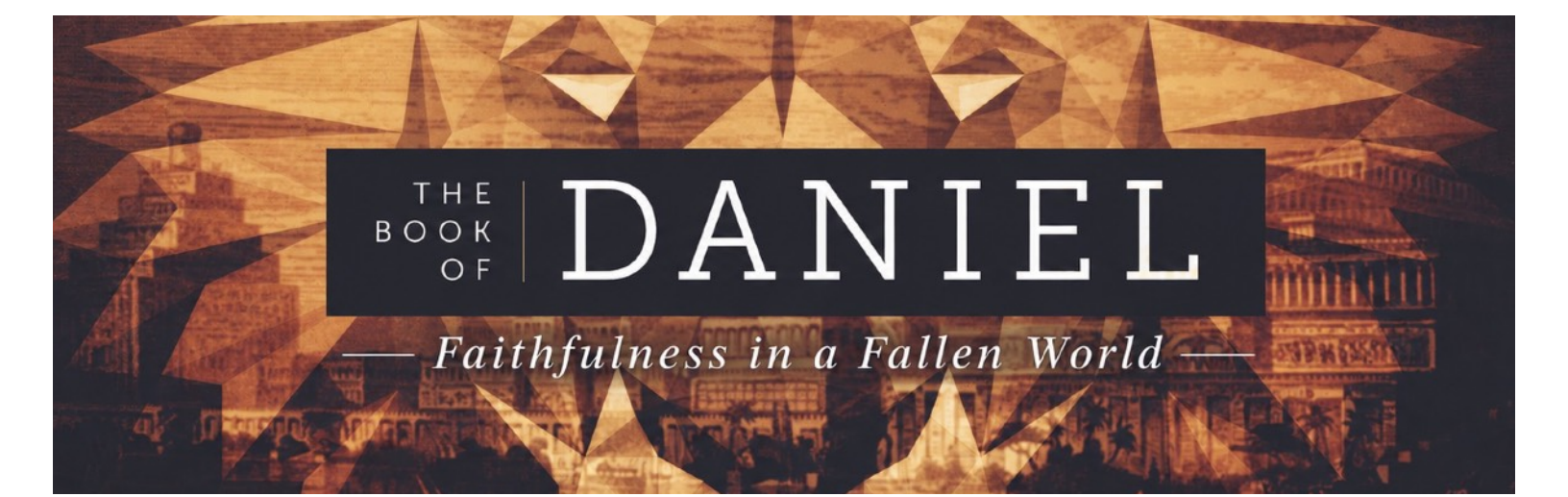




THE
BOOK
OF

DANIEL

— *Faithfulness in a Fallen World* —

DANIEL 7-8

10/4/2026

#8 - “Beasts Rise BUT The Son Reigns”

Intro:

Good morning Church. Join me in the book of Daniel, as we near the end of this study... I'll be doing a bit more teaching than preaching today because we're moving into some challenging sections of scripture... and, we need to understand it before we try to apply it. So, sit up. Focus in. “Put your thinking cap” on as my 6th grad math teacher used to say. And, let's listen for what the Lord has for us in His word.

The book of Daniel is broken down into 2 main parts: chapters 1-6 are historical narrative and chapters 7-12 are apocalyptic prophecy. Its also unique in that Daniel wrote it in both Hebrew and Aramaic. Chapter 1 in Hebrew, chapters 2-7 are in Aramaic, and chapters 8-12 are back in Hebrew again. That's interesting and we're reminded that Daniel is writing both to his own Jewish people, and to the Babylonian context as well.

The bulk of the narrative chapters are to solidify who Daniel is as a trustworthy voice, even though he is a Jew exiled in Babylon. One writer says that the narrative portions of the book serve to validate the integrity and character of the messenger, and the prophetic

chapters are his message for the future. We have historical record of Daniel standing boldly before kings, being given divine interpretations of dreams, and prophesying events to come that were fulfilled exactly as he predicted, and being saved by God from the mouths of hungry Lions... so, all of that validates him as a prophet.

