

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

June 18, 2023

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Far From Home

PART

10

TITLE

The Coming Goat

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 8



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

God starts everyone's story at a particular time with a particular people in a place we call home. And subtly at various times in our life, the foundations under our feet shift and we find ourselves far from our place, far from our people, far from home. Where do we find courage when the foundations shake? How do we live in a new place that feels hostile to our faith? How do we live and thrive? We are far from home.

Well, Providence family, it's good to see you this morning. Hope you've had a really good week. If you are new with us, welcome to Providence. We're glad that you're here with us. If you have a Bible on your hand, if you want to turn with me to Daniel chapter eight. As you turn there, let me just highlight two realities that are in front of us this weekend that you are already completely aware of, today's Father's Day. And so for those of you who are fathers or father figures to others, we just give thanks for the effort, energy, resource, creativity, persistence to teach, to instruct truth, and to seek to provide a model to follow for the next generation.

I know that as a father, there's no perfect father and every father feels that, but we honor you today. In a moment, I want to pray for fathers because our experience of fatherhood, it really differs probably seat by seat and row by row. And so some of us you hear Father's Day and it's a really sweet thing, and for others it can be very sorrowful. Tomorrow is Juneteenth, a federal holiday now that seeks to celebrate a moment in time. On June 19th, 1865, federal forces went into Galveston, Texas and they told what they believe was the last remaining unaware slaves that they have been freed, meaning for a lot of the people around the whole nation, they already knew that they were free, but there was a group they found out that had no idea, wasn't told to them that they were free and they were freed on this day.

We celebrate it and will celebrate as a nation now, I assume ... I say forever, but that's not true, for a long time. At least as long as we are a nation. And so I want to encourage us to think about it tomorrow and every day in a manner that will be consistent with people who believe in Jesus Christ and have been set free from sin and death. That is I think the first thing that we should do tomorrow is to give thanks that our nation is not as it once was.

I thank God that it is changed, that the institution of slavery is not in effect today, and we should give thanks for that. And I think the second thing that we should recognize and pray about is the brokenness that we see within our own nation simply because of the residual scars, the effects from wounds from our past that we're all sinners. And so we lean on things that have happened in the past and sometimes we don't even respond well, and so we simply can create even more stains and more problems. And the fact is that we need healing within our nation and not only this nation, but every nation.

And then the third thing that we should consider when we celebrate, something that should make us very, very happy, an abolishment of an act that first Timothy says is a sin against God. The third thing that we should really consider as we think about this tomorrow is that there are still enslaved people all around the world. There are people in nations, there are people in villages who are slaves. Sometimes they're young and old, sometimes they're male and female, sometimes it's four different ways, whether it's physical, whether it's financial, whether it's sexual. There's a lot of different kinds of enslavement that takes place in the world.

A day like tomorrow should not only make us thankful, it should not only make us prayerful, it should also make us hopeful for the day, for the day when freedom, when freedom literally comes to every single person. You see, for those of us who have trusted Jesus Christ, we have now have this vertical relationship with God where we've been set free, but The Bible tells us that the gospel that changes our relationship with him, it should actually move from the vertical axis and it should move horizontal to where that freedom is extended one to another, where we care for one another and treat one another differently, where instead of saying, "Your life for my good," we would say, "My life for your good." We would serve one another at the point of people's needs.

This is a day that we get to think about these things and I urge you to do so. So let me pray. Father in heaven we bow before you, our maker, and recognize that you are the one and only good Father, the only one who's perfect in all your ways, sacrificial, a teacher, a provider, instructor, the one who models everything for us, who's patient, provides perfect consistent loving discipline. You're so good to us. I pray for the fathers in the room, those who feel good about their life and their family would you help them to be humble. For those that feel like their family is in ruins and maybe their own fatherhood is something that they're embarrassed about, I pray God that you would create within them a new day of hope.

