

Apocalypse Now and Then

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[0 : 00] Okay, Daniel chapter 8. In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, It had two horns, and both horns were high.

But one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power.

He did as he pleased and became great. As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground.

And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his power and powerful wrath.

I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him.

[1 : 25] But he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him, and there was no one who could rescue the ram from his great power. And the goat became exceedingly great. But when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

One of them came a little horn. Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.

It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. It became great, even as great as the prince of the host.

And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. And a host would be given over to it, together with the regular burnt offering, because of transgression.

And it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering and transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot.

[2 : 51] And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state. When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it, and behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Uli, and it called, Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.

So he came near where I stood. When he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.

And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. He said, Behold, I will make known to you what shall be the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.

As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia, and the goat is the king of Greece.

[4 : 07] And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall rise from his nation, but not with his power.

And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, will arise. 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. 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.

The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true. But steal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now. And I, Daniel, was overcome, and lay sick for some days.

[5 : 26] Then I rose, and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision, and did not understand it. This is the word of the Lord. Well, why don't you just have a ponder of that for a minute, because some of you read it beforehand, some of it's just the first time you've even read it, this morning.

So do you want to just cast your eye over it, and ponder the stuff that you just don't get, and don't understand, and think about it with the person next to you, and then I will plunge in. Is that alright? Let's do that. Alright, why don't we pray, eh?

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we need your help to understand your word, and we need your help, to live in lives that please you. Please give us, insight, understanding, and clarity this morning. As we hear your word, we might be encouraged, and rebuked, and correct, and trained in righteousness. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. I don't know what you think you've got in your hands, but when you've got a Bible in your hands, you've got a really unique book.

It's a really unique book. And for us to understand the book, you need the whole book. To understand the New Testament, you've got to actually understand the Old Testament. And to understand the Old Testament, you've got to actually understand the New Testament.

[6 : 46] In other words, we need all of God's revelation, to understand God's revealed word, including, including Daniel chapter 7 to 12.

Without Daniel chapter 7 to 12, we really cannot understand the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, and we'll never really understand places like Mark chapter 13, well at all.

You can move into all kinds of speculation, and things about things in the New Testament, if you're not grounded in the things of the Old Testament. The word apocalypse is based on the Greek word for revelation.

And so we are told that God's word makes us wise for salvation, and gives us knowledge of the way to be saved. So what we have here in the Bible is God's precious word.

And because God tells us all that we need to know about him, and all we need to know how to live rightly as his people, it's a unique book, it's ancient, it's complete, there's no other book from antiquity like it, revealing to us the very plans and purposes of our creator, God.

[7 : 55] And yet sometimes it can be very hard to understand, can't it? And as we read Daniel chapter 8, I wonder if you felt like this, it starts off pretty strange, Daniel's vision speaks about beast defeating beast one after the other, and then we hear of Gabriel coming to help to understand it.

We think, that's fantastic, that'll help me understand it as well. And when Gabriel speaks, there's bits that kind of make sense, and then Daniel says that, well, in the end he doesn't understand it. So I'm just thinking, who can understand it? What's going on here? And yet the things of Daniel 8 have been understood historically, so clearly, so accurately, that some have suggested, that what happened here, in Daniel chapter 8, must have been written, hundreds of years, after Daniel wrote it.

Because it's so accurate, about things happening in the future. Well, the big thing about Daniel chapter 8 is this, God not only knows, what's going to happen in the future, but he makes it happen, in the future.

He's the one who makes it. Kingdoms rise, and kingdoms fall, and God rules over them all. As kingdoms rise, inevitably, they come crashing down, and God is the one, whose kingdom lasts forever, and is in control, of the rise and fall, of every nation.

[9 : 33] Now Daniel chapter 7 to 12, I'm thinking, actually describes, the same kind of things, many times over. It's layering up, the things that are going to happen.

It's an overlapping picture, of the events, that must happen. In apocalyptic style language, in picture language, but in accurate, sort of, different kind of ways, of accurate picture language.

See, Daniel chapter 7, we saw last week, was the beginning, of the end of the universe, and the establishment, of God's eternal kingdom, which is a great encouragement, to God's people, who

are living in times, when God's people, are suffering, and thinking, where is God in all this? The Son of Man, actually he's saying, is going to be reigning, and is reigning, over God's eternal kingdom, that's eternal in scope. Now, we see an inversion, in chapter 7, of the authorities, of the world, right?

God's eternal kingdom, set up, and those who are opposed, are deposed. Ultimately, reversal, being when the Son of Man, takes his seat, on the throne, reigning in power.

