

CHAPTER 8

The visions and prophecies of this chapter look only and entirely at the events that were then shortly to come to pass in the monarchies of Persia and Greece, and seem not to have any further reference at all. Nothing is here said of the Chaldean monarchy, for that was now just at its period; and therefore this chapter is written not in Chaldee, as the six foregoing chapters were, for the benefit of the Chaldeans, but in Hebrew, and so are the rest of the chapters to the end of the book, for the service of the Jews, that they might know what troubles were before them and what the issue of them would be, and might provide accordingly. In this chapter we have,

I. The vision itself of the ram, and the he-goat, and the little horn that should fight and prevail against the people of God, for a certain limited time (v. 1-14).

II. The interpretation of this vision by an angel, showing that the ram signified the Persian empire, the he-goat the Grecian, and the little horn a king of the Grecian monarchy, that should set himself against the Jews and religion, which was Antiochus Epiphanes (v. 15-27). The Jewish church, from its beginning, had been all along, more or less, blessed with prophets, men divinely inspired to explain God's mind to them in his providences and give them some prospect of what was coming upon them; but, soon after Ezra's time, divine inspiration ceased, and there was no more any prophet till the gospel day dawned. And therefore the events of that time were here foretold by Daniel, and left upon record, that even then God might not leave himself without witness, nor them without a guide.

DANIEL 8:1-14

THE VISION OF THE RAM AND GOAT

Here is,

I. The date of this vision, v. 1. It was *in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar*, which proved to be his last year, as many reckon; so that this

chapter also should be, in order of time, before the fifth. That Daniel might not be surprised at the destruction of Babylon, now at hand, God gives him a foresight of the destruction of other kingdoms hereafter, which in their day had been as potent as that of Babylon. Could we foresee the changes that shall be hereafter, when we are gone, we should the less admire, and be less affected with, the changes in our own day; for *that which is done is that which shall be done*, ²⁰¹⁹Ecclesiastes 1:9. Then it was that a *vision appeared to me, even to me, Daniel*. Here he solemnly attests the truth of it: it was to him, even to him, that the vision was shown; he was the eye-witness of it. And this vision puts him in mind of a former vision which *appeared to him at the first*, in the first year of this reign, which he makes mention of because this vision was an explication and confirmation of that, and points at many of the same events. That seems to have been a dream, a vision in his sleep; this seems to have been when he was awake.

II. The scene of this vision. The place where that was laid was in *Shushan the palace*, one of the royal seats of the kings of Persia, situated on the banks of the river Ulai, which surrounded the city; it was in the province of Elam, that part of Persia which lay next to Babylon. Daniel was not there in person, for he was now in Babylon, a captive, in some employment under Belshazzar, and might not go to such a distant country, especially being now an enemy's country. But he was there in vision; as Ezekiel, when a captive in Babylon, was often brought, in the spirit, to the land of Israel. Note, The soul may be a liberty when the body is in captivity; for, when we are bound, the Spirit of the Lord is not bound. The vision related to that country, and therefore there he was made to fancy himself to be as strongly as if he had really been there.

III. The vision itself and the process of it.

1. He saw a *ram with two horns*, v. 3. This was the second monarchy, of which the kingdoms of Media and Persia were the two horns. The horns were *very high*; but that which came up last was the higher, and got the start of the former. So the last shall be first, and the first last. The kingdom of Persia, which rose last, in Cyrus, became more eminent than that of the Medes.

2. He saw this *ram pushing* all about him with his horns (v. 4), *westward* (towards Babylon, Syria, Greece, and Asia the less), *northward* (towards

the Lydians, Armenians, and Scythians), and *southward* (towards Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt), for all these nations did the Persian empire, one time or other, make attempts upon for the enlarging of their dominion. And at last he became so powerful that *no beasts might stand before him*. This *ram*, though of a species of animal often preyed upon, became formidable even to the beasts of prey themselves, so that there was *no standing* before him, no escaping him, none that *could deliver out of his hand*, but all must yield to him: the kings of Persia did according *to their will*, prospered in all their ways abroad, had an uncontrollable power at home, and *became great*. He thought himself great because he did what he would; but to do good is that which makes men truly great.