And pray for us as we think about our fathers for those in the room who think about their father with good thoughts, thankful thoughts, God, would you help them to be thankful? And God, for those who look upon their father with some bitter thoughts, I just ask God that you would move in their hearts, Lord, to release that, to forgive. I pray, Father, also for our nation, we thank you. We thank you God, that there is freedom today. And yet we also see, for there are so many burdens, there are so many historical hostilities, there's so many problems, and we ask God for continued healing.

We pray, Father, for slaves around the world, young and old, God, that you would set people free. Even if it means, God, that their physical slavery has to wait until their culture changes, would you bring the gospel into their hearts that they would be able to experience a spiritual freedom that would transform their life and culture in such a way that the very culture would begin to think about treating people differently? We know one day when we see you face to face, all things will be different. We will live in your Kingdom and there will be perfect peace and love for one another. Until that day, we ask that you would help us to be the salt and the light that people need. And we pray all of this in Christ's name, amen.

Providence, whatever God creates I want you to know Satan counterfeits. God creates his written word and Satan creates counterfeits. God creates a standard of morality for life. Satan creates counterfeits by telling us to everyone do what is right in their own eyes. God creates the family, it's the bedrock of society to stabilize it. Satan creates a redefinition of the categories of family in order to disintegrate and shake society. God Almighty is the one who creates pleasure in order to bless our soul, and Satan seeks to warp and distort those pleasures in order to rob our soul. God Almighty, he sends one sufficient, perfect, true savior. And Satan, he sends many counterfeits.

The Bible tells us of Satan that he disguises himself as an angel of light, which means that he gives the impression that he's a messenger of truth, but in fact he's the father of lies. Providence, I want you to know that if you don't understand that the spiritual world and the physical world are interconnected, meaning the physical world is the world we live in, and some people believe this is all that there is, and as a result of that, they have no categories that allows them to experience genuine wisdom when they see policy, when they see world events, when they see a news broadcast and they see what's taking place in the world and they don't understand. Until you understand that there is a spiritual war that is taking place in the spiritual world and that that war is splashing up into the physical world where Satan himself is a counterfeit, he's a liar, he's the father of lies, he's disguising himself in innocent forms today in our country as a messenger of truth, and yet he's a liar.

If you don't understand that, you literally have no capacity to absorb in a correct way what's happening in the world. And as a result of that, you will not be able to watch the news without anger, apathy or anxiety. You have to understand that there is a war, and this is what Daniel chapter eight is going to tell us among many other things. Now, if you are new with us, if this happens to be your first time in particular, if this is the first time you've ever been in a church and Daniel eight's going to be the first sermon you've ever heard in your life, you are in for a treat. Let me tell you, you're in for a treat.

It's going to be a little weird. Now, the whole Bible isn't always like this, but this is an amazing thing. I'm not apologizing for it. It's remarkable, but it's challenging. Daniel is an amazing book and we've been studying it. The first six chapters tell of the really courageous responses of four exiles in Babylon and it really teaches us how to live and thrive in a culture where that culture's institutions are increasingly hostile to our faith.

But then you get into chapter 7 through 12, the second set of 6 chapters, and suddenly even the writing style changes. It moves from history to something called apocalyptic prophecy. Apocalyptic means the end. Prophecy means that God is telling the end in advance. He's telling us what's going to happen in the future. And so you put them together and what apocalyptic prophecy, Daniel 7 through 12 is all about is God telling us in advance the events that are going to happen that lead up to the very end of this world.

It's a remarkable experience to walk through, okay? It uses a lot of metaphors. There's a lot of symbols, and because of that throughout the centuries, some of the symbols were not told within the scripture exactly what they mean. And so some people guess, and so we should be humble, really humble when we study these kinds of passages. But the other thing you really need to know, and if I don't tell you this upfront about Daniel eight, you're going to have a hard time absorbing what I'm about to tell you. And that is that in God's world of when he's inspiring his word to be written, he uses prophecy in order to actually help us understand dual fulfillments, that means more than one, right? Two. And already and not yet, a soon and a far fulfillment.

