

I remember when as a child I saw the movie "The Wizard of Oz." As most of you well know, it's the story of a young girl, Dorothy, who had a dream in which she found herself living in the magical land of Oz. Dorothy's consuming desire was to return to her home in Kansas, and the story line involves her adventure in that pursuit.

As a child I wondered, "Will she ever make it?" My heart raced as she met foes like the wicked witch of the west and her flying band of monkeys who tried to eliminate her. And then, my heart skipped a beat when she finally made it to the mighty Wizard of Oz, only to discover he was a powerless quack who made big claims but lacked the means to back them up. Finally, when he promised to use his hot-air balloon to escort Dorothy home to Kansas, I breathed a sigh of relief, only to find myself breathless again when the rope broke and Dorothy was left behind, stranded again.

That's how it was when I first saw the movie as a child. A month ago, however, Sherry, the girls, and I watched the anniversary edition of the same movie on television. This time, it was quite different. Oh, the characters were the same, the plot was the same, the dream was the same, the foes were the same, but I was different. My heart didn't race this time. My palms didn't sweat when the wicked witch screeched at Dorothy in the crystal ball, and I didn't lose my breath when the monkeys carried her away. And instead of sitting on the edge of my seat when the hot-air balloon broke loose without Dorothy, this time I reclined in comfort.

What made the difference? Thirty years didn't hurt! But the real difference was that this time, I already knew the outcome. I knew it was just a dream and that in the end, Dorothy would make it home safe and sound. Oh, there would be obstacles along the way, but I knew she'd make it.

You know, it makes a huge difference when you know the outcome. The anxiety is gone when you know the outcome. There's freedom from fear when you know the outcome.

My friends, when it comes to drama of world events, we already know the outcome. Just think of it. As we face setbacks and disappointments and obstacles in life, we already know the outcome. For the child of God, facing the future is like watching a re-run on TV. We know what's going to happen in the end. We know where we are going, and what's going to happen when we get there.

The teens have a popular logo these days that reads, "No Fear." The truth is, there's only one person who has the right to claim that motto, and that's the person who knows the outcome.

Do you know what's going to happen to this world? Do you know what's going to happen *to you* when it's all said and done? Would you like to know? We can know, and the reason is because God has told us. But I must warn you. Increased knowledge brings with it increased responsibility. God gave us a "written video" of the outcome in Daniel 7-12. He wants us to know how it's all going to turn out--so we'll be ready.

***Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

Proposition: In the second half of Daniel 7, we discover the outcome of world events. Notice three movements in the account.

I. The Request (15-16)

- A. He was troubled.
- B. He asked for help.

II. The Revelation (17-27)

- A. We see the big picture of the outcome (17-18).
 - 1. The kingdoms of men will rule for a time.
 - 2. The saints of the Most High will rule forever.
- B. We see the details of the outcome (19-27).
 - 1. Several characters will participate in future events (19-22).
 - The Fourth Beast
 - The Ten Horns
 - The Other Horn
 - The Saints
 - The Ancient of Days
 - 2. There will be a ten-king confederation (23-24).
 - 3. A powerful ruler will arise (24-25).
 - He will slander God.
 - He will oppose the saints.
 - 4. God's kingdom will prevail (26-27).
 - The saints will rule.
 - All rulers will worship the Most High.

III. The Reaction (28)

Concluding question for those who know the outcome: Am I ready?

Last week, we investigated the first half of Daniel 7. In that study we mentioned that a break occurs in Daniel 7. The first six chapters of the book are narrative and focus on the past, whereas the final six chapters are prophetic and focus on the future. In Daniel 7-12, God's Word records a series of visions that God gave to the prophet Daniel towards the end of his life.

The first vision came during Belshazzar's first year as king of Babylon. Daniel, now well into his eighties, had a reputation as a man of God who could interpret visions (as he did for King Nebuchadnezzar). It's ironic that in Daniel 7, the prophet had a vision, but he himself was not able to interpret it.

I. The Request (15-16)

You'll recall the vision itself consisted of four bizarre beasts that successively came up out of the sea, the fourth of which had ten horns and was dreadful and terrible. A little horn (8) entered the scene and caused a roush until the Ancient of Days sent one like the Son of man who came and established an eternal kingdom.

