

8. The prophecy so accurate that is almost unbelievable

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We have many so-called prophets and fortune tellers around us that what they say as prophecies don't mean a whole lot. So when the people see how biblical prophecies are so accurate to the last minute details, they assume that someone doctored it up or it was written after the events occurred.

The chapter 8 of the Book of Daniel is a case in point. The liberal Bible scholars whom I consider not much due to lack of their common sense argue that the Book of Daniel was written after the fifth century A.D., because the history surrounding Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes was so accurate that they couldn't imagine how anyone could write this before what happened.

You see, the definition of prophecy is "A prediction of the future, made under divine inspiration." The Book of Daniel not only contains accurate history, but also stunning prophecies. These liberal scholars missed the whole point of the prophetic side of this Book.

There are two documents that coincide with the original Book of Daniel that are making their position really bad. The first one is Septuagint which is a Greek version of the Old Testament and it was written in the third century B.C. before the existence of Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes. The second one is the Dead Sea Scrolls that were discovered in Qumran between 1947-1956. These documents date back to the first century A.D. The liberal scholars' claims are nothing more than a desperate argument to reject God Almighty's truth.

We should also note that the preceding section of chapter 2-7 was written in Aramaic, the original language of Syria and the world language of these four great empires. With the beginning of chapter 8, the book returns to the use of the Hebrew language.

A. THE SECOND VISION

Daniel 8:1-2 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me--to me, Daniel--after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.

Daniel received a second vision around 551 B.C., when he was close to seventy years old.

The royal city of Shushan or Susa was 350 miles east of Babylon – the capital city in which Daniel lived at this time. It was the birthplace of the Medo-Persian Empire. Shushan was also the headquarters of the Persian king Cyrus. Daniel says that he saw himself "beside the River Ulai" – a man-made irrigation ditch that ran near Shushan.

B. THE VISION OF A MIGHTY RAM

Daniel 8:3-4 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one

was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

Obviously this ram represent the kingdom of Medo-Persia. The ram was the national emblem of Persia, a ram being stamped on Persian coins as well as on the head-dress of Persian emperors.

As we have studied in the last chapter, Medo-Persia started with two separate kingdoms of Medes and Persia. Persia was stronger than Medes and eventually absorbed it. Here we see the ram's two horn – one was higher than the other.

C. THE VISION OF A RAGING GOAT

Daniel 8:5-8 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. 8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

With his only forty thousand but highly disciplined army, Alexander the Great, demolished this two million soldier army of Medo-Persia in short time. It corresponds to the four wings of the leopard and denotes the speed with which Alexander moved his army in chapter 7.

Alexander the Great had an empire of 1.5 million square miles in eight short year of campaign. In 323, Alexander entered Babylon for the last time. Worn out by wounds, hardship and excessive drinking, he fell ill of fever. He was thirty-two years old.

After his death, no one person could control this vast kingdom, that his four generals divided the kingdom in four sections. One of the generals was Seleucus and he took Asia, all the easter part of the empire, except Egypt. This brings up the next part of the vision.

D. ANTIOCHUS AND ANTICHRIST

Daniel 8:9-14 And 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 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. 13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?" 14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

These words undoubtedly refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, who was the eighth king in the Seleucian dynasty. He came to power in 175 B.C. after murdering his brother, the rightful recipient of the throne. Antiochus was determined to unify his kingdom religiously and socially under the influence of Greek culture and idolatry.

His attempt led to a brutal suppression of Jewish worship at Jerusalem and generally throughout Palestine. Antiochus' oppressive policies came to a head in December 168. At that time, he sent his general, Apollonius, with twenty thousand troops under orders to seize Jerusalem on the Sabbath. There he erected an idol of Zeus and desecrated the altar by offering swine on it.

This idol became known to the Jews as "the abomination of desolation" which served as a type of a future abomination that will be set up in the Jerusalem sanctuary to be built in the last days. Christ predicted in Matthew 24:15.

In v14, we find 2300 days. What is this all about? Some Bible students debate if this means 2,300 days or 1,150 days. 2,300 days is a little more than six years.

Either understanding is possible, but it is more likely that this means literal 2,300 days. The date when the temple was cleansed is well established as December 25, 165 B.C. If we count back 2,300 days from then, we come to the year when Antiochus Epiphanes began his persecution in 171 B.C.

