



BEREAN
SMALL GROUPS

FOR THE GOSPEL
ROMANS 1:16

Devoted: A Clash of Kingdoms

Daniel 7-8

Read Daniel 7:1-14 together:

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, [a] "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.

- ? What portions of Scripture do you consider to be most like Hanauma Bay, Hawaii (Beach, sun, and peaceful surf)? Why?
- ? What portions of Scripture do you consider to be the most difficult to understand? Why?
- ? Do you find yourself neglecting to study and meditate on apocalyptic literature in the Bible because of its level of difficulty? Explain.

"Dear friends, whenever you want to understand a text of Scripture, try to read the original" (Charles Spurgeon).

Context:

Throughout the study, Daniel has proven to be wise, devoted, and prayerful. Because of his excellent spirit, he successfully served several kings despite dramatic differences in world view. Chapters 7-12 reveal visions Daniel received regarding a clash of kingdoms, the promised Messiah, victory for God's people, a man called Antichrist, and the end of time.

- ? In Matthew 24:15, Jesus affirms the importance of understanding the End Times. It says, *"let the reader understand."* Do you have a good understanding of biblical eschatology? Explain why or why not.
- ? What are the four prevailing views of biblical eschatology? Take some time as a group to discover and discuss these if you don't know.
- ? What view, if any, have you been taught? Have you, in the spirit of a noble Berean, examined the Scriptures to see if these things were so (see Acts 17:11)?

These visions were life-changing for Daniel. He was alarmed, his color changed, he kept the matter in his heart, he was astonished, and the Scripture even records that once he was sick for days! Even so, Daniel went about the king's business, fulfilling God's purpose for his life.

Content:

The Clash of Kingdoms is revealed. The earthly kingdoms and the Kingdom of God collide. Characteristics of the kingdoms are seen, as well as the nature of the conflict. Unrest and tribulation are unavoidable facts of life. Even so, the Ancient of Days is seated upon his throne. His Kingdom shall not be destroyed. Despite blasphemy, persecution, and lawlessness, the book of Daniel rings with many notes of victory for the Lord and his people.

- ? Daniel 7:1 tells us the *"sum of the matter,"* but leaves out seemingly useful details, such as names. What do you think God's purpose was in holding back those details?
- ? Is the time we're living in really any different than Daniel's? Or, has the scenery just changed? Explain.
- ? Do you believe we'll see the rise of the Antichrist in this generation? Use the Scriptures to support your view.
- ? What is the character of the church in this age? Are we advancing the gospel or are we merely holding our ground until the Second Coming?

In addition to the earthly Tribulation, Daniel reveals to us the true nature of the conflict. We're fighting against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. We're not able to win this fight by our own wisdom and strength. Rather, we need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Application:

"For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4).

Daniel was deeply troubled by the things he saw and heard. He knew God would have the victory, but he also knew that he was called to participate. Daniel knew his own insufficiency for the task. He was desperate, so he PRAYED!

"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."
1 Peter 4:7

- ? Are you an active participant in the Clash of Kingdoms?
- ? What scares you the most about living in the midst of a cosmic war?
- ? What do you need from the church to assist you in the fight?

Acknowledge the ravages of sin and pray.

- ? 1 Peter 4:7 reveals to us two things that hinder prayer, but there are many more than two. What are some things that hinder you from praying? Give specific examples (TV, movies, video games, sleep, etc.).
- ? The Bible says that our sins have hidden God's face from us so that he does not hear us (see Isaiah 59:2). We must confess our sins to one another and pray for one another so that we may be healed (see James 5:16). Take time to actually do this – right now!
- ? Prayer is the means God has ordained for us to obtain all that we need to do his work. We are directly responsible for the failure of the church because we have not sought God's help, or we have asked with selfish motives (see James 4:1-3). Knowing these things, what can you do to be more diligent about spending time in prayer?
- ? Psalm 8:2 says, *"Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger."* Why do infants cry? Where do they cry? How long do they cry? Do they care who might be listening when they cry? Are you an infant in prayer?

Realize that you're alive at the perfect time to witness.

- ? What platforms has God given you in order to witness? Are you making the most of each platform?
- ? What hinders you from being a more effective witness for Christ? Can he work in spite of your weaknesses?
- ? Read aloud 2 Peter 3:8-9.
- ? Knowing what you heard, share the gospel with a stranger or someone you "just don't like."

Prepare your mind and will for faithful endurance.

- ? Prior to hearing this sermon, were you hoping to escape tribulation by being raptured? Do you agree or disagree with Pastor Roger's view? Explain.
- ? What expectations do you have that need to be adjusted to fit into a biblical framework?

- ? Can you honestly say with the saints of Revelation 12:11 that you love not your life, even unto death? Have you truly, “counted the cost?”

Wait in hope for the King’s coming.

- ? What does it mean to wait in hope? What are we supposed to be doing while we wait?
- ? What did Daniel do while he waited for the vision to be fulfilled?
- ? How are we instructed to live in Titus 2:11-14? Discuss as a group.

Please pray for a widespread and general revival beginning with Berean Baptist Church. It’s easy to focus on enemies outside of the church, but enemies exist inside the church as well. Revelation chapters 2-3 reveal unbelief, false teachers, false doctrine, sexual immorality, and idolatry. Pray that the Lord brings these works of darkness into the light so we can be prepared for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.