And so I used the same picture last week, but if we went to the mountains and we were standing a long way off and I said, "Hey, when we get onto those mountains, this is what's going to happen." Well, the fact is from a long way away, those peaks, they all look kind of close together, and yet the closer you get, you recognize

that those peaks can be miles apart. Well, in prophecy from the scriptures, what you find is this, is that God is telling us in advance what's about to happen, but a lot of the prophecies have at least two different fulfillments. One that's really close, maybe 10 years. And another one, it may be a couple thousand years away. That can be very confusing to know, well, is this coming? Is this already happened or is it both? And yet here we are.

Daniel chapter seven that we looked at last week. This is important, you know this, is a panoramic view of the whole mountain range. From the day of Daniel, he's going to say, "There's going to come these world empires and then all of a sudden after these empires, there will be the first coming of Christ. He's going to live, he's going to die for sin, he's going to rise from the dead. He's going to ascend to heaven." Eventually a long, long time after that, even beyond our days, he says, "There's going to come a time, a seven-year period, which would be unlike any other in terms of human death, great destruction, a tribulation."

"During that time, there'll be a rise of someone who's called the antichrist, and eventually Christ is going to come again. He's going to finally defeat evil, and then he's going to reign forever and ever in righteousness." Now, all of that was Daniel seven. He's like, "Here's the whole mountain range." Daniel chapter 8, all the way through 12, what he does is he goes, "All right, now you see the whole thing. Let's zoom in on just these couple peaks. And so when we get to Daniel eight, what he is going to do is he's going to say, "I want to introduce to you three Kings, three coming Kings, all from two empires that were mentioned back in Daniel chapter seven. But all three of these Kings reveal characteristics that are found in the final antichrist who is still coming. And when he comes, he will masquerade as a savior."

So the first truth I want you to see is that God appoints Kings that serve as warnings For the end, he appoints Kings that serve as warnings for the end. God can do this because he knows this. He's sovereign, he knows everything. We live life one day at a time, one World Series at a time, one Super Bowl at a time, one state fair at a time, one mystery food at the state fair at a time. We don't know what's coming. We just get there and like, "Oh, guess what they did this year? They fried this," right? We have no idea until it's there, but God, God sees all things from beginning to the end. He knows all the World Series champions. He knows all the mystery foods that are coming. He knows everything.

And what he does is he reveals just a portion for here and there of all that he knows in order to prove to us and display his sovereignty in order to give us hope. And this brings us to Daniel chapter eight, verse one. "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that, which appeared to me at first." So if you were here last week, we saw that in the first year of Belshazzar, he received the vision that was written in Daniel seven, and now two years later, Daniel gets a second vision.

Verse two, "And I saw in the vision and when I saw I was in Susa, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam, and I saw in the vision and I was at the Ulai canal." Now this is amazing to me. You say, "What's the significance? Why'd you underline Susa?" Well, let me tell you. That's a great question.

Susa was a little town at the time, an obscure place at the time, and what you find here is something pretty amazing. Daniel is having this vision and he's in Babylon, but he says that in the vision, he says, "I was in Susa," and then he calls Susa the citadel, the capital. Now, Susa was this a little obscure little town in the third year of Belshazzar, and yet God Almighty had actually destined it to become the future capital of the Persian empire, the next empire that would conquer Babylon. Now, think about it this way, if that didn't make sense, okay? Let's just say that I came to you and I was a prophet. I'm not, but let's just say that I was and I said, "Guess what? 100 from now, a nation's going to invade America, take over as the world power and their capital building is going to be placed in the town of Creedmoor."

See? You scoff. That's what would've happened if people knew that his vision was in Susa. "Susa? Like really, Susa? Okay." And yet in time the Persian empire, the Medes and Persians did conquer, had a number of Kings, the fourth King, his name was Xerxes. Xerxes needed a queen after the first one disappointed him, and he chose Esther. And do you know where Esther lived? Susa, a proof of the sovereignty of God in taking obscure things and making them capital cities.

Verse three, "I raised my eyes and I 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 at last." This is the Medes in the Persian empire. You notice it has two horns. Now by the way, there's going to be tons of horns in Daniel chapter eight, big ones, small ones, broken ones, all kinds of horns, okay?

