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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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WHAT MAKES A NATION FREE?

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL
NUMBER 23
DANIEL 8:19-27

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

When God led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and into Caanan, he meant for them to be a free people. For several hundreds of years, they were free and they worshipped God and followed after his teachings. Then they disobeyed God, went away from him, and it became necessary for God to discipline them. This he did in two ways. First, he allowed foreign troops to come in and possess the land and make slaves of them, but they were allowed to stay in their own land.

Second, he then in 721 B.C. allowed the Assyrians to come in and take away the ten northern tribes. To this day they have never returned to their land. Then in 586 B.C. God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to come in and destroy Jerusalem and take Judah captive to Babylon for 70 years. Then in 516 B.C. they were back in the land and the second temple was completed and they returned to worship and Bible doctrine.

The Golden Age of Israel

At the end of that 70 year captivity in Babylon, God moved the Persians to allow the children of Israel to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Thus began 200 years of their golden age. They got with Bible doctrine and they had amazing peace and prosperity. All around them there was conflict and trouble but it never touched the Jews for 200 years. Then they forgot God and left Bible doctrine and God allowed Alexander the Great to come in and they were placed under discipline again.

The Dual Fulfillment of Scripture.

In reading books like Isaiah or Zechariah or Daniel it is always good to keep in mind the fact that quite often Scripture has a dual fulfillment. We cannot understand much of the prophetic Scripture apart from this idea of dual fulfillment. We will be reading along about something that has local reference, but it also has a far off application. In Matthew 17 we have the story of how Christ took Peter, James and John into the mountain and was transfigured before them. This was not some stunt to call attention to the greatness of Jesus Christ. This experience was indeed a lesson to let the disciples see the majestic glory of Jesus Christ, but it was also a bird's-eye view of coming attractions. It was a prediction of what Christ would be like in his glory at the time of his second advent. So this incident had both a near and a far fulfillment.

When Antiochus Epiphanes took over Palestine, he placed a golden statue of himself in the holy place in the temple. The far fulfillment of this act will be in the last half of the Tribulation when the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire will place his statue in the holy temple and attempt to make the whole world bow down and worship him. So one of these events is history while the other one is prophetic about what is yet to come.

Now here in this section of Daniel where we are now studying, we see that God had pulled back the curtain so Daniel could see a whole era

of history which was coming in the future. At that time Daniel was the best informed Christian in the earth, so on that foundation and because of that background, God gave him this added information. Knowledge is always based on knowledge. In our last study we saw how Daniel was so shocked by this information that he fell over in a dead faint. But God revived him and stood him on his feet and gave him this added information. (A principle that emerges here is this-- You cannot understand God if you are mentally, physically and spiritually asleep.)

DANIEL 8:20 "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." For those who are always finding fault with an accurate interpretation of Daniel, I suggest that they should read verses like this one. We don't have to guess about which kingdom God is describing here. He tells us that this ram represented the Media-Persian Empire.

DANIEL 8:21 "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." This verse explains to us that the goat and the great leader here stood for Greece and Alexander the Great. (When Alexander the Great started to destroy Jerusalem, the High Priest showed him this part of the Bible that referred to him and as a result he spared Jerusalem and was kindly to the Jews from then on.)

DANIEL 8:22 "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power." This explains the fall of Alexander the Great and the rise of the four generals that took his place--Seleucus--Ptolemy--Casander--Licinicus.

DANIEL 8:23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." You should draw a line between verses 22 and 23 for many centuries pass by between those verses. "In the latter time" is an idiom which is used to refer to the end of time, the Tribulation. "A king of a fierce countenance" refers to the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire. Antiochus Epiphanes was but a faint picture of what was coming in the Tribulation.

DANIEL 8:24-25 "And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." These verses describe the dictator of the Tribulation. He will be the most powerful man in the world and he will be a man of great destruction. He is going to destroy many of God's people. God will allow him to prosper. Notice that by means of peace he will destroy many nations. He will oppose Jesus Christ and will place a golden statue of himself in the holy temple. Now we saw how Antiochus Epiphanes did this, and now the dictator in the Tribulation does the same thing. Eventually Christ will return in the right moment and destroy the armies at Armageddon and destroy the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

We See The Description Of This Dictator in 2 Thess. 2:1-9

The people in the church in Thessalonica had gotten upset because someone had come in and had told them that when Paul was with them he didn't tell them the truth about coming events. These imposters tried to persuade the Thessalonians that they were living in the last times and that Christ was going to return soon. They had forged the name of Paul to some letters he didn't write and had done everything they could to get the people confused. Here in 2 Thessalonians Paul reminds them that he taught them all these things when he was with them. He had taught them--

- a. There will be a falling away first. This really means "a departure" and this is a reference to the rapture of the church. The church will be taken out of the world before the Tribulation begins.
- b. The man of sin will be revealed. Antiochus Epiphanes was not this man he was only a type like this man will be when he is revealed. He was like this man will be, and he is described in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17.
- c. This man is going to exalt himself as God. Antiochus Epiphanes did this. The dictator of the Revived Roman Empire will also do this.

