

Daniel 8

- We move into the second part of Daniel's book
 - Chapters 2-7 were written in Aramaic, and therefore they were directed at both the Jew and Gentile
 - In those chapters, we followed a chiasm that traced the Lord's working to bring world empires into and out of power
 - The chiastic structure served to emphasize that the Lord was in control and that all things were according to His purposes for Israel
 - They would be conquered and oppressed by Gentiles
 - But they were also under God's hand through it all
 - Now Daniel returns to writing exclusively in Hebrew, indicating he's speaking only to the Jewish audience in Israel
 - And the events that he describes are some of the most fascinating and important prophecy in the whole of scripture
 - In chapters 8-12, Daniel receives visions that address each of the remaining Gentile nations in the Age of Gentiles
 - Beginning today, Daniel will explain how the Medo-Persians will transition to the Greek Empire
 - And then in later chapters we learn how the Greek Empire will proceed
 - And then how the fourth kingdom will proceed
 - Finally, we learn details of how that fourth kingdom will come to its end
- But obviously, Daniel doesn't offer us a complete accounting of everything these empires do during the hundreds of years they will rule
 - Instead, his prophecies focus on how these kingdoms impact Israel
 - In particular, how each kingdom will accomplish the central purpose of the Age of the Gentiles
 - That is how they trample Jerusalem and the temple

- Tonight in chapter 8, the focus is on the second and third kingdoms
 - How will these kingdoms deal with Israel and the city of Jerusalem and the temple?
 - The visions come to Daniel during the final years Babylonian empire
 - So for Daniel and Israel they were truly prophecy
- But of course, the events in this chapter are just history now, and therefore we might ask why it matters to us today?
 - The answer is that this chapter serves to authenticate later chapters' prophecies
 - When we see how accurately Daniel described the events of the Medo-Persian and Greek Empires, we have greater confidence in his later prophecies
 - Because just as it was with the statue and beasts prophecies, the focus in these four chapters is squarely on the final days of the final kingdom
- So let's start with the first part of chapter 8
 - In this chapter we learn about an unexpectedly powerful world leader who comes from out of nowhere to dethrone a supposedly undefeatable opponent...

Dan. 8:1 In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously.

Dan. 8:2 I looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal.

Dan. 8:3 Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last.

Dan. 8:4 I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself.

- Daniel dates this prophecy to the third year of Belshazzar

- Remember, chapter 7 was dated to the first year of Belshazzar, while chapter 5 was set 12 years earlier in the final hours of the king's rule
 - So we're jumping around in time, but clearly chronology is not Daniel's first priority
 - His book is organized to convey the significance of these events
- Daniel's vision begins with the citadel at Susa
 - Susa was a an important city in the Babylonian Empire
 - It was located about 200 miles east of Babylon and 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf
 - The Code of Hammurabi, a series of 7ft tall stone obelisks and tablets found there in 1901
 - The code was the law of the Babylonian king Hammurabi and it described various rules for justice and civil contracts
- Susa was in Elam, a province of Babylon in modern-day Iran
 - It sat on the edge of the Babylonian Empire
 - But the city later became the capital of the Medo-Persian empire after it defeated Babylon
 - So the city has dual meaning
 - It represents Babylon's power giving way to the next empire
- In Daniel's vision, he's been transported to the city standing next to the Ulai canal, an artificial waterway that connected two rivers near Susa
 - Daniel's personal involvement in the vision may explain why he moves to talking about himself in the first person
 - Previously, he's been talking in the third person
 - Now's he telling of his personal experiences
 - When we remember he is now writing in Hebrew, this change suggests Daniel was speaking as an eyewitness directly to the Jewish people concerning their shared future
 - Then we're told of a ram with two horns standing in Susa
 - The ram had two horns, but one horn was larger than the other

