



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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### The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Daniel 7:1-14

Daniel

"God and Monsters"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you, Mark, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in the Book of Daniel, and we are in the middle of the book. We're in chapter 7, a very interesting and significant chapter. I'm not going to read the entire chapter. We're just going to look at the first part, verses 1 through 14.

"In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it. Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, "Arise, devour much meat!" After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different

from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts. I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; his vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for this time that we have together this morning. It's a great privilege to gather with your saints and to read your Word, read this inerrant book, the Bible, and spending a bit of time considering its meaning and how it applies to us. And so, Lord, we pray that you would bless us in that way, that you would – and build us up in the faith and strengthen us. This is how we mature as men and women of God. This is how we learn to live in the midst of a world that, as we see from our text, is not a friendly place.

It's a wild place really. Spiritually, it is untamed, and it is hostile toward us, hostile toward you. And yet, if our mind is stayed upon you, you give us stability. You give us peace and you give us perspective. And that's what we should gain from this text of Scripture.

I pray that you give that to each one of us. Give us perspective on life. And enable us to live lives that bring honor to you, that stand for something, that stand for what is really important. May we stand for you and your truth in the gospel, with the confidence that all of history is moving toward a glorious termination when your Son will return and establish His kingdom. That's the great lesson we learn from this passage in Daniel 7.

So I pray, Lord, that you'd open our hearts to receive it. I pray that the teaching would be clear, but would particularly pray that each one of us would be receptive and yielded to the Holy Spirit. He is the great teacher, the one that you've placed within each and every one of us, every believer in Jesus Christ. And He will instruct us and guide us in our thinking. And I pray that that guidance and that instruction would go beyond anything that's said this morning, that He would take this text and apply it to each of us, individually, and give us the kind of confidence that we should have for the various situations in life that you have put us.

And Lord, bless us in those circumstances of life. You've placed us, providentially, where we are and given us the circumstances we have. Some of them are difficult, some even bitter. I pray that you would bless your people in whatever circumstance they are in. Give them encouragement and help them to look to you and look to you with grateful hearts.

This is a time of the year when we are thankful, that special day set apart for thanksgiving. And there's much to be thankful for. As Americans, we have much to be thankful for. You've given us a land of great prosperity and you've given us peace. And I pray that you would continue to bless us in that and to that end.

And to that end, we pray for our government. We pray for our president and our Congress and the courts, that you give all of them wisdom. And I pray for that at every level of government, on the national, through the state and local. Bless those men and women that you have placed in authority over us. But the great thanksgiving that we should have in our hearts, every one of us who put our faith in Christ, is we're saved.

We're saved forever, and we can never be lost. And even though we may go through trials – and we certainly will; that's part of life – nevertheless, we have a kingdom that awaits us. And it will come to this world, and it will be eternal. As our text tells us, it will never perish. We thank you for the King, we thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Savior as well. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.

[Message] At the top of the Sistine Chapel in Rome at the ceiling, Michelangelo painted seven Old Testament prophets. And he chose the prophets that he felt had special significance for Christianity. One of them is Daniel. He is seated with a great book on his knees. It is open in the middle, what would appear to be chapter 7, and he's writing in it what he has seen.

What he recorded in chapter 7 is a dream that he had one night. In it, he saw a man approaching God. He calls Him the Son of Man approaching the throne of God to receive His kingdom. It is a vision of Christ. It is a vision that gives great hope to the world.

It will have a king who is righteous, and the world will enter an age of peace and glory. His kingdom is forever. That's good news. But Daniel's face on the ceiling is serious and maybe even shows apprehension. He'd seen other things as well. Frightening things, terrible beasts making war, causing destruction and ending in a fiery judgment.

And he's writing it all down in the book. That's what we come to in our studies in this Book of Daniel in chapter 7. It is a preview of gentile history. It is the course of the time of the gentiles, from it's

beginning in the past to its end in the future. Chapter 7 has been described as the single most important chapter of the Book of Daniel and, certainly, one of the most important chapters of the Old Testament.

