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Sermon Notes

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## **World Conquest Under Alexander and Suffering Under Antiochus**

### **Daniel 8**

#### **I. A Tale of Two Conquerors: Alexander and Christ**

- A. 323 B.C., Babylon: A 33 year old man's life ends in a bout of drunkenness... ending his reign over his empire
- B. 29 A.D., Jerusalem: Another 33 year-old man's life ends on a cross... enabling His reign over His empire

True story: 200 years ahead of time, Alexander the Great prophecy in DANIEL!!!

STORY: 330 B.C., [Josephus], Alexander the Great in Jerusalem; high priest showed him Daniel

#### **C. God's Purposes: Vision & Interpretation**

- 1. Daniel received the vision BUT doesn't understand it
  - 2. Not until vs. 15-27 is it explained by Angel Gabriel
  - 3. WHY? God's purposes
- 1. "I know the future in detail": God's sovereignty
  - 2. "You know nothing unless I explain it to you": Human dependency

#### **II. The Vision Described and Interpreted**

##### **A. Context: Time, Place, Circumstances (vs. 1-2)**

***vs. 1-2 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. <sup>2</sup> In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.***

##### **1. Time:**

- a. third year of Belshazzar...possibly 553 B.C.

b. AFTER previous vision (i.e. Daniel 7, “Son of Man” vision)

2. Place: citadel of Susa

a. visionary language: was Daniel physically there, or only seeing a vision??

Prophets traveled in the Spirit... Ezekiel constantly lifted by the Spirit and brought places far distant; so also did John see heaven “in the Spirit”

b. prophetic visit: Susa was nothing at the time... BUT soon would be capital of Persian empire

Susa: Nehemiah’s home as cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia; home also to Queen Esther, wife of King Xerxes

At Daniel’s time, however, the ancient capital city of the Elamites, simply a part of the Babylonian empire, about 250 miles east of Babylon

c. Ulai Canal:

NOTE: a wide, artificial canal connecting Choaspes and Coprates Rivers, flowing outside the city of Susa itself

B. The Ram with Two Horns (vs. 3-4, 20)

***vs. 3-4 I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later.***

1. Identified: The Medo-Persian Empire

***vs. 20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.***

2. Horns Described

a. one horn larger than the other

b. BUT grew up later

Fulfillment: initially, kings of Medes were dominant over Kings of Persia... BUT later, Persia came to dominate the arrangement

3. Conquests Described (vs. 4)

**vs. 4** *I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.*

a. direction: westward, northward, southward

b. dominance: no one could stand against him... he did as he pleased, became great

Medo-Persian domination over Ancient Near East was complete and lasted for over 200 years

NOTE: "He did as he pleased and became great..." ultimate desire of human hearts is to rule their own lives and those of others... the essence of human rebellion against God

C. The Goat with One Horn (vs. 5-8, 21-22)

1. Daniel's Pondering (vs. 5) Daniel intensely interested, deeply mystified
2. Goat Described (vs. 5, 21) single prominent horn
3. Origin of the Goat: from the West (vs. 5) MACEDONIA!!!
4. Movement of the Goat: SPEED!!!! (vs. 6)

***crossing the whole earth without touching the ground***

5. Enraged Charge of the Goat (vs. 6-7)
6. Complete Conquest by the Goat (vs. 7)
7. Sudden End of the Horn: at the height of his power
8. Four Horns: Four-Fold Division of the Kingdom

**III. Detailed Fulfillment #1: Alexander the Great**

A. "The First King of Greece"

Philip II of Macedon began to build empire, but assassinated before he could get it going

Thus, Alexander was the first true "King of Greece"...

B. Rise to Power

1. Born July, 356 B.C. After Alexander's amazing life, stories were told of his divine & miraculous conception

2. Father had son tutored by the wisest man in all Greece, Aristotle
3. 8 years old, tamed Bucephalas; carried Alexander to almost major battle he fought

Father Philip said to him after that: "You'll have to find another kingdom; Macedonia isn't going to be big enough for you!"

4. When his father was assassinated, army gladly acclaimed Alexander as their commander
5. Soon, Alexander was king over all of Greece

#### C. Vengeance on the Persians

1. Long-standing enemies, deep bitterness in hearts of most Greeks
2. May, 334: Alexander swept across the Dardanelles with 30,000 troops and 5000 cavalry & began invasion of Persian empire
3. Darius, King of Persia, sent a hired general Memnon, to meet Alexander at the Granicus River... Alexander slaughtered the Persians, smashing his army with a cavalry charge
4. In lightning fashion, Alexander now swept down the coast of Asia Minor, then moved inland to cut the Gordian knot
5. Issus & Gaugemala: two more battles destroyed Darius and the Persian army forever
6. Autumn, 331 B.C. : Alexander entered Babylon & claimed it for Greece
7. December, 331 B.C.: conquered Susa, capital of the Persian empire, site of Daniel's vision
8. Finally, King Darius himself was killed, and Alexander was proclaimed great King of Persia... in just three years, Alexander had effectively conquered the world
9. Next 6 years, conquered as far as Indus River in modern India & the foothills of the Himalays...men marched almost 20,000 miles in 10 years, refused to march any further
10. Alexander sat and wept when he realized there were no more nations to conquer

