



Ministry of the Word

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Scripture: Daniel 8

Subject: Chapter 8, Part 27 – God move again

Just when you think that you have it all sorted out, God moves again.

“In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.” (v1-2)

Chapter 8 takes place in the third year of Belshazzar’s reign which was a couple of years after Daniel had the vision of the four beasts that represented four major world empires. Verse 2 tells us that while Daniel was having this vision, he was in Shushan, the citadel which was in the province of Elam. This means that he was actually in Persia which we would now call Iran. People often wonder why the Bible uses strange names for places, but the problem is that these place names keep changing. People however don’t change the ancestral names. Let me give you a quick example of this, remember in Russia St. Petersburg was changed to Leningrad than back again? So, it depends who’s in favour or who’s ruling. Just a few interesting facts about the Shushan Citadel, also could be known as Shushan Palace. Susa was 230 miles east of Babylon, 150 miles north of the head of the Persian Gulf, midway between Ecbatana and Persepolis. The Susa capital of Elamites in antiquity was later the main

residence of the Persian Kings. It is the Famous palace begun by Darius 1 and later enlarged by Xerxes. It was the home of Esther and also the City of Nehemiah.

In verse 2, Daniel saw that he was by the Ulai river in his vision. Daniel saw two animals, a ram and a He-goat by the river. These two animals where already revealed to us in chapter 7 as the two middle beasts or empires.

The Ram

“Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.” (v3&4)

This ram obviously reminds us of the bear who had one shoulder higher than the one, while this ram had incredible power, this dual power had a dominant one. Note the direction that the ram was pushing in, westward, northward, southward but not eastward. They didn't have that much interest in the east or even in Jerusalem. You will recall that this empire was the one that helped the Israelite people to go back to their land and even helped them rebuild the temple! Did you know that according to historians that the Ram with clean feet, sharp-pointed horns was the guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom? Also, the Persian king, at the head of his army, wore the head of a ram instead of the diadem (Ammianus Marcellinus, 4th Century historian).

The last great ruler of Persia was Xerxes who was the King during the days of Esther. He made an attack against Europe and against Greece with an army of 300,000 men & their families. At Thermopylae (meaning "The Hot Gates") which was a narrow canyon, the Greeks suffered a terrible defeat which is why it was after this battle that the Greeks hatred grew against the Persians. King Xerxes tried to conquer the Greeks by sea and had a fleet of 300 vessels which was destroyed by storm at Salamis. There is a story that he went out to the sea shore, lashing the waves because he was so annoyed by the storm! Talk about losing the plot!!

The He-Goat

“And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.” (v5-7)

The ram was incredibly powerful - no other animal could stand in its way and no one could rescue anything from its grip. It did exactly as it pleased - that is, until a male goat came scurrying from the west with such speed that its feet didn't touch the ground. The goat had a prominent horn between its eyes and gored the ram, breaking its horns and trampling on it. Now it was the turn of the goat to have unparalleled power.

The one horn refers to the leader. The Goat with one horn was a symbol for the ancient Macedonians. From history, we know that this was Alexander the Great. An amazing young man in his own right but history has made note that his mother Olympus who was ambitious and malicious, was believed to have killed his father, Philip of Macedon to ensure Alexander got to where he was. Philip of Macedon died when Alexander the Great was 20 years old and assumed the mantle of his father. 6 years later, he had conquered the mighty Persian Empire. By the age of 30 his empire stretched from the Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush which is the Punjab area of India. His career was very short, but he moved very swiftly. One legend says that by the age of 29 he fell on his bed upset that there were no other worlds to conquer. Alexander was greatly influenced by Homer. He was a visionary conqueror on one hand but a ruthless tyrant on the other. He was a brilliant military strategist, a skilled tactician, and a very good court politician. He sure left his imprint all over the world. The defeat of the ram by the male goat anticipates the Battle of Issus in 333 BC, in which Alexander defeated the armies of Darius III. Ten years later, aged thirty-two and at the height of his powers, Alexander died in Babylon in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar — probably entirely unaware that a man in that very same city had written a prophecy about him nearly 300 years earlier. At the peak of the Greek Empire, it was immensely strong but, its horn broken when Alexander died and was replaced by four other horns.

