

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

“Hear then His voice today. Perhaps you are made aware of the necessity of a change of heart and life, at some future period, in order that you might die safely. Such a change is equally necessary if you wish to live comfortably now. As long as you are unfit to die, you can have no true enjoyment of life. It is an easy thing to prove that procrastination is highly dangerous. Do you consider how many uncertainties you must presume upon? Are you sure that you will not be suddenly cut off by an unexpected stroke, or visited with fever? Tremble lest such be your end, if you are trifling with God, who is now calling you by His Gospel to seek Him today.” [John Newton]

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The Sovereignty of God Over the Nations – A Closer Look at the Little Horn

February 9th, 2025

Sermon Text: Daniel 8

Scripture Reading: Daniel 12

Last time, as we looked at chapter 7 of Daniel, we met this one called

“the little horn,” which one day will arise out of the nations. And we saw that this is none other than the Antichrist, the man of sin, the man of lawlessness whom Paul wrote about in 2 Thessalonians 2.

And we were reminded, as we have been in every chapter of Daniel, that God is sovereign over the nations. They rise and they fall according to His decree. Kings come onto the world scene and

conquer, striving to subdue the entire world to their authority. But no matter how big, regardless of how many conquests they enjoy, they each one come to an end and are replaced by another. That is the plot line of human history.

However, there will come a day – to which we have drawn very close – when one king will succeed – for a short while – in establishing a worldwide kingdom. That king is represented here in Daniel as “the little horn.”

Daniel 7:8 I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

It is crucial that we as Christ’s people understand this. There is great encouragement for us which will sustain our faith even in the darkest of times. One very encouraging element here is that

Daniel – about 600BC – was told this:

Daniel 12:4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Daniel 12:9 He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

But now consider what the Apostle John was told 700 years later:

Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

Revelation 1:19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

We live in the last days, in the era of the end of the days. The visions given to John are the same as those

Daniel saw, only John is given much more detail. In these days, and more so as the time for the Antichrist to reveal himself draws closer, only those who truly know Christ will stand:

Daniel 11:32 He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, **but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.**

Right now the spirit of Antichrist is operating. This is not a crazy conspiracy theory – it is the Word of God given to us. At this very moment, the Antichrist’s servants, energized by Satan, are at work doing what Daniel was shown –

...He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant...

Satan is the great deceiver, and myriads of people who claim to be Christians right now have been seduced by the devil’s flattering lies.

Revelation 13:11-15 Then I saw another beast rising out of the

earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. (12) It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. (13) It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, (14) and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. (15) And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain.

Only those who truly know the Lord will stand.

I was reading a new book last week which is a compilation of Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ sermon series on the New Birth, John chapter 3. “You must be born again.” And I was impressed that even back in the

1960's, the same devilish lie was being preached from church pulpits – namely, a denial of the new birth as a necessity for salvation. This lie is sold on the naïve through Satan's flattery. What is the truth? It is this:

No one will see, let alone enter, the kingdom of God unless they are born again. No one is a Christian apart from the new birth. And the new birth, this regeneration, this new creation, is not something we do. It is not a decision we make. It is something which God does to us.

Satan, right now, is working – the spirit of antichrist – to flatter the naïve into believing that they are just fine with the Lord. That they are surely Christians – after all, they have made a decision, they attend church, they have been baptized, they, they, they, they. But they have not been born again. Only the Lord can speak “Let their be light” and “Lazarus, come forth!”

Are YOU born again? Has the invisible wind of the Holy Spirit blown upon you so that you are a new creation? Or are you deceived

by this lying, Little Horn who flatters and lies?

Follow along now as we read this 8th chapter of Daniel which is a closer look at what Daniel was shown in chapter 7. Then we will just give an overview of the main points.

Daniel 8:1-27 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.

The Time Frame

Daniel 8:1-27 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.

As was the case in chapter 7, Daniel saw this vision prior to chapter 5 – the handwriting on the wall and the fall of Belshazzar and Babylon. Daniel was, in his vision, in Susa which was the chief capital of the Persian empire.

The Ram

This ram which Daniel saw had two horns, one higher than the other. This represented the Media-Persian empire which had conquered Babylon. Cyrus and his Persian empire was greater than the Medes, and thus the longer horn.

This ram effected great conquests and became the world power for a time:

Daniel 8:4 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.

It would have appeared to us, you and myself, had we lived at that time that surely this kingdom of the ram would never end. No one could stand before him. He did as he pleased. But, as always happens according to God's timetable, a conquering goat comes upon the scene:

NOTE: This same phrase is used for the Antichrist's greatness when he conquers the world – "Revelation 13:4 And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" And then its end comes.

The Goat

Daniel 8:5-7 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.

The goat represents Alexander the Great whose speed of conquest was amazing. The seeming power of the Medes and Persians melted before him. But, at an early age, Alexander died:

Daniel 8:8 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.

His kingdom was divided up between his 4 generals. These are the 4 “conspicuous” horns:

- Macedonia under Cassander

- Thrace and Asia Minor under Lysimachus
- Syria under Seleucus
- Egypt under Ptolemy (where the intrigues of Antony and Cleopatra would take place)

And then – another horn. Out of one of the 4, it comes.

Daniel 8:9 Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.

