

(Through the Bible) Daniel 5-8

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the themes of God's sovereignty, the presence of God, and the consequences of sin, using the story of Daniel and the fall of Babylon as a backdrop.

Duration: 1:26:16

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the interpretation of the visions and prophecies in the book of Daniel. He explains that the four great beasts represent four kingdoms that will arise on the earth. However, the speaker emphasizes that ultimately, the saints of the Most High will take the kingdom and possess it forever. The focus then shifts to the fourth beast, which is identified as the Roman Empire, described as dreadful and powerful. The speaker encourages the audience to pay special attention to the ninth chapter of Daniel's prophecy. The sermon concludes with a personal anecdote about the speaker's granddaughter's ballet performance.

Transcript

So we turn now in our Bible to Daniel chapter 5. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand. There are men who call themselves Bible scholars and they belong to a school known as higher criticism. And for years these men declared that the book of Daniel was not valid.

And one of their reasons for this declaration was that in secular history they had not discovered the name Belshazzar. But one of the ancient historians, Neobonus, I think it was, who, Neobonus, who gave a genealogy of Nebuchadnezzar and there was no mention of any Belshazzar in the genealogy that he gave. And naturally the historian could not be wrong, it's got to be the Bible.

And so they put out their disclaimers on the book of Daniel and discredited the book and they gave a later author and just were willing to use any little excuse to disbelieve the book of Daniel. However, Sir Rawlinson, one of the great archaeologists, was doing a lot of excavating in the area of Babylon, the palace of Shushan, when they discovered it. And he found some very interesting, many interesting tablets and all in which the name Belshazzar and all existed and there were, of course, many confirmations of this particular account that we have in Daniel.

And so the critics, you'd think they'd give up? No, they just went to something else. But nonetheless, once more, the archaeologist Spade has proved the truth of God's Word, its authenticity, its reliability. And it's a rather tragic thing that man keeps pounding away, hoping that one day he'll discover a true flaw.

You would think that after this length of time, surely as brilliant and all as these men are, they would have found one that they could have hung their hats on or you'd think that they'd be wise enough to quit trying, you know, at this length. The account of Belshazzar is an interesting account. Belshazzar was not really the son of Nebuchadnezzar.

In the language, there was really no real words for grandson. So, the son of means that he came from that lineage or from the line. He was actually the grandson of Belshazzar.

And he was co-regent with his father. Now, being a co-regent with his father, it would seem that his father was, according to other historians, his father was leading the Babylonian troops in their battles. Whereas Belshazzar remained at the palace and in Babylon, ruling there in Babylon, his father, a king, also co-reigning with his son Belshazzar, was out in the field with the troops in their conquering and plundering.

And that is, of course, the reason why when this experience came, where there was the handwriting on the wall and Daniel was brought in to interpret it, he offered Daniel the third part of the kingdom, because there were already two parts, one to his father, one to him, and so Daniel would receive the third part of the kingdom. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. He drank wine before the thousands.

So, here's a tremendous party. It lasted for quite a period of time. Josephus records it, gives us some interesting details about it, as does Herodotus, the other ancient historian, and Xenophon also makes reference to this banquet.

There are stories of ostriches pulling around trays of fruits and nuts and delicacies and quite a party. In fact, they say that the incense was so thick within the chambers that when a person would just walk in, they'd become intoxicated with the thickness of the incense. Belshazzar, while he was tasting the wine, or actually while he was under the influence of the wine, commanded to bring the gold and the silver vessels which his father, which would have been grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, that the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

And then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God, which was at Jerusalem, and the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines began to drink from them, and they drank wine, and they praised the gods of gold and of silver, of brass, iron, wood, and of stone. And in the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. And the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." Quite a graphic description of the whole affair, to say the least.

As his thoughts began to trouble him, and of course, well, might his thoughts trouble him, as he had taken these vessels that had been sanctified for use in the temple unto the Lord only, and he had profaned, not only profaned them by drinking his wine out of them, but he began to praise the gods of gold and silver. Now, there's an interesting prophecy in Isaiah chapter 21, in which, in verse 2, the prophet declares, "Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Medea, or the Medes! All the sighing thereof have I made to cease. Therefore are my loins filled with pain.

Pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travails. I was bowed down at the hearing of it. I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

My heart panted. Fearfulness affrighted me. The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me." And he speaks then, of course, of the Babylon is fallen, is fallen, all the grave and image of her god are broken to the ground, in verse 9. So it's a prophecy against Babylon, speaking of the fall of Babylon, and surely seems to describe a couple of hundred years before the event, this very thing of which Daniel now describes took place there as the heart was panting, fearfulness affrighted me, the night of my pleasure he had turned into fear unto me.

And, of course, this is the night that Babylon fell. Cyrus, the Persian king, Medo-Persian king, came in to conquer, and that, of course, brings up another interesting prophecy in Isaiah, as he was prophesying the destruction of Babylon, in which he names Cyrus in chapter 44 of Isaiah, verse 28. Then saith he of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, he shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built into the temple, thy foundation shall be laid.

Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings. So you read here that his loins were loosed, and the joints, his knees began to smite one against another, and here is the prediction, two hundred years in advance. I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two levy gates, and the gates shall not be shut.

