



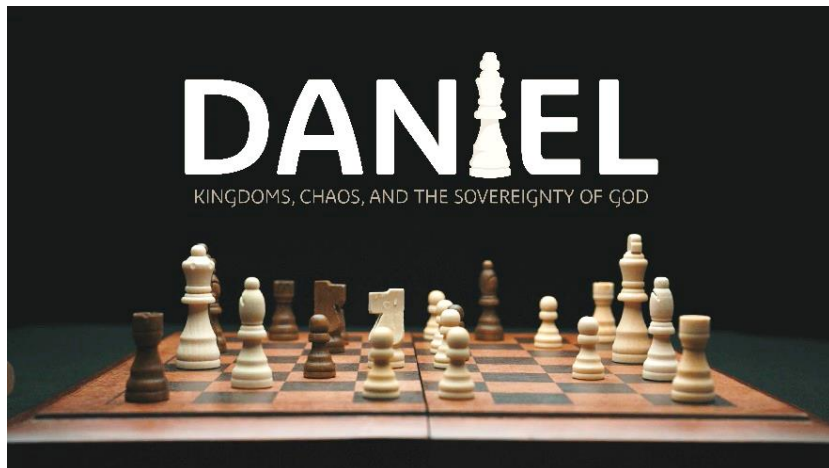
VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

The Dreamer's Dilemma

DANIEL: Kingdoms, Chaos and the Sovereignty of God

Daniel 7 & 8

Tim Badal | March 10, 2024



Turn in your Bibles to the book of Daniel, as we continue in our series titled, “Kingdoms, Chaos and the Sovereignty of God.” The first part of Daniel was the life and history of Daniel during his time in Babylonian exile. We enjoyed learning how he navigated those waters of living in a pagan land while staying true and faithful in his relationship with his God. Last week we started turning the page from the historical narrative into the prophetic and apocalyptic portion of this book, looking at the future, first the future in Daniel’s time and the future for the people of God in the time before Christ, then we’ve also started to see where God has given a picture of our future in these Scriptures.

The chapter we’ll be looking at today has been called the most interesting chapter in the entire Bible, so I hope you’re awake and ready to take notes. We’ll be reading about another vision—another dream—that Daniel had. If you’re like me, dreams happen more often at certain points in life than at others. There are some dreams that are so vivid, so life-like, that when you wake up it takes a moment to decide whether what you dreamed was real or not. Have you been there before? I wake up, and I’m thinking, “Okay, Amanda is next to me. That’s good. She’s breathing. The kids are here. That accident or that fall didn’t happen; I’m here.” I go through what is in essence a mental checklist to make sure that what I dreamed isn’t in fact reality.

Scholars, psychologists and writers call this the “dreamer’s dilemma.” In that moment, there’s a bit of fear or apprehension. “Is what I just experienced real, or not?” Hollywood has dug into this dreamer’s dilemma in two ways. One we see in the movie “Inception.” I won’t give all of it away, but there’s a dream involved. The whole premise of this movie is the challenge to decide what’s real and what’s a dream.

Then there’s the TV show “Lost” from some years ago. It disappointed a great many fans because it seemed as if much of what people had been a part of was in fact a dream and not reality. Now, at the end of the first service, after preaching some controversial stuff in our text, I knew people would come up and talk with me. So the first person who came up and said, “I’ve got to talk to you about your sermon.” I thought, “All right, here we go. Here comes the critique.” “Hey, you totally missed it on Lost.” I was thinking, “Of all the things. I’m talking antichrist, tribulation, the second coming of Jesus, and the first person who comes up, God bless him, he’s like, ‘Yeah, I’ve got an issue with you about Lost.’” Okay, I’ll take that. Maybe I’m not understanding Lost enough. So with your free time, you can prove him or me right by wasting a whole bunch of time streaming the show and coming next week with your view.

All of this is to say that when we dream incredibly vivid dreams, there’s a dilemma in which we have to decide what is real and what is fanciful. I wonder if that was what Daniel was feeling. After the vision and dream he sees in Daniel 7, and now a second dream and vision he sees in Daniel 8, I wonder if he had the dreamer’s dilemma: “What in the world have I seen? What does it all mean? What am I to do with it?”

