Dan. 8: 8-13, 23-25

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Dr. Criswell Sermon Delivered Sunday Morning, Feb. 13, 1972

There is so much about Him here in the Bible that all I am able to do in the brief period of time, such as an hour like this, is to summarize some of the things that the Bible presents concerning Him.

Just as a beginning text in our preaching through the Book of Daniel, we are in the 8th Chapter, and in Chapter 8, Verse 9: "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land, toward Palestine. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified Himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away," and so it continues for verse after verse. Then out of the passage that we read together in Revelation 13, "And they worshipped Satan, the dragon, the serpent, Lucifer, who gave his power unto the beast, the antichrist, the ultimate and final world dictator saying, "Who is like him? And who could make war against him?

That presentation in the 13th Chapter of the Book of Revelation, is something that Satan has done through all the continuing ages. He uses intermediaries to war against the people of God. In the Garden of Eden, sheltered in bliss, in innocence, in superlative happiness, God placed our first parents. But outside of the gate of the garden, there is a sinister being, and he uses the serpent to accost the woman. What did that serpent look like? We only know him now, cursed, crawling on his belly eating dust. But in his unfallen nature, he must have been the most glorious creature God hath made beautiful, appealing to woman. He could talk to her. And Satan used the serpent to destroy our first parents.

You see that again in the story of Job when Job was given permission to act, when Satan was given permission to afflict Job, Job took Sabeans and destroyed all of his livestock and Satan took the Chaldeans and destroyed all of his camels.

You have that same thing in the story of the betrayal of Jesus. At the Last Supper when John asked Simon Peter to ask the Lord, "Who is it that betrays you?" The Lord replied, "It is he to whom I shall give the cup, so he took bread, dipped it in broth and handed it to Judas. He used Judas to betray the Lord.

You have that same intermediary used on the part of Satan in the 11th Chapter of the 2nd Corinthian Letter, that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and he sends for Paul's apostles, Paul's emissaries, that he might bring to destruction those who otherwise would embrace the truth.

This has been a program of Satan through the ages. He uses people to destroy the saints of God. But there is no character and there is no personality that appears in all biblical stories or human history like the ultimate and final dictator who is Satan's masterpiece. He is the great final antichrist. The last great awesome, terrible tyrant who shall rule over this earth.

In the 2nd Chapter of 1st John and the 4th Chapter of 1st John, the apostle speaks of many antichrists and of the spirit of antichrist. But they are all preparatory to the great final, the antichrist, and there is so much about that final dictator in the Bible.

For example, in the 7th Chapter of Daniel and the 8th Verse, he is the little horn in the story of human history. After the empires and the breaking up of the Roman Empire into the nations of the world, there comes finally a little horn who rules over all mankind. In the 9th Chapter of the Book of Daniel and the 27th Verse, he is there - the great desolator.

In the 24th Chapter of Matthew, he is there - the abomination of desolation. In the 2nd Chapter of 2nd Thessalonians, he is there - the man of sin who presents himself in the Temple of God, in the House of Jerusalem, as God himself. And in the 13th Chapter of the Revelation, he is there presented as the beast.

What is he like? In great and meticulous detail, the prophetic descriptions of the beast of the antichrist of the great final dictator in great detail. The Bible presents his description.

In the 13th Chapter of the Apocalypse, he says, "I stood upon the sands of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea;" that is, he comes out of chaotic, turbulent world conditions when the whole mass of mankind seems to be plunged into irretrevable, irrecoverable, insufferable despair. They are weary of war; they have no answers to their problems; the pain seems insoluble. It is out of the turbulent sea of mankind that he arises, and he arises quickly and powerfully and glorifully. This is described here in the Bible: "And the beast which I saw was like a leopard."

In the 7th Chapter of the Book of Daniel, that describes Alexander the Great, and it refers to the quickness, the swiftness, the alacrity with which he conquered the world. This great final dictator will be like a leopard, like Alexander the Great. He will suddenly rise and will conquer the whole earth. He is like a bear in the 7th Chapter of the Book of Daniel. Again, the lion represented the Golden Kindom of Nebuchadnezzar, and this final dictator will be regal in

his demeanor, in his stature, in the way he walks, in the way he carries his head, in all or his gestures, and life - he will be the king. And the Scriptures say this lion-like man wounded unto death but miraculously recovered; the whole world will wonder after him and the dragon, Satan, Lucifer will give unto him his power, his throne, and his authority - the glory of the whole world will be placed in his hands.

