

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

False Messiahs, Part 1

Scripture: Daniel 8:1-2, 15-19

Code: 27-18

It's with great anticipation in my heart that I invite you to turn with me to Daniel chapter 8. I'm convinced that this study of the Book of Daniel is timely for us at this hour of our history. It speaks to issues that are current and provocative. We're going to find, particularly as we continue to flow from chapter 7 through chapter 12, that the prophecies that we see are gonna be easily marked as we examine the history of our very own age. We've already had that experience as we've moved through the first seven chapters, and we'll have no less an experience as we go from chapter 8 to 12, beginning with chapter 8 tonight.

Again, the chapter is a long chapter; 27 verses and some of them rather lengthy. It's well nigh impossible to cover the whole chapter in one shot and do any kind of justice to the tremendous intricacies of the prophecy that is here. And so we're going to take our time and unfold the outline as the Spirit of God gives direction. Basically, as you'll note if you have your outline with you, the chapter deals with three horns. If you'll indulge my alliteration a little bit, the big horn, the little horn, and the final horn. Tonight and next time for sure, we'll be discussing the significance of these three distinct characters who, though distinct, yet have a commonness about them that is startling and amazing.

Lemme begin by saying this. The world is full of false messiahs, and we shouldn't be surprised. They've been around in every era of man's history. We can trace backwards to the time of the Book of Genesis, and we can see the birth of false religious systems at Babel. And in line with false religious systems are always the leaders who lead the systems. And so man has had a legacy of false messiahs since the very beginnings. We have them in our own time, as other societies have had them. We've had our cult leaders. We've had our Father Divines and Charles Mansons and our Jim Jones and all the others who go along with the false messiah concept. And I suppose we're not surprised at all, because we anticipate that God's Word will be counterfeited. God's prophets will be counterfeited, and so we expect these kind of things. Our Lord said that there would appear, after His lifetime, many pseudocristos, many phony Christs, many false messiahs, if you will. He said many of them would come in His name, and they would be very effective, deceiving many.

Satan, of course, is the author of false religious systems. He goes about disguised as an angel of light. That is, he defines himself in terms of the truth, but is not the truth, but is, in fact, a liar and the father of lies. And so we will note that as all history flows by, Satan will be counterfeiting reality. Now, Daniel points us in this direction in the eighth chapter. At the end of the chapter, he points, I

believe, to the ultimate antichrist, the ultimate pseudochristos, antichristos, the false messiah, none other than the son of perdition, the man of sin that we know as antichrist. But along the path of chapter 8, he introduces us to two other individuals in history. Two who haven't even lived when he wrote this, but who would live and would fulfill explicitly the prophecies indicated in this chapter. It is not only a prophecy of the antichrist, it is a prophecy of two who will come as other false messiahs, and by their own lifestyle and pattern, they will reveal something of the power and the character of that final antichrist. They're like signposts along the way to remind society as it moves through history to its consummation of what the false messiah will be like.

Now, you'll remember that some months ago, we discussed how Hitler was a graphic illustration of the nature of the antichrist. Well, backing up prior to that, there are two other men in history, two men whom Daniel pinpoints as those we can mark as patterns or pictures in some way or another of how the antichrist will be, although we must admit they will not be able to approximate the ultimate terror of that final individual. They do give us some insight.

The first one Daniel calls the big horn. The second one he calls the little horn, and the third or the last and final one we'll call the ultimate or final horn. And, as you know, if you've been with us in our study of Daniel, horn stands for power or authority or dominion or might or strength. And in Daniel's case, it is used to mark one who takes the place of rulership.

Now, one of the major thrusts of Daniel's prophecy is to focus on this final, ultimate antichrist. This final man of sin, son of perdition, willful king, king of fierce countenance, this final little horn. He calls him by all of these various names. This final prince that shall come, as he calls him in chapter 9. Daniel focuses, in fact, and I want you to remember this, Daniel focuses in chapter 7 to 12 more on that individual than any other character...Daniel is giving a prophecy, I believe, of hope to Israel. They are in the midst of their captivity, but Daniel's prophecy is to remind them that God will not fail them. That, yes, there will be a time of the Gentiles. Yes, there will be an era of Gentile or pagan dominion over Israel. Yes, there will be a period of time when the world is ruled by ungodly men. But that will end in the glorious coming of Jesus Christ. And he has pointed to that, hasn't he, so graphically in chapter 7 when we find the Ancient of Days giving the Kingdom to the Son of Man.