A horn is an object of power, of dominance, how one animal gains control of another. If you have one pet and has a horn and you have another one who doesn't, the one's more powerful than the other. It dominates the house. And so in this vision, there's these metaphors of these horns. Well, it says that there's a ram and he has two horns, but then notice it says that they were unequal, meaning this ram was kind of lopsided. What we know in history is that the Medes and Persians, they started together, and yet the Persians grew significantly stronger, which is why it says, "And the higher one came up last." This is why today oftentimes we just leave out the word Medes and we just say, "And the Persian empire," it's because they were more powerful.

Verse four, "I saw the ram charging westward, 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." Starting in the east, this first major emperor, the Persian Empire, his name was Cyrus the Great. We're told that he went in three directions. First he went west, he conquered Asian minor, and then he conquered as far north as Armenia, as far as south as Ethiopia, and he did just as he pleased and he became great.

Now, here's the point. Cyrus the Great was a real person in history, a real person in history that when Daniel was having the dream was not in any power whatsoever. He was still living under Belshazzar, the King of Babylon, and yet God is saying this is what's going to take place. But not only was Cyrus a real man in history, he was also, we're going to find here, a warning. A warning of the power, the self authority and the greatness of the final antichrist that is going to come.

What we're going to do as we go through these Kings, we're going to keep stacking up characteristics that we will all find one day will be true of one person who is still coming. Verse five. Verse five, it says, "And as I was considering, behold, a male goat," so we've moved from a ram to a goat, "It 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." Now, this goat represents the Greek empire. You notice that there's an animal and has this conspicuous horn, that means an obvious, it's noticeable, it's obvious. Later we're going to learn that this was the first King, and the first King was Alexander the Great.

You notice that it says that he went across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground. It's just a metaphor to say that he did it really quickly. When we were in Daniel chapter seven, the metaphor that was used of Alexander the Great was a leopard with four wings, a leopard's really fast until he gets to water, and then it slows down, but not if the leopard has four wings. Alexander the Great conquered the entire known world in 12 years before he was 33 years old. Incredible power, incredible speed, and one of the places that he invaded was the Persian Empire.

This is what we read about in verse six and seven. He says, "And he," Alexander, "Came to the ram," that's the Medes and the Persians, "With two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath. I 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 broke the Persian empire in 331 BC, and this brings us to verse eight. In verse eight, he says, "Then 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." Now, what is this about? You notice that it says that, "At the height of his power when he was strong, the horn was broken." Alexander died unexpectedly when he was 33 years old and without a known heir to the throne, they had to decide who was going to receive the Greek empire. And over the next 22 years, different generals vied for attention and authority, and eventually the entire Greek empire was divided up into four different empires.

These four generals took a piece, Cassander, he took the region near Macedonia. Lysimachus took Thrace, Ptolemy took Egypt, and Seleucus took Syria. Now, I know that these words don't mean a whole lot to us right now, but let me just say if you're going to be here for a few weeks, we're going to come back to these two when we get to Daniel chapter 11, and pay attention to this last one right here. Seleucus is sort of the father of the Seleucid empire. The third King that we're about to read about in verse nine comes from this person right here.

Alexander was a man of history, but what I want you to see is he was actually serving us. Not only as a man of history, but also a signpost warning us of other characteristics that will be found in the final antichrist, namely deep ambition to conquer, a speed and his ability to conquer and domination over people. And that

brings us to verse nine. He says, “Out of one of them,” that is out of one of those four Greek empires, “Came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.”

Now, if you were here last week, hopefully you’ll remember that there was a little horn in Daniel chapter seven, but that little horn came from the Roman Empire and not the Greek empire. We saw last week that he was actually a representative of the final antichrist. Here in chapter eight, this little horn doesn’t come from the Roman Empire, it comes from the Greek empire. What we know about him is he simply points to the final antichrist, but this is somebody who already lived. What we learn about what he did, you look in history and we know who this was. His name was Antiochus. Antiochus was the eighth King of the Seleucid empires.

