



**MCG**  
**Study Guide**  
**Daniel 8**  
**April 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>**



**Prayer Requests:****Wednesday April 11<sup>th</sup> – The Corruption of Power**

(By NBBC's Bob Wilkins)

**Reading Daniel 8:1 - 4**

*"...none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased..."*

It was John Dalberg-Acton, 1st Baron Acton who wrote. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you add the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority." This has been seen to be true over and over again today by those who wield power in politics, in business, and in entertainment. The "Me Too" movement led by those who have suffered sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual assault by those having power over them, cannot be ignored. The corruption of power is seen also in the behaviour of dictators in Africa, where countries have been plunged into poverty and ruin while the powerful dictator pads his bank account. We see this demonstrated also in places like Syria where the country is virtually destroyed because of the leader in power. Playground bullies have also destroyed the lives of other children, resulting even with some committing suicide. The abuse of power leads to all kinds of other abuses and is one of the greatest social issues of our time.

The truth is that all of us have been given a certain amount of power, in which we are in certain positions of power, and we all have others who exercise power over us. The unfortunate thing is that we are all in

danger of misusing the power we have been given, and this can happen even in the church and in our families. In the reading, Daniel has a vision of a ram with two horns but one was higher than the other. This ram charged in all directions and “none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased.” Surely this could not describe us in any way!...but those who experience the misuse of power may also feel like they are being pushed around by a raging ram even if it is in the church or in the family.

What has surprised me again and again is that at the very same moment when Jesus was instituting the Lord’s Table which spoke of forgiveness and redemption, the disciples were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest.<sup>1</sup> Jesus reminded them that in the Kingdom the greatest would not be the one wielding the power but the one who serves. These followers of Jesus were in grave danger of desiring power and then misusing it. After over 50 years of ministry I am ashamed to repeat the number of times when I have seen an abuse of power even in the church. It is entirely unbecoming of the followers of Jesus who did not come to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for many.<sup>2</sup> This should be our spirit, not the wielding of power.

### **Meditation/Application**

You no doubt have experienced being the victim of an abuse of power. How did you feel when you experienced this? What did you do about it? Is there anything that you still have to do?

**Tell/draw/illustrate your story here...**

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 22:24 - 30

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 20:28

**Reflecting on the reading:**

The vision that Daniel had of the ram with two horns was a vision of the current world power – a Medo-Persian Empire that was aggressively exercising its power. What current world powers do you think may be abusing the power they have to the detriment of others? How would you suggest that Christians today could speak truth to power?

**Prayer Points:**

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Health concerns: Nicole Palings friend Lloyd; Siew Chang, Karen Flegg
- Pray that the Missional Community Groups continue to form around God's mission and resist temptations to consumerism and individualism



**Thursday April 12th – The Transience of Power**  
 (By NBBC’s Veronika Bankuti)

**Reading** Daniel 8:5 – 8

*“...at the height of its power the large horn was broken off...”*

It began three years ago with one person – the undisputed king of TV sitcoms of the 80s - the beloved Bill Cosby. Dozens of women came forward and accused him of drugging and sexually assaulting them over several decades. It came as a shock to the millions of fans. The outstanding father, this brilliant family man who seemed for all outward appearances a paragon of decency. It can’t be true!

However, this was only the beginning. 2017 was the year when the tsunami of the “Me Too” movement hit with full force. Famous people whom we trusted, admired and put on a pedestal because of their unusual and brilliant success in their chosen fields, were accused of sexual misconduct one after the other; Harvey Weinstein, Charlie Rose, Matt Laurel, Kevin Spacey, Dustin Hoffmann, Richard Dreyfuss - and the list goes on and on - 97 to date.

You may ask what does this have to do with our bible verse? At first glance, probably not much. But if we look again we find that the word of God is “living and active” and it is relevant in every age. *“...at the height of its power...”*.