So Daniel is saying, even though we're in captivity, it isn't the end. There will be a great and glorious restoration. There will be a great and glorious Kingdom as has been promised by the prophets. But Daniel has another message. Before things get better, they're gonna get what? Worse. And that's the reason he focuses so much on the antichrist. And on those who are sort of preliminary pictures of him. So that as the people of God wait for the unfolding of the Kingdom of God, they are not disillusioned when they see things getting worse. I think the Apostle Paul gives us something of the same kind of an insight when he says we shouldn't be surprised that evil men, 2 Timothy 3:15, shall grow worse and worse. That we shouldn't be surprised when the man of sin or the son of perdition, 2 Thessalonians 2, appears, because the consummation cannot happen until after that.

And so Daniel, having stated the coming of the Kingdom, now starts to deal with the details given to him in the visions of God. And the details show that things will get worse before they get better. There will be some fearful chastenings of the people of God. And then a final holocaust under the pressure of this final beast, this final antichrist, this final ruler of the final form of the final Gentile dominion. And so I believe that his purpose is clearly indicated as we come to these final chapters of Daniel's prophecy.

To understand, then, chapters 7 to 12, is to understand that that Daniel is focusing his attention on this final world ruler. This is the theme that he really has in mind. He discusses him in chapter 7, chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 11, before he consummates things in chapter 12. He gives great attention to this individual...and even to events that are going to happen before he comes that they may act as signposts.

Now, as we look at chapter 8 tonight and next time, we're going to consider not only that final antichrist, but the two individuals, first of all, who mark the path, who show the way he's going to be when he finally arrives. The two, if you will, false messiahs that are in Daniel's mind to present to us. In a sense, we might call them forerunners to the final man of sin. So we meet in this chapter, then, three false messiahs. It is really an incredible prophecy, people. It is so explicit. It predicts, not the birth of one man, but the birth of three. It predicts not the character of one man, but the character of three. It predicts with specificity something of their kind of character and how they function and how they rule and how they conquer. In fact, we have here the history of these three individuals long before any of them are ever born. And it is marvelous to me that God is not only in the business of controlling the destiny of His own people, but He is in the business of controlling the destiny of those who are even against His own people...

I want you to note something. From chapter 2 in verse 4 clear to the end of chapter 7, the language in Daniel has been Aramaic. In other words, it has been the language of Babylon. Because the message has been primarily directed to the Gentiles or to those occupied in a Gentile land. And so this massive portion of Scripture, from 2:4 to 7:28, appears in Aramaic. But all of a sudden, when you entered chapter 8, it changes back to Hebrew, and the language is now Hebrew. People have asked why. And the answer's very simple. There's a tremendous change in emphasis. From here on, now mark this, Daniel will be speaking about the times of the Gentiles, but he will be speaking about the times of the Gentiles as they relate to Israel...

Previously, he's spoke of the times of the Gentiles as they related to the world of the Gentiles. How they would build their dominions. How the four great empires would take place. How there would be a final ten-nation confederacy. How there would come a final ruler. And how the whole system would ultimately come crashing down when Christ took His Kingdom. Now, he backtracks a little bit to give details, but he speaks now concerning the times of the Gentiles or Gentile world dominion as it

relates to Israel. And, therefore, he goes back to the language of God's people.

Now, lemme just distinguish, if I may for a moment, chapter 7 from chapter 8. The first of Daniel's visions, chapter 7, not the first vision in the book. There were other visions, but this is the first to Daniel. The first of Daniel's visions is a broad summary of the times of the Gentiles. It goes all the way from the life of Daniel to the return of Christ. And it touches the climactic events that culminate in the Second Coming.

