

# **BOOK OF DANIEL**

## **PERSONALITY AND POWER OF THE ANTICHRIST (DAN. 8:15-27) – COREY STARK**

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### **I. REVIEW: OUTLINE OF DANIEL 8:1-27**

- A. Setting of Daniel's second vision (8:1-2)
- B. Daniel's vision (8:3-14)
  - 1. Ram with two horns (8:3-4)
  - 2. Goat with notable horn (8:5-8)
  - 3. The little horn as the Antichrist, foreshadowed by Antiochus (8:9-14)
- C. Gabriel's interpretation of the vision (8:15-25)
  - 1. Vision pertains to the end times (8:15-19)
  - 2. Gabriel's interpretation of the symbols (8:20-22)
  - 3. Antichrist's personality and power (8:23-25)
- D. Importance of the vision (8:26-27)

### **II. OVERVIEW: GABRIEL'S APPEARANCE TO DANIEL (DAN. 8:15-19)**

- A. God sent Gabriel to give Daniel understanding of the vision (8:15-16).

***Dan. 8:15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision [vs. 1-14] and was seeking the meaning... suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man [Gabriel]. 16 And I heard a [another] man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."***

- 1. Sought the meaning: Daniel sought more understanding consistently throughout his life. Jesus most repeated lesson was that those with "ears to hear" will be given more. Why would God reveal more if we never seek the meaning of what has already been revealed? Daniel understood this truth (Dan. 2:21).

***Dan. 2:21 He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.***

- 2. Gabriel: This is the *first time* that Gabriel appears in Scripture, and it is to reveal the true nature of the Antichrist. Gabriel is mentioned four times in the Scriptures—twice in Daniel (8:16; 9:21) and twice in the gospel of Luke (Lk. 1:11-20, 26-38). Each time he gave significant messages directly related to the coming of the true Messiah. His appearance indicates the importance of the vision.

- B. Gabriel emphasized five times in four verses this vision would be ultimately fulfilled in the end-times (Dan. 8:17, 19 [x2], 23, 26).

***Dan. 8:17 "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end"...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."... 23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise... 26 "And the vision... refers to many days in the future."***

- 1. The indignation: The term "indignation" points to the times in which God was indignant with Israel because of sin. It is a time when God disciplined the nation of Israel through Gentile armies. The oppression by Assyria (Isa. 10:5, 25) and Babylon (Lam. 2:6) are seen as indignation. "The" indignation refers to the height of God's unique discipline of Israel, during the Great Tribulation (Dan. 12:1, 7).

***Dan. 12:1 There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation... 7 and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.***

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2. *Time of the end*: Gabriel revealed to Daniel that this vision will be fulfilled in the end times, repeating this five times as the “time of the end” (8:17), the “latter time of the indignation” (8:19), the “appointed time of the end” (8:19), the “latter time of their kingdom” (8:23), and “many days in the future” (8:26). All of these phrases essentially have the same meaning and should be understood as the end times.

### III. GABRIEL’S INTERPRETATION – MEDO-PERSIAN AND GRECIAN EMPIRES (DAN. 8:20-22)

A. Gabriel interpreted the ram with two horns (8:3-4) and the male goat (8:5-8) with the large horn (8:20-22). The clear testimony of history reveals that the Medo-Persian and Grecian Empire perfectly fulfilled this.

***Dan. 8:20 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 [horns] that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.***

1. The ram (v. 3-4) is the Medo-Persian Empire (v. 20).
2. The two horns (v. 3-4) are the kings of Media and Persia – Darius and Cyrus (v. 20).
3. The male goat (v. 5) is the Grecian Empire (v. 21).
4. The notable horn between its eyes (v. 5) is the first king – Alexander the Great (v. 21)
5. The broken horn (v. 8) speaks of Alexander’s death at the age of 32 in 323 BC (v. 22).
6. The four horns that stood up in place of the first horn (v. 8) speak of Alexander’s four notable generals who divided up the kingdom of Greece into four separate kingdoms, following Alexander’s death (v. 22). These four horns parallel the four heads of Daniel 7:6.