What kind of impact did the vision have on Daniel? He tells us in v 15, "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me." His response was twofold.

A. He was troubled. Why? Granted the vision was strange, but what about it promoted Daniel to be grieved and disturbed? Was it because he saw something he didn't understand? Or was it because he sensed the gravity of what he saw yet did not fully comprehend?

I remind you that Daniel was a godly Jew. As such, the delight of his heart was to see the kingdom come to Israel, with the Messiah ruling the world from Jerusalem. That's

what the prophets before him had predicted. Daniel longed to see peace and prosperity for his Jewish people, a people at that time in exile in Babylon. But now in the vision, he began to realize there was a long, dark future for the Jewish people, and that grieved him.

It was what Jesus would later call "the time of the Gentiles." The glory days under David and Solomon and Hezekiah were long gone for Israel. Yes, a restoration to the land was coming for the Jews, but it would be under Gentile rule. Four Gentile world powers would dominate the world, and Daniel realized that the Messiah's kingdom was a long way off. No wonder he was troubled (see Strauss, 219). Here's what he did.

B. He asked for help. Daniel explains in v 16, "I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things."

Daniel was confused, so he asked for help. He did what many of us find difficult to do. For instance, how many of you have an unfinished project at your house, and the reason it's unfinished is because you refuse to admit you need help? "I can figure it out by myself!" And that's why it's been untouched for months.

Daniel admitted he didn't have all the answers. Never be afraid to ask honest, sincere questions, of God and of others. May we not be so proud that we get to the place where we refuse to be taught. James 1:5 states, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God."

With a troubled heart, Daniel turned to one standing nearby. Who was this potential counselor? Was it someone in the vision or an angel in the room with Daniel? Perhaps it was one of the millions Daniel saw at the throne scene in v 10. Whoever it was, Daniel asked for help, and an interpretation was given. So movement #1 is the request.

II. The Revelation (17-27)

The interpretation of the vision was given to Daniel in two phases. First, we see the panoramic view in verses 17-18, the short version of the outcome. This is followed in verses 19-27 by the longer, more detailed version.

A. We see the big picture of the outcome (17-18). The NIV reads (17-18), "The four great beasts are four kingdoms [KJV "four kings"--the terms are interchangeable for there is no kingdom without a king] that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever--yes, for ever and ever." Here's the big picture of future events, summed up in two statements.

1. *The kingdoms of men will rule for a time.* Four kingdoms, in fact. The Babylonians ruled the world under Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. The Medo-Persians came next under Darius, then Greece under Alexander the Great and his successive generals. And finally, Rome under Caesar, Nero, and the rest.

You say, "Things getting out of hand in the world. Look at all the bloodshed! Look at the rush of world frenzy, with nations attacking nations, jockeying for position and power! Why doesn't God do something?" The truth is, He is and He will. God is allowing the world to reap the consequences of the fateful decision Adam made when he rebelled against God in the garden, and God will one day say, "Enough is enough." For a time, He is allowing the kingdoms of men to rule. For a time. But...

2. *The saints of the Most High will rule forever.* Who are the saints? There is considerable discussion about their identity in the commentaries, but I agree with Walvoord that the term seems to refer to the saved of all ages as well the holy angels which may be described as "the holy ones."

Question--Who will one day take the kingdom that will last forever and ever? If you answered, "Jesus Christ will," you are right (1 Cor 15:24-28), yet it's interesting that we find a different answer in v 18. Who will take the kingdom? The saints will. The saints of the Most High (another title for God).

Now we know that Christ will rule in His kingdom, but why here does God highlight the position of the saints? What was happening in Daniel's day? The same thing that's happening in our day--the saints are taking it on the chin! The godly are living in an ungodly, unfriendly world. The hymnwriter asked the question, "Is this vile world a friend to grace?" The answer is "No!" But God says to us, "Your day is coming!"

