

## DANIEL'S VISION OF THE ETERNAL VICTORY

Daniel 7:1 – 8:27

Key Verse 7:27

**“Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”**

The book of Daniel is largely divided into two parts. The first 6 chapters, which contain mostly history lessons, have taught us the story of four exiles from Judah as they struggle to remain faithful in a pagan society under intense pressure. And the last 6 chapters will show us God's visions to Daniel concerning the kingdoms that would rise and oppress them and the time of the end. It leads us to consider what spiritual attitude we should have and how we can prepare ourselves for the time of the end. Throughout the entire book, we pray to learn that our God is the Sovereign God. Let us pray to meet Him and accept Him personally.

Chapter 7, at first, seems like a repetition of Chapter 2 (which M. Peter Lim shared with us). While the main contents are the same, their emphases are not. Chapter 2 focuses on the rise and fall of the kings and kingdoms with the general view of human civilization. But Chapter 7 focuses on Jesus the Son of man and his final victory. Chapter 8 becomes an extension of Chapter 7. It teaches us about the end times when the holy people will be deceived and brought to suffering by the Antichrist. But Daniel's vision does not end with the rise of evil. The corruptor will be destroyed, not by human power, but by the sovereign power of God. Only those who repent of their sins and put their faith in the Son of man will share his eternal victory. May God give us the ears to hear His words.

### I. #Daniel's Vision of the Son of Man (7:1-28)

Look at verse 1. In the first year of Belshazzar or fourteen years before the destruction of the Babylonian Empire, Daniel saw visions in his dream. # Let us read verses 2 and 3. **“Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.”**# In his vision, Daniel saw the four winds of heaven which churned up the great sea. In this verse the word "winds" was like the Spirit of God that was hovering over the waters in Genesis 1. Then, "four great beasts" came out of the sea. These four beasts are each different in quality, but their degree of doing evil was the same. Let's take a look at the four beasts one by one, and find out what they represent.

**#The first beast**, a lion with the wings of an eagle, would represent the Babylonian Empire (4a). The image of this beast was literally the symbol of the Babylonian Empire. And the torn off of its wings and given the mind of a man refers to God's humbling

training of King Nebuchadnezzar until he acknowledged that God of Daniel is sovereign God over the kingdoms of the earth (7:4b 4:3,17,37b).

**#The second beast**, a bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth, would represent the Medo-Persian Empire under the rule of King Cyrus (5), which was known for its brutal force through overwhelming numbers. And the raised side of the bear tells us the greater power of the Persians over the Medes. The three ribs in its mouth would refer to their three great military conquests over the kingdoms of Babylon, Egypt, and Lydia.

**#The third beast**, a leopard with four wings and four heads, would describe the Greek Empire under the rule of Alexander the Great (6) who was renowned for the incredible speed of his conquest from Greece down to Egypt and to the border of India in just 13 years! The four heads represent the dividing of his kingdom among his four generals after his death.

**#The fourth beast** did not have a specific animal to compare to. It was beyond description and was simply terrifying and a very powerful beast. This beast had large iron teeth and ten horns. This beast is describing the Roman Empire—which was different from all the kingdoms that came before it in size, structure, and endurance (7). Around 241 B.C. Roman power originated from Sicily. Since then, Rome conquered Spain, Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. In 10 B.C. it also conquered Jerusalem. During the next 10 years, it conquered today's England, France, Belgium, and Germany. By 17 A.D., the Roman Empire had conquered the entire European continent and part of India and rose to be the greatest empire in human history. But when the Roman Empire was powerful, it did many evil things beyond imagination. When they conquered other nations, they destroyed all inhabitants; killing the weak people and selling strong people as slaves to other nations. Their cruelty was well-revealed when they crucified innocent Jesus on the cross. The Roman Empire became the symbol of ignorance and cruelty. It was nothing but a destructive machine. But even this most powerful empire was ruined in 476 A.D. What seemed to last forever crumbled and disappeared.

Look at verse 8. **# “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.”** According to the interpretation in verse 24, the ten horns symbolize the ten kings who would come after the Roman empire. And the little horn represents a new king who was different from all the earlier kings. This conspicuous king must be the Antichrist. Look at verse 25, and see what it says he will do. He will speak against God, oppress God's holy people, and attempt to change God's set times and laws. God's holy people will be delivered into his hands for a while. Antichrist disguises himself as God's servant, pretending to do God's work when in truth, his sole intention is to oppose God and make God's people stumble. This is not a surprise to us because **#Revelation 13:5-8** already prophesied this as well. **The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words... It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast...**” When we see

this world with spiritual discernment, we can realize that we are living under the influence of the Antichrists. There are many movements and activities that are rising against God's ways, such as wars, murders, drugs, sexual immorality, LGBTQ, and gender identity. We are living in a world where there are bloody battles somewhere every day. We are living in a world that is teaching our children to choose their gender while calling it a freedom of choice. We are living in a world where sexual immorality is considered "natural". This world leads you to think that the Antichrist is the winner and the ultimate victor.