***Dan. 7:6 After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.***

- a. *Seleucus* ruled Syria, Babylonia, southern Turkey, Persia, and a region to the east.
- b. *Cassander* ruled Macedonia and Greece.
- c. *Lysimachus* ruled Thrace (Bulgaria) and much of Asia Minor (western Turkey).
- d. *Ptolemy* ruled Egypt, Cyprus, and Israel.

### IV. THE ANTICHRIST’S PERSONALITY AND POWER (DAN. 8:23-25)

A. Daniel 8 emphasizes the Antichrist’s activities related to the Jewish people and the temple in Jerusalem (8:9-14), as well as the great cruelty in his reign of terror over the nations (8:23-25).

***Dan. 8:23 In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise [Antichrist], having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. 24 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. 25 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 [Jesus]; but he shall be broken without human means.***

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1. *Their kingdom*: In the latter days, the Antichrist will arise from the bloodline of one of the four generals (i.e. ethnic people groups) and/or one of the four geopolitical kingdoms (i.e. geographic territories) that arose after Alexander's death. Since Antiochus Epiphanes came from the actual bloodline of Seleucus and was clearly a biblical type of the future Antichrist it is apparent that he will come out of the geographic territory and/or ethnic people groups that are historically associated with the Seleucid Empire (Greece).

2. *Fullness of transgression*: In the generation of the LORD's return, sin will reach the greatest heights in history (Isa. 24:5-6; Dan. 8:23; 12:10; Mt. 13:30; 1 Thes. 2:16; Rev. 13:3-4; 9:20-21; 14:18; 17:4; 18:5).

***Rev. 9:20 But the rest of mankind... did not repent... that they should not worship demons... 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.***

a. Jesus likened these day unto the days of Noah (Gen. 6-10; Lk. 17:26).

***Gen. 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... 12 for all flesh had corrupted their way...***

b. Yet, where sin abounds, grace does much more abound (Rom. 5:20). Unprecedented unity, righteousness and purity across the body of Christ will also reach the greatest heights in history, as the Holy Spirit is poured out in great power across upon every nation, tribe and tongue (Isa. 60:1-2; Mt. 13:36-43; Jn. 14:12; Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Rev. 19:7).

3. *A king shall arise*: The Antichrist will be more than a religious, military and economic leader, he will be a political leader (i.e. king) at the time of the end (8:17) when sin "reaches its fullness" (8:23). He is called the "king of Babylon" (Isa. 14:4), "willful king" (Dan. 11:36) and "king of the North" (Dan. 11:40).

***Dan. 11:36 Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods...***

4. *Fierce features*: The Antichrist will have fierce features (8:23), referring to his bold or strong countenance. In other words, He will be resolute in his cruelty and without any capacity for compassion or mercy. Therefore, it's not surprising that the most prominent name used for him in Scripture is the "beast," listed thirty-six times in the book of Revelation (Rev. 13; 14:9-11; 17:3-17; 19:19-21; 20:4, 10). He is also described as having an appearance "greater than his fellows" (Dan. 7:20).

***Rev. 13:3 And all the world marveled and followed the beast.***

***Dan. 7:20 The horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.***

5. *Sinister schemes*: His throne of iniquity will devise evil by law (Ps. 94:20) and through trickery cause his reign to prosper. This includes confirming a covenant with Israel and many in the Middle East (9:27). He will discern the hidden agendas and evil motives of others (8:23). He will solve complex problems through Satan's insight, including the spiritual realm (occult) and the natural realm of politics, war, economics, etc. His supernatural insight is depicted in Daniel 7 through the horn having "eyes" (7:8, 20).

***Dan. 7:8 In this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.***

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6. *Mighty power*: The Antichrist will not be limited to human power, insight and abilities, but his power and authority will be mighty (8:24) through Satanic empowerment (2 Thes. 2:9; Rev. 11:7; 13:2; 17:8).

a. Satan will give his power to the Antichrist to do great miracles (Rev. 13:2).