Beloved, what a great day to be alive! We are seeing history move before our very eyes towards the climax of God's sovereign plan for the world. The formation of the secular state of Israel in 1948, the Israeli/Arab tensions, the increasing hostility towards Christians, the search for a world leader to save the day. All coincidence? No. It's right in line with the prophetic plan God revealed through Daniel 2,500 years ago!

The big picture of the outcome is this. The kingdoms of men will rule for awhile, but the saints of God will enjoy the reign of God forever! You say, "Well, that's fascinating, but I want to know more. I've got some questions." So did Daniel. Notice v 19, "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast..." In verses 19-27, God fine-tunes the interpretation for us

B. We see the details of the outcome (19-27). The section clarifies four details.

1. *Several characters will participate in future events (19-22).* You'll see them mentioned as Daniel rehearses the vision he saw (19-22 LB). "Then I asked about the fourth animal, the one so brutal and shocking, with its iron teeth and brass claws that tore men apart and that stamped others to death with its feet. I asked, too, about the ten horns and the little horn that came up afterwards and destroyed three of the others--the horn with the eyes, and the loud, bragging mouth, and was stronger than the others." Stop there and notice these characters.

•The Fourth Beast •The Ten Horns •The Other Horn--This character is no longer referred to as the "little" horn as he was in v 8, for he has become an imposing figure. In v 21, Daniel gives us additional information from the vision concerning the activity of the other horn. "As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom (NIV 21-22)." Two more characters enter the scene.

•The Saints •The Ancient of Days

Here's the outcome Daniel saw. A fourth kingdom, represented by the fourth dreadful beast would arise and dominate the world. It would consist of ten horns, representing ten kings. Suddenly, another horn would enter the scene, and not only defeat the three horns, but exhibit oppression against the saints. In the end, the Ancient of Days would come to the rescue of the saints and establish His kingdom. Let's notice detail #2.

2. *There will be a ten-king confederation (23-24).* Vv 23-24 "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms...And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten horns that shall arise." Who are these ten rulers? The text indicates their reign is simultaneous because three of them will be disrupted by the little horn. There is endless speculation as to the identity of these ten kings. Critical scholars have tried to find these ten kings in the history of the Grecian

empire or to find them in the later Roman empire. But the simple fact is, according to the Bible, the scholars are searching in the wrong place!

You won't find these ten kings in the past, but in the future. This ten-king confederation will be in place, Daniel reveals, at the future time when the Ancient of Days gives the signal for the Son of man to come and rescue His saints and establish His Messianic kingdom (22).

Personally, I agree with such conservative teachers as John MacArthur, John Walvoord, Gleason Archer, and others, who teach that the ten-king confederation refers to the revised Roman Empire. There will be a ten-ruler, ten-nation alliance (perhaps the European Common Market) that will dominate the world scene. Next, detail #3...

3. *A powerful ruler will arise (24-25)*. The end of v 24 states, "And another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." Lehman Strauss makes an interesting observation (224-5), "At the turn of the twentieth century this prediction of a world ruler seemed to many to be fantastically unbelievable. However, modern communication systems, jet travel, and destructive weapons of warfare have erased all doubts as to its possible fulfillment. Our modern world has shrunk."

Who is this powerful ruler that shall arise? Daniel reveals he is a powerful ruler that will arise and subdue three of the ten rulers in his aggression. He apparently is the same person as the "lawless one" (2 Thes 2:8-9), the one known as "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," the man the Bible calls the "Anti-Christ."

This final world dictator will subject three of the ten kings and then subordinate the other seven states to his rule, somewhat as Hitler subjected Norway, Holland, Hungary, and the Balkan countries to a leader of their Nazi party (Archer, 93). In theory, they were separate nations, but in practice they were subservient to Hitler.

Notice what this powerful ruler will do, two spiritual atrocities revealed in v 25.

•He will slander God. •He will oppose the saints. Notice v 25, "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change the times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of a time."

What a vicious ruler! He will try to "wear out" the saints during a three and one-half year period of persecution unlike the world has ever seen. This godless leader will introduce a new legal system based on totalitarian principles which reject God's absolute laws. He's also going to revise the calendar in his attempt to eliminate God (end of v 25). This will happen during the time the Bible calls the Tribulation (we'll see in future times).