If you remember those four Kings, right? And they each took a part of Greece. The last one, Seleucus, you went from his line, seven more Kings down and you get to a man, his name was Antiochus. Antiochus was a work of art. Not only did he conquer a lot of things, one of the places that he went Daniel calls the glorious land. Now you remember where he is at? He’s in exile in Babylon. He’s talking about Jerusalem here, and sure enough, that’s where he went. Antiochus, when he became King, which of course he became King out of deceit and treachery.

When his brother was killed, the rightful heir was actually made a hostage, and during that time, he rose to the throne. When he rose to the throne, he called himself Epiphanes, which means the glorious one. He then made coins because every King needs a coin and on those coins, his name, Antiochus, and then he put on this side, “God manifest, God in flesh.” This is a human King has already been on the earth, who’s about to do some ... We’re going to see what he did. He believed that he was the son of God who would come in flesh.

Verse 10 begins to tell us some of the things that he would do, “It grew great even to the host of heaven and some of the host and some of the stars that threw down to the ground and trampled on them.” In Daniel 12 we’ll learn that the stars represent saints who shine light lights in the darkness. When Antiochus invaded Jerusalem, the first thing he did was kill the 80,000 people.

Verse 11, “It 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.” Not only did he claim to be the Prince of the host, the son of God, told here that he overthrew the temple, the sanctuary. What he did is really an amazing and despicable thing. Let me just tell you just a few of the exploits of how he overthrew the temple.

The first thing that he did was he defiled the priest by shoving pork into their mouth, making them ceremonially unclean. The second thing he did was he installed a Greek high priest named Jason. The third thing he did was he established a prostitution ring in the temple courtyard. Then he set up a statue, an idol to Zeus and the Holy of Holies, and then he sacrificed a pig on the altar, desecrating it. Then we’re told the one other thing that was true of him in verse 12 it says, “Then a host will be given over to it together with a regular burn offering because of the transgression, and it will throw the truth to the ground and it will act and prosper.”

One of the things Antiochus did was he took the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures, and he tore them in pieces and threw them into a fire giving no regard for the word of God.

Now we get to verse 13 and 14. There we find two angels asking a question that I would want to ask, and that is, how long? They say, “Then 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 offerings, the transgression that makes desolate and the giving over the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot? And he said to me, for 2,300 evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.’” They ask, “How long?” And the number was given 2,300.

Now you notice it’s 2,300 evenings and mornings. You notice this is also about the sanctuary or the altar. I believe what it means, and I think history confers that this actually means 1,150 days because there was a morning and evening sacrifice in each of those days, which was roughly three years. And the reason that’s important is because history tells us that the temple sat desecrated for three years until Judas Maccabeus let a revolt and cleansed the temple on December 25th, 165 BC. The cleansing of this moment and the restoration of the temple was so significant that the Jewish people said, “We should celebrate this. We’ll call it the Festival of Lights. Today, we call it Hanukkah, that Jesus celebrated in John chapter 10.

Antiochus was a real man in history and he also served as a warning sign of six other characteristics at least that will be seen in the final antichrist, which include deception, brutality, a growing influence, starting small, growing big, a desecration of holy things, claiming of deity and a rejection of God’s word. Now, you may be asking, how do you know all this keeps all this points to the end? And the answer is, I’ve read the whole chapter, so let me read a little bit more to you.

Verse 15, “When I, Daniel, had seen the vision I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man, and I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, ‘Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.’” So God Almighty is sending one of his archangels, Gabriel, who went to Zachariah about John the Baptist’s birth and Mary about Jesus’ birth, and he says, “You really need to explain what’s going on to Daniel because he’s really confused.”

That’s exactly what he said. In verse 17, “So he came near where I stood and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face,” more literally, “I passed out.”

“And he said to me, “Understand, oh son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end. And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground,” he passed out again, “But he touched me and made me stand up and he said, ‘Behold,’” listen to this, “I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation.” The word indignation, wrath, God’s wrath, “For it refers to the appointed time of the end.”

