Daniel's Vision Explained
Dan 8:15-26
SS Lesson for 03/17/2013

Devotional Scripture: Exodus 23:20-23

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND APPROACH TO LESSON
Key Verse: Daniel 8:26
Commentary on Daniel 8:26 from Barnes Notes Commentary
Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator
Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

LESSON BACKGROUND
From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
From "Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety" by Bob Deffinbaugh

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

INTRODUCING GABRIEL (DAN 8:15-19)

Gabriel Is Commissioned (15-16)
Commissioned to bring good news (Luke 1:19)
Commissioned to bring understanding and insight (Dan 9:21-23)
Commissioned to bring knowledge (Zech 1:8-9)
Commissioned to bring assignments (Luke 1:26-28)

Gabriel responds to fear (17-18)
Angels are only fellow servants (Rev 22:8-9)
Angels are ministering spirits (Heb 1:14)
Never fear angels, fear only God (Luke 12:5)
Worship of angels is forbidden (Col 2:18)

Gabriel warns to expect desperate times (19)
Desperate times on earth and among men (Matt 24:7-12)
Desperate times unequaled by man (Matt 24:21)
Desperate times of the last days (2 Tim 3:1-5)
Desperate times where scoffers will come (2 Peter 3:3-4)

MEANING OF THE RAM AND GOAT (DAN 8:20-21)

The Ram (20)
Commentary from Barnes Notes

The Goat (21)
Commentary from Barnes Notes

MEANING OF THE BROKEN HORN (DAN 8:22-26)

Rise and fall of a mighty king (22-25)
Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Meaning should be sealed (26)
Sealed until the time of the end (Dan 12:4)
Sealed until the time is near (Rev 22:10)
Sealed with seals that can only be opened by Jesus (Rev 5:1-5)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

Concluding Thoughts by Bob Deffinbaugh ("Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety")
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator
Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson reviews the Explanation of Daniel's Vision and what it can mean to us. The study's aim is to understand that God reveals His eternal plan to us to encourage and comfort us. The study's application is to pay attention to the truths God reveals to us in Scripture so that we are prepared for what is to come.

Key Verse: Daniel 8:26

26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future."

Commentary on Daniel 8:26 from Barnes Notes Commentary

[And the vision of the evening and the morning] That is, of the two thousand three hundred days. See Dan 8:14. The language here is evidently what was derived from Gen. 1., or which was common among the Hebrews, to speak of the "evening and the morning" as constituting a day. There can be no doubt, however, that a day is intended by this, for this is the fair and obvious interpretation. The Greeks were accustomed to denote the period of a day in the same manner (see 2 Cor 11:25), in order more emphatically to designate one complete day. The time then specified by this would be six years and a hundred and ten days. The meaning here is, "the vision pertaining to that succession of evenings and mornings." Perhaps this appellation was given to it particularly because it pertained so much to the evening and morning sacrifice.

[Is true] Shall be certainly accomplished. This was said by the angel, giving thus to Daniel the assurance that what he had seen (Dan 8:9-14) was no illusion, but would certainly come to pass.

[Wherefore shut thou up the visions] Seal it up. Make a record of it, that it may be preserved, and that its fulfillment may be marked. See at Isa 8:16, books were made in the form of rolls, and were often sealed when completed—as we seal a letter. The mode of sealing them was not by wax only, but by uniting them by any adhesive matter, as paste, or glue. Wax in warm climates would be generally rendered useless by the heat. The meaning here is, to secure, to close up—perhaps by passing a cord or string around the volume, and making it secure, denoting that it was finished.

