

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL 7-8

The professional football season starts this week.

And at first glance tonight's chapters seem to be a roster of NFL teams. Daniel 7-8 has [lions](#), [eagles](#), [bears](#), [saints](#), and [rams](#). We also have [chiefs](#), or *kings*, even the chief of the universe, "[the Ancient of Days](#)."

There's also an unnamed beast. It's called "[dreadful and terrible](#)." Let's hope that's not our Atlanta Falcons.

Actually, Daniel's visions have nothing to do with the National Football League, but with *a league of nations*.

Daniel, writing from Babylon, is shown 2500 years of gentile world domination. He sees four beasts rising out of the sea. The four beasts represent the four world governing empires from Daniel's time until today: [Babylon](#), then [Medo-Persia](#), then [Greece](#), then [Rome](#).

These Kingdoms ruled the world a thousand years.

Daniel's vision in these two chapters is one of the most remarkable sections in all the Scripture.

The exactness with which the prophet describes the details of what were future events, is amazing. The rise and fall of kings and kingdoms was described by Daniel long before they appear on the pages of history.

These chapters offer conclusive proof there is a God who dwells outside of time - who sees the end from the beginning - and is sovereign over world events...

And with that said, let's *kick-off* Chapter Seven...

Verse 1, “In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed.” The secular date is 553 BC.

In keeping with tonight’s NFL theme, the book of Daniel is actually divided into *two halves*... The first six chapters are the narrative of Daniel's life. The last six chapters record visions of the future God gave Daniel.

Daniel receives four visions: One each in chapters 7, 8, 9, and then one in 10-12. The most comprehensive and sweeping of these visions is Chapter 7. It outlines the future, while chapters 8-12 fill in the details.

The Jewish scribes who copied the OT considered Daniel 7 to be the greatest chapter in the Bible.

“Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.” Daniel is only giving us “*main facts*.” There were details he chose not to share. We only get essentials.

“Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea (that’s the Mediterranean). And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.” We gather from the context of this chapter that what Daniel sees is symbolic. And throughout the Scriptures “*the sea*” is a symbol for lost humanity.

Isaiah 57:20 reads, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” We still use similar imagery today. We've all heard the expression, “a sea of humanity.”

The sea represents mankind, and the winds are God's providence. He is the one who stirs up nations. God manipulates events according to His purposes.

And out of this vast sea of humanity rise four beasts.

“The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’ “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.” Now there's no need to speculate on the symbolism of the beasts. Peek ahead to verse 17, and Daniel tells us what they represent... *“Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which rise out of the earth.”*

Its interesting, countries still use animals as national symbols. Great Britain is the lion, the US the eagle, Russia is the bear. Daniel sees the same progression of nations that Nebuchadnezzar saw in Chapter 2.

He sees four gentile empires, that from *the time of Daniel* until *the end of time* dominate global politics.

The first of these world governing empires was Babylon, and of course King Nebuchadnezzar.

Babylon ruled the world from 605-539 BC. Jeremiah calls Nebuchadnezzar a lion (49:19). Ezekiel sees him as an eagle

(17:3). The famed Ishtar gates, the doors to ancient Babylon, had winged-lions as its insignia.

But what happens to the wings? They get plucked off. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar is humbled by God, and given the heart of a man. That's exactly what happens in Daniel 4. King Nebuchadnezzar, the predator, who once stalked the earth like a wild beast, ended up being tamed by Yahweh, the lion-tamer!

After the Babylonian empire, came the Medes and Persians. They ruled the earth from 539-331 BC.

Notice Daniel depicts them as a bear raised up on one side. At the outset, the Medes and Persians shared power equally, but ultimately Persia dominated.

Also note there were three ribs between the bear's teeth. The Medo-Persians conquered three kingdoms in building their empire: *Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt*.

And recall too what they say, *“Arise, devour much flesh!”* The Persians had little regard for human life. They waged massive battles employing hundreds of thousands of troops. Xerxes once marched against Greece with three million soldiers. The Persians were like a bear, slow and plodding. They'd crush an enemy, even though it cost them thousands of their own men.