[10:45] In Daniel chapter 8, we see a vision, with turbulent times, of terrible strife, leading up to, a desolating transgression, and what comes after that?

So, let's plunge into the vision, and see what it's got to say. So, the vision, we see the time, and the place, here we go, in the third year, of the reign, of King Belshazzar, he's the one, who had the writing, on the wall, remember?

So, it's around two years, after the last vision, chapter 7, somewhere around, 550 BC. Remember, Belshazzar, was the last, Chaldean king, of the Babylonian Empire, that's who, Belshazzar was. We heard about, his downfall, in chapter 5, after he held, a great party, right? And he got the, the golden goblets, and things, that have been taken, from the temple, and profaned them, greatly, in worshipping, his gods.

In this vision, Daniel sees, himself, standing in Susa, in the province, of Elam. It's just above, the Persian Gulf there, I think there's a, bit of a slide there, there we go, we've got a picture, of the Persian Gulf, there it is, there's Elam, and the Persian Gulf, just there.

[12:04] Susa became, the capital, capital, of the Persian Empire, in what's, modern day, Iran now, it's a real place, and the ruins, are still there today. But Daniel's living, in the time, of the Babylonian exile, still.

The Medes, and the Persians, are to the east, you can see there, and they're nearby, and they're, they're growing, in power, and they're about, to head west, towards Susa, and into Babylon. And then we have a ram, in verse 3 to 4 there, there's a two-horned ram, he charges around, causing destruction, and no one can be rescued, from his power. This beastly ram, becomes great, conquering all before it.

And then we have a goat, in verses 5 to 7, this male goat, comes flying in, from the west, right, destroying, from the west, destroying the ram, and no one can, just, get rescued, from his power there.

It's not like, he's a low flying missile, right, not like that, necessarily. It's like we might say, that car is flying, it's going so fast. This beastly goat, destroys the power, of the ram, and the beastly goat, then becomes, exceedingly great.

[13:20] So you can see, they're getting greater, and greater, and greater, and more powerful, these kingdoms, but they fall, fall, fall, right. And then we have, a great horn, in verse 8. But he comes to an end, and four horns, grow up, from him.

And out of one of those horns, comes a little one, that rises up, who desecrates the glorious land. Now the glorious land, is the promised land, the land of Israel, it's about Daniel's home, about a thousand kilometres away, roughly.

And it's the land, that was described, as flowing with milk, and honey. Now the little horn, grows great, and even to the host of heaven, great power, conquering all before it, and the usual meaning, of the host, of heaven, in the Old Testament, is heavenly beings, or stars, of the heavens, the moon, and the stars, that kind of thing.

And this beast, is so great, that it takes on, the very things, of the heavenlies. Have a look at verse 11. It became great, even as great, as the prince of the host.

And the regular burnt offering, was taken away from him, that is the prince of the host, and the place of his sanctuary, was overthrown. Who is this prince of the host? Well, the prince of the host, that this little horn, has become, as great as?

[14:42] It seems like, the prince of the host, of heaven, is the one, who has the regular offering, made to him, which would be God himself. So this, beast is, actually, opposing God himself.

And, a host will be given over to it. Verse 12, the sanctuary is, is overthrown. Now this is a bit tricky, verse 12. Pretty tricky indeed, actually.

The host here, seems to refer to an army, that's set over, the conquering, the conquered sanctuary. And the horn has become, great then, overthrows truth, but prospers.

It's, drags, God's truth, through the mud, if you like. God's truth, the Torah, the Bible, the Old Testament. And then the question is, verse 13, 14, how long?

The cry of woe, how long can this, how long can this vision, of the desolation, of the temple, go on for? With a burnt offering, being done away, with the transgression, that makes desolation, happen, with trampling, of the sanctuary, under the foot, of the host, and truth dragged, through the, how long can this, go on for?

[15:55] Well he's told, 2,300 evenings, and mornings. Likely, 2,300 offerings, of the daily burnt offering, which would, one's offered, one in the morning, one's offered, one in the evening, so half of that, is 1,150 days, so roughly three years.

That's the vision, alright, there's the vision. Then comes, thankfully, the interpretation.

Okay, so let's plunge, into the interpretation. Fortunately, we're given, the interpretation, and you think, but is it really, that much clearer? It's the vision, of the end, but the end of what?

The end of the exile, the end of national Israel, the end of the temple, the end of the world, yes, all those things, but whatever it is, it makes Daniel sick, he doesn't understand it.

It's the end, of something, that's going to happen, in the future. And so here's, the interpretation. We're told, pretty black and white, then, verses 19 and 20, that the ram, is, the Medes, and the Persians.

