

The Shadow of Antichrist

Daniel 8

CONTEXT: Remember last week we said:

- The book of Revelation is the end time with Christ as the Key figure. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.
- Well, Daniel 7-12 is the end time period with Anti Christ as the Key figure. So in many ways the two books overlap.

Here in Chapter 8 we read a prophecy concerning a time that many Evangelicals are highly unfamiliar with. This prophecy is fulfilled during the time we call the inter-testamental period.

That is the 400 years between the prophecy of **Malachi** and the Gospel of **Matthew**. 400 where God was silent, SORT OF.

You see, we don't believe that any authoritative revelation occurred during this period, that is the kind that would included in the Canon of Scripture. But that does not mean that God wasn't working. He was very much working, this was no 400 year Sabbatical.

As a matter of fact - Daniel prophecies about some of God's work that occurred between Malachi and Matthew.

Now the Catholics had a section of books between the Old and New Testament that we call the, "**apocrypha**". They consider it *secondary*, or less authoritative than the Old or New Testaments.

But the prophecy of Daniel 8 IS SCRIPTURE, it is AUTHORITATIVE. We all agree on that and it also covers this intertestamental time.

NOW - this chapter is consider **TYPICO-PROPHETIC**. That is - it gives us a historical figure that we can watch and wrap our minds around who will serve as a TYPE of the final person of ANTICHRIST.

We see this all through scripture:

- **Isaac** lays helpless before Abraham - as a type of a far greater Son who would be sacrificed.
- **David** fights Goliath - as a type of one greater than David who would come and fight a greater Goliath.
- Even here in **Daniel** we see Daniel cast into a pit of death yet come out alive as a type of a far greater than Daniel who would one day come.
- There are times when you see a prophet describing an earthly King, and then the language goes beyond what is possible of any mere mortal to describe **Satan**

himself.

- Well here in Dan. 8 we see something similar - Daniel is going to show us a figure in history who is a TYPE of that end times personality we call **AntiChrist**.

His name is **Antiochus Epiphanes**. That name means, "*The Appearing of Glory*", incidentally the Jews called him "*Antiochus Epimenes*" which means, "The Appearing of the Idiot".

TEXT: Daniel 8:1–27 (ESV)

¹ In the third year of the reign of **King Belshazzar** a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

So this prophecy came while **Babylon** was still in power, Beshazzar is King.

² 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. ³ I raised my eyes and 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 last.

So remember what we said about numbers in Apocalyptic Literature? They typically mean the same thing. Where else have we seen the number 2 emphasized, specifically with one larger than the other?

- We saw it in the Statue of Daniel 2 - the two arms, which we said was the Medo-Persian Empire.
- We saw it again in Second Beast of Daniel 7 - one side was larger than the other. We said that was also the Medo-Persian Empire.

So here we see a Ram with two horns, one larger than the other. What do you suppose that represents? The **Medo-Persian Empire**. See how easy this is?

⁴ I saw the ram charging westward and 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.

So that is the Persians...then notice verse 4.

⁵ As I was considering, behold, a male goat 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 which Nation followed the Persians? The **Greeks**. So we can assume this is likely the Greek Empire.

⁶ He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath. ⁷ 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.

So this is the over throw of the Persians by the Greeks.

⁸ 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.

Alexander the Great lead the Greeks to conquer the known world then died at the age of 33. He had no sons to rule after him, so the empire was divided between 4 generals, those are the 4 conspicuous horns. **Verse 22** tells us that is what this is - ²² As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power.

- **Asia Minor and Macedonia** - were ruled by Lysimachus and Cassander. Don't worry about them for now.
- **Syria** (North of Israel) - was ruled by Seleucus, from which came the Seleucid kings.
- **Egypt** (South of Israel) - was ruled by Ptolemy (most famous was Cleopatra)

NOW - The Seleucids and the Ptolemaic dynasties were both Grecian. But they began to develop unique identities.

It is always dangerous when a nation or any type of organization begins to form a variety of identities, mark it down, things are falling apart.

- When a married couple develops too separate of a life, that marriage is in danger.
- When different groups within a Nation fly different flags that is a bad sign. There is a reason the American flag is always the tallest at pubic events, it is supposed to unite our people, and say what unifies US is our fidelity to our One Nation Under God.

Well these GREEKS flew two different flags and became two different nations and went to war with one another. This was known as the Syro-Egyptian Wars.

Guess who was in the middle? **Israel**. Both wanted Israel.

⁹ Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.

171 B.C. there came forth the 8th Seleucid King - Antiochus Epiphanies. He began to expand his Kingdom toward Egypt.

Meanwhile, far to the west, another Kingdom was growing strong on 7 Mountains... called **Rome**. Egypt had a friend in Rome, so Egypt appealed to Rome for help.

The story goes that the Old Roman general came to Antiochus.

Antiochus said to the Roman General, 'Rome has no business in Egypt!' The General smiled, "'Syria has no business in Egypt either,'

"Go back to Rome,' said the King Antiochus.

"Go back to Syria,' said the Roman General.

"But neither of them moved a single inch.

"You are offending the Senate and People of Rome,' said the General, "I have been ordered to make you return to Syria."

"Antiochus laughed and asked 'And how are you going to make me go home? Where is your army?'