That's what I want to consider this morning as we look at the second dream. We're going to ask, "What does it mean and what are we to do with it?" In order to do this, we first need to review a little in Daniel 7, then read Daniel 8 and understand what it's doing. Then we'll see how it has some specific prophecies regarding the days after Daniel's life but before the coming of Jesus Christ in the first century. We'll ask, "Could it be that there is also a future fulfillment of some of these things for which we need to be prepared?"

So let's go back to Daniel 7. There were four different beasts that appeared to him. I gave you this picture as a way of helping us envision what he saw. There was the winged lion, then the lopsided bear with the three ribs in his mouth. Next was a winged leopard with four heads, then there was a ghastly and terrifying beast that was hard to explain. As we learned last week, this represented a succession of kingdoms that rose up during Daniel's life and afterward, all the way to the first coming of Jesus in Bethlehem. It goes like this:



- The lion was Nebuchadnezzar and the nation of Babylon. That's the nation Daniel was living in at that time. We're told that the lion's wings were plucked off, which took place when Nebuchadnezzar lost his authority and power. Then sometime after that, the kingdom of Babylon itself was overturned.
- The next kingdom, represented by the lopsided bear with three ribs in its mouth, was the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The Persians always being more powerful than the Medes made that kingdom a lopsided kingdom. The three ribs represent the three provinces, involving three major battles the Medes and Persians engaged in as they built their empire: Babylon, Lydia and one other province.
- Next, the Medes and Persians got knocked out of power by a leopard-like animal. It had wings, which indicated that it was even faster than the leopard already was. And it had four heads. Secular history tells us that the Medes and Persians were conquered by the Greeks. This took place very swiftly, led by Alexander the Great, whom we'll talk about in more detail today. He was a young man who took over the entire known world over the course of about ten years. But on his way back to Greece after all this conquering, he stopped in Babylon. He was then in Nebuchadnezzar II's palace and there he suddenly died. We don't know if he was poisoned or whether his death was caused by something natural. However, he had enough time to speak his final wishes, in which he said, because there was no heir to inherit his empire, "I give my kingdom to the powerful." That meant he wanted it to be divided between his four generals—thus the four heads of the leopard.
- After the leopard of Greece came a ghastly looking beast, one that Daniel struggled to describe. He mentioned that it had iron teeth, it stomped on and smashed everything in its way. It had horns, then out of the horns eventually came a little horn. We'll talk about that as well today. That horn is actually a future fulfillment that came after the Roman Empire. We have to figure out what that little horn means.

All of this is covered in Daniel 7—a chronological history of what would be happening from Daniel's time to the first coming of Jesus to earth. Now we get to Daniel 8 where two new animals appear in his dream. That means there's more to interpret, more to try to understand. As we turn to Daniel 8, we need to highlight a couple things that are not in the Bible, or at least the first one isn't. As you go from Daniel 7 into Daniel 8, everything looks the same, at least in English it does. In the original writing, Daniel switched languages from Aramaic into Hebrew between these two chapters. Now remember, he already did this once. In Daniel 1 and the first part of Daniel 2, he wrote in Hebrew, specifically to the people of God in their language so they would understand what he was writing. Then in the rest of Daniel 2 all the way to the end of chapter 7, he switched to Aramaic, which was the trade language of the known world. He wanted the whole world to know what he wrote, as it applied to them and not

just to the people of Israel. Now in Daniel 8 he pivoted back to Hebrew, seemingly because he wanted his people to understand what God had for them in the days to come. So this language change is the first thing to notice.

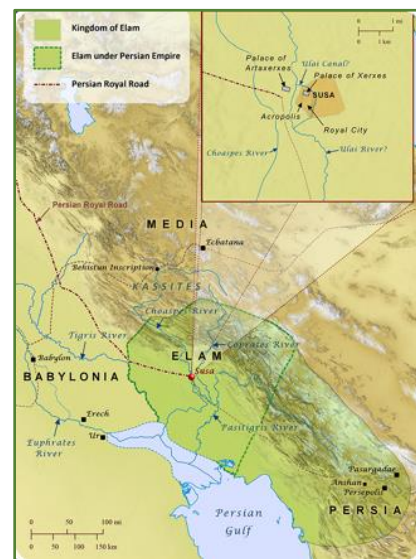
Number two, we also get time stamps with these two visions. The vision in Daniel 7 came in the first year of King Belshazzar's rule. Now in Daniel 8, this second vision came in the third year. So Daniel had two visions within a span of three years and we need to understand these visions are connected to each other. Specifically, the animals in chapter eight correspond in certain ways with the animals in chapter seven.

