

The Antichrist's Family Tree

Daniel 8

(preached Pine Grove 3/12/17; Sunday PM)

Introduction

People today are fascinated by evil..

Whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, the evil in this world generates a curiosity within us.

We ask, “who could be that evil to do this thing or that thing?”

We wonder why God allows such evil to occur...

We watch shows that talk about horrible murders and we are fascinated by them so much that all the major networks have real-life murder mysteries on every night...

ABC has 20/20.

CBS has 48 Hours.

And NBC has Dateline NBC.

And they all focus on murders and the trials of these people...

And the world turns on those shows by the millions..

Yet, why is that?

Well, I think we watch to feel better about ourselves..

To see ourselves as not as bad as those murderers in
God's eyes...

But we also watch because the depth of human depravity
fascinates us...

People even write books about serial killers and they sell
like hotcakes...

Something in us, -our own depravity, possibly, draws us
to look at evil actions and even evil men...

Maybe that is why there is such a fascination about the
antichrist in our culture..

This man of lawlessness as he is described in the Bible...

This man of sin who will rise to world domination...

He fascinates us..

We make predictions of when he will come, and what he
will look like and how he will speak and what he will
do...

Some are based on what the Bible teaches about him, but most are not...

Yet, we find ourselves in Daniel 8 tonight, and he once again becomes our focus...

Last week, in Daniel 7, we saw the antichrist as the final ruler of the final world kingdom before Christ comes to establish his kingdom on the earth at the second coming...

We saw him as the little horn that sprang up among the 10 horns which I believe represent the 10 leaders that will be leading this final form of the Roman Empire near the end of time in the tribulation period...

As the world deals with the fallout caused by the rapture of the church, a group of 10 world leaders will unite from Europe and the Middle East to establish some sort of world stability...

And within this group of 10 leaders will come an 11th with a boastful mouth and he will rise among the group, kill 3 of the 10 leaders and assume the place of leadership over this final kingdom...

And eventually over the entire world which is rushing to its end in these last 7 years known as the tribulation period...

And the world has been fascinated by this man who will be led by Satan and eventually empowered by him...

Now, the book of Daniel was written in 550 BC, which is centuries before this final world leader would emerge...

Yet, God gave Daniel much insight into this man who is known as the 'capital' Antichrist in the Bible...

And as we think about this, why would God do that at this point in time?

Why not wait until later to reveal more about this most evil figure..

Well, Daniel is writing to Israel, which at the time was a nation in captivity...

And God has a message for Israel..

They are going to be under the authority of Gentile kingdoms for a while...

The head of gold, which was the Babylonian kingdom is going to rule over them...

The chest and arms of silver of the Med-Persian kingdom is going to rule over them..

The belly and thighs of bronze of the Grecian kingdom is going to rule over them...

The legs of iron of the 1st Roman kingdom is going to rule over them...

And then at the end of time, the feet of iron and clay will be ruling over them as well..

In other words, the message of Daniel to Israel is that they would be ruled over by unbelieving Gentile kingdoms until the very of time...

They would suffer under the leadership of the the kings of these kingdoms to the point that the worst king the world has ever seen would be ruling over them at the very end of days...

And all of this is the result of Israel's continued refusal to obey the Lord..

That is why you find Israel under Roman authority during the time of Christ...

God had predicted that in the book of Daniel 500 years before Jesus' birth....

That is why Israel has never been a people of their own since the time of Daniel...

Yes, they go to their land after Daniel, but other empires dominate their world and rule over them...

And Jews scatter all over the world...

Now, that is why 1948 was so important as Israel was given a land and the nation came back together in the form that we see them today...

But they are dominated by the world's power who take their land away and give it to their enemies to this very day...

So, the story of Daniel and the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel that reveal all the coming world kingdoms were simply given to reveal Israel's domination for years to come...

Yet, in that bad news, there was good news...

The evil kingdoms would not prevail against Israel..

God would protect his people in all those years of Gentile domination, and eventually in his time at the very end of time, God would deliver Israel once and for all...

And God's kingdom would eventually come to earth under the leadership of Jesus Christ...

Now, as we wait for that and as Israel waits for that day, there are questions that God answered about the order of the world...

Though there are going to be other kingdoms on the world from 500 BC to today, God has revealed the order of the nations that will rule over Israel until the very end...

And we have seen these kingdoms described in order in a couple of ways...

You should know them by heart now..

Babylon, Medo-Persians, Greece, Rome, Revived Roman kingdom...

These were the five parts of the statue that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about...

These were the beasts out of the sea last week in Daniel 7...

We are family with these kingdoms...

Israel was made familiar with these kingdoms even before they came to pass...

As Daniel wrote about them, the only one that existed was Babylon, the head of gold led by Nebuchadnezzar...