In fact, we would have to say, therefore, one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It is the turning point of the book. It brings the first half of the book to a conclusion, and it introduces the second half of the book. The first six chapters are largely about the career of Daniel, told with stirring stories about his faith and his wisdom and his courage. It is recorded in chronological order.

It is recorded from Daniel's youth to his old age. It occurs through the reigns of the three kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius. From chapter 7 on, the book is very different. It doesn't continue the chronology of events, but reverts back in time to a series of visions that Daniel had. It's not history; it is prophecy.

In a sense, the first half of the book gives the credentials of the prophet, the reliability of the messenger. The second half gives his message. Now, the message of chapter 7 through chapter 12 is really not new. It is given in the first half as well, and it's the message that I reminded you of many times in our study. It's the message that God is sovereign.

He controls history, and He promises to bring history to a glorious conclusion. He will triumph. But that lesson is given in a different form. Each chapter is about a dream Daniel had of the future. So we might say the events of the first half of the book prove the reliability of the prophecies of the second half of the book.

If God can save His servants from a furnace of fire and a den of lions, then He can prophesy and found His kingdom. The first dream Daniel had occurred one night in the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon. Well, this is years before the events of chapter six, years before the events of chapter 5. It is the same dream that we saw earlier in the book, the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had back in

chapter 2. The relationship between these two dreams, here in chapter 7 and the dream in chapter 2, is rather obvious.

Nebuchadnezzar, you'll remember, saw a colossal man made of four metals. Daniel saw four beasts. Both dreams have the same subject. They are about kings and kingdoms. Verse 17 of our chapter tells us that, gives the explanation. "These great beasts" are four kings "who will arise from the earth."

Both dreams are intended to, and do give a comprehensive view of gentile history. I would say the time of the gentiles from its beginning to its end. But they give it from two very different perspectives. What Nebuchadnezzar saw was glorious: gold, silver, brass, iron. It was all splendor and power. What Daniel saw was hideous: ravenous animals, more monster than animal.

Chapter 2 is man as man sees himself and his empires: strong and impressive. Chapter 7 is man as God sees his rule on earth: corrupt and cruel. Really, I think this is almost as much a lesson on anthropology as it is on eschatology. That is as much a study of man, of human nature, as it is a study of future things. Man sees himself differently from the way God sees him.

Protagoras was an ancient Greek philosopher whose famous statement is, "Man is the measure of all things." That's the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, imposing, glorious. This is man. He's the measure of all things. But long before the Greeks, God said to the first man, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

Whatever nobility man has, and man does have nobility, but whatever nobility that is, it's God-given. It's God's own image that He has put upon us. Man by nature, of himself, is ordinary dust. And not dust that gathered itself together. It was gathered together by God. Life was breathed into it.

We're totally dependent upon Him. But what we are, in essence, is dust. And man returns to dust. The colossal statue of chapter 2 is crushed into dust. And here, in chapter 7, the kingdoms are really baser than death.

They are like wild animals and worse. They are dreadful and destructive. Daniel saw them come up from the sea. It was a stormy, eerie night. The four winds were blowing, the waters were churning, when four nightmarish creatures come up from the deep.

Daniel describes them in verse 3 as each being "different from one another." Each one was increasingly strange and menacing. The first is really not so strange. In fact, it's almost noble. It is a lion with "the wings of an eagle."

This past September we were up in Maine, and I saw a bald eagle for the first time. I mean, in person I saw this eagle. It was in a tree not far from us, and suddenly, it takes off. We didn't know what kind of bird it was until its wings spread. And you could see immediately that's a bald eagle.

And I learned later that there are a number of them in that part of the state. It was magnificent. The spread of its wings was huge. And so there is something of nobility in this first creature, this lion with the wings of an eagle. The next, however, is more threatening.

It is a large bear, oddly shaped, with one side higher than the other and three ribs in its mouth. The third is a leopard, but it is freakish. It has four wings and four heads. The fourth is more different still, and Daniel can't even liken it to any animal. He describes it as dreadful and extremely strong.

It had iron teeth, ten horns and trampled on everything. While he was thinking about this fourth beast, especially about its horns, the dream got even stranger. Another horn came up. It was smaller than the ten horns, and it uprooted three of them. The horn had eyes and it had a mouth and was boasting great things.