I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight, and so forth. And he said that you may know that I am the Lord which call thee by thy name. I am the God of Israel, for Jacob my servant, my elect, I have even called thee by thy name, and surnamed thee.

Now Isaiah wrote this about the year 712 BC. We are writing of things that took place in the year of about 538 BC. So a hundred and fifty years before the event, God speaks about it, and he talks about loosing the loins of the kings and opening up the levy gates.

The city of Babylon was thought to be totally impregnable. It had a wall some three hundred feet high, eighty feet thick, with these massive towers upon it, and then it had also a secondary wall, not quite as large. The river Euphrates flowed through the middle of the city of Babylon.

The wall was fifteen miles around the city, and the city was lined off with blocks going east and west, or streets, wide streets going east and west, and north and south. Now where these streets intersected, the Euphrates River. They had bridges, and they also had gates that they could shut so that the Euphrates River could be sealed off, and the city actually be divided into two by the sealing off of the Euphrates River.

According to the historians, the night that Babylon fell, this particular night that we're reading about in chapter five, for some reason, and they say it was because the soldiers were too drunk to know what they were doing, they did not lock those gates to the levy that came in from the river Euphrates. Now Cyrus, the king of the Medo-Persian army, had diverted or had built diversion channels for the river Euphrates, and he diverted the flow of the river Euphrates, and his soldiers came under the wall in the riverbed, having diverted the flow of the river, and then they came up into the city and found these gates unlocked, and were able to come in and take the city. Of course, the soldiers were really too drunk to defend it, and so prophesied by Daniel in great detail, even naming the king that God would use to destroy the city of Babylon.

And now the fulfillment of it, and God mentioning even such things as the loins being loosed in prophecy, the joints of the loins being loosed, the fear that came upon Belshazzar when he saw the hand of God. You know there are people whose activities are those of open blaspheming against God. There are people who seem to be so forward in their mockery, ridicule, and blaspheming of God.

It seems that there is no fear of God within their hearts at all, and they are just brazen. Imagine this man calling for the gold and silver vessels that have been sanctified for use in the temple of God, and now drinking his wine out of these vessels as he praises gods of gold and silver. But suddenly he saw the hand of God, and this king who seemed to be so brazen and so blasphemous is suddenly shaking like a leaf.

And there are people today who seem to be so brazen and blasphemous in their activities, but once they see the hand of God beginning to come in judgment, I've seen God break people just down to a withering leaf kind of a thing. People talk so tough. People seem to be so blasphemous against God.

But when God begins to work, I'll tell you there's no man that can stand against it. This fellow began to shake. His thoughts troubled him, and well might they trouble him.

And the king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, the soothsayers. And the king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, whosoever shall read this writing and show me the interpretation thereof shall be clothed with scarlet and have a chain of gold about his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. His father was first.

He was second. He is offering now the position of third ruler. Then came in all the king's wise men, but they could not read the writing nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

And then was King Belshazzar greatly troubled and his countenance changed in him and his lords were astonished. Now the queen, that is the queen mother, by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house and the queen spake and said, O king, live forever. Let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed.

There is a man in the kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods was found in him, whom the king Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, the king, I say, thy father made the master of the magicians and the astrologers and the chaldeans and the soothsayers for as much as an excellent spirit and knowledge and understanding the interpreting of dreams and the showing of hard sentences and the dissolving of doubts were found in the same Daniel whom the king named Belshazzar. Now let Daniel be called and he will show you the interpretation.

Then was Daniel brought in before the king and the king spake and said unto Daniel, are thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king, my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee that the spirit of gods is in thee and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. Now the wise men, the astrologers have been brought in before me that they should read this writing and make known unto me the interpretation thereof, but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. And I have heard of thee that you can make interpretations and dissolve doubts.

Now, if you can read the writing and make known to me the interpretation, you will be clothed with scarlet. You'll have a chain of gold about your neck. You'll be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Interesting reputation that Daniel possesses in him dwells the spirit of the holy gods, man of excellent wisdom, understanding. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, keep your gifts, give your rewards to someone else. Yet I will read the writing unto the king and make known unto him the interpretation.

The gifts of God are not really to be bought. It is really wrong, uh, for a man to receive higher or to be hired to do the work of God in that sense. Jesus spoke about the hirelings and for a man to, to sell these God given capacities would be a wrong thing.

It would be the prostituting of the gifts and the works of God. That is why Daniel said, keep your gifts given to someone else. I don't need them.

I'll tell you what it says. I'll interpret it for you. But before he interprets it, he's going to give the king a little message.

Now at this point, Daniel must be close to 90 years old because the 70 years of the captivity are almost over. He was probably a teenager, maybe late teens when he was taken captive. So the 70 plus the late teens puts him up close to the 90 mark, probably 85 to 90 years old, somewhere in there.

And he takes now this opportunity to preach a stern message to this young King. Oh, thou King, the most high God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, your father, a kingdom and majesty and glory and honor. And for the majesty that he gave him, all of the people, nations and languages trembled and feared before him.

And whom he would, he slew the absolute authority that Nebuchadnezzar possessed. Whom he would, he kept alive. Whom he would, he set up and whom he would, he put down.

But when his heart was lifted up and his mind was hardened by pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from him. They took it, these watchers from heaven. And he was driven from the sons of men and his heart was made like the beast and he was dwelling with the wild asses and they fed him with grass like the oxen.