But what was the vision that God showed Daniel? Look at verses 9-10. **"As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."** #Verse 26 explains that when God and Jesus come and sit at the court, all of Satan's power will be taken away and he will be completely destroyed forever. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

This is the only place in the Bible where God is called the "Ancient of Days." This means that God is "from everlasting to everlasting" or "the first and the last". Our God is the final victor and righteous judge with absolute purity, wisdom, and power. "Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (10b). This is the image of the kingdom of God which is recorded in Revelation 5 and 7, where God is surrounded by 100 million angels and worshipped by people from all nations, tribes, and languages, awaiting the final judgment (Rev 5:11,7:9,14). Everything was set for the final judgment. The Book of Life was open. According to Revelation 20:12-15, all people will be judged according to what they have done in life. If your name is written in this book, you will join Jesus in the glorious kingdom of God for eternity. But if your name is not written in it, you will join the rest of the wicked and be thrown into the lake of fire.

This is an awakening message for us because our ultimate goal, as Christians in this world, is to enter the kingdom of God. The whole point of our faith in God, acceptance of Jesus, and, our struggle to obey one word is the kingdom of God. Have you ever wondered, "Is my name written in the Book of Life?" How can we be sure of this? The very first message that Jesus preached to the world was, **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."** (Matt 4:17) Jesus calls us to repent, confess our sins, and turn away from our wicked ways. And in Mark 16:16, as Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, he declared to his disciples, **"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."** It is neither about our good deeds nor worldly accomplishments, but our faith in Jesus' blood. Jesus already finished the work of salvation on the cross. Amen? Let us repent and believe! I pray that all of our names are written in that book.

How does God's victory continue? Let us read verse 13 together.# **"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with**

**the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.**” If you look at the footnote in your Bible in verse 13, you’ll see that the Aramaic phrase ‘bar-enash’ literally means human being. He is the representative of the holy people (18,22,27). This son of man came on the clouds of heaven with his divine authority. He is the promised Messiah Jesus.

In contrast to the beast-like kings, Jesus, who is God, humbled himself and became one of us (Php 2:5-8). He was born in a stable and lived as a carpenter’s son. His ministry was not wealthy but he became a friend with the sinners, the poor, and the sick. He preached the message of the kingdom of God. Jesus even allowed himself to be put to death by the very people he came to save. But when he comes back for the second time, he will come as the righteous judge. Look at verse 14. **"He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."** All kingdoms of the world rise and fall. USA, Germany, Russia, Ukraine, Korea, Turkey, Ghana, and Nigeria are no exception. But Jesus’ dominion is an everlasting one! Jesus’ Kingdom will never be destroyed. Amen!

Do you know what better news is? Let us read today’s Key Verse, v27. **“Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”** The sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms will be handed over to us the holy people of God. In the end, all the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's and we will co-rule it with Christ. Jesus will share the victory he won with us. Isn’t this amazing news? It is such amazing, victorious, hopeful news for us!

Look at verse 28. **"This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself."** Daniel was not intimidated even before King Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar. But when he saw the prophecy of God, he was deeply troubled to know what was to come. More than anything, his heart was broken to find out that the judgment of God will be very severe to the unbelieving people. Is your heart also troubled and broken? Recently, my mind was preoccupied with work, focusing on building wealth for my future security. I also struggled to fight off my lustful desires but hesitated to repent before the Lord. I thought that as long as I maintain a certain set line between God and the world, I should be okay. Then, through studying the book of Daniel, God has reminded me that I am serving the Sovereign God who loves me, and who is faithful and patient with a sinner like me. God is giving me a chance, yet again, to repent of my sins daily and be restored in my relationship with him. Please pray with me, my brothers and sisters, to believe that Jesus has won the victory. Let us pray for ourselves, our families, our community, our campuses, and our nations to hear this message of God’s victory and turn our wicked ways to God! Amen.

In this chapter, we learned that, in the end, the Ancient of Days and the Son of man will come and win the final victory over all elements of Satan and the Antichrists. So, I have

a question for you. To where will you put your hope? In the lion or bear? In one of the ten horns or the little horn? No way! Would you want to put your hope in Germany? In the US of A? In your career? In Cryptocurrencies? Absolutely not! Let us put our hope in our Sovereign God who gives us the purpose and meaning in our lives. Let us put our hope in our Lord Jesus who not only died for our sins but who is coming back to share with us his final victory. Amen!

(I would like to sing a verse. And if you'd like, please sing with me.)

