

## DANIEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Daniel chapter 8 as we continue our study through the Word of God. If you remember from our last study in Daniel chapter 7, we saw four beasts that came upon the earth. And these beasts represented Gentile World Empires. These Kingdoms were what King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream back in Daniel chapter 2. They represented the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires.

The only difference is King Nebuchadnezzar saw these Kingdoms through the eyes of man and they were beautiful, glorious. Remember that he saw this huge multi-metallic image that must have shined brightly. But Daniel saw them through the eyes of God, as they really are, and they were vile and destructive beasts!

Also, in Daniel chapter 7 we saw a more detailed look at the last Gentile World Empire, the Roman Empire. And it is during the time of this revived Roman Empire that a leader will emerge on the scene and he will try to exalt himself above the Most High God and speak pompous words against Him. This man is the known as the Antichrist!

It is during the time of this Kingdom, and the time of this leader that the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, will return and pour out His righteous judgment against this man and all those who have rejected Jesus.

It is then that Jesus will set-up His Kingdom here on the earth and rule from the throne of David in Jerusalem. And Daniel, in seeing all these things was overwhelmed and we read in Daniel 7:28, **“This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.”** No doubt about it, he was overwhelmed by all that he saw!

Let's face it, we all have bad days and I think the problem for us many times is our focus.

Let me share this with you and then I will expound on it. We are told,

Judith Viorst tells of a little boy, Alexander, who had a terrible day.

I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there is gum in my hair when I got up this morning. I tripped on the skateboard and dropped my sweater in the sink when the water was running, and I could tell it was going to be a horrible, terrible, no-good, very bad day.

In the carpool, Mr. Gibson let Becky have the seat by the window and Audrey and Elliot got seats by the window too. I said I was scrunched. I said I was smushed. I said, "If I don't get a seat by the window I am going to get carsick." Nobody even answered me. I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day.

There were two cupcakes in Phillip Barker's lunch bag and Howard got a Hershey bar with almonds, and Paul's mother gave him a jelly roll-up that had little coconut sprinkles on the top, and guess whose mother forgot to put dessert in his lunch. It was a terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day.

There were lima beans for dinner. I hate lima beans. There was kissing on TV. I hate kissing. My bath was too hot, I got soap in my eyes, my marble went down the drain, and I had to wear my railroad pajamas. I hate my railroad pajamas. And when I went to bed, Nick took back the pillow he said I could keep, and my Mickey Mouse night-light burned out and I bit my tongue. The cat wants to sleep with Anthony and not me. It was a terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day.

- Rodney Stortz, Daniel – The Triumph of God's Kingdom, p. 129

That is a funny story and I am sure that we have all had bad days before and maybe more than just a bad day! But the reality is, it is not the bad day that is the problem; it is the focus during those bad days. We tend to focus on all that is going wrong, and that is easy to do because we are living it. But we need to keep our eyes on the Lord; we need to trust in Him. As we are going to see over the next several weeks, God is going to give to Daniel some encouraging words regarding Israel, what is going to happen to them and within those encouraging words are some difficult times as well.

The thing we need to remember is that God will see them through it just as He will see us through the difficult times we go through. When you look at this nation, when you look at this world it can be depressing. We might say as we watch the news, “It was a terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day.”

But our focus needs to be on God’s Word because these Kingdoms, these nations, all this wickedness will be done away with because the Lord is coming back and He will set up His Kingdom on this earth and righteousness will fill this land! In other words, “It will be a wonderful, pleasant, really-good, very good day!” Praise God for that and in the meantime, He will see us through!

Now here in Daniel chapter 8 we see the language change once again, this time from Aramaic to Hebrew. The reason for this change is that God is once again going to speak to His people, the Jews. Thus, this chapter is going to deal primarily with a Kingdom that is going to oppress Israel and thus God is going to speak to Israel in the Hebrew language.

And from now till the end of the book we will see God speaking to Israel. All the things that will transpire will have a direct impact on this nation from wars against them to their deliverance from captivity to the coming of the Messiah as we are going to see over the next several weeks.