Now watch this. The second vision in chapter 8...concerns only the Medo-Persian and Greek elements of that bigger vision. Remember, that in the first vision, Daniel saw that there would be four world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and what was the final one? Rome. And that Rome would be restored in a ten-nation confederacy in finality, over which the antichrist would gain dominion and rule, and his power will be shattered in the coming of Christ. So the sweep is there...

But, now, the second vision given by God zeroes in on the period of the Medo-Persians and the Greeks. And it draws some incredible prophecies into history that are to be fulfilled. And it focuses on them in relationship to Israel. Particularly drawn out of that era in the transition from the Medo-Persian to the Greek empire, are two rulers who are pictures of that final world ruler...

And so what are we saying? The second half of the book touches on Israel and how Israel is going to suffer along the road from those who are in the...in the path, as it were, of antichrist, until that final day when antichrist brings the holocaust. It's really a preparation for suffering. Let's go back then and begin in chapter 8 verse 1, and I wanna set the scene...the scene. And, by the way, Daniel sees in his vision animals as he has in the past, but distinct.

Verse 1, "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai." We'll stop right there.

Now, we need to get the setting here, because the setting is really significant. "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar." The first vision, you will remember, came in the first year of Belshazzar. This one comes in the third year of Belshazzar. Somewhere around 551 BC, and if you've been with us, that might fit into the scheme of things. And Daniel, I estimate, would be between 69 and 70 years of age. Now, the first thing we note about this is God's timing in the scene. God's timing is perfect. Chapter 5, now, think with me on this, chapter 5 records the fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persians. You remember Belshazzar was having a big feast, and they were all drunk and carrying on an orgy, and the handwriting on the wall said, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, you are weighed in the balances and found wanting. The kingdom is removed from you," and so forth. They were having this big feast, and while they were having their big party, in came the Medes and the Persians. That's

chapter 5.

Now, this vision came well before the events of chapter 5...and so we're backing up chronologically. And it is prophetic of the Medes and the Persians before they ever actually took Babylon. Now notice, again, in verse 1, "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me." Now, the vision that he had in chapter 7, he had when he was asleep, and this one he had when he was awake. And so we see not only God's timing, but God's method...This vision is a warning of future chaos, of future suffering, of future problems. And because it was given before the Medo-Persians came, when the Medo-Persians came, you see, that wouldn't be a shock to the Jews. God had already prepared their hearts...

And God is unique in His method. Last vision he got, he got asleep. This one he gets when he's awake. And I think there's a way...there's a thought behind that. I think God does that in order to prevent any human devices...He gives things sovereignly, and we cannot predict how or when or where in a prophetic sense.

There's a third thing here. We see not only God's timing and God's method, but God's man. And even he is shocked. He says, "A vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel." To me. Daniel perceives himself as an ordinary man. Daniel is shocked by this, "Appeared unto me, even unto me." And I believe that this is one of the virtues of godliness, and that is that there's always a feeling of overwhelming unbelief that God could ever use me...I...I see this with John the Apostle. He says...he doesn't say, "And I saw the holy city." He says, "And I, just John, I, John saw the holy city." It's overwhelming to him, and he repeats that several times in the Book of the Revelation. "And I, John, just plain John, saw that." He's overwhelmed by such graciousness on God's part that God would grant him such a revelation. This was cause for wonder. This was an overwhelming sense of unworthiness, brought to the surface, surprise and thrill.

Like C.S. Lewis says, "Surprised by joy." Shocked that God should be so favorable, and I guess I have to believe that God's choice leaders have always been that way. Don't you?...I mean every time God tried to get a really godly man to do a job, he always wanted to back out of the job because he felt inadequate, right? Moses says, "I can't do that, Lord. Do You really realize who You're talking to? I'm just me, Moses. I have a speech problem, and who am I?"