Suddenly, the scene shifts to heaven and to a great courtroom. "Thrones were set up." And in verse 9, Daniel says, "The Ancient of Days took His seat." He sat down as judge. His throne was flames. A river of fire flowed from it.

Thousands upon thousands were worshipping Him, myriads upon myriads stood before Him. This vast, innumerable host is there. And

then the court is convened and the books were opened. The evidence against the beasts were made known and they were judged, especially the fourth beast, that boasting horn, the little horn. It was slain, and its body was thrown into the river of fire.

The vision ends when Daniel sees a person he describes in verse 13 as being like "a Son of Man," who comes on the clouds to the Ancient of Days, who gives to the Son of Man, "dominion, glory and a kingdom." It is an everlasting kingdom that included all the peoples and nations and languages of the earth. Verse 14 ends, "And His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed." What a dream. No wonder, at the end of the chapter, Daniel says that after seeing all of this, he was alarmed and his face became pale, like that stern portrait of him on the Sistine Chapel.

Again, the dream corresponds closely to the one that is recorded in chapter 2. Both give the future of gentile nations. That's indicated from the storm on the sea at the beginning of Daniel's dream. In verse 17, we're told that the Kings arise from the earth. But in the beginning of the dream, we see that they arise from the great sea, in verse 2.

There's no contradiction there. The sea is the gentiles. We see that in the Old Testament, one of the great texts of Scripture that describes the gentiles in that way is Isaiah 7:20 where he says, "The wicked are like the tossing sea," restless. The sea is the metaphor for the nations in rebellion against God. They're in turmoil.

And the four beasts come out of the stormy sea. They come out of the nations, the gentiles. And again, each match the kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's great statue. The first beast, the lion, represents Babylon. It corresponds to the gold head of the statue. The winged lion was the national symbol of Babylon.

Daniel would have recognized this immediately. Archaeologists have found statues of winged lions among the ruins of the city. The lion is a powerful hungry animal that devours and eats. And that was



true of Babylon. The wings symbolize the swiftness of its conquests, the vastness of its conquests.

But this is especially descriptive of Nebuchadnezzar himself. In the dream, the lion's wings are plucked and removed. Then the lion is made to stand on two feet like a man. He's given the mind of a man. And that symbolizes the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar when he was struck with insanity; had seven years of that, and then that was followed by his restoration to reason.

He was given the mind of a man, and he was given his power. It was restored to him, but it didn't last. Babylon is succeeded by a second kingdom, a bear. It represents Medo Persia, the silver part of the statue. One side is raised, representing the prominence of Persia that it would have in this kingdom.

And in ancient times, bears were feared for their ferocity. This one is especially ferocious and voracious. It has three ribs in its jaws and is commanded to "Arise, devour much meat," and it does. The ribs symbolize three kingdoms the Persians conquer. The Lydian Empire in Asia Minor, Babylon, and then the Kingdom of Egypt.

The Persian Empire was vast. It stretched from Egypt to India. But it was removed by the third beast, which corresponds to the middle part of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, the bronze portion of that statue. And it represents the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. The leopard is fast. And Alexander swept across the ancient world with amazing speed and acquired a large empire in a short time, then suddenly died at the age of 32.

At his death, his kingdom was divided between his four generals, which corresponds to the four wings and the four heads of this monster leopard. The fourth beast is even more of a monster. So much so that Daniel couldn't liken it to an animal, it was so bazaar. He does say that it had large iron feet. Now, that corresponds to the iron legs and feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, and represents Rome.

Its legions were like iron as they marched across the world crushing all of their opponents. No one could stand before those great

Roman legions. But there are details about this beast that really don't correspond to the history of Rome. And it must be descriptive of things that are still to be fulfilled. It suggests a future form of the Roman Empire.

The beast had ten horns that correspond to the feet and the ten toes of the statue in chapter 2 that were mixed, you remember, with clay; iron and clay together, which don't adhere. Well, these are ten confederate kingdoms. Horns often refer to kings and to power. And these horns refer to ten kings in a confederation with one another. Then another horn appears. It is a little horn that Daniel mentions in verse 8.