Let us look for a moment at the history of the Roman Empire. For some reason historians like to play down Julius Caesar. I believe they discount men of the past like Julius Caesar because they are jealous of them. Historians play down Julius Caesar and play up Augustus Caesar. Augustus was the pimply-faced nephew of Julius Caesar who would never have amounted to anything had it not been for Julius Caesar and the system he set up for the empire. They took unto themselves the title of Emperor or Kurios and it meant deity, it meant they called themselves Lord. Tiberius Caesar followed Augustus and for the last ten years of his life he lived on Capri. He was referred to as Kurios, Lord. Caligula followed him, and he was a real creep, but they also made a God out of him. Then came Claudius Caesar and they called him Kaiser, or Caesar or Emperor. Then Nero came to the throne who was the son-in-law of Claudius and you know what a madman he was. He tried to learn to play the flute, but he never quite made it. He played the flute about like Jack Benny plays the violin. He went to Athens and played in a contest and because he was the Emperor they gave him first prize. All of them told him how beautifully he played, all except one. Vespasian told him the truth and told him his playing was terrible. In a garden party when all the others were complimenting Nero, Vespasian came right out and told him how lousy he really was. So Nero said to him: "You know what I'm going to do with you? I'm going to send you to Camp Polk, Louisiana. (Not really. I just put that in there for that is the worst place I can think of.) He sent him to Caesarea in Palestine. Nero thought he would send him down there and he would never become the Caesar of Rome. But Vespasian fooled him, and did eventually become Caesar. Then followed Titus and Domitian, who was absolutely a madman. He was the one who banished John to the Island of Patmos.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul reminds them that he told them that these things would all happen before the end of time.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:6 "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time." The thing that restrains here is none other than the Holy Spirit. The Roman Empire would have been revived long ago had it not been for the restraining power of the Holy Spirit.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:7 "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." The forces that are leading up to these terrible times are already at work in the world. But the Holy Spirit, until he is withdrawn, will hold these forces back.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:8 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" This is that final dictator. But he will be destroyed in the end by Jesus Christ.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9 "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," This dictator will have miraculous power like speaking in tongues and performing miracles. These are Satanic powers always.

Look for a moment at Revelation 13

Here we have a quick survey of history. The Roman Empire was wounded to death in 476 A.D. It lasted for a little over 500 years. Now before the end the deadly wound is going to be healed. The Roman empire is going to be revived. He will have great power and his power will last for 3½ years. He will rule the last half of the Tribulation. He will blaspheme the theology both of the Old and New Testaments. "If you have an ear to hear, then you better hear."

Look for a moment at Revelation 17

Here this dictator is described as the great whore. This is the religious description of this dictator. Revelation 13 is the political description. The scarlet colored beast is the Revived Roman Empire. This is the description of Ecumenical Religion when it is fully organized. The Revived Roman Empire will wear the robes of religion. Golden chains and royal robes, riding over the consciences of people.

Now back to Daniel 8:26

DANIEL 8:26 "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days." These things I have shown you are true. But God reminds Daniel that these apostate Jews won't understand these things if they are told them now. One day they will be able to understand, but not now. So Daniel was commanded to shut up the vision for the present. But now, it is given so in our time we can understand these things.

God's Kindness To Daniel

God had actually just let Daniel read the newspaper of his day and see the inside story of events in the world. Large sections of history had been run by the mind of Daniel, and he had been permitted to see these events. As a result, Daniel fainted. Now Daniel is not the fainting type. He had stood before kings and had interpreted dreams and had slept with the lions in the lion's den. He had stood in a banquet hall and had read the writing on the wall which told of the fall of the empire. But here he fainted away and was sick for several days. He was sick for he had read history and had seen the stupidity of the people.

Now what is it that makes a nation great? It is the Word of God. It is doctrine.

The government is to lay hands off the private lives of the people. Men shall make their living by the sweat of their brow. If a man will not work, neither let him eat. Daniel had a real traumatic experience and he became ill. He saw the Chaldean Empire collapse and he was sick over what he saw.

But notice the end of the story--"I rose up and did the king's business." The lesson for us is this--No matter how bad the times may be, you get right up and move on and do the king's business.