Then, we roll into chapter 7 and 8. And, Daniel has his own dreams and visions. He's no longer tasked with interpreting the king's dreams, these visions are for him and are not just about life in the Babylonian kingdom. These are dreams he knows are from God, and they have real significance for the future.

Some people refer to this last half of the book of Daniel as the "Revelation of the Old Testament" — and concerning apocalyptic texts, chapters 7 and 8 play a key role in understanding Eschatology — which is the study of the end times. Now, the focus of our series is primarily on how to live faithfully in a fallen world, and not mainly about End Time prophecy, so I'll do my best not to go too far down the end-times rabbit trails.

Daniel chapter 7. Stand in honor of God's Word.

READ — DANIEL 7 & 8:1-2, 18-27

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a

man, and the mind of a man was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

*“As I looked,
thrones were placed,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat;
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames;
its wheels were burning fire.
A stream of fire issued
and came out from before him;
a thousand thousands served him,*

*and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.*

*“I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the
horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its
body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the
rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives
were prolonged for a season and a time.*

*“I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.*

*And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;*

*his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.*

“As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ‘These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.’

“Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet, and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

*“Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast,
there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth,
which shall be different from all the kingdoms,
and it shall devour the whole earth,
and trample it down, and break it to pieces.
As for the ten horns,
out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise,
and another shall arise after them;*

*he shall be different from the former ones,
and shall put down three kings.*

*He shall speak words against the Most High,
and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,
and shall think to change the times and the law;
and they shall be given into his hand
for a time, times, and half a time.*

*But the court shall sit in judgment,
and his dominion shall be taken away,
to be consumed and destroyed to the end.*

*And the kingdom and the dominion
and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven
shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;
his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom,
and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'*

*"Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts
greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in
my heart."*

8:1-2a. *In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision
appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the
first. And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the
citadel, which is in the province of Elam... (note again the*

historical references. Daniel is a real person in a real time, with real visions)

8:18-27. *And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. He said, “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end. As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise. His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand. The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now.”*

And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king’s business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, your Word is true. Every promise you make, you keep. We want to grow in trust and faith in you, Lord. When we look around us, it seems there is conflict and confusion

everywhere. Nations at war, people suffering, Governments promising and threatening, ... there seems to be such turmoil. But, none of this surprises you. You see the end from the beginning. You know all things, and you are moving the pieces around, preparing for the Great Day of the return of Jesus Christ our King. We long for that day! Refresh our hearts, renew our spirits, and restore our purpose to be faithful in the kingdom in our generation.

In Jesus name we pray, AMEN.

SERMON

Now, this is a weird passage. We have strange creatures, mysterious symbols and images, and perplexing prophecies. It has been said that this series of chapters are the most difficult in all the Bible. There is a rule to apply when you read the Bible: start with the clearest truth and let the main things be the main things. Chapters like these make is clear though, not every part of the Bible has the same level of simplicity or clarity. We've just read 6 chapters of really great stories. Many of them are in our children's bible story books. But, these chapters are probably not. They are really complex.

And most of us, when we come to apocalyptic (end-time) literature, we flip a switch in our minds, and think we need to get our lantern and compass and become Indiana Jones searching for the treasures, the answers of humanity... when and how will it all end?! Even the disciples, at Jesus' ascension were obsessed with that line of thinking: "Lord will you at this time, restore your Kingdom?" (Acts 1 — note what Jesus said to them: "Its not for you to know... But You will receive power and you will be my witnesses.") — we also need to hold on to that. Our job in these chapters is not to solve every mystery, and get all the answers. In

fact, some of the world's best scholars differ widely on the interpretations of these things.

Think of prophecy a little like Jesus' parables. They're actually not meant to be perfectly clear in the moment to everyone. But, they prove to be true in time. There will come a day when these things come to pass, and we will read these words with complete understanding... because what was foretold in mystery has come true in history.

Just as it was with Jesus Christ himself. Many prophets foretold of the Messiah, but when he finally came, no one could see it. All the way to the cross and empty tomb, it remained a mystery to some. But now... we look back on passages like Isaiah 9 - "for unto us a Son is given..." and we know that is Jesus. Isaiah 53 - "He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities..." - the very men ordering his hands nailed to the cross were scholars in that very text, but they could not see it.