[17:12] The two horned, verse 20, are the united kingdom, of the Medes, and the Persians. That is the beast, standing on the bank, of the Uli canal, and it will destroy, everything before it, including Babylon, including Babylon.

So that's good, we got that much, alright. But, the Medes, and the Persians, then, are going to be defeated, by a very fast, moving goat, whose feet, don't touch the ground, he's moving so fast, which we're told is, the king of Greece, verse 21, it's pretty clear, isn't it, verse 21, and the goat, is the king of Greece.

Now, the first, king of Greece, who, defeats, Darius, and Mede, and then, comes and kills, chapter 5, we saw the beginning, of the ram, sorry, chapter 5, we saw the beginning, of the ram, right, he reigns, when Darius, and Mede, comes and kills, Belshazzar, that happened, chapter 5, we saw that beginning, and now, this king of Greece, who, comes, over, the Medo-Persian Empire, was, well, you guessed it, starts with, A, Alexander the Great, he is the great horn, who came swiftly, from the west, right, from the Macedonia, conquering everything, and all before him, all the way, to India, I think there's a good, of a slide here, there he goes, he comes from the west, and goes, crosses, conquers kingdoms, all before him, north, south, east, and west, all the way, to India, massive, conquering, regime, of Alexander the Great, and he's like a, car flying down the road, he's going so fast, he's conquering, and yet, verse 22, we see that this great king, is broken at the height, of his reign, it's, and then four lesser kings, take charge, after him, all right, now it's clear from history, that this refers to Alexander the Great, who on his deathbed, divided up, the regime, his kingdom, to four generals, after him, and they ruled, as kings, they put crowns, on their heads, right, and so then, a little horn grows, in verse 22 to 26, at the end of their reigns, they can't, the sin can't get any worse, and their sins, will reach the limit, it sounds like Genesis chapter 15, doesn't it, and the impending doom, that comes on the people of Canaan, who we're told, will be destroyed, when their sins, reach the limit, and were subsequently destroyed, by God's people, when they went into the land, in Joshua's day, anyway, from one of these lesser four kings, a little horn comes, he's a terrible king, he becomes great, and he becomes, he's deceitful, he makes lies, seem like truth, has great power, in his own mind, in his own mind, he thinks he's God, he destroys the saints, the people of the holy ones, the people of God, the Jews,

God's mighty ones, another way of describing them, rising up, even against the prince of princes, verse 25, who is God, himself, but this beastly king's power, will be broken, but not by the power of man, not by human hand, right, and again, it becomes clear, from history, well after Daniel's day, that this king, is none other, than the Seleucid king, Antiochus Epiphanes IV, and we know about him, from history, from the first book of Maccabees, now the Maccabees, is a books that are written, in the intertestamental times, right, he erected a desolating sacrifice, on top of the altar, in the temple of Israel, a desolating sacrilege, of an idol, of the Greek god Zeus, to whom the Seleucids, they were the descendants, of one of these, four kings, right, dedicated the temple, in Jerusalem, you read about that, in 2 Maccabees chapter 6,

Antiochus Epiphanes IV, stopped, the regular sacrifices, at the temple, that's what he did, he called on the Jews, to sacrifice, to the idols, of the gods, I've got a little handout, for you there, and you

can read about it, let me read to you, from your handout there, Maccabees, 1 Maccabees chapter 1, verse 4, to 1, sorry 41, I think I might have it, on the screen here, there is it, behind me there, so then the king wrote, to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and that all should give up, their particular customs, this is Antiochus Epiphanes IV, right, now on the 15th day, of Chislev, in the 145th year, they erected, desolating sacrilege, on the altar, of burnt offering, they also built altars, in the surrounding towns, of Judah, and offered incense, at the doors, of the houses, and in the streets, the books, of the law, that they found, they tore to pieces, and burned with fire, so truth is torn down, anyone found, possessing the book, of the covenant, or anyone who had, adhered to the law, was condemned to death, by decree, of the king, now, later in Maccabees, it speaks of those, who refuse to comply, suffering, extremely, right, this is how extremely, [23 : 06] I'm just looking around, to see there's not too many, minors here, right, right, but, if someone circumcised, their child, as was the custom, of the Jews, right, they would kill, the child, hang it around, the mother's neck, and then kill her, and those, who did the circumcision, with her, just as one example, of the atrocities, that happened, to the Jews, in Jerusalem, under Antiochus, Epiphanes the fourth, this incredible suffering, is part of the vision, that was seen, and, the question is, how long, can we cope, with this kind of stuff, happening, in our country, in our city, in our temple, in our homeland, land, we've already been told, the answer, we're given that back, in verse 13 and 14, not that long, about three years, 2,300 evening, morning sacrifices, 1,150 days, having a morning, evening sacrifice, that's roughly, that was roughly, the time, that Antiochus Epiphanes the fourth, actually did away, with traditional worship, in the Jewish temple, in Jerusalem, 167, to 164 BC, that's when he did it, and, there's an end, that's going to come, supernaturally, as was the case, in Daniel chapter 2, as was the case, in Daniel chapter 4, we are told, that Antiochus Epiphanes, died an untimely death, not by human hand, but by the hand of God, well, why wouldn't that, make Daniel sick, when he saw it, if you saw, what was going to happen, to your temple, and your people, and your land,

