

## 7 - "Antichrists Far and Near" // Daniel 7–8 // *Shining in Babylon* #7<sup>1</sup>

### (DANIEL BUMPER)

Hello, my name is J.D. and I am *not* the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and all God's people said... I will say that serving in that role the last 3 years was one of the greatest privileges of my life, to be able to support and stand behind our missionaries and church planters in this way. But it's been a long 30 years these past 3 years, and it's good to jump back in with renewed vigor to my favorite ministry role, outside of husband and daddy, which is being your pastor.

I never stopped being your pastor, of course, but now, I can do so without distraction--I was supposed to serve for 2 years and then I got a bonus one because of Covid--at any rate, I'm excited to jump back into the book of DANIEL. Daniel 7–8. Some of you thought we were going to kind of fade out of Daniel after chapter 6 because I was just too scared to deal with all the weird stuff Daniel gets into in these chapters... And I'll admit, the second half of the book *is* a bit bizarre and a little intimidating: Daniel has these dreams about beasts and dragons, and the antichrist, end times.

**And I know some of you love that stuff.** Be honest: Who in here is REALLY excited to get into the prophecies? Hands up. Okay, safe space: Who wishes we had just stopped at chapter 6? Hands up. You'll notice my hand went up both times.

I've told you the church I grew up in '**capital-L-LOVED' end times prophecy**. Our annual prophecy conference was our best attended event of the year, and our pastor made rapture jokes like there was no tomorrow. We had charts showing which beast mostly likely represented FDR and Jimmy Carter...

**I've heard that there are two surefire ways to fill up a church:** one is to preach on sex and the other is to preach on the end times. It makes me wonder what would happen if I preached a message on the question, "Will there be sex in the end times?" **Maybe something worth considering but today, Daniel 7–8.** Let me encourage you: prophecy is a major part of your Bible. **25% of your Bible is prophecy.** For every one mention of Christ's first coming, there are more than 8 re: his second. So this is going to be good.

**Recall how the book of Daniel is set up:** The first half of the book, chapters 1–6, chronicles the adventures of 4 Hebrew immigrants seeking to live faithfully in the midst of a hostile culture, Babylon, where they'd been taken captive. Daniel shows us how it is possible to not only survive, but thrive in that environment. These first

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<sup>1</sup> **Works Consulted:** Tim Mackie, "The Super Beast and the Son," August 19, 2017; Beth Moore, "Daniel | Session 7: The Ancient of Days," 2006; Beth Moore, "Daniel | Session 8: Foreshadowing The Little Horn," 2006; Mark Driscoll, "Kingdom Down #7 - King Jesus is Coming on the Clouds," sermon Preached at The Trinity Church, February 23, 2020; Bryan Chapell, "Daniel: The Throne Mysteries and Victories," October 18, 2015; Mark Driscoll, "Kingdom Down #8 - Possibly the Most Amazing Prophetic Chapter in the Bible," sermon Preached at The Trinity Church, March 2, 2020; Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from Daniel*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition; Davis, Dale Ralph. *The Message of Daniel (The Bible Speaks Today Series)*. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

chapters are written mostly not in Hebrew, the language of Israel, but Aramaic, the language of Babylon, because the focus is one shining *out there*, in Babylon.

**Well, chapter 7 shifts back to the Hebrew language**, because these prophecies are specifically given to God's people to prepare them for the future. They are not so much messages for people out there as they are for us, in here. In fact, you'll notice that up until now, the dreams in the book of Daniel have been given to pagan kings and Daniel is the interpreter. Now, Daniel himself is the dream-ER.

**These prophecies are for God's people**--to teach us how to look at the future if we're going to shine in the present.

**Let me ask: Which word characterizes your attitude toward the future**--stressful, or peaceful? Are you the kind of person who is just always depressed about what's going on--you're addicted to cable news, cussing at the anchorperson, always griping about how the world is going to hell in a handbasket and always depressed about the world we are leaving our kids? Or, how about this--are you the kind of person who finds themselves HATING those who voted the other way, PARTICULARLY if they call themselves Christians? You're like, "I mean, HOW COULD ANYBODY be so dumb?" And you're always trolling them and leaving them nasty messages. (Some of you listening on our podcast are like, "I do that to you!")