After Persia the Greeks rose to power. Greece rule the earth from 331-146 BC. And like a leopard with four wings, they were a combo of *splendor, skill, strategy, and speed*. Under Alexander the Great the Greeks conquered the whole world in less than ten years.

And it was part of God's providence that throughout his conquests Alexander spread the greek culture and language. By the time of Christ all the world spoke Greek, setting the stage for the spread of Christianity.

When Alexander died he left his empire to his four generals which are depicted by the leopard's four heads. We'll talk more about Greece in Chapter 8.

Verse 7, “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.”

It was the fourth beast that disturbed Daniel. He wasn't afraid of the beasts in the lion's den, but this fourth beast shook him up! - “*dreadful and terrible*” can also be translated, “*menacing and mighty.*”

Let me refute what I said earlier, this dreadful beast can't be the Falcons; it's been a long time since Atlanta “*broke in pieces and trampled*” anyone. Yet that's what this beast does - it mangles with its iron fangs.

In verse 8 the plot thickens, “*I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.*” On the world stage, after Greece came the Romans. Rome ruled the world from 146 BC-476 AD. Their empire lasted 600 years -

longer than the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks combined.

The Roman empire extended from England to Egypt, from the Atlantic to the Euphrates - far outstretching the reach of its predecessors. Rome became famous for its cruelty. Its lust for blood was unrivaled. They refined crucifixion. *Gladiators, and human torches, and feeding Christians to the lions* - all were examples of the ruthlessness of Rome. She did devour and trample.

In a sense this fourth beast was the Romans. But it also represents much more than *ancient Rome*...

Understand, a few characteristics of Bible prophecy.

First, like animals to the Ark, prophecy frequently comes in twos. There're dual-fulfillments - *two comings of Christ, two forerunners, two Babels, two defeats of Tyre, etc.* Often, a single prophecy describes both a short-term and a long-term event of similar detail.

Second, there are often hidden gaps of time in the fulfillment of a prophecy. Biblical prophesy is like looking at a mountain range from a distance. The peaks are actually separated by large valleys, but from a distance it all appears as if it's one summit.

Such is the case here. The fourth beast describes Rome, but during the reign of this Rome, God destroys the kingdoms of man and establishes His kingdom.

This hasn't happened. It's an event yet to come.

This is why many scholars see in this fourth beast a last days revival of ancient Rome. And the little horn is seen as the Antichrist who'll rule the world from Rome.

One more point before we move on, Daniel basically sees what King Nebuchadnezzar saw in Chapter 2.

But the king was observing history from **man's viewpoint**. He sees human governments as a metallic, shiny, polished image - a thing of beauty and glory.

Whereas Daniel, observing history from **God's viewpoint** sees human government as animalistic and barbaric - ravage and savage. To him man's kingdoms are beasts that frighten and destroy. *What a contrast!*

Verse 9 continues, "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire... The phrase, "*Ancient of Days*," could be translated, "Days without beginning," or "The One Who Has Been Around Forever." This is our God.

And notice the burning wheels on his throne. This is what Ezekiel saw - God sitting on his throne-chariot!

This picture also resembles Jesus in Revelation 1:13-14 - *white hair like wool, and eyes on fire*.

Verse 10, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.

The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Heaven's Tribunal, *God's court*, has come to order!

“I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.” We know the identity of this “*Son of man*,” for Jesus applied this passage to Himself.

In Matthew 26:63 at His trial, the High Priest asked Jesus, “I adjure you by the living God that You tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus answered by quoting this passage from Daniel, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and **coming on the clouds of heaven.**” The Priest knew Jesus had made Himself this “*Son of man*” in Daniel.

That’s why “the High Priest tore his clothes, saying, he has spoken blasphemy!” For he knew what Daniel goes on to say in verse 14, “Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.” Psalm 2 tells us God will give to *His Son* the nations as an inheritance and the earth as His possession. In

quoting Daniel, Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God, equal to the Ancient of Days.

“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.” At first, Daniel didn’t know what to make of all that he’d seen.

So he approaches someone in the vision, perhaps an angel and asks him to explain the vision’s meaning.

