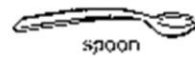
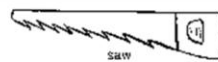
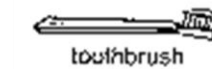
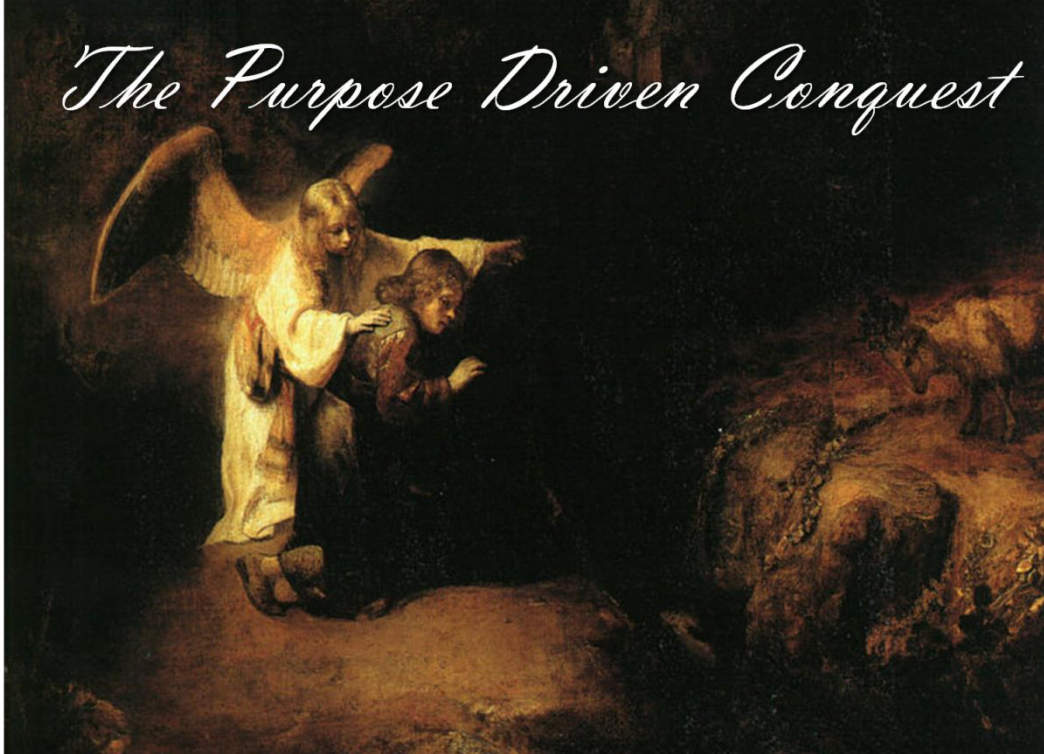


The Purpose Driven Conquest



Do you remember these “hidden pictures” puzzles from Highlights magazines? We didn’t have them at home so the only place I ever saw them was in the doctor’s and dentist’s office. But in my day, going to the doctor always ended up getting a shot of penicillin. Runny nose? Give him a shot of penicillin? Poison Ivy? Shot of penicillin. Broken finger? Yet another needle. So when I looked at these hidden picture puzzles, I saw hypodermic needles all over the place. Can’t you see them too!

I still got needles at the dentist’s office but they weren’t as bad, but then all of the hidden pictures were already circled, so it was no fun for me.

We are back in the book of Daniel at chapter eight, so please turn there. There are three hidden pictures in this chapter—Alexander the Great, Hanukkah and the Antichrist. All three of them

are clearly described in the eight chapter of Daniel. As I read this chapter, follow along and see if you can begin to identify these three things.

1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first. **2** And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the citadel, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal. **3** I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. **4** I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

5 As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground. And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. **6** He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath. **7** I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him. And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. **8** Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

9 Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. **10** It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. **11** It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. **12** And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. **13** Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" **14** And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. **16** And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." **17** So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."

18 And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. **19** He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end. **20** As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. **21** And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. **22** As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. **23** And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise. **24** His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall

succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. **25** By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand. **26** The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now.”