The next thing we need to know is where Daniel himself is located. We're told that this happened in Susa, the capital of the province of Elam. Looking at the map, we see that Susa is just north of the Persian Gulf. The province of Elam is modern-day Iran. Susa was the capital of Elam, next to the Ulai Canal and near the palace of Xerxes. So we know where Daniel was, the year he was having these visions, and the language he was using to communicate them.

With all that said, now we get to Daniel 8. Here we'll be introduced to more creatures and more horns which can be altogether difficult to ascertain what in the world was going on. So first I'm going to look at Daniel 8 under the heading of prophecies that have already come true.

Prophecies that have already come true.

Let's read Daniel 8 together:



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. 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. 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.

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. 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. 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.

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. 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."

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.

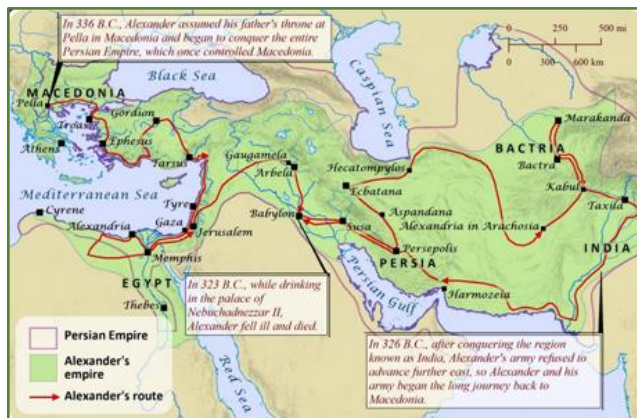
Thanks for coming to church. Let's close in prayer.

Seriously, this is one of the most interesting passages in the entire Bible. What in the world are we to make of it? Let's walk through this together.

There are two new animals. The first is a ram with two heads and two horns, one of which is bigger than the other. Then we have a goat. We're told in the interpretation that they are different animals representing the kingdoms already depicted in Daniel 7.

The first animal is the Medo-Persian Empire, with the longer horn being the Persian side of the kingdom. We're told that they acquired a large amount of territory, up until this goat came along. The goat isn't known so much for its goatness but more for the horn that comes out from between its eyes. We're told that this horn represented the king of Greece.

History tells us that the Media and Persian Empire was overtaken by the Greeks under the leadership of Alexander the Great. In fact, it says in the vision that his name will be great. The Bible has pinpoint accuracy in this account. So what do we need to know about this horn? It will be so strong and powerful that it will knock the horns off the ram. What we know from history is that about 200 years after Daniel, Alexander the Great came into power. He was born into a royal family. His father was King Alexander of Macedon, who ruled in Macedonia, which is modern day Greece. He had done some empire building, but it always stopped wherever the Persians ruled. He could never overtake this stronger kingdom. Then at some point Alexander's parents were assassinated, after which he rose to power. Alexander was brilliant. When he was young, his parents arranged for him to be tutored by Aristotle. Talk about a good teacher! Alexander was 22 years old when he took over the rule of his country, then within ten years he had expanded his rule to the entire known world. The kingdom of Greece was so swift it never even touched the ground.



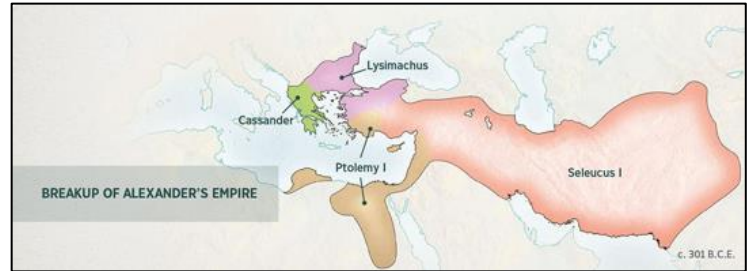
As you'll see on this map, Alexander started out in Greece, then advanced through the Holy Land into Egypt and northern Africa. Then he zoomed east, conquering Babylon and Susa, where Daniel was. Not stopping there, he advanced all the way through Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. At the end of this he became tired of conquering lands and people, so he turned back until he again reached Babylon. But then in 323 B.C., about 250 years after Daniel, Alexander the Great got sick and died in Babylon. During his years of conquest, one of the most famous of all battles took place—the battle between the Greeks and the Persians. This battle was extraordinary because of the total defeat the Persians experienced. They brought 100,000 troops, led by Darius; Alexander's army only

had about 35,000 men. The battle stretched over three days and at the end of that brief time over 25,000 Persians had died and another 25,000 were taken captive. Even though the Greeks were outnumbered three to one, they only lost fewer than 100 troops. It was a massive battle. But the reason Alexander the Great wanted to pummel Persia was because it was the thorn in his father's side.