These words deal with the deceptive and intoxicating effects of the power that success, fame and fortune brings. It speaks of the lulling effect that makes the powerful ones feel like these good times will never end! They can do what they like because they are special, not like other people, and will not be judged like others! In almost all cases, there was no backlash - not for decades!

Charlie Rose, the famous and charismatic journalist was one of my favourite interviewers. I watched him regularly on the PBS “Charlie Rose Show”. He had a very special way of creating a true sense of intimacy with his subject. The studio was simple; one round table with a few

chairs around it, low lighting - comfortable! It was an hour-long show, quite often with only a single guest. Charlie Rose would ask some very simple questions and about 15-20 minutes into the interview he leaned closer to the guest, listening intently but said very little. The guest took over the show! The atmosphere was created to draw the guest out and it worked perfectly! I watched what was to be his last show on Wednesday night and on Thursday morning on CBS Gail King and Nora O'Donnell reported that Charlie Rose had been suspended from both the Morning Show (which he co-hosted with them) and "The Charlie Rose Show" on PBS. Two days later he was terminated from both shows due to allegations of sexual misconduct. Just like that, he was gone! At age 75 after 40 years of stellar career and dozens of awards, Charlie Rose was history! The day of reckoning may delay – but it will surely come!

God delights in giving us good things. Some of us may have great success, fame and fortune. Praise and thank God and enjoy it, but realize that when much good fortune comes your way, temptation also increases!

The Lord tells us how to stand up to temptation; "For I am telling every single one of you, through the grace that has been given to me, not to have exaggerated ideas about your own importance. Instead develop a sober estimate of yourself based on the standard that God has given to each of you, namely trust".<sup>3</sup>

### **Meditation/Application**

We sometimes feel as if we do not have power. In many instances we may not, but we all have some power. Do a "power inventory", list those areas where you have power (you can start with power over your own decisions). Then ask yourself if there are any areas where you are not stewarding your power well.

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<sup>3</sup> Romans 12:3 CJB

**Reflecting on the reading:**

We are told that Daniel saw the goat “attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it...” Where do we see similar actions on today’s world stage?

**Prayer Points:**

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Pray for the mountainside MCG as they begin to form and meet
- Friend of NBBC Mark Zammit in Beaver Creek Institution
- Current NAFTA negotiations and Summer Student Jobs  
FYI: in response to our declined CSJ application, a few NBBC’ers have filled an activity form to invite others to monetarily contribute towards our 2018 summer students at NBBC. See staff for details. Let’s see what God will do and praise Him for nudging us.

**Friday April 13<sup>th</sup> – The Arrogance of Power** (By NBBC's Blair Clark)

**Reading** Daniel 8:9 – 14

*“It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord.”*

The often-quoted proverb, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely” can be witnessed in every culture, every continent, every race, every gender and every religion.

Just in the last two years, corruption scandals have led to the downfall of the presidents of Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Peru and Zimbabwe, and in many other countries it is being exposed but the hold on power has been sufficiently strong to enable them to remain in office.

Why does power corrupt? One of the reasons is that power breeds arrogance, the belief that I am better than others, that I am smarter than others, that I am not subject to the rules that others must obey, that power gives me privileges and rights that others do not have. This is not just true in politics but in every realm including the church, where power is held. It is often just more scrutinized and publicized in the political realm, hence more easily illustrated from there.

From their very auspicious beginnings as Israel's kings, both David and Solomon eventually became victims of their own power-fuelled arrogance. David's arrogance and privilege displayed itself in him deciding he no longer needed to leave the comforts of his palace to lead his troops into battle, as kings were expected to do. This led to his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and his eventually arranging for the death of her husband Uriah to cover it up. Solomon's wealth and power led him to eventually compromise his faith as he was led into the worship of other gods by his many pagan wives. This is such a contrast to his humble beginnings in which he confesses his own inadequacy and

asks God to give him wisdom so that he could rule justly and distinguish between right and wrong.<sup>4</sup>

In the account of James and John's mother requesting positions of power and prestige for her two sons in Jesus' kingdom (Matthew 20:20-28) Jesus response is 100% counter-cultural when he says, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant". Jesus exemplified this kind of leadership in his own ministry, as attested by Paul in Philippians 2:5-8. The horn in today's passage is striving for equality with the commander of the army of the Lord. Paul states in Philippians that even though Jesus was in very nature God, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but instead became a servant, a servant who was obedient even to death.