One more point here and that is related to prophecy. You see, there are many who don’t believe that Daniel wrote this book because of the detailed description of these Kingdoms long before they came into existence. J. Vernon McGee wrote,

The vision recorded by Daniel in this chapter was prophetic when it was given, but it has since been fulfilled. Because it has been so clearly and literally fulfilled, this chapter is the basis for the liberal critic giving a late date for the writing of the Book of Daniel. His argument rests on the fact that prophecy concerning the future is supernatural and he does not believe in the supernatural; therefore, this prophecy could not have been written at the time of Daniel, but must have been written afterward as history.

That is a very weak argument, and I won't say any more than that the Book of Daniel was written by the prophet Daniel. You know, there is a debate among some scholars as to whether Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare. Mark Twain's amusing reply to that question was that if Shakespeare didn't write Shakespeare, it must have been written by another man of the same name! Well, if Daniel did not write the Book of Daniel at about 600 B. C., then it must have been written by another man of the same name at the same date.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Vol. III, p. 577

When people claim that this had to be written after the fact otherwise it would be supernatural, of course that is true. God wrote it, He told us ahead of time what would take place! It is supernatural! In Isaiah 44:6-8 we are told, **“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”**

There is no other God like ours and He has told us what will take place before it happens not only to comfort us but to be a witness to others that there is no God besides Him! With that as our background, let's begin reading in Daniel chapter 8 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

## **DANIEL 8**

### **VERSES 1-2**

1. Daniel once again gives us the time in which this vision was given to him. In Daniel chapter 7 we saw that the vision occurred in the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, which would place that vision in 553 B. C. That would place this vision, being two years later, at 551 B. C., some 12 years before the fall of Babylon by the Medo-Persian army in 539 B. C.

Now I don't believe that Daniel was taken and physically transported to Shushan, but he was given a vision by God that placed him in this region. Thus, he was still in Babylon when this took place. Now Shushan was located about 230 miles east of Babylon and a 120 miles north of the Persian Gulf. At the time of this vision Shushan was nothing but it was going to become the capitol of the Persian Empire, a royal city, but not at the time of this vision.

If you remember from our study in the book of Esther, the events of that book took place in Shushan, (Esther 1:2) We also see this spoken of in Nehemiah 1:1 as we see that Nehemiah, the cup bearer to King Artaxerxes, was also in Shushan. But again, this is all future, nothing has taken place yet, although God is going to speak as it has already happened.

That drives the critics of the Bible crazy and that is the reason they place the writing of the prophetic books after the events took place because they can't believe that anyone can tell the future with that kind of accuracy, that kind of detail. But God can do that, for what He says will come to pass and it has come to pass!

2. Also, this river Ulai, also known as the Kerkhah, the place where Daniel was transported in this vision, was literally an artificial canal some 900 feet wide that flowed close to Shushan on the northeast, and once again, this canal had not been built yet, although Daniel sees it as being already built. And this river would flow between the Choaspes and the Coprates Rivers. This is where Daniel was at as he received these visions from God that are recorded in this chapter.

3. Now let's dig into these visions that Daniel is given and we will deal with this ram first.

#### VERSES 3-4

1. Now get this picture in your mind. Daniel is given this vision of being by the River Ulai. And as he was standing there he saw this ram. And on the head of this ram where two horns but one was higher than the other and this higher one came up last. That is a strange vision! What in the world did Daniel see? What does this mean? What Empire is represented by this animal that Daniel saw?

Make no mistake about it; this ram is the bear that was spoken of in Daniel chapter 7 and the chest and arms of silver in the multi-metallic image of Daniel chapter 2. It is the Medo-Persian Empire.

I realize that you may be thinking, “How in the world did you come up with that one from these two verses?” It is because I studied and studied and then I just looked down to verse 20 and it cleared it up for me. I am not that smart but listen to what Daniel 8:20 tells us and I think you will be convinced. We are told, “**The ram which you saw, having the two horns - they are the kings of Media and Persia.**” So there is no doubt that this ram represented the Medo-Persian Empire!

2. We are also given a few more details about this Empire. We are told that this ram had two horns and they were high. Keep in mind that horns represented power and thus, this was a powerful Empire. But there is something different about these horns, one of them grew taller and it came up last or grew to that height later on.