- As we try to understand the meaning of the symbol of a ram, we notice that the lopsided nature of the horns reminds us the bear in chapter 7
- The bear stood lopsided to represent the unequal union of the Medo-Persian Empire
- The Persians were far more powerful and in short order, they took control of the union
- So immediately we begin to think that the ram with unequal horns may be another representation of the Medo-Persian Empire
 - And when we look more closely at the symbol of the ram itself, we find confirmation
 - The ram was an important symbol for the Persians
 - In their pagan religion, the Persians represented their primary god as a ram
 - A ram's head was carried by the commander of the army when going into battle
 - Even in the ancient zodiac of the night sky, Persia was associated with Aries, the ram constellation
- So the horns represent the two parts of the Empire, the Medes and Persians
 - A lopsided ram standing in the future capital city of Persia is a uniquely appropriate symbol for the rise of the Medo-Persian empire
 - The Persians were the more powerful, thus the longer horn
 - And the horn comes up "last" because the Persians took control away from the Medes who held it early
 - Finally, the horns sit on a ram reflecting the way the Medo-Persian empire becomes a Persian empire by the end
 - And the ram's behavior also reflects that nation's ascent to power over Babylon
 - The ram in the vision did as rams are wont to do
 - It butted everything within its reach north, south and west
 - It doesn't go east though

- The nation of Persia was the power of the east, so it conquered in the other directions
- These three directions were pictured in the three ribs of the bear's mouth
- The power of this ram was unchallenged, doing what it wanted we're told in v.4, because it is the world power
- Next we hear of another power coming to challenge this supreme ram

Dan. 8:5 While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.

Dan. 8:6 He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath.

Dan. 8:7 I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power.

Dan. 8:8 Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

- Now a goat arrives on the scene and contends with the ram
 - Rams are male sheep, which are obviously a different animal than a goat
 - So this change in type of animals would seem to indicate a change in kingdom
 - That conclusion is based on what we saw happening in chapter 7
 - Each beast represented a different kingdom
 - We've already seen that the ram is the Medo-Persia empire, so we're looking at a kingdom with the capacity to challenge the Persians
 - Clearly, that leads us to assume that the goat represents the Greek Empire
 - No other empire challenged the Persian Empire until the Greeks destroyed them

- As we look back to the Alexandrian Empire, we find that the goat was a ancient symbol for Greece
 - The constellation Capricorn, which is latin for goat horn, stood for Greece in the ancient zodiac
 - And the features of this goat match other aspects of the Greek empire
- First, this goat had a single conspicuous horn
 - Normally, goats have two horns so possessing only one horn suggests a single powerful ruler of this kingdom
 - That certainly fits with the history of Alexander the Great
 - He ruled alone and single-handedly conquered the vast territory that would become the Greek Empire
- Next, the way this goat took control away from the ram fits history
 - In v.6 it says the goat “rushed” at the ram
 - Certainly speed was an essential element in Alexander’s strategy for victory
 - He reached world domination in only 10 years from the beginning of his military career
 - He defeated the near east and middle east in barely three years
 - And he defeated the Persians in a series of decisive battles that resulted in the end of their reign over the world
 - The Persians greatly outnumbered the Greeks in battle, as was the Persians’ style of warfare
 - But Alexander was a brilliant military tactician who defeated Persia with movement and disciplined troops
 - So in v.7 we’re told the goat completely ends the strength of the ram
 - So far all the details match with what we know of these two Empires
- The confirming detail, as if we needed one, is found in v.8
 - Daniel predicts the early death of the leader of this kingdom

