

Beast Wars
Daniel 8:1 – 27
The Laurel Center
February 13, 2015

Main Idea: God intimately knows humanity, its history and destiny.

Introduction

All of us want to know what is going to happen in the future. I don't know if you're like me but I like to know what is about to happen so that's I am prepared for it and can plan. In one sense, we know what is about to happen because we have calendars and we decide what will happen. What we cannot decide as human beings is whether or not the future will happen so that our events can be attended.

Although Daniel does not ask for it God tells them exactly what is about to happen to the nations of the world and to his own people Israel in the near future. Over 200 years before these things will happen, Daniel is aware of them. God even tells him why he will do certain things to Israel, like allow a brutal dictator to endanger them and persecute them. But we can trust the Lord because he knows the future and it does not surprise him. It is better to trust in the one who knows the future then to wonder about it on our own and hope for the best. Let us take a look at what Daniel learns from the Lord.

Text – Daniel 8:22–25

22 As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. **23** And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise. **24** His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. **25** By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand.

I. God owns and details human history and future (vv. 1 – 14).

A God foretells the future with total accuracy.

1 Daniel provides the background for which we will see this second vision in the context of his life and of history. This is important for us to note because prophecy not only tells us what we should do for God but what God is going to deal in human history.

- 2 This prophecy/vision takes place in the third year of Belshazzar's reign. This would be about 550 BC. This is the second king of Babylon under which Daniel served.
- 3 Daniel served on the three Kings: Nebuchadnezzar, his son Belshazzar in the land of Babylon, and King Darius in the Persian Empire. The prophecy he's about to explain is given about 200 years before it happens in history.
- 4 Did you also gives us not only the place in human history but the place geographically where he receives the vision. Interestingly, the places Souza in which the capital city of the Persians will soon be placed.
- 5 God allows Daniel to see a prophetic vision of the student future not just of humankind but also specifically reporting concerning the people of Israel in the future.
- 6 God shows his people what is about to happen to them specifically. He first speaks to the empires of the world and humanity in general, but then highlights specific sufferings that Israel will go through.
- 7 **Application:** God takes great care of his people because it allows us to see the things that will come to us. In this case, God is about to send a trial to this people when they do not listen to him and do what he tells them to do. When we do not continue to serve the Lord in the way that he wishes for us to serve and worship him, we will see hard times. We must remain faithful to God because he has never let us down and always let us know what is about to happen to us.

B God shows his ownership and sovereignty through foretelling the future.

- 1 God tends to call his shots in history through prophecy. As far as prophecy tells the future, it comes directly from the one who has foreknown all things.
- 2 When God tells us the future, it is not for the same purpose that evil people do. He tells us these things to show that everything is in his hand and he has complete control.
- 3 We need to hear this because we often fear what is about to happen to us. There is no need to fear what happens because God knows that it happens before it happens.
- 4 God uses images in the vision to show Daniel about the two empires that are to come next. Remember that this happens before the Persians kill Belshazzar the night of the party in chapter 5.
- 5 Nobody realized that the Persians would do what they were about to do. So at the time that Daniel sees this vision, it is prophetic to him. We have the advantage of looking back on human history and seeing that God was completely accurate in his descriptions.

- 6 The ram represents the Persian Empire, one horn being higher than the other because the Persians were stronger than the Medes. This ram represented the Persian Empire and was the seal of the Empire.
- 7 The goat with the conspicuous horn represents the Greek empire along with its greatest general and leader Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered the world and had the largest empire to date because of his military prowess and genius.
- 8 However, Alexander would die young at the age of 33 in 323 BC. Because he died young, his four generals would split his empire. That is where this prophecy helps us to understand what happened right after Daniel's day.

II. God prepares His people for trials (vv. 15 – 27).

A His foretelling of human history helps us be prepared.