#### D. Lightning Warfare, Lightning Conquest

1. Incredible speed of assault: 3 years, Persia destroyed; 10 years, known world conquered
2. Some days marched 36 miles for shockingly rapid unexpected assault
3. Cavalry used brilliantly; fluid and quick movements on the battlefield were his trademark

4. Incredible personal courage, always led attacks in person; many times struck down in battle but never seriously injured... his men willing to follow him to the ends of the earth
5. Alexander the Great never lost a single battle

#### E. Zeus-Ammon: the Symbol of the Horn

While in Alexandria, his men crowned him son of "Zeus-Ammon", and proclaimed him to be a god; the symbol of Zeus-Ammon was a set of ram's horns coming from out of his head [SEE COIN]

This is strikingly like Daniel's vision!!

#### F. World Domination

1. From Yugoslavia to the Himalayas: 3200 miles
2. Organized efficient empire: returned to Babylon, to be the capital of his world empire
3. Future dreams:
  - To build 1000 warships and conquer North Africa beyond Italy all the way to Gibraltar
  - To build a road along Mediterranean's southern shore fitted out with harbors and shipyards
  - 10,000 talents to be built on temples for the Greek gods
  - "Harmony of Asia & Europe": Cities to be settled, populations transferred from Asia to Europe to bring these huge continents into common kinship by mixed marriages and acts of assimilation
4. Concerned for eternal fame: Built sixteen "Alexandria's" (cities with his name on it); had constant historian-accounts written, had his face minted on coins as deity

#### G. Self-Destruction

***vs. 8 The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off***

In June, 323, in Babylon, Hercules cup killed him: alcohol poisoning

#### H. Kingdom divided

No clear heir: Cassander ruled in Macedonia & Greece; Ptolomy in Egypt; Seleucus in Babylonia, and Lysimachus in Thrace and Asia Minor; **CLEAR FULFILLMENT!!!**

***vs. 8 The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.***

**vs. 22 *The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.***

I. Impact:

1. Spread of Greek language and culture
2. New Testament: Greek-speaking Jews
3. Inscription on Christ's cross
4. YET: waiting for a Savior

IV. The Vision Extended: The "Little Horn" (vs. 9-12, 23-26)

A. The Description and Rise of the "Little Horn" (vs. 9-12, 23-36)

1. Started small, grew large (vs. 9)
2. Place of origination (vs. 9): south & east
3. Place of focus: "the Beautiful Land" (Israel)

B. The War on the Saints (vs.10)

**vs. 10 *[the horn] threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.***

1. The "host of heavens" = Jews (Abraham's vision: your descendants numerous as stars")
2. Threw them down & trampled them

NOTE: 175 B.C-170 B.C. Antiochus Ephiphanes secured the high priesthood & pressured Jews to show loyalty to Greek culture & idolatry... many Jews persecuted and put to death

C. Blasphemy

**vs. 11-12 *It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.***

1. Antiochus declares himself equal to God
2. Daily sacrifice terminated: for 2300 days
3. Sanctuary desecrated horribly

Antiochus declared himself to be the manifestation of Zeus on earth... a form of an incarnation: Epiphanes = manifestation

#### D. The Desecration of the Temple

1. The “rebellion that causes desolation” (vs. 13)

**“Rebellion that causes desolation”**: a very important phrase we’ll meet again in Daniel 9

2. Antiochus’s direct assault on God

December 168 Antiochus seized Jerusalem by treachery, subjected it to prolonged looting & massacre; **he converted the temple holy of holies into a sanctuary for Zeus**

To complete the desecration, he ordered that pigs be sacrificed in the holy of holies and pig’s blood smeared throughout the temple

Daniel asked how long this would last: answer **2300 mornings and evenings**

*vs. 14 He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."*

**Different interpretations: A period of about 3 years, 55 days... 1150 mornings, 1150 evenings**

#### E. Destruction of the Little Horn

Antiochus’s demise will be covered in Daniel 11

#### F. The Hanukkah Story: The Reconsecration of the Temple

1. 164 B.C. Three years later: Judas Maccabeus leads a successful assault on the forces holding Jerusalem
2. Retakes the temple
3. Consecrates it... non-desecrated oil for lamp only sufficient for one day; miraculously burned for eight days... this is commemorated by the menorah

### V. Specific Fulfillment #2: Antiochus IV “Epiphanes”

We’ll learn even more about Antiochus IV “Epiphanes: in Daniel 11

## VI. The “Little Horns” of Daniel 8 & 7: Type and Fulfillment

### A. Little Horns Compared

#### 1. Similarities:

- a. arising up from Gentile kingdom
- b. similar career: conquest of rivals, war against saints, blasphemy against God, desire to be worshipped in God’s temple, demise not done by human hands

