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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Daniel 8.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Daniel 8.

Topics.

- Daniels vision of a ram with two horns.
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- The abomination of desolation.
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NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Daniel's third Vision.

Daniel 8:1 ----- ¹In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

Belshazzar means, "May Bel protect the King." In the fifth chapter of Daniel, he is referred to as the Son of Nebuchadnezzar, this is in conformity to general Semitic usage where one's descendant is frequently referred to as his son (Dan. 5:2, 11, 13) (Daniel 18:22). Belshazzar's miserable doom came about at the end of, and largely as a consequence of, a drunken orgy, held October 29, 539 B.C. (cf. the Feast of Belshazzar) suddenly the fingers of a man's hand appeared, writing in fiery letters a message ("*mene, mene, tekel, upharisin*") of which Belshazzar could not decipher, but which he still recognized as ominous.

Following the failure of his advisers to decipher the cryptogram upon the suggestion of the Queen-Mother the venerable Hebrew prophet Daniel was summoned. He, after verbally rebuking Belshazzar, interpreted the message citing the following words, "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting*," meaning God has judged him and he is found lacking. God's judgment upon him was swift and inevitable. Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians; Belshazzar was slain; and Darius in the name of Cyrus, took the throne.

Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon died and was followed by:-

- Amel-Marduk.
- The Evil-Merodach.
- Nergal-Shar-usar (Neriglissar).
- Labashi-Marduk (who reigned only a few months).
- Nabonidus (the father of Belshazzar).
- Belshazzar.

The third year of the reign of King Belshazzar: Belshazzar (flourished 550-539 BC) and it is the third year of his reign so this vision is in 553 BC. Daniel tells us that this is second vision his first vision gave the entire picture of world Empires from Babylon to Christ's return.

Daniel sees in the Vision.

Daniel 8:2 ----- ²I And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal.

A vision can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. In most cases God gives the picture or vision then the prophet speaks or writes it in their own words. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind).

A biblical vision is always under God's control and can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of the prophet or to whoever God chooses to give the vision to. The vision communicates the LORD'S will or future events to the prophet who then proceeds to tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words the LORD has spoken to them in the vision.

Susa: was a city of the Babylonians that enjoyed a very delightful climate located in the fertile valley on the left bank of the Choaspers River and probably named from the lilies that grow in the region in large numbers (called Ulai in Dan. 8:2, 16).

Elam: was a country in a mountainous region situated next to the capital at Susa and on the E side of the Tigris River opposite Babylonia.

Ulai Canal: was a river that ran through the province of Elam and flowed through Susa.

Daniels vision of a Ram with two Horns.

Daniel 8:3-4 ----- ³I 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. ⁴I 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.

The Small Horn: is Media.

The Higher Horn: is Persia.

The Ram with Two Horns: is Media and Persia untied as one Kingdom (v20).

The Medes (Media) (the small horn): the Medes were inhabitants of the land of Media (the Iranian plateau in central Asia) they were warlike and skilful in their use of the bow and linked very closely in their background, linguistically and religiously, to the Persians whom they antedate by several centuries.

The Persians (the higher horn): Cyrus the Great king of Persia toppled the Median rulers.

Media and Persia (the ram with two horns): Cyrus the Great King of Persia turned Media into the Kingdom of Persia. He then conquered the Empire of Babylon in 539 B.C., and established the Persian Empire as the pre-eminent power of the region.

He gave the Jews written permission to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem and the LORD'S temple earning the respect and goodwill of the Jews. In the 6th century BC, the Persian Empire was the largest Empire in the world and was located in a region that included parts of what is now Iran eastern Syria, south-eastern Turkey, and most of Iraq.

Daniels vision of a Male Goat.

Daniel 8:5 ----- ⁵As 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.

The male goat: is Greece (v21).

The conspicuous horn: is Alexander the Great first king of Greece (v21).

Greece (the male goat): the male goat is a symbol of the entire kingdom of Greece which Philip of Macedon the father of Alexander the Great unified.

