

DANIEL

Week 24, chapters 8 and 9

We'll conclude Daniel 8 today and get started on chapter 9. Chapter 8 is acknowledged among bible scholars as one of the most difficult in the bible. However don't think that chapter 9 is a piece of cake. Chapter 9 introduces a new element to End Times prophecy, a timeline called the 70 weeks of Daniel, and if only it were clearly spelled out and straightforward (but it's not).

As I mentioned last time, we are studying the bible and not prophecy; there is a difference. We are taking prophetic passages in their biblical context, neither adding nor subtracting, and interpreting them within the framework of the chapters they are written. What most Believers are used to hearing about the Book of Daniel is the teaching of prophecy as a separate topic, and the prophetic passages are removed from their context and historical setting and set apart as a stand alone unit. So for most Western Christians, what you think you know about Daniel (and the Book of Revelation) is based mostly on books written by prophecy teachers and they consist of verses lifted out of their context, arranged in an order that the author thinks they ought to go, and then copious amounts of personal speculation are mixed in based on doctrines and opinions.

We've all seen those Hollywood movies that begin with some on-screen text that says: This film is based on a true story. The movie-maker's hope is that what you'll actually think is: This film IS a true story. However just because there is indeed a kernel of a real event that the director has built upon to create his movie doesn't mean that what is depicted on the screen actually happened. The goal of the film is to entertain and to put forth the director's worldview. And that is how we need to approach what we hear from popular prophecy teachers and read in their literature.

When we left off last time, we had just discussed Daniel 8:13, 14. Recall that chapter 8 is Daniel's 2nd vision. He had his first vision in chapter 7. So we have now had 3 visions presented to us in the Book of Daniel: the vision given to the gentile King Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2, and now two visions given to Daniel the Jew. There is another one yet to come.

We find that in Daniel 8:13, 14 there are two spiritual beings called Holy Ones (***echad-qadosh***) who are speaking to one another, and the question is asked: How long will the events of this vision last? Specifically the question refers to how long of a time that the little horn on the male goat (the little horn symbolizes a tyrant and the male goat symbolizes Greece) will cause the morning and evening temple offerings to be suspended. And the answer is: 2300 evenings and mornings. The most usual interpretation of 2300 evenings and mornings is that it means 2300 days. And that is because in Genesis 1 it says this:

Genesis 1:5 CJB ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So there was evening, and there was morning, one day.

However the definition of 2300 evenings and mornings ought not to be based on the Creation Story; rather the question is specifically concerning the evening and morning offerings that the little horn has ordered a halt to. And the answer to “how long” is: 2300 evenings and mornings. So my opinion is that 2300 refers to the number of sacrifices that will be missed; and since there are 2 sacrifices per day, then we can extrapolate that the number of days this goes on for is 1150 (2 sacrifices per day times 1150 days, equals 2300 evening and morning sacrifices).

And indeed in the mid 2nd century B.C. a Greek tyrant named Antiochus Epiphanies ordered a halt to the temple sacrifices. This would be an appropriate time to spend just short time speaking about the infamous Antiochus IV Epiphanies.

He was the son of King Antiochus III, but became a political hostage of the Romans in 188 B.C. Epiphanies had an older brother named Seleucus IV, and Seleucus was the heir to their father's throne. When Antiochus III died, his eldest son Seleucus properly assumed the throne. But in a strange and unlikely series of events, Seleucus made a deal with the Romans: a nephew named Demetrius would be exchanged for Epiphanies. Demetrius became the political hostage and Epiphanies was set free. Soon afterward King Seleucus was assassinated and his murderer assumed the throne for a brief time. In turn, Epiphanies was able to gain support and so ousted this illegitimate king. So in 175 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanies became the new king over the district of the Greek Empire that now included the Holy Lands, recently acquired from the district that had been controlled by Ptolemy.

This was a fulfillment of prophecy because in Daniel 8:9 we read this:

CJB Daniel 8:9 Out of one of them (out of one of the 4 horns on the goat) came a little horn which grew extremely big in the directions of the south and east, and in the direction of the Glory.

