

## ***Session 6 The Personality & Power of the Antichrist (Dan. 8:15-27)***

### **I. REVIEW: OUTLINE OF DANIEL 8**

- A. Daniel's vision (Dan. 8:1-14)
- B. Gabriel appeared to Daniel to explain and expand the vision (8:15-25)
  - 1. The vision pertains to the end times (8:15-19)
  - 2. Gabriel's explanation of the symbols (8:20-22)
  - 3. The Antichrist's personality and power (8:23-25)
- C. The importance of this vision (8:26-27)

### **II. THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VIEW OF THE ANTICHRIST**

- A. Jesus called His people *to see* the abomination of desolation and pointed them to Daniel's prophetic visions to grasp it (Mt. 24:15). The *abomination* is the central event that helps us to understand Jesus' view of the Antichrist and the end times. Two components of the abomination will be the *image* and the *mark of the Beast*. Daniel described how *uniquely horrific the Antichrist will be*.  
***<sup>15</sup>"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup>"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...<sup>21</sup>then there will be great tribulation." (Mt. 24:15-16, 21)***
- B. The theme most emphasized in Daniel's four visions, surprisingly, is not Jesus, but the Antichrist. Why? Because the Lord knows that many will be *deceived* by the Antichrist and *offended* at God when He allows the Antichrist to persecute His people, and that this will lead to many falling away. (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3). The issue that Jesus most emphasized in Matthew 24 was not about persecution but the *need to avoid deception* (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24).  
***<sup>4</sup>"Take heed that no one deceives you...<sup>5</sup>Many will come in My name...and will deceive many...<sup>11</sup>Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many...<sup>24</sup>For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." (Mt. 24:4-5, 11, 24)***
- C. God raised Daniel up as a forerunner prophet 2,500 years ago as a premier gift to the generation in which the Lord returns, so that God's people would be prepared with understanding of what the Word says about the Antichrist and not to yield to *deception, fear, compromise, or offense* at God's leadership, but be filled with clarity, peace, purity, and confidence in God's leadership. Some will be offended, asking how God could allow such an evil man to persecute them and prosper.
- D. Jesus wants His people to understand the intensity of power, cruelty, and evil that the Antichrist will cause, so that they can be spiritually prepared for what will happen and have biblical answers for it. It is far easier to process what the Word says about the Antichrist and the negative events that will occur during the Great Tribulation *before* they live under the pressure of such terrible events.

- E. There is a spirit of stupor and unbelief related to the four visions that Daniel saw of the Antichrist (7:15-28; 8:9-26; 9:27; 11:21-36). Many teach that the prophecies about the Antichrist are merely symbolic; others teach that they were all fulfilled in the past (by Antiochus Epiphanes or in AD 70); others say that they speak of a man coming in the future, but that we cannot really understand them.

### III. GABRIEL APPEARED TO DANIEL (DAN. 8:15-19)

- A. God sent Gabriel to give Daniel understanding of the vision (8:15-16). His appearance indicates the importance of this vision. *This is the first time that Gabriel appears in Scripture, and it is to reveal the power, cruelty, and evil of the Antichrist.* Gabriel is mentioned four times in the Scriptures—twice in Daniel (8:16; 9:21) and twice in Luke (Lk. 1:11-20, 26-38). Each time, he gave messages pertaining to events related to the coming of the Messiah. He is known as a “messenger angel.”

*<sup>15</sup>When I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning...suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. <sup>16</sup>And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.” (Dan. 8:15-16)*

- B. Gabriel's message was about the end times (8:17-18). Daniel received this vision in 551 BC—over 2,500 years ago. Antiochus died in 164 BC—less than 400 years after this vision was given.