Now what is the deal with the high horn coming up last? History tells us that Media rose up to power first but then the Persians, who were larger and stronger, overshadowed them. In fact, this Kingdom is commonly referred to as the Persian Empire even though it was a united kingdom.

It is also interesting to note that the symbol of the ram is found on the coins of this Empire and the Persian King, as he stood before his army, did not wear a Kings crown but placed the head of a ram upon his head. Pretty accurate of the vision that Daniel had representing this Empire!

3. We are also told that this ram went every direction except eastward. Now we can check this out historically knowing that this is the Medo-Persian Empire. And historically speaking, just as Daniel said, they moved westward towards Lydia, Ionia, Thrace, and Macedon. Then they moved northward towards the Caspian Sea and the Oxus Valley all the way up to the Aral Sea. And then they moved southward with their massive army towards Babylon and later towards Egypt. They did not move eastward towards India and China just as the Scriptures tell us.

4. Listen to what they were doing according to verse 4, **“I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.”**

Again, one of the repeating thoughts in this book is ***PRIDE!*** Here we see them moving as they pleased, conquering nations, and they were setting themselves up for a fall. You see, you can either be broken of your pride or you will be broken by your pride! The choice is yours!

And for the Medo-Persian Empire, there is a Male Goat that will come upon them and break their horns, break their power. Let’s read on and see what happens next.

#### VERSES 5-8

1. A little over 200 years after the Medo-Persian Empire came into power, we see their fall. At one time they did as they pleased and no one was able to stand against them, no one could get in their way. They were invincible!



But now we see the male goat come with great speed from the west and trample all those who got in his way. And as this male goat came up against the ram with its two horns, we see him crush them and break their horns and thus, their power was taken away. Who is this Empire? Who is this male goat?

This male goat is the same as the Leopard with 4 wings on its back in Daniel chapter 7 and the belly and thighs of bronze of the multi-metallic image in Daniel chapter 2. It is the Grecian Empire with its leader, Alexander the Great. And Alexander the Great took 35,000 troops, a very small army, and struck the Medo-Persian army and nation quickly and speedily, defeating them, crushing them!

Alexander the Great was the son of Philip of Macedon, who, at the age of 21, after the murder of his father, became the King of Greece. Again, some wonder how in the world do you see this as the Grecian Empire and the answer is simple. Daniel tells us in verse 21, “**And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.**” So there is really no question to who this is speaking of, the Grecian Empire.

2. Now, as you read this you see that this male goat came from the west, which is the area of Greece, and had conquered the entire Near East and Middle East within 3 years! So when we read of this male goat moving “**... across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground ...**” that gives to us a perfect illustration of the quickness and incredible ability of this man and his army. In fact his military strategies are still being studied today to glean any insight into the military genius of this man.

3. Can you imagine at the age of 21 being called one of the most brilliant and most powerful men of all time! But as successful as this man was, at the age of 32, he became depressed and wept for there were no more Kingdoms to conquer. And he became an alcoholic, got drunk one night and got soaked in a rain storm, as one of the stories goes. As he got into his bed he did not change his clothes, caught pneumonia, also he had malaria, and with the alcoholism, at the age of 32 he died of these things in the city of Babylon in 323 B. C.

This man owned the world and yet it wasn't enough for him. He wanted more and when he couldn't obtain anything else he drank himself to death! Now listen carefully to this, it will never be enough! Without the Lord you will never be satisfied. You can have absolutely nothing and have the Lord, and you are rich, in need of nothing, you are satisfied. Also, you can own everything and not know the Lord and be poor, looking to find satisfaction, but you can't get no satisfaction! What are you reaching for in this life? May it be the **LORD!**

4. Jon Courson did a comparison of Alexander the Great and Jesus and look at how this plays out, it is very interesting. He wrote,

Alexander was a powerful man, a military genius. Yet he died broken and empty. I contrast him with another Man who also died at the age of thirty-three . . .