Or are you the kind of person who--while you're concerned about the future--you still have a sense of optimism about what God is doing? And get this--you can even love those who voted the other way--you might strongly disagree with them, but you can love them.<sup>2</sup>

**In a word, what word characterizes your outlook** on the future? STRESSFUL or PEACEFUL?

**Daniel's prophecy makes the difference between those two attitudes.** We left off in chapter 6 when Daniel was 80. Now, Daniel 7, we're going to go back a few years to Daniel in his mid 60's. There's a lot of detail in these chapters--Daniel's dream has bears and leopards with wings and talking horns and a chariot with wheels of fire--and when you first read all of it, you're concerned that Daniel might need to be drug tested. But I want to show you that running through these details is a simple, easy to follow message weaving through it. So, hang on, and don't get overwhelmed by the details. It's going to be a lot and you're going to be like, "What in the world???" Just hang on, I'll make it simple for us at the end, I promise.

**I told our Thursday service that reading these chapters reminded me of the Disneyworld ride "It's a Small World."** That ride is in many ways an assault on your senses. Everywhere you look there are things spinning and individual small scenes, and different themes and sounds coming at you from every direction--and you feel like, "Have I gone to music hell?" But through it all there is a river moving you through, and one dominant song being played, and if you'll just sit still, you'll make it out; and, guaranteed, you'll be singing that song in your head for the rest of the day--to the point that you might need to go see a psychiatrist to MAKE IT STOP.

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<sup>2</sup>ibid.

**Here we go:** 7:2 Daniel said, “In my vision at night I was watching, and suddenly the four winds of heaven stirred up the great sea. 3 Four huge beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

**Now, in the OT, BEASTS, of course,** are metaphors for world governments. So we’re looking at 4 kingdoms. 4 “The first was like a lion but had eagle’s wings. I continued watching until its wings were torn off. It was lifted up from the ground, set on its feet like a man, and given a human mind. (This is Babylon. The wings getting torn off represent God humbling Nebuchadnezzar by making him go insane, after which he is **lifted up off the ground and given a human mind**, which represents his coming to his senses and **his** conversion--we saw this in cp. 4.)

5 “Suddenly, another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up! Gorge yourself on flesh.’ (This bear represents the Medo-Persian empire, which conquered Babylon, like we saw in chapter 5. The fact that the bear is larger on one side than the other represents the fact that Persia was bigger than the Medes and eventually took over.)

6 “After this, while I was watching, suddenly another beast appeared. It was like a leopard with four wings of a bird on its back. It had four heads, and it was given dominion. (This third animal represents Greece, under the leadership of Alexander the Great. The fact that it’s a “leopard with wings,” communicates the speed at which Greece overtook the world. Alexander did it all by the time he was 30. He was an incredible warrior, maybe the greatest conqueror the world has ever known. In fact, in 323, when Alexander conquered Persia-- prophesied here--he brought with him only 35,000 soldiers to Persia’s 100,000. Yet he won magnificently. Persia in that battle lost 20,000 soldiers and Alexander lost only 100, and Persia was on their home turf! So he’s the leopard with wings.

The 4 wings that become 4 heads prophesy that Alexander’s kingdom would be divided between 4 generals. That happened, btw--after Alexander won, there was a bitter power struggle between 4 of his generals, which we’ll talk about more in a minute.

7 “After this... suddenly a fourth beast appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns. (This 4th beast is Rome, who would conquer the Greeks. It has iron teeth, representing Rome’s incredible strength.)

- **It has 10 horns. HORNS in the Bible usually** represent power; the ability to damage. That makes sense, right? Raise your hands if you have an animal in your home. Dog. Bunny. Hamster. Fish. Some of you still have cats. Anybody have a pet in their home with a horn? Typically no. There might be someone at our Alamanca Campus that raised their hand, but we typically avoid animals with horns. Now think of some animals WITH horns: Bull. Ram. Rhino. What happens when an animal without a horn (like your bunny) runs up against an animal with a horn (like a bull)?<sup>3</sup> Horn wins almost every time. So these horned nations represent conquering nations.
- See? This is not hard. It all makes sense.

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<sup>3</sup> I owe this to Mark Driscoll.

