

## ***The Personality and Power of the Antichrist (Dan. 8)***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. Daniel had four visions (Dan. 7-12). The Antichrist's great power, fierce cruelty and eventual defeat by the sudden manifestation of God's sovereign power was central to each vision. God's people must feed on Daniel's revelations before the Antichrist emerges on the world stage.
- B. The two most detailed prophecies about the Antichrist in the OT are found in Dan. 8 and Dan. 11. They are parallel to Rev. 13 (which is the most detailed NT prophecy about the Antichrist).
- C. Dan. 8 focuses on the Antichrist's personality and power, whereas Dan. 11, describes his religious and military activities. Dan. 8 has great significance because of the appearance of Gabriel to Daniel.
- D. In both Dan. 8 and 11, the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes are described to give us a prophetic picture of the Antichrist. God disciplined Israel through Antiochus Epiphanes as a prophetic picture of God's discipline through the Antichrist. Antiochus Epiphanes was an antichrist of this period and he prefigured the Antichrist of the last days. Daniel sees Persian and Grecian empires as the stage from which a ruler arises during the Greek Empire.
- E. God has a surprising script for introducing the Antichrist in Scripture and history as seen in Dan. 8 and Dan. 11. The mighty Persian Empire is suddenly overthrown by Alexander the Great and the Greeks. He dies suddenly and four of his generals divide his kingdom up into four separate kingdoms. Out of one of them emerges Antiochus Epiphanes whose political and military activities provide us with a prophetic picture of the End-Time Antichrist.
- F. In the End-Times, Israel cries out for peace yet God sends her the Antichrist to create the context where she receives true peace on God's terms through Jesus. This reality of the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation is offensive because we do not understand God's holiness thus we do not see the vastness and seriousness of Israel's sin.
- G. In Dan. 2, metals (gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay) are used to symbolize the nations related to Israel's prophetic drama through history (Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome). In Dan. 7 and Dan. 8, animals are twice used to symbolize the same nations. Summary: Babylon is symbolized by gold and a winged lion; Medo-Persia by silver, a bear and a ram; Greece by bronze, a winged leopard and a goat with one horn; and Rome by iron and clay and a unique wild beast.
- H. Dan. 8 is the second of Daniel's four visions. It gives details about the second (Persian) and third (Greek) kingdoms because they set up the political and military context for Antiochus Epiphanes to emerge as a prophetic picture of the Antichrist. It is the last time Daniel uses symbols instead of direct yet cryptic language as in Dan. 9 and Dan. 10-12.

## II. OUTLINE OF DAN. 8

- A. The Setting of Daniel's second vision (Dan. 8:1-2)
- B. The vision itself (Dan. 8:3-14)
  - 1. Part one of the vision: Persia and Greece set the stage (Dan. 8:3-8)
    - a. The ram (of Persia) with two horns (Dan. 8:3-4)
    - b. The goat (of Greece) with one horn: Alexander the Great (Dan. 8:5-8)
  - 2. Part two of the vision: Little Horn as Antiochus and Antichrist (Dan. 8:9-14)
    - a. The activity of the Little Horn (Dan. 8:10-12)
    - b. How long the defilement and persecution continues (Dan. 8:13-14)
- C. Gabriel appears to Daniel: vision pertains to the End-Times (Dan. 8:15-19)
- D. Gabriel's explanation of the symbols (Dan. 8:20-22)
- E. Part three of the vision: Antichrist's personality and power (Dan. 8:23-25)
- F. The importance of the vision (Dan. 8:26-27)

## III. THE SETTING OF DANIEL'S SECOND VISION (DAN. 8:1-2)

*<sup>1</sup> In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar (551 BC) a vision appeared to me--to me, Daniel--after the one that appeared to me the first time (Dan. 7). <sup>2</sup> I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel (palace/royal residence), which is in the province of Elam (Persia); and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. (Dan. 8:1-2)*

Belshazzar was the king of Babylon. The third year of his reign was 551 BC. Daniel is about 70 years old. This is two years after his vision in Dan. 7 and 12 years before Belshazzar's famous feast in Dan. 5. In this vision Daniel traveled in the Spirit to another country like Ezekiel did (Ezek. 8:3; 40:1).

## IV. THE RAM (OF PERSIA) WITH TWO HORNS (DAN. 8:3-4)

*<sup>3</sup> Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram (Medo-Persia empire v. 20) which had two horns...<sup>4</sup> I saw the ram pushing (conquering nations) westward, northward, and southward, so that no beast (nation) could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. (Dan. 8:3-4)*

## V. THE GOAT (OF GREECE) WITH ONE HORN: ALEXANDER THE GREAT (DAN. 8:5-8)

*<sup>5</sup> Suddenly a male goat (Greece, v. 21) came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground (speedy military victories); and the goat had a notable horn (Alexander the Great)...<sup>6</sup> Then he came to the ram (Persia)...and ran at him with furious power. <sup>7</sup> I saw him (Alexander the Great) confronting the ram (Persia); he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns (Alexander fully defeated Persia in 334 BC). There was no power in the ram (Persia) to withstand him (Alexander the Great), but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him...<sup>8</sup> Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken (Alexander suddenly died at age 32), and in place of it four notable ones (four of Alexander's generals divided up his kingdom) came up toward the four winds of heaven. (Dan. 8:5-8)*