He saw it come up, and it replaced three of the ten horns. And this is clearly a king. It has eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth. This king is aggressive. He usurps the power of the ten kings, and he destroys three that resist him.

He becomes the dominant king. The description of this horn is similar to what we find elsewhere in Scripture. A picture of the beast, a picture that's given to us, for example, in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 of the man of lawlessness. That's how Paul describes him. He says of this man of lawlessness, "who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship."

Paul's not describing someone who had come on in the scene in the past or was a contemporary of Paul. He's looking to the future. Paul didn't know how distant the future was. But he's looking to the future, just as Daniel is as he describes the same person. In the same way, this little horn utters great boasts.

This is the future antichrist. This is the beast who will arise out of Rome, likely a revived Roman Empire of some kind. But, like the others, he won't last. God won't permit it. And in verses 9 through 12, Daniel's vision suddenly moves from earth to heaven, and to God's court where judgment is passed on the world, passed on the gentile powers of this earth.

While Daniel was looking, he saw the Almighty take His seat. He describes the Lord anthropomorphically. That is he describes Him in the form of a man, with features that are physical, that God does not have because God is a Spirit. But to make some theological points of that and to explain the character and the power of God, he describes Him in human terms. He describes Him as a man, but it's all symbolic.

He has a robe, and His robe is "white like snow." And He has hair that is "like pure wool." These are emblems of God's holiness and God's eternity. His white hair symbolizes age. He is the Ancient of Days.

He has no beginning and no end. And because He is eternal and pure, as signified in the whiteness of His robe, he judges evil. He cannot tolerate evil indefinitely. God is patient; he is longsuffering with the evil, but someday His patience will run out. And he, as a righteous and holy God, must judge it.

And that's what we see here. He judges evil, and that judgment is serious business. His throne was a judgment seat. It is actually a chariot throne. Daniel says that it "was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire.

What an interesting kind of curious throne that is. It reminds us of the vision that Ezekiel had, roughly at the same time. He was a contemporary of Daniel and he was living in Babylon. And he sees this vision, at the beginning of his book, of the throne of God, and it's somewhat similar to this with these wheels. Well, wheels represent movement and chariots represent speed, and that's the idea of this throne.

God is in heaven. God rules over it, but He's not kept in heaven. God is omnipresent. He's everywhere, and He knows all things. And that's very clear from what follows.

A river of fire flowed from His throne. And Daniel said, "The books were opened." The complete record of the kings' lives, of all that they did, all that they said, all that they thought. All of that is

opened before the Lord God. He knows every deed that has been done.

In all this time, while this awesome court sits in heaven, the beast, oblivious to what is going on, oblivious to what is really important, this beast boasts on earth. He is blaspheming the Lord. When at the height of his arrogance, the height of his power, the Lord cuts him off forever. Daniel says, "I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire." That's the end of the antichrist, but it's not the end of the vision.

In verse 13, Daniel says he "kept looking in the night visions," And he saw something more, something spectacular. "Behold," he said, "with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming." Daniel watched Him approach the Ancient of Days who gave to Him "dominion, glory and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him." And Daniel concludes "His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

So the dream that began like a nightmare with monsters coming out of the sea, ends happily and, hopefully, with a Man coming out of heaven whom God crowns sovereign over the world. This is the end and the goal of history. The world will be delivered from beasts and given to man, to a particular Man, who will rule forever. It's a prophecy of Christ. We know that because He identified Himself numerous times as the Son of Man.

In fact, He used that title of Himself more than any other, sometimes, something like 69 times in the synoptic Gospels, in Mathew, Mark and Luke, and then 12 times in the Gospel of John, which mainly uses the words Son of God. And it's clear from numerous passages that He took the title, this title the Son of Man, from this very text, from Daniel 7, and was identifying Himself with this heavenly person, which reveals a great deal about Him. His humanity, first of all, and perhaps most obviously, because the idea of

the Son of Man. It's an expression that's used throughout the Old Testament of humanity.