“I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’” The term “saint” means “set apart or dedicated to God.” In contrast to the gentiles who have been ruling the world, these saints are the Jews. God promised to David that Israel would one day be given an everlasting kingdom. The Messiah would reign in Israel. Daniel foresees Israel's coronation day.

And this was a great encouragement to Daniel.

Jerusalem had been destroyed by Babylon and the Jews were in exile. Gentiles controlled the world, even the land of Israel. *But God’s promises had not failed!*

Here, God shows Daniel that gentile rule will one day end and God will fulfill all His promises to the Hebrews.

Verse 19, “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which

devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.” Daniel wants more info about this fourth beast. Of all that he saw it was this last beast that peaked his curiosity.

“Thus he said: (apparently, this is an angel from his vision who is now speaking to Daniel) 'The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom.'”

Daniel sees a revived Roman empire taking the form of a ten nation confederacy. The emergence of such a political entity began on March 25, 1957, with the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Half a dozen European nations took a pledge of unity. France, Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, and the Netherlands (all within the borders of ancient Rome) signed the treaty and the European Economic Community was born.

Over the sixty years that have followed, and with the fall of the Soviet Union, the EU has expanded its membership, and intensified efforts toward unification.

Here's a brief timeline that documents how quickly unification has progressed since the Treaty of 1957...

1979 saw the first elections to a EU Parliament.

1985 brought open borders with no passport control.

1986 saw the establishment of a European flag.

1993 and the Maastricht Treaty launched a formal plan for full economic, political, and military unity.

In 1999 the Euro became the EU's single currency.

This has propelled the EU economy into being the wealthiest and largest in the world, topping the US.

And since 2000 the EU has grown - from 6 to 12 to 27 member states - helping to unite east and west.

Today, seven more nations are potential candidates.

In fact, the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize went to the EU.

Of course, European unity is not without its setbacks.

This June in response to uncontrolled immigration and economic uncertainty, Britain withdrew from the EU. It was a Brexit. Other countries are threatening.

Recently, the French Prime Minister was quoted as saying, ["Now is the time to invent another Europe."](#)

Yet regardless of what happens to its current configuration, European unity is seen as a necessity.

The two world wars of the 20th century started in Europe. That's what prompted former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to state, ["War in Europe is only avoidable through](#)

European union, and for that reason, political unity is the most important of all.”

Today, the unification of Europe is seen as the glue that keeps the peace. And with the rise of radical Islam, unity is all the more important. We know from Daniel that eventually, a union will coalesce into ten nations.

Old Rome is on the rise just as Daniel predicted!

When you read the EU’s constitution it’s no surprise its democratic ideals are attributed to ancient Greece and Rome. The EU ignores its Christian heritage.

The EU’s favorite symbol is the greek goddess, Europa, on the back of a mystical bull. It’s often seen rising out of the sea, like the fourth beast in Daniel 7.

In Revelation 17 the last days Rome is also seen as a woman riding on a beast. This woman is the religion that rides to power on the dreadful beast of Daniel 7. Today, this symbol of the beast is used all over Europe.

Verse 24 continues, “**And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.**” Another king will rise out of the ten kings. We’re told here he will overcome three obstructionist states, and rule over the other seven.

Remember Daniel tells us this fourth beast will “**devour the whole earth.**” This little horn which rises among the ten horns will eventually rule the world.

And this ruler goes by many names in Scripture. He’s “**the seed of the serpent,**” “**the Assyrian,**” “**the man of sin,**” “**the**

willful king,” “the lawless one,” “the beast.” And the name you’re most familiar with is “Antichrist.”

The real impediment to European unity over the last 60 years has been the lack of a leader. Europe suffers from a power vacuum. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, East German, Martin Garber, stated, “Power is lying on the ground waiting for somebody to pick it up.”

Paul Henri-Spaak, an EU founder, stated “We don't want another committee. We want a man of stature to hold the allegiance of the people and lift us up out of the economic mess we've gotten ourselves into. Send us a man whether he be God or a devil, send him.”

Europe and the world desperately seeks a leader. Soon the little horn of Daniel 7 will appear. It’s quite possible he’s alive today, being groomed for his role!