*<sup>17</sup>He said to me, “Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end”...  
<sup>19</sup>And he said, “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.”...<sup>26</sup>“And the vision of the evenings and mornings...refers to many days in the future.” (Dan. 8:17-19, 26)*

1. **Time of the end:** Gabriel emphasized four times that the message pertained to the end times—the *time of the end* (8:17), the *latter time of the indignation* (8:19b), the *appointed time of the end* (8:19c), and in the *latter time* (8:23). These four phrases essentially mean the same thing.
2. **Son of man:** The title *son of man* indicates human weakness.
3. **The indignation:** In the Old Testament, the term *indignation* is used at times when God was indignant with Israel because of her sin and disciplined her through the oppression of Gentile armies—Assyria (Isa. 10:5, 25) and Babylon (Lam. 2:6). The term “*the indignation*” refers to God's discipline of Israel specifically during the Great Tribulation (Dan. 12:1, 7).

### IV. GABRIEL'S EXPLANATION OF THE SYMBOLS (DAN. 8:20-22)

- A. Gabriel interpreted the ram with two horns (8:3-4) and the male goat (8:5-8) with the large horn (8:20-22). Most agree that these were historically fulfilled by the Medo-Persian and Greek empires.

*<sup>20</sup>“The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia.  
<sup>21</sup>And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king [Alexander the Great]. <sup>22</sup>As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.” (Dan. 8:20-22)*

- B. The two horns of the ram (8:3-4) are the kings of Media and Persia; the goat (8:5) speaks of the kingdom of Greece. The notable horn (8:5) between the goat's eyes is the first king—Alexander.
- C. The broken horn (8:8) speaks of Alexander the Great, who died at the age of 32 in 323 BC. The four horns (*four notable ones*, 8:8) are four kingdoms that arose following Alexander's death. After Alexander died, four of his notable generals divided his kingdom into four lesser kingdoms. The four horns here parallel the four heads of Daniel 7:6.

## V. THE ANTICHRIST'S PERSONALITY AND POWER (DAN. 8:23-25)

- A. Daniel 8 emphasizes the Antichrist's activities in relationship to the Jewish people and the temple in Jerusalem (8:9-14), as well as the great cruelty of his reign of terror over the nations (8:23-25). He will emerge in the latter time (8:23) of the kingdom of the four kings mentioned in verse 22. The composite beast of Daniel 7:11 will express the evil, geography, and ethnicity of Greece.

<sup>23</sup>***"In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king [Antichrist] shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes.***

<sup>24</sup>***His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power [by demonic power]; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.***

<sup>25</sup>***Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes [Jesus]; but he shall be broken without human means [by God's power]."* (Dan. 8:23-25)**

- B. ***Fullness of transgressors:*** In the generation in which Jesus returns, sin will reach the greatest heights ever in history (Dan. 8:23; 12:10; Mt. 13:30; 1 Thes. 2:16; Rev. 9:20-21; 14:18; 17:4; 18:5).

<sup>21</sup>***They did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. (Rev. 9:21)***

<sup>5</sup>***The earth is defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed... (Isa. 24:5)***

- C. ***A king shall arise:*** The Antichrist shall arise as a king when sin "reaches its fullness" (8:23).
- D. ***Fierce features:*** The Antichrist will have fierce features (8:23). Some translations refer here to his bold or strong countenance—cruelty. He will be resolute in his cruelty, without any capacity for compassion or mercy. His most prominent name in Scripture is the Beast, because he thinks like a wild beast. He is called the Beast thirty-six times in the book of Revelation to convince us that it will be impossible to negotiate with him for mercy. He will be the cruelest man in history.
- E. ***Sinister schemes:*** He will discern the evil motives of men and solve complex problems (8:23). This will include the spiritual realm (occult) and the natural realm of politics, war, economics, etc. He will solve complex problems by receiving supernatural, demonic insight.
- F. ***Mighty power:*** The Antichrist's power shall be mighty (8:24). The Antichrist's source of power will be satanic (Rev. 13:2). He will not be limited to human power and abilities.