Now the reason for such a thing is very obvious. When the world is in turmoil, men turn in any direction for an answer and for a solution. I would hardly have believed that had I not lived to see the rise of Hitler in those days. The German people were one of the great cultured peoples of the world. If a man sought a degree in a university, especially a special degree studying a field separate and unique, he went to a university in Germany. They were a cultured, educated, civilized people, but they were also depressed. They lived in poverty and shame after World War I and in their necessity and need, Hitler came and promised them victory - a place in the Sun, the super race with supermen. And to the astonishment of the world, Hitler became the absolute Fuhrer of Germany. That is the kind of a thing that will happen at the end of time as the world becomes more turbulent and involved and finally plunges into terrible, indescrible war. They will turn to anybody who will promise peace and unity and prosperity.

The Pax Romana was not something nearly so much forced on the civilized world in the days of the Caesars as it was something that the nations of the civilized world accepted themselves. For example, the Adlicks kings of Pergamum gave the Adlim Empire to Rome - gave it to the Caesars,

because they saw no other way out for security and defense.

Now, just another Pax Romana, the Bible says will obtain when the great dictator comes. He comes in the 6th Chapter of the Revelation riding on a white horse and the whole world bows before him. It is in such turmoil and such agony, such blood shed and war that they seek somebody who can bring a way out. I think of that in the world today. I just wonder if these processes now continue that we are watching in our newspapers and in our daily magazines, what is the ultimate outcome? To what does it lead?

On the radio this morning, I listened to the broadcaster as he described the agony of England and from every side the newcaster said, "Prime Minister Heath is being assailed and attacked. There are hardly answers, they are shutting down the light plant. The whole nation is being

plunged into distress."

You haven't seen in your lifetime the sorrow of a nation such as you read in Ulster - the five counties in Northern Ireland. What would you say of the outcome of the turbulent situation in which the great powers are involved in the Middle East? And now in the Indian Ocean? And what would you say is the ultimate answer to be found in the great moving monster, the Red Dragon of China, and all of Southeast Asia? And as though this was not enough, I heard a newcast this morning in which the man was describing the lengths to which some of the organized groups in America are going to turn to make this nation a veritable culprit against President Nixon as the coming election approaches.

It is out and the book says here, it is out of the sea of turmoil and trouble and trial and tribulation and terror that he arises and he comes as the answer to all of the problems of mankind

In the days of the French Revolution, their watchwords were liberty, fraternity, and equality This man, this ultimate final antichrist and dictator will come with the watchwords of peace and unity and prosperity, and the whole world will receive him as a way out, an answer to the problems

Now the Bible begins in great detail to describe what happens. For the first part of Daniel's 70th week, described in Daniel 7:26 and 27. For the first part of Daniel's 70th week, he is indeed all that he promised to be. He gives to the Jews their homeland; he makes a covenant with the Jewish nation; he's their defender, benefactor and protector; and he brings unity and Then suddenly, as the Book of Daniel describes, he changes; prosperity and peace to the earth. he is something else. He is a fright; he is a fury; he is a terror.

Now the Bible is written from the standpoint of God's chosen people, the Jews, and Daniel describes in detail how in the midst of that 70th week this ultimate dictator - this final antichrist - breaks the covenant with the people of God, and he turns into a fiend and a persecutor.

He plunges the entire earth into war.

First, in the 6th Chapter of the Revelation, he comes riding a white horse - the great marvelous answer to humanity's needs to governmental necessity. Then he is followed by a red horse of war and a black horse of famine and a pale horse of death. The whole earth is plunged into a mysterium of blood leading up, of course, to the battle of Armageddon.

And in the trying, troublous tribulation (that is what the Bible calls it - the Great Tribulation), in those trying days, there is persecution of a Jew unexcelled and unparalleled. Here is something else that you find in the Bible repreated again and again and again. Over and over again the Bible says that as the end time approaches, as the great consummation of history draws nigh, it says that the Jews will suffer unparalleled trouble and persecution.