Alexander the Great (the conspicuous horn): the conspicuous horn is a symbol of Alexander the Great (son of Philip of Macedon) who in the mid-fourth century before Christ, swept the vast state of Persia out of existence, and as his father Philip had unified Greece, Alexander brought under his single rule the great complex of states and kingdoms (spoken of as the world) that lay between the Dardanelles and the Indus, the Caspian and Nile.

The Goat breaks the Ram.

Daniel 8:6-7 ----- ⁶He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal (river in KJV), and he ran at him in his powerful wrath. ⁷I 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.

Alexander the Great (the horn) went to war against Media Persia (the ram with two horns) and conquered the mighty and vast Empire of Media-Persia.

The Goat is Broken and Four Horns Arise.

Daniel 8:8 ----- ⁸Then 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.

Alexander the Great of King of Macedonia (Greece): Alexander was the King of Macedonia and though not officially the king of Greece he conquered and subdued the surrounding nations and the empire of Greece became firmly under his Macedonian control. Notice the detail of Daniels vision (the battles by the river). Daniel in his vision saw this battle between the goat (Greece) and the ram (Persia) taking place at a canal/river (Dan. 8:6). The Persian army with about 20,000 cavalry had advanced to take up a position on the eastern bank of the River Granicus to battle against Alexander and his armies.

Alexander had spectacular success and defeated the Persian forces, but it was another two years before Alexander could call himself master of the Persian Empire nevertheless this battle was the beginning of the fall of the Persian Empire. In a second battle much later Darius king of Persia and his armies were waiting at the River Tigris for Alexander. Though Darius armies out-numbered Alexander by five to one Alexander once again had great success and was now able to regard himself as master of the Persian Empire (how beautifully perfect was Daniel's vision).

Alexander and the gods: Alexander demanded that all Greek cities worship him as a god (the demand, though not well received, became the standard mode thereafter for imposing royal authority on nominally free cities). He became hailed as "son of Amon" (and thus of Zeus). As the expeditions progressed Alexander began to develop intimations of divinity believing he was the son of a god which later added to his growing symptoms of arrogance and pride which lead to rifts amongst his soldiers.

Alexanders Death: Alexander's death (323BC) created enormous problems as there were no plans for a succession, when asked on his death-bed, "To whom do you leave your kingdom?" Alexander replied, "To the strongest".

The Four Strongest Generals that Took Alexanders Place.

1. **Ptolemy 1 King of Egypt:** Ptolemy was a general in the army of Alexander the Great and took a leading part in Alexander's later campaigns in Asia Minor. Alexander had appointed him as a satrap (governor) over Egypt and Libya. In 305 BC Ptolemy 1 assumed the title of king of Egypt and made Alexandria his capital city. In 285 BC Ptolemy I abdicated in favour of one of his younger sons, who became Ptolemy II.
2. **Cassander King of Macedonia:** (305-297BC) in 316 BC Cassander had Alexander's mother, Olympias, killed and in the same year married Alexander's half-sister Thessalonica. Not long after, he slew Roxana, Alexander's Persian wife, and their son, Alexander IV, thus ending Alexander's dynasty. Under Cassander, Greece was ruled by a small, elite group backed by the military. He re-founded Cassandreaia as his capital on the site of Potidaea, and in honour of his wife Thessalonica he founded Salonica (Thessaloníki) nearby. In 305, despite the ongoing warfare, Cassander gained control over the empire conquered by Alexander and proclaimed himself king of Macedonia.
3. **Lysimachus King of Thrace:** (306-281BC) Lysimachus was a general in the army of Alexander the Great who after Alexander's death was appointed satrap of Thrace. Lysimachus to strengthening his own grip on power allied himself with Ptolemy I, Cassander, and Seleucus I (other successors of Alexander). He later instigated aggressive policies of his own and took over the kingdom of Thrace and assumed the title of king.
4. **Seleucus I King of Syria:** (called Nicator Greek, the conqueror) (358-280BC). Seleucus I, was the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, had been a Macedonian general who Alexander the Great had made satrap (governor) of Babylon. Seleucus I became king of Babylonia and ruler over the whole of Syria and a great part of Asia Minor. He proclaimed himself king of Macedonia but was assassinated soon after.