1. Satan will give power and great authority to the Antichrist to do great miracles.  
<sup>2</sup>*The dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne, and authority. (Rev. 13:2)*  
<sup>9</sup>*The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is...with signs, and lying wonders. (2 Thes. 2:9)*
2. He will ascend from the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7; 17:8).  
<sup>7</sup>*The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war. (Rev. 11:7)*  
<sup>8</sup>*The beast...will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. (Rev. 17:8)*
- G. **Destroy fearfully:** He will destroy in a fearful way and on an unprecedented level (8:24). Here the Hebrew word for *fearfully* includes the concept of *unique*, as in *uniquely fearful*. He will use unique ways to kill in large numbers and will use fearful methods to produce terror.  
<sup>23</sup>*“...fourth beast shall...devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.” (Dan. 7:23)*
- H. **Destroy the mighty:** He will not be afraid to kill the mighty—the most prominent world leaders (politics, finances, science, etc.)—and beloved public figures (8:24).
- I. **Destroy the holy people:** He will kill Jewish people as well as members of the Body of Christ (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7, 10; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9, 14; 9:21; 11:7; 13:7, 15; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4; cf. Mt. 10:21-22, 28; 24:9; Lk. 12:4-7; 21:16-19; Jn. 15:18-16:4).  
<sup>7</sup>*It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. (Rev. 13:7)*
- J. **He shall destroy many in their prosperity:** The Antichrist shall destroy many rich people (8:25). He will not be afraid to kill the rich, because he will not need their favor to succeed like most politicians do. The rich should not place their confidence in their wealth to protect them from the Antichrist, for he has no capacity for kindness or mercy.  
<sup>16</sup>*...the ten horns...on the beast...hate the harlot...and burn her with fire. (Rev. 17:16)*
- K. **Cunning:** His propaganda will be cleverly devised to deceive multitudes. Cunning is the crafty use of special skill or knowledge that is characterized by trickery. Deceit and cunning will be his weapons. He may use the arts, media, and music to make his message more convincing. He will present himself as a man of peace, but will cause many wars and great destruction.  
<sup>24</sup>*“He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive...<sup>25</sup>Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity.” (Dan. 8:24-25)*
- L. **He will cause deceit to prosper:** He will convince the multitudes with lies that are backed up by demonic signs to confirm them (2 Thes. 2:9-10).

- M. **Prosper and thrive:** The Antichrist shall prosper and thrive (8:24). He shall temporarily thrive politically, militarily, and financially, even while doing evil and destroying people. His power and wealth will increase as his armies conquer more nations. What he does will seem to be blessed by God. Many will assume that prosperity is a sign of God's blessing on him. This will give them confidence to join him. He will seem totally invincible to the people in the nations (Rev. 13:4).  
*<sup>4</sup>They worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4)*
- N. **He shall exalt himself:** The Antichrist will have an unholy boldness in his wisdom. He will have no fear of consequences for his ruthless attacks on the nations. Even the boldest leaders in history have had some fear of the consequences of their actions. Paul made reference to Daniel's prophecies of the Antichrist exalting himself as God (8:11; 11:36) by claiming to be God (2 Thes. 2:4).  
*<sup>4</sup>The man of sin [the Antichrist]...exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:4)*
- O. **Rise against Jesus:** The Antichrist will stand against Jesus as the Prince of princes (8:11, 25).  
*<sup>25</sup>"He shall even rise against the Prince of princes [Jesus]." (Dan. 8:25)*  
*<sup>11</sup>He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host. (Dan. 8:11)*  
*<sup>36</sup>"The king shall...speak blasphemies against the God of gods." (Dan. 11:36)*  
*<sup>6</sup>Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name. (Rev. 13:6)*
- P. **Broken:** The Antichrist will be destroyed in a supernatural way (8:25). He will be broken without human intervention. No man's hand will be involved in destroying the Antichrist. His army will be destroyed by the sword *from the mouth of Jesus* (Rev. 19:20-21).  
*<sup>25</sup>"...but he shall be broken without human means." (Dan. 8:25)*
- Q. Daniel described the Antichrist's judgment four times, prophesying that he will be *consumed*, *destroyed*, and *broken without human means* (by divine intervention), and that no military alliance will be able to *help him*, support him, or rescue him from God's judgment (7:11, 26; 8:25; 11:45).  
*<sup>11</sup>I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. (Dan. 7:11)*  
*<sup>26</sup>They shall take away his [Antichrist's] dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. (Dan. 7:26)*  
*<sup>45</sup>...yet he [Antichrist] shall come to his end, and no one will help him. (Dan 11:45)*  
*<sup>8</sup>The lawless one [Antichrist] will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thes. 2:8)*

