

Pastor Paul Bawden
Grace Evangelical Church
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"God's Word – Always True, Always Comes True"
Daniel 8

Last eve I paused before a blacksmith's door
 and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime.
 And looking in, I saw old hammers on the floor,
 Worn by the beating years of time.
 "How many anvils have you had," said I,
 "To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
 "Just one," said he, then with a twinkle in his eyes,
 "The anvil wears the hammers out you know."
 And so I thought, the anvil of God's word,
 For ages skeptic blows have beat upon.
 Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard
 The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone!

I use those words, for the Book of Daniel we have been considering on Sunday mornings has been hammered on by the critics for years, especially in our text today in Daniel 8, but still the anvil is unharmed,.

As one writer, Bill Lockwood, stated, Daniel has been hacked to pieces by the sharpest critical knives, wielded by those who have a problem with the notion that God moves in the affairs of men. Beginning in the 3rd century A.D., with the skeptical notions of the Neo-platonist philosopher Prophyry, Daniel was again mercilessly cast into the lions' den, this time occupied by liberals, who have sworn not to let him out until every vestige of the miraculous is extracted from his book by their theological thimble-rigging.

In 1897, Samuel Driver, in a popular commentary, argued for the late date for the literary work (Driver, *The Book of Daniel*). It has also been pointed out, although this argument has been answered for many years, that recent commentaries such as the one by Louis Hartmann and Alexander Di Lella in the Anchor Bible Series, continue to repeat the "conventional critical position."

In fact, the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament (280-150 B.C) written prior to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175 B.C. - who is written about today in the prophetic text of Daniel 8), contains the Book of Daniel.

Josephus records an incident during the time of Alexander the Great which supports the early authorship. When Alexander's invasion reached the near East, Jaddua, the high priest, went out to meet him and showed to him a copy of the Book of Daniel in which he was clearly mentioned. Alexander was so impressed by this that instead of destroying Jerusalem, he entered the city peaceably and worshipped at the temple.

Yes, the Book of Daniel is not a forgery. Daniel was not a deceiver. Edward B. Pusey puts it this way, "The rest which has been said is mostly mere insolent assumptions against Scripture, grounded on unbelief." Then Sir Isaac Newton declared, "To reject Daniel is to reject the Christian religion."

Then Dr. Vernon McGee, I believe, summarized best the critics of Daniel by saying, our Lord called the Pharisees, "hypocrites," but He called Daniel a prophet (Matthew 24:15).

I take the time to mention these things, for when we come to our text in Daniel 8, and any of the Book of Daniel, we don't need to have any doubts about its validity and its ability to foretell the future. It is more dependable that anything we own, or friends that we have, for the word of God is eternal settled forever in heaven (Psalm 119:89).

What, then, does the Lord have for us today in His Word as we continue on in the Book of Daniel looking at chapter 8 today?

Note first of all. . .

I. The time of the happenings in Daniel 8. (1-2).

1. When?

Verse 1 tells us – In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king, In chapter 7 Daniel wrote in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, which was 553 B.C.

Now it is two years later so the time is 551 B.C. – two years after the vision in chapter 7, and before the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. or about 12 years before the events in chapter 5. **Daniel was probably around 70 years of age at this time.**

This means, as with chapter 7 of Daniel, chapter 8 of Daniel obviously comes after chapter 7, but along with chapter 7 comes after chapter 4 in Daniel chronologically.

We are not quite sure why Daniel did not place his recording in a chronological sequence, but it may be, as one commentator said, the first 6 chapters are more about others, but these chapters from chapter 7 on now are more personal, so he put these chapters later. Also now the chapters move more to what is going to happen directly to Israel rather than the nations. Starting with chapter 7, Daniel turns from the third person to the first person, as he records his direct involvement in what is taking place.

2. What?

Verse 1 tell us – Daniel had another vision. Notice that in this second vision, Daniel is wide awake with the Lord gave him this second vision. In chapter 7 Daniel was asleep as he was given the dream or vision. **As the chapter 7 vision God gave directly to Daniel amplified the vision God gave to Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2, so the vision that God gives now to Daniel in chapter 8 amplifies the vision God gave to Daniel in chapter 7.**

Daniel in recording this vision also returns to writing in the Hebrew language, where from Daniel 2a:4-7:26, he had been writing in the Aramaic.