And some of 'em argued that they weren't from the right kinda stock or breed. That's always the way with humility. And so Daniel is somewhat overwhelmed that he's God's man. There's something about that that I love. Do you realize if you received a revelation from God, that would be tremendous cause for great joy, wouldn't it? To say, "God chose me to be the vehicle. God gave His revelation to me." As I was thinking about that, I realized that, if that was exciting for Daniel, what must it be like for me when I have all of His revelations. What an incredible thought. And sometimes I take it all for granted, and I forget how favored I am to have His Word. What about you? Daniel was

overwhelmed.

The next verse tells us the scene and gives us something of God's exactness when He gives a prophecy. Daniel was in Babylon, I believe, at this time. But in his vision, he was transported to Shushan...to Shushan. And he was transported to Shushan by the river Ulai. Lemme give you a little background about that. Shushan is called also Susa, by the Greeks, S U S A, Susa. You'll find it in your history books. It is a city about, well, let's see, nowadays there's a village left there called Shush. But it's left, I think, the ruins pretty much on the old and ancient location. So it's located about 230 miles directly east of Babylon and about 120 miles north of the Persian Gulf. I mean it's way back in nowhere. That's desert out there...

Now, at the time Daniel wrote, Shushan was just an eastern town at the extremity of the Babylonian Empire. It was in the province, and that word is maybe not a technical term, maybe just a general term. It was in the area of Elam. But after Daniel's time, mark this, Shushan became the royal city of the Medes and the Persians. For Daniel, in his prophesy, to pick out that, for the Spirit of God to nail down Shushan as a city of great significance, where such a vision would occur, would be obscure to the time in which Daniel lived. Because, at that time, it had no significance. Later on, the Medes and the Persians under Cyrus affirmed it as a royal city. And listen to this. When Esther sat on her throne as queen, she sat in the palace built by Darius in the city of Shushan. And when Nehemiah was to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall, he was commissioned and departed from where he dwelt, and it was in the city of Shushan. So it became a very significant city later on.

Now notice, again, he saw in a vision, and what he saw was in Shushan in the palace. The Hebrew word is a very broad term. It is used, for example in 1 Chronicles 1, or 29:1, rather, 1 Chronicles 29:1, to describe the temple in Jerusalem. It is sometimes in extra-Biblical sources translated as a fortress. Other times as a palace. Whatever it was, it was the official place. By the way, Shushan has some other significance. Have you ever heard of the Code Of Hammurabi? The old critics of the Old Testament used to say that Moses could never have lived that long ago and written the Ten Commandments and all the stuff that the Pentitude claims. Because when Moses lived that long ago, nobody knew that kinda stuff. There was no law. Nobody had...nobody was smart enough to figure out a code of ethics. That was a primitive time, you know, with guys running around with clubs hitting women on the head and dragging 'em into a cave. That was not a sophisticated time.

And so Moses, the critics said, could never have written the law that long ago. And then somebody was nosing around Shush and dug up the Code of Hammurabi, which was a sophisticated, ethical, moral law from the time of Moses. That's a significant little town all of a sudden. And it was there, as I said, that Darius built his magnificent Persian palace where Esther served as queen. And, by the way, you might be interested to know that, at the village of Shush, or near it, archeologists have uncovered the palace and the fortress of which Daniel wrote...At that time, it probably never even existed. But it does, and you can go there today and see it.

Now, what about the river Ulai? Very interesting. Very interesting. The word river, do you see it there? It was by the river...That is the only time that word for river is ever used in the Bible. It's in this chapter. It is a very obscure and strange word for river. It is not the normal word for river. Aha! We might assume, then, that whatever the Ulai is, it is not a normal river...Hmmmmm.

The archeologists have discovered that running through the area of Shushan, just on the northeast of the city, was an artificial canal built to transport water between two rivers that flowed north and south. It was a river, or really a canal 900 feet wide. It was called Ulais by the classic writers. But it wasn't a normal river. It was a man-made, 900-foot wide channel. Amazing. Spirit of God had a special word for a special kinda river.