3. He saw this ram overcome by a he-goat. He was considering the *ram* (wondering that so weak an animal should come to be so prevalent) and thinking what would be the issue; and, *behold, a he-goat came*, v. 5. This was Alexander the Great, the son of Philip king of Macedonia. He *came from the west*, from Greece, which lay west from Persia. He fetched a great compass with his army: he came *upon the face of the whole earth*; he did in effect conquer the world, and then sat down and wept because there was not another world to be conquered. *Unus Pellaeo juveni non sufficit orbis* — *One world was too little for the youth of Pellae*. This he-goat (a creature famed for comeliness in going, ~~XXX~~ Proverbs 30:31) went on with incredible swiftness, so that he *touchèd not the ground*, so lightly did he move; he rather seemed to fly above the ground than to go upon the ground; or *none touchèd him in the earth*, that is, he met with little or no opposition. This he-goat, or buck, had a *notable horn between his eyes*, like a unicorn. He had strength, and knew his own strength; he saw himself a match for all his neighbours. Alexander pushed his conquests on so fast, and with so much fury, that none of the kingdoms he attacked had courage to make a stand, or give check to the progress of his victorious arms. In six years he made himself master of the greatest part of the then known world. Well might he be called a *notable horn*, for his name still lives in history as the name of one of the most celebrated commanders in war that ever the world knew. Alexander's victories and achievements are still the entertainment of the ingenious. This *he-goat* came to the *ram that had two horns*, v. 6. Alexander with his victorious army attacked the kingdom of Persia, an army consisting of no more than 30,000 foot and 5000 horse. He *ran unto him*, to surprise him ere he could get intelligence of his motions, *in the fury of his power*. He came *close to the ram*.

Alexander with his army came up with Darius Codomannus, then emperor of Persia, being *moved with choler against him*, v. 7. It was with the greatest violence that Alexander pushed on his war against Darius, who, though he brought vast numbers into the field, yet, for want of skill, was an unequal match for him, so that Alexander was too hard for him whenever he engaged him, *smote him, cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him*, which three expressions, some think, refer to the three famous victories that Alexander obtained over Darius, at Granicus, at Issus, and at Arbela, by which he was at length totally routed, having, in the last battle, had 600,000 men killed, so that Alexander became absolute master of all the Persian empire, *broke his two horns*, the kingdoms of Media and Persia. The ram that had destroyed *all before him* (v. 4) now is himself destroyed; Darius has *no power to stand* before Alexander, not has he any friends or allies to help to *deliver him out of his hand*. Note, Those kingdoms which, when they had power, abused it, and, because none could oppose them, withheld not themselves from the doing of any wrong, may expect to have their power at length taken from them, and to be served in their own kind, ⁽²³¹⁾ Isaiah 33:1.

4. He saw the he-goat made hereby very considerable; but the *great horn*, that had done all this execution, *was broken*, v. 8. Alexander was about twenty years old when he began his wars. When he was about twenty-six he conquered Darius, and became master of the whole Persian empire; but when he was about thirty-two or thirty-three *years of age*, when he was *strong*, in his full strength, he was *broken*. He was not killed in war, in the bed of honour, but died of a drunken surfeit, or, as some suspect, by poison and left no child living behind him to enjoy that which he had endlessly laboured for, but left a lasting monument of the vanity of worldly pomp and power, and their insufficiency to make a man happy.

5. He saw this kingdom divided into four parts, and that instead of that one great horn there came up *four notable ones*, Alexander's four captains, to whom he bequeathed his conquests; and he had so much that, when it was divided among four, they had each of them enough for any one man. These *four notable horns* were towards the *four winds of heaven*, the same with the *four heads* of the leopard (⁽²³⁶⁾ Daniel 7:6), the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, Asia and Greece — Syria lying to the *east*, Greece to the *west*, Asia Minor to the *north*, and Egypt to the *south*. Note, Those that heap up riches know not who shall gather them, nor whose all those things shall be which they have provided.

6. He saw a *little horn* which became a great persecutor of the church and people of God; and this was the principal thing that was intended to be shown to him in this vision, as afterwards, ²¹¹³Daniel 11:30, etc. All agree that this was *Antiochus Epiphanes* (so he called himself) — *the illustrious*, but others called him *Antiochus Epimanes* — *Antiochus the furious*. He is called here (as before, ²¹⁰⁸Daniel 7:8), a *little horn*, because he was in his original contemptible; there were others between him and the kingdom, and he was of a base servile disposition, had nothing in him of princely qualities, and had been for some time a hostage and prisoner at Rome, whence he made his escape, and, though, the youngest brother, and his elder living, got the kingdom. He waxed exceedingly great *towards the south*, for he seized upon Egypt, and *towards the east*, for he invaded Persia and Armenia. But that which is here especially taken notice of is the mischief that he did to the people of the Jews. They are not expressly named, or prophecies must not be too plain; but they are here so described that it would be easy for those who understood scripture-language to know who were meant; and the Jews, having notice of this before, might be awakened to prepare themselves and their children beforehand for these suffering trying times.