- He says that the one horn on the goat will magnify himself, yet at the moment he becomes mighty, the horn is “broken”
- In other words, this leader doesn’t stay in power after he has conquered the ram
- Sure enough, this is a perfect description of Alexander
 - After conquering Persia, he went further east into India before turning back because his troops were homesick
 - He eventually returned to Babylon determined to make the massive city his capital city
- But before he could even plan the next steps of his government, Alexander died suddenly
 - This detail is a stunning confirmation of the accuracy of Daniel’s prophecy
 - Years before the Medo-Persia Empire rose to power, and centuries before the birth of Alexander, Daniel predicted his early death
- Or we should say the Lord predicted it, because the Lord desired it
 - Alexander was said to point to the book of Daniel to say he had a divine appointment with destiny as a world ruler
 - He must have conveniently overlooked how the horn came to its end
- After Alexander’s death, there was a struggle for control over his kingdom
 - Eventually, civil wars resulted in the kingdom being divided four ways under the control of four of Alexander’s generals
 - The divisions of the empire ran along compass directions
 - There was an east, west, north and south division of his kingdom
 - That result is also mirrored in this uncanny prediction
 - In v.8 we’re told that in place of the large horn were four conspicuous horns
 - And these were pointing toward the four winds of heaven

- Notice it's the four winds (or in Hebrew it says the four spirits) of heaven
- That is these matters are appointed by God, as they must since it's all being described in perfect detail hundreds of years in advance
- Up to this point the prophecy is treading over old ground, albeit with new imagery
 - We're still waiting for the new information
 - And so now it comes

Dan. 8:9 Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land.

Dan. 8:10 It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down.

Dan. 8:11 It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down.

Dan. 8:12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.

Dan. 8:13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?"

Dan. 8:14 He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."

- We're still looking at the goat and it's four new horns that replaced Alexander
 - By logical conclusion, we see the four new horns as representing the rulers of the four divisions of Alexander's kingdom
 - And if so, then the new, smaller horn that grows up among them must be yet another ruler
 - It also draws our attention to the earlier mention of a "little horn" in chapter 7
 - In that chapter, the little horn described a man who arrives in the fourth kingdom at the very end

- We identified him as the antichrist who will come 3.5 years before the Lord's return
- Yet this little horn is part of the third kingdom and he comes soon after Alexander's death
 - So clearly this little horn is different than the one described in chapter 7
 - And the events surrounding his appearance are different than those of at the end of the age
- Nevertheless, the fact that this symbol is being used for the second time is not a coincidence
 - The Lord is purposely reusing the little horn symbol to draw our attention to similarities between these two men
 - Though they lived in very different times and circumstances, they are connected in spirit and in actions
- To understand the connection, let's look at what this little horn does
 - He grows great in three directions
 - He goes south, east and toward the Beautiful Land
 - The beautiful land is always a reference in scripture to Israel or Palestine generally

Jer. 3:19 "Then I said,
 'How I would set you among My sons
 And give you a pleasant land,
 The most beautiful inheritance of the nations!'
 And I said, 'You shall call Me, My Father,
 And not turn away from following Me.'

- Daniel also uses this term several more times in the same way
- These details help us identify a man who fits this description
 - Antiochus IV, who was the eighth king of the Seleucid empire
 - The Seleucid empire was located in present-day Syria
 - And it was one of the four divisions of the Greek Empire after Alexander's death

- He fought against the other Greek divisions seeking to gain power over them
 - He fought to gain territory in the east, south
 - And most famously, he invaded Palestine and conquered the land of Israel
 - So far, Antiochus IV fits the description of the little horn in this chapter
- Then in v.10 we get to the point
 - The little horn kept growing until it reached heavens where caused stars in the sky to fall to the earth and be trampled
 - Remember, Daniel is describing the things he saw in a vision
 - And these things are symbolic, not literal
 - Just as the horns stood for kings, so do stars falling in the night sky stand for something else
 - What do stars represent in scripture?
 - Here we get a chance to exercise two important principles of symbolic interpretation
 - First, we look to see how the Bible interprets this symbol
 - If we did that homework, we find that when stars are used symbolically, they represent angels
 - So we might be tempted to stop there and declare that these falling stars are fallen angels, that is demons
 - But before we can come to that conclusion, we must apply another major rule of interpretation
 - We must check to see if our interpretation fits the context of this passage
 - For example, does it make sense that a man, Antiochus IV, can reach up into the heavenly realm and cause angels to fall
 - And can that man trample (i.e., destroy) these beings?
- Suddenly, our interpretation doesn't make much sense, since we can't expect that a man would have the power to bring angels down from heaven

- So what do stars mean then?
 - In this case, we go back looking for other uses of stars as a symbol
 - And we find this in Genesis 37

Gen. 37:9 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

Gen. 37:10 He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?"