Summing up the scene then, Daniel is in Babylon. He finds himself projected in a vision to a town little known at the time. A town which had no suspicion of its coming future grandeur. A town destined to be the imperial, royal city of the Persians. The city of Esther, the city of Nehemiah, a town which became so great that today to modern village of Shush stands besides its ruins, which are testimony to all in the world that God's Word is true. And the vision which follows, that takes place in that city is startling.

But before we look at the vision, just one more thing. This vision was so special, that God had to interpret it. So look over at verse 15 for a minute...Daniel's not always chronological, or he doesn't get his visions in chronological order, and so he kind of sticks things here and there. But verse 15 tells us that God gave him an interpretation. God gave him a way to understand this, and it was a tough thing to understand. In fact, if you look at the end of verse 27, it says "none understood it." None. It was a tough vision. In order to help Daniel out, look at verse 15. "And it came to pass...really should say while I, and there he goes again...I...I...he says it twice...I...I, Daniel...I love that...Had seen the vision and sought for the meaning, then behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man."

He says, now notice that little phrase, "sought for the meaning." He was seeing this vision. I don't know how visions work. I mean people always say, "Well, how does a vision work?" I don't have any idea. I don't have any idea. But it is as real as reality is for the one who receives it. However it was, he was seeing this before him as John saw a vision on Patmos. And it was all unfolding in front of his mind's eye. And as it was unfolding, he was struggling in his head with the meaning of it all. And no doubt, after having had a previous vision two years before, and having interpreted a couple of Nebuchadnezzar's visions, he was trying to fit the pieces of the puzzle together in his mind. But not having the...the hindsight that we have, it was very difficult. And so the Lord recognizes this, and the Lord sends along somebody to help him.

You know, that's always the way it is with God. I don't believe God ever gave His Word to His people to keep them in the darkness. People say, "Ohhhhh, the Bible is so hard to understand." It isn't really hard to understand. You know, some people will come up to me...in fact, this morning, some men came up to me and said, "You know something? Our pastor teaches the same thing that you taught."...You know what I said? "He's got the same Bible." Not that tough. I got a letter from a fellow recently, he said, "I have discovered in my Bible these truths, and then I got your book, and you believe the same things." Same Bible. It's not that tough...

I don't believe God's trying to keep us in the dark. I believe a wayfaring man, though he be a fool, need not err. Because God not only gives us His Word, but, if needed, He gives us His interpreter, too. And for us in this age, who is it? It's the Spirit of God. First John 2, "You don't have any need for man's understanding. God's given unto you an anointing. And that anointing is none other than the Spirit of God to lead you into all truth and bring all things to your remembrance." And so we have here, then, God giving Daniel a vision, and God giving Daniel and interpretation. The only thing that...the only time I should say that God veils the meaning of things is to the darkened minds of unbelievers. To His own children, He wants to open the meaning.

To me, that's the greatest confidence there is. I start out every week with a blank. I do. I go in there, and I've never preached on the passage before. You're getting the first sermon I've ever preached in my life on Daniel 8. People say, "Oh, it's so complex. How did you ever figure it out?" You just go in there, and the first thing I say is, "Lord, there's a lotta stuff in this chapter, and You're gonna have to be my teacher. The words are here, but I want the message that You give in this text." And I find that week after week after week, I experience the exhilaration and the thrill of the Spirit of God unfolding to me the meaning of the Word of God. That's a wonderful, wonderful joy.

So God sends a messenger, verse 15. I gotta quit preaching and keep going. "Behold, there stood before me on having the appearance of a man." Now, we know that angels could take on a human appearance. I think it's kind of interesting that the word for man is gabor. You say, "Why is that interesting?" Because it means a mighty man. Gabor, and the consonants in Hebrew are G, B, R. You know what the Hebrew word for God is? What is it? Two letters...EI, E L. From Eloheem.