#### 2. Differences:

- a. Daniel 8: arises from Greek empire, the THIRD beast of Daniel 7... dies not by human hands, but not by Second Coming either... fulfilled completely in the days of the four horns... the Greek empire which ended in the first c. B.C.
- b. Daniel 7: arises from the fourth beast (Rome), destroyed by Second Coming of Christ... has not yet been fulfilled

### B. Type & Fulfillment

- “Type” is pattern set in Old Testament, fulfilled in NT
- Every OT sacrifice a “type” of Christ... Christ Himself is the fulfillment
- David a “type” of Christ... Christ Himself the fulfillment
- Antiochus Epiphanes the OT “type”, the final “antichrist” is the fulfillment

### C. Future Fulfillment: Clues in Daniel 8

***vs. 17 As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."***

***vs. 26 "The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."***

### D. Many Anti-Christ... scene played many times

#### 1. 1 John 2:18

***1 John 2:18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come.***

2. Christ & the “Abomination of Desolation”: Matthew 24

***Matthew 24:15-16 "So when you see standing in the holy place `the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.***

Destruction of Jerusalem by Rome a picture of future destruction by Antichrist... the scene gets played again and again

E. Final Antichrist: Career Laid Out Clearly

1. Conquest of Gentile rivals
2. Growth in power
3. War against the saints
4. Blasphemy in God's temple
5. Accepting worship as God
6. Destroyed by Second Coming of Christ

## VII. Application

A. Detailed predictive prophecy:

1. Alexander the Great world famous, written about two hundred years in advance
2. Antiochus IV Epiphanes: not so famous, details even greater

So what?

1) Well, God holds your future in His hands... it may be dark to you but its bright to God

2) This gives us an answer to skeptics questions: how do you know that Christianity is truth and all the other religions are false? How do you know we haven't just evolved?

B. History matters: God ties His plans to history

1. Christianity alone can answer the question: what does history mean?
2. History has a purpose: the glory of God in the salvation of people through the Kingdom of Christ

So what?

- 1) Your daily life matters, too! Not just great world figures like Alexander, but even seemingly insignificant people matter too...Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3 has 75 names in it... 39 of the men listed there are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible; yet these men's lives mattered to God
- 2) Great movements of history are made up of ordinary people who make seemingly ordinary decisions... each act means something; your daily choices matter in the eternal plan of God
- 3) Whether you play a small role or a great one, understand that history has a purpose... that the river of history is flowing to a magnificent consummation in the eternal Kingdom of Jesus Christ

#### C. The Antichrist and Suffering Saints

1. The Bible is clear: many Antichrists have come and will come
2. God's people will suffer greatly in this world
3. FUTURE ANTICHRIST is yet to come... many of God's people will die at his hands
4. Last week's testimony is still true:

***John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."***

So what?

- 1) Don't expect an easy life in this world... non-Christians that are powerful in our society will use their power and influence to make your life difficult in proportion to how clearly you stand for Christ
- 2) God's sovereign power overrules the persecution and trouble... after our suffering, he will deliver us
- 3) Don't sink deep roots in this world; don't love this world, don't expect the world's stuff to be friendly to your soul or your faith

D. Alexander Needed a Savior... and so do you!!

***Matthew 16:26-27 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.***

Macedonia the first foothold in Europe for Christ's Kingdom

***Acts 16:9-10 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the***

*vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

What help did the Macedonian's need? They had, at one time, conquered the world!! A Macedonian army with a Macedonian emperor riding at its head rode through all of Asia and conquered every village. Four hundred years later, the Macedonians needed help, for their eternal souls were in peril.

And from the East, help would come, not a mighty conquering army but a small band of Jews preaching a simple message of repentance and faith... but building a mightier empire than Alexander ever dreamed of... a Kingdom that would never end

### **Thus the contrast between King Jesus and King Alexander:**

1. Alexander crushed His enemies, leaving them shattered and poverty-stricken
2. Jesus saved His enemies, leaving them eternally blessed and wealthy
3. Alexander boasted and exalted Himself
4. Jesus was meek and lowly of heart and laid His majestic glory down in order to save us
5. Alexander claimed to be the son of Zeus
6. Jesus was the Son of God
7. Alexander wept that there were no more peoples to conquer
8. Jesus wept when Jerusalem would not believe in Him
9. Alexander died in his early thirties in a drunken feast of pride and dissipation
10. Jesus died in his early thirties on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for sins
11. Alexander's body rotted in a grave
12. Jesus' body rose from the dead on the third day
13. Alexander's soul was eternally judged for his sins
14. Jesus is Alexander's judge
15. Alexander built a world-wide empire... all that remains is the reputation

16. Christ is still building His world-wide empire... it will last eternally