Now, so far, this vision is tracking along with Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue in Daniel 2 of the 4 kingdoms (PIC). But then, a new detail is added: 8 "While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. And suddenly in this horn there were eyes like the eyes of a human and a mouth that was speaking arrogantly. Out of Rome comes a little horn. This is our first prophecy of the Antichrist. Notice, Daniel says that this little horn has "eyes like the eyes of a human... LIKE the eyes of a human. They seem human, but when you look into them, you see something different. Think of one of those horror movies where you look into the killer's and you see something not human but demonic.

...and (he had) a mouth that was speaking arrogantly." He boasted and blasphemed against God

Now let's move on to the vision of chapter 8 because it comes at the same thing from a different angle. And then, I want to draw some conclusions for us from both visions.

**Chapter 8.** This time, the vision is about a two-horned ram and goat, where basically the ram gets pulverized by the goat. 8:5 The goat... came toward the two-horned ram and rushed at him with savage fury. 7 He struck the ram, and the ram was not strong enough to stand against him. My RA, who is a Duke grad, saw in this a clear prophecy about UNC's sports demise at the hands of Mike Krzyzewski (The ram gets pulverized by Coach K, the GOAT, he says. I told him I didn't think that was the main point, though I appreciated his attention to detail.)

**No, the two-horned ram is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, and the goat is Alexander the great,** who again, was one of the most successful conquerors the world has ever known.

8 Then the male goat acted even more arrogantly, but when he became powerful, the large horn was broken. Four conspicuous horns came up in its place, pointing toward the four winds of heaven. 9 From one of them a little horn emerged and grew extensively toward the south and the east and toward the beautiful land.

Vs. 16, Daniel said: 8:16 I heard a human voice calling... "Gabriel, explain the vision to this man." 17 So he approached where I was standing; when he came near, I was terrified and fell facedown. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision refers to the time of the end."

21 The shaggy goat represents the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes represents the first king. (Alexander the Great) 22 The four horns that took the place of the broken horn represent four kingdoms. They will rise from that nation, but without its power. (Get this: Alexander died in his early 30's, some say of alcoholism. The large horn was broken. When he died, there was a vicious power struggle between his 4 generals, greatly weakening Greece's power. **By the way, Daniel wrote all this over 200 years before any of this happened!** It's pretty amazing prophecy)

23 Near the end of their kingdoms, when the rebels have reached the full measure of their sin, a ruthless king, skilled in intrigue, will come to the throne. 24 His power will be great, but it will not be his own. He will cause outrageous destruction and succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the powerful along with the holy

people. 25 He will cause deceit to prosper through his cunning and by his influence, and in his own mind he will exalt himself. He will destroy many in a time of peace; he will even stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be broken—but not by human hands.

**Out of those 4 horns of Greece, a ruthless small horn would arise who would be especially cunning and violent and especially vicious toward God's people**

- Sure enough, around 170 B.C. a man named Antiochus Epiphanes arose from out of one of the 4 subkingdoms of Greece and set out on a violent campaign of conquest for himself. Vs. 9 prophesied that this little horn would aim his conquests toward the South and East, which would have been from Greece's perspective Egypt and Israel, which is exactly what he did.<sup>4</sup> The specificity of this prophecy is amazing.
- And, as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 8, he was RUTHLESS. **He's been called the "Hitler of the OT."** He murdered 80,000 Jews upon entering Jerusalem. Old women. Pregnant women. Kids. He issued coins in his Israel with his image that read, "King Antiochus--God in the Flesh." and to top it all off set up his statue in the Holy of Holies and made the Jews worship HIM right there in the Holy of Holies and eat swine flesh right in the middle of the Temple. It's almost impossible to describe the offensiveness of this to the Jews. It meant complete and utter blasphemy against God. Scripture calls it the "abomination of desolations."<sup>5</sup>
- And then, out of nowhere, he developed some stomach virus, went insane, and died. Just like Daniel predicted, he died not by human hands, but by God's hands.<sup>6</sup>
- (BTW, a lot of these events are recorded in the Apocrypha, that little section of books that Catholics have in their Bibles between the Old and New Testaments. Those books are not Scripture, and they have never really been thought of that way in the church, but they have some good history in them.)

**The point is, it's safe to say that AE was the specific fulfillment of this prophecy.** BUT. Let me show you something really interesting about how later Bible writers treat this prophecy, because it teaches us a couple of very important things about prophecy.