[For it shall be for many days] That is, many days will elapse before it will be accomplished. Let a fair record, therefore, be made of it, and let it be sealed up, that it may be preserved to prepare the people for these events. "When" these things would come thus fearfully upon the people of Judea, they would be the better able to bear these trials, knowing the period when they would terminate.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Bible prophecy is history written in advance. God gave Daniel an understanding of what He was going to do regarding the nation of Israel even before it happened. The prophecies Daniel received were so specific and dramatic that skeptics say someone else must have written the book after the events occurred; otherwise, they would be forced to acknowledge the supernatural source of the prophecies. Believers know they are revelations from God. We marvel at men like Daniel who received special instructions from God about the future. What a privilege to be told what would happen in advance! Such insight has been sought throughout history; Satan has even offered it at times to lure people into occult bondage. Knowing the future is not always welcome; Scripture even calls it a burden (cf. Isa. 21:1,11,13). It made Daniel sick (Dan. 8:27) and left him speechless (10:15); it frightened the Prophet Habakkuk (Hab. 3:16) and caused Jeremiah to weep (Jer. 13:17). Indirectly, all believers have access to knowledge about the future through the writings of the biblical prophets. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). You have access to those revealed secrets every time you open your Bible. However, like the situation faced by the prophets of old, such knowledge of the future can be both a blessing and a burden for us. The greatest blessing of biblical prophecy comes from knowing that God has a perfect plan and that He will accomplish it exactly as
He intended. One young man was worried about the condition of the world, but his grandfather said to him, "Grandson, I've read the Book, and I know how the story ends. I've got good news for you. God wins!" God is not surprised by any world events. He is never worried about the outcome; nor should we worry. The Apostle Paul reminded us, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). If God has a plan for this world, your life is not without purpose. Contrary to the pessimistic propaganda of modern science and philosophy, your existence is meaningful. Your life is part of God's plan for reaching this world. Another blessing of having access to trustworthy prophecies about the future is the motivation to godly living. Peter reminded us that we should live godly lives because we know this world is going to be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:11). Yet, there is a burden associated with knowledge of the future spoken by the prophets. Most believers have family and friends who will face God's horrible judgment in the future if they are not brought safely into the family of God. In II Corinthians 5:20, the Apostle Paul reminds us of the burden of pleading with unbelievers to be reconciled to God or face judgment. That is why the Lord Jesus gave us the Great Commission. Regrettably, for many Christians it has become the Great Omission. Be sure that you do not lose the dynamic purpose of God's calling.

**Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson**

The concept of the major outlines came from NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and was determined by reviewing the Scriptural Text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Major Outline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, &quot;Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.&quot;</td>
<td>Introducing Gabriel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>The ram which you saw, having the two horns — they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.</td>
<td>Meaning of the Ram and Goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>As for the broken horn</td>
<td>Meaning of the Broken Horn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson Background**

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Every once in a while a book series comes along that captures the imagination of millions of readers. What the Harry Potter series did for young people in the general public, the Left Behind series did for a broad range of Christian readers back around the turn of the millennium. That series is a imaginative account of the end of the world revolving around apocalyptic portions of Revelation. The events of Revelation are interpreted as if they were meant to give a literal play-play account of end-times tribulation. This kind of interpretation draws a crowd partly because it plays off of the difficulty that readers have with apocalyptic texts such as the book of Revelation. The symbolic language of such texts is perplexing, and an interpreter who “connects the dots” in a way that seems fairly plausible can gain a wide hearing. Daniel 8, today’s lesson, is an apocalyptic text that can cause similar consternation since it involves key historical events represented symbolically by animals. This chapter is different from other apocalyptic texts, however, in that it also includes an angelic interpretation. We are not left guessing what the animals represent; we are told. Readers are led to understand better both the meaning of the animals in this chapter and the nature of apocalypse as a type of literature. This gives us clues for the proper reading of apocalyptic texts for which interpretations are not so obvious.
Daniel 8 contains a vision of two animals and an interpretation of what they represent. The interpretation points to a future time long after the death of Daniel. Rather than focus on the Babylonian empire against which Daniel and the Jews of his time struggle, the vision focuses on the times of the Persians and Greeks that followed. A brief introduction to the Jewish encounter with these nations is therefore in order.