For now, a question. Why does God allow His saints to suffer? Why would He allow them to be killed? The answer, in part, is because God is not interested solely in the here and now. He has a plan, and He uses suffering to accomplish the outcome He desires.

I want you to see a parallel passage in Revelation 13:1-7 (NIV): "And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, 'Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?'"

"The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."

Why is the beast hostile towards God's people? What have they have done? It's not who we are nor what we've done per se, but Who He is and what He's done.

By the way, when the enemies of God attack Christians, what are we supposed to do? Unite and fight? What counsel does Rev 13:10 give? "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for *patient endurance and faithfulness* on the part of the saints."

What enables God's people to endure? A fourth and final detail.

4. *God's kingdom will prevail (26-27)*. Vv 26-27 tells us what will ultimately happen to the rebel ruler (NIV is clearer), "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him." God's kingdom will prevail. In short, there are two implications to that.

- The saints will rule. The kingdom of men will be handed over to the saints.

- All rulers will worship the Most High. That includes Belshazzar, Alexander the Great, and Nero. They'll bow before the Most High. So will Napoleon, Mao, Churchill, JFK, Lenin, Reagan, Yeltsin, Arafat, President Clinton, and every other ruler.

These leaders have one thing in common with each other. They will all bow down one day before the Lord Jesus Christ. So will you. So will I. The question is, when you bow before Him, will He be your loving Lord or your sentencing Judge?

III. The Reaction (28)

I love the way the KJV captures Daniel's reaction, "My cogitations much troubled me." It's pretty touch to think seriously about these truths and not have our cogitations troubled! Now that you know the outcome, I invite you to ask yourself a question.

Concluding question for those who know the outcome: Am I ready? Are you ready? The truth that God's plan will unfold regardless of whether you are ready or not. Are you living in light of what you know?

Years ago, when I was an eleven year old boy, God used a series of messages on the end times preached by a pastor by the name of George Fissel to touch my heart. The Spirit of God opened my eyes to the fact that I was not ready, but could be ready if I would repent of my sin and trust in Jesus Christ. I needed to get ready for the outcome. What about you?

Time of Response: After seeing his vision from God, Daniel didn't hop up and go eat lunch. No, he went through a period of deep exercise of his soul. So must we. Now that we know the outcome, it's important for us to respond rightly.

First of all, let's worship the King in song.

Hymn of Response: #234 "Crown Him with Many Crowns"

Whose kingdom are you living for? Whose empire? Is it apparent by the way you are living that Jesus Christ is *your* king? As you listen to the next song, reaffirm your allegiance to the King.

Ministry in Music: Ken Henry

The challenge before us today is this. In light of the sure outcome, we must choose in this life to live in light of God's eternal kingdom. Perhaps you're wondering, "How can I know if I am, if I truly am ready?" Consider these important questions:

1. Do you know the king? Are you sure?
2. Are you living in obedience to the king's will for your life?

--Why do you work where you work? Is it because it's the best paying job you could find, or is it because you know it's the king's will for you to be there?

--Young people, why did you choose to pursue the career you have selected? Because it impresses Dad? Because it will pay the most? Or because you know it's the King's will for your life?

--Why are you dating that person? Because he or she is fun to be with, or because you know it's the king's will?

Are you obeying the king's will in your life? Remember, there's a battle, a rival to the king's will. We battle with self. We battle with Satan. Who's winning the battle in your life? Spend some time in reflection and confession as you talk privately with the King.

Time of Response in Prayer

Years ago, Esther Kerr Rusthoi penned these words: "Oft-times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear; We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair. But Christ will soon appear to catch His Bride away, all tears forever over in God's eternal day." Here's the chorus: "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, so bravely run the race till we see Christ." It will be worth it all. But we must be ready.

Let's sing the chorus: "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, so bravely run the race till we see Christ."

We know the outcome! The day is coming when Jesus Christ will rule as King.

Worship through Singing: #105 "He Is Lord"

We'll sing the three verses together, and then the chorus. During the chorus we'll sing an offering as well as give our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

Worship through Giving (during closing hymn)