The Four Horns

“Therefore, the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.” (v8-9)

When Alexander died he had no clear natural successor, and forty years of struggle ensued between his generals whom he had appointed as satraps. The empire was eventually divided into four parts, each ruled by one of the generals.

Cassander: was married to Alexander’s sister, he ruled Macedonia and Greece;

Lysimachus: ruled Thrace, Bithynia and Asia Minor which would be modern East Turkey.

Seleucus (sel-u-cus): was in charge of northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and regions to the east towards India (a Large area)

and Ptolemy: a friend and school mate of Alexander, took southern Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, Arabia Petraea and parts of Asia Minor (large part of Africa).

“And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.” (v10)

This verse is a reference to Israel and not God’s abode. Geographically, if you look at who was sandwiched between these kingdoms, it was Israel, who inevitably suffered in the constant battles between them. (There is more about this in Daniel 11 in what is known as the ‘Silent Years’ which weren’t so silent!)

The Little Horn

“He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.” (v11-12)

Yet another horn grew out of the four horns. It was small at first but rapidly increased to an enormous size, growing South, East and toward to the Glorious land – Israel. It even challenged heaven and cast some of the hosts of heaven and the stars to the ground. It proceeded to put an end to the regular burnt offering, desecrating the sanctuary. This can be no-one other than Antiochus the 4th who was a decent of the

Seleucus. He was the 8th King of the Syrian dynasty 175-164 BC. He was the infamous brother of Cleopatra (but not the Cleopatra from Egypt!). He ascended the throne following the murder of his brother, the former king, Seleucus Philopater. He was not even the rightful heir. Demetrius, the son of Seleucus and the rightful heir to the throne was still alive but was being held hostage in Rome. Antiochus succeeded in obtaining the throne largely through flattery and bribery. When he went to power, he invaded Egypt, defeating Ptolemy VI. He made Jerusalem a buffer state while he plundered and desecrated the Temple. He called himself – Epiphanes, “the Illustrious One” or “God manifested” but the Jews called him Epimanes, “the madman”.

He set out to fundamentally outlaw Judaism. According to the historical Maccabees, Antiochus sent letters out directing the Jewish people to follow customs strange to their land, he forbade burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, he wanted to build altars in sacred precincts and shrines for idols, he wanted them to profane the Sabbaths and any of the feasts, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals as well as leave their sons uncircumcised. In fact, any circumcised baby found was tied to their mother’s neck and thrown off the walls of Jerusalem to their death. This is some of the extent that he went to, so as to rid the place of Judaism. He wanted them to make themselves unclean and abominable by every profane thing so that would forget the law of God and change all the ordinances. He also ensured those who did not obey his command would die. (1 Maccabees 1:44-49)

How long?

“Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot? And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.” (v13-14)

Daniel overheard two holy beings speaking to each other about how long this violent desecration would last, until the sanctuary was to be restored again. Who are these holy ones? They were messengers and they certainly were interested in God’s affairs.

He was told that it would be 2,300 evenings and mornings. Although it was fearful, the persecution would not last forever.

If the 2,300 days are taken as literal 24 hour-days, this would be between 6 to 7 years which approximates the time Antiochus began to perpetrate his atrocities in about 170 BC. 6 years were from Antiochus' first incursion into Jerusalem in 170 BC to the restoring of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in late 164 BC. The Jewish priest, Judas Maccabeus (also known as 'the Hammer') drove out the Syrian army. At which time the temple was cleansed and rededicated after its pollution. This cleansing is still celebrated in the Feast of Lights, Hannukah (reference John 10:22). We will come back to this time line as it's interesting that this time line is similar to that in Revelation about the end times.