- Joseph had a dream in which the sun, moon and stars are used symbolically
 - Jacob gives the interpretation of the dream
 - He declares that the stars represent the sons of Israel
 - Now we have an alternate way in which the Lord has used stars symbolically
- If we return to Daniel 8 and use the symbol again in that alternate way, the context fits perfectly
 - Antiochus IV comes into the Beautiful land, which is Israel
 - And when he arrives, he defeats the sons of Israel and brings them to destruction
 - Not only does the symbol now fit the context, but it also fit's Daniel's purpose in writing
 - He is explaining how each of these kingdoms will impact the people of Israel
- History records that when Antiochus arrived in Palestine, he came with a particular vengeance against the Jewish people
 - In just one campaign against Israel, he killed 40,000 Jews and took another 10,000 into slavery
 - Having conquered the land, he continued moving south to defeat the Romans in Egypt

- Instead, he lost to the Roman commander Popilius Laenas
- So he was forced to retreat back north into Palestine, angry and seeking to take his anger out on Jews
- In December 168 he seized Jerusalem on a Sabbath and began to do everything he could to offend the Jews
 - He placed a statue of the pagan god Zeus in the temple
 - He ordered that a pig be sacrificed in the temple and the animal's blood poured out on the altar
- This act was the most horrifying thing Israel had seen in the temple's history
 - It was so bad that the Jews gave the event a special title that stuck in their collective memory
 - They took to calling it the "abomination of desolation"
- We see a veiled reference to this event in v.11
 - The little horn will magnify himself to being equal to the Commander of the host
 - The host is a reference to the stars collectively
 - And the word for Commander could mean the High Priest or even God Himself
 - Putting this together, the little horn magnifies himself as the greatest in Israel, stops sacrifices and desecrates the temple
 - Antiochus did all these things
 - First, he added the term Epiphanes to his name, which means the manifestation of God, comparing himself to God
 - Later the Jews changes the word slightly to Epimanes which means madman
 - Furthermore, in 171 BC he removed the legitimate high priest of Israel and appointed a wicked man to serve him in that role
 - This prevented the legitimate daily sacrifice in the temple
 - Since his man was not truly the high priest, there could be no daily sacrifice in the temple

- His actions against Israel culminated with the desolation in 168 BC
- In v.12 Daniel is told these things come to pass because of Israel's transgression
 - This is a reference to Israel's failure to keep the Old Covenant
 - It was Israel's failure to keep their covenant with God that brought about the Age of the Gentiles
 - And this passage is confirmation that these terrible events are ordained by God in keeping with the promised penalties of the Old Covenant
 - The host of Israel will be given into the hand of this man for a time
 - And he will also fling truth to the ground
 - Israel and the temple were intended to be a testimony to the truth to the world
 - But it has been (temporarily) flung to the ground
- Then in vs.13-14 Daniel overhears a conversation between two angels, or so it would seem
 - One angel turns to another and asks how long will Israel be subjected to these things?
 - The angels are having this conversation for Daniel's benefit of course
 - It seems that Daniel didn't even know what questions to ask
 - The answer to the question is 2,300 evenings and mornings
 - The phrase evening and morning is a clear reference to the Jewish way of reckoning a 24-hour day
 - So all these things will last 6 years, 4 months and 20 days
 - Once again, history bears out the truth of this prophecy
 - Beginning on September 9, 171 BC the regular authorized sacrifices were not possible without a legitimate high priest
 - But the Maccabean revolt ending with the rededication of the temple on December 25, 165 BC allowed Israel to reinstate the sacrifices