And his body was wet with the dew of heaven until he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men and that he appointed over it, whomsoever he will. And thou his son, oh Belshazzar, you have not humbled your heart, though you knew all of this. Now Belshazzar was well aware of the things that happened to his grandfather.

The madness that he experienced until the seven seasons had passed over him and his restoration and the proclamation that his grandfather made upon restoration that there is no God in all the earth like the God of Daniel, who is able to set up those whom he would and bring down those whom he would and sets in authority those whom he will. Belshazzar knew all of this. Daniel is reminding him that you are sinning against the knowledge that you have.

You know better, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee and you and your lords, your wives, your concubines have drunk the wine in them and you have praised the gods of silver, gold, brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know, and the God in whose hand thy breath is and in whose all of thy ways hast thou not glorified. Now, here was the man's sin. He was praising these gods of wood, stone, gold, brass, silver, the gods that they had made with their own hands, gods that could not see, gods that could not hear, insensate, little idols, gods that knew nothing.

He was praising them, yet blaspheming the God in whose hand his very breath was. That, of course, is an interesting statement. The God in whose hand thy very breath is.

The lungs are an involuntary muscle. That is, they're not attached to the skeleton and you do not have to think to breathe. It's something that is done automatically.

Now, there are some people, very, very few, that are afflicted with an extremely rare disease and that is they have to think to breathe. And it's a very tragic thing because they sleep very fitfully. Actually, they've monitored them during their sleep and they sleep for about 30 seconds and then they wake up and take a breath and then sleep for another 30 seconds.

And it's a very frightening kind of a thing because they do not breathe except by the control of the mind. They have to think to breathe. But you don't.

You can be thankful for that. God controls the breath. It's interesting.

God controls the heart, the heartbeat. God controls those things that are vital to your life. God controls.

He lets you control other things, other muscles of your body. But those that involve life, God put on this what we call the involuntary system. That is, they don't take the mind to control them.

You don't have to think to make your heartbeat. It's something that is done automatically for your lungs to work, for your kidneys to function, things of this nature. Those things upon which your life depends, God doesn't leave with something as feeble as your mind to control.

The God in whose hand your very breath is, your stinking breath, wine. Have you ever spelled them? Wine as breath? Sour. Yet the God in whose hand you're very breath is.

Paul the Apostle, in talking about God to the philosophers on Mars Hill, said, I want to declare to you, I want to talk to you about the unknown God. For in him we live and we move and we have our being. God is much closer to people than they realize.

But we need to become more conscious of the all prevailing and pervading presence of God. As David said, where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there. If I descend into hell, thou art there.

If I take the wings and I flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, even there you surround me. He was conscious of the presence of God wherever he might be. One of the fallacies of the people have always been that of localizing God.

And so they had gods of the cities and they thought that this God dwelt in this city, another God dwells in the next city. Or God is being put in an idol and the worshiping of an idol. It's the localizing of God.

He's there. Let's go. Let's go and visit our God.

It's always wrong to localize God. God cannot be localized. He isn't confined to one area.

Now we even in church many times fall into this same kind of a fallacy of localizing God in church. And so often we'll hear prayers being offered. Oh Lord, we're so thankful to have this opportunity to come into your presence this morning and sit here before you.

As though we weren't in the presence of God when we woke up. We weren't in the presence of God as we were driving here, but at last we've arrived and we come into the presence. Oh, let's be quiet now.

Let's, you know, let's look sober now or let's not joke now or, you know, and we have that tendency of localizing God so that we're not aware and conscious of the fact that God is with us wherever we are, in whatever circumstances we are. He hears us. He sees us when we think that we are hiding.

We so often are with those blasphemers of Psalm 71 who say, does God know? Have, you know, God seen? And we think that we can hide ourselves from God because God is localized. And so if I do my evil down the street, God won't know it. I just don't do my evil when I get in church.

But not so. God is not localized. The very God in whose hand thy breath is.

Now, gods who had no breath, gods who could not see, the little insensate gods, they were glorifying and praising them. But the God who controlled their breath, they did not glorify. And for this reason, that part of the hand was sent from him.

And this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written. And this is the interpretation.

You've had it. Tackle. Thou art weighed in the balances and you've come up short.

Paris, thy kingdom is divided and will be given to the means and the Persians. What an awesome declaration from God. Your kingdom is numbered.

It's finished. You've been weighed in the balances. You've come up short.

Your kingdom is going to be taken from you and divided. Medes and the Persians then commanded Belshazzar. And they called Daniel with Scarlet.

They put a chain of gold about his neck. They made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom for the next few hours. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain and Darius the Mede took the kingdom being about 62 years old.

Now it pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 princes, which should be over the whole kingdom. Now that the Persian Medo-Persian empire has conquered over the Babylonian empire. Darius, who was co-reigning with Cyrus, set over the kingdom 120 princes and there were three presidents of whom Daniel was the first.

That the princes might give accounts unto them and the king should have no damage. So Daniel immediately moved into a position of extremely high authority within this Medo-Persian empire being made one of the three presidents in the head over them. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an excellent spirit was in him and the king thought to set him over the entire realm.

But then the other presidents and the princes sought to find an occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no occasions nor faults for as much as he was faithful. Neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, we will not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

This guy is just too good. We're never going to be able to trip him up unless it be with the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king and said unto him, King Darius live forever.

