

## Sermon: Gabriel's Answer

Text: Daniel 8

### Discussion Questions:

When reading through the Old Testament, basically the last 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of it is written by men called "The Prophets." Four of these men (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel & Daniel) wrote rather lengthy books—which is why we now call these "The Major Prophets." The remaining twelve books (from Hosea to Malachi) are called "The Minor Prophets." This isn't because they are less important. It just has to do with the fact that they wrote less.

When we think of what a "prophet" does—we almost always focus on the way they predicted the future (known as foretelling). And yes, the test of a "true prophet" was whether or not what they said would happen actually happened (Deut. 18:22).

But the calling and work of a prophet was far more than foretelling the future. They were also used by God to bring words of great encouragement and comfort! This role of the prophet is known as forth-telling. Prophets like Elijah and Jeremiah spent most of their energies reiterating and reminding God's people of WHO God is and WHAT He is doing in the world (The Upper Story).

I don't believe that God is raising up "prophets" today in the same way He did in the days of the Old Testament...or as He did with John the Baptist. We now have the completed Word of God (Genesis through Revelation). God is speaking to us today through His Word (which is LIVING and ACTIVE), through His creation (the heavens declare the glory of God), and through the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His children as we read His Word and listen to His "inner voice."

I do believe, though, that the GIFT of prophecy is still given by God. In these days of confused situations, the work of FORTH-TELLING is VITAL! We all need to be constantly brought back to the hope and truth of the Word of God. The gift of declaring the misunderstood or unrealized truths of God's Word is the primary function of prophecy today. For those who open their Bible and are discouraged by things they can't understand, the forth-telling insights by those who have the spiritual gift of prophecy help clarify the loving intentions of the AUTHOR of the Bible.

- Talk about these two aspects of what a prophet is called to do.
  - Has it been your impression that the primary thing that a "prophet" does is foretell the future?
  - Restate in your own words the difference between foretelling, and forth-telling.
  - Why is the gift of prophecy so important today? When you think about the upcoming generations, do you think they have good understanding of the message of the Bible?
  - Have you ever been helped or blessed by the prophetic gifts that God has given to someone who has explained the Bible to you? How did God use those gifts to open your eyes to what God is saying to you? What role do you believe the Holy Spirit played in this?

## Examination:

- Read **Daniel 8:1-14**

- Once again, Daniel provides context and historical detail before telling us the vision that he saw. Why is this important? What difference does it make?
- We know that Daniel spent his life in the capital city of Babylon. However, IN THE VISION Daniel finds himself in a place called Susa, sitting alongside a canal. This doesn't mean that Daniel was actually, physically there. Why do you think God might PLACE Daniel in this distant place as the context for this vision?
- In verses 5-12, Daniel sees two animals—a ram with two horns; and a very swift goat with a single horn (no, not a unicorn ☺). We will see from verses 20-21 that the ram is Medo-Persia, and the goat is Greece. This is now the third time that God is describing these two empires. How are they described in Daniel 2 (vv. 31-33)? How are they described in Daniel 7 (vv. 5-6)?
- What are the similarities between the leopard of chapter 7, and the goat of chapter 8?
- Verses 9-12 describe—much like Daniel 7—the appearance of “another horn.” We know from chapter 7 that this is describing a person. A leader. A ruler. How do these four verses describe this person? Make a list of how he is described.
- Verse 13 refers to four things that are referred to (be fulfilled) as a result of this ruler. What are they?
- Verse 14 talks about 2,300 “evenings and mornings.” If an “evening and morning” is one full day—how many years & months is that? Another way to interpret this is a “morning” counts as one, and an “evening” counts as another. This would cut it in half to 1,150 days. How many years and months is that?

- Read **Daniel 7:15-27**

- In our study of Daniel to this point, we have run across a reference in chapter 3 to “one who looks like a son of the Gods,” and in chapter 7 to “one like a son of man.” Here in verse 15, we have “one who looked like a man” talking to the angel Gabriel. Who do you think this is, and what does he say to Gabriel?
- Gabriel's words remove all doubt regarding the two animals. Is that helpful?
- Verse 23 talks about “the latter part of their reign.” Whose reign? What happens?
- It's clear that this “master of intrigue” is the “horn” mentioned in v. 9. What more do we learn about him (vv. 24-25), and what happens to him?

[Note: As you learn in the sermon, this wicked ruler that emerges out of the divided Greek Empire is a man named Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He is a madman (much like Hitler) who tries to destroy Israel. He completely desecrates the temple in Jerusalem by sacrificing a pig (an abomination of desolation)—and sets up an idol honoring Zeus. How many “morning & evening” sacrifices fail to take place? Exactly 1,150. Following his “reign of terror,” he is ultimately “destroyed” by a revolt led by a man named Judas Maccabee. When the Jews regain control of the temple, they re-light the sacred candles—but only have enough oil to keep the fire going for one day. However, miraculously, the candles remain lit for eight days!]

## Application:

This chapter might be a bit confusing to us—but for the Jews who endured the terror of Antiochus Epiphanes, it meant the world! It shows them, and us!, that God has ALL THINGS in His control!