Yet, the other ones were coming and they were coming fast...

Now, on top of the kingdoms that would rule over Israel, Daniel was also given insight into the kings of these kingdoms...

And the key to understanding what Daniel was told about the leaders of these empires is this...

All of these leaders of all these kingdoms would be a foreshadowing of that final evil leader of that final horrible kingdom...

All of the leaders of Babylon and the Medo-Persians and the Greeks and the Romans would give Daniel and the Jews and all of us a sneak peek at this horribly evil person who is coming at the end...

And Daniel 8 is another opportunity for us to get a better picture of the final ruler of the world known as the AntiChrist...

Now the Bible describes him as the Antichrist, but that won't be his name...

He will have a normal name in the beginning, but eventually he will want to be called God by his followers...

Now, as get into Daniel 8, I am going to slow down to keep us all up to speed on what we are seeing in regards to what this chapter teaches us about the Antichrist...

So, we are going to look at this chapter in 3 parts...

In verses 1-8, we will see...

I. The Big Horn (1-8)

In verses 9-22, we will see...

II. The Little Horn (9-22)

And then in verses 23-27, we will see...

III. The Final Horn (23-27)...

Let's begin in Daniel 8, with verses 1-2 which simply gives us the scene of Daniel receiving this truth about the future in a vision....

I. The Big Horn (1-8)

1 In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, [a]Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me [b]previously. 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 [c]Canal.

Just like last week, Daniel gives us the contents of another vision that God gave him in the OT...

This vision in in the 3rd year of Belshazzar's reign...

Last week in chapter 7, Daniel's vision of the beasts coming out of the sea happen in the 1st year of Belshazzar's reign...

So we have moved back in time since chapter 6 and Daniel in the lion's den under the Medo-Persian king Darius....

Daniel takes us to a time 15 years earlier when the Babylonians are still in charge...

And Daniel is given another vision...

This time, the vision carries him to the city of Susa in the province of Elam...

He is standing beside a palace in that city near a canal outside the palace...

Now, you may say what's the big deal where he is at?

Well, the big deal is this....

In 550 BC when Daniel was having this vision, Susa was not major city and certainly not home to any palace...

It wasn't until the Medo-Persians took control of the world that Susa became a major city...

In Daniel's day in the Babylonian empire, Susa was nothing yet God took Daniel there to show him a vision of what that city would become and even years past that city in the future of the world..

So, that's the scene of what Daniel is going to see, and now we get the action of the scene....

Verse 3...

3 Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the [d]canal. Now the two horns were [e]long, but one was [f]longer than the other, with the [g]longer one coming up last. 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 [h]power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself.

What fills Daniel's eyes as he looks is the sight of a ram with two horns...

This ram represents the Medo-Persian empire symbolized the two horns of the Medes and the Persians...

We know from ancient history that the Medes were the older of the two people groups...

The Persian people came along later, but they eventually came to dominate and grow larger than the Medes and these two groups of people eventually merged into one kingdom led by Cyrus the Great...

Cyrus then expanded the kingdom of the Medes and Persians into all directions...

You can see that on the map here..

And the greatest conquest was their defeat of the Babylonians which we saw a few weeks ago when a hand came and wrote on the wall of the Babylonian palace, telling Belshazzar that his time was up..

And so in 539 BC, this ram of the Persian empire made up of 2 unequal horns overthrow the Babylonians and there is another kingdom to rule over the Jews...

And that is the Medo-Perisan people...

Yet, their reign over the world was short lived as the ram of the Medo-Persians fell to the goat of the Greeks...

Look at verse 5...

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 [i]goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.

Couple things to notice here, but the goat comes from the west...

Which makes sense since the Greeks were to the west, and so this goat, representing the Greek empire, sets his sights on the ram, representing the Medo-Perisan empire..

Now, the Greeks were led by possibly the greatest military mind and political mind of the ancient world, which is represented by the big horn between the eyes of the goat..

And his name was Alexander the Great..

I don't have time to tell you everything about Alexander, but he was brilliant and brutal in one nice package of a leader...

Let's read about how Alexander led the Greek empire to rule the world....

Verse 6...

6 He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the [j]canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. 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 [k]power.

The thing that set Alexander apart and changed warfare forever was that Alexander didn't play by the rules of war...

He often led his men into battle, rather than sit on a hill and watch the fighting...

He had an uncontrollable temper that him to disregard the usual rules of battle...

He also didn't accept surrender, but would crush the enemy until they were dead...

He was fiercely loyal to his men, but fiercely brutal to his opponent...

And that style led Alexander to conquer the world by his late 20s...

And Daniel saw and we see the brutality of how Alexander overthrew the Medo-Perisians here...

He was enraged at the Medo-Perisians...

He struck them until they were out of strength...