Antigonus 1 took control of Asia Minor: some scholars have Antigonus a general in Alexander's army as one of the four, because he almost became the sole successor to Alexander's Empire after Alexander's death, but Lysimachus, king of Thrace, and Seleucus I, king of Babylonia, in alliance with other generals, killed him in battle.

A Little Horn Arises out of the Four Horns.

Daniel 8:9-12 ----- ⁹Out of one of them (the four conspicuous horns) (v8) came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. ¹⁰It 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. ¹¹It 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. ¹²And 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.

In the context of these verses: -

Stars: refers to the people of Israel.

The glorious land: refers to the land of Israel.

The host of heaven: refers to the nation of Israel.

The prince of the host: refers to the High Priest.

The sanctuary: refers to the Temple of God.

Out of the four conspicuous horns will arise another little horn meaning out of one of the four Kingdoms Alexanders Empire was divided amongst will arise another king.

The four major kingdoms that came out of Alexanders Empire were: -

1. Ptolemy 1 King of Egypt.
2. Cassander King of Macedonia.
3. Lysimachus King of Thrace.
4. Seleucus I, King of Syria.

The little horn: a ruthless Syrian king named Antiochus IV Epiphanes who fits the description of these verses perfectly, arose out of the Seleucid Dynasty which was founded by Seleucus 1 king of Syria who was one of the four strongest generals to arise after the death of Alexander the Great.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes: by murder he seized the throne for himself. He was commonly called Epiphanes meaning, "the illustrious and God made manifest." He was the eighth king of Syria (175-164BC).

Writers of history record: Antiochus IV Epiphanes took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery.

To consolidate his Empire and strengthen his hold over the region, Antiochus IV Epiphanes decided to side with the Hellenized Jews by outlawing Jewish religious rites and traditions observed by more orthodox Jews and by ordering the worship of Zeus as the supreme god. This was anathema to the Jews and when they refused, Antiochus sent an army to enforce his decree. Because of the Jewish resistance, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, many were slaughtered, and a military Greek citadel called the Acra was established.

Not long after this Antiochus IV Epiphanes sent an Athenian senator to force the Jews to abandon the customs of their ancestors and to live no longer by the laws of God, they were to dedicate the Temple in Jerusalem to the Olympian god Zeus, profaning the temple and on Mount Gerizim build an altar to Zeus the hospitable. Things that were forbidden were brought into the temple so that the altar was covered with abominable offerings prohibited by the Jewish laws and those who circumcised their sons would be put to death.

A man could not keep the Sabbath or celebrate the traditional feasts, nor even admit that he was a Jew. At the suggestion of the citizens of Ptolemais, a decree was issued ordering the neighbouring Greek cities to act in the same way against the Jews. The surrounding Greek cities were to force the Jews to partake of the Greek sacrifices, and put to death those who would not consent to adopt the customs of the Greeks.

The rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes king of the Seleucid Empire lead to disaster and horror. Following is an example of two of these horrors two women who were arrested for having circumcised their children were publicly paraded about the city with their babies hanging at their breasts and then thrown down from the top of the city wall. Others, who had assembled in nearby caves to observe the Sabbath in secret, were betrayed and all burned to death.

The reign of Antiochus Epiphanes was the last period of real strength for the Seleucid Dynasty, but in some ways his rule was also fatal to the Empire. Technically Antiochus IV was a usurper, and he left an infant son named Antiochus V Eupator as his only heir. The result was a series of civil wars between rival claimants to the throne, effectively crippling the Empire during a critical phase in the wars against Parthia (Daniel 11:21-35).

The following is a historical Jewish report: Antiochus IV Epiphanes ruled the Jews from 175-164 BC., and is remembered as a major villain and persecutor in the Jewish traditions associated with Hanukkah, including the books of Maccabees and the "Scroll of Antiochus" Rabbinical sources refer to him as "the wicked."