(1.) He set himself against *the pleasant land*, the land of Israel, so called because it was the *glory of all lands*, for fruitfulness and all the delights of human life, but especially for the tokens of God's presence in it, and its being blessed with divine revelations and institutions; it was Mount Zion that was *beautiful for situation*, the *joy of the whole earth*, ²¹⁰²Psalms 48:2. The pleasantness of that land was that there the Messiah was to be born, who would be both the consolation and *the glory of his people Israel*. Note, We have reason to reckon that a pleasant place which is a holy place, in which God dwells, and where we may have opportunity of communing with him. Surely, *It is good to be here*.

(2.) He fought against the *host of heaven*, that is, the people of God, the church, which is the kingdom of heaven, the church-militant here on earth. The saints, being born from above, and citizens of heaven, and doing the will of God, by his grace, in some measure, as the angels of heaven do it, may be well called a *heavenly host*. Or the priests and Levites, who were employed in the service of the tabernacle, and there *warred a good warfare*, were this *host of heaven*. These Antiochus set himself against; he waxed great to the *host of heaven*, in opposition to them and in defiance of them.

(3.) He *cast down some of the host* (that is, *of the stars*, for they are called the host of heaven) *to the ground, and stamped upon them*. Some of those that were most eminent both in church and state, that were burning and shining lights in their generation, he either forced to comply with his idolatries or put them to death; he got them into his hands, and then trampled upon them and triumphed over them; as good old Eleazar, and the *seven brethren*, whom he put to death with cruel tortures, because they would not eat swine's flesh, 2 Mac. 6:7. He gloried in it that herein he insulted Heaven itself and *exalted his throne above the stars of God*, ²³⁴³Isaiah 14:13.

(4.) He *magnified himself even to the prince of the host*. He set himself against the high priest, Onias, whom he deprived of his dignity, or rather against God himself, who was Israel's *King of old*, who *reigns for ever* Zion's King, who himself heads his own host that fight his battles. Against him Antiochus magnified himself; as Pharaoh, when he said, *Who is the Lord?* Note, Those who persecute the people of God persecute God himself.

(5.) He *took away the daily sacrifice*. The morning and evening lamb, which God appointed to be offered every day upon his altar to his honour, Antiochus forbade and restrained the offering of. No doubt he took away all other sacrifices, but only the *daily sacrifice* is mentioned, because that was the greatest loss of all, for in that they kept up their constant communion with God, which they preferred before that which is only occasional. God's people reckon their daily sacrifices, their morning and evening exercises of devotion, the most needful of their daily business and the most delightful of their daily comforts, and would not for all the world part with them.

(6.) He *cast down the place of his sanctuary*. He did not burn and demolish the temple, but he cast it down, when he profaned it, made it the temple of Jupiter Olympius, and set up his image in it. He also *cast down the truth to the ground*, trampled upon the book of the law, that word of truth, tore it, and burnt it, and did what he could to destroy it quite, that it might be lost and forgotten for ever. These were the projects of that wicked prince. In these he practised. And (would you think it?) in these he prospered. He carried the matter very far, seemed to have gained his point, and went near to extirpate that holy religion which God's right hand had planted. But lest he or any other should triumph, as if herein he had

prevailed against God himself and been too hard for him, the matter is here explained and set in a true light.

[1.] He could not have done this if God had not permitted him to do it, could have had no power against Israel unless it had been given him from above. God put this power into his hand, and *gave him a host against the daily sacrifice*. God's providence put that sword into his hand by which he was enabled thus to bear down all before him. Note, We ought to eye and own the hand of God in all the enterprises and all the successes of the church's enemies against the church. They are but the rod in God's hand.