I mean, if Brisbane, was going to be bombed, and destroyed, and you saw it happen, before it happened, how would you cope, and the image, of, Antiochus Epiphanes 4, becomes a symbol, for all, human rule, that exalts itself, in power, above God, and persecutes, God's people, the things that he did, were abominable, desecrating temple, sacrifice, and worship, and then, after him, after the Greeks, came the Romans, in 64 BC, when Pompey enters town, so the kingdom, and the visions, of Daniel, can look something, like this, here's a bit of a slide, right, you can find this slide, it's a really helpful, and visual unit, you can dig it up, online, it's a really helpful slide, you can see a bit of a summary, but just look at the last, two over the beast, Daniel chapter 7, and Daniel chapter 8, so you see there, in Daniel chapter 7, the first kingdom, is the lion, we talked about last week, that's,

Nebuchadnezzar, all right, and then we see, the next kingdom, there is, in Daniel chapter 7, talked about a bear, but in Daniel chapter 8, we see this is a ram, that comes, and destroys, and then we see, the third kingdom, the kingdom of the Greeks, it's the goat, that comes, and destroys, and then we saw, in Daniel chapter 7, a terrifying, frightening beast, which is more than likely, Rome, right, more than likely, Rome, we didn't get to it today, in Daniel chapter, in Daniel chapter 8, but the Romans, come next, and then we see, there's future powers, that will come, and then God's kingdom, ultimately comes, you can dig that up, on visual unit, just type in visual unit, Daniel, you'll get it, all right, but I want to home in, this morning, on this desolating, desolating transgression, which reached, its limit, in Canaan, and God himself, brought about, the judgment, promised in Genesis chapter 15, spoken about in Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and played out in Joshua, it reached, its limit, again, in the book of Kings, at one level, which brought about, the judgment of God, upon his people, and they were, cast out of their land, and taken into exile, and destroyed, back in homeland, and this desolating transgression, this of the temple sanctuary, is the pinnacle, of man's, sinfulness, and attempt, to overthrow,

God of heaven himself, it's the absolute, limit of weakness, when the sin, has reached, its absolute limit, when under, beastly Roman rule, the violation, of the temple, the temple sacrifice, and the holiness of God, when God's place, God's temple, God's name, God's honour, God's provision, is profaned, despised, when God's vision, temple is, then rejected, and then ruined, and then, when something, so utterly sinful, is placed on the altar, it's something, we'll come to, again in chapter 9, next week, a time of, unbelievable suffering, for the God's people then, with the future, in mind, and the primary, horrific, ground, for the transgression, that causes, desolation, is, you guessed it, the

cross, of the Lord Jesus Christ, we're showing, where this goes, into Mark chapter 13, come to Mark chapter 13, with me, read it with me, Mark chapter 13, we'll pick it up, at verse 14, Matthew, Mark, now the, the uni church, crowd, and those who come, to Wednesday night, Bible study groups, who are doing Mark, will delve into this, with much greater depth, but we'll, go there this morning, Mark chapter 13, pick it up, verse 14, you can't understand, Mark 13, without Daniel chapter 8, you see, Mark chapter 13, verse 14, but when you see, the abomination, of desolation, standing where, he ought not to be, let the reader, understand, then let those, who are in Judea, flee to the mountains, let the one, who's on the house, stop not go down, nor enter his house, or take anything out of it, and let the one, who's in the field, not turn back, and take his cloak, and alas for women, who are pregnant, and for those, who are nursing infants, in those days, pray that it may not, happen in winter, for in those days, there will be such tribulation, as not being, until the beginning, of the creation, from the beginning, of the creation, that God created, until now, and will never be, and if the Lord, did not cut short, the days, no human being, would be saved, but for the sake, of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days, and then if anyone, says to you, look he is the Christ, or look there he is, do not believe it, for false Christs, and false prophets, will arise, and perform signs, and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect, but be on guard,