In fact, if you read through the Book of Ezekiel – that's a very long book. But as you read through it, you see numerous times how God addresses Ezekiel as son of man. But in Daniel it's more than a reference to humanity. This Son of Man is also the Son of God. He is a person of heaven.

He comes on the clouds of heaven. God often reveals Himself in clouds. Clouds speak of deity. All of that's significant here. It signifies that the Son of Man is not only a man but an eternal person, a divine person.

And Jesus Himself indicated that in the Gospel of John. In John 3:13, he's speaking to Nicodemus and he referred to Himself in this way. He said, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: – "you might expect Him to say, "The Son of God," but He says – "the Son of Man. Well, that's clearly a reference to our passage, to Daniel chapter 7. Jesus was speaking of Himself as that specific Son of Man, and saying that He had come down from heaven.

That's a big claim. That's a claim to deity. So when Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man, he meant that He was that man in heaven seen by the prophets, seen by Daniel, to whom the Ancient of Days gave authority to rule the world. The men at the Lord's trial certainly understood that to be the meaning. When the high priest, Caiaphas, asked Jesus to tell the court whether He was the Christ, Caiaphas comes to this point and says, "Let's just cut to the chase.

"Are you the Messiah, are you the Christ, are you the Son of God? And Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say. But I say to you, in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Again, He is clearly referring to Daniel 7, and was saying that He is the king prophesied in that passage. And the Jewish leaders understood Him to mean just that.

Caiaphas tore his robes, and he said, "He has blasphemed. What further need do we have of witnesses." They spat on Him, they beat Him with their fists. They condemned Him and they sent Him off to be crucified. The Son of Man then is both God and Man.

He is God the Son. The Ancient of Days is God the Father, all of which gives us a glimpse at the plurality of persons in the Godhead. There is one God. The Bible's very clear about that. Not three Gods; one God, we learned in chapter 6, verse 4.

But God subsists, God exists in three persons. One God in three persons, and two of the three are present here. So this is really an important passage on the doctrine of the Trinity. But the main lesson is the sovereignty of God. The Father has given the kingdom to His Son.

The Father is in control of history. He is the Ancient of Days. He is the One who began the days, He began time. He is the source of time and history. He has a plan.

It's all working according to His plan. And all the kingdoms possessed by the beast and all the kingdoms that aren't even referred to in this book, all the kingdoms that will yet come, have been given to them. They weren't earned, they weren't obtained. Those kingdoms were given. Back in verse 6 of our chapter, the leopard, Alexander, was able to conquer quickly, swiftly, Daniel said, because "dominion was given to it."

Daniel was careful about his words. "Given," not gained. We marvel over Alexander and his skill as a general and as a leader. In fact, he was deified in his own day. Men marveled at him in his own day and for the centuries that followed.

Even to the present day, men marvel over the speed, the skill by which Alexander conquered the world. And yet, what Daniel is saying here is he didn't gain that. It was given to him. It was a gift. Alexander's conquests were so swift and sweeping because God empowered him.

His kingdom, as well as the other kingdoms, was sovereignly bestowed because it all fit within God's plan for the world. It was His plan that was being worked out in all of this. That's suggested in the four winds that stir up the great sea, which are the heavenly powers bringing up these kings and kingdoms in their appointed time. They each fit in the unfolding of God's plan. So the beast, the kings, had no reason to boast in their own prowess. No man does.

The man who climbed from stock boy to CEO of the company has no ground for boasting. I don't discount hard work, drive and discipline. Those are important, and if a man does not have that, if a person does not have that, he or she won't get very far. Those are the elements in success that God uses in His providence to bring about the things that He does. But wealth and power are not ultimately self-generated. They're not self-created.

So intelligence and talent gives no reason for a person to look down on another or lord it over them. They're gifts. They're gifts bestowed by God, the Father of Life from whom all good things come. And someday, He will open the book on every one of us just as He will on these kings, on these beasts, and He will judge how we used our gifts and our abilities and our opportunities. God is the source of every blessing.