God often works through mystery. So, when He presents us with images of beasts and visions of creatures like this, our main objective isn't to say "Aha! Now I know the future!" But, instead... we behold the God who knows the end from the beginning. So, We see our God is on His Throne. Isaiah 46:10 says that "*God declares the end from the beginning.*" He is Sovereign over the kingdoms of men, and the future is secure in the strong hands of the Lord. — that's actually what we've seen play out in the first 6 chapters of Daniel, in flesh and blood kingdoms of history. God is King over all. And now, Daniel is given a glimpse into the final days, and God is saying what you've lived through is a portrait of the end of all days.

Now... we should acknowledge how Daniel feels about these visions. Is he happy about what he's seen? He says it made him anxious, he was disturbed in his spirit. For Daniel, this is not a comforting vision. His countenance fell. His color changed — remember that's the same expression as was said of king Belshazzar when the floating hand wrote the writing on the wall in Daniel 5. And actually, this vision was given before the writing on the wall.

Helpful Tips: Anytime you study Apocalyptic texts,

- Stay Humble. — “As I understand...” “I think...”
- Context is King. — How are these symbols interpreted in this book. How does Daniel feel about this? Has there been other dreams interpreted? Is there a main thrust of the book that this section may also reinforce?
- Christ at the Center. — Resist the urge to put yourself and your time at the center and make contemporary application. God is revealing Himself in the Bible. Focus on Him.

OK Lets look at it...

1. Beasts Rise, But God Reigns.

Daniel sees a chaotic sea, and out of the sea come four beasts. In scripture, the tumultuous sea is akin to the chaos of nations and peoples. Isaiah 17:12 - *“Ah, the thunder of many peoples; they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!”* And, these beasts, as it is later interpreted represent Kings and kingdoms of the earth.

I think these are the same kingdoms that Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 represented: The Babylonian Empire, The Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and the Roman Empire +.

Beasts are often used to identify nations: Russia - Bear / America is an Eagle / Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon was a Lion... the animal mascots represent kings and some distinctive of their kingdom.... If the Lion with wings of an eagle represents Nebuchadnezzar, that makes sense. His wings were plucked, as he was humbled. Then, he was made to stand up like a man, and restored with the mind of a man.

And so it goes. These animals point to those kingdoms of men. Rising in power and conquest. Consider, Alexander the Great and the Greek conquests. He moved so fast! Within 10 years, he controlled the entire region, at the age of 32. Like a Leopard with wings... and it had four heads. Well, when Alexander died, he had no kids in line to hand off his kingdom, so it went to his four leading generals - which correlates to the leopard with four heads.

Roman Empire - the expansive rule, lasting for almost 1000 years. Rome was exceedingly strong, and it could be said that it had great iron teeth, as it chewed up all its enemies. With 10 horns, it seems so mighty. So huge. Who could ever defeat them?

Now... you say, well all those kingdoms are gone? What about Russia? China? N. Korea? America? — well, that's the point. Its not just about these 4, and them only. The principle is true.

There aren't just 4 earthly kingdoms that will rise up, but many who bear the spirit of anti-christ... they come up out of the chaos, with bold rebellion and violent ambitions, declaring their own power and glory...

Beasts of earthly kingdoms will rise... But, there is one King who Reigns.

Look at verses 9-14 - The Ancient of Days took his seat on the throne.” — the God whose been working behind the scenes, finally comes to the forefront, riding on the clouds of heaven, like a Son of Man... to Him was given dominion and glory and a Kingdom that will last forever and ever.

2. The Son of Man is Christ the King.

Daniel sees “one like the Son of Man” — remember the 4th man in the fire that King Nebuchadnezzar saw? He said he looked like a Son of the gods. Well, here we’re given a different title for the same person - the God/Man Jesus Christ.

In fact “Son of Man” from Daniel 7, was Jesus’ preferred title. He used it of himself more than any other distinction. Its used over 70x in the gospels.