[30 : 46] I've told you, of all things beforehand, verse 24, but in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon, will not give its light, and the stars, will fall, from heaven, and the powers, in the heavens, will be shaken, and they will see, the son of man, coming in cloud, with great power, and glory, and then he will send out, the angels, and gather the elect, from the four winds, and from the ends of the earth, to the ends of heaven, we're not going to cover it, well this morning, but here's, a bit of a picture, right, when Jesus was crucified, all beastly, opposition against, God's powerful saint, all the wickedness, of man, was arraigned, against the prince, of princes, God's name, God's temple, God's place,

God's provision, God's honour, was hung up, on the cross, God himself, was profaned, God himself, was despised, rejected, ruined, the true Israelite, the true Israel, suffered infinitely, shamefully, indescribably, at the cross, Jesus became, this is, profound, right, Jesus became, cursed for us, having all the sin, of the whole world, for all time, placed upon him, and he became, utterly, sinful, so horrific, is it, that the host, of heaven, fall down, but as we saw, last week, this is not the end, God raised Jesus, to life again, from the dead, and the son of man, then comes, on the clouds, to the ancient of days, and in doing that, he gathers, all the elect, you and me, from the four corners, of the earth, when the son of man, comes in the clouds, he's not coming to us, he's coming to the father, to receive all glory, and honour, and power, and at the same time, this desolating sacrifice, will preempt, the destruction, of all those, who despise, the true and living God, for he will bring about, their downfall, when he asserts, his rightful rule,

I mean, how could Daniel, understand this, I mean, it's hard enough, for us to get ahead around, how perplexing, and disturbing, it would be for him, having this vision, we can't fully understand, the plumb, the depths of it, which is why, it's given to him, in apocalyptic terms, and so Daniel, continued to live, for God, while he lived, in a foreign land, of Babylon, in this time of exile, and it's sealed up, because, while he's living in Babylon, the temple in Jerusalem, is still rubble, it hasn't been rebuilt yet, how could he possibly, understand what's going on, but seal it up, until we get, some clarity there, so, what are we seeing now, having understood Daniel's vision, in ways that he really couldn't, again, God is totally in control, of all events in history, before they ever happen, and he orchestrates, the rising and falling, of nations,

God reigns, over every kingdom, we've been shown, the incredible love of God, in our Lord Jesus Christ, who fulfills, every promise, of God, bears our sins, on the cross, and the day, when God is both glorified, at his most glorified, and is despised, at his greatest, despising, when a sacrifice, is so great, is given, that is so perfect, and yet becomes, so putrid, it shatters, the host of heavens, and we might ask, how long, oh Lord, can this world, groan like it does, and the answer is, just a little while, and in this time, nations will rise, and kingdoms will fall, but God is the one, who is in totally, charge of it all, and in God's time frame, it's only a short time, for the saints, to be suffering, until he reigns, and comes in glory, ultimately, so what kind of people, should we be, two Peters, Peter is, one and two Peter, are terrific books, two Peter chapter three, tells us, he asks us a question, in verse 11, since all things, are going to be thus dissolved, and what sort of people, ought you to be, in lives of holiness, and godliness, waiting for, and hastening the coming, of the

day of God, because of which, the heavens will be set on fire, and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies, will melt, and they burn, but according to his promise, we are waiting, a new heavens, and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells, to Peter chapter three, verse 14, the answer, therefore beloved, since you are waiting, for these, be diligent, to be found in him, without spot, or blemish, and at peace, and count the patience, of our Lord, as salvation, Daniel, went about his business, in peace, serving the Lord, waiting for these things, to happen, this short time, is a time now, for patience, waiting for the new creation, when the kingdom of heaven, comes fully, and finally, and while we wait, we wait, living lives, of holiness, and godliness, lives directed, towards him, in godliness, and hastening the day, by proclaiming that, our God reigns, the kingdom of God, is at hand, repent, and believe, the gospel, this momentous, good news, let's pray, our Father in heaven, we thank you, that your son reigns, that your kingdom, has come, and is coming, thank you, that kingdoms, rise and fall, and yet you're the one, in charge of it all, thank you, for the precious, life of your son, who experienced, the extremity, of the suffering, the desolation, of being on the cross, and thank you, that you raise him, to life again, to reign, and that through faith, in him, we can be members, of your family, your holy ones, and be those, who will endure, and live with you, forever, in your kingdom, forever and ever, reigning with him,
[37 : 59] Amen.