[2.] God would not have permitted it if his people had not provoked him to do so. It is *by reason of transgression*, the transgression of Israel, to correct them for that, that Antiochus is employed to give them all this trouble. Note, When the pleasant land and all its pleasant things are laid waste, it must be acknowledged that sin is the procuring cause of all the desolation. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?* ^{<3024>} Isaiah 42:24. The great transgression of the Jews after the captivity (when they were cured of idolatry) was a contempt and profanation of the holy things, *snuffing* at the service of God, *bringing the torn and the lame for sacrifice*, as if the *table of the Lord* were a *contemptible* thing (so we find ^{<3007>} Malachi 1:7, 8, etc., and that the priests were guilty of this ^{<3011>} Malachi 2:1, 8), and therefore God sent Antiochus to *take away the daily sacrifice* and *cast down the place of his sanctuary*. Note, It is just with God to deprive those of the privileges of his house who despise and profane them, and to make those know the worth of ordinances by the want of them who would not know it by the enjoyment of them.

7. He heard the time of this calamity limited and determined, not the time *when it should come* (that is not here fixed, because God would have his people always prepared for it), but *how long it should last*, that, when they had no more any *prophets to tell them how long* (^{<5749>} Psalm 74:9, which psalm seems to have been calculated for this dark and doleful day), they might have this prophecy to give them a prospect of deliverance in due time. Now concerning this we have here,

(1.) The question asked concerning it, v. 13. Observe

[1.] By whom the question was put: *I heard one saint speaking* to this purport, and then *another saint* seconded him. "O that we knew how long

this trouble will last!” The angels here are called *saints*, for they are *holy ones* (²⁰⁴³Daniel 4:13), the *holy myriads*, (⁶¹¹⁴Jude 1:14). The angels concern themselves in the affairs of the church, and enquire concerning them, if, as here, concerning its temporal salvations, much more do they desire to *look into the great salvation*, (⁶⁰¹²1 Peter 1:12). One saint *spoke* of the thing, and another *enquired* concerning it. Thus John, who lay in Christ's bosom, was beckoned to by Peter to ask Christ a question, (⁶¹²³John 13:23, 24).

[2.] To whom the question was put. He said *unto Palmoni that spoke*. Some make this *certain saint* to be a superior angel who understood more than the rest, to whom therefore they came with their enquiries. Others make it to be the *eternal Word*, the *Son of God*. He is the *unknown One*. *Palmoni* seems to be compounded of *Peloni Almoni*, which is used (⁶⁰⁰¹Ruth 4:1) for *Ho, such a one*, and (¹⁰⁶⁸2 Kings 6:8) for *such a place*. Christ was yet the *nameless One*. *Wherefore asked thou after my name, seeing it is secret?* (⁰⁷³⁸Judges 13:18). He is the *numberer of secrets* (as some translate it), for from him there is nothing hidden — *the wonderful numberer*, so others; his name is called *Wonderful*. Note, If we would know the mind of God, we must apply to Jesus Christ, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, not hidden from us, but hidden for us.

[3.] The question itself that was asked: “*How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice? How long shall the prohibition of it continue? How long shall the pleasant land be made unpleasant by that severe interdict? How long shall the transgression of desolation* (the image of Jupiter), that great transgression which makes all our sacred things desolate, how long shall that stand in the temple? How long shall *the sanctuary and the host*, the holy place and the holy persons that minister in it, be *trodden under foot* by the oppressor?” Note, Angels are concerned for the prosperity of the church on earth and desirous to see an end of its desolations. The angels asked, for the satisfaction of Daniel, not doubting but he was desirous to know, how long these calamities should last? The question takes it for granted that they should not last always. *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous*, though it may come upon their lot. Christ comforted himself in his sufferings with this, *The things concerning me have an end* (⁶²²⁵Luke 22:37), and so may the church in hers. But it is desirable to know how long they shall last, that we may provide accordingly.

(2.) The answer given to this question, v. 14. Christ gives instruction to the holy angels, for they are our fellow-servants; but here the answer was given to Daniel, because for his sake the question was asked: *He said unto me*. God sometimes gives in great favours to his people, in answer to the enquiries and requests of their friends for them. Now,