Verse 25 speaks of this little horn, “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High...” This future ruler goes by many names, but his most popular is “blabber-mouth.” He spouts blasphemies against God.

And he “shall persecute the saints of the Most High and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.” This little horn will be so arrogant he'll try to alter the calendar, maybe even the days of the week. He'll tinker with fundamental principles of law.

He'll probably try to strip from the culture all vestiges of our Judeo-Christian heritage, and usher in what he'll call “a new world order” or “the post-Christian era.”

And notice, he'll "*persecute the saints,*" or the Jews.

The word "*persecute*" means "to wear out." For "*a time, times, and half a time,*" or for three-and-a-half years, this Antichrist will conduct a second Holocaust.

Realize some people equate these saints with the Church, and conclude Christians now will endure the Great Tribulation. But "*the saints*" can't be the Church.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus declares, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here the Antichrist prevails against "*the saints,*" yet Jesus says that hell won't prevail against His Church.

We'll learn in Chapter 9 that after signing a treaty with the Jews, Antichrist will betray them and viciously attack God's chosen. Here "*the saints*" are the Jews.

Verse 26, "*But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.*" Daniel sees all this in the context of God's tribunal. The Lord oversees affairs on Earth, and renders His verdict. Revelation 19:20 tells us that in the end the Antichrist will be "*cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*" The kingdoms of man will end and the Kingdom of God will be established forever.

"*Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.*" The little horn is the last gentile ruler before God's takeover.

When Jesus returns, “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.” It was a lot to grasp. Daniel was shown the end of human history.

Chapter 8, “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.”

It's two years after the vision in Chapter 7, 551 BC.

“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 is in Babylon, but in his vision he's transported to Shushan or Susa, 375 miles east.

Shushan was the birthplace of the Medo-Persian empire, and the winter residence of its king. In Susa we find Nehemiah and Esther. Daniel is taken to the future site of Persian power and sees a coming empire.

“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.” Again, there's no need to guess who this ram is - verse 20 identifies the ram with two horns as the Medes and Persians.

In fact, the Persian king wore a crown of gold made like a ram's head. In the Persian ruins of Persepolis they've found

ram's heads engraved on sculptured pillars. The ram was an ancient symbol for this empire.

The two horns represent the two divisions of the kingdom - the Medes and Persians. The horn that ends up dominating is Persia. History tells us during the reign of Xerxes the Persians superseded the Medes.

And a word of reminder before we go further, don't forget Daniel is not a *historian*, he's *God's prophet*.

Amazingly, he's recording these details before the fact, *not after*. As Daniel writes Babylon is still the reigning empire and will be for a dozen more years.

Verse 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." The Persian empire expanded north into Asia Minor, west toward Babylon, south into Egypt.

They enlarged the borders of Babylon, and became the greatest kingdom, *to that point the world had ever seen*. Persia was the last great eastern empire.

"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." Again, God leaves nothing to guesswork. In verse 21 the goat is Greece.

A goat was their ancient symbol. Greece's early capitol was named "Egaea" - which means "the goat city." Today, the Aegean Sea is "the sea of goats."

Daniel 8:21 also tells us that the "*notable horn*" is Greece's "*first king*" - the most famous and successful king of the ancient world - Alexander the Great.

Verse 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. 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."

Alexander was quite a young man. His tutor was a philosopher named Aristotle, *who was among other things, a brilliant strategist*. In 331 BC Alexander inherited command of the Macedonian army from his father, Phillip. He was just 19 years old. *A highlight of our Greek tour last fall was a visit to Philip's tomb.*

After crushing various Greek city states and unifying Greece, in 334 BC Alexander crossed the Aegean into Asia where he confronted the mighty Persian army.

Outnumbered a half million men to 40,000 - a ratio of 12 to 1, Alexander conquered Darius and the Persians.

Now in Asia Alexander plowed east and south.

Sidon fell. He then won a remarkable battle at Tyre (Ezekiel 26). Jerusalem surrendered to him in 333 BC.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that while Alexander was in Jerusalem he was shown this passage from Daniel 8. He acknowledged himself as the *“notable horn”* who would defeat the Persians...