To see another situation where a son did what his father seemed unable to do, we could go back to the days when I was in high school, when George H.W. Bush came to the aid of Kuwait, which Saddam Hussein had invaded. Bush put together a coalition, driving Saddam out of Kuwait and back into Iraq. He even took over half of Iraq, but he left Saddam in Baghdad. Then came his son, George W. Bush. It always bothered George W. Bush that his dad never finished the job. So he went in and toppled Saddam,

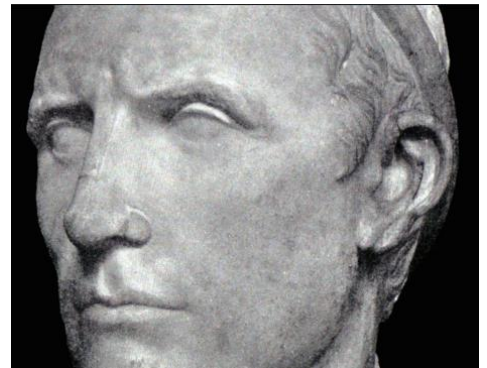
taking over all of Iraq. This is what was going on with Alexander the Great and his dad. He wanted to prove he could do what his father had been unable to do.

Then after Alexander's death, his kingdom was divided into four provinces, each ruled by one of his four generals. There were three smaller empires that never became much of anything. The two most well-known are the Seleucus and the Ptolemy empires. Those of you who have studied world history will recognize those names, because this is real history.



Now, if we go back to the goat in Daniel's dream, we'll see that it went through several phases. The first goat represented Alexander the Great. The second had four horns representing the four empires. Now one of the horns was taken over by a new leader. This new horn was longer according to Daniel 8 and its leader came from the Seleucus empire, which was the largest of the four empires.

Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C. In 175 B.C., a leader rose up in the Seleucus Empire named



Antiochus Epiphanes. I went to his Facebook page and this is what he looked like. It says in Daniel 8 that he rose up in a different way, through cunning, bribery and political maneuvering. Eventually he became the leader. He defined himself as Antiochus "Epiphanes," which means God manifested, or God in human flesh. That's a pretty bold statement. This guy did not have a self-esteem problem. He thought very highly of himself. The vision indicates he showed up in the latter end of the Greek empire, as the Romans were about to take over the whole kingdom. It was about 165 to 175 years before the coming of Christ.

Daniel 8:23 also mentions transgressors who have reached their limit. Most Bible scholars think this was a prophecy against the Jewish priesthood in that day who had defiled the Jewish worship. By that time, the Israelites were back in Jerusalem and were able to carry out all their rituals and celebrate all their holidays. The walls and temple had been rebuilt under Nehemiah and Haggai, so all the forms of worship had been resumed.

Things were going well, until Antiochus Epiphanes rose to power and appointed a man named Jason as high priest, who oversaw the temple worship. Jason was an Israelite who had switched teams and was a traitor. He told the people they must worship Antiochus as god. In other words, the man who had the highest religious authority in the land was now telling them that Antiochus was the guy. Antiochus then came to Jerusalem speaking words of peace. Shortly thereafter he turned from that and began to wreak great havoc in the land. Verse 24 tells us he brought fearful destruction, destroying the mighty men and the people who were faithful Jews. He essentially unleashed hell on God's people.

All this is recorded in secular history. If you go to any encyclopedia, you will find him there. You will read about Jason the high priest as well. This is real history. One of the writers who describes this was Josephus in his book Antiquities. There's also another book, one that is less known to Protestants. If you grew up Roman Catholic, part of the canon of Scripture included what we call the Apocrypha. These are intertestamental books, that is, books written after Malachi and before the opening of the New Testament. Two of these books—1 and 2 Maccabees—cover the history of Antiochus' rule in great detail. Second Maccabees 6 through 9 describes the unspeakable horrors of what he did in Jerusalem. Let me tell you some of these.