Indeed Epiphanies was the “little horn” of Daniel chapter 8. He was a Greek and a prisoner of Rome (before they became an empire) and he had little to no political influence. That his father willingly handed his son Epiphanies over to the Romans as a political hostage when there were other more distant relatives that probably would have been suitable, demonstrates his lowly status in his father's eyes. But in what had to be a God-orchestrated series of events, after his father's death Epiphanies was freed as part of a prisoner exchange for someone else, and in a very short period of time 3 successive kings of the district of Greece that his father ruled over died (remember, after the death of Alexander the Great the Greek Empire was divided into 4 districts each ruled by a king). Now, however impossible it might have seemed only months earlier, Epiphanies found himself the king of that district (from the outhouse to the penthouse almost overnight). And he knew exactly what to do with that newfound power as he was a

bitter, ruthless, cunning and ambitious man who intended to make up for lost time after his years of being cast aside by his father and offered up as a political hostage to Rome.

Epiphanies would rule from 175 to 164 B.C., and he had an overwhelming hatred of the Jews. He believed he was doing mankind a favor by ridding the world of the Jewish religion. A 1st century B.C. Greek historian named Diodorus Siculus wrote this about the Greek and Roman viewpoint of what Antiochus Epiphanies did to the Jewish people: "Since Epiphanies was shocked by such hatred directed against all mankind he set himself to break down their (the Jews') traditional practices". To show that this gentile attitude towards the Jews prevailed interminably, and to rid the world of the Jewish ways if not the Jews themselves was seen by the gentiles as a most praiseworthy endeavor, we hear from the Roman Senator and Historian Cornelius Tacitus that: "King Antiochus (Epiphanies) endeavored to abolish Jewish superstition and (instead) to introduce Greek civilization". This introduction of Greek civilization was later given the scholarly name of Hellenization.

So Jewish belief and observance of the commandments of the God of Israel had, to the modern Greek and Roman world, come to be viewed as "hatred towards mankind", and "a superstition that needed to be abolished". Why? Because the Jewish religion didn't tolerate worship of other gods or accept the gentile pagan ways. That anti-Jewish mindset has continued ever since in the gentile world, and even within large segments of Christianity. But now in the 21st century the tables are being turned. Now the secular humanist world order that is dominant throughout the Western industrial world, a world order that seeks tolerance for all things, and acceptance for all religions and gods, is turning on Christianity and declaring it to be dangerous because it represents a "hatred towards mankind" and "a superstition that needs to be abolished" because we don't accept the gods of other religions nor their holy books (at least we haven't until rather recently). What goes around comes around, doesn't it?

The thing is, Epiphanies wasn't the creator of the Greeks' hatred towards the Jews; he merely used the existing hatred of the times and drove it to new heights, in order to further his career and his agenda. And today modern politicians and international leaders haven't created the hatred towards Christians (and Jews) they are merely chiming in and driving it to new heights so that they can use it to further their careers and bring about their Enlightenment era secular agendas and quest for power. So the pattern of a politically correct and culturally accepted norm of anti-Semitism and anti-bible can be positively traced to Daniel's little horn of chapter 8, who proved to be Antiochus Epiphanies. And of course we find the Epiphanies-like Adolf Hitler in WWII merely continuing the worldwide socially accepted belief that Jews represented hatred towards mankind and so their beliefs were a superstition to be eradicated. Is it no wonder that the bulk of the Christian world has, even prior to the establishment of the Roman Church by Constantine, determined that God's Covenant of Law with Moses is to be eradicated, and all holy biblical observances directly ordained by God (such as the Sabbath and the Biblical Feasts) are to be declared null and void because within the New Testament Church these are now considered as mere remnants of primitive Jewish superstitions?

In 169 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanies plundered the Temple in Jerusalem. In 167 B.C. he ordered an end to the morning and evening TempleAltar sacrifices. Although truth be told, the sacrifices had been neglected by the Jewish Priesthood starting a few years earlier because the High

Priest Jason sought to conform Judaism to Greek culture and religion. Shortly after plundering the Temple Epiphanies had a statue of himself, represented by the Greek god Zeus, erected in the Temple and a pig was sacrificed to consecrate it into service. The Jews were now ordered to give up their observances and practices and to adopt the Greek religion, under the threat of execution.