All of the presidents of the kingdom and the governors and the princes and the counselors and the captains have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for 30 days, except from you, O King, he shall be cast into the den of lions. This, of course, would be a guy would have to be stupid to make this kind of a proclamation. No one can ask anybody for anything for 30 days except me.

Now they were, of course, playing up to his pride and flattery. You know, you know, you're so great and all the people need to know how great you are. So to demonstrate this, let's make this proclamation that throughout the entire kingdom, no one can pray to any God or ask anybody for anything except you.

So they don't know how great you are. Now, O King, establish the decree, sign the writing. They have made this proclamation, brought it into him, now sign it, seal it, that it cannot be changed according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which alters not.

Wherefore, King Darius signed the writing and the decree. Now notice that the decree once signed could not be changed even by Darius the king. It shows that his rule was not as strong as was Nebuchadnezzar's.

Nebuchadnezzar could make any decree and change any decree. He could do anything. He had the complete control whom he would.

He, you know, saved alive when we would. He killed him and he just had absolute control with this. He was controlled by the decrees.

Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, I like this. Daniel knew that the king had signed the thing. He went into his house and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he was accustomed to do.

And these men being assembled, found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Now in the book of Second Chronicles, when Solomon had dedicated the temple that he had built unto the Lord, Solomon prayed a beautiful prayer at the dedication. And in a part of the prayer of Solomon, he said, Oh, Lord, if these people turn their back against thee and they begin to worship and serve other gods and they be taken captive by their enemies, if they shall turn toward this place and pray unto thee, then hear thou from thy holy place in heaven and answer their prayer and deliver them from their captivity.

And we remember God responded to this prayer of Solomon by saying, if my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and heal their nation and so forth so that Daniel was taken captive. But even as Solomon prayed, Lord, if they turn toward this place and pray, and so he was turning towards the holy place in the temple. Now that is why the Jews today go to the Western Wall and pray facing the Western Wall, because on the other side of the Western Wall, somewhere the Holy of Holies once stood in Solomon's temple.

And so they are praying toward that place. Solomon said, this place that I built into the, you know, the heavens and heavens can't contain you, much less this house that I've built, but Oh God, you know, we pray that this will be the place where the people can meet you. And if they turn toward this place and pray and call upon thee.

And so Daniel was turning towards Jerusalem and three times a day during the 70 years that Daniel was in a captive in Babylon, it was his custom to just turn toward this place and pray unto God for the people, for the nation. What a beautiful man Daniel must be. What a privilege it will be to go up and shake his hand, get acquainted with this fellow.

He's one of the top on my list of fellows that I want to meet when I get to heaven. I really admire Daniel. Courage of this man.

Knowing the King had signed it, he went as was his custom, left his windows open. He didn't bother, you know, hide anything, prayed unto God. And then they came near and they spoke to the King concerning the King's decree.

Have you not signed a decree that every man that asked a petition of any God or man within 30 days, except from you, O King shall be cast into the den of lions. The King answered and said, the thing is true. According to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which does cannot be altered.

Then answered they and said before the King, Daniel, which is the children of captivity of Judah does not regard you, O King, nor the decree that you have signed, but he makes his petition three times a day. Then the King, when he heard these words was very displeased with himself and he set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. And he labored until the going down of the sun.

And then these men assembled unto the King and said unto the King, no, O King, that the law of the Medes and the Persians is that no decree or statute, which the King established may be changed. Then the King commanded and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. And now the King spoke unto him and said unto Daniel, thy God, whom you serve continually, he will deliver you.

Imagine this, Darius, the King of the Medes comforting Daniel. I don't worry, Daniel, I've got to do this. You know, I was a fool, but the God that you serve, he will deliver you.

He sounds like the three human children, the God that we serve, he's able to deliver us from your burning, fiery furnace. And he will deliver us from your hand. And if he doesn't, we're still not going to bow.

So a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den and the King sealed it with his own signet and the signet of his Lord's, the purpose that it might not be changed concerning Daniel. And then the King went to his palace and he passed the night in fasting. Neither did they bring the instruments of music before him and his sleep had gone from him.

And then the King arose very early in the morning and he went in haste to the den of lions. And he came to the den and he cried with a lamentable voice. I like that half hoping, wondering, a lamentable voice unto Daniel.

And the King spoke and said to Daniel, Oh Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom you serve continually able to deliver you from the lions? Now the King had some faith or he had never gone out there. Crying unto Daniel, the question he said to him the night before, don't worry, Daniel, your God is

able to deliver you. But he had a question in his mind.

So he asked the question, is your God able? Then said Daniel unto the King, Oh King live forever. My God has sent his angel and he has shut the lion's mouth and they have not hurt me. For as much as before him, innocency was found in me and also before the King, I have done no hurt.

Then was the King exceedingly glad for him. And he commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no manner of hurt was found upon him because he believed in his God.

And the King commanded and they brought those men which had accused Daniel and they cast them into the den of lions. Them, their children, their wives, the lions had mastery over them and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever hit the bottom of the den. Then King Darius wrote unto all the people, nations, and languages that dwell in the earth, peace be multiplied unto you.