We should pause to take in the overall impression of this vision. There is frequent repetition of the idea of power - it is said of both the ram and the goat that *there was no one who could rescue from his power (8:4, 7)*. This echoes the statement by Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel's three friends: *who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands? (3:15)*. Nothing in history is insignificant but instrumental in the hands of God to bring about His purpose. That is true of history and it is also true of your life and mine.

The Vision Explained

"Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. ¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." ¹⁷ So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."

¹⁸ Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright."

Daniel heard in his vision a man's voice telling Gabriel to give him the explanation of the visions. This is the same messenger that Daniel speaks to in Chapter 9 and even the same one who was sent to Mary to give the message from God. Gabriel appeared to Daniel as having the appearance of a man. This is a biblical description of a messenger from Heaven, unlike those you see now paraded in many shops around this country and in people's homes as something else, ones that will give you insight into your life, all on their own, have you ever

heard them say, this is what your Guardian angel has to tell you, ones that people often now venerate, or in order words worship. Nothing like Gabriel here, who only spoke when he was instructed to. Now here Daniel is called son of man but this is speaking about his humanity, not to be mistaken with Jesus or Jesus's incarnation, just so we are clear!

The explanation is given clearly, and straight forward, thank God, however there are two levels to it. We know the first historical power which has come and gone, but the second level is really to do with the power behind the empire and will come again in the last days, as Chapter 7 inferred to when it spoke about the final beast having elements of the previous three powers.

This is not the first time that scripture does this. Remember Isaiah 14 when it spoke about the King of Tyre and as the language goes on it changes to the power behind King Tyre, who was Satan. The same occurs in Ezekiel when it speaks about Babylon and then says "you who were in Eden". Let's keep in mind now, Chapter 7 was the last use of Aramaic in this book. Chapter 8 was written in Hebrew. This is of great significance for the Jewish people for it will be at that time that they will be centre stage and not the Gentiles, and the New Testament church will not be around.

"Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. ¹⁹ And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be. ²⁰ The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. ²² As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power." (V18-22)

Gabriel gave Daniel a straight forward explanation which when we look back at history we can see that this was fulfilled to the later. Surely, this gives us confidence of what is prophesied to come will take place at its allotted time.

When we look at this King Antiochus Epiphanes IV from the natural history it is of interest to us for many reasons. In order to consolidate his power in his vast multi-cultural empire, Antiochus drove forward the process of Hellenization, that is a term to describe the spread of the Greek language and culture. Part of that process was to try to create one religion for all - by force if necessary. He could not tolerate, what he believed, was the

narrow-minded exclusivism of Judaism's devotion to one God and the rejection of all others. Antiochus went much further than many of the emperors before him to impose his will on the people, including Nebuchadnezzar when he constructed his golden image, and Darius when he proclaimed his edict.

He shocked the Jews when he encouraged the peoples of the Mediterranean region to worship him as the Canaanite god, Baal - a pagan god that had been decisively rejected by Israel as the idolatrous personification of all that they stood against. Antiochus was trying to force them back to a compromise that centuries before had cost them the "locust years" of exile.

There were some Jews who accepted the compromise - indeed, welcomed it. Sounds familiar!

Clearly these "renegades" felt that they were missing out, even attributing their misfortunes to their original separation from the Gentiles. They found Greek culture and lifestyle very attractive. It made far fewer moral demands than the law of Moses and allowed them to give free rein over to their every impulse and desire. It also opened up a whole new world of entertainment and sport that had been foreign to them, to say nothing of the intellectual stimulation of the free exchange of ideas, without having to be committed to any particular world-view. It was not only some of the ordinary people that welcomed the wave of Hellenization, but a group of the leaders led by no less than Jason the high priest, who abandoned any sense that their Bible (our Old Testament) was a definitive revelation from God.

It was a strong taste of freedom. And Antiochus was giving it to them.