- With the help of Jason the high priest, he completely eradicated the religion of the Jews.
- He attacked Jerusalem and in a matter of a couple days, he killed 80,000 Jews and took 40,000 as slaves.
- He plundered the temple, ended all sacrifices and dedicated the temple to Zeus, his Greek god
- Then he desecrated the temple by going into the Holy of Holies and sacrificing a pig, announcing that he alone was god. This sacrificing of a pig is referred to in Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11 as the abomination that caused desolation.

- He burned the Hebrew Scriptures and prohibited the circumcision of children. In fact, in the book of Maccabees, it speaks of two women who had recently had sons whom they circumcised. Antiochus Epiphanes heard about this and to make an example of them, he killed their babies, then hooked the dead babies somehow to their mothers' breasts and had them parade topless through Jerusalem. He was a terrible, terrible, terrible man, doing unending abuses of the people of God.
- Maccabees also tells of a mother of seven children. When Antiochus tried to force the children to do despicable actions defiling their God, the children remained faithful so he killed them all one at a time. After the mother watched them die, she was put on trial and also killed.

These were the worst times ever faced by the Israelite people. We're told that in the middle of all this, he still wanted the people to pledge allegiance to him. To implement this, he minted coins and put them into circulation. On these coins were written the words, "Antiochus the great god manifest." A person could neither buy nor sell without paying homage to Antiochus, even revering him as god. That's going to be important in a moment.

The key question is when would all this end? Now remember, Daniel was writing some 400 years before these events took place and was still able to tell us that it would be 2,300 mornings and evenings before it was over. Using that timeframe literally, it seems Antiochus was around for a lot longer than history tells us he was. But dividing that in half gives us about 1,150 days, or three years, which perfectly matches the length of his rule, wreaking havoc in Israel. Again, pinpoint accuracy.



So how did this all end? There was a priest named Judas Maccabeus—after whom the books of Maccabees were named, who saw the defiling of God and His people. He gathered an army who then stood in opposition against Antiochus Epiphanes and who amazingly were able to drive him out of Jerusalem. They restored Jerusalem as the capital city. They restored the temple, getting it ready again for sacrifices. But they had a problem: there was only enough lamp oil for one day. Miraculously, the oil continued to flow for eight days, then light again shone in the temple. The people were greatly encouraged by this. Recovery of the land and the temple has been forever enshrined in the Jewish celebration of the eight days of Hannukah. This again was real history.

Predictions for a future time

With all that said, how does this impact us in the 21st century? What we need to do is go back to Daniel 7 and think again about the little horn. Was that a picture of Antiochus? The answer is no. That little horn did not come out from the leopard or the goat—it came out of the great beast, which represented the Roman Empire. Yet that empire too has come and gone. So where is the little horn? Is there anywhere else in the Bible other than Daniel that can help answer that question? Yes, there is.

If you will, turn now to 2 Thessalonians 2. The context of this passage comes from the question of the people in Thessalonica to Paul, "Did we miss the second coming of Jesus?" Paul tells them no, they hadn't missed it. Jesus had not returned. Here's what he wrote to the people:

¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

Paul continues, beginning in verse 9:

⁹ The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

This is describing a man who will be coming in the future; we know he still has not yet come, but he will arrive before the second coming of Christ. The question is: how does this prophecy connect with what we read in Daniel? We need to go next to Revelation 13. This is the writing of the apostle John, now 700 years after Daniel's time. Here's what he says, beginning in verse one:

“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea” —this is reminiscent of Daniel 7— “with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth.” This beast was then given power by a dragon.

Could it be that John is being given a similar picture to that of Daniel’s vision? In my estimation, and in that of our church, in fact he is. That means Daniel 7 and 8 are not just prophecies that have already come true, but they also contain predictions about what will happen in the future. What does that mean for us?

Let me be completely straight with you, because maybe you don’t know this. Village Bible Church, and most evangelicals, believe that in the future a world leader will come on the stage whom the Bible calls the man of lawlessness. He’s the little horn of Daniel 7. He will receive adoration and power, not just over one or two countries, but over all the earth. According to Revelation 13, the way this man—the antichrist —will be empowered is by a religious leader. Remember, Antiochus was given power by Jason, the high priest. There will be a traitor in the religious world who will tell his followers to obey this new leader instead of God. For a season of time there will be peace, then there will be all-out tribulation.