The opposite of arrogance is humility, and it is humility that the Bible repeatedly commends, requires, and teaches about. In people with power, humility stands out as unusual and noteworthy. After the death last month of evangelist Billy Graham, one of the people who commented on his life was Nancy Gibbs, former editor-in-chief of Time magazine. She commented that when she met him for the first time to interview him "What was most surprising to us . . . was how completely disarming he was. We were struck by his humility, the gentleness, the quiet, confident grace."

### **Meditation/Application**

We've spent a lot of time on the dangers of Pride over the last two weeks. This is because of pride's hideous nature. Consider making a list of Bible characters who were seduced by pride.

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<sup>4</sup> | Kings 3:7-14

**Reflecting on the reading:**

Today's passage is similar to another passage that is thought to tell some of the history of Satan's fall. Read Ezekiel 28:11 – 19. How does today's passage have similarities?

**Prayer Points:**

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Dewhurst family as they travel for a well needed break
- Cameron family on the journey of transitions
- Pride to decrease and a rising of humility in our homes and neighbourhoods
- Drop-in for adults at NBBC today

## ***Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> – The Posture of Humility***

**Reading** Daniel 8:15 – 18

*“...I was terrified and fell prostrate.”*

Not all communication is verbal. Those who have been trained, can see tell-tale signs when someone who is lying or nervous. Pride has a certain posture also. Pride often puffs itself up, sets its jaw, tries to look down on others to make them seem smaller. Pride is a form of self-exaltation and our posture communicates just that.

Humility on the other hand makes us bow low. The greater the other, the lower we stoop. Therefore we bow our heads in prayer, or kneel, or even lie prostrate. God is great, and before Him we feel our smallness.

Humility is meant to be our heart's orientation to others; to our neighbours and those in our community. Very often it is easy to slip into a prideful posture when we judge others by their appearance as being somehow, not as important, valued, put-together, as we are.

Author Jim Cymbala tells a story that illustrates this point:

One Sunday in our church service, a woman who sings in our choir, a former drug addict with the HIV virus, told the story of how she came to Christ. She described in raw detail the horrors of her former life. A street person named David stood in the back listening closely.

The meeting ended, and I was exhausted. After giving and giving, I had just started to unwind when I saw David coming my way.

I'm so tired, I thought. Now this guy's going to hit me up for money. When David got close, the smell took my breath away—a mixture of urine, sweat, garbage and alcohol. After a few words, I reached into my pocket and pulled out a couple of dollars for him. I'm sure my posture communicated, “Here's some money. Now get out of here.”

David looked at me intently, put his finger in my face, and said, "Look, I don't want your money. I'm going to die out there. I want the Jesus this girl talked about."<sup>5</sup>

Our posture can push people away. It can give the impression we don't care, and very often it is a reflection of a deeper attitude that resides in our hearts.

### **Meditation/Application**

What is your typical posture when you pray? Experiment with different postures in prayer this week. Consider kneeling, bowing or even standing with your arms raised. Instead of your posture being first directed by "what's comfortable" try being intentional about what you want to communicate to God.

#### **Reflecting on the reading:**

We are told that it was Gabriel who was told to explain the vision to Daniel. Where else do we find Gabriel in the Bible? Why do you think Gabriel was chosen over a lesser messenger to speak to Daniel?

#### **Prayer Points:**

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- *Our church family to grow in REALNESS through story and postures of worship*
- *Tomorrows gathering and those who's journey is so close to accepting Jesus as Lord*

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<sup>5</sup> Jim Cymbala, "Keeping Connected to Spiritual Power," *Leadership* (Fall 1993), pp.67-68

***Sunday April 15<sup>th</sup> – The Spirit of Anti-messiah*****Reading** Daniel 8**Sermon Notes:****Meditation/Application**

As you think about today's sermon what is one action point that you are taking away?