**First, even though** the events of Daniel 8 were clearly fulfilled by AE, **both Jesus and the Apostles John and Paul, all who lived some 200 years after AE, use Daniel 8** to point to something still in the future--namely the rise of the Antichrist. Even though Antiochus Epiphanes clearly fulfilled this prophecy, Jesus, John and Paul all use Daniel 7-8 to point to something still to come. In fact, you could say that the whole book of Revelation is built on the prophecies of Daniel 7-8!

**Which leads us to our first point: 1. The prophecies about the Antichrist are 'already/not yet' fulfilled.**

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<sup>4</sup> This all took place in the period of Jewish history called the Maccabean period--Spartacus, Masada, all that stuff. A lot of info about this time is recorded in that little section the Catholics put in their Bibles between the OT and NT called the Apocrypha which are great for history but they are not Scripture and were not recognized as such until Catholics canonized them in an attempt to delegitimize Luther.

<sup>5</sup> BTW, it's hard to imagine how awful this would be. Imagine we could look in the future and see that these buildings we were using to meet in for worship and to teach our children about Jesus were being used for destruction. Say Communists took over the United States From this very stage our children were indoctrinated in atheistic communism. Part of the building was being used for a child prostitution ring and back there was an abortion clinic. That's essentially what AE did.

<sup>6</sup> I owe much in this section to Mark Driscoll and Beth Moore

For many prophecies, there is both a near fulfillment and a far one, and the near fulfillment gives you a picture of the far one--And a lot of times OT prophets talk about both fulfillments as if they are one. But they are separate. Think of it like this:

- If you've ever been to the Rocky Mountains, you can stand on one peak and look off in the distance at what looks like one mountain with two peaks. But if you were to travel to them, you'd see that in between these peaks that look to you like one are individual mountains separated by dozens of miles. From a distance they look like one, but they were actually separated by a great distance.
- That's what OT prophecy is like. The Bible presents these peaks together, but there is a near fulfillment and a far one. Antiochus Epiphanes was a picture of what the ultimate antichrist would be like.
- I'll give you one example: When the Apostle Paul in **2 Thess 2** talks about the future antichrist, he does it in terms similar to Daniel 8: Listen to what he says. Paul is answering the charge that the end times have already occurred: **3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God... 9 The coming of the lawless one is based on Satan's working, with every kind of miracle, both signs and wonders serving the lie... 8 The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and will bring him to nothing at the appearance of his coming.** See it? **This is all Daniel 8 imagery.** A future antichrist coming, Paul says, and he'll do all the things that AE did. (*BTW, what is very interesting is that the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and hasn't been rebuilt yet. There's been talk of it but no follow-through yet. But passages like this one imply that it will happen, eventually, and that the antichrist will aim for it and seat himself there.*)<sup>7</sup>

My point is that the prophecies of Dan. 7–8 are both behind and before us.<sup>8</sup> Antiochus was the first fulfillment and the Antichrist is the ultimate one, and the first one, Antiochus, sets some patterns which will be fulfilled by the 2nd one.

Which leads me to our second point, which might be even more important than the first: **2. In every age, the spirit of the antichrist (i.e. Satan's spirit) is at work**

Notice what the Apostle John says: **1 John 2:18 "Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come."** Even though the ultimate antichrist is coming, the spirit of antichrist is already here, which means we can learn from what we see in these chapters what to expect in our day.

For example: Jesus, in Mark 14, took the prophecies of Daniel 7–8 and applied them to his trial. Even though he lived hundreds of years from either Antiochus or Antichrist, he said, "You guys are playing the role of the beasts and antichrist in that chapter and I am playing the role of God's people." And he said that even though

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<sup>7</sup> John MacArthur, Christians and Antichrists, Part 1, Nov. 10, 2002

<sup>8</sup> Beth Moore, "Daniel | Session 8: Foreshadowing The Little Horn," 2006.

he was 100's of years separated from either AE or the Antichrist. Which means we can take the principles of Daniel 7–8 and learn about what our enemy is doing.