Egypt surrendered to him in 332. He was crowned *“pharaoh”* and built a lavish city he named, *Alexandria*.

That’s when he marched north against Persia. In 331 he took the city of Babylon, which he intended to make his new capitol. Next, he conquered Persepolis and Ecbatana pushing further and further eastward.

Alexander made it as far as India where his weary troops put their foot down and said they’d had enough.

In a little less than 10 years Alexander conquered the whole known world! As Daniel puts it in verse 5, it was as if this male goat was skipping *“across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground.”*

Legend has it that at the end of his conquests Alexander laid on his bed and cried *“for there were no more worlds to conquer.”* It was mockingly said of another general, Dionysius, *“A tub was large enough for Dionysius: a world was too little for Alexander.”*

Verse 8 tells us, *“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.”* Alexander died in 323 BC - 33 years old - at the pinnacle of his career.

After several rounds of heavy drinking he got sick. Twelve days later he died. He literally drank himself to death. *And*

while lying on his death bed several of his friends asked him to whom he would give his kingdom?

Supposedly he said, "Give it to the strongest."

And that statement set off a bloody, brutal struggle among his subordinates to decide who would succeed him. His wife Roxane and his only son were murdered.

Eventually his empire was divided among four chief generals. 8:8 refers to them as the "*four notable ones.*"

Casander took over Macedonia and Greece.

Lychimachus went on to rule Asia Minor.

Seleucus became the king of Syria

And **Ptolemy** ruled over the land of Egypt.

Over the next few centuries, God's people, Israel, lived between two warring Greek kingdoms, the Seleucids to the north and the Ptolemies in the south.

Verse 9, "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." The term "*glorious land*" was a name for the land of Israel.

Now, here's where it can get confusing, don't mistake the "*little horn*" here with the "*little horn*" in Chapter 7.

The *little horn* in Chapter 8 is the ruler at the end of the Greek empire, while the *little horn* of Chapter 7 is at the end of revived Rome in the last days. There are similarities, but the little horns are two different people.

The *little horn* in Chapter 8 grows out of the Seleucid empire, which took over Syria and lands further east.

The king Daniel refers to here is the eighth in the line of Seleucid kings, a man named Antiochus IV. He had a famous sister in Egypt. Her name was Cleopatra.

Antiochus gave himself the name "Epiphanes" or "*god manifest*" - an arrogant title. The Jews, gave him a nickname (*which was a play on words*). Rather than "Epiphanes," they called him "Epimanes" or "*madman.*"

Verse 10, "And it (this little horn) 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."

In the Bible stars are a symbol for the Jews. The national emblem of Israel is the star of David.

The Seleucid kings fought numerous battles with Egypt, and every time Antiochus marched southward he would pass through Israel, where he would launch some atrocity on Jerusalem and persecute God's stars.

We're told, "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. 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." Antiochus was Greek and one of Greece's ambitions was to spread the Greek culture and religion. And Antiochus tried to *grease up* the Jews. He even issued a decree that all his subjects should worship the Greek god, Zeus. Of course, the Jews resisted.

They'd been cured of their idolatry by their time in Babylon. Now that they were back in their land they refused to bow to Zeus, or any other god, but Yahweh.

This is why Antiochus hated the Jews and their God. He defiled the holy sanctuary, their Temple, with idols. He stopped the daily sacrifices. He also despised the OT Scriptures. He *"cast truth down to the ground."*

We're told in verse 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 underfoot?'"* Antiochus' ultimate blasphemy occurred on December 15, 168 BC when he issued the order to desecrate the Jewish Temple.

He offered a pig on the altar and erected a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies. This blasphemous act is what the angel refers to here as the *"transgression (or abomination) of desolation."* This was the final straw in the eyes of God. This was the transgression that would cause desolation, that would bring down God's wrath.

It's interesting, in Matthew 24:15 Jesus uses the same phrase to refer to a similar action to be taken by the Antichrist. The ruler in the last days will also erect an image of himself in the Temple, and require the world to worship. This marks the beginning of the end.

God will have had enough. This blasphemy will be the last tumbler that unlocks God's final judgments on planet earth.