- Alexander was a man who made himself to be God.  
*Jesus, who was God, humbled Himself and became a man (Philippians 2:5–7).*
- Unlike Alexander, Jesus was not in competition with His Father. Rather, Jesus was in submission to His Father. "I have come to do the will of Him that sent Me," He said (see John 6:38). "I always do the things that please My Father," He declared (see John 8:29).
- At the age of thirteen, Alexander was taught by Aristotle.  
*At the age of twelve, Jesus tutored the priests.*

- Alexander shed the blood of millions for his own glorification.  
*Jesus shed His own blood for our salvation.*
- Alexander rode a magnificent black stallion.  
*Jesus rode a lowly donkey.*
- Alexander wiped out the city of Thebes and enslaved the rebels.  
*Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem and freed the sinners (John 8:11).*
- “Friend, you must die,” Alexander said before killing a friend who he thought had made advances toward his wife.  
*“Friend, what seekest thou?” Jesus said to the one who would indeed betray Him.*
- When Alexander died, his body was placed in a golden casket and moved from Babylon to Memphis, Egypt and finally to Alexandria, where a great monument was built to his memory.  
*When Jesus died, He was also moved from the place where He was buried - not to another burial place but up to heaven where He lives to make intercession for you and me (Hebrews 7:25).*
- Alexander is simply a memory.  
*Jesus is the Messiah who is coming again.*

- Jon Courson, Jon Courson’s Application Commentary Old Testament Vol. 2, p. 727

5. Another fascinating thing that Daniel tells us is that when he was strong, it was then that he was broken, and that is exactly what took place. At the zenith of his power, after conquering the world, he died as I have said. And as his horn was broken we see four other horns arise from this Empire. But these four leaders are not from his family but they were his generals.

Daniel tells us this in greater detail in Daniel 11:4 when he says, “**And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.**”

Thus, after the death of Alexander the Great, his Kingdom was divided up between his four generals, not his family. And in Daniel chapter 11 we will see some of the fighting that went on between these Kings as they tried to gain more and more land from each other. These four Kings or generals were: Ptolemy who was to the south, the areas of Egypt and parts of Asia Minor. Seleucus was to the north, the areas of Syria, Israel and Mesopotamia. Cassander was to the west, the areas of Macedonia and Greece. And Lysimachus was also to the west, the areas of Thrace and parts of Asia Minor, (western Bithynia, Phrygia, Mycia, Lydia).

Also, with the death of Alexander the Great we also see the glory and power of this Kingdom begin to break in pieces. Keep in mind that Daniel was not recording news events as they were taking place. Daniel received this vision in 551 B. C. and Alexander died in 323 B. C.

Daniel was writing things in great detail some 200 years before they took place! Also, remember that the coinage of the Persian Empire was a ram, guess what the symbol was on the coins of the Grecian empire? It was a goat! Just a coincidence, I don't think so!

6. As we move into verse 9 don't be confused about this little horn that is going to rise up. This little horn is not the same little horn of chapter 7. In chapter 7 that horn represented the lawless one, the man of sin, the Antichrist.

Here in chapter 8 the little horn arises from the Grecian Empire not the Roman Empire from which the Antichrist will come from. As we shall see, this little horn that arises from one of the divisions of the Grecian Empire is none other than Antiochus Epiphanes from Syria. We will learn more about this evil man in the following verses. Also, I believe Antiochus is a picture of the Antichrist that is to come.

VERSES 9-14

1. Like I have said, this little horn that came out of the Grecian Empire is Antiochus IV Epiphanes who was the 8<sup>th</sup> King of the Seleucid Empire to the north. We are told that he came to power in 175 B. C. by murdering his nephew and ended with his own death around 164 B. C. But during those years he grew strong and invaded Egypt to the south, Parthia and Armenia to the east and against the “**Glorious Land**” or Jerusalem.

2. Here is what happened that caused this little horn to invade Israel. In 168 B. C. Antiochus returned to Alexandria, in Egypt but was turned away by the Roman commander Popilius Laenas.

Frustrated and humiliated by this defeat, Antiochus returned northward home and vented all his frustrations on Jerusalem. He sent his General, Apollonius with 20,000 troops and invaded Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Thousands of Jewish people, (the host of heaven), and the spiritual leaders or priests, (the stars), were persecuted and many were murdered by him.