He was a Syrian King that came to power about 175 BC and is the representative forerunner of the Anti-christ soon to appear. He was one of the Seleucids who in succession to Alexander the Great built a realm in Syria and adjacent lands. Epiphanes sought to force Greek culture and manners on the Jews. In imposing Hellenism, Epiphanes was but following out the intentions of his predecessor, Alexander the Great whose dream was to create an Empire, not by the sword but by culture.

This had a measure of success among the free thinking section of the priesthood, but there were faithful priests and people who refused to abandon the faith of their fore-fathers and be westernized. By the introduction of Hellenistic cults, Epiphanes tried to put an end to the Jewish religious community. The events were the cause of the Maccabean struggle. Severe burdens, hardships and punishments brought the matter to a head and the revolt followed.

Antiochus Epiphanes the senior god of the Seleucids: in 170 a law was announced requiring all citizens to present themselves four times a year to pay formal homage to Antiochus Epiphanes as the senior god of the Seleucids. The day chosen for these periodic submissions was Shabbat, when Jews preferred not to leave their homes, this being their day of prayer.

The temple of God polluted: it is an exciting time for Judah when the heroes of the revolt were kindled. In 168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes dared to occupy Jerusalem, enter the Holy of Holies, desecrate the sanctuary by offering unclean animals upon the altar of burnt-offerings, pollute the whole building by sprinkling it with water in which flesh had been boiled, dedicated the temple itself to Jupiter Olympius, and erected the statue of that deity and plundered the temple treasures.

NOTE.

Zeus, in Greek mythology was the god of the sky and ruler of the gods of Mount Olympus. Zeus corresponds to the Roman god Jupiter.

The abomination of desolation: Antiochus Epiphanes represents the type of the abomination of desolation foretold by the prophet Daniel, on the altar of the LORD in the inner court of the temple. Antiochus Epiphanes serves as a foreshadowing of the Anti-christ to come in the days ahead. Many Old Testament types pointing to end time fulfilments are first fulfilled in the natural and second in the spiritual, so we may see the spiritual temple defiled in the last days.

Coins during the era of Antiochus IV Epiphanes: the inscription around the throne on the face of the silver coin reads: -

- Basileos Antiochou, Theou Epiphaniou Nikephorou meaning, of King Antiochus, God Manifest, Victory Bearer.

The inscription on the face of the bronze coin portrays: -

- A bearded Antiochus as Zeus laureate himself, wearing the victor's wreath while the reverse side identifies the image of King Antiochus, God Manifest.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is also found in (Daniel 11:21-35). The remaining verses indicate that the time covered by Daniel's vision do not end at the era of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but by extension travel through time to the Roman Empire and continuing on to the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Rome and the divided Empire of Alexander the Great.

The Empire of Alexander the Great was eventually divided among four Macedonian generals, but disagreements arising from this division resulted in a series of wars many of which took place in Greece until it became a Roman province, thus by extension Rome the fourth Beast of (Dan. 2) could be seen as the nation that rose out of the four kingdoms of Alexander the Great and the little horn (v9) as the king who rises out the ten horned beast kingdom (see also Daniel chapter seven).

2,300 Evenings and Mornings.

Daniel 8:13-14 ----- ¹³Then 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?" ¹⁴And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings (2300 days in KJV). Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

The appointed time of the end refers to the vision concerning: -

- The regular burnt offering.
- The transgression that makes desolate.
- The giving over of the sanctuary and the people of God to be trampled underfoot.
- 2,300 evenings and mornings.
- The sanctuary being restored to its rightful state (Dan. 8:13-14).

NOTICE: the vision is to the end of a pre-determined time which will bring about the end of the indignation (unfairness) the indignation covers a period of time called 2,300 evenings and mornings. During this entire period the temple of God is polluted and saints are dashed to pieces (meaning those who deny God have the authority over those who acknowledge Him), but at the end of the 2,300 evenings and mornings the temple of God is restored to its rightful state.

Gabriel gives Daniel the interpretation of the Visions.