***Rev. 13:2 The dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne, and authority.***

***2 Thes. 2:9 The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish...***

b. This beast will ascend from the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7; 17:8). This gives us insight into his connection with darkness that is unique to any human being. Satan and the spirit of antichrist have been together for a long time. This is the mimic of the Father and the Son. Notice that Jesus humbled himself and descended to earth, whereas the beast exalts himself and ascends to the earth. There are currently many angels held in the pit awaiting judgment (1 Pet.; Jude; Rev. 9).

***Rev. 11:7 The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war...***

***Rev. 17:8 The beast... will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.***

7. *Destroy fearfully*: He will destroy in a fearful way and on an unprecedented level (8:24). Here the Hebrew word for fearfully includes the concept of unique, as in “uniquely fearful”. He will use unique ways to kill in large numbers and will use fearful methods to produce terror. Both the beast-man and the beast-kingdom are emphasized as being “different” (Dan. 7:7, 19, 23, 24). Adolf Hitler is an example from recent history of an evil leader who killed unprecedented numbers of people in unique and fearful ways, using gas chambers and ovens, etc. ISIS is a modern-day example using fearful methods that cause terror.

***Dan. 7:7 A fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces... It was different from all the beasts that were before it...***

8. *Destroy the mighty*: He will not be afraid to kill the mighty—the most prominent world leaders (politics, finances, science, etc.) and beloved public figures (8:24). He will kill three of the mightiest political leaders at the end of the age. They are described as being “plucked out by the roots” (7:8), “falling before” the little horn (7:20), and “being subdued” by him (7:24). This unprecedented political event is a major sign of the times to alert the prophetic church of the emergence of the Antichrist.

***Dan. 7:7 It [beast] had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots.***

9. *Destroy the holy*: Two groups are considered to be “holy”: First, the *nation of Israel* in the sense that they are “set apart” by God for a special purpose and second, the Church in being both “set apart” and being “washed from our sins” (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33-35; 12:7, 10; Rev. 1:5-6; 6:9-11; 7:9, 14; 9:21; 11:7; 13:7, 15; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4; Mt. 10:21-22, 28; 24:9; Lk. 12:4-7; 21:16-19; Jn. 15:18-16:4). Satan vents his rage against both Israel and the Church (Rev. 12:13-17).

***Rev. 12:13 The dragon... persecuted the woman [Israel] who gave birth to the male Child [Jesus]... 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring [Church], who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.***

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10. Destroy the wealthy: The Antichrist will destroy many in their prosperity (8:25). He won't be afraid to kill the rich, because he won't need their favor to succeed like politicians do. Their wealth will not protect them from the Antichrist, because he has no capacity for kindness or mercy. Harlot Babylon will be the wealthiest organization in history, yet the ten-king confederation of the beast will destroy it (Rev. 17:16).

***Rev. 17:16 The ten horns... on the beast... hate the harlot... and burn her with fire.***

11. Cunning: He will be cleverly devise propaganda to deceive multitudes through his sinister schemes (8:23). He will use all means (i.e. music, media, arts) to make his message more convincing. These will be backed up with supernatural displays of power (Rev. 13:12-14). The definition of “cunning” is the crafty use of special skill or knowledge that is characterized by trickery. Deceit and cunning will be his weapons. He will present himself as a man of peace, but will cause many wars and great destruction (Rev. 6:1-2).

***Rev. 6:2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it [Antichrist] had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.***

***Rev. 13:12 And he [False Prophet] exercises all the authority of the first beast [Antichrist] in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast...***

12. Deceit will prosper: He will advance his reign by convincing the multitudes with lies that are backed up by supernatural signs to confirm them (2 Thes. 2:9-10; Rev. 13:11-17; 16:13-14; 19:20). This is not surprising considering that his father the devil is a master deceiver and liar from the beginning (Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:9; 20:3, 8, 10).

