



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Understanding The End Times

Chapters 7-8

Goal Of Chapters 7-8

Daniel 7-8 marks the beginning of a new genre in this book. Chapters 1-6 are considered narrative, chapter 7-12 are categorized as apocalyptic literature. The remainder of the book presents a series of Daniel's visions and their interpretations. Each new vision adds further revelation and looks forward to a time beyond Daniel's life. Although these chapters can be difficult to understand, there still remains a lot we can learn and apply.



Antiochus Epiphanes

Antiochus is a dangerous figure in Jewish history. After coming to power as a king of the Greek Empire that grew out of Alexander's conquests, he attacked Jerusalem on the Sabbath. He killed many of the males in the city and carried the women and children into slavery. He's been called "Hitler of the OT." Antiochus also outlawed Jewish customs and practices and profaned the temple by dedicating it to Zeus. Many of the prophecies in these chapters were fulfilled by him.

The Antichrist

Even though the events of Daniel 8 were clearly fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes, both Apostles John and Paul, both who lived some 200 years after Antiochus, used Daniel 8 to point to something still in the future, namely the rise of the Antichrist. There seems to be some "already but not yet" fulfillments taking place. Paul uses Daniel 8 language in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-11 when describing the antichrist. The point is that the prophecies of Daniel 7-8 are both behind and before us. A helpful scripture that affirms the Antichrist's past behavior and future coming is 1 John 2:18 "Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come."

Two Behaviors We Can Expect From The Antichrist

Daniel 7:23 & Daniel 8:25 say regarding the Antichrist: "Without warning he shall destroy many". It is natural for the spirit of the antichrist to kill masses of people. History has shown us the spirit of the antichrist several times: American Slavery, the Holocaust, the work of Joseph Stalin in 1932, the rise of abortions, and finally the idea that he's continuously at work in many lives creating addictions and ruining relationships.

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Chapter 8:25 says "He will cause deceit to prosper through his cunning and by his influence, and in his own mind he will exalt himself." Those who work hard at deceiving people from trusting the Bible and those who exalt their thoughts above God's thoughts are operating under the spirit of the antichrist. If you are not just giving yourself room to question what the Bible says, you're exalting yourself over God and ultimately operating in the spirit of the antichrist.

Eventually God Will Rule and Destroy the Antichrist

Daniel 7:11 says "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire."

One day, the God who is working in history invisibly will come and destroy the beast. And in that moment the power of the antichrist will literally evaporate in front of him. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians that Jesus on that day will destroy the antichrist and all his armies "with just the breath of his mouth." John in the book of Revelation says he does it "With just a word." The point is, his days will be limited and numbered.

Questions:

- 1) What excites you and what worries you about the end times?
- 2) How often do you think about the end times?
- 3) What should our current attitude, motivation, and actions be, since we know we are on the winning side?
- 4) Knowing that eventually God will completely destroy Satan and all of his evil, how does that help you view and wrestle with current evil?