The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC, carrying many Judeans into exile. Yet Babylon’s dominance as a world power did not last much longer after that. With little struggle, Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon by 539 BC. Cyrus had come to power initially under the authority of the more powerful Median Empire. The Medes controlled a vast amount of territory north and east of the Babylonian Empire. Within roughly a decade, however, Cyrus conquered the Medes, assumed their territory, and declared himself king of Persia (modern Iran). His empire is thus referred to as either the Persian Empire or the Medo-Persian Empire. The Persians ruled over the Judeans in a much more benevolent manner than the Babylonians had. The Persians sponsored the Jews’ return to Jerusalem of 538 BC, allowing the Jewish people to rule themselves by their own laws. There were, of course, strings attached. Should the Jews rebel or withhold tribute, the Persians would beat them into submission.

This arrangement lasted until the 330s BC. At that time, Alexander the Great of Greece subdued the Persians and took control of Palestine. Alexander died in 323 BC, and his kingdom was divided among his generals. These Greek rulers continued Persia’s more benevolent foreign policy for the most part. This lasted until about the middle of the second century BC, when the tide changed for the worse for God’s people (see the non-biblical book of 1 Maccabees). Daniel’s vision in today’s lesson provides an important glimpse into some terrifying periods and God’s decisive response.

From "Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety" by Bob Deffinbaugh

Daniel had a reputation for being able to understand and interpret all kinds of visions and dreams (1:17; 5:11-12). He had already demonstrated his God-given skill in interpreting the two visions of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet, the vision he receives in chapter 8 leaves him physically ill. He simply cannot grasp its meaning. When a divinely gifted interpreter of dreams and visions cannot understand it, even with Gabriel the angel explaining this prophecy to him, what can any preacher do with this text?

**Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

**Introducing Gabriel (Dan 8:15-19)**

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly 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, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."
17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."
18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright.
19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.

**Gabriel Is Commissioned (15-16)**

*Commissioned to bring good news (Luke 1:19)*

19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news."
Commissioned to bring understanding and insight (Dan 9:21-23)

21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.

Commissioned to bring knowledge (Zech 1:8-9)

8 During the night I had a vision — and there before me was a man riding a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses. 9 I asked, "What are these, my lord?" The angel who was talking with me answered, "I will show you what they are."

Commissioned to bring assignments (Luke 1:26-28)

26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Gabriel respond to fear (17-18)

Angels are only fellow servants (Rev 22:8-9)

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. 9 But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

Angels are ministering spirits (Heb 1:14)

14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Never fear angels, fear only God (Luke 12:5)

5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

Worship of angels is forbidden (Col 2:18)

18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

Gabriel warns to expect desperate times (19)

Desperate times on earth and among men (Matt 24:7-12)

7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains. 9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. 10 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

Desperate times unequaled by man (Matt 24:21)

21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again.
Desperate times of the last days (2 Tim 3:1-5)

1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power;

Desperate times where scoffers will come (2 Peter 3:3-4)

3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation

Meaning of the Ram and Goat (Dan 8:20-21)

20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns — they are the kings of Media and Persia.
21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.

The Ram (20)

Commentary from Barnes Notes

[A ram which had two horns] There can be no error in explaining the design of this symbol, for in Dan 8:20 it is expressly said that it denoted the two kings of Media and Persia. The united power of the kingdom was denoted by the ram itself; the fact that there were two powers or kingdoms combined, by the two horns of the ram.

[And the two horns were high] Both indicating great power.
[But one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last] The higher horn springing up last denotes Persia, that became the more mighty power of the two, so that the name Media became finally almost dropped, and the United Kingdom was known in Grecian history as the Persian The Median or Assyrian power was the older, but the Persian became the most mighty.