- There are 2,300 days on the Jewish calendar between those two dates
- Here again the accuracy of Daniel's prediction is uncanny
 - We should expect nothing less from God of course
 - But that's the point, that these prophecies are clearly from God
 - And He's not merely predicting the future, He's controlling it as He chooses
- Now at this point, I have been working through the vision and its interpretation based on an analysis of the symbols and a comparison to history
 - But of course, Daniel didn't have the benefit of hindsight as he received this message the first time
 - So he's thoroughly confused about it's meaning
 - And so the Lord provides Daniel with an interpretation of the vision in the second half of the chapter
 - Having this interpretation will serve as confirmation to us that we have properly understood the prophecy
 - But the interpretation introduces a new understanding as well, one built upon that connection to the little horn symbol of chapter 7

Dan. 8:15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man.

Dan. 8:16 And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, "Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision."

Dan. 8:17 So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end."

- First, notice that Daniel is assisted by one in his vision who looks like a man
 - In v.16 we discover that this man was no man at all but was actually the angel Gabriel
 - The name Gabriel means the man of El, or the man of God
 - He is an archangel, the leader of the angels

- The angelic realm is divided in scripture into cherubs, seraphim and angels
 - Gabriel and Michael are the only angels named in scripture
 - And both are archangels, which suggests they have high positions of authority
- The voice of a man “between the banks” of the channel calls out to Gabriel telling him to give Daniel the interpretation
 - We will hear more about this mysterious man between the banks later
 - Meanwhile Gabriel carries out these instructions
- His first comment to Daniel is that this visions pertain to the time of the end
 - This is our first clue that the thing in this dream look forward to something beyond even the Persian and Greek empires
 - In fact, the vision has a second player of meaning that draws our attention once more to the end of the fourth kingdom

Dan. 8:18 Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright.

Dan. 8:19 He said, “Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.

Dan. 8:20 “The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.

Dan. 8:21 “The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Dan. 8:22 “The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.

- Daniel’s faint into a coma-like sleep in v.18 is significant
 - It reflects a new stage to his vision, moving to a new phase of revelation
 - That gives us some license to understand these visions in another way
 - And in v.19 Gabriel says these things relate in some way to the final period, the indignation at the appointed time of the end

- And then Gabriel moves to explaining the ram and goat and horns
 - And his explanation tracks exactly with our earlier interpretation
 - These things describe events in these two periods of the age of the Gentiles
- But then the archangel moves to explain how these symbols also allude to other events in a later day

Dan. 8:23 “In the latter period of their rule,
 When the transgressors have run their course,
 A king will arise,
 Insolent and skilled in intrigue.

Dan. 8:24 “His power will be mighty, but not by his own power,
 And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree
 And prosper and perform his will;
 He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.

Dan. 8:25 “And through his shrewdness
 He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;
 And he will magnify himself in his heart,
 And he will destroy many while they are at ease.
 He will even oppose the Prince of princes,
 But he will be broken without human agency.

Dan. 8:26 “The vision of the evenings and mornings
 Which has been told is true;
 But keep the vision secret,
 For it pertains to many days in the future.”

- As we consider the archangels tells Daniel, don't forget that we know the little horn is a symbol of Antiochus IV
 - Everything we saw in the prophecy matched his actions
 - The places and dates were a perfect match
 - And he is a part of the third kingdom, of Greece
 - Nevertheless, we're starting to hear new things in this description
 - What Gabriel tells Daniel fits Antiochus to a degree
 - But some of the details go beyond what Antiochus does