**Prayer Points:**

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- Remember a song we sang this morning together; review the words of the chorus, or emotion you felt as we sang God's praises together. Give thanks to Him.

## **Monday April 16<sup>th</sup> – The Attributes of Antichrist**

**Reading** Daniel 8:19 - 25

*“He will cause deceit to prosper...”*

Most often when we hear the term “antichrist” we think of a person rather than a type of person, but within Scripture we find that the term antichrist describes a type of person. This is why John can write, “even now many antichrists have come.”<sup>6</sup> It is a type of person with particular attributes and one of the key attributes of an antichrist is that they cause deceit to prosper.

Richard Owen, the gifted scientist who coined the term dinosaur in 1841, aptly embodies this antichrist spirit. Owen wrote about 600 scientific papers and was the first to describe the archaeopteryx, but he would stop at nothing to further his career.

He told the publication *Churchill's Medical Directory* that he held the prestigious position of Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Physiology at the Government School of Mines. Too bad that the position was actually held by another man, naturalist T. H. Huxley. Owen then took a discovery made by scientist Hugh Falconer and claimed it as his own.

Owen essentially stole important specimens from other scientists; he would borrow the specimens but never return them. When the scientists confronted him, he would deny he had ever borrowed anything.

When a young anatomist, Robert Grant, showed promise, Owen must have seen him as a threat, because he used his contacts at the Zoological Society to blackball Grant. Bill Bryson writes, "Grant was astonished to discover that he was suddenly denied access to the anatomical specimens he needed to conduct his research." His promising career went nowhere.

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<sup>6</sup> 1 John 2:18

Then Owen turned on Gideon Mantell, the person who had discovered the iguanodon and other dinosaur species. Mantell had been crippled from a serious accident, so he was unable to defend himself when Richard Owen "set about systematically expunging Mantell's contributions from the record, renaming species that Mantell had named years before and claiming credit for their discovery for himself." When Mantell tried to publish new research, "Owen used his influence at the Royal Society to ensure that most of his papers were rejected. In 1852, unable to bear any more pain or persecution, Mantell took his own life."

If that weren't horrifying enough, when Mantell died, an anonymous obituary appeared in the Literary Gazette, criticizing Mantell as a mediocre scientist and claiming that the iguanodon was really discovered, in part, by Richard Owen. The obituary was almost certainly written by Owen.

Concludes author Bill Bryson: "Even Owen's son (who soon after killed himself) referred to his father's 'lamentable coldness of heart.'"

There may come a day when one person embodies the spirit of antichrist, but for now we should be aware that the spirit of antichrist is often in competition with the Spirit of God. Our God is a spirit of truth and antichrist is one of deception.

### **Meditation/Application**

While the number varies depending on the source, all research suggests that people lie at least once every day! What might it mean to go a day without imbibing from this antichrist spirit of the age? Try going through the whole day committed to not telling one lie. If you are brave, consider sharing your experience with you MCG.

**Reflecting on the reading:**

Read through this passage again and list all the attributes that we are told about this “antichrist” character:

**Prayer Points:**

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- The staff meet with other church leaders around becoming stronger neighbourhood missionaries. Pray for learning and stretching of minds and hearts.
- Youth drop-in is afterschool. Still praying for future direction in leaders. Might you know of someone?

**Tuesday April 17<sup>th</sup> – The Attitude of Humility****Reading Daniel 8:26 - 27**

*“I was appalled by the vision...”*

It seems that insight into “the end” can cause people’s true nature to be revealed.

I have witnessed over my life what I can only call a strange morbid desire for the end of the world. I wish I could say that I see it in non-Christians but I don’t. Where I most often see it is in a certain type of Christian whose speculation about the end times almost makes them froth at the mouth as they recite how the end will come (according to their carefully calculated end timed schema).