***2 Thes. 2:9 The coming of the lawless one [Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish...***

***Rev. 16:13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.***

a. His greatest sign is a mock of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, mentioned three times (Rev. 13:3, 12, 14). Whether he is truly resurrected or not we do not know, however it seems to be the time that the man is fully inhabited by the spirit that ascends out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7; 17:8 [x2]).

***Rev. 13:12 And he [False Prophet]... causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Rev. 13:3, 14)***

b. This deceptive sign will galvanize the world's belief that the Antichrist is invincible (Rev. 13:3-4).

***Rev. 13:3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they... worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”***

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13. *Prosper and thrive*: The Antichrist shall prosper and thrive for 1,290 days (Dan. 8:24; 12:11). He shall temporarily thrive politically, militarily, and financially, even while doing evil and destroying people. His power and wealth will increase as his armies conquer more nations and seize their natural resources. Daniel's first vision describes this as "trampling the residue" (Dan. 7:7, 19). The unsuspecting will assume that his prosperity is a sign of God's blessing on him, giving them confidence to join him (Rev. 13:3-4).

14. *Exalt himself*: The Antichrist will have an unholy boldness in his perverted wisdom. He will have no fear of consequences for his ruthless attacks on the nations. Even the boldest leaders in history have had some fear of the consequences of their actions. Paul referenced Daniel's prophecies of the Antichrist exalting himself (Dan. 8:11, 25; 11:36) and sitting as God in the Jerusalem temple (2 Thes. 2:4).

***2 Thes 2:3 The son of perdition, 4 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.***

a. Even Adolf Hitler, who conquered so many over a 3-year period in his "blitzkrieg" or lightning wars (1939-1941) was concerned about reprisals from other leaders like Stalin in Russia, Mussolini in Italy and Churchill in England. Yet, the Antichrist will fear no one, due to his blinding arrogance.

b. Antichrist will defiantly blaspheme the God of Israel (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36; Rev. 13:5-6).

***Dan. 11:36 The king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods...***

15. *Rise against Jesus*: The Antichrist will stand in arrogant defiance of Jesus, the Prince of princes (8:11, 25). He will convince the kings of the earth to join him in making war against Jesus (Rev. 17:14; 19:19).

***Rev. 19:19 And I saw the beast [Antichrist], the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse [Jesus] and against His army.***

16. *Broken without human means*: The Antichrist will be destroyed in a supernatural way before the nations (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45; 8:25; Rev. 19). He will be broken without any human intervention.

***Dan. 2:34 A stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay [Antichrist Empire], and broke them in pieces. 35 ...so that no trace of them was found.***

a. Adolf Hitler had over 40 attempts to take his life, yet escaped them all. Joseph Kony of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda has also escaped capture since the 1980's by use of the demonic.

b. Daniel described the Antichrist's judgment six times, as being consumed, destroyed, and broken without human means (divine intervention), and that no military alliance will be able to help support him, or rescue him from God's judgment (Dan. 2:34-35; 44-45; 7:11, 26; 8:25; 11:45).

***Dan. 7:11 I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.***

***Dan. 7:26 They shall take away his [Antichrist's] dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.***

***Dan 11:45 He [Antichrist] shall come to his end, and no one will help him.***

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B. Summary: Antichrist will be the most powerful political, spiritual, economic and military leader in history:

1. Military genius (tactics/strategy) – Dan. 8:24, 25; 11:38-39; Rev. 6:2; 13:2,16
2. Oratorical genius (moves masses of people) – Dan. 11:32, 36; 8:23
3. Political genius (deceptive diplomacy) – Dan. 7:23; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:8, 12; 17:11-12
4. Commercial genius (economic prosperity) – Dan. 8:9, 24; 11:36, 43; Rev. 13:16-17
5. Religious genius (doctrines and history) – 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:4, 8, 12
6. Intellectual genius (science, math, technology, languages, etc.) – Dan. 7:25; 8:23
7. Occult genius (demonology, miracles, human sacrifice) – Dan. 8:24; 11:39; Rev. 13