- So we need to understand how these two truths are working together
 - How these visions can certainly describe Antiochus
 - And also how they can describe someone else in the end of the age
- First, Gabriel says in v.23 that these events are set in the latter part of “their rule”
 - “Their rule” must refer to the rule of the Persians and particularly the Greeks
 - So here again this must refer to Antiochus
 - But the Gabriel goes forward in time
 - He says that when the transgressions have run their course, a king will arise
 - The plural transgressions is a reference to all the events described in the earlier vision
 - To all the sins Antiochus commits against Israel and the temple
 - After this a king arises
 - So now we move into new territory, to something we didn’t detect the first time in the vision
 - The vision told a story of not only what Antiochus would do in his day but also of what another king would do in another day at the end of the age
 - These two are connected such that the same vision can tell both their stories
 - And yet they are different kings living in different times
- Therefore, we must conclude that the first king, Antiochus, is a type of the second king
 - A type in scripture is the use of one set of circumstances to prefigure a later set of circumstances
 - The earlier set of circumstances is a type of the later circumstances

- And in that way, a type is always a lessor in relationship to the fulfillment of the type
- For example, the Bible says Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac on the top of Mt Moriah is a type
 - It pictures the Father sacrificing Christ on the very same mountain in a future day
 - Clearly Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his son was not nearly as significant as Jesus' actual sacrifice
 - So the type is a lessor to the greater fulfillment that came later
 - In this case, the life and circumstances of Antiochus is a lessor to the circumstances that surround this later king Gabriel is describing
- In v.23 Gabriel says this coming king is insolent and skilled in intrigue
 - The Hebrew word translated insolent means to be strong in a rough or outrageous way
 - And skilled in intrigue means having understanding of puzzles and enigmas
 - This is a man who is very strong but also a man with special insight to understand his place in history
 - Those are a very effective and potentially dangerous combination of traits in any aspiring world leader
- Next in v.24 we learn this man is powerful but not by his own power
 - He gets his power from somewhere else, somewhere outside himself
 - And with that great power he is able to destroy to an extraordinary degree
 - He will destroy like no one before him
 - It's details like this that tell us we're looking at someone beyond Antiochus
 - First Antiochus relied very much on his own power
 - And it wasn't overwhelming

- He couldn't even conquer Egypt, though he did control Israel for a time
- And that's one thing these two men share: they both prosper and are successful to at least partially destroy the holy people, the people of Israel
 - Remember, these last four chapters deal with how these coming Gentile nations will impact the people of Israel
 - And so that's the recurring theme we see here again
 - Both Antiochus and the future king will have a measure of success against Israel and the temple
- The heart of the message is in v.25
 - Because of this coming king's shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence
 - This statement is a little enigmatic
 - And we wouldn't have much luck understanding it except for what we studied last week in chapter 7
 - Remember we learned that the little horn of the fourth beast will be a ruler in the last days of this age
 - He will gain power 3.5 years before Jesus' Second Coming
 - He rules the entire world, calling himself God and directing the whole world to worship him
 - He is able to convince the world to accept this lie because he has been resurrected from death
 - The resurrection happened by the power of Satan, who gave his power to this king who Revelation calls the beast
 - So now Gabriel says that this king, once again portrayed as a little horn of chapter 8, will cause deceit to succeed by his influence
 - The deceit that this coming king will cause to succeed is the lie that he is God, the resurrected Messiah
 - And he will cause this deceit to succeed because of his influence, that is his power given to him by Satan

- Speaking of this coming deception, Paul says

[2Th. 2:7](#) 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.

[2Th. 2:8](#) Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

[2Th. 2:9](#) that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

[2Th. 2:10](#) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

[2Th. 2:11](#) For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

[2Th. 2:12](#) in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

- The man of lawlessness is a reference to this same man, the antichrist as we called him last week
 - Paul says he will come according to the activity of Satan
 - He comes with Satan's power and with false wonders
 - And he comes with deception of wickedness
 - This is the deluding influence that the Lord sends upon the world
 - It's the false testimony that the resurrected antichrist is the Messiah
- Then having received Satan's power and having been resurrected, the antichrist will magnify himself in his heart Gabriel said
 - Of course we know that Antiochus did this, but so will the antichrist
 - Again, Paul tell us this too