I get this sense that if they had it in their power they would press “the button” to start a nuclear war and usher in the end of the ages. It is as if they feel they have gained a little bit of insight into the future and they are eager to see it come to pass.

There are of course, those who are prepared to take advantage, and exploit people with their knowledge. A company named Vivos asks, “Are you ready for the end of the world?” If not they can help you and your loved ones get prepared. The Vivos website says, “Whether we want to believe it or not ... we are on the cusp of an increase in number and magnitude of events that may, in the twinkling of an eye, change the world as we know it.” They list a range of possible cataclysmic disasters, including Armageddon, plagues, a solar kill shot, a super volcanic eruption, major earth changes, killer asteroids and comets, mega tsunamis, an economic meltdown - not to mention manmade threats, including nuclear explosions, a reactor meltdown, biological or chemical disasters, terrorism and widespread anarchy.

But for a mere \$35,000 per person, you can co-own an underground Vivos shelter in one of their airtight, fully self-contained, impervious complexes designed to survive any catastrophe. Their website advertises:

*Our [complexes] comfortably accommodate community groups from 50 to 1,000 people, in spacious living quarters, outfitted and stocked for a minimum of 1 year of autonomous survival to ride out the potential events. Every detail has been considered and planned for. Members need only to arrive before the facility is locked down and secured from the chaos above.*

Their website warns that "millions will perish, or worse yet, struggle to survive," but they also boldly promise, "Vivos is your solution to ride out these catastrophes, so you may survive to be a part of the next Genesis!" They also offer this reminder: "It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark."<sup>7</sup>

I don't see any of these same attitudes in Daniel. The thought of the end and all the frightening implications appalled him. Our knowledge that this world will one day end, should cause our hearts to swell with compassion for those who are still not reconciled to God. We too should be appalled at the evil that will come, and rather than wishing for it, we should resist it and overcome evil with good.

### **Preparing for your MCG**

As you come for you MCG be prepared to share:

- **POTLUCK:** Be mindful about a story you might share regarding the importance of MCG regular group meeting together. (ie. What it means to you, or how the group has seen God work through them or in them)
- **STUDY:** Share from your time of Meditation/Application from each day study. What from chapter 8 of Daniel made an impression on you or what confused you.
- **PRAYER WALK/ACTIVITY:** be creative and intentional as you pray/work together.

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<sup>7</sup> Douglas Rushkoff, Present Shock (Penguin Group, 2013), p. 245; [Vivos website](#) (accessed on April 10, 2013)

### **Missional Community Group (MCG) Covenant**

We desire to grow as followers of Jesus who represent Him and His Kingdom well in all of our life. We recognize that God's plan is for us to grow in and through relationships with other like-minded disciples. As those who identify as neighbourhood missionaries we enter into this covenant so that we might be transformed by God's grace and that together we might be transforming agents in our neighbourhood.

To this end, this year, we therefore covenant to:

- Meet regularly for weekly encouragement, accountability, and fellowship in our Missional Community Group and corporately with all of NBBC.
- Seek to grow in likeness to Jesus by engaging in NBBC MCG's shared practices.
- Nurture loving relationships within our Missional Community, accepting others as Christ has accepted us.
- Faithfully steward the resources that God has given us: time, abilities, resources and energy.
- Together discern where God is at work and join Him in His mission to bring the Kingdom of God to our neighbourhood.

In all that we covenant, we recognize that we are dependant upon the grace of God to enable us and so we joyfully enter this covenant in hope of what He might do in and through us.

### **Missional Community Group Shared Practices**

1. Daily engage in reading Scripture and pray for God to bless NBBC in its missional calling.
2. Weekly purposely and intentionally bless another person.
3. Monthly practise table fellowship with someone in your Missional Community.
4. Respond to the Spirit's prompting as you sense Him leading and directing.
5. Share with others the stories of what God is doing in your life as opportunities arise.