"I have no need of an army, Everything that Rome is, has been, and will be, is standing before you here and now. I am Rome, And in the name of Rome, I say to you a further time, go home!'

"No,' said Antiochus.

"So the General stepped forward, and moving sedately, he used the end of his staff to trace a circle in the dust all the way around the person of Antiochus.

"Before you step out of this circle, King Antiochus IV, I advise you to think again,'

'And when you do step out of it - why, be facing east, and go home to Syria.'

Antiochus did decide to go home Syria. But on his way he took the fury of his shame out of Israel whom he already controlled.

In 175 BC he began the practice of **Hellenization** - that is he sought to make the Jews, Greeks. He made it illegal to be circumcised. He outlawed the Torah. He made Jewish boys exercise in the nude like Greek boys at a gymnasium just in sight of the Temple.

Worst of All - He turned the Temple of God into the Temple of Zeus. He then took a pig and sacrificed it on the Jewish Alter and took the entrails and spread them over the temple grounds so no Jew would enter.

Those who did not comply he killed. He eventually killed 40,000 Jews. Those who would not comply retreated into the Mountains.

That is prophesied in verse 10 -

¹⁰ It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. 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. ¹² And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. ¹³ 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 offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" ¹⁴ And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

In 175 BC Antiochus began the process of Hellenizing the Jews.

Persecution had forced one of the Faithful Priests named **Matthias** to **Modi'in**, a small, inconspicuous hamlet situated to the northwest of Jerusalem. There, he and his family hoped to be spared the brunt of the Hellenistic efforts that were previously concentrated in Jerusalem. However, their hopes would soon be dashed.

Before long, Greek troops arrived at Modi'in. They instructed the Jews to meet in the town square where the pagan ritual, which included the sacrifice of a pig to Zeus, would take place. As the town elder and a priest, Matthias was called upon to perform the sacrifice (I Maccabees, 2:17-18). If the Greeks could win him over, the rest of the town would certainly follow.

Defying Matthias's heroic stance, a hellenized Jew came forward to sacrifice the pig. At that moment, the elderly priest stabbed him and killed the Greek commander as well. He then faced the crowd. Echoing the words spoken by Moshe following the sin of the Golden Calf some 1,500 years prior, Matthias challenged them, **"All who are for God should follow me!"** (I Maccabees 2:27) Local inhabitants immediately pounced upon the Greek garrison, killing them. The war had officially begun.

Miraculously, Matthias, then his grandson Judas the hammer defeated the Greeks, driving them from Israel. And for 80 years the Jews were an independent nation.

As Daniel prophesied, Antiochus stopped the Sacrifices in September of 171BC, 2300 days later on 165 BC Dec. 25 when the Maccabees put down the sons of Greece and light the Menorah. This is commemorated by the Jewish festival of Lights - Hanukkah.

Gabriel explains the vision to Daniel in 15-26 as I have explained it to you

Daniel 8:15–27 (ESV)

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. ¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." ¹⁷ So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time

of the end.” ¹⁸ And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. ¹⁹ He said, “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end. ²⁰ As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. ²² As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. 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. ²⁴ 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 mighty men and the people who are the saints. ²⁵ By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand. ²⁶ The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now.” ²⁷ And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king’s business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

Conclusions for Practical Application:

1. Recognize the Importance of Identity

Proverbs 23:7 As a man thinks within his heart, so is he.

Zig Ziglar said, “It is impossible to perform consistently in a way that is inconsistent with how you see yourself”.

Everyone in this chapter was concerned about Identity.

The Jews wanted to maintain their National Identity

The Greeks wanted to reorient the Identity of the Jews through Hellenization.

What do you think is important to preserve in our National Identity

What about our Christian Identity

What about your family identity

2. Remember that a People’s power is found in a humble relation to God

Notice that throughout this study God raised up nations and took them down. A Nation exists simply because of the Providence and good graces of God Almighty. At any moment he can remove his hand of protection and raise up another to destroy it.

He did it to Babylon

He did it to Persia

He did it to Rome

He even did it to Israel when they got out of line....

But now he wouldn’t do that to us here in America because we are special - HAHA!

You better believe he would. Do you believe it? Do you believe that it is important that we humble ourselves before God and show our dependance on him? Tonight at 6:30 meet me at the courthouse for a prayer meeting.

3. Daniel is Remarkably Accurate

For year critics of the Bible said, “this chapter HAD to be written after the fact”. Now these are scholars who don’t believe the scriptures, they said that this section is so absolutely accurate that it must have been written in retrospect.

That theory fell apart in 1947 when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Actually, years after when the various parts were collect and read. It turns out that all of Daniel was intact, except for chapter 12. Now, the dead sea scrolls were copies of scrolls that were MUCH older than those your OT was translated from, the Masoratic Texts. They proved conclusively that Daniel made these prophecies far before they occurred. Thus, what you hold in your hand is the very revelation of God.

We know they are accurate, because history proves the events took place. Do you think they may be accurate concerning those things that have not yet occurred?

CONCLUSION/INVITATION

4. Prepare for the 2nd Coming by Trusting the Christ of the 1st Coming

INVITE TO JOIN US AT COURTHOUSE FOR PRAYER AT 6:30PM