3. Where?

Verse 2 – tells us – When Daniel received the vision in chapter 8, he evidently saw himself in Susa, which was about 250 miles East of Babylon, and about 150 miles due north of the Persian Gulf. Elam was the province where Susa was located when Daniel wrote the book. Later Susa became the capitol of the Medo-Persian Empire. In the time of Esther, 80 years later, Susa became her home (Esther 1:2). One hundred seven years later, it was the city from which Nehemiah departed to return to Palestine (Nehemiah 1:1). Perhaps Daniel had visited there previously in his position in the Babylonian Empire.

Evidently Daniel in this vision was transferred to Susa, like Ezekiel was to Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8). Daniel saw himself by the Ulai Canal, which connected the two rivers (Kerkha Choaspes & Coprates).

I understand that the Tomb of Daniel is located in the city of Susa (Elam). Some have suggested that Daniel may have been the Babylonian ambassador to the Persian empire living in Susa at the time and that is where he died.

II. The vision that Daniel received from the Lord (Daniel 8:3-14).

1. The vision of the ram (8:3-4).

(1) His description (8:3).

Daniel saw a ram with two horns standing in front of the Ulai Canal. One of his horns was longer than the other. The longer one came up last

(2) His activity (8:4).

The ram butted westward, northward, and southward – no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and magnified himself.

2. The vision of the male goat (8:5-8).

(1) His description (8:5).

Daniel saw a male goat come from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.

(2) His activity (8:6-8).

The male goat came up to the ram that had the two horns that had been standing in front of the canal. The male goat rushed at the ram in his mighty wrath (8:6).

The male goat became so enraged that he struck the ram and shattered his two horns. The ram had no strength to withstand the male goat. So the male goat hurled the ram to the ground and trampled on him, and there was no one to rescue him (8:7).

The male goat then magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he became mighty, his larger horn was broken and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven (8:8).

3. The vision of the small horn (8:9-14).**(1) Its description (8:9).**

Daniel saw coming out of one of the broken horns a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land, which meant Palestine or Israel (8:9).

(2) Its activity (8:10-14).

The little horn that Daniel saw grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host to and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and then that horn trampled on them (8:10).

The little horn became as powerful as the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down (8:11).

Due to the transgression of the host, the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice, and the horn will fling truth to the ground and perform its own will and power.

(3) A question about the length of the activity of the little horn (8:13).

A holy one, evidently an angel asked another holy one, an angel, "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply (or take place), while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?"

(4) The answer to the question about the length of the activity of the little horn (8:14).

The answer was that the holy place and the host of heaven would be trampled for 2300 evenings and mornings, and then the holy place would be restored to its proper use once more.

III. The interpretation of the vision given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel (Daniel 8:15-25).**1. Daniel's desire to understand the vision (8:15).**

When Daniel saw the vision that God gave him, he naturally would want to understand it. Then, before him he saw someone standing that looked like a man.

2. The angel Gabriel sent to give the meaning of the vision (8:16-19).

- Then a voice spoke by the Ulai Canal, calling out to the one Daniel sees identifying him as Gabriel. The voice, evidently the Lord, tells Gabriel (the angel) to give the interpretation of the vision to Daniel.
- Gabriel, the angel, whose name means "hero of God" or "strong man of God" is often used to bring important messages to different people in the Bible. Gabriel appears again to Daniel in Daniel 9:21. Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in Luke 1:19 telling him that he and Elizabeth were going to have a child in their old age. Then Gabriel is the angel who appeared to Mary with the announcement that she would be the mother of our Lord (Luke 1:26). The other good angel mentioned in the Bible is Michael, one of the chief princes (Daniel 10:13), and called the archangel (the chief leader) in Jude 9.
- Gabriel came to Daniel to give him the meaning of the vision. Daniel became frightened and fell on his face. Gabriel told Daniel that he would tell him what the vision meant – it pertained to the time of the end. (8:17).