Now you take G B R, and you add EI at the end, and guess who you get? Gabriel. Good, class...Gabriel, and you get it verse 16. "And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called and said, 'Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.'" Isn't it interesting that in the pre-Holy Spirit era, if you wanna use that term, although Holy Spirit was very active in the sense of indwelling believers, angels were the interpreters many times? How fascinating. And a voice comes booming out of the sky between the banks of the river, thundering down in his vision. It says, "Gabriel," who must be the gabor, the mighty man, "make this man to understand the vision." God used His angel, Gabriel. Now, Gabriel is a fascinating angel. He is unique. He is God's official...publicity man. He is the guy who makes the big announcements...He comes to Zacharias,

and he says, "Zacharias, you are going to have a son, and your son will be the forerunner of the Messiah, and he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink to turn many of the hearts of people of God...and the children of Israel to God." And he goes on to this, and it is Gabriel who makes the announcement to Zacharias about the birth of John the Baptist.

Little while later, he comes to a virgin by the name of Mary, and he makes another pretty significant announcement, doesn't he? "You're gonna have a child, too. He's gonna be Emmanuel, God With Us." So I'd say stuff's pretty important when Gabriel gets the assignment. "Gabriel, you tell that man what this means. God wants him to know." By the way, the only other angel named in the Bible, apart from Lucifer who was Satan, the only other angel named is whom? Michael. And Michael is super-angel. He is champion angel. He is hero angel. He wins all the big wars. Later on, we'll see how Michael gets into the Book of Daniel. The Lord...there's a demon messing up the action, and the Lord says, "Michael, get him."...Michael comes outta heaven and does a number on whoever that demon is...Michael is the angelic leader.

So the powerful presence of Gabriel, and I guess Gabriel and Michael and...and Lucifer might have been some kind of a triumvirate in...in the economy and the strata of angelic being. We know there is such a strata from Ephesians chapter 6 and from Ephesians chapter 1. And so Gabriel is dispatched to give clear meaning, and I believe the voice you hear in 16 is the voice of God commanding the angel, for who could command such a high angel as Gabriel other than God Himself?

Verse 17, "So he came near where I stood. And when he came...and this is kinda good. Gabriel comes over beside Daniel in the vision. Daniel sees himself in the vision, and Gabriel comes over alongside of him, wants to get near him. And what was Daniel's reaction?...And when he came, I was...the Hebrew says terrified...and fell on my face." Now, it's normal for mortals to have that kind of a reaction in the presence of a supernatural being. We find it over and over again in Scripture. We find that in Isaiah chapter 6, for example, when Isaiah beheld the glory of God and the majesty of God, and he saw the angels come out, he just completely fell apart, didn't he? Said, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips. I'm undone." He needed to be purified, didn't he? And he had the same kind of a collapsing reaction. Job had the same reaction when he really saw God and perceived God in all of His majesty, and said, "I abhor myself in dust and ashes."

And I believe that in the presence of the holiness of the supernatural, there is an overpowering sense of sinfulness. And Daniel, even in his vision, collapses at the feet of the angel. And I believe this is not uncommon. We find it with John. And John and Daniel are so much alike. They must be having a great time in eternity, just comparing notes, because in Revelation 19, when the angel came to give a message to John, you remember what he did? He fell down in front of the angel, too. Gabriel's presence was intimidating. Supernatural holy angel of high rank. But, wonderfully, his presence there was not to condemn Daniel for some sin or to browbeat him for some omission in his life. But

his presence was reassuring. Daniel was afraid, it says in 17, "Fell on his face, but he said unto me, 'Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end shall be the vision.'" Hmmmmm.

He says, "Now, Daniel, you must understand the vision. It is a vision...watch this...about the time of the end. The vision shall be taking place at the end." This then, beloved, is a prophecy running to the end. That's why I believe that in verses 23 to 25 at the end of the chapter when the vision closes out, he stretches all the way to the final antichrist. Some would make the final one the same as one of the earlier ones. But in my own feeling, there is the necessity to stretch it as far as it can go. The time of the end.

Verse 18, "Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground." Now lemme give you the sequence. In the vision, obviously Daniel wasn't really asleep at this point. The vision came when he was awake. But he sees himself in the vision. The angel sent by God. The angel comes over, stands beside him on the bank of the river in Shushan, and he sees that angel in the vision, and he collapses, and he's on his knees. And the next thing he knows, the angel says, "Understand, O man, son of man, this is a vision of the time of the end." And while he was still speaking, Daniel just fainted flat out in his vision. So what it means, he fell into a deep sleep, literally means he fainted. It is the response of an extreme emotional excitement, so that there is an abnormal loss of consciousness, that he just passes out. Already on his knees. All he has to do is fall down on his nose, and there he is, flat.