The Goat (21)

Commentary from Barnes Notes

[Behold, an he-goat came from the west] In Dan 8:21, this is called the "rough-goat," There can be no doubt as to the application of this, for in Dan 8:21 it is expressly said that it was "the king of Grecia." The power represented is that of Greece when it was consolidated under Alexander the Great, and when he went forth to the subjugation of this vast Persian empire. It may serve to illustrate this, and to show the propriety of representing the Macedonian power by the symbol of a goat, to remark that this symbol is often found, in various ways, in connection with Macedon, and that, for some reason, the goat was used as emblematic of that power. A few facts, furnished to the editor of Calmet's Dictionary, by Taylor Combe, Esq., will show the propriety of this allusion to Macedonia under the emblem of a goat, and that the allusion would be readily understood in after-times. They are condensed here from his account in Taylor's Calmet, v. 410-412.

(1) Caranus, the first king of the Macedonians, commenced his reign 814 years before the Christian era. The circumstance of his being led by goats to the city of Edessa, the name of which, when he established there the seat of his kingdom, he converted into AEgae. The adoption of the goat as an emblem of Macedon would have been early suggested by an important event in their history.

(2) Bronze figures of a goat have been found as the symbol of Macedon. Mr. Combe says, "I have lately had an opportunity of procuring an ancient bronze figure of a goat with one horn, which was the old symbol of Macedon. As figures representing the types of ancient countries are extremely rare, and as
neither a bronze nor marble symbol of Macedon has been hitherto noticed, I beg leave to trouble you with the few following observations, etc." He then says, "The goat which is sent for your inspection was dug up in Asia Minor, and was brought, together with other antiquities, into this country by a poor Turk." The annexed engraving is a representation of this figure. The slightest inspection of this figure will show the propriety of the representation before us. Mr. Combe then says, "Not only many of the individual towns in Macedon and Thrace employed this type, but the kingdom itself of Macedon, which is the oldest in Europe of which we have any regular and connected history, was represented also by a goat, with this peculiarity, that it had but one horn."

(3) In the reign of Amyntas the First, nearly 300 years after Caranus, and about 547 years before Christ, the Macedonians, upon being threatened with an invasion, became tributary to the Persians. In one of the pilasters of Persepolis, this very event seems to be recorded in a manner that throws considerable light on this subject. A goat is represented with an immense horn growing out of the middle of his forehead, and a man in a Persian dress is seen by his side, holding the horn with his left hand, by which is signified the subjection of Macedon. The subjoined is the figure referred to, and it strikingly shows how early this symbol was used.

(4) In the reign of Archelaus of Macedon, 413 B.C., there occurs on the reverse of a coin of that king the head of a goat having only one horn. Of this coin, so remarkable for the single horn, there are two varieties, one (No. 1) engraved by Pellerin, and the other (No. 2) preserved in the cabinet of the late Dr. W. Hunter.

(5) "There is a gem," says Mr. Combe, "engraved in the Florentine collection, which, as it confirms what has been already said, and has not hitherto been understood, I think worthy of mention. It will be seen by the drawing of this gem that nothing more or less is meant by the ram's head with two horns, and the goat's head with one, than the kingdoms of Persia and Macedon, represented under their appropriate symbols. From the circumstance, however; of these characteristic types being united, it is extremely probable that the gem was engraved after the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great." These remarks and illustrations will show the propriety of the symbol used here, and show also how readily it would be understood in after-times. There is no evidence that Daniel understood that this ever had been a symbol of Macedon, or that, if he had, he could have conjectured, by any natural sagacity, that a power represented by that symbol would have become the conqueror of Media and Persia, and every circumstance, therefore, connected with this only shows the more clearly that he was under the influence of inspiration. It is affirmed by Josephus (Ant. b. xi. ch. viii.) that when Alexander was at Jerusalem, the prophecies of Daniel respecting him were shown to him by the high priest, and that this fact was the means of his conferring important favors on the Jews. If such an event occurred, the circumstances here alluded to show how readily Alexander would recognize the reference to his own country, and to himself, and how probable the account of Josephus is, that this was the means of conciliating him toward the Jewish people. The credibility of the account, which has been called in question, is examined in Newton on the Prophecies, pp. 241-246.