That concept of freedom is shared by many people today, and given as their reason for abandoning God. They say that God is out to stifle them; their self-expression, their creativity, and their flourishing. They want freedom from any authority, they want relativism, and they think that secular society can deliver it to them. As it is for many today, the Greek ideal of pursuing happiness is all that matters; and they put great emphasis on human reason and resource as the vehicles for achieving it. For them, man is the measure of all things and just as many Jews who bought into it then, today *we* have a Christianized version: This description really sums it up:

“A conscience soothing Jesus, with an un-scandalous cross, an otherworldly kingdom, a private, inwardly limited spirit, a pocket God, a spiritualized Bible, and an escapist church. Its aim is to have a happy, comfortable, and successful life, obtainable through the forgiveness of an abstract sinfulness by faith in an unhistorical Christ.”

(Costas, 1982, page 80.)

In traditional Jewish eyes the Greek religion was a complete overturn of all they stood for. Its gods were only mythological (Freudian, we might say) projections of human desire, fear, greed, envy, and anger. Orthodox Jews believed in revelation, a notion beyond the comprehension of the Greeks, as it is of many moderns.

This frenzied anti-god madness reached its height in December 167 BC. In a final act of supreme and studied blasphemy, Antiochus had the city temple dedicated to the Greek Olympian god Zeus. Nothing like this had ever happened to the Jews. Many before him had defied God but never went as far as this. For the Jews, this was abomination upon abomination and it actually became known as the abomination of desolation. See Daniel 9:27 and particularly Matthew 24:15. Paul the apostle made the observation in 2 Thessalonians 2:2-4

“not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

Paul here is talking about a restored temple, which in his time, Jerusalem had one in situ, so what he is clearly speaking about here is a temple in the future, which we know from Revelation will be the restored temple in the end times, which we will come back to again. But just have it clear, this is for the Jewish people.

The question we might ask is, “How did such an evil person walk into the place where God’s presence was believed to be and do such things? No doubt Antiochus believed Judaism was religious nonsense, taking his power and rightful worship away, sure he was not struck down. Perhaps he thought he would succeed in banishing God from the world, but he did not reckon on the anger that he provoked in the heart of some of the Jews who rose up and revolted.

This became known as the Maccabeus' wars. These men captured Jerusalem and rededicated the temple and built a new altar.

Nearly 2 centuries later the Prince of princes, Jesus, was in Jerusalem at the time of this feast Hanukkah, walking in the temple precincts in Solomon's colonnade. John tells us what happens in John 10:24-33

"Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. ³⁰ I and My Father are one."

³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

³³ The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

This was the very place where Antiochus stood a man who named himself as Epiphanes meaning "God made manifest", Jesus stood there and said "I and the Father am one". The Jews were appalled could this be Hanukkah history repeating itself. There can be only two answers, either it was blasphemy or it was true. They made the wrong decision and tried to stone Him there and then. Jesus told them that the consequences of their rejection of Him would mean another period of exile and further destruction of their city. He told them also of His return one day, and as a sign of that return He referred them to Daniel's prophecy Matthew 24:15-31

"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ "then let

those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

²³ "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

²⁶ "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

²⁹ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

The End Times

We've looked at the historical interpretation of this vision now let's look at it on another level. Not only does the vision point forward to the time of Antiochus himself, but Daniel is explicitly told that it is *for the time of the end (8:17)*. *Let's read verses 23-26 of chapter 8 -*

*"And in the latter time of their kingdom,
When the transgressors have reached their fullness,
A king shall arise, Having fierce features,
Who understands sinister schemes.
His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;*

He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive;
He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people.

“Through his cunning, He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;
And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart. He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity.
He shall even rise against the Prince of princes;
But he shall be broken without *human* means.

“And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true;
Therefore seal up the vision, For *it refers* to many days *in the future.*”

This immediately raises the question: how can the description of a Seleucid king in the second century BC possibly relate to the time of the end? As said earlier on, this is not just about one who is to come but also about the power who is really behind such an individual.