He is sovereign. This is one of the great themes of the Book of Daniel, as I keep saying. He is the Lord of history, and He will bring it to a glorious conclusion. The Son of Man, who is the Son of God, who is our Lord Jesus Christ will come again. He told Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, "You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven."

And just as it is written in Psalm 2:8, where the Father says to His Son, "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession," someday He will ask and the Father will give, and He will come. And as in chapter 2, in that vision of Nebuchadnezzar where the stone uncut by human hands, this supernatural stone representing the Lord

Jesus Christ, strikes the statue, Christ will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth. He will destroy the antichrist and the world empire, the world system, and He will establish His kingdom on the earth and it will fill the earth. It will be righteous; it will be glorious. That's our future; that's our hope.

Presently, He's seated as king at the Father's right hand. He's reigning presently in the hearts of every believer in a spiritual sense. But Daniel's not speaking about that. Daniel 7 is a prophecy of an earthly reign and a material kingdom on the earth. This is what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 19:28 where He told His disciples, "The Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne in the regeneration." That's a description of the earth.

That's a description of the kingdom on the earth when the earth is regenerated, when the earth will be glorified. It won't look like this. It won't look like what we see, even in all of its beauty and glory. The splendor of this coming day is something that can only be described as a regeneration. He will sit on His throne in that day, and they will sit on thrones with Him.

It's what John spoke of in Revelation 5:10, and then in Revelation 20:4, where he wrote that the saints will reign upon the earth and Christ will reign for a thousand years. That's the millennial kingdom. The context of Daniel supports that. All the kingdoms described in this chapter are real earthly kingdoms. They're material kingdoms, kingdoms on the earth.

So it's only consistent with that to see this final kingdom, this kingdom that will not perish, as a kingdom that is real, that is earthly, that is material, but is eternal. Again, that's our hope. That is the reason this dream and revelation were given to Daniel, to give God's people hope, to encourage God's people; that the rule of tyrants will someday end and the Lord will reign. It's given in the time of Belshazzar, in the first year of his reign. We know about Belshazzar from chapter 5, and what an ungodly man he was; what a profane man he was.



So it seems significant that in that pagan king's reign, as it begins God is saying, "This is the end of it all." Not these men, not the kingdoms and the empires and the states of this world, but the one that God will bring that is unlike anything. It is spiritual and righteous and will be upon the earth in a glorified state. So, again, that is our hope. And hope is real because of the cross.

And it is a hope that is only for those who have laid hold of the cross, those who have believed, those who put their trust in Christ. Now, in Daniel 7, you read it; it doesn't teach that Christ would suffer and die. But that's taught by Christ Himself in John 3, where He speaks of Himself as the Son of Man coming down from heaven. He speaks of His crucifixion in verses 14 and 15. He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life."

By His death He regained what Adam lost, the right for man to rule the earth. Man will rule the earth. The Son of Man will rule the earth, and all who believe in Him will rule with Him. We will rule because our sins have been removed through Christ's substitutionary death. We don't earn that anymore than these kings actually earned or gained their own kingdom.

It was all given to them. And this eternal life that we possess and this right to rule with Christ, this forgiveness of sin, this righteousness with which we are clothed in Christ, all of that is a gift. We have received it all as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ. And because of that we have a glorious eternal future. But to have that hope, you must believe.

Have you believed? If not, we invite you to trust in Christ. He is the Son of Man, the Son of God. Trust in Him for salvation. He receives all who do at the moment of faith, without exception.

Come to Him, trust in Him and then rest in Him. We have a glorious future in Christ. And that should give us great confidence every moment of our life regardless of the circumstances. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for the hope that is given in this text, a text that is in many ways very strange, fascinating in many ways. But the point of it all is to come to that great statement of faith. That this dominion that is given to your Son, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is an everlasting dominion which will not be destroyed. These others are destroyed. They come and they go.

We see that throughout history. Kingdoms rise and they fall. And we know from chapter 2 of this book, verse 21, that that's your will. You appoint kings and you remove them. And you do it all according to a plan, and everything's unfolding according to that plan.

And the end of it all is glorious, and thank you for it. Thank you for making us a part of it through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we live to your honor and glory, resting in Him. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.