**3 things these chapters teach us** about what antichrist is up to:

- **Chapter 7:5, he aims to “devour much flesh.”** That’s not hard to believe, is it? Just look at the last 100 years.
  - How do you look at things like the Holocaust and just chalk all that up to merely human evil?” Adolf Hilter flunked out of art school and developed some nationalistic leaning and the next thing he’s marching 6 million Jews toward gas chambers?” There’s something more than human cruelty. It has the eyes of man but behind it is something demonic.<sup>9</sup>
  - The 20th century saw so much moral and technological advancement, but it was still the bloodiest century of history. In 1915, the Turks came to believe Armenians sharing their country with them were a problem and set April 24 as Armenian liquidation day and on that day murdered 600,000 in cold blood.
  - The Japanese declared a Black Friday during World War II when Japanese troops went through Alexandra Hospital in Singapore, bayoneting all the patients, doctors and nurses.
  - In 1932 Joseph Stalin executed over 10 million of his own countrymen and starved another seven million to death through enforced grain quotas.
  - We have Mao Tse Tung, Pol Pot, King Jong Il the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. And this is all within the last 100 years. Don’t you see this? It has the eyes of a man but it’s more.
  - Can we not see Satan at work today in the abortion industry or the slave trade or the myriad places around the world oppression is celebrated and religious liberty and basic human dignities are denied? The spirit of antichrist, which has the eyes of man but is much worse, has as its aim the devouring of flesh. He’s at work in your life creating addictions, ruining relationships, and leading you to self-destruction.
- **So the first thing he does is “he devours much flesh.”** Second, **8:25 He will cause deceit to prosper through his cunning and by his influence, and in his own mind he will exalt himself.**
  - He questions God’s word (deceit) and exalts man. He’s at work everywhere trying to get you to question the Bible. He’s in university classrooms and entertainment studios and newspaper offices and corporate boardrooms and social media platforms making people question God’s word and puffing up our obsession with ourselves--he LOVES social media, it’s designed to magnify our self-obsession, which is his calling card! I’m not saying you should go try to cast a demon out of your professor. Just saying that there is a supernatural power at work in the world trying to deceive people against God.
  - You say, *“But I’m just questioning what the Bible says about sexuality and trying to find myself.”* No, you’re not, you’re playing with Hell. You’re exalting yourself and putting your thoughts above God.<sup>10</sup> There are 2 paths--the path of truth (God’s word) and the other one is where you do what is right in your own eyes. **THIS is God’s Word.** It comes down from heaven. It exalts God. Humble yourself before it.

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<sup>9</sup> Many of these examples are drawn from Dale Ralph Davis, *The Message of Daniel (The Bible Speaks Today Series)*. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>10</sup> Head nod in some of these applications to Mark Driscoll

So, in our age, we can expect to encounter the spirit of antichrist. And these 3 things are what he will be doing: devouring flesh; deceiving you, and causing you to exalt yourself.

**And here's the bad news. We can expect these things until the end of history.** It's not going to get better. If anything it's going to get worse.

*You say, "Well, that's depressing." So glad I came to church for this encouraging word. Yeah, but I've got some really good news, too:*

### **3. Even in the Age of Antichrist, the Ancient of Days still rules**

**Let me take you back to Daniel 7 and show you what Daniel says in the midst of all these prophecies about darkness and judgment:** 7:9 "As I kept watching, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was white like snow, and the hair of his head like whitest wool. His throne was flaming fire; its wheels were blazing fire. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from his presence. Thousands upon thousands served him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was convened, and the books were opened.

Here is God, in the midst of all this, calmly coming to take his place as judge. **BTW, I love that name, "Ancient of Days."** It reminds me of a phrase we parents use on our kids when they try to pull something on us. One of my teenage kids comes up to me and says, "Dad, say--just for illustration purposes--is there a way to get a dent out of the front fender of a car?" And I say, "What did you do?" And they say, "I never said I wrecked the car." And I say, "Kid, I wasn't born yesterday." What do I mean? I mean, "I've been around the block for a while and so I see through your ruse." We tell our kids, "I wasn't born yesterday." God leans into the backseat of human history and says, "I wasn't born at all."<sup>11</sup>