We believe the Bible describes this as lasting seven years, during which a world leader will come to power, approved of by the religious establishment. Eventually he will deliberately sort between those who are loyal to him and those who are not. At the end of Revelation 13, we’re told that all people must receive a mark, what is called the mark of the beast. This will confirm where your allegiance lies and will be required in order to buy and sell.

If you recall, this is much like what happened under the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes, who determined that people could only buy and sell using his coinage, thus declaring that he was god. The mark of the beast will be a similar declaration of the deity of the beast, so only people who affirm this will be able to buy and sell.

What I’m communicating to you is that Daniel 7-8 are a foreshadowing of what the future antichrist and the tribulation will look like. What we have in store for us appears to be a time of great upheaval. As we’ve seen, God’s people are never eradicated. God’s Kingdom is never brought down. There will always be light at the end of the tunnel.

Promises that we must take hold of.

So what do we do with all this? Isn’t there more to the story? That’s why we have the rest of Daniel to go through. But what should we walk away with this morning? There are some promises we need to take hold of. Daniel saw a vision and it says in Daniel 7:28 that he was more than just anxious. *“As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”* Chapter 8 ends by saying, *“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.”*

Some of you are probably appalled right now, thinking, “Tim, you’re saying to me that there’s a time in the future when a world leader is going to come to power who will hate Christians, who will rage against Christians, meaning my comfortable middle-class American Christian life won’t last?” Yes, it quite possibly will happen. It could be in our lifetime, or it could be a hundred lifetimes in the future, but it is on the horizon. What are we to do about this?

God proves He is in total control.

Number one, this passage proves to us that God is in total control. We can have hope in the future because we’ve read that God had it all planned out in the past. With pinpoint accuracy, He’s laid out the world empires before they even came into existence. He has declared with utter perfection what events would transpire, and in fact they did. We need to know that God is in control because we are appalled by what we hear and read about.

Persecution and tribulation are on the horizon.

It’s clear to us in our day that there is persecution and tribulation on the horizon. Every indication from what we’ve studied today is that our future will be darker than it is presently. The Bible points to a decline in the world. While the church is endeavoring to grow and prosper, the devil is also active. The contention between good and evil will come to a climax, appearing that evil is winning. We need to be prepared for that.

Let's face it—even if we're not in the last days, in our present context it's becoming more and more difficult to be a Christian than it was previously. We need to be willing to stand and defend the Kingdom of God. We do this, not by building up arms, but through prayer. It's not through weapons, but through evangelism. It's not done with missiles, but with mission. That's why we pray and why we send people. Although the kingdoms of this world are raging on and on, they cannot stop our Village Bible Church people from proclaiming the gospel in Uganda. That's the Kingdom work. We get tripped up by these things, thinking we can adjust our lives to the changes. "Well, if the election goes this way, I can move here or there."

However, Daniel 7 and 8 are telling us, "Listen, it's already been planned out. It's already in motion." What King Jesus has told us is that we should pray, we should tell others about Him, then live upright and holy lives until He comes back. That's our mission. We do this in both the good times and in the difficult times.

You can prepare for Jesus' second coming by trusting His first coming.

Finally, the way we prepare for Jesus' second coming is by trusting His first coming. A lot of you are all worked up, wanting to talk about when Jesus is coming back. But can we just talk about His first coming? Can we just appreciate and enjoy what He has already done? Can we put our faith and hope in the realization that He came to earth, born of a woman, so that He could redeem those who were under the law?

In His death and resurrection, Jesus trampled once and for all the devil's plan for our destruction, and because of that He will put to shame any enemy that opposes His will. King Jesus accomplished this in His first coming, so if we prepare ourselves now by living in light of that accomplishment, we will be altogether prepared for His second coming. Amen?

You see, there is yet one more animal that will come: the Lion of Judah. He will come to earth and declare, "Every square inch of this world is Mine." So let us keep the plain thing the main thing. King Jesus is in control. He has a plan and has called us to work as part of this plan. So let us live faithfully, giving glory and honor to the Lamb of God—King Jesus, the Lion of Judah, the One who is worthy of all praise.

Village Bible Church | 847 North State Route 47, Sugar Grove, IL 60554 | (630) 466-7198 | www.villagebible.org/sugar-grove

All Scriptures quoted directly English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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