Now, notice as for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the Kings of the Mede and Persia, and the goat is the King of Greece and the great horn between his eyes is the first King, that would be Alexander. As for the horn that was broken in place of which four others arose, four Kingdoms shall arise from this nation. Now, this is given to Daniel hundreds of years before all of this is taking place because God is sovereign over all things.

All of this though, it all points forward. And as it points forward, we should ask the question, well, what will we see? And the second truth I want you to see is what we will see is that God promised the rise and fall of the antichrist at the end. He promises here the rise and the fall of the antichrist at the end. Friends, Antiochus was a historical man who really did come. He was the little horn from the Greek empire, but I want you to notice something that's really interesting. 200 years after he did all that he did, both Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul, they hold up a Bible and they talk to their people and they say, "Have you guys read Daniel chapter eight?"

And they both refer to it as something from the time of Jesus as something still to come. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24, he says, "When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place, let the reader understand this is coming." When the apostle Paul told us about the second coming of Christ, he says, "It doesn't just come when you think it comes though." This is what he says. He says, "That day will not come," that's the day of Christ, when we will see Christ again. "It will not come unless the rebellion comes first." And then he describes the antichrist with two different phrases, "And the man of lawlessness is revealed in the son of destruction who opposes and exalts himself so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God."

What should we look for? Verse 23, "And 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." Seven years we saw last week before Christ return will come a moment in history that is devastating called the tribulation. During this seven years, there will come a King that is bold and clever and he will arise. According to Daniel seven, from a confederation of nations that are tied in some way to the ancient Roman Empire, the world will trust him with its problems because he will have the ability to solve them.

During the first half of that seven years or three and a half years then, the antichrist will gain power and even help rebuild the temple, and then he will unleash a war in the second half. Verse 24 says, "His 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 the mighty men and the people who are the saints."

In Revelation chapter 13, verse 2, we're told that Satan himself is the one who gives power, throne and authority to the antichrist. And we're told here that he's going to do two things. He'll be successful and destructive. First of all, he will be successful in his exploits, which include putting an end to the sacrifice, desecrating the temple, placing his own image in the Holy of Holies in that temple demanding worldwide worship and

requiring a mark be given to function in his worldwide economy. You can read all of this in Revelation 13, or you can wait four or five weeks and we'll look at it in Daniel 12.

Not only will he be successful in his exploits, he'll also be destructive to people and leaders and saints. Daniel seven says of him that, "He will speak words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times and half a time." A time is one-year, times is two years, a half a time is six months, three and a half years.

We're told that he will be a great liar. Verse 25, "By his cunning, he shall make deceit prosper under his hand and in his own mind he should become great. Without warning he shall destroy many and he shall even rise up against the Prince of Princes," that's Christ, "And he shall be broken, but by no human hand." We should ask, well, how then if not by your human hand? And that's the third and last point, and that is that God promises that Christ will break the powers of evil upon his return. Christ is going to do it. You say, well, if not by human, then how? By God sending his son.

The first time God sent his son to the earth in fulfillment to his promise that he would send us a savior. And do you remember how Christ came? The opposite of the antichrist, right? The opposite of all these Kings. All these Kings, they started small and became great and he began as the son of God and he took on human flesh and became a servant. He became small. Unlike these Kings we were told who were self authorizing, who did what they wanted, says that Jesus Christ only did as the Father pleased.

God Almighty, sending Jesus Christ to the earth. Jesus did not burn the word of God. Instead, he gave perfect obedience and honored the word of God. Jesus did not lie. Instead, he spoke truthfully. He did not desecrate the temple. He purified the temple. And he did not take life, he gave his life that our lives could be rescued. He then died on a cross paying for our sin. He was buried in a grave.

And then on the third day, he rose from the dead inviting us to put our faith and trust in him for the salvation of our soul, the forgiveness of our sins. All who admit that they have a sin problem, all who believe in Jesus' death and resurrection and all who confess in his Lord are forgiven and given a place in his Kingdom. You see, Christ will come again and at the end of those seven years when he returns, we're told how this lawless one will die. It says, "The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth." He's going to talk to him and he's going to die. That's authority. The Christ will then reign. He will establish a thousand-year reign on the earth. We're told in Revelation 20, where Satan will be bound in a pit and at the end of this time, Satan will be sentenced forever to hell and we will live in a new heaven and a new earth with King Jesus for and ever and ever.