This set off a rebellion of the Jews, which was led by Judas the Maccabee, and by 164 B.C. Judas had retaken the Temple from Epiphanies' army, cleansed it, and reinstated the morning and evening sacrifices. While the dates recorded from exactly when Epiphanies ordered the sacrifices ended to when the Temple was recaptured and cleansed by the Jewish rebels are hard to pinpoint to the precise day, the length of time falls well within the prophesied timeframe of 1150 days, during which 2300 morning and evening sacrifices were missed.

A tradition is that when it came time to relight the Temple Menorah, only one jar of consecrated oil could be found, but it took one jar per day to fuel the Temple Menorah. However in a miracle from God, that single jar of oil kept the Menorah burning for 8 days. To commemorate the re-dedication of the Temple and that miracle a holiday was created called Hanukkah and it is celebrated on Kislev 25th. This is NOT to be confused with December 25th on the Roman calendar that eventually was chosen to celebrate a Christian-created holiday to remember the birth of Jesus. Kislev 25 can occur anywhere between the end of November and the last part of December (according to modern Roman based calendars).

As part of the commemoration of Hanukkah, and to remember the miracle of the single jar of oil fueling the Temple Menorah for 8 days, a special 8-branch (or more technically 9-branch) Menorah was created called the Chanukkiyah. While we'll find mention of the holiday of Hanukkah in the New Testament, the reason for the day is not explained. And while we'll find the circumstances of the capture and re-dedication of the Temple in 1st and 2nd Maccabees (books included in the Catholic bible and also some Orthodox Christian bibles, but not in the Protestant bible) we won't find mention of the miracle of the oil. It is in the Talmud, in the Gemara tractate Shabbat, which we find the story of the jar of oil that allowed the Temple Menorah to burn for 8 days.

There can be no reasonable doubt that Antiochus Epiphanies is the little horn of the goat symbol in Daniel chapter 8. But some theologians will say that Epiphanies is also the little horn of Daniel chapter 7. I say that the 2 little horns cannot be the same person because the goat of Daniel 8 is directly identified as the symbol for the 3rd gentile world empire that is Greece. While the beast with the 10 horns of Daniel 7, and then the little one that sprouts up later, is directly identified as being the 4th gentile world kingdom (which turned out to be Rome). Thus what we have is that the little horn of chapter 8, the Greek little horn, is definitely Antiochus Epiphanies. And as terrible and bloodthirsty and as full of hatred as he was towards the Jews, there will be a 2nd little horn in the future who will make Epiphanies look like an amateur. So the 1st little horn, Epiphanies, is a type and shadow (it sets a pattern) of the 2nd little horn, who will be what the Church calls the Anti-Christ of the End Times. The appearance of the 2nd little horn of Daniel 7 is still ahead of us in the year 2013, but how far ahead we don't know. I doubt it can be very far, though, since the prophecy of Israel returning as a nation of Jews has occurred, and since Jerusalem has been retaken by Israel as their capital city. The next

prophetic event on the calendar is probably the rebuilding of the Temple, which sets off a series of events including the revealing of the 2nd little horn, the Anti-Christ who leads an all out attempted genocide of the Jewish people and eradication of Christians, and a near destruction of all life on earth.

Let's move on by re-reading Daniel 8 starting at verse 15.

RE-READ DANIEL 8:15 – end

Verse 15 begins with the interpretation of Daniel's vision by the angel Gabriel. And this is definitely an End Times vision because Gabriel directly said so. Let's be clear: while there are 2 separate ***acharit-hayamim's*** (latter days) spoken of in bible prophecy, there is only 1 End Times. I know that this can be a bit confusing, but this is central to properly interpreting prophecy. The 1st latter days concerned the days leading up to, and during, the 1st coming of Christ. The 2nd latter days concerns the future days leading up, and during, Messiahs 2nd appearance (His return). But the End Times ONLY refers to things that happen in relation to the 2nd latter days. There is no End Times in relation to the 1st latter days (when Yeshua was born) because it wasn't the end! The End Times is speaking of the end of the history of mankind.