- While Gabriel talked to Daniel, he fell into a deep sleep with his face to the ground (evidently Daniel fainted at the presence of Gabriel) but Gabriel touched him and made Daniel stand up (8:18).
- Gabriel wanted to be sure that Daniel had heard what he had just said, so he repeated that the vision in its interpretation would be about what would occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.

Gabriel got right into giving the interpretation to Daniel of the vision he had just seen.

3. Gabriel provides the interpretation of the vision Daniel received (8:20-25).

(1)The ram with the two horns was Media/Persia (8:20). (There is no doubt about this interpretation).

Remember now that Daniel is receiving this vision in 551 B.C. 12 years before Media/Persia defeats Babylon in 539 B.C.

- **The longer horn came up last suggesting the Persian Empire was younger**, but in 550, Cyrus, the Persian rebelled against the Medes and became the dominant force, and the lord of the dual kingdom. This was happening about the time Daniel was prophesying.
- **The power of the Persian Empire is shown in the two horned ram who butts westward, northward and southward. No one can stand against him.** Not until 490 B.C. when a determined army of Athenians at Marathon defeated the forces of Darius (father Xerxes, the Ahashuerus of Esther) did Persia experience a setback. Then 10 years later there was a defeat in the Gulf of Aegina in a naval battle. But the two horned ram was great. Then, God used Cyrus in 536 B.C. to return His people to Palestine, the land of Israel.

2. The male shaggy (the word shaggy added here) goat with the conspicuous horn between its eyes was Greece (8:21-22). There is no doubt about this interpretation either as it's right in the text.

- **It's interesting in this vision that Media/Persia is portrayed as a ram and Greece as a goat, relatively mild farm animals in comparison to the bear and leopard in Chapter 7. This seems to be a portrayal of how they would deal with Israel and that was relatively mild. The animals of the ram and goat were also used in Israel's sacrificial system.**
- **The goat, then, represented Greece. The conspicuous horn signified Alexander the Great whose armies swept through Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and finally into Mesopotamia (334-331). After that his armies advanced eastward to India and back toward the west. Alexander, of course, brought the Greek culture and language into the land of Israel.**
- **The large horn on the male goat was broken and in its place four horns came up (8:22). These four horns represent what happened to Alexander the Great's kingdom after his sudden death. Alexander's kingdom was divided into four parts under four of his military successors. Cassander took Macedonia; Thrace and much of Asia Minor went to Lysimachus; and Seleucus took Syria, and Ptolemy Egypt. Ptolemy II was very sympathetic to the Jews granting them full political and religious rights. It was during this time of the third and second centuries (B.C.) that the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into what we know as the Septuagint (meaning the seventy), at Alexandria, Egypt.**
- **As mentioned above, Daniel received this vision of Media/Persia and Greece in 551 B.C. Babylon is still in power, but in 12 years its power will be gone as Media/Persia defeats Babylon in 539 B.C. Eventually Greece will defeat Persia in 330 B.C. The kingdom divided just as Daniel saw in the vision. God's Word is always true and God's Word always comes true.**

3. The small horn that came from one of the four horns (8:23-25).

- **Who is this small horn which we just read about in Daniel 8:9 who is great in power toward the south, the east, and toward the Beautiful Land, Palestine, or Israel. He tramples down the host of heaven, and he acts equal to the Commander of the host, who must be God. He will take over**

the regular sacrifice, evidently in the temple of Jerusalem, and fling truth to the ground (Daniel 8:10-12).