So what do we do with this? What do you do with this if you're in a broken marriage? What do you do with this if you have cancer? What do you do with this? Well, this is what I would encourage us to do with this. First, I would encourage us to lean on God's accuracy and sovereignty. You see, one reason we can trust the

Bible is because of the way that it so precisely predicts the future. And this is what Peter even said. He says, "We have the prophetic word more fully confirmed to which you'll do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in the dark place."

If you're in a dark place, financially, relationally, socially, physically, if you are in darkness, you see what he's saying? He's saying it is looking back at the record of God's fulfilled promises, gives us hope to say he's made promises that will still stand today. If you happen to be in a bad marriage, you say, who cares about Alexander? If I can't stand the guy who's sitting next to me on the couch, what am I supposed to do about this? Jesus Christ says, "I will never leave you or forsake you," and he never will. He never will. And so we can lean on passages like this to say, "This is the God who has the whole world in his hands. I am not forgotten. I am not forsaken."

Second, let's recognized the spirit of antichrist in our own day. There is a real person called the antichrist who will come, but his spirit, his influence is working among people today. This is what John tells us. He says, "Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already." The spiritual influence starts small and it grows large until Christ is replaced as authority, as King and as our first love.

And there are different things that you can look for to say, what would it look like if I'm seeing the influence of the spirit of this antichrist? You look for these, you look for destruction of life. When people abuse one another, when there's abortion, when there's slavery, when there's human trafficking, when there's a disregard for human life, when there's policy or practice that disregards the image of God upon a person, it is anti Jesus.

Second is deception. When there is lies, when there's slander, when there's truth that is twisted into philosophies such as critical theory and a million others to where we would look and we would take a little bit of truth and we would distort it, you can know for certain that it's anti Jesus. The exaltation of self. Friends, the spirit of God never exalts man and always exalts Christ, but the spirit of antichrist always exalts man and never exalts Christ. And so if you see the exaltation of self and pride, if you see deception or the destruction or disregard of human life, rest assured you are looking at the influence of an evil power that is opposite of Christ. Be wise.

Third, let's ask God to help us feel people's peril as we proclaim the gospel. Oh, do you see the good news that we have to tell? Jesus is going to destroy evil. He's going to reign forever and ever, and anyone can enjoy his righteous rule if they will admit their sin, believe in him and confess him as Lord. But notice Daniel's pain, verse 27, "And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days, and then I rose and went about the King's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it." This is a severe reaction, emotional reaction to seeing what lies ahead even when he couldn't understand it completely.

In other words, our sharing of the gospel will be more potent if we can empathize with the human pain that

sin and judgment is going to bring. If you can actually look at somebody in the eye and say, “If you don’t trust Christ, there is hell awaiting you,” and your heart does not break, you’re telling it unlike Christ. It’s truth and love, truth and empathy, truth and sympathy, truth and mercy. There’s emotional investment in these truths, because they’re about people and people are important.

Finally, for those of you who have never put your trust in Christ, I urge you to call upon Christ and be saved because this prophecy and all prophecy is not meant to turn us into curious investigators. It’s meant to turn us into believers and lifelong worshipers. So let’s pray.

Father in heaven, we bow before you and we recognize the complexity of this kind of a chapter. The remarkable fulfilled prophecy through history is just that, it’s remarkable. We praise you for your sovereignty, and we yield to you. I pray, father, for the things that we do understand in this, that you would give us courage to apply to our life. I pray for those who are considering putting their trust in Christ, even now. That you would draw them to yourself and urge them right now to call in belief, in confession of sin, belief in Christ.

I pray for those of us who already have that you would fill us with energy now to respond in song, to sing about the worth of Christ, who’s going to liberate us from all this evil because of his death and resurrection and victory. And so we honor you now. We sing to you and we pray all of this in Christ’s name. Amen.

,



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors. Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.