And the in verse 18, it says, "But he touched me and set me upright." He restored him. Now, Daniel had the right reaction to a supernatural visitor...You know, it should be with the same kind of reaction that I open the pages of the Word of God that have been delivered to me by the Holy Spirit, right? It is with the same kind of a reaction that I should draw myself to study the Word of God, knowing full well that the resident truth teacher who dwells within me is my instructor. I cannot study the Word of God unless I study on my knees. I must hold in my hand this awesome book, knowing full well in my heart, that this is delivered to me by a supernatural agent. What do we see then?

Daniel's reactions are what our reactions should be. First, to know that we have a Word from God should cause us the kind of exhilarating joy that says, "And to me, even to me, God has given this. Secondly, not only should there be an exhilarating joy, but there should be a sense of overwhelming unworthiness that makes us fall at the foot of the messenger. If you can study the Word of God with flippancy, you've missed the point. Daniel can't. He can't hear God's message with flippancy. And then the angel, I'm sure, gently touched him and stood him up.

And he said, verse 19, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation, for at the time appointed the end shall come." He starts out by saying this, "I will make you know. I'm gonna instruct you, Daniel. I'm gonna interpret this vision to you, so you'll understand. And you will find out that what happens...now watch this...will be in the last time, but in the last end of the

indignation."

Now, indignation refers to God's anger toward Israel. God's indignation over their sin. God's indignation over their disobedience. And as a result of their disobedience and sin, God is indignant with His people. And, as a result of His indignancy, there is a chastening period. In Daniel 11, look at verse 36 for a minute. And here it refers to antichrist, called the willful king or the king who shall do according to his will. And it says in verse 36, "The king shall do according to his will; and shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper...the antichrist will flourish...till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done."

In other words, the antichrist will last until God's indignation over his disobedient people is finally finished. So, the angel says to Daniel, "Your vision is a vision of the end, and a vision of the last end of the indignation." Again I say that's why I believe the vision of chapter 8 must stretch to encompass the antichrist who is involved in the last of God's indignation against His people as He chastens and purifies them.

You see, beloved, it is not until the Tribulation, which is another name for the indignation, it is not until the Great Tribulation that "The nation Israel will look on Him...as Zachariah says...whom they have pierced and begin to mourn for Him as an only Son." It's not till then. It's not till then that Romans 11, "And so all Israel shall be saved will come to pass." Thank God for the remnant today. But it is not till then, in the midst of that, when the abomination of desolations occurs in the middle of the seven-year Tribulation. It is not until then that the hearts of Israel are burst open toward the Messiah, and they see, and they're wonderfully one. Not till then. It's not till the chastening is accomplished and finally completed. And so says the angel, "Daniel, you're gonna see a vision that runs all the way to the end. All the way to the end of the end of the indignation."...

Now, having said that, now listen and I'll draw this to a close for tonight. Some of this indignation has been going on throughout the history of Israel. Do you know that? God has chastened His people over and again throughout their history, has He not? There have been periods of peace followed by great periods of...suffering, always seeming to be the legacy of God's people, Israel. The marvel of all marvels is that in the midst of all of it, He's always preserved His people. But there have been times of indignation. Times when God has been angry with His people in a righteous anger over their rebellion and unbelief and rejection...

Now, Daniel is about to see the flow of indignation till its finality. The antichrist is not the only one who will be part of the indignation. There will be two others, among many, but two others whom Daniel points to who will also carry out part of God's chastening on Israel. One he calls the big horn. If you look at verse 5, or the notable horn, means the big horn. And one he calls the little horn, verse 9. In verse 5, the notable or big horn. In verse 9, the little horn. These also mark the path of the

history of Israel's chastening, pointing to the final coming of the antichrist.