Now let me address one theological issue here regarding who it was that ordered Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel. Many theologians including Calvin say it MUST be Christ. After all, He is the Word, and He is the only one of the Trinity that can (theoretically) have a physical voice. But I think that this is an unreasonable stretch. First, there is no hint in these passages as to whose voice instructed Gabriel. Second, the ONLY reason Calvin and others say it is Christ is because it is required in order to fit their predetermined version of the Trinity doctrine. Nothing else. I don't know who it was who ordered Gabriel to tell Daniel the meaning of his vision because we're not told. So let's leave it at that.

Daniel is filled with terror at the sight of Gabriel. Even though Gabriel is said to be like a man in appearance, it's pretty evident that Gabriel's angelic attributes and radiant glory could not be muted and it shook Daniel to his core. Verse 19 assigns the End Time to the period of time labeled as God's fury. Some theologians say that this occurred during the time of the Epiphanies. The meaning of God's fury or indignation (depending on your English translation) MEANS the displeasure and subsequent wrath of Yehoveh. So to put together the terms End Time and wrath (or fury) of God, there is really only one place in the bible that it fits (without twisting the passages), and that is when in Revelation we hear of God's wrath being poured out the world over as the end of days draws near. So it is simply not intellectually honest to claim (as some do) that the End Times when God's wrath was poured out has already occurred, and it happened during the days of Antiochus Epiphanies. Once again, this dubious claim is made only to support a predetermined doctrinal agenda that must have it that way, or all of their doctrines concerning the coming Kingdom of God fall apart.

The next several verses are very helpful in that they give the interpretation of earlier verses

when Daniel describes his vision. Verses 20 – 22 explain verses 3 – 8.

RE-READ DANIEL 8:3 – 8

OK. And here is what Gabriel says those verses meant.

RE-READ DANIEL 8:20 -22

Gabriel tells Daniel that the Ram with horns (one longer than the other) is Media and Persia. And that the male goat (with the one big horn that became 4 horns) is Greece. We don't have to guess, extrapolate or speculate; it is said straight away. But the modern critical school of bible commentators says that here is the proof positive that Daniel is a complete fraud. Why is that? Because they say if Daniel were writing this in the last part of the 6th century B.C. (which is when he and the Jews were in Babylon), there is no human or rational way that he could have known that Media-Persia was the next gentile world empire, nor especially that Greece would become a conquering force to overcome Media-Persia because that wouldn't happen for 2 more centuries! Therefore since they deny that prophecy is even possible, then all that is left is to declare Daniel a dishonest work that was written AFTER the fact and then only pretended to be prophetic.

Next it is explained that the shaggy goat with one horn (shaggy indicating the goat is male) will have that one big horn broken and 4 horns will replace it. And this means that 4 kingdoms will arise out of this single nation (Greece). And then another king (referring to the little horn) will arise; he will be arrogant and skillful in getting his way.

Verses 23 – 26 now explain verses 9 – 12.

RE-READ DANIEL 8:9 – 12

And Gabriel now says in verses 23 -26 what that means.

RE-READ DANIEL 8:23 - 26

This king (the little horn) will succeed in everything he attempts and he will decimate the holy ones (God's people, Israel). He'll be very powerful, but not as powerful as the original single big horn was (Alexander the Great). He will overcome the Jewish people when they are feeling secure and not suspecting that they are about to be attacked. He will even challenge the prince of princes (which can only mean God or perhaps more specifically Yeshua Messiah), but this arrogant king will be destroyed not by human intervention but by divine decree. And as history proves, Epiphanies did not die in battle or by assassination but rather by disease.

Verse 26 refers back to verse 12 and also to verse 14 about how long the burnt offerings to Yehoveh will be stopped; that is, verse 26 is an oath solemnly sworn by Gabriel that the amount of time that the burnt offerings will be stopped will happen as promised. But that Daniel is to seal up the vision because it is not meant for now but for a distant time. The idea of “sealing up” is not that the verses are to be kept locked away; it is that when a seal is affixed to something, it means that the matter is complete, concluded, won’t be changed, and cannot be tampered with. It’s a done deal.