[1.] Christ assures him that the trouble shall end; it shall continue *2300 days and no longer*, so many *evenings and mornings* (so the word is), so many *nychthemera*, so many *natural days*, reckoned, as in the beginning of Genesis, by the evenings and mornings, because it was the evening and the morning sacrifice that they most lamented the loss of, and thought the time passed very slowly while they were deprived of them. Some make the morning and the evening, in this number, to stand for two, and then 2300 evenings and as many mornings will make but 1150 days; and about so many days it was that the daily sacrifice was interrupted: and this comes nearer to the computation (²⁰²⁵Daniel 7:25) of a *time, times, and the dividing of a time*. But it is less forced to understand them of so many natural days; 2300 days make *six years and three months*, and about eighteen days; and just so long they reckon from the defection of the people, procured by Menelaus the high priest in the 142nd year of the kingdom of the Seleucidae, the sixth month of that year, and the 6th day of the month (so Josephus dates it), to the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the reestablishment of religion among them, which was in the 148th year, the 9th month, and the 25th *day of the month*, 1 Mac. 4:52. God reckons the time of his people's afflictions he is afflicted. (⁶¹²⁰Revelation 2:10, Thou shalt have *tribulation ten days*).

[2.] He assures him that they shall see better days afterwards: *Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed*. Note, The cleansing of the sanctuary is a happy token for good to any people; when they begin to be reformed they will soon be relieved. Though the righteous God may, for the correction of his people, suffer his sanctuary to be profaned for a while, yet the jealous God will, for his own glory, see to the cleansing of it in due time. Christ died to cleanse his church, and he will so cleanse it as at length to present it blameless to himself.

~~2085~~ DANIEL 8:15-27

THE VISION OF THE RAM AND GOAT

Here we have,

I. Daniel's earnest desire to have this vision explained to him (v. 15): *I sought the meaning*. Note, Those that rightly know the things of God cannot but desire to know more and more of them, and to be led further into the mystery of them; and those that would find the meaning of what they have seen or heard from God must seek it, and seek it diligently. *Seek and you shall find*. Daniel considered the thing, compared it with the former discoveries, to try if he could understand it; but especially he sought by prayer (as he had done ~~2085~~ Daniel 2:18), and he did not seek in vain.

II. Orders given to the angel Gabriel to inform him concerning this vision. One *in the appearance of a man* (who, some think, was Christ himself, for who besides could command angels?) orders Gabriel to *make Daniel understand this vision*. Sometimes God is pleased to make use of the ministration of angels, not only to protect his children, but to instruct them, to serve the kind intentions, not only of his providence, but of his grace.

III. The consternation that Daniel was in upon the approach of his instructor (v. 17): *When he came near I was afraid*. Though Daniel was a man of great prudence and courage, and had been conversant with the visions of the Almighty, yet the approach of an extraordinary messenger from heaven put him into this fright. He *fell upon his face*, not to worship the angel, but because he could no longer bear the dazzling lustre of his glory. Nay, being prostrate upon the ground, he *fell into a deep sleep*, (v. 18), which came not from any neglect of the vision, or indifference towards it, but was an effect of his faintness and the oppression of spirit he was under, through the abundance of revelations. The disciples in the garden slept for sorrow; and, as there, so here, *the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak*. Daniel would have kept awake, and could not.

IV. The relief which the angel gave to Daniel, with great encouragement to him to expect a satisfactory discovery of the meaning of this vision.

1. He touched him, and set him upon his feet, v. 18. Thus when John, in a similar case, was in similar consternation, Christ *laid his right hand upon him*, ⁽⁴¹⁷⁾ Revelation 1:17. It was a gentle touch that the angel here gave to Daniel, to show that he came not to hurt him, not to *plead against him with his great power*, or with a hand *heavy upon him*, but to help him, to *put strength into him* (⁽³²⁶⁾ Job 23:6), which God can do with a touch. When we are slumbering and grovelling on this earth we are very unfit to hear from God, and to converse with him. But, if God design instruction for us, he will be his grace awaken us out of our slumber, raise us from things below, and *set us upright*.

