

Series: The End Of The World As We Know It | **Title:** The Ram And The G.O.A.T. | **Scripture:** Daniel 8:1-27 ESV

Follow Along/Take Notes: Back of the worship guide or in the church app

Opening Line: This morning, we are talking about the ram and the G.O.A.T.

Introduction: There has been a debate going on for awhile in the sports world about who is the GOAT (the greatest of all time)

- Is it Tom Brady or Aaron Rogers
- LeBron James or Michael Jordan

However, there can only be one G.O.A.T.

- **Main Thought:** There Can Only Be One G.O.A.T.

While we have this debate amongst ourselves, Daniel was having difficulty trying to determine who the GOAT was in his day and age.

- Except he was trying to figure out who the greatest nation of all time would be, not a specific person in a particular sport.

Scripture: In chapter 8 of the book of Daniel, Daniel has a second dream related to the destruction of Babylon (the country where Israel is currently in exile). This dream takes place 2 years after the first dream. There are some similarities, as we are going to see, but we are also going to gain some new insight and understanding about the end of the world as we know it.

- Chapter 8 is split in half with the dream Daniel had (1-14) and then the explanation of what the dream means (15-27)

Read Daniel 8:1-27 NLT

I can already tell that some of you are lost. You know that you just read and heard words, but you can't really put them together in a comprehensible format.

Supporting Thought: It Is Difficult To Understand The End Of The World (v. 27)

Even Daniel, who had the dream AND had the dream interpreted to him by the angel Gabriel ended his commentary about this dream of the end of the world by saying "I still don't understand this."

- Before we move on in this message, and even in this series, you need to know that it's okay if you don't understand everything!
 - o I still don't understand everything! And just know that even if an angel came down from heaven right now and stood before you on this stage and explained how the end of the world was going to happen...you would still be confused!

Supporting Thought: End Times Prophecy Has Immediate AND Future Implications.

One of the beautiful and powerful things about the prophetic words written about the end times events is that they have an immediate implication for the people living during the time they were written as well as a future implication of the events that will occur leading up to Christ's return!

- This dream, as we see interpreted by the angel Gabriel in verses 20-25, represents the Persian empire being taken over by the Greek empire under Alexander the Great.
 - o The ruler that rises up in verse 23 is representative of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was an extremely evil ruler, and honestly, just a mad man.

While these verses have an immediate implication for Daniel and the Israelites he is writing to, they also have a future implication of the anti-Christ at the end of the world.

Read verses 17-19, 23-25

These verses here reveal to us the character of the anti-christ.

- He will be fierce, a master of intrigue (curiosity), become strong and powerful and succeed in everything he does, he will destroy powerful leaders, and he will seek to destroy those who follow Christ. Finally, at the end, he will wage war against Jesus himself, but he will be broken (he will not win!)

Why Is This Important For Us To Understand?

Because there can only be one G.O.A.T.!

- There can only be one person who is the greatest of all time, and that person is Jesus Christ!
 - o Yet, the anti-christ will come along and try to disrupt the legacy of Jesus. He will try to outshine and outdo him, thinking that he can beat him.
 - o And if the anti-christ thinks that he is the G.O.A.T., then he will think that he is more deserving of your worship than Jesus is.

Supporting Thought: The Enemy Wants To Destroy Your Worship!

Satan believes that if he can destroy your worship of God, then he can win. And he will try and destroy your worship by any means possible!

- This is nothing new. We see that the devil used Antiochus Epiphanes to physically destroy the worship of God when he came to power.

Read verses 11-12

One of the main ways that Satan attempts to destroy our worship of God is by using the nations of the world to disillusion us and try to make themselves the primary focus of our lives.

- When Antiochus came to power, he stopped allowing people to offer sacrifices to God. He placed a statue of Zeus in the temple, and used the offering table to perform human sacrifices to Him. He limited the worship of the people of God, and then He tried to replace it with false gods and false worship.

One of the main ways that we will know the end is near is when our worship is attacked!

When the world and its leaders begin to tell followers of Christ how to worship, when they can worship, where they can worship, and what they can worship, you can be sure that Jesus is coming back soon!

And sadly, we are seeing this begin to unfold before our very eyes.

- There are dozens of countries where it is illegal to share the gospel, where followers of Christ are meeting together in secret to worship the Lord and grow in their understanding of the Scriptures.
- We have seen over the last few decades in our own country other things become a priority on Sundays, the day we set aside to worship the Lord.
 - o Things like sports, or work, even hobbies and other things that entertain us and bring us joy.

I'm not saying that these things are wrong and you shouldn't enjoy them. But we have to be careful that we don't allow the things we enjoy to replace our worship of the Lord!

- Because, what we see at the end of Daniel's vision about what to expect about the end times is this:

Final Thought: All Earthly Kingdoms Will Come To An End And Jesus Will Be Glorified!

Read verses 13-14

There can be only one G.O.A.T., and that person is Jesus!

- He is the greatest of all time because he willingly chose to lay down his deity and become like us so we could be redeemed back to our Heavenly Father.
 - o He did what you and I can never do on our own, he lived a perfect and sinless life.
 - o And despite all of our flaws, our failures, our lack of obedience, and our pursuit of the things of this world, it was Jesus who chose to lay down his life for our salvation.

He truly is the greatest person of all time.

Spiritual Response: I'm going to ask two of our deacons, Allen and Jimmy to come forward and begin to prepare for communion.

As they come around and you receive the elements, I want you to take this time and reflect on your priorities.

- Are you making Jesus the center of your worship? Is He your primary focus?
 - o Or, are you worshipping something else? Has Satan tempted you with the pursuit of more money, a greater career, a better relationship with someone other than the person you are with?
- All of us need to take a moment and truly ask ourselves, is my worship being attacked? Have I been distracted lately from my relationship with God?
 - o If the answer is yes, I want you to take the next few moments before we receive communion together and ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you for not making Jesus your primary focus and to help you eliminate the things of this world that the devil is using to destroy your worship of Him.