### V. THE IMPORTANCE AND RELIABILITY OF THE VISION (DAN. 8:26-27)

A. Gabriel affirmed that the vision was true, and Daniel was overwhelmed again (Dan. 7:15, 26; 8:26-27).

***Dan. 8:26 The vision of the evenings and mornings [v. 1-14]... is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future. 27 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.***

1. Evenings and mornings: Gabriel's name for the vision of the 2,300 days (8:14).
2. It is true: Gabriel emphasized the importance and reliability of the vision (Dan. 8:26). In other words, the coming persecution and ultimate victory of God's people, as well as the total defeat and eternal punishment of the Antichrist will surely come. This is similar to the mighty angel swearing that Israel's trouble was coming for a limited time (Dan. 12:7).

***Dan. 12:7 He [the angel]... swore... that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time [3½ years]; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.***

3. Seal the vision: Gabriel told Daniel to seal or preserve the vision (8:26). In this case, the word "seal" does not mean to conceal or hide, but to write it down and seal it up to preserve it. Daniel was commanded to seal it because it was about things that would happen "many days in the future" (8:26). The saints in the end times would need this important revelation. To seal up the vision meant to write it down and preserve it, not to make it secret (7:28; 12:9).

4. In the future: Gabriel again emphasizes that this message is about the end-times (Dan. 8:17, 19, 23, 26).

***Dan. 8:17 He said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end"...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."... 23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise... 26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings... refers to many days in the future."***

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5. Sick for days: Daniel was negatively impacted by both the first and second visions (Dan. 7:15, 26; 8:27), because of the dreadful nature of the Antichrist Empire and the severe persecution that he saw coming to Israel. If this vision does not make us sick, then we have not yet understood what Daniel saw.

***Dan. 8:27 I fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business.***

6. Astonished by the vision: As he meditated on the vision, he was astonished by what he saw.

***Dan. 8:27 I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.***

8. Understanding the vision: No one fully understood the vision (Dan. 8:27). Even with Gabriel's help of personally interpreting the vision to Daniel, there were still many implications that he did not fully grasp. Daniel told the vision to others, but none of them understood the full implications and magnitude either.

B. In Daniel's fourth vision, the Lord promised that in the end times many of His people would not only understand the things pertaining to the book of Daniel (Dan. 12:10), but would instruct many in preparation to prevail during this unprecedented period of time (Dan. 11:33-35).

***Dan. 12:10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.***

***Dan. 11:33 Those of the people who understand shall instruct many... 35 Some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.***

C. Jeremiah said God's people would have mature understanding of His plans in the latter days (Jer. 23:20).

***Jer. 23:20 The Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart [His plans]. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. (Jer. 30:24)***

D. Our greatest means of preparation isn't in storing food, water and guns, but in knowing the Bridegroom-King and His end time plan to restore all things (Acts 3:21). He calls this wisdom (Dan. 12:10; Mt. 25:1-11).



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### VI. CONCLUSION: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR (DAN. 8:15-27)

- The Antichrist will arise in the latter days when transgressors reach fullness.
- The Antichrist is a king and political leader.
- The Antichrist will have fierce features.
- The Antichrist will understand sinister schemes.
- The Antichrist will have mighty power through Satanic empowerment.
- The Antichrist will destroy in a fearful way and on an unprecedented level.
- The Antichrist will destroy mighty people - prominent world leaders and public figures.
- The Antichrist will destroy the holy people - Israel and the Church.
- The Antichrist will destroy wealthy people in their prosperity, including those in Harlot Babylon.
- The Antichrist will cause deceit to prosper through cunning, backed up with supernatural power.
- The Antichrist will temporarily prosper and thrive while doing evil for 3 ½ years.
- The Antichrist will exalt himself against the God of Israel without fear of consequences.
- The Antichrist will rise in defiance against Jesus.
- The Antichrist will be destroyed by Divine intervention.