I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom, men tremble in fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God and steadfast forever and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed and his dominion shall be even unto the end. I brought a proclamation for a pagan king. He delivers and rescues and he works signs and wonders in heaven and in the earth and who has and who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus, the Persian. Darius was the king over the Medes and Cyrus over the Persians. Now at this point we come to more or less the end of the historic part of the book of Daniel and beginning with chapter seven.

We are now going to go back and deal with visions that Daniel had during previous years. In other words, as we go to chapter seven, this particular vision came to Daniel in the first year that Belshazzar was king. You see, our story has taken us out to the end of Daniel's life during the reigns of Darius and Cyrus, the Medo-Persian kings.

But now going back, we're going to start dealing now with prophecies or with visions that Daniel received. The first one here in chapter seven was when Belshazzar was in his first year as the king of Babylon. Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed.

And then he wrote the dream and he told the sum of the matters. And Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night and behold, there were four winds of the heaven striving upon the Mediterranean Sea and four great beasts came up from the sea that were different from each other. Now the first was like a lion and it had Eagle's wings and I beheld it until the wings were plucked and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand upon the feet as a man and a man's heart was given unto it.

And behold, there was another beast. The second was like to a bear and it raised itself up on one side and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it. And they said thus unto it, arise and devour much flesh.

And after this, I beheld and lo another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it, four wings of a fowl and the beast had also four heads and dominion was given unto it. And after this, I saw in the night visions and behold, there was a fourth beast that was dreadful and awesome. It was exceedingly strong.

It had great iron teeth that devoured and broken pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it. And it was different from all the beasts that were before it. And it had 10 horns.

Now, as we read of these four beasts, we immediately see their correlation with the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had that was interpreted by Daniel. As Nebuchadnezzar had a vision of those world governing empires or those governments that would govern over the world. Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he saw them as a image of a man with the head of gold, the chest of silver, stomach of brass, legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay with the 10 toes.

And of course he watched it until this rock came not cut with hands that hit the image in its feet and the whole image crumbled and the rock grew into a mountain that covered the earth. Now we have a parallel vision by Daniel. Only he does not see the world governing empires as a man, but he sees them as beast.

And the first lion would of course be the Babylonian empire. It had Eagle's wings that were plucked. It was lifted up from the earth.

But then it was made to stand like a man. The second, like a bear, three ribs in its mouth, the Medo-Persian empire. The third, the leopard would be the Grecian empire under Alexander the Great.

And interesting, the four heads. When Alexander the Great died, the kingdom or the Grecian empire did not pass on because Alexander the Great did not have any children, did not pass on in a dynasty, but actually was divided into four separate heads and four of his generals began to rule one in Syria, one in Egypt, one in Asia minor and the other in Greece. And so the dividing into the four heads.

But finally this last beast, the Roman empire, is just an awesome beast of which there is no correlation. There's no, you can't say it's a lion or a bear. It's just an awesome, fearful looking kind of a beast such as does not exist in reality.

It has ten horns and of course we are reminded of the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. So you have the ten horns coming out of the fourth beast, the Roman empire, even as you have the ten toes, part iron, part clay, showing their relationship to the Roman empire. So you have parallel visions here as God is again revealing the four world dominating empires.

But now we're going to receive some other interesting enlightenment that did not come in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Now I considered the horns, that is the ten horns of this final beast and behold there came up among them another little horn before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots. And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things.

So there is to be a federation of nations in the last days. Nations that were related to the Roman empire. Ten of them together equaling the ten toes or the ten horns.

Now in the European community we do see today ten nations that were related to the Roman empire that have federated themselves together. So it is quite possible that what you see today in the European community is actually the beginning of the fulfillment of these prophecies of Daniel. If God doesn't use this alignment, he's missing a good opportunity.

I believe that it is much more than coincidence that Western Europe is rising as a great financial and an industrial empire. And surely there are all the qualifications necessary to fulfill this vision of Daniel. But there is a eleventh horn that arises, which actually takes over three of the horns, plucks them up by their

roots.

And in this horn there were eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things. This eleventh horn is the Antichrist who will come in, plucking up three of the kings. And I beheld, he said, till the thrones were cast down.

You remember in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, the stone hit the feet in its, the stone hit the image in its feet and the image crumbled. It was cast down. So I beheld until these thrones, the ten kings were cast down and the ancient of days did sit whose garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like the pure wool.

His throne was like a fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire and a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him and thousand thousands ministered unto him. And 10,000 times 10,000 stood before him and the judgment was set and the books were open. And so he beheld these horns until they were cast down.

And he saw actually the throne of God, the ancient of days and all of the splendor and the glory surrounding the throne of God. A thousand thousand or a million ministering unto him and 10,000 times 10,000 or a hundred million standing before him. Now, when we turn to revelation chapter five, chapter four, actually we see God sitting upon the throne.

We see the green, the green Emerald rainbow about the throne of God. We see the crystal sea in front of it. We see the 24 elders with their golden crowns.

They're also before the throne of God and the cherubim surrounding him, declaring Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God Almighty. We see the brightness of God as he sits there upon the throne. And then our attention is diverted to the scroll that is in the right hand of God, because an angel is proclaiming with a loud voice who is worthy to take this scroll and to loose the seals.

And then we turn and we see Jesus as a lamb that has been slaughtered as he comes forth and he takes the scroll out of the right hand of him who sits upon the throne. And we watch them as they offer the golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And we begin to sing worthy is the lamb to take the scroll and to loose the seals thereof for he was slain and he has redeemed us by his blood out of all of the nations, tribes, tongues, and peoples.