*<sup>20</sup>The beast was captured...cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev. 19:20)*

R. **Summary:** The Antichrist will be the most powerful political leader in history:

1. Military genius (tactics/strategy) – Dan. 8:24, 25; 11:38-39; Rev. 6:2; 13:2, 16
2. Oratorical genius (moves masses of people) – Dan. 11:32, 36; 8:23
3. Political genius (diplomacy) – Dan. 7:23; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:8, 12; 17:11-12
4. Commercial genius (prosperity) – Dan. 8:9, 24; 11:36, 43; Rev. 13:16-17
5. Religious genius (doctrines and history of world religions) – 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:4, 8, 12
6. Intellectual genius (science, math, technology, languages, etc.) – Dan. 7:25; 8:23
7. Occult genius (demonology, miracles, human sacrifice) – Dan. 8:24; 11:39; Rev. 13

## VI. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISION (DAN. 8:26-27)

A. Daniel fainted and was sick, overwhelmed and astonished by what he saw in the vision (8:27). Gabriel emphasized again that the vision would be fulfilled in the distant future (8:17-19, 26).

*<sup>26</sup>“The vision of the evenings and mornings...is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future.” <sup>27</sup>I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I...went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it. (Dan. 8:26-27)*

B. **The vision of the evenings and mornings:** Gabriel’s name for the vision of the 2,300 days (8:14). The vision revealed that an army under the Antichrist would oppose the daily sacrifices (8:12). The Antichrist would eventually take away the daily sacrifices and cast down the sanctuary (8:11). An angel referred to this as “the transgression of the desolation” (8:13).

*<sup>11</sup>...by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.  
<sup>12</sup>...an army was given over to the horn [Antichrist] to oppose the daily sacrifices...<sup>13</sup>I heard a holy one [angel] speaking...“How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”  
<sup>14</sup>He said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.” (Dan. 8:11-14)*

C. **It is true:** Gabriel declared that what Daniel saw was true (8:26). This was meant to emphasize the importance and reliability of the vision. In other words, the persecution and victory of Israel will surely come. This is similar to the mighty angel swearing that the trouble was coming (12:7).

*<sup>7</sup>He [the angel]...swore...that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time [3½ years]; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. (Dan. 12:7)*

- D. ***Seal the vision:*** Gabriel told Daniel to seal, or preserve, the vision (8:26). The word *seal* does not mean to hide, but to write it so as to preserve it. Daniel was commanded to seal it because it was about things that would happen many days in the future. The saints in the end times would need this revelation. To seal up the vision meant to write and preserve it, not make it secret (7:28; 12:9).
- E. ***Daniel was sick:*** Daniel was impacted more by this vision than other visions because of the severe persecution coming to Israel. If we are not troubled by this vision, then we have not understood it.
- F. ***Daniel was astonished:*** As he thought over the vision, he was astonished by what he saw.
- G. ***Understanding the vision:*** Even with the help of Gabriel interpreting this vision, Daniel still did not understand many of the implications. Daniel told the vision to others, but none of them understood. The Lord promised that in the end times His people would understand (11:33-35; 12:10).

*<sup>33</sup>“Those of the people who understand shall instruct many...<sup>35</sup>Some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end.” (Dan. 11:33-35)*

*<sup>10</sup>Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. (Dan. 12:10)*