It was around this period of time that he entered the sanctuary and desecrated the Temple by slaughtering a pig on the altar, in the inner court and poured swine broth over the holy vessels. He forced the Jews from following the Mosaic Law, observing the Sabbath, observing the feasts, even the circumcision of their sons. He set up an image of Zeus in the holy place in the Temple, and to the Jews this was known as the abomination of desolation. When the Jews revolted, 40,000 were killed in a single day and perhaps a million more in the ensuing months.

Listen to this summary of what Antiochus did from the Scriptures we have read and you will see his power and his pride come forth.

- Antiochus Epiphanes exerted his dominion **toward the south, toward the east, and toward the** land of Israel.
- Antiochus Epiphanes murdered other rulers and persecuted the people of Israel (**cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them**).
- Antiochus Epiphanes blasphemed God and commanded idolatrous worship directed towards himself (**exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host**).
- Antiochus Epiphanes put a stop to temple sacrifices in Jerusalem (**by him the daily sacrifices were taken away**).
- Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple (**the place of His sanctuary was cast down**).
- Antiochus Epiphanes opposed God and seemed to prosper (**he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered**).

3. That is only part of the story. Yes he did these abominations upon the Jewish people, the land of God and the Temple of God, but he was not going to get away with it for long. You see, we are told that he would only prosper for a time, 2,300 days, even though he thought of himself as a god, inscribing on his coinage the title, *THEOS EPIPHANES* or “*GOD MANIFEST*.” But his days were also numbered. Back in 171 B. C. he murdered the high priest in Israel, Onias II, and that was the start of those 2,300 days or about 6 years.

Now from the priestly lineage of Jehoiarib, I Chronicles 24:7, Judas Maccabeus came from and he had enough of the oppression and the blasphemy of God. So he led a revolt against Antiochus and overthrew them through a series of successful night attacks and with those attacks he gathered more troops. Then, on December 25, 165 B. C., 2 years after the Temple was desecrated, December 25, 167 B. C., the sanctuary was cleansed by Judas Maccabeus.

Now some say that these “**two thousand three hundred days**” speak of morning and evening sacrifices or 1,150 days. Philip Newell makes this case: “For a duration of time during which 2300 daily sacrifices would ordinarily have been offered, one at evening and one in the morning, as specified in Exodus 29:38-43. Since there are two of these daily, the actual time period involved is 1150 days, or slightly over three years. This, in fact, was the time of the Maccabean tribulation, 168-165 B. C., at the end of which the sanctuary was ‘cleansed’ by Judas Maccabeus in his restoration of the evening and morning sacrifices (2 Maccabees 10:1-5).”

So which is it? I think both fit and I will not be dogmatic about it. But God is very precise and maybe that is the idea, no matter how you look at it, the timeframe is certain and this little horn was destroyed!

4. Let me add this because each year the Jews celebrate the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah. This Feast is a celebration of what took place at the re-dedication of the Temple. Outside of the Holy of Holies stood the Table of Showbread, the Altar of Incense and then the Seven Branch Oil Burning Lamp.

Now when the Temple was cleansed there was only enough oil for one night and yet the light of that lamp was not to go out. And the problem was it took several days to make new oil for the lamp. But, by faith they lit the lamp and it not only burned for one day, or two days, but for eight days until the new oil was prepared. Thus we see this Feast celebrated with a nine branch candle stick instead of a seven branch that was outside of the Holy of Holies.

The reason is the lamp was burning supernaturally for eight days, and the ninth candle stick is the one that is used to light the other eight. And Jesus Himself, in the New Testament celebrated this Feast in the Temple back in John 10:22, which commemorated this event. It says **“Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.”** This is the only Feast that is celebrated in the winter and not part of the Feasts the Lord commanded the Jews to celebrate in the Old Testament!

So we can see what the nine branch candle stick represented, God’s miraculous work in keeping the lamps lit those eight days. But what does the seven branch oil burning lamp or Menorah represent? This is the one that was placed outside the Holy of Holies in the Temple.

Six is the number of man, incompleteness. Seven is the number of completeness. There are 3 branches on each side of the lamp with one in the middle. Jesus said in John 8:12, **“... ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”** And in John 15:5 we read **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”** In other words, you are in darkness outside of Christ, there is no light and there is no life without Him!