2. He promised to inform him: “*Understand, O son of man!* v. 17. Thou shalt understand, if thou wilt but apply thy mind to understand.” He calls him *son of man* to intimate that he would consider his frame, and would deal tenderly with him, accommodating himself to his capacity as a man. Or thus he preaches humility to him; though he be admitted to converse with angels, he must not be puffed up with it, but must remember that he is a son of man. Or perhaps this title puts honour upon him: the Messiah was lately called the *Son of man* (⁽²⁷³⁾ Daniel 7:13), and Daniel is akin to him, and is a figure of him as a prophet and one *greatly beloved*. He assures him that he shall be made to know *what shall be in the last end of the indignation*, v. 19. Let it be laid up for a comfort to those who shall live to see these calamitous times that there shall be an end of them; *the indignation shall cease* (⁽²¹⁵⁾ Isaiah 10:25); *it shall be overpast*, ⁽²³¹⁾ Isaiah 26:20. It may intermit and return again, but the *last end* shall be glorious; good will follow it, nay, and good will be brought out of it. He tells him (v. 17), “*At the time of the end shall be the vision*; when the last end of the indignation comes, when the course of this providence is completed, then the vision shall be made plain and intelligible by the event, as the event shall be made plain and intelligible by the vision.” Or, “*At the time of the end* of the Jewish church, in the latter days of it, *shall this vision be accomplished*, 300 or 400 years hence; understand it therefore, that thou mayest leave it on record for the generations to come.” But is he ask more particularly, “When is the time of the end? And how long will it be before it arrive?” let this answer suffice (v. 19): *At the time appointed the end shall be*; it is fixed in the divine counsel, which cannot be altered and which must not be pried into.

V. The exposition which he gave him of the vision.

1. Concerning the two monarchies of Persia and Greece, v. 20-22. The *ram* signified the succession of the kings of Media and Persia; the *rough goat* signified the kings of Greece; the *great horn* was Alexander; the *four horns* that rose in his room were the four kingdoms into which his conquests were cantoned, of which before, v. 8. They are said to *stand up out of the nations*, but *not in his power*; none of them ever made the figure that Alexander did. Josephus relates that when Alexander had taken Tyre, and subdued Palestine, and was upon his march to Jerusalem, Jaddas, who was then high priest (Nehemiah mentions one of his name, ^{2721b} Daniel 12:11), fearing his rage, had recourse to God by prayer and sacrifice for the common safety, and was by him warned in a dream that upon Alexander's approach he should throw open the gates of the city, and that he and the rest of the priests should go forth to meet him in their habits, and all the people in white. Alexander, seeing this company at a distance, went himself alone to the high priest, and, having prostrated himself before that God whose name was engraven in the golden plate of his mitre, he first saluted him; and, being asked by one of his own captains why he did so, he said that while he was yet in Macedon, musing on the conquest of Asia, there appeared to him a man like unto this, and thus attired, who invited him into Asia, and assured him of success in the conquest of it. The priests led him to the temple, where he offered sacrifice to the God of Israel as they directed him; and there they showed him this book of the prophet Daniel, that it was there foretold that a Grecian should come and destroy the Persians, which animated him very much in the expedition he was now meditating against Darius. Hereupon he took the Jews and their religion under his protection, promised to be kind to those of their religion in Babylon and Media, whither he was now marching, and in honour of him all the priests that had sons born that year called them *Alexander*. *Joseph. lib. 11.*

2. Concerning Antiochus, and his oppression of the Jews. This is said to be in the *latter time of the kingdom of the Greeks, when the transgressors are come to the full* (v. 23); that is, when the degenerate Jews have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and are ripe for this destruction, so that God cannot in honour bear with them any longer then shall *stand up* this king, to be *flagellum Dei* — *the rod in God's hand* for the chastising of the Jews. Now observe here,

(1.) His character: He shall be a *king of fierce countenance*, insolent and furious, neither fearing God nor regarding man, *understanding dark*

sentences, or (rather) versed in dark practices, the hidden things of dishonesty; he was master of all the arts of dissimulation and deceit, and knew the depths of Satan as well as any man. He was wise to do evil.

(2.) His success. He shall make dreadful havoc of the nations about him: *His power shall be mighty, bear down all before it, but not by his own power* (v. 24), but partly by the assistance of his allies, Eumenes and Attalus, partly by the baseness and treachery of many of the Jews, even of the priests that came into his interests, and especially by the divine permission. it was not by his own power, but by a power given him from above, that he *destroyed wonderfully*, and thought he made himself a great man by being a great destroyer. He destroys wonderfully indeed, for he destroys,

[1.] The *mighty people*, and they cannot resist him by their power. The princes of Egypt cannot stand before him with all their forces, but he practises against them and prospers. Note, The mighty ones of the earth commonly meet with those at length that are too hard for them, that are more mighty than they. Let not the strong man then glory in his strength, be it ever so great, unless he could be sure that there were none stronger than he.

[2.] He destroys the *holy people, or the people of the holy ones*; and their sacred character does neither deter him from destroying them nor defend them from being destroyed. *All things come alike to all*, and there is one event to the mighty and to the holy in this world.