27 And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king’s business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

CHRONOLOGY OF DANIEL

| | | BABYLON | | MEDES-PERSIANS | |
|-------|------|---------|------|----------------|--|
| Chap. | Date | Chap. | Date | | |
| 1 | 605 | | | | |
| 2 | 604 | | | | |
| 3 | 603 | 7 | 553 | | |
| 4 | 574 | 8 | 550 | | |
| 5 | 539 | 9 | 539 | | |
| 6 | 535 | 10 | 535 | | |
| | | 11 | 535 | | |
| | | 12 | 535 | | |

HISTORY { 1-6 } { 7-12 } **VISIONS**

Let me start by reminding you where we are at in the book of Daniel. If you recall, the first six chapters are history and the last six chapters are visions and overlap to a large degree with the historical sections. Chapter eight begins in the third year of King Belshazzar, the year 550 BC. Belshazzar was the king who saw the handwriting on the wall, who died that very night which ushered in the end of the Babylonian Kingdom and start of the Medo-Persian Kingdom.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream we saw the five parts of the statue divided into four historical kingdoms and the fifth part symbolizing the end times. In chapter seven, we read of the vision of the four beasts representing these same four kingdoms with the horns of the fourth beast symbolizing the end times. One of the reasons we can be so certain about these symbols is because chapter eight tells us the precise meaning of the middle two kingdoms.

If you didn’t notice, this chapter is neatly divided between the vision and the interpretation of the vision given by the angel Gabriel. Incidentally, this is the first time that Gabriel is mentioned by name in the Bible. We can accelerate our understanding by jumping to the interpretive parts. Verses 20 and 21 let us in on the secret. *As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. And the goat is the king of Greece.*

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream we



This gives us an opportunity to review the principles of interpreting apocalyptic literature like Daniel, particularly principle number three.

1. Scripture ALWAYS has a single meaning (UNLESS there is a double fulfillment.)
2. Symbols do represent actual entities, they are not random or meaningless.
3. Assume the plain meaning of the text, including numbers.
4. Look for the interpretation within the text.

The ram had two horns and even though the ram is symbolic of the Medo-Persian Empire, the two horns are meant to be taken literally. The two horns represent the two parts of the empire—the Medes and the Persians. Even though they were united they were still two definitive parts of the empire. But the goat representing Greece only had a single horn because when the Greek Empire rose to power, it was a fully united kingdom under a single ruler—Alexander the Great. There he is, hiding in plain sight. And we know that this was Alexander because verse 22 tells us. *And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.*¹

Alexander was only twenty years old when he assumed the throne of Greece and within three short years, completely conquered the entire Medo-Persian Empire.² He truly fits the description of the goat who *came from the west across the face of the whole earth*. Secular historians agree that Alexander conquered more territory in less time than any king who ever lived. He truly was unstoppable.

Before we move on to find the next two “hidden pictures,” I want to draw out some applications from this part. First, this reminds us that the Bible is 100% reliable as a historical document. Skeptics and scoffers claim that the Bible is nothing more than a collection of fairy tales that have never been proven to be true. But the reality is that not a single historical fact in the Bible has ever proven to be false. On the contrary, archaeologists search for cities using the Bible as their GPS. You can trust every word in the pages of the book you are holding.

The second application is once again seeing how God perfectly predicts the future. Remember that from God’s perspective, the promise and the fulfillment are one and the same. When God gave this description of the first king of Greece to Daniel, from God’s perspective, it was already accomplished. How do I know that the Packers suffered a hard defeat at the hands of the New York Giants on November 25th? Because it is past history and we can look back on it as an accomplished fact. This is why God can describe the future in perfect measure. This is also why every future promise can be trusted as if it were an accomplished fact. When God says that he will never leave you or forsake you, it is finished. You can live your life with that finished promise in hand.

Since it is so clear that this is Alexander, why didn’t God choose to just name him? Wouldn’t that have been a real slam dunk Alexander’s name in this chapter? Actually, the prophet Isaiah named Cyrus, the first Medo-Persian king, hundreds of years before he was even born. However, secular historians and liberal theologians see Cyrus’ name and conclude that this section of Isaiah must have been written after Cyrus lived, because they flatly deny the possibility of any miracles. So even if Alexander’s name was written here, the skeptics would dismiss it anyway. We don’t need to have Alexander’s name appear here to be absolutely confident that this is who was intended.

Third, the conquest of the Greek Empire, though as brutal as any in history, was part of God's plan. The title of my message is a sort of satire of the book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. The rise of Alexander and his empire was all part of the God's Purpose Driven Conquest. If this bothers you that God would use conquest as a means to suit his own purposes, we need to be reminded that this was true for Israel's entire history. From slavery in Egypt through the judges and kings through the fall of Israel and Judah all the way to the occupation by the Romans who crucified Jesus, every last one was a purpose driven conquest.