And he has made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign with him upon the earth. And then he heard 10,000 times, 10,000 and thousands of thousands equivalent to Daniel here angels there before the throne of God saying worthy is the lamb to receive glory and honor and dominion and might and authority and power and all. So again, the scene in heaven, which will be followed immediately.

The book is open when the scroll is open brings actually the judgment, not the great white throne judgment, but the judgment of God upon the Christ rejecting world, which is then described in revelations chapter six through 18. So Daniel and John had corresponding visions of this throne of God and the glory of the throne of God and the impending judgment upon the kingdom of man. Now I beheld then because in verse 11, because of the voice of the great words, which the horn spake and I beheld even until the beast was slain, we are told concerning this beast, the man of sin, the son of perdition, commonly called the antichrist, that he speaks great blasphemous things against the God of heaven and that he finally declares that he himself is God and demands to be worshiped as God puts to death those that refuse to worship

him.

So I beheld him till the beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. We are told in the book of revelation that when Jesus comes again, that he will destroy this instrument of Satan, this man of sin, and he will be cast into Gehenna, the lake that burneth with fire. So here Daniel and revelation are just running side by side, parallel visions.

Now concerning the rest of the beast, they had their dominion taken away, the kingdoms of the earth, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. Now I saw in the night visions and behold, there was one like the son of man coming with clouds of heaven and he came to the ancient of days and they brought him near before him and there was given to him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion and that which shall not pass away in his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.

And so he sees now Jesus Christ and the receiving of the glorious kingdom being given to Jesus and coming to reign a kingdom that shall never end. Isaiah nine, six unto us, a child is born unto us. The sun is given.

The government shall be upon his shoulders. Names will be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace and of the increase of his government and peace. There shall be no end upon the throne of David to order and to establish it in righteousness and in judgment from henceforth, even forever for the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.

And the angel said unto Mary, fear not for you have found favor with God and behold, you will conceive and bear a son and also call him Jesus. And he shall be great for he should be called the son of the highest. And God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over Jacob and of his kingdom.

There shall be no end. So Daniel got a beautiful insight into these things. He sees Jesus coming with clouds of heaven, coming to the ancient of days and receiving the authority, the dominion, the glory, the kingdom that all of the world should rule.

And in Psalm two, God says to Jesus, ask of me and I will give unto you the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession, the glorious kingdom of God. Now I, Daniel, he said, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, the visions of my head troubled me. So I came near to one of those that were standing by and I asked, what does all of this mean? And so he told me and he made me know the interpretation of the things.

Now the great beast, which are four are four kingdoms, which shall arise out of the earth, but the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. These are the kingdoms that are going to rule over the earth, but ultimately the saints will take the kingdom. Then I would know the truth of this fourth beast, this indescribable beast, the Roman empire, which was different from all of the others exceeding dreadful whose teeth were of iron, his nails of brass, which devoured and broken pieces and stomped the residue with his feet.

And of those 10 horns that were in his head and of the other, which came up before whom the three fell, even of that horn, which had eyes in a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. And I beheld in the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them. Now

we are told this also in revelation 13, as he speaks of the rise of the beast out of the sea, the antichrist, that he makes war with the saints and overcomes them because the antichrist prevails against the saints.

I conclude that the saints are not the church for we have the promise of Jesus Christ made in Caesarea Philippi to his disciples. When Peter said, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, Jesus said upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. There's no way the antichrist or the gates of hell or Satan can prevail against the church of Jesus Christ.

So by virtue of the fact that the antichrist is prevailing against the saints, they could not be the church, but will be redeemed Israel in the tribulation period. And he will make war against Israel. He comes to Jerusalem and he makes war against the remnant of the woman's seed or of Israel, but they are not church or the church.

Daniel did not see the church in his prophecies. He was making war against the saints, prevailing against them until the ancient of days came and judgment was given to the saints of the most high. And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Now you remember Paul rebuked the Corinthians, those in the church in Corinth. He said, what are you doing taking your brother to a pagan judge? You know, suing them before the courts of the land. You ought to be settling these things in the church.

Don't you know, the saints are going to judge the world. And so judgment is given to the saints. We will be judging the world one day.

Interesting. That's one thing I never wanted to be. Maybe I can just get a job picking up coconuts on the beach in Hawaii, but the saints possessed the kingdom.

Thus, he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth or the Roman empire, which will be different from all of the kingdoms and would devour the whole earth and tread it down and break it in pieces. And the 10 horns out of this kingdom are 10 Kings that shall arise and another shall rise after them. And he shall be diverse from the first and he will subdue three kings and he shall speak great words against the most high and will wear out the saints of the most high.

And he will think to change the times and the laws and they shall be given into his hand until a time times in the dividing of a time or for a three and a half year period. Will he rule coming to Jerusalem and beginning to make war against Israel during the first three and a half years of his reign. He'll make a treaty with Israel.

We'll get this next week in Daniel chapter nine, but then he will break this treaty, which will start the beginning of the end in the countdown the last days until the return of Jesus Christ. But he is given power to rule over these saints. The redeemed Israel for three and a half years, but the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it.