[On the face of the whole earth] He seemed to move over the whole world-well representing the movements of Alexander, who conquered the known world, and who is said to have wept because there were no other worlds to conquer.

[And touched not the ground] Margin, none touched him in the earth. The translation in the text, however, is more correct than that in the margin. He seemed to bound along as if he did not touch the ground-denoting the rapidity of his movements and conquests. Nothing would better express the rapid conquests of Alexander the Great than the language employed by Daniel. He died at the early age of thirty-three, and having been chosen generalissimo of the Greeks against the Persians at the age of twenty-one, the whole period occupied by him in his conquests, and in his public life, was but twelve years; yet in that time he brought the world in subjection to his arms. A single glance at his rapid movements will show the propriety of the description here. In the year 334 B.C., he invaded Persia, and defeated the Persians in the battle of the Granicus; in the year 333, he again defeated them at the battle of Issus, and conquered Parthia, Bactria, Hyrcania, Sogdiana, and Asia Minor. In the year 332, he conquered Tyre and Egypt, and built Alexandria. In the year 331, he defeated Darius Codomanus, and in 330 completed the conquest of the Persian empire. In the year 328, he defeated Porus, king of India, and
pursued his march to the Ganges. In these few years, therefore, he had overrun nearly all the then known world, in conquests more rapid and more decisive than had ever before been made.

[And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes] The goat represented the Macedonian power, and all this power was concentrated in the person of Alexander—undoubtedly denoted by the single horn—as if all the power of Greece was concentrated in him. The margin is, a horn of sight. This corresponds with the Hebrew—the word rendered "notable" meaning, properly, look, appearance, and then something conspicuous or remarkable. The literal translation would be, a horn of appearance; that is, conspicuous, large-Gesenius, Lexicon

**Meaning of the Broken Horn (Dan 8:22-26)**

22 As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.
23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.
24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.
25 "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.
26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future."

**Rise and fall of a mighty king (22-25)**

*Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

Gabriel clarifies here that this king comes later than the others and that he stands out in ferocity and darkness. In particular, this king seeks to destroy the holy people. This is Gabriel’s way of identifying “the Beautiful Land” of verse 9. That land is Judah. The Greek king most known for attacking God’s people in their homeland is Antiochus IV, also known as Antiochus Epiphanes. He rules from 175 to 164 BC. It is not clear what it means that this king’s prosperity is not by his own power. The book of Daniel makes no reference to satanic influence. If the reference is to God, the point is that Antiochus can have power over God’s people only as God allows it. Any power Antiochus is to have will be on loan from God. This does not mean that God is the cause of this king’s wicked deeds. But it does mean that God can easily take that man’s power away. Wickedness thrives during the reign of Antiochus. Jews with money and a willingness to abandon faith can rise to prominence within his corrupt regime. Jews who resist his policies are persecuted from 170 to 164 BC. Antiochus ends up being so arrogant that he rises up against God himself by defiling the Jerusalem temple in 167 BC. Antiochus also makes it illegal to follow God’s commands. Jews are killed for reading Scriptures, honoring the Sabbath, abstaining from unclean food, etc. (This is described in the non-biblical 1 Maccabees 1:54-61.) This period proves to be one of the most distressing eras in Jewish history. Yet God is still in control. The verse before us ends with a clear and simple statement that Antiochus will be destroyed, but not by human power. God is the one who brings him to justice. When God decides that the time is right, he will destroy Antiochus as easily as he does the ferocious beast in Daniel 7:11. This remarkable prophecy is given over 380 years before it comes to pass!

*Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator*

There is no question among expositors that Antiochus is in view in this prophecy. What was prophesied was fulfilled literally through him. However, the prophecy looks beyond Antiochus to a future person (the Antichrist) of whom Antiochus is only a foreshadowing. This coming one is said to stand against the Prince of
princes' (v. 25). This can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ" (Walvoord and Zuck). The power of this evil ruler would be "broken without hand" (Dan. 8:25). That means his destruction would not come by human power but by divine intervention. While there are conflicting reports concerning the details of his death, the most reliable sources indicate that he died suddenly in Babylon after hearing of the Jewish victories under Judas Maccabaeus. Another account has him lingering for several days, then dying in a very despicable manner, somewhat similar to the death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:21-23).

Meaning should be sealed (26)

Sealed until the time of the end (Dan 12:4)

4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

Sealed until the time is near (Rev 22:10)

10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.

Sealed with seals that can only be opened by Jesus (Rev 5:1-5)

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. 4 I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. 5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts by Bob Deffinbaugh ("Daniel: Relating Prophecy to Piety")

Does it puzzle you that God revealed this vision to Daniel? Why reveal a vision to a prophet he cannot understand, even with the help of an angel? Why reveal a vision which caused such physical and emotional distress—and then instruct him not to tell anyone? Why indeed! If the message of chapter 8 were announced as the subject of next week’s sermon, and it was preached true to the text, most Christians would not show up to hear it. Many indeed would refuse to hear it.

While struggling in my study of this text, it occurred to me that Christians today do not want this kind of revelation. They do not want to hear a word from God if it is like Daniel chapter 8. Contemporary American Christians want the truths of God’s Word made clear and comprehensible, and most of all, relevant. We want a word from God which is affirming, that reassures that there are only good things ahead. We want clear, amusing illustrations with immediate, practical applications which make us more successful and cause us to feel more fulfilled.

Do you wonder why the prophets of old were consistently persecuted, even killed, and their message resisted and rejected? Do you wonder why the prophets did not find a willing, listening audience? Because true prophets have always told men what they needed to hear, while false prophets tell men what they want to hear. I find myself reluctantly admitting, at the end of my efforts to understand what this prophecy means, that I do not really understand it at all. Why does this admission come so slowly and reluctantly? Prophecy is given to teach me and to remind me that I do not understand God’s ways. Let us not reluctantly confess our ignorance and God’s wisdom but gladly acknowledge it. Prophecy is given not so we will understand all that the infinitely wise God is doing. Prophecy is given to remind us that God is in control. When His promises are fulfilled, we will look back in wonder, confessing that we would never have planned it that way, and we would not have believed God would achieve His ends that way, even if we had been told in advance. Prophecy
exposes our lack of wisdom and our need for divine enablement. Prophecy assures us of God’s infinite holiness, power, and goodness, and turns us to Him for the wisdom and grace we need in our weakness:

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

If Daniel 8 is an indication of how biblical apocalypses function, then there are a few lessons that we learn about how to read them. We learn about the nature of symbolic language. We learn that God does not give us glimpses into the future so we can use that knowledge to take control of how things turn out. We learn that sometimes God gives us only enough knowledge of the future to embolden us to remain radically faithful in the present. Yet not all apocalyptic texts are the same. Daniel 8 is different in many ways from Daniel 7 and Daniel 10-12. The book of Daniel as a whole is different from the book of Revelation, which in Greek is called Apocalypse. Yet these differences are not so great that a proper reading of Daniel cannot prepare us for a proper reading of Revelation. Though some of the events foretold in Revelation pertain to the end of time when Jesus brings his kingdom in its fullness, much of that book also pertains to events of the first-century church. In all this, one thing remains clear: God is in control. May we approach God’s Word with that fact in mind. Our side wins.

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. Without authoritative interpretation, visions may provide little insight (Dan. 8:19)
2. Kingdoms rise and fall not of their own accord but subject to purposes they can never guess at (vs. 20-22)
3. We should not be surprised or alarmed at the prosperity of wicked and terrible rulers (vs. 23-24)
4. Evil is given a time to strut, but it will be destroyed in due course (vs. 25)
5. Even with revelation we will not understand all that will take place in God's plan and purpose (vs. 26)