

THE KING OF KINGS

DANIEL 8

OUR KING CRUSHES THE ANTICHRIST



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Knowing the ending helps us with living. If we know how the story finishes, it can help us to keep reading. I remember reading a book that was really hard going—hard to understand, hard to enjoy. I was close to giving up on it, but decided to skip forward to the last chapter to see how it ended. I know that's cheating, but it actually motivated me to keep reading.

Sometimes the world's story can be hard going—hard to understand, hard to enjoy. This is one of these times. Many are tempted to give up on living. But, if we know the ending, we'll find a way to keep living. **What will happen at the end and how should that impact our lives?** Daniel 8 is one of the chapters in the Bible that helps to answer these questions.

BACKGROUND

Three Revelations

Daniel's vision in chapter 8 overlaps significantly with Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image in chapter two, and Daniel's vision of the four beasts in chapter seven. All three chapters predict the future using pictures and symbols, but with a different emphasis in each. Daniel 2 predicts a succession of powerful kingdoms throughout time. Chapter 7 predicts the united hostility of these kingdoms, with a focus on the final king's hostility against God and his people (7:19-21, 23-25). Chapter 8 predicts the hostility of many horns (kings) and zooms in on an especially hostile horn (king).

Structure of Chapter 8

- Daniel's vision of the horns (1-8)
- Daniel's vision of the hostile horn (9-14)
- God's interpretation of the horns (15-22)
- God's interpretation of the hostile horn (23-27)

We're not going to study the multiple hostile horns or God's interpretation of them because, we've covered that sufficiently in previous sermons on chapters two and seven. Suffice to say that the ram is Medo-Persia (20), the male goat is the Greek Empire, and the horn is its first king, Alexander the Great (21). The four following horns are the four divisions of the Greek Empire (22) and out of one of them comes the hostile horn that we're zoning in on. (23).



Who is this hostile horn and what will he do?



1. THE ANTICHRIST WILL CRUSH CHRISTIANS (9-12, 23-25)

A Mini-Antichrist

In the previous chapter, the little horn that emerges after the ten horns of *fourth* beast (the Roman Empire) is the final Antichrist (19-21, 23-25). But here, a little horn appears from one of the four parts of the *third* beast (the Greek Empire).

History confirms that Alexander the Great's Greek Empire was eventually divided into four quarters, one of which was eventually led by Antiochus Epiphanes IV (216-164 BC).

In Daniel 7, God told Daniel that there would be a powerful final horn, a uniquely evil and destructive individual, who will be the Antichrist. In Daniel 8, God told Daniel that there would be an example of that final horn much sooner. Antiochus Epiphanes would be a sample Antichrist, an embryonic form of the final revelation of Evil, a precursor of the final Antichrist.

Jesus confirms this interpretation in Matthew 24:15, where he uses what the evil Antiochus Epiphanes did a couple of hundred years before (Dan. 9:27; 11:31), as an example of similar but greater evil that will be done in the future and finally.

History tells us that Antiochus was not in line for the throne but seized it deceitfully and then expanded it aggressively. He was a tyrant who imposed Greek culture and religion on those he subjugated. As far as Israel was concerned, he banned circumcision, stopped sacrifices, burned a pig on the altar, set up a statue to Zeus in the Holy of Holies, burned the Scriptures, took the Temple furniture, installed an immoral man as High Priest, banned the Sabbath, and slaughtered about 60,000 Jews.

How accurately did Daniel predict this 400 years before? Let's see how Antiochus is pictured in the dream (9-14) and then described in the angel's interpretation (23-25). The dream describes him as:

- **A little horn (9):** Small obscure beginnings.
- **An expansive horn (9-10):** Arrogantly invades many lands, including the holy land.
- **A persecuting horn (10):** Attacks the Prince of the host and the hosts of the Lord (God's people Ex. 7:4; 12:41).
- **A blasphemous horn (11-12):** Eradicates sacrifice and desecrates the Temple
- **A lying horn (12):** Lies beat truth for a time.
- **A victorious horn (12):** It not only acts, it prospers.



God sent Gabriel to interpret (15-16). Daniel was so terrified he fell on his face, and then passed out (17-18). The angel revived him so that he could hear and process this prophecy about about the Antichrist's character (18-19).

- **A bold king:** 'a king of bold face' (23)
- **A clever king:** 'one who understand riddles' (23)
- **A powerful king:** 'his power shall be great—but not by his own power' (24)
- **A destructive king:** 'he shall cause fearful destruction' (24)
- **A successful king:** he 'shall succeed in what he does' (24)
- **A persecuting king:** he will 'destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints' (24)
- **A deceiving king:** 'By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper' (25)
- **A proud king:** 'in his own mind he shall become great' (25)
- **A genocidal king:** 'without warning he shall destroy many' (25)
- **A theocidal king:** 'he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes' (25)

Many Antichrists

The fact that Daniel predicted the Antichrist in chapter seven and then gave an example of an antichrist in chapter 8 should help us to anticipate further antichrists throughout history. That's how Jesus used this passage and also what the Apostle John leads us to expect (Matt. 24; 1 John 2:18-19; 4:3; 2 John 1:7).