And unto the end and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominion shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matters. And as for me, Daniel, my concentrations, much troubled me and my countenance changed in me, but I kept the matter in my heart.

Now, two years later, in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even as unto me, Daniel, after that, which appeared unto me at the first, a similar type of a vision. But in this vision, it came to pass. And I saw that I was in Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam.

And I saw in a vision and I was by the river of Uli. And then I lifted up my eyes and I saw and behold, there stood before a river, a ram that had two horns and the two horns were high, but one was higher than the other. And the higher came up last.

The Medo-Persian empire represented by the two horns, uh, the Persian empire, uh, being the higher coming up last and, and was more powerful than the median empire. And I saw the ram that is the Medo-Persian empire as it was pushing westward and northward southward so that no beast might stand before him. Neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand.

And he did according to his will and became great. And as I was considering behold, a he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, touched not the ground and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. So he was watching this, uh, Ram, the Medo-Persian empire as it was conquering.

But suddenly there comes this goat out of the west Greece with a notable horn, Alexander, the great and conquering so rapidly that the feet weren't touching the ground. You read to the conquest of Alexander, the great, and it's amazing how rapidly he was able to conquer the known world at that time. And he came to the Ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing before the river.

And he ran unto him with a fury of his power. And I saw him come close into the Ram and he was moved with color against him. And he smote the Ram and broke his two horns.

And there was no power in the Ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and stomped on him. And there was none that could deliver the Ram out of his hand. Therefore, the, he waxed very great and was strong and the great horn was broken.

And from it, there came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven, a graphic prophecy, fabulous, interesting prophecy. How could Daniel know this, except by the inspiration of the Holy spirit, that the great horn Alexander would be broken in his youth, 32 years old when he died And the Grecian empire passed on to the four generals, Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes. And then of course, out of Egypt, Asia minor and Greece.

And out of one of them came forth a little horn Antiochus Epiphanes who waxed exceeding great toward the South and toward the East and toward the pleasant land Antiochus Epiphanes who moved against Egypt down towards the South. And of course, in passing from Syria into Egypt, he had to go through the land of Israel and it waxed great, even to the host of heaven and it cast down some of the host. Now we go from Antiochus Epiphanes to what he is a type of the antichrist.

And we go on now, right to the antichrist. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven. And it cast down some of the host of the stars to the ground and stomped upon them.

Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host. And by him, the daily sacrifice was taken away and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And a host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression.

And it cast down the truth to the ground and it practiced and prospered. Then I heard one Saint speaking to another Saint and said unto that certain Saint, which spake, how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot? And he said unto me 2300 days and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. Now this, of course, is a prophecy concerning Antiochus Epiphanes.

It does have a dual aspect in the fulfillment, but he's talking about this profaning of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. When he came to Jerusalem to show his utter disregard for God and for their beliefs, he sacrificed a pig upon the holy altar there in Jerusalem. And he sought to turn the temple into a pagan temple.

This created such a feeling of incense in the Jewish zealots that Judas Maccabeus gathered together a group of men and against insurmountable odds came to Jerusalem and defeated the Syrian army that was there. Now this is where the feast of dedication comes from, Hanukkah. They wanted to reestablish the true worship.

And interestingly enough, it was 2300 days after Antiochus Epiphanes had profaned the temple. Exactly as Daniel said, 2300 days later, Judas Maccabeus and these faithful zealots had come and they were wanting to reinstitute the proper sacrifices and the temple worship again. But it was found that they had, of course, only enough holy anointing oil to last for one day there in the candlestick.

And it took a period of about seven days to prepare this oil, or eight days, whatever it is. And so by a divine miracle, the one day supply lasted until they were able to get the new supply of oil compounded and made for the lights there in the temple. And hence the feast of dedication, or Hanukkah, and even to the present day, the lighting of the nine candles to symbolize the miraculous preservation of the oil in the lamps during the period that they were preparing new oil for them.

Jesus was in Jerusalem for Hanukkah in John chapter 10. It was noticed in the middle of the winter. Hanukkah corresponds, of course, Hanukkah is tomorrow in the celebration.

Hanukkah comes this year on the 21st. That's tomorrow. And so the Jews will be celebrating Hanukkah at the time that we are celebrating Christmas.

The feast of dedication, it was called, and it relates to actually the period of history of Judas Maccabeus, but it is prophesied and predicted here, the profaning of the temple by Antichus Epiphanes and the resultant cleansing 2,300 days later by Judas Maccabeus. And so the sanctuary was trodden down for the 2,300 days. Now, there was a fellow by the name of Miller.

He was the minister in the United States back in the 1800s. And he took and said, you know, 2,300 days is actually 2,300 years. And so he took the day that the temple was profaned and he added to that 2,300 years.

And he said, Jesus is coming in the 2,300 years after the profaning of the temple. And so he picked a date in 1844 that he had determined Christ was coming and they got white robes and they went out in the hills there in Illinois and waited for Jesus to come. After a couple of weeks, they had sold everything, sold their houses, farms, everything else, so certain the Lord would come.

And of course, when the Lord didn't come, the group that were known as the Millerites sort of disbanded. But then a lady came along, Ellen G. White, and said, oh, Jesus at this point cleansed the sanctuary in the

heavens. He entered into the sanctuary and cleansed it in the heavens.