5. As we read on we are going to see these visions interpreted for Daniel and for us. Let’s see what Daniel was told.



VERSES 15-19

1. Here we see Gabriel, the messenger of God, explain to Daniel what this vision was all about. And Daniel was so overcome by this that he passed out, his face was to the ground. It was then that angel Gabriel lifted him out of this condition and explained that these things speak of a future time, the End Times or the Tribulation Period.

Now some say that this is just referring to the end of Antiochus, but I believe it goes far beyond that. I see Gabriel linking the things that Antiochus did to that of a future man of sin, the Antichrist, who will rise to power during the Tribulation Period. And as we finish up this evening we will look at the comparison of these two men and we will see how Antiochus is a foreshadow of the Antichrist who is to come.

How can I be so certain? Because this phrase that is found in verse 19 of Daniel chapter 8 is very specific as it says, “**in the latter time of the indignation.**” This is referring to the period in history in which God is indignant or angry with Israel because of their sin, their rebellion against Him. We call it the *Times of the Gentiles!*

We read of this in Luke 21:20-24 where we are told, “**But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**”

This began with the Babylonians as they took the Southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity and it continues on today. It will culminate with the Antichrist rising to power and then the coming of Jesus to put down this rebellion and to put an end to the Times of the Gentiles, no longer will the Jews be in bondage to Gentiles. So it is the End Times, the Latter Days that this will take place and it is still future!

Yes Antiochus Epiphanes was a powerful man who killed many Jews and desecrated the Temple but he is nothing compared to the Antichrist and what he will do not only to the Jews but all those who oppose him! Wood put it like this, "From what Antiochus did to Jews in his day, therefore, one may know the general pattern of what the Antichrist will do to them in the future."

And Heslop adds this, "Greece with all its refinement, culture and art, produced the Old Testament Anti-Christ while the so called Christian nations produce the New Testament Anti-Christ."

2. So we will be looking at the ram, the male goat and the little horn, what all these mean in the following verses. We will start with the ram in verse 20.

#### VERSE 20

1. Again there is no need to guess who this ram represents; it is the Medo-Persian Empire.

VERSES 21-22

1. Over 200 years before Greece came to power; God calls them by name and tells us they will be a world power, led by one man for a time, Alexander the Great! But then his horn is broken, he dies and his four generals have the Kingdom divided up between them. And we are told, “**not with its power**” or what Alexander the Great had, they lost, they were not as powerful as Alexander was!

VERSE 23

1. After the death of Alexander the Great, at the age of 32, the Kingdom was divided up to his four generals as I have said and that Kingdom never was as strong and powerful as it was under the leadership of Alexander the Great. These four Kings that rose out of this Kingdom were Ptolemy to the south, Seleucus to the north, Cassander to the west and Lysimachus also to the west.

But out of one of these Kingdoms, out of the Seleucid Empire rose a man by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes and he was brutal, especially towards the Jewish people as we have seen. Listen again as we read from the last part of verse 23 onward and see the description of this evil King.

VERSES 23b-26

1. Here again we see a near fulfillment and a future fulfillment of this prophecy. Listen to the description of what this man, Antiochus Epiphanes did against the nation of Israel and against the true and living God from the Apocrypha book of I Maccabees.

Now please understand that the Apocrypha books are not part of the Holy Scriptures, nor were they ever. They have some historical relevance and that is how we look at some of those books, but they are not to be used for doctrine, they are not inspired by God.