In fact, at one of the most intense moments of Jesus’ life, when he was on trial and the high priest and the Sanhedrin wanted Him dead, in Mark 14, they asked him “*Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*” And Jesus said, “*I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.*” — Jesus made reference to this very prediction. He claimed to be the one that Daniel dreamt about. The One King who will put an end to all the beastly infighting of the nations. Psalm 2 — While the nations rage, the King still reigns!

Now, 7:27 says that the saints of God are not just spectators... but that we are participants in this unshakable kingdom. Listen to Hebrews 12:28 - *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a*

kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.

What does this mean for us? — Behind every earthly kingdom of men, the One True King is seated on His Throne. Daniel isn't given these visions so that we'll know WHEN... but so we'll know who WINS.

When Jesus came the first time, no one knew He was the Messiah, because they expected a conquering king to swoop in and destroy the Roman Empire. But, Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world. He came to conquer a greater enemy. 1 John 3:8 says that He came to destroy the works of the Devil.

**

So, Jesus would be crowned with thorns before He was crowned with glory. The first time He came to His world, we put Him on the cross. The next time He comes, He'll be riding on the clouds.

!!!! Praise God for Promises made... and now we wait until the promise is kept !!!!

There is TIME between promises and fulfillment. We are there in the middle. Daniel had this dream around 555BC. Here we are in 2026AD... and, although Jesus has already come to deal with sin, He has not yet come in all His glory and power.

So, what now? What do we do in the waiting?

3. While we Wait, we engage in Spiritual Battle.

Daniel 8 emphasizes that of all the anti-christ kingdoms, there is one coming who will become great and will destroy many.

This “King of the North” anti-christ role saw partial fulfillment in history with a man named Antiochus Epiphanes. In AD168, he sacked Jerusalem, killed 100,000 Jews and desecrated the Temple. He put out the “immortal” flame on the lamp stand in the temple, slaughtered a pig and offered its flesh on the altar. He then sprinkled the holy scrolls and sacred writings with its juices, and violently forced the priests to eat the meat of the pig. He went on the force a hybrid faith of the Greeks and Jews. Pulling in concepts of Zeus and mythology, trying to taint the Jewish faith forever. — if you were to ask a Jew in the second or third century “who is the Anti-Christ?” — they would have pointed to Antiochus Epiphanes.

As it turns out, he was just a type. A shadow. And as terrible as he was, the last great enemy will be worse.

When Daniel gets this vision, he isn’t filled with joy, immediately. He sees a glorious end, but a terrible road to get there.

And... so it was for Christ himself. His body broken. His blood shed. The crown of thorns, before the crown of glory.

We are to know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings. We are not above our master. If we desire to live godly lives, we should expect persecutions... And yet, We are to seek first the Kingdom. We are to pray, “Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...” We are to live as salt/light in our generation. We are to be His witnesses, calling our friends and neighbors to repent and trust Christ. We are to step into the brokenness and hurting lives around us with the help, healing, and hope of Christ. We are left here, for such a time as this, for eternal purposes!

- + Jesus told the disciples in the garden to *Watch & Pray* before His passion... those words ring out for us today. Suit up for battle. Pray on the armor. Join in the fight on your knees. Call heaven down in prayer. The seas of chaos in this world will only be brought to PEACE by Christ... we call on Him in prayer! Prayer isn't our last resort, its our front line of attack. We go on offense when we get on our knees. — What are you praying for right now? What darkness are you praying against? If God grants your prayers, who will be set free, who will be delivered, who will be healed, who will be saved?
- + In prayer, we align ourselves with the throne of heaven, not the doctrines of darkness. In prayer, we call on the one who is within us, who is greater than He that is in the world: God Almighty, the Ancient of Days.
- + When you pray, “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done...” you’re not persuading God to do something He hasn’t planned to do, you are aligning your own heart with His eternal decree. God’s Kingdom is coming... and Christ will reign forever.

COMMUNION:

Praise God, the King is coming! The same King who came to die now lives and will reign forever.

If you are a baptized believer in Jesus, as we come to the table today, consider the chaos He endured... and the peace He alone can offer. Jesus is our only hope.

— Pray now. Confess sin, and repent of living for yourself.
Resolve to join Jesus in His mission to save the lost and destroy
the work of the devil, and bring glory to His name. —

1 Cor. 11