In verses 22-23 it describes this king to have a fierce countenance, this is one of the names for the Antichrist. Did you know that there are 33 titles used in the Old Testament alone for the Antichrist. Some include the Destroyer of the Gentiles found in Jeremiah 4:7, The Proud Man in Habakkuk 2, Seed of the Serpent in Genesis 3, Violent Man, the Assyrian in Isaiah 10,12, Micah 5, Man of the Earth in Psalm 10, this is to name but a few. There are less names actually in the New Testament’s allusions to the Antichrist, such as Pseudo-Christ in 1 John 2, Man of Sin, Lawless one, Son of Perdition all found in 2 Thessalonian 2, again, to name just a few. We will learn more about him in chapter 9 and 11.

Antiochus is a form of a prototype or model of a leader to come, he will arise like Antiochus but will accomplish worse things including the last abomination of desolation in the third temple which Jesus himself spoke about in Matthew 24.

The history of this man’s evil achievements will pail into obscurity by comparison to the coming Antichrist. However, in the days of Jacob’s trouble, which we read of in Jeremiah 30:3-7, this event in history will take on new meaning. They will perhaps realise that Daniel warned them once before but they did not listen and Jesus warned them many times but they did not heed, and even the disciples warned them many times but still they would not pay attention.

In verses 23 to 25 we are told more about his character. For example, he will understand sinister schemes. In Revelation we are told the following about the Antichrist :

1 – He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand (Revelation 13:17) – No one will be able to buy or sell without his mark

2 – He shall magnify himself in his heart (Revelation 13:5) - He is given a mouth speaking blasphemies, with power to continue 42 months.

3 – By peace shall destroy many (Revelation 6) - The rider comes on the white horse, how deceptive.. then comes the red horse of war! So, it is a false peace. By peace he should destroy many, interesting, again we will look at this later in more detail.

Just like this part of Daniel speaks about –

4 – He shall stand up against the Prince of princes (Revelation 13) The 1st beast of Revelation 13 is the one against Christ. Prince of Princes – Jesus. He’s against Christ but he will be broken supernaturally.

So just to give a quick a summary -

This man will be intelligent and persuasive (verse 23). He will achieve great power by subduing others (verse 24). He will be controlled by another, Satan (verse 24). He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugated Israel to his authority (verses 24-25). He will rise to power by promising false security (verse 25). He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 25) and his rule will be terminated by divine judgment (verse 25).

History’s Lesson.

Like many other rulers, Antiochus realised that unifying those under his rule was near impossible as religious loyalties ran very deep. The Jews were the worst, for them God was the centre of everything not him. Now listen very carefully as we proceed. He saw that their loyalty to God and His revelation (contained in the Old Testament) clearly transcended any loyalty they could give to a human king and his wishes. The very first command,

“You shall have no other gods before Me”.

This was a direct provocation to this fellow who called himself “God made manifested”. His hatred for the Jewish faith and their loyalty to God spurred him on to destroy them.

The Finale –

“And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.”

Daniel seen that he was out to make war not peace by desolating the Holy of Holies and the Jewish people. This vision so overwhelmed Daniel that he was ill for several days. No wonder that he was, between disgust and fear of the things to come.

When we see from the historical records what actually happened under Antiochus IV, it is not at all surprising that Daniel was so affected by what he saw. In fact, the brazen defiance of God that Antiochus displayed was so serious and so significant that it was also a major focus of Daniel's final vision. Never mind what he did to ordinary people who believed in the one true God, as revealed in Scriptures.

Let us apply a thought from this before we end, if a man can do this, what more can Satan do, much more in peace time than in war. Time when you are comfortable, unaware that anything is wrong, or about to go haywire. Then the attack always happens, the calm before the storm. Paul in Ephesians 6 instructed us to continual wear the full armour of God, not just in battle times but continually. Often times, the greatest enemy is within and not without. Hebrew 10:25-27 encourages us to exhort each other to go on in the faith and with the Lord.

There are many personal applications we can and should draw from this history.

1. Will we be so easily deceived?
2. Will we give in for a more easier life?
3. Will we have oil in our lamps?

History teaches us many things and the one great lesson from history is that we repeat it if we don't take heed.

Amén.