- Nothing gets by him. Nothing surprises him. He never learns anything. He never misunderstands anything and nothing ever catches him off guard. There's never been a time he wasn't fully in charge.
- His hair is white like snow--which means he carries the authority and wisdom of the ages.
- His clothes are white like the purest wool, which means he is pure, wise and righteous altogether without the slightest blot of imperfection.
- His throne blazes in fire, which means it consumes all before it.<sup>12</sup> He alone is worthy to judge the nations and that's what he's about to do. So, sit down, little horns. Greatness is in the room. There is no Game of Thrones here--that might make for a trashy TV show, but it has no place here. God is in the room. The Judge is about to speak.<sup>13</sup>
- **By the way, God's throne has WHEELS. And they are on fire. How cool is that?** I'm like, "Is this like a big tricked-out monster truck?" Maybe, but what that's communicating is that the Ancient of Days is not stationary, uninvolved in things on earth, separated from us by a great distance; his throne has wheels. He goes to where his people are, and he doesn't have to leave his throne to get there.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> I owe this specific analogy to Beth Moore, "Daniel | Session 7: The Ancient of Days," 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Bryan Chapell, "Daniel: The Throne Mysteries and Victories," October 18, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Bryan Chapell, "Daniel: The Throne Mysteries and Victories," October 18, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Thanks to Beth Moore for this great little insight. Beth Moore, "Daniel | Session 7: The Ancient of Days," 2006.

**It's interesting to look at how all the events that Daniel predicted, which seemed so dark at the time, actually worked out for the furtherance of God's purposes.**

- For example:
  - When Persia took over Babylon, did you know Persia actually rebuilt Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple? Paid for it and everything! Both Jerusalem and the Temple would be crucial for Jesus' ministry.
  - Then God raised up Greece, and they united the world under one trade language--koine Greek--which made it much easier for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout the world through the writings of the Apostles.
  - Then God raised up the Romans who built a system of roads that made it possible to transport the gospel from place to place.

**Paul summarized all this in Galatians by saying "When the fullness of time had come, God brought forth his son..."** In all of this mess, God was creating a situation perfect for the coming of the Messiah and the spread of salvation around the world.

- The point: **God does everything, Everything, EVERYTHING**, for his purposes.
- And more good news, that's true of your life too! The good, the bad, it's all for his glory.<sup>15</sup> He's at work in **every disaster moving his church forward.**
- **I read a story this week that reminded me of that.** It's the story of how **Dawson Trotman** started a ministry called "the Navigators." In the late 1930's, Dawson was working at a Texaco gas station in Lomita, California. He had just escaped going to jail and gotten saved in the process. He started ministering to two young sailors stationed nearby who frequented the gas station. He explained his testimony to them and told them that if they would trust God, God could save them like he saved him. Those two Sailors called two more and they began to do this little Bible study in the service station garage. At one point, he told them he believed God wanted to use the 5 of them to change the world. It was kind of silly. I mean it was just 4 sailors, and two of them were more there for the free food than for the Bible study, and he's talking about how God was going to use them to change the world. Well, eventually, the other 2 get saved and these 4 sailors say, "Dawson, if you'll quit your job at the gas station we'll donate part of our salaries to make you a missionary to our ship. Of course they don't have any money either, but "come on our ship," they said, "we've talked to our captain and he said you can start a Bible study on there." Well, 6 months later there's been 100 conversions on that ship and twice that many meeting regularly for a Bible study they called "the Navigators." The name of that ship was the USS West Virginia and just a few months after the Bible study really got going, the USS WV got deployed to a place called Pearl Harbor, where it was sunk on Dec 7, 1941. Sounds like a tragedy, right? And it was. But all those sailors in the Navigators Bible study got redeployed onto other ships, and by the end of the war there were 800 ships that had Bible studies led by The Navigators. These young men came back to the United States and under the GI Bill they were spread out into universities all across the nation and began leading Bible studies on campus. This resulted in the formation of groups like InterVarsity and Campus Crusade.

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<sup>15</sup> Mark Driscoll, "Kingdom Down #8 - Possibly the Most Amazing Prophetic Chapter in the Bible," sermon Preached at The Trinity Church, March 2, 2020.