And so she developed the Seventh-day Adventist, and they follow her writings and so forth, which it turns out aren't necessarily her writing. She was a plagiarist and has copied from other books and so forth, which some of their own scholars are discovering nowadays and exposing and getting kicked out of the Seventh-day Adventist. It's quite a stir that's going on in that particular denomination right now.

But at any rate, they took the prophecy from here in Daniel, but there is no basis whatsoever to make the 2300 days, 2300 years. That's not good biblical interpretation or exegesis or whatever. Now, the Lord interprets the whole thing for Daniel.

It came to pass when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and sought for the meaning, then behold, there stood before me the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Uli, which called and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he, that is Gabriel, came near to where I was standing.

Gabriel is an interesting angel. He's going to be a fun one to meet too. Uh, we'll talk more about him next week as we meet him again in chapter nine.

Uh, we meet him during the Christmas season. Uh, he's the one that came to Mary and told her that she was to have a child. He came to, uh, Zacharias, the priest, and let him know that his wife, Elizabeth would have the child, John the Baptist.

He said, how can I know this? He said, I'm Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God. They got to lie to your man.

And, uh, so, uh, he is a very interesting angel and, uh, here he's commanded, uh, explain to the fellow what it's all about. So he came near where I was standing and I was afraid and I fell on my face, but he said to me, understand, no son of man for the time of the end shall be the vision. Now this vision is going to take you out to the time of the end.

Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground, but he touched me and set me upright. And he said, behold, I will make you to know what shall be in the last end of the indignation for at the time appointed, the end shall be now the Ram, which you saw having two horns. We don't need to question what is the Ram for he tells us they are the Kings of media and Persia and the rough goat is the King of Greece.

And of course this is when Greece was nothing. And the great horn that is between his eyes is the first King or Alexander, the great, that is the first King during the time of its conquering Philip Alexander's father, uh, did not conquer or begin any kind of a world conquest. That would be the first King in its conquering efforts.

Now that being broken, Alexander dying at 32 years where as four stood up, there will be four kingdoms that will come out of the nation, but not in the power of Alexander, the great, which was true and did happen. And the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressions are come to a full, a King of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences shall stand up and his power shall be mighty. And this of course is referring not to the antichrist, but not by his own power.

We read in revelation 13, that this beast that rises out of the sea, that Satan gives unto him his authority and his power. So this man of sin is going to arise. He's going to be tremendously powerful, but not his own power.

It will be Satan's power that will be vested in him. All of the power of Satan will be given unto men. This man, his power will be mighty, but not by his own power.

And he shall destroy awesomely and shall prosper and practice and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. He's going to make war against Israel ultimately. And through his policy also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.

He shall magnify himself in his heart and by peace will he destroy many. He's going to come on with a program of peace and be hailed really as the savior of the world. He shall also stand up against the prince of princes, but he will be broken without a hand.

The brightness of the coming of Jesus Christ with a word that goes forth out of the mouth of Christ, the antichrist will be broken and destroyed without a hand touching him. And the vision of the evening and the morning, which was told is true. Wherefore shut out up the vision for it shall be for many days.

Just close it because it isn't for now it's for the future. And I, Daniel fainted and I was sick for certain days. And afterward I rose up and I did the King's business and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

It was all before the fact. No one understood. He just wrote it.

And of course that's an interesting thing. I, man, I don't understand it. This is weird, you know, but this is what it was, you know, now we look at it.

We say, wow, that's so clear. Man, that's interesting how he could write with such clarity things that did not happen, you know, but that's because we're looking at it from this standpoint and we can see where it was fulfilled. Whereas Daniel who Greece show, man, that little area of Grecian what's over there, you know, how can they ever destroy the Persian empire? And, and yet in time, it all was fulfilled as we get into the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel.

I think that it does possess really the key to the understanding of all of prophecy. If you understand the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, the whole subject of prophecy will become very clear to you. If you're garbled on the ninth chapter of the book of prophecy, your whole prophetic picture will be garbled.

The ninth chapter is the key to the understanding of the subject of prophecy. And so we'll be spending a lot of time next Sunday night in the ninth chapter, because I want you to get the key, because if you can get this chapter, then prophecy shouldn't be a problem for you ever. Everything will fit together perfectly.

If you get this ninth chapter. So next week, we'll finish the book of Daniel, Lord willing, but paying a special attention, special attention to the ninth chapter of this prophecy of Daniel, may the Lord be with you in this hectic week. My, one of my little granddaughters was in a little ballet today at South Coast Plaza.

She was Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer. Naturally, grandpa had to go up and see her do her little bit, but oh my, South Coast Plaza on the Sunday before Christmas, what a zoo. Was I ever glad I wasn't there to buy anything, just to observe.

And this week before Christmas is so oftentimes hectic. They're out of what you were planning to get, you know, and now it throws a whole new dilemma on this problem of giving the gift. But may the Lord see you through the whole malaise and may the giving of the gifts to each other becomes secondary as our relationship with God is enriched and becomes more meaningful.

As we remember that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son and thus through it all, may the Lord be magnified and may you be drawn close to him. And thus may your Christmas be a very meaningful day of sharing God's love, receiving God's joy, and experiencing the peace of God which passes human understanding. May indeed you know the joy that he came to bring to this world, the peace on earth, and the goodwill.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6476.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-daniel-5-8/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net