



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE LATTER-DAY FIERCE KING

Daniel 8:15-27

So far Daniel had two visions recorded in chapters seven and eight. These two visions had a profound effect on him. After the first vision he said, ***“As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart”*** (Daniel 7:28). The understanding of the details of the reign of coming kingdoms and empires overwhelmed his spirit to such a degree that his vigour and appearance became weak and pale. Yet, he treasured the secrets of the Lord in his heart. The impact of the second vision was even more distressing. ***“And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business”***. The future calamities coming on Israel were so fearful in their character; the oppressive tyrant that would arise to rule the world ***“in the latter time”*** came vividly before him. He became sick for a considerable period just by thinking on the vision. If the vision could make the prophet sick, what impression or impact would the accomplishment have on those who would live through those days? ***“There shall be, upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth”*** (Luke 21:25,26). Daniel said, ***“And I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it”*** (Daniel 8:27). The vision had no impact on others who heard it because they did not understand it. If Daniel’s contemporaries in Babylon had understood that a mighty king of fierce countenance would rise; that he would be a tyrant, more wicked than any king who ever lived on earth; that he would oppress Israel more than any persecutor ever did; that he would violently oppose true worship, cause their daily sacrifice to cease and profane the temple; that he would continue for a definite period; that he would only be cut off by a divine stroke of sudden, supernatural judgment; the vision would have affected them like it overwhelmed Daniel.

THE DIVINE PERCEPTION THROUGH AN ANGEL

Daniel 8:15-22; 7:15,16; 9:21-23; 10:10-14,21; 12:8-10; Proverbs 28:5; John 16:13; Acts 8:26-35; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13.

When Daniel saw the vision he did not understand, neither could he discern its meaning. Though God had given Daniel ***“knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams”*** (Daniel 1:17), he did not understand this vision; so he ***“sought for the meaning”*** (Daniel 8:15). He prayed to God that he might have the revelation of the mystery made known unto him. God sent an angel, Gabriel by name, to reveal the true meaning of the vision to him. Gabriel is the first angel to be mentioned by name in the Bible and his name appears in Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19,26. In Luke 1:19, he reveals his identity by saying, ***“I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God”***. This angel was to explain the infallible truth and meaning of the vision to Daniel. When the angel came near, Daniel lost his strength and fell upon his face. He was not worshipping the angel, he was afraid and his physical strength failed him at the appearance of the angel. He was strengthened by the touch of the angel. Then the angel made him to know the meaning and the certainty of the vision.

Do angels still come to reveal the meaning of prophetic revelations to us today? Ours is a better dispensation and it is the Holy Spirit, Himself, who is greater and higher than all angels, who guides us into all truth, showing us things to come (John 16:13). ***“The deep things of God”*** are now ***“revealed unto us by His Spirit”*** (1 Corinthians 2:10). ***“The mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit”*** (Ephesians 3:2-5). If the ministrations of an angel gave Daniel understanding, the ministrations of the Holy Spirit will give us much clearer and fuller understanding in all the revelation of the mystery of God. The eyes of our understanding being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we shall be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the revelation and knowledge which passes understanding.

THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF ANTIOCHUS

Daniel 8:23,24; 10:14; Ezekiel 38:8,16-19; Daniel 7:8,23,25; Deuteronomy 28:50-52; Daniel 11:36-39; Zechariah 13:8,9; Jeremiah 30:6,7,23,24; Revelation 17:12,13,17.

“Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. In the latter time of their kingdom, a king of fierce countenance shall stand up” (Daniel 8:17,23). The angel explained that the fulfilment of the

vision would be “**at the time of the end**”, at “**the latter time of their kingdom**”, that is, of the four kingdoms which came up in Greece after Alexander the Great. “**For at the time appointed the end shall be**” (Daniel 8:19). The angel emphasized that the vision will certainly be fulfilled but the fulfilment must await the appointed time.

“**When the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance shall stand up**” (Daniel 8:23). The suffering and captivity of the Jews in Babylon did not purge them from iniquity. They would continue in abomination and wickedness and God would have to permit a tyrant to rise up and oppress them because of the prevalence of sin and iniquity among them. That is the reason God allowed Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of fierce countenance, to arise to lay their temple, city, and country waste. “**And his power shall be mighty, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people**” (Daniel 8:24). The oppression of Antiochus against the Jews was terrible and dreadful. He was fierce, furious and deadly, neither fearing God nor regarding man. The mighty people in Israel and in other nations could not successfully resist him. The initial fulfilment of the vision was realized in Antiochus, yet there is still a future fulfilment in the Antichrist (Matthew 24:15-29; Luke 21:20-36).

THE DECEPTIVE POLICY OF THE ANTICHRIST

Daniel 8:25-27; 11:21-27,32; 1 John 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 13:11-14; Daniel 7:26,27; 11:36,37,45; Revelation 19:19-21.

In the interpretation of the angel, he said that the king of fierce countenance would prevail through the policy and practice of deceit, craft, cunning and subtilty. He would owe his domination and suppression in a great measure to his crafty policy and intrigue. History has recorded from different historians that Antiochus came to the kingdom by deceit and that a great part of his success was owing to crafty policy. “**And by peace shall destroy many**”. Rather than declaring war openly, he would seem to be working for peace and then suddenly invade and destroy people who would be living in a state of false security.

“**And he shall magnify himself in his heart: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand**” (Daniel 8:25). His heart would be lifted up against God, against Christ, against God’s people and he would come to his end. He shall be overcome by a divine, invisible power. The divine prediction was fully accomplished in the death of Antiochus.

“**He shall be broken without hand**”. The account of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes has been preserved for us, so that we can read, learn and take heed to ourselves. ‘Antiochus, hearing that the Jews had cast the image of Jupiter Olympius out of the temple, where he had placed it, was so enraged at the Jews that he vowed he would make Jerusalem a common burial-place, and determined to march thither immediately; but no sooner had he spoken these proud words than he was struck with an incurable plague in his bowels; worms bred so fast in his body that whole flakes of flesh sometimes dropped from him; his torments were violent, and the stench of his disease such that none could endure to come near him. He continued in this misery very long. Finding his disease grow upon him, when he could no longer endure his own smell, he said, **It is meet to submit to God, and for man who is mortal not to set himself in competition with God**, and so died miserably in a strange land, on the mountains of Pacata near Babylon’. Antiochus was the first fulfilment of Daniel’s vision. The Antichrist will be the final fulfilment during the period of the Great Tribulation.

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