For example, here in the 20th Chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, he is describing those awesome and he uses it in a nicture. in a sentence that is overwhelming. He says it will be as if

and in pain and in agony and in suffering? And he says: "Alas, for that day it is even the time of Jacob's trouble." This is just one passage out of a multitude that predict toward the end time, Israel will find tiself in unparalleled trouble and sorrow and persecution.

Now the Bible no less says that about the Christian faith. My dear people, there is no such thing as persecuting the Jew. Until just a little later you find that same bitterness and venon poured out toward the people of Christ; there is no exception to that. Don't you ever think otherwise. If the Arab hates the Jew, give him time he'll hate the Christian. If the Slavic world despises the Jew, the Slavic world will despise the Christian. If Egypt is an enemy of the Jew, he is also an enemy of the Christian, and an enemy of America. There is no such thing as persecution of the Jew without also persecution of the Christian. And that is why in the 7th Chapter of the Book of Revelation, you have a description of the Great Tribulation.

There it is mostly described concerning the people of Christ and they are so innumerable to have suffered under the iron hand of that final dictator until John says when he saw them he could not count their number, there were so many. Our Lord says that were not those days shortened, no place would be safe, then he added but for the elect state those days shall be shortened. They are in biblical prophecy whatever that means. They are one half of Daniel's 70th week, 42 months, 1,260 days, time, times and a dividing of time. It will not last forever, but those awful, awesome days of horror and tribulation under earth's final dictator will find an answer in the intervention of Christ from Heaven at the battle of Armagedon, which is fully described in the 9th Chapter, the 14th Chapter and the 19th Chapter of the Apocalypse.

Now, here in the Book of Daniel, let me take a large section and summarize it. In the Book of Daniel, in Chapter 8, Verse 9 through 14, and again in Verses 23 through 25, and then again in Chapter 11, Verses 21 through 26 and in Verse 36 to the end, you have the description of the antichrist himself. But in the two passages, you have a detailed description of the prototype of this final dictator.

The description in Daniel, in Chapter 8 and in Chapter 11, the description concerns Antiochus Epiphanes. Now this is a tragic era of persecution in the life of Isreal that was fulfilled years ago. But it is presented in the Bible in meticulous detail because Antiochus is a prototype, a picture of the great final antichrist.

What is Antichrist like? What does he do? You will find it in Antiochus Epiphanes more than any other human who ever lived, more than even Judas himself, is Antiochus Epiphanes presented in the Bible as a prototype, a picture of the final dictator who shall rule over this world. Antiochus Epiphanes actually is Antiochus the 4th. He was the 8th in a long line of the Solidus who governed Syria, who built their capital at Antioch named by Solidus the First in honor of his father. He reigned from about 175 BC to about 163.

What is he like, for what he is like is what the ultimate dictator is going to be like.

Now let me say two things about him among a multitude that are presented. One, he is
inardently proud and lifted up and ambitious. He is Satan's true copy. He is Satan's true
incarnation. He is Satan's true instrument - just a prototype of a final dictator. For example,
when Antiochus came to reign, he coined the money of the realm of the kingdom and he wrote on his
coins. "Tiochus Antiochus, Tiochus Epiphanes, and Antiochus God Manifest." I don't need to
stagger that such a thing will be according to 2nd Chapter of Thessalonians, this final dictator
presents himself as God manifest.

Antiochus Epiphanes - I don't have to stagger at that because I read that inhumane story. This is what these men are like. This is what these men do. That is the spirit of Hitler; it is the spirit of any great dictator, and he has the spirit - proud, lifted up, regal, lion-like. Second thing about him, he is given to bitter and intractable persecution.

Down in Egypt when Antiochus was on his way to the conquering of the world, he was stopped by Rome. And in fury and frustration, he turned his forces away from Egypt and backed up through the Mediterranean. Then, to bit his anger he took his army into Jerusalem and attacked it. He killed 80,000 men, women and children. He sold 40,000 other men into slavery, and he plundered the temple, even taking the golden altar of incense that stood before the inner wall. Then he decided to extirpate and to destroy the Jewish religion forever and to substitute for it Greek worship and Greek culture. He took the temple at Jerusalem and dedicated it to Jupiter Olympus. He took a sow and offered it at the great brazen altar and took the juice of it and spread it all over the Temple and over the sacred vessels. In that way, he defied everything in the eyes of a Mozah Jew. He forbade the Jewish festivals and peace. Instead of tabernacles or Passover or Pentacost, they celebrated in the Temple the Bacchanalia worshipping Bacchus, the God of pleasure and wine and the Saturnalia worshipping Saturn and used harlots in the temple itself for those feast days. He forbade the observance of the Sabbath. He forbade the reading of the Scroptures and burned them. He forbade the institution of circumcision.