VI. PART 2 OF THE VISION: LITTLE HORN AS ANTIOCHUS & ANTICHRIST (DAN. 8:9-14)

<sup>9</sup> *Out of one of them (one of the 4 new kingdoms) came a **little horn** (first Antiochus; later the Antichrist) which grew **exceedingly great toward the south** (Egypt), **toward the east** (Babylon or Iraq), and **toward the Glorious Land** (Israel). 10 And it grew up to the host (army) of heaven; and it cast down some of the host (fallen angels? Rev. 12:7-9) and some of the stars (faithful Israelites) to the ground, and **trampled them**. 11 He even **exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host** (Jesus, v. 25); and by him the **daily sacrifices** were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary (Jerusalem Temple) was cast down. 12 Because of transgression (Israel's), an army (Israel's) was **given over to the horn** (Antichrist) to **oppose the daily sacrifices**; and he **cast truth down to the ground**. He did all this and prospered. 13 Then I heard a holy one (angel) speaking; and another holy one (angel) said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?" 14 And he said to me, "For 2,300 days (6 years and 4 months); then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." (Dan. 8:9-14)*

A. The "little horn" was first mentioned in the Dan. 7 vision (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 21). It speaks of a political and military leader that starts out in a little way or in a small and insignificant way as a regional leader. This was partially fulfilled first in Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) who ruled Syria (175 to 164 BC). He was a cruel man who was one of Israel's greatest persecutors. Antiochus' actions prophetically point to the Antichrist who is the little horn of Dan. 7.

B. The little horn grew up to the host (army) of heaven. This may mean that the Antichrist's influence will increase to such a degree that he affects a chain reaction in the spirit realm in a dramatic way (by stirring up the prayer movement by martyrdom Rev. 6:9-17) so that demons (fallen angels) are cast down to the earth in the fierceness of the spiritual warfare that ensues. Dan. 8:25 speaks of the hosts being trampled. Is this the demon host or the armies of Israel? Some see the host of heaven and the stars as synonymous translating it as "the host even the stars" (v. 13). Israel is referred to as the armies of the Lord (Exod. 12:41).

<sup>7</sup> *War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was **cast out** ...called the Devil and Satan...was cast to the earth, and his angels were **cast out with him**. (Rev. 12:7-9)*

C. The stars refer to the faithful in Israel who will be as numerous as the stars of heaven (Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 37:9-10; Jer. 33:22). The faithful shine like stars (Dan. 12:3; Mt. 13:43; Rev. 12:1). The Little Horn will cast the stars to the ground to trample them or will persecute the Jewish people (v. 10, 24). Antiochus killed over 100,000 Jews. The Antichrist will participate in 2/3 of the Jews being killed (Zech. 13:8). This will number in the millions.

<sup>8</sup> *"It shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That **two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die**, but one-third shall be left in it." (Zech. 13:8)*

- D. The Little Horn will become "great toward" Israel or will greatly impact Israel by growing up against "the host of heaven," and/or the stars. God is the commander (or prince) of the host. This horn started out little, but grew exceedingly great in power toward the south, east and Israel. Daniel saw a fifth horn come that from one of the four horns on the goat.
- E. Four things are trampled or cast to the ground by the Little Horn: the sanctuary (v. 11, 13), the host (v. 13), the stars (v. 10) and truth (v. 12). A righteousness angelic host cannot be trampled.
- F. The Antichrist will "exalt himself as high as the Prince of the host" (v. 11, 25). The little horn will claim to be equal with God. This is a reference to God. There is no evidence that Antiochus Epiphanes magnified himself to be equal with the God of Israel. Antiochus took the name "Epiphanes," which means "[divine] manifestation". The Jews mocked this by changing his name to Epimanes, which translates "madman". The Antichrist will claim to be God.
- G. God used Antiochus as His tool to discipline Israel and will use the Antichrist in the End-Times. Because of transgression (v. 12) – this may either be the Antichrist's or Israel's (or both). It will result in God giving over an army to the Antichrist to use against Israel and the giving over of Israel's armies to be defeated by the Antichrist to stop Israel's daily sacrifices (v. 12).

<sup>3</sup> *The man of sin...the son of perdition (Antichrist), 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:3-4)*

<sup>12</sup> *Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. (Dan. 8:12)*

## VII. PART 3 OF THE VISION: ANTICHRIST'S PERSONALITY AND POWER (DAN. 8:23-25)

<sup>23</sup> *In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king (Antichrist) shall arise, having fierce features (strong countenance: cruel without compassion), who understands sinister schemes (complex problems: spiritual and natural). 24 His power shall be mighty (demonic, Rev. 13:2), but not by his own power (human power); he shall destroy fearfully (unique), and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty (world leader), and also the holy people (Israel). 25 Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper (with lying signs 2 Thes. 2:9; Rev. 13:2) under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes (Jesus); but he shall be broken without human means (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:20). (Dan. 8:23-25)*

## VIII. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISION (DAN. 8:26-27)

<sup>26</sup> *The vision...which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision (preserve it), for it refers to many days in the future. 27 I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it. (Dan. 8:26-27)*