In a presentation years later, Dawson was talking about his “ministry success” and he said that the need of the hour is just to believe that **God is God**; that he’s the Ancient of Days, that he sits upon the throne and will be true to his purposes in all times and all places and will be true to us if we are obedient to his will. “God’s calling to us today,” he said, “is to recognize that our circumstances, as difficult as they may be, as hard as they may be to understand, do not counteract the eternal truth that our God sits upon the throne.”<sup>16</sup>

**Saint, God is doing the same thing in your life.** I’m reading a book right now by John Piper called *Providence* and Dr. Piper demonstrates that throughout the Bible God is up to hundreds and hundreds of things in our lives and at any given point we are aware of only 1–2 of them. But he is working in all of them, true to his purposes. **He’s the Ancient of Days.**

**MUSIC** And even better, Daniel tells us **4. One day, the God who rules over the world will come to rule in the world**<sup>17</sup>

- **11** “I watched, then, because of the sound of the arrogant words the horn was speaking. As I continued watching *and...*suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. **14** He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.”
- One day, the God who is working in history invisibly will come to assume the throne personally. And in that moment the power of the antichrist will literally evaporate in front of him.
  - Paul says in 2 Thessalonians that Jesus on that day will destroy the antichrist and all his armies “with just the breath of his mouth.” John in the book of Revelation says he does it “With just a word.”
  - All Daniel says about the defeat of the antichrist is that it happens “not by human hands.” (...Yet he will be broken—not by human hands. (Dan 8:25))
  - For Antiochus, it was an invisible stomach virus that killed him. What mighty armies couldn’t do, God accomplished through a microscopic virus.
- The defeat of the Antichrist doesn’t happen through a stomach bug, of course, but through doing something that human ingenuity has never been able to do--raise a man from the dead.
  - **Jesus was the Messiah who came to the lion and bear and ram and goat of the world’s kingdoms with their mighty horns of power.** But he came not with a horn of his own. He could have come as a dragon, but instead he came as one of the weakest animals there is--a Lamb, and he allowed himself to be gored by them. But he was doing that to die for our sin.
  - And through that death he broke Satan’s power, so that the word of the gospel is mightier than all their horns of oppression and chains of captivity.
- Allow me to **close with 2 applications**, one for the church and one for you who may not know Jesus. **For the church:**

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<sup>16</sup> Thanks to Bryan Chapell for this illustration

<sup>17</sup> Wording of this phrase I owe to Mark Driscoll

- Seeing this secret behind history, I've heard it said, may not keep me from pain but it will keep me from panic. I might experience fear but I need never feel frantic.<sup>18</sup> **The Ancient of Days is on the throne, and the God who rules over history promises to one day come to rule in history** and he is moving everything in the world, and in your life, to that end.
- **So be encouraged. Every setback** will ultimately be used for the advancement of his glory. The cancer, the broken marriage, the wandering child, the chronic pain, the frustrating lack of promotion in your job. God's good hand is in all of it. It may **look dark to you**, but it's all flowing by the hand of God. **And when the fullness of time has come, God brings forth Jesus from all of it.**
- And church, we have something to do in the meantime, in between Antiochus and Antichrist: **we preach the word of the gospel.**
- **We are a dot on this great timeline.** We live in an age of mercy and light, when God desires all men everywhere to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He's given us his spirit and told us greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world; that no weapon formed against you shall prosper, and all those who rise against you will fall; that all authority has been given unto me therefore go into all the world and make disciples.
- This is the age of the church. It's our time to spread this gospel. It's what we are supposed to be doing.
- So, that's the application for the church. **Here's one for you who still don't know Jesus personally, or have not submitted fully to him:**
  - The goal of our enemy through the antichrist and all the little antichrists is to destroy faith and destroy you. It's been happening to some of you, hasn't it? Sin hasn't turned out what you thought it would be. It's been "devouring your flesh."
  - He controls the world--devouring, deceiving, and exalting man. Mark it down: **He is going to make it progressively harder to be a Christian.** The world is going to get worse before it gets better. The lions and bears of the world are going to oppose you. If you are looking for the affirmation of the world, you'll never find it!
  - There's a reckoning coming that will separate false Christians, half-committed Christians, from true ones. Where are you going to be?
  - **If that scares you, you can give yourself fully to Christ right now, today,** by admitting that you can't save yourself and you need him to do all the saving, and submitting yourself fully to his authority. Right now. Do you want to do that?

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<sup>18</sup> "Is History All Beastly?", Dale Ralph Davis