

# Bite Size Bible Study

Sheep and Goats pt3 #74

By Pastor Lee

In this study we will look at the second place in the Bible where we see a goat being referenced as the depiction of evil.

## The Ram and the Goat

Daniel 8 contains a vision of two great beasts: a ram and a male goat. (For those of us not familiar with farm animals a ram is a male sheep that has not been castrated.) This prophetic vision is the second time in the Bible where there is an association of goats with evil and the devil.

In the chapter itself, the ram, the goat, and their various horns as described in the vision are identified with the kings of various kingdoms. The male goat, in particular, is associated with Greece and its kings. The final horn that grew on the forehead of the male goat in the vision is described in this way:

In the third year of King Belshazzar (not Belteshazzar) of Babylon who was the son of Nebuchadnezzar and as the last king before the advent of the Medes and Persians (555-538 B.C.); Daniel finds himself in a vision by the Ulai river (canal) that is located in Susa, also called Shushan, which is the capital of Elam, near the foot of the Zagros Mountains.

There, Daniel has a vision:

*<sup>3</sup> I looked up; and as I watched, there in front of the stream stood a ram with two horns. The horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one came up later [than the other]. <sup>4</sup> I saw the ram pushing to the west, north and south; and no animals could stand up against it; nor was there anyone that could rescue from its power. So it did as it pleased and became very strong.*

*<sup>5</sup> I was beginning to understand, when a male goat came from the west, passing over the whole earth without touching the ground. The goat had a prominent horn between its eyes. <sup>6</sup> It approached the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the river, and charged it with savage force. <sup>7</sup> I watched as it advanced on the ram, filled with rage against it, and struck the ram, breaking its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it. It threw the ram to the ground and trampled it down, and there was no one that could rescue it from the goat's power. <sup>8</sup> The male goat then became extremely strong; but when it was strong, the big horn was broken; and in its place arose what appeared to be four horns in the directions of the four winds of heaven. <sup>9</sup> Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew extremely big in the directions of the*

*south and east, and in the direction of the Glory. <sup>10</sup> It grew so great that it reached the army of heaven; it hurled some of the army and the stars to the ground and trampled on them. <sup>11</sup> Yes, it even considered itself as great as the prince of the army; the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was thrown down. <sup>12</sup> Through sin, the army was put in its power, along with the regular burnt offering. It flung truth on the ground as it acted and prospered.*

The angel Gabriel now is dispatched to explain the vision to Daniel. *<sup>19</sup> and (Gabriel) said, "I am going to explain to you what will happen at the end of the period of fury, because [the vision] has to do with the time at the end. <sup>20</sup> You saw a ram with two horns which are the kings of Media and Persia. <sup>21</sup> The shaggy male goat is the king of Greece, and the prominent horn between its eyes is the first king. <sup>22</sup> As for the horn that broke and the four which rose up in its place, four kingdoms will arise out of this nation, but not with the power the first king had. <sup>23</sup> In the latter part of their reign, when the evildoers have become as evil as possible, there will arise an arrogant king skilled in intrigue. <sup>24</sup> His power will be great, but not with the power the first king had. He will be amazingly destructive, he will succeed in whatever he does, and he will destroy the mighty and the holy ones. <sup>25</sup> He will succeed through craftiness and deceit, become swelled with pride, and destroy many people just when they feel the most secure. He will even challenge the prince of princes; but, without human intervention, he will be broken. <sup>26</sup> The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; but you are to keep the vision secret, because it is about days in the distant future."* Daniel 8 (CJB)

Without getting into a deep history lesson, I think we can see that we are not talking about Rams and Goats. These animals were stand-ins for the nations that would affect Israel's future. We are looking at what these nations were going to do in the future; the animals have nothing to do with the good or the evil that the nations would do. From Israel's point of view many of the rulers of these nations were the bad guys.

I have used the Complete Jewish Bible translation because I feel it gives us a better view of the original texts. If you compare it to some of the modern translations you will find that the modern translations give the wrong impression of the animals being either good or evil.

Next we look at how Matthew 25 speaks of the Sheep and Goats

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