Alexander was unstoppable because God had made him unstoppable in order to fulfill his own purposes. One of the immediate purposes of the conquest of the Greeks was the unification of the West and the East under a single language—koine Greek. The entire New Testament was written in this common Greek language. God used Alexander the Great to lay the foundation for the spread of the gospel throughout the world. But there were also other purposes, to which we move next.

Our next hidden picture is Hanukkah and of the three, this one is probably the most difficult to find at first. We see this develop starting at verse 22.

As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. 23 And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise.

Alexander was the horn that was broken as he died at the young age of 32 and following his death, the empire was divided into four parts with four rulers or kings.³ Exactly as Scripture says, "at the latter end of the kingdom," another king arose who was cunning, deceitful, powerful and destructive. His name was Antiochus IV. Antiochus' coins were inscribed *theos epiphanēs* which means "God manifest."⁴ While he gave himself the title epiphanies, the Jews called him epimanes, which means madman.

A great deal of what we know about Antiochus Epiphanes is found in the apocryphal books, 1st and 2nd Maccabees. These apocryphal books are not considered to be inspired by God but are considered to have very high historical reliability. A few selections from these books will explain why they called him a madman.

Then there was massacre of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaughter of young girls and infants. Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed. (169 BC—2 Mac 5:13–14)

And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and festivals, to defile the sanctuary and the priests, to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and other unclean animals. (167 BC—1 Mac 1:44-47)

*Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-fifth year, they **erected a desolating sacrilege** on the altar of burnt offering. The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. (1 Mac 1:54–56)*

In this next quote, you see the temple worship restored because Judas Maccabeus defeated Antiochus and rededicated the sanctuary.

*Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year (**December 14, 164 B.C**), they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. So they **celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days**, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. (164 BC—1 Mac 4:52–56)*

Here is a summary of the events predicted in Daniel and described by 1st and 2nd Maccabees.

169 BC—Antiochus killed 80,000 Jews and outlawed Judaism

167 BC—Antiochus offered pigs and pig's blood as a sacrifice in the temple and erected an altar to Zeus

164 BC—Judas Maccabeus defeated Antiochus and reconsecrated the temple

The rededication of the temple is part of the vision from verse 14. *Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state. (8:14)* Did you notice how long they celebrated the dedication of the temple? This was an eight day celebration in the middle of December which today is known as...Hanukkah.

If you are good at math you may notice that these events only cover a span of about five years yet the vision stated that the desolation would last for 2300 mornings and evenings. However, in 170 BC, Antiochus had the High Priest murdered which was the start of his persecution. When you add in this date, you arrive at 2300 days of desolation before the altar “was restored to its rightful state.”

2300 days

170 BC—Antiochus had the High Priest murdered

167 BC—Antiochus offered pigs and pig's blood as a sacrifice in the temple and erected an altar to Zeus.

169 BC—Antiochus killed 80,000 Jews and outlawed Judaism.

164 BC—Judas Maccabeus defeated Antiochus and reconsecrated the temple
Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state. (8:14)

Before studying this myself I did not know that Hanukkah was in the Old Testament but did you know that it is also in the New Testament? In John chapter 10 we read, *At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon* (John 10:22-23). Jesus came to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Dedication, which is Hanukkah, for the word Hanukkah means “dedication.”

One application of all of this is that as Christians, we should not be “afraid” of Hanukkah. We tend to see Hanukkah as the “Jewish Christmas” and perhaps even see it as somehow profaning the celebration of Jesus’ birth since the Jews reject Christ. One thing is certain—a true celebration of Hanukkah is far better than a worldly celebration of Christmas. Furthermore, now that you understand the origins of Hanukkah better, you might get the chance to witness to a Jewish person about Hanukkah. You can explain to them that the celebration was predicted in the Bible hundreds of years before it happened. You can also tell them that Jesus celebrated Hanukkah. But I have to tell you that I left out something vitally important from John 10. Look at what happened during the Hanukkah celebration.

²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; ²⁶ but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰ The Father and I are one.”

³¹ The Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?” ³³ The Jews answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.”

Therefore, during the celebration of Hanukkah, Jesus claimed to be God. I never put this together before but this could be a fantastic way to witness to a Jewish person. In fact, I wrote a letter to the editor of the Broadcaster describing these very truths but they refused to publish my letter.