E. AN INTERPRETATION BY GABRIEL

Daniel 8:15-22 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly 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, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end." 18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be. 20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns--they are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. 22 As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

This is the same Gabriel the angel who showed up in dreams and vision of Mary, Joseph and Zacharias to announce the arrival of Jesus and John the Baptist in Luke chapter 1.

F. THE VISION OF THE ANTICHRIST

Daniel 8:23-27 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes. 24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. 25 "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means. 26 "And

the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future.” Daniel 8:27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

As we study Daniel 8:23-26, we discover that some of its descriptive phrases do not strictly apply to Antiochus Epiphanes. For example, the words “*He shall even rise against the Prince of princes*” indicates the blatant opposition to Jesus Christ that will characterize the antichrist according to Rev. 19:19. But it could not have been true of Antiochus, since it was impossible for him to have known Jesus.

Also, the comment “*But he shall be broken without human means*” strongly suggests a judgment that was carried out by God Himself, instead of by natural means. We know from Scripture that such a supernatural judgment will fall on the antichrist after Christ defeats him at the end of the Great Tribulation in Rev. 19.

From this incredible prophecy concerning Antiochus, we can learn several facts about the forthcoming antichrist:

- 1) He will achieve great power by subduing others.
- 2) He will rise to power by promising false security and peace.
- 3) He will be intelligent and persuasive.
- 4) He will be controlled by satan.
- 5) He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugate Israel to his authority.
- 6) He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7) His rule will be terminated by divine Judgment.

So we can conclude that there is a dual reference in this striking prophecy. It reveals Israel’s history under the Seleucids and particularly under Antiochus during the time of Greek domination, but it also looks forward to Israel’s experiences under antichrist, whom Antiochus foreshadows.

G. ONE PERSON WHOM WE SHOULD NOTICE

Many people try to figure out who the antichrist is. Some said that it is Henry Kissinger, or Ronald Reagan, or Bill Clinton, or a Spain king or whomever they don’t like.

The person I am about to talk about does not have a neon sign on his head to show that he is the antichrist. I am not saying this to get a special antichrist excitement fringe, nor I am claiming that he is the antichrist. But I thought it is interesting to see how many pieces of puzzles are starting to fit together around his life.

Not many people in America know about a man name Javier Solana. He kept his profile so low that the majority of American Christians do not know who he is. In last twenty years, he rose from a liberal college physics professor in Spain to one of the most powerful men in the world.

He was born July 14, 1942 in Madrid, Spain. Now he is the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Secretary General of both the Council of the European Union (EU) and the Western European Union (WEU). He was a former Secretary General of NATO from 1995 to 1999.

He gained the reputation of being a very successful, diplomatic Secretary General who is capable of negotiating between the differing needs both of the members of NATO and EU and those with whom they were negotiating.

Solana is married and has two adult children in Spain, but he lives alone in Brussels, Belgium.

Last week I mentioned that there are 27 nations in EU and two countries are going to be their members soon. But the prophecy from Daniel chapter 2 talks about ten toes that represent 10 nations divided into east and west region of Europe.

I just have learned that EU divides their territory into ten sections: five in the west and five in the east. Of course Javier Solana is the Secretary General of the Western European Union, the more powerful one of two.

H. APPLICATIONS

1) From what happened according to the Word of God, we can have confidence in accuracy of God's Word.

Practically all of this prophecy has been fulfilled, down to its last minute detail. This gives us reassurance that the rest of the Scriptures are true and reliable as well.

2) From what happened according to the Word of God, we don't have to be fearful about our future.

If we are trusting in Christ as our Savior, we need not be afraid. Because He has promised that He will protect us from the antichrist by removing us from the face of the earth before he rises to power with the Rapture according to 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

3) From what happened according to the Word of God, we will share with others the promise of salvation.

It is one thing to find personal peace in our salvation through Christ. It is quite another to reach out and offer His deliverance to those who are living without hope. No one except God the Father knows when the Rapture of the Church will occur and the Great Tribulation will begin.

But we know that these events will usher in terrible days of divine judgment for unbelievers. Out of compassion, we who are Christians should testify to others that God's wrath will only be escaped by those who place their faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Shouldn't we begin sharing with non-Christians today?