[2Th. 2:3](#) Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

[2Th. 2:4](#) who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

- Here again, these two men align in their activities

- Antiochus did it in his day, and the antichrist will do it in his day to come
- Next Gabriel says this man will destroy man while at ease
 - The antichrist will come into power promising peace
 - But destruction comes upon those with him
 - Jesus confirms this as well

Matt. 24:36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Matt. 24:37 “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

Matt. 24:38 “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

Matt. 24:39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

- The time of destruction that accompanies the rise of this man will lead many to think that they have entered a period of great peace and tranquility
 - Instead, they are experiencing a calm before the storm
 - They will be destroyed while at ease
- Finally, we’re told that this coming king will oppose Jesus Himself
 - Here again Antiochus opposed God too
 - But he didn’t oppose Jesus personally
 - But Christ is opposed by the antichrist
 - That is the meaning of antichrist...it means one who opposes Christ
 - The Bible says this opposition culminates with the Lord’s second coming to destroy him
 - As we read a moment earlier in 2Thess 2:8

2Th. 2:8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

- Notice at the end of v.25 Gabriel says this king will be destroyed without human agency
- Clearly that's a reference to Jesus defeating the antichrist at His second coming
- And by the same token, it precludes us from concluding that these verses are describing Antiochus
- Finally, notice that Gabriel ends saying this vision pertains to many days in the future in v.26
 - That footnote confirms that we're looking at something beyond what Antiochus alone did
 - Yes, Antiochus mirrors these things in many cases
 - But we're learning he is a type of the antichrist
 - God brought him to Israel in the time of the third kingdom to give a preview of what was coming in the last days in a greater way
 - The antichrist is Antiochus on steroids
 - He will do similar things but in greater and more terrible ways
 - In particular, the abomination of desolation will be repeated in a day to come
 - But it will be much more severe than Antiochus' pig sacrifice
 - Jesus refers to this coming abomination as the breaking point in Tribulation when all hell breaks loose (literally)

[Matt. 24:15](#) "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), [Matt. 24:16](#) then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

- Notice Jesus says there will be another abomination of desolation in the temple in that day to come
- And He adds the reader should have understanding of what He's talking about
- Jesus is expecting His reader to go back to Daniel to understand what this abomination involves

- It involves someone eliminating sacrifice from the temple
- And in the process desecrating it, by seating himself in the temple declaring himself to be God as we read earlier
- So the little horn of chapter 7 was a vision of the coming antichrist, and the little horn of chapter 8 is also a reference to the same man
 - In the case of chapter 8, the little horn also stands for Antiochus IV
 - But that association is merely for the purpose of creating a picture of the antichrist
 - By that picture, we can come to understand even better what the antichrist will do
 - Why do we need this prophecy?
 - In a sense, we don't since we are destined to never see the antichrist while we are on earth
 - Paul says in 2Thess 2:7 that the spirit of the antichrist, that is Satan, is being restrained by the Holy Spirit for now
 - Only when the Holy Spirit is removed will Satan have freedom to act in raising up the antichrist
 - And the removal of that restraining influence happens when the church is removed from the earth
 - So who does need this prophecy?
 - Again, it was written to help Israel understand how the age of Gentiles would impact Israel
 - In Antiochus' day, the people of Israel could take comfort knowing from Daniel that they wouldn't be oppressed by Antiochus forever
 - Once the Maccabees succeeded in killing Antiochus, they could see the faithfulness of God toward Israel even in the midst of this age
 - Now again in a future day, Israel will have this word to explain how the antichrist's terrible reign isn't intended to destroy the nation
 - He will gain a measure of success

- But in the end he will be destroyed
- And even more important, the people of Israel can see that Jesus their appointed Messiah sent to rescue them from this oppression
- Next week we look at the timing of the age of Gentiles, particularly how long Israel will have to wait for all these things to complete