The final “hidden picture” comes more from our principles for interpreting apocalyptic literature, this time from the first principle.

1. Scripture ALWAYS has a single meaning (UNLESS there is a double fulfillment.)

This may sound like a contradiction but I mean to emphasize the plain reading of Scripture. There are instances of double fulfillment but they are very rare and we should never just assume that they are present. But in this case, I think the last third of chapter eight is a clear case of double fulfillment.

The plain meaning of this section refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, as we have already seen and the double fulfillment—or second fulfillment—will take in the person of the Antichrist. Let me show you a chart of comparison.

| Antiochus | Antichrist |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Symbolized as a “little horn” (8:9) | Symbolized as a “small horn” (7:8) |
| “A king of bold face” (8:23) | “seemed greater than its companions (7:20) |
| Possessed great power (8:24) | Will possess great power (2 Thes 2:9) |
| His power was given to him (8:24) | His power will be given to him (Rev. 13:2) |
| Destroyed tens of thousands | Will destroy millions (Rev 16:14) |
| Prospered for about 3 years (8:14) | Will prosper for about 3 years (Rev 13:5) |
| Persecuted the saints (8:24) | Will persecute the saints (Rev 13:7) |
| Deceived multitudes (8:23,25) | Will be a master deceiver (Rev 19:20) |
| Was very arrogant (8:25) | Will be very arrogant (7:8) |
| Blasphemed God (8:25) | Will blaspheme God (7:25) |
| Was not killed by human hands (8:25) | Will not be killed by human hands (Rev 19:20) |

From Daniel’s perspective, the first fulfillment of this vision was hundreds of years away and the second fulfillment was thousands of years in the future. Will the final fulfillment happen in any of our lifetimes? Even if it does, let me leave you with a few encouragements.

1. If you are a believer, you will not be deceived by the antichrist. Though he will deceive billions of people, true Christians will not bow down to this pretender.
2. God routinely raised up enemies to discipline his people but he also always raised up a deliverer. During the revealing of the antichrist and the final tribulation, our deliverer will be standing by in heaven waiting for the word from his Father to ride to victory on his white horse.
3. God’s perfect prediction of events already past gives us assurance that his future promises will come true. The enemy will be defeated. Even if we lose our homes, our wealth, our families and even our lives, we will have lost nothing. This is how Martin Luther ended his famous hymn.

Let goods and kindred go

This mortal life also.
The body they may kill.
God's truth abideth still.
His kingdom is forever.

Rich Maurer
December 2, 2012

¹ Someone asked me if these symbols are intended to represent the kingdoms as a whole or just the prominent king within that kingdom. I have found that it is usually both kings and kingdoms represented. For example, we know that Babylon was the head of gold on the statue but Daniel explained the dream to Nebuchadnezzar by saying, "You are the head of gold." There were several kings after Nebuchadnezzar but he was the most important and prominent. In this sense, Nebuchadnezzar was the kingdom.

In this chapter, the ram seems to represent only the two-part Medo-Persian kingdom with no real emphasis on any one king but Greece is different for several reasons. First, as we have already seen, the text tells us was the "first king," obviously referring to Alexander. Second, Greece was a united kingdom under Alexander but right after he died, the kingdom was divided into four parts, hence the four horns that replace the single horn. Third, Alexander perfectly matches the description of the goat in verses 5-8. Therefore, very often the king and the kingdom can be one and the same, but this is not always the case.

² Alexander, educated under the famed Aristotle, was only twenty in 336 B.C. when he succeeded his father as king. A year and a half later (334 B.C.), he launched his attack against the Persians. In that same year Alexander won the Battle of Granicus in Asia Minor, thereby bringing to an end the dominance of the Medo-Persian Empire. With his subsequent victories at Issus (333 B.C.) and Arbela (331 B.C.) the conquest of Medo-Persia was complete. Incredibly within only three years Alexander had conquered the entire Near East. (Miller, S. R., 2001. *Vol. 18: Daniel Logos Library System; The New American Commentary* (223). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

³ This fourfold division of the Greek Empire after Alexander "has been the almost constant interpretation of the four [kingdoms], with variations as to the names of the Diadochi." Archer observes that some of these areas later gained their independence but correctly notes that "the initial division of Alexander's empire was unquestionably fourfold." (Miller, S. R., p. 224)

⁴ "by which the king did not literally attribute deity to himself (he was devoted to the Greek gods) but did understand himself to be the earthly representative of deity." (Miller, Pp. 235)