

## Daniel 8 Discussion Guide

As we progress in the latter half of the book of Daniel we should remember that we are in a genre known as apocalyptic literature. One of the great characteristics of apocalyptic literature is its heavy use of symbolism in speaking about real-world events. Because of the heavy use of symbols, sometimes the reference of the symbols is a bit unclear to the readers, as much as it may have been unclear to the original recipients of the visions.

Another important aspect of apocalyptic literature is the prophetic nature of the writing. When understanding Biblical prophecy, we must remember that not *all* prophecy has yet to be fulfilled and not all prophecy that has already been fulfilled can be said to be completely fulfilled.

These elements will come into play as we read Daniel 8 and Daniel receives more of a vision of some of the things that will occur in his future.

Most Bible commentators are in agreement that the vision of the little horn in Daniel concerns Antiochus Epiphanes, who ruled nearly 400 years over a kingdom that had yet to come to fruition. Here is a link to a short explanation of who Antiochus was and what was his significance to the Jewish people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIlkxQtQNOY>

The persecution, desolation, and blasphemy of Antiochus exceeded what most Jews could even comprehend before they saw it in person. But the people came to understand that even such an evil character would be used by God to display His glory and purify his people.

You can understand why Daniel ends chapter 8 sick and overwhelmed by the negative emotions he resulting from this vision. But he doesn't lose his faith. Focus your discussion time this week on practical ways to maintain faith and become emotionally unstuck even in the face of uncertainty or negativity.

### Discussion Questions

- **What do you think Daniel must have felt when he saw this vision?**
- **Why might Daniel be disappointed that his people would continue to go through tribulation in the future?**
- **How much of the identities of the symbols did Daniel understand?**
- **Why did Daniel not have to fully understand the prophecies in order to receive them?**
- **What might the temptation look like for Daniel to allow the future to cause him problems in the present?**
- **Does God intend for us to be anxious about the future?**
- **What was the point of the prophecies in Daniel 8 concerning Daniel's understanding of God?**
- **How can we combat anxiety in our own lives?**