Daniel 8:15-16 ----- ¹⁵When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. ¹⁶And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

While Daniel is trying to understand the vision he sees the appearance of a man asking Gabriel to show Daniel the meaning of the visions. Gabriel means: "Man of God," he is an angel mentioned four times in Scripture and each time shared a momentous message: -

1. Gabriel interpreted to Daniel the visions of the ram and the he-goat (Dan. 8:16f).
2. Gabriel explained the vision of the seventy-weeks (Dan. 9:21f).
3. Gabriel announced the birth of John, forerunner of the Messiah (Luke 1:11-20).
4. Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary with the unique message of Jesus' birth (Luke 1:26-28).

It is interesting to notice the angel Gabriel's introduction and testimony in (Luke 1:19) since it is the ideal testimony for every messenger of God. Gabriel introduces himself saying: "I am Gabriel that stands in the presence of God and am sent to speak unto thee." Though it would not be wise for me to say: "I am James that stands in the presence of God and am sent to speak to you," for obvious reasons (i.e., it would most likely spook them or cause them to think I am a religious nut), it is certainly how we should see ourselves in our minds when we are sharing the Gospel.

Gabriel gives Daniel the interpretation of the Vision.

Daniel 8:17-19 ----- ¹⁷So he (Gabriel) 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." ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, it refers to the appointed time of the end."

It is during the seventy year Babylonian captivity, that Daniel has these visions. At this time he is by the banks of the Ulai canal in Babylon (v16). The time of the end of Daniel's vision is for an appointed time meaning it is totally in the control of God. Gabriel tells Daniel that he will make known to him what will happen at the end of this period of indignation.

Indignation: comes from the Hebrew word (*za'am*). From Strong's Concordance it means fury anger and rage (especially of God's displeasure with sin). Indignation from the English Dictionary means anger because something seems unfair or unreasonable.

2,300 evenings and mornings: this period of God's displeasure at sin is called 2,300 evenings and mornings.

Gabriel gives Daniel the interpretation of the Vision continued: -

Daniel 8:20-23 ----- ²⁰As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. ²²As 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. ²³And 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.

Gabriel tells Daniel the ram is Media Persia, the goat Greece and the great horn is Alexander the Great. Alexanders Empire will be broken meaning divided into four and because of this it will not have the power that it had under Alexander and at the end of these four kingdoms a ruthless king (of bold face) will arise.

Gabriel gives Daniel the interpretation of the Vision (continued).

Daniel 8:24-25 ----- ²⁴His (the king of bold face) 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. ²⁵By 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.

The king of bold face will: -

- Be great, but not by his own power.
- Cause fearful destruction and succeed in it.
- Destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.
- By his own cunning make deception prosper.
- In his own mind think he is someone great.
- Without warning will destroy many.
- Rise up against the Prince of princes (the Lord Jesus Christ).
- Be destroyed, but not by any human hand.

Gabriel tells Daniel this king of bold face will rise up against the Lord Jesus Christ, but he will be destroyed, but not by any human hand.

This instantly takes the mind of the Bible reader to: -

- In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵just as you saw that *a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand*, and that it broke in pieces the

iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure" (Daniel 2:44-46).

Here we see kingdom/nations (maybe the ones that gave the king with a bold face his power) being destroyed by a stone that was cut from a mountain by no human hand. This is the Lord Jesus Christ returning as King of kings and Lord of lords suggesting that though this vision has been fulfilled at various times throughout history the ultimate climax of its end will be when Jesus returns a second time to establish the Kingdom on earth.

The Vision of the Evenings and Mornings has Been Told.

Daniel 8:26-27 ----- ²⁶The vision of the (2300) (v14) evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now." ²⁷And 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.

I, like Daniel do not know the exact time period the vision of the 2300 evenings and mornings covers, I suspect that it applies to various past periods of history, but will reach its ultimate climax when Christ returns.

The conclusion of the whole matter: we do not have to feel frustrated at not being able to interpret the exact detail or time of the vision after all it is sealed until..... Even more than this Gabriel said he was going to show Daniel the interpretation of the vision which he did and Daniel was still confused! (v19), so we are in good company in our lack of complete and perfect understanding. Nevertheless the important thing that we take away from all this study is to do what Daniel did which was to rise up and go about his daily business and be found standing in faith when the days of the vision is fulfilled (Dan. 12:9-13).

End.