Chapter 8 concludes with Daniel becoming physically ill from the stress and anxiety from everything he saw his vision, and by what Gabriel told him. He believed it, but he couldn’t understand it from the sense of comprehending how this was going to play out. He couldn’t imagine what the circumstances would be or how this was going to come about that Media-Persia would become a world power; and that Greece 200 years later would overtake Media-Persia, or how this little horn might be recognized. It is really not much different than how little we are legitimately able to discern today about the End Times, the identification of the Anti-Christ, imagining the world political situation that will have to happen to allow the Temple to be rebuilt, what exactly will be the catalyst that sets off the War of Armageddon, or how all those celestial catastrophes that Revelation speaks of that devastate the earth will occur. So Prophecy teachers often compensate by filling in all the blanks with their opinions, but usually implying that what they say is more reliable than speculation.

Let’s move on to Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 consists of two major pieces. As a result of Daniel contemplating if the 70 year time period of Judah’s exile that Jeremiah prophesied was near its end, Daniel began to pray fervently and to confess Judah’s sins and to ask for God’s mercy. The second major piece starts at verse 20 when the angel Gabriel appeared again to Daniel and gave him the prophecy of the 70 weeks that have been decreed for Daniel’s people.

Let’s read Daniel Chapter 9.

READ DANIEL 9 all

Daryavesh is Darius, a man who has been given the former Empire of Babylonia to govern. Darius is a Mede; and we discussed in earlier lessons that Darius was NOT the king of the entire Media-Persian Empire, but only the king over most of what used to constitute the Empire of Babylon. In fact, the original Hebrew says that he was king of the Kasdim, meaning the Chaldeans. So he had a large territory to govern, but King Cyrus (a Persian) was the real power of the totality of the Media-Persian Empire and no doubt was above King Darius. This arrangement fulfilled Daniel’s chapter 8 prophecy of the Ram with 2 horns; both horns were big, but one was larger than the other. The Ram was the combined Media-Persian Empire; the smaller of the two horns was Media (and its king Darius) and the larger was Persia (and its king Cyrus).

Daniel had been a captive in Babylon since the first wave of Judeans were taken from Judah by Nebuchadnezzar decades earlier about 606 B.C. He was an old man by now, and had lived out his entire adult life in Babylon and in service to Babylon. But now his service was transferred to his new master, the Median King Darius, because Media-Persia had conquered Babylon. Daniel knew the biblical prophecies well and thought that the time had come to expect the release of his fellow Jews to return to their homeland, mercifully and finally bringing an end to their shameful captivity.

Jeremiah 25:9-11 CJB

⁹ I'm going to send for all the families of the north,' says ADONAI, 'and for my servant N'vukhadretzar the king of Bavel, and bring them against this land, against its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them, making them an object of horror and ridicule, a perpetual ruin.

¹⁰ Moreover, I will silence among them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bridegroom and bride, the grinding of millstones and the light of lamps.

¹¹ This entire land will become a ruin, a waste; and these nations will serve the king of Bavel for seventy years.

And yet Daniel had seen no signs whatsoever that release was imminent; nothing was happening that said that the Jews' return to their homeland was at hand. Faith and faith alone was on his side. Such was exactly the sense of the wonderful NT verse that so many Christians have held tightly onto when all else seemed futile and hopeless; something that we all ought to remember when times are the most troublesome for us:

2Corinthians 5:7 CJB ⁷ for we live by trust, not by what we see.

Amidst dozens of gods of scores of nations, Daniel seeks THE God. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The true God of heaven and earth. He bares his soul in fervent prayer, and exhibits his grief and mourning over the sins of his fellow Jews that had finally caused their just God to act in severity towards them, and confessed his and his fellow Judeans' unworthiness of receiving heavenly mercy. Thus from verses 4 – 19 we read of Daniel's prayer. And we shall discuss that prayer and the mysterious prophecy of the 70 weeks the next time we meet.