- Now in Daniel 8:23-25 we find out more about this small horn who acts with such rebellion against God, and if we take the host of heaven (Daniel 8:12) to refer to God's people Israel, this small horn seeks to destroy God's people as well.
- Daniel is given the interpretation in Daniel 8:23-25 that he is a king who will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue. His power will be mighty, but not by his own power. He will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will. He will destroy mighty men and holy people. With his shrewdness he will deceive and magnify his heart. He will destroy many and even oppose the Prince of princes (the Lord Himself). But he will be broken without human agency.
- **Who is this shrewd, wicked and powerful ruler that will come on the pages of history?**
- Note that this ruthless ruler comes out of the kingdom of Greece actually from one of the four kingdoms, where the Greeks were in power, the kingdom that was part of Syria.
- His name was Antiochus Epiphanes from Syria invaded Egypt and made Ptolemy VI regent. In 168 B.C. Ptolemy rebelled against Antiochus, who promptly invaded Egypt a second time threatened to take over Egypt. **Being threatened by an envoy from Rome that wanted to take over Egypt**, Antiochus suddenly withdrew from Egypt and left Ptolemy, his regent, to deal with Rome.
- Up to this time the Jews had enjoyed the support of the rulers. But frustrated, Antiochus went north into Palestine to vent his spite on the Jewish people. He was an ardent Greek having been educated in the Graeco-Roman culture in both Rome and Athens. He was determined to have the Jews adopt the Greek culture. Of course, to the Jews this was odious, since it involved the worship of foreign gods and partaking of food which they considered unclean. Some of the younger and more sophisticated priests indulged.
- Withdrawing from Egypt, Antiochus seized Jerusalem without fighting, plundering as much of the wealth as he could and returned to Antioch. Two years later he returned and invaded Judea a second time, stripped the temple of its furnishings and confiscated its treasures. He massacred many of the inhabitants and carried away a large group of captives estimated by Josephus to be about 10,000. He demolished the walls of the city of Jerusalem so it was defenseless and worst of all he sacrificed a pig on the altar in the temple in 168 B.C.
- He compelled the Jews to erect shrines to the Greek dieties in their villages and sacrifice swine on their altars. He had his officers seize and burn copies of the books of the law and executed their possessors. He forbade circumcision and the children who had been circumcised he had their mothers strangled along with their children.
- Obviously, Antiochus opposed the PRINCE of princes, God Himself, as Daniel 8:25 foretells.
- It was no wonder that his enemies called Antiochus, Epimanes, meaning, "Madman."
- **How long would the Jewish people be under such a ruthless and diabolical leader?**
- **What did Daniel 8:14 say? The desecration of the temple and God's people would last 2300 days. The best interpretation of this is the period of 5 years from 171-165 BC. The time that Antiochus Epiphanes would persecute the Jewish people.**
- For the Jews, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus (Maccabee meaning hammer) rebelled against Antiochus. It was a tough fight for the small band of Jewish resistors, but they won and restored the temple on December 25, 165, a joyous celebration of sacrifices, singing, and feasting took place for 8 days. Why eight days? When Judas dedicated the Temple, only one vessel of sanctified oil was found—enough for one day. Miraculously, it burned for eight days.

This is remembered by the kindling of lights for eight days. A special lamp, the menorah, is used. The celebration is called Hanukkah (meaning dedication), or the Festival of Lights. It is referred to in John 10:22-23. Of course Hanukkah is still celebrated today by the Jewish people.

- **An amazing prophesy here given to Daniel as recorded in Daniel chapter 8. The rise and fall of Media/Persia, and Greece, then breaking into four different kingdoms, and the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes who opposed God's people and eventually lost the battle.**
- **But some feel (and I believe rightly so), that in Antiochus Epiphanes is the foreshadowing of the Antichrist who was foretold would come in Daniel. The beast, which represented Rome, would have 10 horns and another horn would come out of them and subdue three of the horns and then rule over the other kingdoms, and eventually fight against the Ancient of Days, the Son of man, Jesus Christ, when He returned to earth. Christ then comes and puts him down, and establishes His kingdom on earth.**
- **Obviously two different settings. In chapter 7 the horn that opposes Christ comes out of the revived Roman empire, and the horn in chapter 8 that comes out of the Greek empire in its divided state.**
- **Nevertheless, the little horn in chapter 8 could be a foreshadowing of the Antichrist who is to come for he exalts himself as god, and in the middle of the tribulation sets himself up in the temple as god declaring to be the Christ. The Lord himself in Matthew 24:15 called this the abomination of desolation. He will seek to destroy God's people but his end will come when the Lord comes in Revelation 19 and puts down his rebellion and all who oppose Him.**
- **Again the word of God – always true – always comes true.**

How does Daniel 8 apply to our lives today?

