

## Daniel 8

### “Intimate Details from an Intimate God”

1. Many over the years have claimed they are able to predict the future, but typically they speak in a general, non-specific nature.
  - **Things** like, there will be a big earthquake this year or multiple bad storms are on the way.
  - **But** it's no more specific than a fortune cookie.
2. But that is not how true prophecy works.
  - **True** prophecy from God is not only 100% accurate, but also incredibly detailed in its predictions.
  - **And** those two things are what differentiate true prophecy from fakes such as Jean Dixon or Nostradamus.
3. As we continue on with Daniel's prophetic visions in Chapter 8, this is exactly what we will see,
  - **Prophecy** that so incredibly accurate and so full of intimate details that critics of the Bible have been forced to say that Daniel must have been written much later by a different author.

4. However, we noted a couple weeks ago that the evidence is irrefutable that Daniel indeed wrote the book.

- **Even** Jesus Himself said so in Matthew chapter 24, so that settles it for me even without all the other evidence.

5. Another interesting point to make as we enter chapter 8 is that we now switch back to Hebrew.

- **If** you remember in chapter 2 verse 4, the language suddenly and unusually switched to Aramaic or Chaldee, the language of the gentiles.

6. Why?

- **Because** from chapter 2:4 through chapter 7, God specifically deals with the gentile nations and their future.
- **Now** God addresses how they relate with the Jews and Israel, so God again uses Hebrew.

**v.2** 1. It is interesting that he saw Shushan because at this time, the town was insignificant and small.

- **But** God was showing Daniel that it was going to be the capital of the next Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire.
- **This** would have been as shocking to Daniel as if the Lord showed us that Friendsville

was going to be the new capital of the United States!

2. The river Ulai is a massive river some 900 feet across!

- **And** we will see Gabriel speak to Daniel here in just a moment.

**v.3** The Medo-Persian Empire.

- **It** is fascinating that the Ram was the official symbol used by the Medo-Persian Empire and what God uses here.

**v.5** Now we see the next kingdom which was the Greek Empire which was represented by a goat.

- Which, like the Ram for the Medo/Persian Empire, was the symbol for the Greek Empire.
- **And** the notable horn of course was Alexander the Great.

**v.8** 1. This is an incredible prophecy that didn't come to pass for another 200 years!

- **Who** is this goat?

2. We know from history that the Greek Empire followed immediately after the Medo-Persian Empire.

- **And** as we noted, the Ram and Goat were the symbols used by both of these kingdoms.
3. The first Greek colony was established by an oracle that sent a **goat for a guide** as they went to build a new city.
    - **The** goat ended up in the region of Greece, and in gratitude to the goat, they called the city Agae which means “Goat City.”
    - **And** the name of the nearby sea was named the Agaen Sea or the “Goat Sea.”
  4. Alexander’s dad was Philip of Macedonia who was himself a great conqueror in battle.
    - **But** not like Alexander.
  5. Amazingly, when Alexander conquered the civilized world, he did it in only 12 years without a single loss in battle!
    - **Hence** the goat moves rapidly and never touches the ground.
  6. As Alexander grew, his mother taught him that he was a descendant of Achilles and Hercules and that he was a god.
    - **And** while obviously not true, he was probably the greatest warrior in world history.

7. Coming with only 35,000 troops against some 2 million of the Persians, he still defeated them at Hellespont.

- **He** then swept down south and took Egypt, Tyre, and Gaza, and then came back to face the remaining Persians and totally wiped them out.

8. The Jewish historian Josephus also tells us that when Alexander arrived at Jerusalem to conquer it, the High Priest came out to meet him and showed him here in Daniel when God foretold of his conquests. He was so moved that he spared the city.

- **The record** then goes on to say that he actually bowed, and when asked by his soldiers why he bowed to this priest, he said he didn't bow to this priest but to his God.

9. After conquering the known world, Alexander then forced all of the newly conquered world to learn the Greek language in order to unify it...

- **Which** paved the way for the spreading of the gospel to the entire world later through the Roman Empire.

10. As we noted last week, when Alexander was asked who to put in charge after his death, he said to give the kingdom to the strong.

- **And** since his two sons were assassinated, they looked to his 4 most powerful generals and divided the world up into 4 different sections (as we saw last week).

**v.11** 1. Now we come to a dual prophecy concerning Antiochus Epiphanes and the anti-Christ.

- **There** are many of these type of dual prophecies found throughout Scripture, so this is not unusual.
- **It's** where one person or event is spoken of as a foreshadowing of another that will come later. This is what we see here.

2. We will see in these next few verses a dual prophecy of two specific individuals both called "little horns."

- **The** first, as I said, is Antiochus Epiphanes who is simply a picture of the main "little horn" to come later which is the anti-Christ.

- **First**, Antiochus.

3. His name means "God manifest."

- **This** is especially interesting in light of the fact that we know the anti-Christ will also claim to be god in human form.