[3.] The methods by which he will gain this success, not by true courage, wisdom, or justice, but by his *policy and craft* (v. 25), by fraud and deceit, and serpentine subtlety: He shall *cause craft to prosper*; so cunningly shall he carry on his projects that he shall gain his point by the art of wheedling. *By peace he shall destroy many*, as others do by war; under the pretence of treaties, leagues, and alliances, with them, he shall encroach on their rights, and trick them into a subjection to him. Thus sometimes what a nation truly brave has gained in a righteous war a nation truly base has regained in a treacherous peace, and craft has been caused to prosper.

[4.] The mischief that he shall do to religion: *He shall magnify himself in his heart*, and think himself fit to prescribe and give law to every body, so that he shall *stand up against the Prince of princes*, that is, against God himself. He will profane his temple and altar, prohibit his worship, and

persecute his worshippers. See what a height of impudence some men's impiety brings them to; they openly bid defiance to God himself though he is the Kings of kings.

[5.] The ruin that he shall be brought to at last: *He shall be broken without hand*, that is, without the hand of man. He shall not be slain in war, nor shall he be assassinated, as tyrants commonly were, but he shall fall into the hand of the living God and die by an immediate stroke of his vengeance. He, hearing that the Jews had cast the image of Jupiter Olympius out of the temple, where he had placed it, was so enraged at the Jews that he vowed he would make Jerusalem *a common burial-place*, and determined to march thither immediately; but no sooner had he spoken these proud words than he was struck with an incurable plague in his bowels; worms bred so fast in his body that whole flakes of flesh sometimes dropped from him; his torments were violent, and the stench of his disease such that none could endure to come near him. He continued in this misery very long. At first he persisted in his menaces against the Jews; but at length, despairing of his recovery, he called his friends together, and acknowledged all those miseries to have fallen upon him for the injuries he had done to the Jews and his profaning the temple at Jerusalem. Then he wrote courteous letters to the Jews, and vowed that if he recovered he would let them have the free exercise of their religion. But, finding his disease grow upon him, when he could no longer endure his own smell, he said, *It is meet to submit to God, and for man who is mortal not to set himself in competition with God*, and so died miserably in a strange land, on the mountains of Pacata near Babylon: so Ussher's Annals, A.M. 3840, about 160 years before the birth of Christ.

3. As to the time fixed for the continuance of the cessation of the daily sacrifice, it is not explained here, but only confirmed (v. 26). That *vision of the evening and morning is true*, in the proper sense of the words, and needs no explication. How unlikely soever it might be that God should suffer his own sanctuary to be thus profaned, yet it is true, it is too true, so it shall be.

VI. Here is the conclusion of this vision, and here,

1. The charge given to Daniel to keep it private for the present: *Shut thou up the vision*; let it not be publicly know among the Chaldeans, lest the Persians, who were now shortly to possess the kingdom, should be

incensed against the Jews by it, because the downfall of their kingdom was foretold by it, which would be unseasonable now that the edict for their release was expected from the king of Persia. *Shut it up, for it shall be for many days.* It was about 300 years from the time of this vision to the time of the accomplishment of it; therefore he must *shut it up* for the present, even from the people of the Jews, lest it should amaze and perplex them, but let it be kept safely for the generations to come, that should live about the time of the accomplishment of it, for to them it would be both most intelligible and most serviceable. Note, What we know of the things of God should be carefully laid up, that hereafter, when there is occasion, it may be faithfully laid out; and what we have not now any use for, yet we may have another time. Divine truths should be sealed up among our treasures, that we may find them again after many days.

2. The care he took to keep it private, having received such a charge, v. 27. He *fainted, and was sick*, with the multitude of his thoughts within him occasioned by this vision, which oppressed and overwhelmed him the more because he was forbidden to publish what he had seen, so that *his belly was as wine which has no vent*, he was *ready to burst like new bottles*, ~~Job~~ Job 32:19. However, he kept it to himself, stifled and smothered the concern he was in; so that those he conversed with could not perceive it, but he *did the king's business* according to the duty of his place, whatever it was. Note, As long as we live in this world we must have something to do in it; and even those whom God has most dignified with his favours must not think themselves above their business; nor must the pleasure of communion with God take us off from the duties of our particular callings, but still we must in them *abide with God*. Those especially that are entrusted with public business must see to it that they conscientiously discharge their trust.