III. Application to our personal lives today.

1. There is God's general revelation.

- (1) **Through Creation** – Psalm 19; Romans 1:18-210.
- (2) **Through preservation** of the universe (Colossians 1:17).
- (3) **Through dreams and visions** – Daniel 2; 7, 8; Joseph – Genesis 37
- (4) **Through angels-** Daniel 8:16 – Gabriel interpreted the vision. Luke 1:19 – Gabriel to Zacharis; Luke 1:25 – Gabriel to Mary; Luke 2:10 – the angel to the shepherds regarding Christ's birth.
- (5) **Through circumstances and people** - Delivering the people from Egypt demonstrated God's righteous acts (Micah 6:4-5) – God brought Israel out of the land of Egypt.

There is God's special revelation.

(1) Through His Son, the living word of God.

- **He showed us who the Father was, John 1:14 – The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. John 1:18 – Christ has explained the Father.**
- **He revealed the nature of God (John 14:9) – He who has seen me has seen the Father.**
- **He revealed the power of God (John 3:2) – Through His miracles.**
- **He revealed the wisdom of God (John 7:46) – He speaks as no other.**
- **He revealed the glory of God (John 1:14) – the Word became flesh and we beheld His glory.**
- **He revealed the life of God (I John 1:1-3) – Jesus is the Word of life.**
- **He revealed the love of God (Romans 5:8) – God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.**

Christ did this by His actions (John 2:11) and by His words (Matthew 16:17).

(2) There is the written Word of God, the Bible.

The Bible, of course, is the most inclusive of all the avenues of God's revelation. Though God created, preserves the universe, gave visions and dreams, used angels, works through circumstances, and people, we only know that is true because these are recorded for us in the

Word of God the Bible.

The Bible not only is the accurate recording of these different revelations, the Bible gives us additional truth beyond these, including what Christ Himself taught.

The Bible then is the revelation of these activities and revelation itself. It is God giving information to men who recorded it accurately for us under the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is not just a word written by men, it is in fact the very eternal Word of God that Peter says lives and abides forever.

And in that process, the Bible is accurate, progressive, and provides instruction for our lives.

Just think where we would be if the Bible were not true always, and always did not come true

The book of Daniel we are studying would be a nice story with no prophetic content. In fact there would be no miraculous. The atheists and the agnostics would be right. This world is it. We eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.

That's why the Bible is different from all other books. In fact at least one fourth to one third of the Bible is prophetic. As we have seen, what Daniel foretold has already come true. Thusly, what he prophesied that has not yet come true will come true. You can count on it as much as you and I are here alive in this building today.

It is a miracle book that tells us of the biblical God's intervention into the affairs of men because He is the Creator, has seen man in his mess because of disobeying Him, and has come into man's little box to provide Him forgiveness and eternal life through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is not just for the past and the present, but for the future as well. No other book like it.

Man does not want to accept the miracle God, because it interferes with his prideful life-style. So he lives in his sin, going his way, not realizing he needs a Savior, unless he is confronted with the Savior through the believer's prayer and life of witness.

So what is the Bible doing in our lives today?

- Points us to the one and only Savior Jesus Christ (John 14:16; Romans 10:9-13).
- Points us to the fact that we need to accept Him as Savior (John 3:16; Romans 3:23; 6:23).
- Accepting Him as Savior, the Bible ties us to the past, while providing us hope, for the present and the future (Romans 5:12-21; 15:4; I Corinthians 15:51-57).
- Using the Word of God we have spiritual strength, stability, and direction (I Corinthians 15:58). I have a list here of some 22 passages of Scripture that the Bible speaks to in our daily experiences. They cover such topics as: Worry, Tired, Procrastination, Pessimism, God doesn't care about me, God is against me, Discouraged, Depressed, Frustrated, Doubt, Bad thoughts and attitudes, No one pays any attention to me, I'm afraid to share my faith. If you would like a copy of the verses that speak to these different areas that we experience in our lives, they are available in the foyer on the table.
- We can share with others the hope we have (Acts 1:8).
- Being in Christ we know we are His forever (Romans 8:37-39).

May the reality that "God's Word – Always True – Always Comes True" cause each of us to live with enthusiasm for our Lord each day.