The the threw them to the ground even though they couldn't stand and then he trampled them into the ground...

This was Alexander the Great's style...

And it will be the Antichrist's style as well...

HE will be a charmer to the world, but he will deal ruthlessly with his enemies...

The ones who are loyal to him will prosper, but his enemies will be trampled under foot...

And that will lead to what we see in verse 8...

8 Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly.

Alexander was an arrogant, egotistical leader...

At the end of his life, he came to consider himself a god who could not be defeated...

He was a megalomaniac that tried to conquer everything he encountered that didn't belong to him..

Eventually, his ego up to him and he died not in battle with the enemy but in a battle with strong drink, where he died from an overdose of wine...

And that is what we see in the end of verse 8....

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.

As soon as Alexander conquered the world at the age of 33, he was dead and his empire split into 4 parts, which we see in the 4 horns at the end of verse 4...

And this is exactly what happened in history...

The Greek empire begun by Alexander's conquests became 4 smaller empires after his death...

Though it is still the Greeks in charge, the power was split between 4 of Alexander's top generals..

And those 4 horns or leaders kept Greece in charge of the known world..

Now, these 4 leaders try to grow their areas and over the next few generations, new leaders rise up in each of these small Greek kingdoms and try to take over more land from the others...

Now all this time, and we are talking from 350 BC to 150 BC, Israel is under the rule of the Greeks...

Remember, the Babylonians fell to the Medo Persians in 539 BC, but Israel remained under Medo-Persian rule...

Then the Medes and the Persians fell to Alexander the Great and the Greeks in 330 BC, and now more time has passed and we are seeing Greece rule the world with 4 smaller kings and kingdoms after Alexander died...

So, we are here and it about 175-150 BC, and one of these 4 Greek kingdoms begins to take charge of the others led by a small horn that we are about to meet in verses 9-22...

So, let's get a look at this small horn....

And remember, Daniel is giving us this to give us a better look at worst final horn of the future which will be the Antichrist...

So, we have this little horn of the Greek Empire to learn about...

So, let's look at this small horn beginning in verse 9...

II. The Little Horn (9-22)

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 [1]Beautiful Land.

So Daniel is telling us that out of the four horns that followed the single horn of Alexander the Great, there eventually came a small horn...

And he was a conquering horn who came up within these four sections of Greece...

And he starting taking land to the south, to the east and toward the Beautiful Land, which is a reference to the land of Israel...

Now, the Jews were in the land under the rule of Greece, but they were living their lives under the law of God as best they could...

They were offering sacrifices and trying to obey the Lord even the culture and laws of Greece...

Yet, this horn became hostile to God's people in Israel...

Look at verse 10...

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

Though the Bible doesn't tell us, we know from history that a Greek leader by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes came into Israel and specifically into Jerusalem in 171 BC..

And he stopped all Jews from obeying the laws of God...

He killed anyone who tried to keep the customs and traditions of the Jews...

He even went into the temple and stopped the daily sacrifices in the temple and killed Jews who tried to ignore his orders...

In other words, he flung down the stars of God and trampled upon them....

He started full fledged persecution of the Jews...

Antiochus was the Hitler before Christ...

He even called himself God in the temple according to verse 11...

Antiochus was similar to Alexander the Great in his ruthlessness, but what made him worse is that he focused that brutality on God's people...

Now that alarms Daniel and God gives him some information in verse 13 and 14 to calm him down...

Verse 13...

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, [o]while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host [p]to be trampled?" 14 He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be [q]properly restored."

As Daniel sees the vision of this persecutor of the Jews in the future, he hears how long it will last...

2300 days, which is little over 6 years...

And we know that Antiochus came into Jerusalem in 171 BC, but he was eventually killed by a group of Jewish terrorists in 164, which could be represented by these 2300 days....

Either way, the picture is clear for Daniel...

One of these horns that comes after the horn on the goat is going to bring much persecution to Israel in the days ahead...

He is not going to just overthrow the world, he is going to focus on overthrowing the Jews...

And though he will kill and destroy Jews, his brutality will not last forever but for a little over 6 years..

Now Daniel didn't enjoy the blessing we had of being able to look back on history and see how this all played out...

Remember, he had this vision before it all happened..

So in verses 15-22, he asks for help...

Verse 15..

15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought [r]to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one [s]who looked like a man. 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." 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.”

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 [t]upright. 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.

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

21 The shaggy [u]goat represents the [v]kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 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.

So, Daniel is given the information about who the ram is and who the goat is by an angel named Gabriel...

By the way, this is the first time in the Bible where an angel is given a name...

The only other named angels are Michael and Satan..

Gabriel makes another appearance in the NT when he announces the births of Jesus and John the Baptist..

And so Gabriel is told by a voice to give Daniel understanding of this vision, and he tells Daniel what we already know..