I know the Catholic Bible has the Apocrypha books, but again, you will not find them used as part of the Canon of Scriptures. In saying that, we read in I Maccabees chapter 1, beginning in verse 41,

**“Her sanctuary was desolate like a wilderness, her festival days were turned into mourning, her Sabbaths into reproach, her honors were brought to nothing. . . . And king Antiochus wrote to all his kingdom, that all the people should be one: and every one should leave his own law. . . . And many of Israel consented to his service, and they sacrificed to idols, and profaned the Sabbath. And the king sent letters by the hands of messengers to Jerusalem, and to all the cities of Judah: that they should follow the law of the nations of the earth, and should forbid holocausts and sacrifices, and atonements to be made in the temple of God. And should prohibit the Sabbath, and the festival days, to be celebrated. And he commanded the holy places to be profaned, and the holy people of Israel. And he commanded altars to be built, and temples, and idols, and swine’s flesh to be immolated, and unclean beasts. And that they should leave their children uncircumcised, and let their souls be defiled with all uncleannesses, and abominations, to the end that they should forget the law, and should change all the justifications of God. And whosoever would not do according to the word of king Antiochus should be put to death. According to all these words he wrote to his whole kingdom, and he appointed rulers over the people that should force them to do these things. . . . King Antiochus set up the abominable idol of desolation upon the altar of God, and they built altars throughout all the cities of Judah round about. . . . And they cut in pieces, and burnt with fire the books of the law of God: And every one with whom the books of the testament of the Lord were found and whosoever observed the law of the Lord, they put to death, according to the edict of the king. . . . Now the women that circumcised their children, were slain according to the commandment of king Antiochus. And they hanged the children about their necks in all their houses: and those that had circumcised them, they put to death. And many of the people of Israel determined with themselves, that they would not eat unclean things: and they chose rather to die than to be defiled with unclean meats. And they would not break the holy law of God, and they were put to death: and there was great wrath upon the people.”**

I Maccabees 1:41, 43-53, 57, 59, 60, 63-67

2. Now with all the atrocities that this man committed against God and the nation of Israel, he is just a foreshadowing of one who is to come, the Antichrist. And you can see plainly why some people call the Great Tribulation “Hell on earth!” If you refuse to surrender to this man you are in for his wrath. And it is not only the wrath of this man but it is also the wrath of God being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world.

One way you can avoid that, and truly the only way, is by coming to Christ today and His wrath will not be poured out upon you, you will be taken out before the Tribulation starts!

3. In regards to this time of the Tribulation Period, specifically the last 3½ years or the Great Tribulation, we see Jesus say to the Jewish people in Matthew chapter 24 beginning in verse 15, **“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”** Matthew 24:15-22.

You see, it will be during the time of the revived Roman Empire that this man will arise from within its ranks. He will come on the scene as a man of peace but will turn with fury against all those who refuse to worship him. He will forbid the worship of the true God and try to change the laws, just as Antiochus did. But with as much power and strength which he obtains from his father, Satan, he will be destroyed by the words of Christ and cast into Outer Darkness.

Paul tells us in II Thessalonians, chapter 2, beginning in verse 7 that **“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”** II Thessalonians 2:7-12.

This is the time that is fast coming upon this world and yet the people of this world seem to be totally blinded to what is happening around them, that judgment is coming, the man of sin is soon to be revealed!

4. Let me share this story with you to show you that the mover and shakers of this world, the people of this world are ready for someone to come forward and rule this world, lead them! We are told,

Tony Blair yesterday faced accusations of ‘megalomania’ over an interview in which he vowed to set up his own ‘leaders club’ of ex-statesmen – and appeared to dismiss the need for democracy.

The ex-PM said he wanted to create a ‘cadre’ [a small group of people specially trained for a particular purpose or profession] of former leaders to advise governments, saying: ‘You can get some of these guys who are fantastic executors. Why not use their talents and their experience?’ He added: ‘Why not come and help the president of this country or the prime minister of that country?’

Tony Blair on the cover of Newsweek. The former Prime Minister said his ideas of leadership were ‘close to a benevolent dictatorship’ In the profile in the American magazine Newsweek, Mr Blair also praised the authoritarian military regime in Egypt, which has been accused of human rights abuses, saying: ‘Yes, democracy is important, but democracy is not on its own sufficient. You need effective government taking effective decisions.’

The article – which described Mr Blair’s ideas of leadership as ‘close to a benevolent dictatorship’ – added that Mr Blair had concluded from the foot-and-mouth crisis of 2001, when the army slaughtered ten million sheep and cattle, that soldiers were better at emergencies than governments.

When asked about his future work plans, he grandly announced: ‘I’ve done British. I suppose where I think I can make most difference is on a global level, working on things that had interested me as Prime Minister but that I was not able to devote myself to.’