So Gabriel says, "Daniel, I'm gonna teach you what this means. It reaches to the final ruler and the final persecution...of Israel." Again, let me just say that I believe, again, it has to be the antichrist at the end of the chapter, because antichrist has already been introduced in chapter 7. And the language of this angel has tremendous finality about it that I believe must stretch to the end. The interpretation, then, of verse 19 could be summed up like this. Lemme read you a paraphrase: "I shall cause thee to know by way of explanation what will occur in the latter portion of the indignation known as the Great Tribulation, which will have long before been foreshadowed by the oppression of the big horn and the little horn."...

That's what he's really saying. Now, the question that remains for us is who is the big horn, and who is the little horn. Would you like to know?...The big horn...I'm gonna tell ya...You think you know me, but you don't know me...The big horn is Alexander the Great, and the little horn is Antiochus the Greek who came out of the family of the Seleucids, one of the four generals who took Alexander's dominion. And Antiochus coming out of the element of the Seleucids became the master of Israel. Both of them...manifest characteristics of the indignation and the antichrist. Alexander shows the power of the antichrist. Antiochus shows the character of the antichrist...Alexander shows the power. Antiochus shows the character. It is utterly incredible to see now, and we shall do that, the flow of this chapter as it outlines the career of Alexander the Great before the man was born, and the career of Antiochus Epiphanes, but it chronicles the career of both of those individuals before they were ever born.

It's an incredible insight, and we'll save that till next time. The big horn, the little horn, and then the final horn. Lemme say this in closing for tonight. This has been a Bible study, really, not a sermon. And, yet, I trust that the Spirit of God has spoken to our hearts. I can never study the Scripture without a thrill in the sense that I know I'm communing with the living God. Many things excite me about this chapter. One is that God can predict the future. Is that great? That puts God right where He belongs. The other is that God has given me this incredible Book. And I guess the message for us tonight...is to see in the...the response of Daniel's heart, our own proper response to the Word of God. It's easy to get cold about it, isn't it? Easy to get stale. It's easy to see the Bible as there all the time, and it loses a little of its glow. And then there are always these people in our society who are saying, "Oh, you should be in our movement. We get visions."...

And there's that searching for some supernatural event...and that's a jaded perspective, because God has given to us in the matchless, inerrant, infallible words of this Book all the visions and all the revelations necessary for salvation and perfection. For Paul said to Timothy, "The Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, and they're able to make you...perfect. Thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

And, beloved, I submit to you this: if you can study the Book of Daniel or any other book in the Bible, and not be thrilled to the point where you say, "And me, even me, God has shown the truth," and find yourself on your knees in adoration before the messenger of the Spirit of God, if you can read the Bible without those two things, something's missing in your life. You've lost your perspective. You're jaded by familiarity...If I ever get to that point, I say, "God, take it away from me until I learn to appreciate it, and give it to somebody who will." Some of us have so many Bibles around our house, we could open a bookstore...and maybe that's just the problem...Let God speak to your heart. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You tonight, again, for the wonderful joy of being together. We do love Your Word here at Grace Church, and just looking out and seeing all of these people lets me know that. I thank You for them. God, may our love for Your Word not be an emotional thing, sentimental. May it express itself in worship, you know, an overwhelming awe that You should be so gracious to us. May we never forget that there is a vast world of millions of people who don't have this Book, and were they to buy it and read it, they wouldn't have understanding, because that comes only by the indwelling Spirit. Oh, how grateful should we be, how thrilled should we be, and how diligent to grasp its pages. You have not given us this Word to confuse us or to frustrate us. For You have given us Your Holy Spirit dwelling within to teach us its truths. And, if we apply ourselves, we know that Your will be fulfilled. May we tonight, Lord, all of us here, covenant in our hearts to seek at Your good and gracious hand a renewed and a fresh love for Your Book. It would be one thing, Father, if it wasn't true, if it's predictions didn't all come to pass. Maybe there'd be an excuse for our indifference. But there is none. For every Word is truth. And so renew our commitment, and we'll thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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