That the ram of the Medo-Persians would overthrow the Babylonian Empire..

That the goat of the Grecian Empire would overthrow the Medo-Persians...

And that the Greeks would spilt into 4 parts after the death of Alexander the great...

So, Daniel hears that and though he can't look back on history to see that it happened exactly as God predicted, he is comforted to get more details...

And we are able to look back on those kingdoms and see a preview of the Antichrist in the swift conquering of the big horn of Alexander the Great in verse 1-8...

And we are able to look back on those kingdoms and see a preview of the Antichrist in the persecution of God's people in the little horn of Antiochus Epiphanes in verses 9-22...

But Gabriel doesn't stop there. he continues to speak and in verses 23-27, he takes us to the end of time and combines the previews with some details of the actual Antichrist....

So, let's finish up in verses 23-27 with what I describe as...

III. The Final Horn (23-27)

Verse 23..

23

*“In the latter period of their [w]rule,
When the transgressors have [x]run their course,
A king will arise,
[y]Insolent and skilled in [z]intrigue.*

24

*“His power will be mighty, but not by his own power,
And he will [aa]destroy to an extraordinary degree
And prosper and perform his will;
He will [ab]destroy mighty men and [ac]the holy
people.*

25

*“And through his shrewdness
He will cause deceit to succeed by his [ad]influence;
And he will magnify himself in his heart,
And he will [ae]destroy many while they are [af]at ease.
He will even [ag]oppose the Prince of princes,
But he will be broken without [ah]human agency.*

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.”
 27 Then I, Daniel, was [ai]exhausted and sick for days.
 Then I got up again and carried on the king’s business;
 but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none
 to [aj]explain it.***

Though there is debate about this final set of verses, I believe this to be a description of the final ruler of the final kingdom...

This is the Antichrist who is like the big horn of Alexander the Great and like the little horn of the Antiochus Epiphanes...

But he is much worse than those two combined, but we see a limited description of him here...

In verse 23, we see that he will arise, which fits with what we saw last week as the little horn will rise among the 10 horns..

Verse 23 always says that he will be insolent and skilled in intrigue..

Insolent suggests he will be arrogant and disrespectful...

Which got along with his boastful ego...

Some translations say that he will be strong of face, which suggests a prideful determined personality...

He will be skilled in intrigue...

Which suggests that he will have a supernatural feel to him...

He will be able to explain deep spiritual things...

Unfortunately, he will understand dark spiritual things and not the things of God...

Verse 24..

He will be powerful, but not from within..

WE know from the NT that the Antichrist will be empowered by Satan...

We also see that he will be a man of destruction much like Alexander the Great...

Verse 24 says that he will get his way and destroy mighty men and even the people of God, which makes him like Antiochus Epiphanes...

Verse 25 calls the future final horn of the Antichrist a shrewd man...

He will be clever and a great negotiator...

HE will be deceitful and influential in the world...

He will magnify himself, just like alexander the Great...

He will even oppose God, who is called the Prince of princes..

That is just like Antiochus who demanded that the Jews worship him...

But the final Antichrist's end will be as swift as the two other horns we have seen tonight..

As he will be killed by God at the battle of Armageddon and cast into the lake of fire...

And with the end of verse 25, our sneak peek of the Antichrist is over...

So Gabriel ends this vision with a reminder to Daniel that all he has witnessed is true and will come to pass...

And Daniel does what anybody would do after getting so much insight into the future...

He gets sick on his stomach and is out of commission for a number of days...

Conclusion

And with that, we end our look into the past kingdoms that show this vision was exactly fulfilled...

But our stomachs also ache because we know this final horn of the future antichrist is yet to come..

Now, what do we take from this tonight?

Couple thoughts...

#1 - God is the God of history.

How does a young man like Alexander the Great rise to power and conquer the world by the age of 30....

Only because God allowed it to give us a preview of one much worse than Alexander is coming...

How do the Babylonians fall to the Persians who fall to the Greeks who fall to the Romans...

Only because God allows it to discipline the Jews and make them long for a deliverer...

Why do the nations today have the leaders they do?

Only because God allows it to fulfill his perfect purpose of bringing his Kingdom to the earth at the proper time...

The problems of the world...

Immigration...

The economy...

Crime...

Nations falling...

Leaders rising...

Are all in the hands of God to bring him the most glory in the end...

#2 - God is in full control of evil.

One thing that I love about this chapter on evil kingdoms and evil men is this..

Evil comes to an end...

Alexander the Great died.

Antiochus Epiphanes was killed..

The Anticrist will fall as well...

Israel was persecuted but it had a time limit...

God allows evil to give men time to repent and turn to Him...

But God will not allow evil to continue forever...

Men of evil also have their days numbered, and their time is up when God says it is up...