Mr Blair, who made his first intervention in the Election campaign last week with a speech backing Ed Miliband and warning about the risks of leaving the European Union, said that he hoped to stay active in both politics and business well into his 90s.

Tony Blair uses speech to attack Conservatives over Europe explaining why he had no plans to retire, Mr Blair said: 'I've got decades. I want to be seeing someone when I'm 91 after having had medical tests which show I'm getting younger. The thought of actually retiring is not . . . look, you have got to have some self-awareness of these things. And I just know that if I do that, it would literally take me about three days before I was bored out of my mind. Took to drink or something.'

The 61-year-old has been working as a Middle East peace envoy while picking up international consultancy work that earns him millions of pounds a year. Talking about the group of ex-leaders he hoped to deploy in his business, Mr Blair suggested that only those who had risen to the top of their countries could properly relate to each other.

He said: 'The moment I'm talking to a new leader and I'm describing what I felt and what the challenges were, there's a total and instant empathy, an immediate locking on to each other . . . and I know what it's like because I've sat in the decision-making seat.' Last night, Tory MP Andrew Bridgen claimed that Mr Blair's words suggested he has 'completely lost the plot'. Mr Bridgen added: 'David Cameron recently announced that he would not serve a third term, on the grounds that all prime ministers go a bit mad after ten years.'

'It is becoming increasingly clear that Mr Blair's decade in Downing Street has indeed left its mark, and he is now displaying the distinct signs of megalomania.'



This is what is coming. I am not saying that he is the man but I believe there is a man out there today who will step in and solve the world's problems, and he is the Antichrist! May we listen to what Tozer said years ago, "Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope - a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Amen to that!

### VERSE 27

1. Here we see Daniel physically drained from this spiritual experience. But even though he was sick, he continued on doing his work. And those around Daniel did not understand what troubled him. I think that should encourage us to forge ahead in the work that God has called us to, not to give up. People might not understand what we are going through, but God does, let Him be the strength of our life. Let Him be the Rock that is higher than we are. Let Him be that strong tower of refuge that we can run to and take comfort in from the enemy. I think we can be refreshed as we rest in Him! No, I know we can be refreshed as we rest in **HIM!**
  
2. God spoke to the prophet Daniel not only to comfort him and the Jewish people, who were in captivity, but to comfort us and show us that God is in total control. We can look at these verses tonight and see their fulfillment in Antiochus, but remember for Daniel that this was some 360 years in the future that these things would take place.

Thus, as God tells us of another who will arise, like Antiochus, we should in no way doubt what He has said or try to spiritualize it. It will come to pass! What we should do is try to glean from these verses and understand what this future beast will be like. In doing so it should fire us up to see more and more people come to know the Lord before we are removed and before this man of sin is revealed! As Paul said, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”** Romans 15:4.

3. Now some will try to tell you that prophecy is not important or that we can't understand it so why teach it and all I can say is this, ***“Have you not read . . . ?”***

In Daniel 12:8-9 we are told, **“Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’ And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’”**

In Revelation 1:3 we are told, **“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”**

And in Revelation 22:10 we are told, **“And he said to me, ‘Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.’”**

God has opened up the words of prophecy for us to understand in these last days we are living in. It is not time to seal them back up for God has opened them up to us. There are blessings in reading and applying these things to our lives. And the time is at hand and we need to understand the days we are living in so we are prepared for what is ahead!

Let me close with this. We are told,

The Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, tells a parable of a theater where a variety show is proceeding. Each show is more fantastic than the last, and is applauded by the audience. Suddenly the manager comes forward. He apologizes for the interruption, but the theater is on fire, and he begs his patrons to leave in an orderly fashion.

The audience thinks this is the most amusing turn of the evening, and cheer thunderously. The manager again implores them to leave the burning building, and he is again applauded vigorously. At last he can do no more. The fire raced through the whole building and the fun-loving audience with it. "And so," concluded Kierkegaard, "will our age, I sometimes think, go down in fiery destruction to the applause of a crowded house of cheering spectators."

- Resource, July/August, 1990

An interesting observation and apart from Christ that is exactly what will happen!