We'll talk more about this act - *the abomination that causes desolation* - in Chapter 9.

Verse 13 ends with a question, *“How long will the (Temple) be trampled underfoot?”* Verse 14 answers, *“And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”*

Antiochus' blasphemies infuriated the Jews, particularly a priest named *“Mattathias.”* When Antiochus' emissary came to the old priest and ordered him to bow before the altar of Zeus, Mattathias grabbed a sword and slew the messenger.

His courage began what is called the *“Maccabean Revolt.”* Mattathias' son, *Judas Maccabeus*, known as *Judas the Hammer*, led a guerrilla war against the Syrian troops. Eventually the Jews took back Jerusalem and the Temple, and on December 25, 165 BC the Temple that had been defiled was cleansed.

After its purification the Jews wanted to reinstitute worship in the Temple by lighting the golden menorah.

This menorah ceremony to rededicate the Temple took eight days, but the Jews only had enough sacred oil for one day. The story goes, God did a miracle. The oil continued to burn even after it should've run out.

Today the Jews celebrate this miracle as *the Feast of Hanukkah*, which is called *“the festival of lights.”* It's also called *the Feast of Dedication*. A feast that according to John 10:22, Jesus Himself celebrated.

But what about the 2,300 days? If you go back 2,300 days from the rededication of the Temple on December 25, 165 BC you come to September 6, 171 BC.

This corresponds with the time relations between Syria and Israel really soured. *But what occurred on September 6 to trigger the timetable?* No one knows!

Verse 15, “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. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.”

It’s the archangel Gabriel that appears to Daniel. The name “*Gabriel*” means “mighty one of God.”

“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.” That’s the end of the age - just prior to God’s intervening and the establishing of His Kingdom.

“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. 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.”

Daniel was no doubt exhausted from all he'd seen. He falls asleep and Gabriel has to wake him up.

And this reassures me. I'm not the only preacher who puts folks to sleep. It even happened to Gabriel!

In verse 20 Gabriel explains the meaning of the vision Daniel has just seen. And remember this is hundreds of years before the rise of these empires.

“The ram which you saw, having the two horns - they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king (Alexander the Great).

“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.” These were the four divisions of the Greek world that followed the reign of Alexander.

Now verse 23... *and in the context of Daniel's earlier vision you'd expect the next few verses to speak of Antiochus...* They do *in a sense*. But there're reasons to believe another king is also in view, the king of which Antiochus is a type, the blasphemer, the Antichrist.

And here's the basis for this... **First**, the tone of the text changes. The subject of these verse is far more sinister than Antiochus. **Second**, Gabriel states several times what he's about to tell Daniel is for *“the time of the end.”* The days of Antiochus ended nothing.

And **third**, the point of the visions in Chapters 7 and 8 are the closing of gentile world dominion. It would seem fitting that *“the time of the end”* would refer to the days of a revived Rome when Messiah will return and establish God's Kingdom... I believe these last few verses refer to **“Mr. Big Mouth”** himself, *the Antichrist*.

He says in verse 23, “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.” This king is unusually imposing. He’s knowledgeable in the occult.

“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.” Revelation 13 tells us that the Antichrist's henchman, the false prophet will be given power to work miracles. Even call down fire from heaven. This Antichrist will empowered by Satan - a New Age guru.

He’ll also “*prosper and thrive*” - He’ll have the midas touch. For a season, whatever he attempts succeeds. Yet in the end he’ll pick on “*the holy people,*” the Jews.

“Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule...” He’ll be an expert in Machiavellian strategy. He’ll have no problem lying to gain an advantage. To him, *the end justifies the means.*

He’ll be shrewd and manipulating - politically savvy.

“And he shall exalt himself in his heart.” In the end, he'll claim to be god and demand the world’s worship.

“He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without human means.” Revelation 19 says he’ll gather the world’s armies to the Valley of Megiddo to fight against the Christ. But he’ll be defeated supernaturally - *by one shimmer of the Lord’s glory.*

2 Thessalonians 2:8 puts it, “the Lord will consume (the Antichrist) with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” *No contest!*

Chapter 8 closes, “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.”

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.” How could they? He'd seen the end of time!