4. But instead of the 'anti' ochus, he will be the 'anti' Christ.

- **Around** the 170's BC, he was ruling over the Jews in Israel as his region of the kingdom of the Seleucids. He traveled down to Egypt to conquer the Ptolemies in their region but failed.
  - **It** was then rumored that he had been killed in battle, and the Jews began to remove the Seleucid authority from Jerusalem.
5. Hence, when he returned from his defeat to find the Jews rebelling against him and his kingdom, he took out his anger by killing between 80,000 and 1000,000 Jews.
- **Then** went on to sell another 40,000 into slavery.
6. And if that wasn't enough, He introduced a new worship system in Jerusalem forbidding the Jews to worship their God.
- **He** tried to destroy every scroll of the Bible he could find and completely forbade the observation of the Jewish religion.
7. **And** there were great consequences for those who didn't comply.
- For example, when two Jewish women circumcised their babies in obedience to God's Word, he killed the babies, hung them around their mother's necks, and then

marched the women to the highest wall in Jerusalem and threw them off.

- **He** then took another Jewish family who had 7 sons who defied him, cut out their tongues in front of their mother and then fried them one by one on a flat iron while their mother looked on.

8. Now you know why the Jews referred to him as “Antiochus the madman” rather than Antiochus Epiphanes.

- **And** if he was simply a foreshadowing of the real thing to come, just think how horrible the anti-Christ will be.

9. He then desecrated the Temple...

- **Killed** a pig on the altar, spread the blood on the wall, and made the priests eat raw pork, then set up an image of Jupiter, later called Zeus by the Romans, and declared himself to be god.

- **Again**, a picture of the coming anti-Christ.

10. However, this blasphemy was more that some in Israel could take, and it was worth dying for.

- **There** was a priest in a nearby village to Jerusalem named Matthias who, when ordered to bow down and worship the Greek god Jupiter, killed a fellow Jew who bowed and the officer commanding it.

- **This** led to the Maccabean revolt.
11. At this point, the old man's son, Judas Maccabeus who was called "The Hammer," led the Jews to victory over the Greeks and cleansed the temple in 144 BC.
- **When** they cast the image of Jupiter out of the Temple, Antiochus declared Jerusalem would become the burial place of all the Jews.
12. As soon as he made this declaration, he was smitten with a deadly disease and filled with worms that slowly ate his body.
- **It** was said he developed such a stench that he couldn't even stand smelling himself and died a miserable and painful death.
  - **Which** is exactly what happened to Herod Agrippa I in Acts 12 when he allowed the people to declare he was "a god."
14. The Maccabean revolt and victory over the rule of Antiochus is where the Jews get Hanukkah or the "Feast of Dedication."
- **Explain.**
15. It is interesting how often a new Jewish feast arises when someone tries to wipe out the Jews.
- **With** Pharaoh it was Passover, with Haman in Persia it was Purim, and with Antiochus it was the Feast of Dedication or Hanukkah.

16. Notice in verse 10 the “casting down of some of the host of heaven.”

- **And** although both Antiochus and the Anti-Christ did and will do what is mentioned here...
- **The** casting down of the “host of heaven” is more focused on the Anti-Christ probably through Satan’s possession as he and a 3<sup>rd</sup> of the angels were cast down.

17. Notice, he will exalt himself as high as the Prince of the Host of heaven or Jesus.

- **Which** both Antiochus and the Anti-Christ did and will do.

18. And as Antiochus stopped the sacrifices on the Temple Mount, the Bible says the anti-Christ will as well.

- **As** the world leader, he will allow them to rebuild their Temple in the last days and re-establish their sacrifices.
- **Only** to stop it all 3 ½ years after he takes power and demand they all worship him like Antiochus did.

**v.14** 1. Historically, we know it was exactly 2300 days from the time Antiochus took over until the Jews successfully cleansed the Temple!

- **And** Jesus said in Luke 21 that in the last days, the gentiles will once again “trample Jerusalem underfoot” during the reign of the anti-Christ until Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom.

**v.23** 1. Notice the anti-Christ will “understand sinister schemes” or be a master of intrigue.

- **Not** only will he be an incredibly charismatic and popular leader, but he will be extremely wise in evil and deception to mislead the masses as well.
- **This** is what we see in Psalm 2 concerning him.

2. He will mesmerize the world with amazing economic and world peace solutions.

- **And** no doubt will address climate concerns as well, but it will all be short lived.

**v.24** Notice he will have “mighty power” but not from himself or from God.

- **It** will be given by Satan.
- **And** during this time, he will “prosper and thrive.”

**v.25** Notice he will rise up against Jesus the “Prince of Princes” but shall be broken without human means.

- **Which** means man won’t defeat him but Jesus Himself will at His return.

**v.26** Notice Gabriel says the “vision is true.”

- **And** now looking back we can see that every bit of it has been fulfilled 100% the way it was said except for what is still to come.
- **And** that gives us great confidence the rest will happen 100% the way God said.

**v.27** 1. It is interesting that after this Daniel was “sick for days.”

- **And** maybe you have found that when the spiritual battle is raging it is extremely tiring.
- **Hence**, with a vision this big and his interaction with angels, he was wiped out.

2. It ends by saying no one understood the vision although Daniel had been told specifics.

- **But** this means he did not completely understand it, and there is no way he could without further information which God will give him later and which we now see looking back.

3. However, as we finish, each of us here today has plenty of information to know and understand that God's Word is supernatural and 100% accurate.

- **The** question is what will we do with that?

4. As a believer we should let such intimacy draw us closer and give us greater and greater confidence and boldness in God and His Word.

- **But** as an unbeliever this should seal the deal.

5. There is no greater proof that God can give that He is Who He says He is and that His Word is true.

- **The** question is are you going to respond?