- 1 Daniel further learns about this prophetic vision from game girl, one of the Lord's choicest angels. God not only gave him the vision but also explained its meaning as he has done throughout the book of Daniel.
- 2 The vision further foretells of the rise of an especially brutal and ruthless king. This king would come out of the Greek empire but would demonstrate a special brutality and persecution of Israel.
- 3 We now know that this leader was named Antiochus Epiphanies IV and he would take out his rage on the Jewish people. He would come into Israel, sacked Jerusalem and destroy the religious establishment.
- 4 We now know that Antiochus then would go into the Temple, declare himself to be the God of the Jews, set up a statue of Zeus and offer human sacrifices on the altars. He would also offer pigs on the altars, which went against Jewish law.
- 5 This brutal leader would begin to destroy the fabric of God's people and their faithfulness to God. But glory to God he would raise up saints who would turn back the tide for God's people and rescue them.
- 6 God allowed Daniel see the kinds of things his people would face in the coming empires. Part of the reason for such a brutal leader and dictators take over Israel was because the Israelites did not follow God with a return.
- 7 God did not only call his shots in human history concerning the empires that would come about but he also showed his people what they would suffer. God is the Lord of human history and knows what will happen before it does.
- 8 **Application:** This brings us much comfort because although we may not know what the future holds, God knows exactly what is going to happen to us and to everything. Because our Lord knows these things, nothing comes

as a surprise to him. In fact, he is the one who ordains and controls every part of it. Not only is he not surprised by it, but he has already set it in motion. Because nothing surprises our God, we can stand in comfort and in faith, trusting that the Lord will guide our path exactly the way he wants to.

B The boastful leader is also a type of the Antichrist.

- 1 While many scholars fail to see it, there are certain phrasings within the prophetic vision and its interpretation which allow us to see that this was not just about the Jews and empires that have already passed the current audience by.
- 2 Certain phrases that speak of the end of the age speak more to the finality of human history which we have not seen yet. This is important to be realized because it shows us this leader is a type of the Antichrist.
- 3 Biblical prophecy uses vivid imagery, types and anti-types, as well as foreshadowing and future telling. All of these things help to bring home the message of each prophecy.
- 4 Prophets tend to be concerned with the way their society and culture are leaning. When they see things that do not agree with the way God has planned, they let us know. Prophecy is most concerned with the change of heart from wickedness to righteousness and following the Lord and loving him.
- 5 When these things don't take place, God uses prophets and tells them about things that will take place so that they can see that God will deal with wickedness in his people.
- 6 This brutal leader did not just happen to Israel in the past in the 160s BC but is a type of the Antichrist who is yet to come. A type is one who resembles the characteristics of a future figure. And anti-type is one who demonstrates the opposite characteristics of a future character.
- 7 The Antichrist will do the same types of things that Antiochus Epiphanies IV did to Israel. He will fight the Saints in the future and he will bring about destruction willfully.
- 8 He will rise up and call himself God in the Temple as Paul prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2. He will be deceitful and do everything he can to destroy the works of God. He will revel in wickedness.
- 9 In these senses and characteristics, Antiochus is a type of the Antichrist who is to come yet at the end of time. Both of them show the type of rule of terror and wickedness that the devil controls.

Characteristics of these hybrids and the Antichrist

- Boldfaced King who understands riddles
- Great power not of his own abilities
- Successful in causing great destruction, unstoppable
- Destroying mighty men and the saints
- Deceit prospers under his cunning hand
- Rises up against the Prince of princes
- Destroyed not by his own hand

Conclusion

The Lord is good to his people because he shows us he is sovereign over all human history and we have nothing to fear from the future. The Lord holds all things in the palm of his hand. We need not fear because the Lord has a very best in mind and will bring us victory. We can trust him no matter what trials and persecution we may face because he will turn it off for his good.

Let us not fear the future to trust in the Lord who holds the future the palm of his hand. We serve the King of history and the Lord of the future. We can have confidence that no matter what may come, God will help us to face it with faithfulness to him and righteousness. The Lord is good to his people and protects us from the dangers to come. Let us not fear in trust in the Lord.