There were two mothers who circumcized their babies. They took those two babies, slew them, hung each one around its mother's neck, drove the women through the streets of Jerusalem up to the highest wall, and flung them head long to death.

First they cut out the tongues of the seven boys; then before the mother's eyes, they fried those boys to death, one at a time, in frying pans heated; and last of all murdered the mother. This is just somewhat of the long story of the agony of Israel under Antiochus Epiphanes, the great prototype of the great suffering and persecution yet to come under the earth's final dictator.

Now in those days, there was a priest at Midine, a town just outside of Jerusalem. There was a priest at Midine named Methadius, and he grieved over the sorrow of his people, and Methadius had five boys - John, Simon, Judas, Elazer and Jonathan. And upon a time when an emissary from Antiochus came to Midine, to make the Jews there bow before the altar of Jupiter, a Jew came to worship and when Methadius saw him, the aged priest, like Moses in Egypt, slew him and slew the officer, and a Maccabeen revolt was on. Methadius died soon after that being an aged man and he gave the torch of liberty and revolution to Judas, his third son, and Judas carried it to victory. Thereafter in this story as each boy was slain, the other boy picked up the torch, all five of them, and carried it on. And in 164 BC, Judas Maccabeus, Judas the Hammer, like Charles Markell, Charles the Hammer, Judas Maccabeus, Judas the Hammer.

In 164 BC, Judas won a victory over Antiochus and independence for his people Israel. The first thing they did was to reconsecrate and to rededicate the house of God. It lasted 8 days. The Jewish people celebrated that feast of reconsecration and dedication. It meant more to them than the dedication of the Solomon Temple itself. They call that today the Feast of Hanukkah. And on the 1st day, they light a candle and the 2nd day, a second one until finally in the 8 days there were 8 candles burning. It is a sign of victory and deliverance and dedication - the Feast of Lights.

And in God's Holy Word isn't it strange that it is at that feast itself, the Feast of Lights, the Feast of Hanukkah, that our Lord is standing on Solomon's porch in Jerusalem and he says three things in John 8 and 9 that come out of that feast. First, it was a feast of deliverance, of victory and their assurance. It gave God's people back God's house and God's land. The promises to Abraham and Jacob were confirmed to the people forever, and that was a sign and a pledge, and at the feast the Lord said to us, "I give unto my people eternal life and they shall never perish." It is a feast of deliverance and victory and assurance. "The soul that on Jesus had leaned for repose, I'll never, no never, desert to its pose. That soul though all Hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake." A feast of deliverance, assurance and victory. We shall not lose this war, we shall win it. God will crown us with ultimate and final victory.

Second, it is a Feast of Lights, and upon that occasion, Jesus stood and said, "I am the light of the world." They who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and we who do sit in the shadow of the valley of death, upon us light has shined, for he had brought light and immortality to light. There is no victory in the grave or in death, for Christ has won that victory for us. It is the Feast of Lights and in the gloom and darkness of death, there do we see the glorious light of the promise of Christ shining forever.

Last, it is a feast of dedication. In the story that gave the introduction to His word. "I am the light of the world," the story is the healing of a blindman, and they cast him out because of his words of witness to Christ. When the Lord heard that they cast him out, he found him and the Lord finding him said to him. "Does thou believe on the Son of God?" And the man who had been born blind said, "I don't know him, Lord, but I might believe in him. Who is he? Where is he?" And the Savior replied, "Thou has both seen him, and it is he that speaketh unto thee." And the man who was healed fell at the feet of Jesus and said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped Him. It is a dedidation; it is a commitment; it is a worship; it is a belief. It is an acceptance; it is a trust. It is a giving of one's soul and heart and life in faith and in hope; in life and in death; in youth and in aged time and eternity to the blessed Jesus.

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