This one is certainly a kind of antichrist, but not *the* Antichrist. It is generally accepted that this horn is Antiochus Epiphanes whose rule included “the glorious land” (vs 9). The Jewish historian Josephus who wrote a 20 volume history of the Jews in about 94AD, wrote:

“And there would arise from their number a certain king who would make war on the Jewish nation and their laws, deprive them of the form of government based on these laws, spoil the temple, and prevent the sacrifices from being offered

for 3 years. And these misfortunes our nation did in fact come to experience under Antiochus Epiphanes, just as Daniel many years before saw and wrote that they would happen.” [Vol 10:11:7]

In First Maccabees we have a description of some of the great evil Antiochus carried out against the Jews:

“And the king sent letters by the hand of messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, that they should follow laws strange to the land, and should forbid whole burnt offerings and sacrifice and drink offerings in the sanctuary; and should profane the sabbaths and feasts, and pollute the sanctuary and those that were holy.”

The Interpretation of the Vision

Daniel 8:15-16 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.”

The voice, as Calvin concludes, is very probably Christ. He sends Gabriel, the same angel who announced both the birth of John the Baptist and that of Christ.

Here, Gabriel is explaining to Daniel how the course of God’s wrath against the Jews for their apostasy is going to proceed. At the same time, there would be a remnant, Christ’s true Israel, and what is being shown to Daniel is to serve that remnant as great encouragement. Very difficult times would come, just as such times have continued to come with tyrants trying with demonic power to destroy the Church. But all have failed.

“When such things occur, let us trust in God. The battle is His, and the overthrow of the enemy will often be without man’s hand. Tyrants like Antiochus cannot halt the working of the efficacious grace of God.” [Edward Young]

This is the fundamental truth which the Lord gives to us all through the book of Daniel. God is sovereign. Tyrants appear only for His purpose and they fall at His decree. Antichrist is at work, flattering and deceiving but we must not be duped by his lies. All who truly belong to Christ must grow in the knowledge of God and in His truth so that we recognize this evil.

“The book of Daniel is given to God’s people to serve the purpose of strengthening the weakness of the faithful, and giving them consolation in the hour of trial.”
[Keil]

Application

In the persecution of Israel by Antiochus, we have a type of the coming day of the Antichrist. You see this here:

Daniel 8:16-17 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.**”

As is so common with biblical prophecy, we see here a kind of double fulfillment – one near, and one far. Listen to H.C. Leupold explain:

“This statement means that, aside from the obvious relation that the vision has to the events that lie in the near future, namely in the time of the Persian and Greek Empires, this whole vision also serves as a type of what shall transpire at the time of the end of the present world order. So the “end” referred to the absolute end. In other words, King Antiochus is seen to be a kind of Old Testament antichrist like unto the great Antichrist; the overthrow and the defilement of the sanctuary (in Jerusalem under Antiochus) shall correspond to similar experiences *of the church*; the suffering of the holy people corresponds to suffering in the last

great tribulation. When this is borne in mind, the chapter loses its isolation from present-day events and is seen to be typical in a very definite sense.” [Exposition of Daniel]

Understand? There is application for us. We can learn about the coming appearance and reign of Antichrist by learning about this antichrist Antiochus.

Here is more from Leupold:

“Antichrist, like Christ, has a more immediate future as well as a more remote one. We take it that this is written from the standpoint of the Old Testament times and is a reference to Christ’s first and second comings. Greece with all of its refinement produces the first, ie, Antiochus, the Old Testament antichrist. From this we should be inclined to draw the inference, based on the typical character of the vision, that the refinement of the culture and the civilization of the last days shall help very materially to bring forth the great Antichrist. The more ungodly and

antichristian this culture becomes in our day, the more should we reckon with the possibility here involved and not be surprised at such developments.” [ibid]

We can learn from this description of Antiochus that the Antichrist will:

- Be very cunning, deceitful, and crafty
- He will succeed at whatever he undertakes
- No one can stand against him
- He will persecute the church
- And we know from other Scriptures that he will declare himself to be God and most likely pronounce himself head of the church

But there is a final event concerning the Antichrist’s tenure – *he will be very suddenly destroyed, and this will not be accomplished by man’s hand.*

It will be his unlimited arrogance that works to his downfall. He will “stand up against the Prince of princes,” who is Christ Himself.

Daniel 8:25 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.**

We know that the antichrist Antiochus exalted himself in this way, *and that he met his end smitten by God, defeated in battle:*

⁸ When the king heard this news, he was astounded and badly shaken. He took to his bed and became sick from disappointment, because things had not turned out for him as he had planned. ⁹ He lay there for many days, because deep disappointment continually gripped him, and he realized that he was dying.

And so it will be with THE Man of Sin-

Revelation 19:11-21 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called

Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. (12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. (13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (14) And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. (15) From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. (16) On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (17) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, (18) to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” (19) And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies

gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. (20) And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. (21) And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

These are the truths which sustain our faith. We must know them and hold to them as the true Word of God which cannot be broken. Right now the spirit of antichrist is at work. We live in evil days, deceiving days. Rome is the masterpiece of Satan's lies. It is his church by which he has taken many millions to hell. It is a deception that creeps in among us disguised as righteousness. But Rome is no ally. Don't be drawn in by the ever increasing propaganda that would have us believe otherwise. Know the Lord. Know His Word.

1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

And pray for our President. He always has false prophets hovering around him, presenting themselves as angels of light, claiming to speak for the Lord. Let's pray that they will be exposed for what they are and rejected.