No beginning and no end  
You're my hope and my defense  
You came to seek and save the lost  
You paid it all upon a cross  
You are stronger, You are stronger  
Sin is broken, You have saved me  
It is written, Christ is risen  
Jesus, You are Lord of all  
Amen

## II. #Daniel's Vision of the Antichrist (8:1-27)

Chapter 8 is extremely similar to Chapter 7 in terms of structure and theme. Even the numbers of verses almost match. The only difference is that Chapter 7 emphasizes the victory of the Son of man whereas Chapter 8 focuses more on the Antichrist. Looking at verses 1-2, another vision came to Daniel 2 years after he had the previous one. Under king Belshazzar's reign, a pleasure-seeking mentality spread throughout the Babylonian Empire. As we learned from Lydia Point's message, Babylonian Empire was rushing down for its end. In total, Belshazzar reigned for 11 years. During this spiritually corrupt time, Daniel deepened his prayer life and set his heart on the words of God just like all my brothers and sisters here at GLEF 2023. Then God showed Daniel yet another vision.

Let's look at verses 3 and 4: **"I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great."** According to verse 20, the ram in the vision represents the kings of Media and Persia. The higher horn, which later grew forth, represents Persia. Under the Persian king Cyrus II the Great, Persia became the dominant power in this alliance.

Let us look at verses 5 and 6: **"As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage."** While Daniel was still admiring the ram in his vision, his attention was suddenly drawn to a goat. According to verse 21, this goat represents the Greek king Alexander the Great, who conquered the vast Persian empire in just four years. But in verse 8, Daniel already

foresaw the decline of this kingdom. When the goat's horn had become strongest, it broke. At the height of his power, Alexander the Great died at the age of 33.

Then, Daniel saw a little horn that grew out of one of the four horns, which in turn had sprung from the horn of Alexander the Great. This was small initially, but it grew very large, to the south, east, and towards the Beautiful Land (9). It grew until it reached the host of the heavens. It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down. Because of rebellion, the Lord's people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

Daniel longed to understand the mystery of the vision. God saw his spiritual desire to understand God's plan and purpose. Then God sent the angel Gabriel to tell Daniel the meaning of the vision (16). Look at verse 19: **“He said: “I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.”** So this was concerning the time of the end. According to verses 20-25, at the time of the end, the Antichrist will try to wipe out the believers and keep the truth of God away from people. The Antichrist comes at a time when the wicked are widespread. (23). He will destroy the strong (24) and corrupt many of God's holy people by deceit (25). His goal is to put himself in the place of God and force God's people to stumble and worship him instead.

Historically, this description of the Antichrist was King Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He was a Greek Hellenistic king who ruled the Seleucid Empire, which came out of the four succeeding kingdoms after the death of Alexander the Great. Antiochus IV Epiphanes gave himself the title of god. He was determined to abolish Judaism. In 168 B.C. he invaded Jerusalem and killed many Jews including priests and the High Priest. He forbade the Sabbath, circumcision, and Jewish festivals. He had the scriptures burned and erected a statue of Zeus with his own face in the temple in Jerusalem. He decreed that, against the law of Moses given by God, unclean animals such as pigs were sacrificed in the temple. This time was a time of serious hardship and suffering for many devout Jews. Countless men, women, and children, who did not want to be unfaithful to God's law, died as martyrs.

And 2,000 years later, we are still in the end times today where many Antichrists deceive us and make us fall due to sin. The spirit of relativism deceives so many Christians that they no longer accept God's Word as the absolute truth. Many Christians stopped living according to God's Word, let alone passing on biblical teaching to the next generation. One pastor said, “When the word of God becomes optional to us, our next generation will find it unnecessary.” The Antichrist uses whatever the young people are drawn into whether it is money, sex, or power, and makes a vehicle for their sinful practices to be considered normal or even cool. In the name of God's love and acceptance, he has already seduced many into tolerating the sin of genderism. The Rainbow, once a God's sign of mercy and forgiveness, became a symbol of “sexual liberty”. Not only so, but he also seduces people, in the name of a happy life, to enjoy themselves to the maximum degrees with sexual immorality, pornographies, drugs, and

alcohol, doing everything their hearts desire, only to experience the bitter consequence of sins.

Verse 24b says, "**...He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does...**" Those who walk in the counsel of the Antichrist look confident. But look what will finally happen. Verse 25b says, "**... Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.**" As we learned from Chapter 7, no matter how dominantly and overwhelmingly the Antichrist rules and destroys the children of God, he will be destroyed. The Antichrist will be broken gives us the confidence of victory, like many of our ancestors of faith, to fight the good fight of faith to the end. Despite all the seductions of the world through the deceit of sin and all the afflictions, we can be sure that it is not the Antichrists, but God **who is the sovereign ruler** and true victor.

Let us pray every day that God may give us His spiritual discernment and alertness, and teach our children and our friends the word of God, which is the only absolute truth. Let us repent of sins before God every day, and prepare for Jesus' final victory to be shared with us. The sovereign ruler of the world is God. Everything that stands against God will be destroyed by God. Therefore, with confidence in victory, we can decide faith to live for the sake of Christ. May God bless you, in this time of the end, to be spiritual victors who possess the hope of God and preach the Word of God to young and old people to the end. May God use you as spiritual leaders and main characters in this spiritual revival! Amen!