Another example antichrist would be the antichrists involved in the death of Christ. Antiochus laid hands on God's house and God's people, but Christ's crucifiers laid hold on God himself. God was desecrated in the ultimate abominable act. There have been many others since then: Nero, Popes, Hitler, Stalin, etc.

The Final Antichrist

The precursor antichrists like Antiochus and Christ's crucifiers are unforgettable embodiments of the final Antichrist. He will be what they were, but worse. It will go on longer, deeper, and wider than anything ever seen before (2 Thess. 2).

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

We must prepare. Daniel is preparing us just as Christ did (Matthew 24; John 16:1-4) and the Apostles did (2 Thess. 2; 1 Peter 4:7-16; 5:8-11; 2 Peter 2; Rev. 3-22). They do not want us taken by surprise, so that we're not ready for the last time. Knowing the final ending helps us with present living. It's going to be hard going, especially towards the end, but the outcome makes it worthwhile. So, gather faith, hope, love. Get to know Christ before you know the Antichrist or the Antichrist knows you. You cannot be too ready for this.

KNOWING THE END,
HELPS US TO LIVE.



Is there a crusher of the crusher?



2. KING CHRIST WILL CRUSH THE ANTICHRIST (13-14, 25)

Another angel appears and they talk to one another about what Daniel saw. One asked the other: **“How long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?”** (13). He’s basically asking, “Is that the end? Is that it? Is that the last chapter? Sin wins? The church is defeated?”

“No,” replies the other angel. This will last, **“for 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state”** (14). It’s a lengthy time but it’s not all time. It’s a long chapter but it’s not the last chapter. Christ and his church wins. Christ and his people will be restored to their rightful place. Salvation wins, the saints win, the Savior wins. Antiochus loses (2,300 days is about 5-6 years, the length of Antiochus’s anti-Israel campaign from 171-165 BC). All mini-antichrists lose. The Final Antichrist will lose

How do they all lose? **He shall be broken—but by no human hand** (25, 2:34). The breaker will be broken. However strong their hands, God’s invisible hand will sweep them all away, off the stage of history, and into the dustbin of history. It will be done in such a way that it’s obviously God who does it.

Antiochus Epiphanes died under mysterious circumstances while returning from Persia. He contracted an exceedingly painful disease accompanied by deep psychological anguish. We know that Christ’s crucifers lost and Christ won. And we therefore know that the final Antichrist will lose and Christ will win.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Rejoice in anticipation of Christ’s victory. Every human power and even demonic power is a little horn to God. Look at how Zechariah rejoiced when he believed what Gabriel told him about the coming Christ: **“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David”** (Luke 1:68-69).

Go back to work (26-29). Don’t spend all your time thinking about this because it’s well into the future (26). Sure, it’s shocking and even scary, sure it’s hard to grasp everything, but follow Daniel’s example and get on with your daily work and calling (27). No withdrawal and no panic.

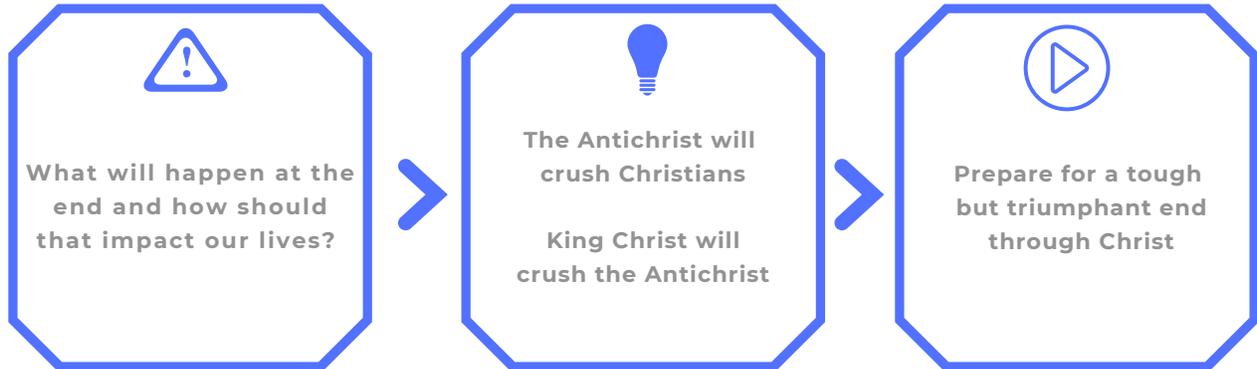
BLOW YOUR HORN BECAUSE
CHRIST'S HORN BEATS ALL HORNS



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the Story



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: King Christ, we rejoice because you crush all mini-antichrists and the final Antichrist with your mighty hand. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time when knowing the ending helped you to live?
2. What did you think about the Antichrist before Daniel 8? How has your view changed?
3. How many antichrists are there? How would you explain that to someone?
4. What can you do to prepare for the time of the final Antichrist?
5. Why should this chapter help you to rejoice in Christ?
6. What should you be doing while you wait for the appearance of Antichrist?

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