

# The Big Problem Of The Little Horn

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's take our Bibles and open them up this morning to Daniel chapter 8. Daniel chapter 8, if you were away for Labor Day last week and you missed chapter 7, I would say you didn't miss too much, but that would be a lie.

Chapter 7, we covered God's plan for human history from Babylon all the way to the return of King Jesus. And this week in chapter 8, thankfully, he narrows it down just a little bit for us to only about 400 years worth of human history.

And so we got a lot to cover. Hopefully the rain doesn't have you too sleepy this morning. We're going to stand up in order of the reading of God's word as I read Daniel chapter 8. Let's stand.

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. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai Canal. I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal.

[ 1 : 14 ] It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward.

No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west, across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground.

And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal. And he ran at him in his powerful wrath.

I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him, and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him to the ground and trampled on him.

And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. Then the goat became exceedingly great. But when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it, there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

[ 2 : 18 ] Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.

It grew great even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. It became great, even as great as the prince of the host.

And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. And a host will be given over to it together with a burnt offering because of transgression.

And it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?

And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state. When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it, and behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

[ 3 : 27 ] And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, Gabriel, make this man understand the vision. So he came near where I stood, and when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face.

But he said to me, Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end. 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.

[ 4 : 36 ] 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.

And then I rose and went about the king's business. But I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it. This is God's holy word.

Lord, we pray. Father, would you help us to understand what we've written, what we've read, what you've written. Father, would you make all things clear. These things are difficult and mysterious.

[ 5 : 35 ] Father, we pray you would strengthen and edify us as we search out the wonders of your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. I wonder what you would do if I told you how the next 400 years or so might play out.

Not everything in crystal clear clarity, of course. Probably not what you would have for breakfast tomorrow morning, or what your kids or grandkids might wind up doing, who they might marry. But if I told you big picture, major events over the next 400 years or so, I wonder how do you think you would respond?

It might, of course, depend on whether it was good news or bad news. Depending on what I told you, you might celebrate or you might cry. Maybe you'd go to Vegas and place a few bets.

You might go sell all of your belongings, move to another country. You might quit your job. You might quit your job. And depending on what you heard, maybe you'd spend the rest of your life in anxious fear over when this thing might come and happen.

Or maybe you would trust in a good and sovereign God to accomplish His plan. And you would go about your life in faithfulness to Him.

[ 6 : 47 ] Here in Daniel chapter 8, God shows Daniel what is coming down the pipeline of human history. He's letting Daniel and us in on a sneak peek of what's to come over the next several centuries.

And unfortunately for Daniel, this is not good news. Ever since coming into exile, you remember the context here of the book of Daniel. Ever since coming into exile in Babylon, Daniel has had his eyes set on these 70 years that's been promised in Jeremiah when these exiles would return to the promised land.

But here, in this vision, the Lord seems to expand His understanding of human history just a little bit to show Him that what's coming next after this is bad followed by bad followed by bad.

Worse followed by worse followed by worse. Evil followed by evil followed by evil. And He does so by showing Daniel three key figures in human history.

This will be our outline this morning as we follow through this passage. Three key figures in human history. The ram, the goat, and the little horn. And we're going to take one, each one in order with its vision and the interpretation.

[ 8 : 03 ] So ram, goat, and little horn. And we're going to spend most of our time on this little horn because He seems to be the central figure in this vision. So first, verses 1 through 4 here of chapter 8, we see the ram.

Look there with me starting in verse 1. Daniel says he has this vision in the third year of Belshazzar's reign. And in his vision, he was in Susa, the citadel, in the province of Elam at the Ulai Canal.

Susa was the capital of Persia at the time. And as he raised up his eyes, he saw a ram standing on the bank of the canal. The ram had two horns. It was one horn up higher than the other horn.

And it says the ram was charging westward and northward and southward. And it was powerful. There was no one who could stop him or rescue from his power.

He did whatever he pleased and he became great. And if we look to the second half of Daniel chapter 8, we see that just as Daniel did last week in chapter 7, he seeks help in understanding the vision.

[ 9 : 06 ] And I don't know about you, but I love when he does this because we don't have to guess at what these things mean. Gabriel, the angelic interpreter here, he makes it clear for us. He says, verse 20, Now we've seen these things before, haven't we?

This is the third time now that we've seen these kings of Media and Persia. If you're keeping track here, the silver chest and arms from Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. There are the second beast from chapter 7.

And now this ram with the two horns, all of these are pointing to the same kingdom. It's the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. And God says that kingdom, Daniel, is on the move.

You remember last week, this second beast. It was the bear that was told to rise and devour much flesh. And here we see this ram. He's advancing to the west, to the north, to the south.

He is on the attack. All these directions, as we look back in the history books, these are all areas that Medo-Persia eventually conquered.

[ 10 : 17 ] Babylon, Syria, Asia Minor to the west. Armenia and the areas by the Caspian Sea to the north. Egypt and Ethiopia to the south. But here, before any of this actually happens, God is revealing, he's showing to Daniel, that this powerful, battering ram is coming.

Now just put yourself in Daniel's shoes for a minute. All of this is still future for him. And he's sitting here in the empire, the kingdom of Babylon.

And God says, this kingdom is about to be overtaken. Daniel doesn't know when. He doesn't know exactly how. He doesn't know who's going to live, who's going to die. What exactly the details of this plan is.

All he knows is that there is a sovereign God who sets up kings and takes kings down. A sovereign God who reigns and rules over all human history. A sovereign God who's worthy to be trusted, even when we don't know all the details of the plan.

I think it also sheds a little bit of light on the story of Daniel and Belshazzar. That we read earlier with this feast of Belshazzar as he's feasting at the end of the kingdom of Babylon.

[ 11 : 32 ] And he sees this cryptic hand writing a message on the wall. And you remember this message of impending doom. And who was there providentially prepared, ready to interpret the message with confidence?

It's Daniel. You see, Daniel is prepared here by God in chapter 8 for the events that we saw already previously with the end of the kingdom of Babylon.

He didn't run and hide at this information. He didn't build a bunker and hide himself away. He simply, faithfully, waited for God to bring about what he had told him he would do.

And when the opportunity came, providentially, to fill Belshazzar in, he did so. Now, as Daniel was considering this ram with two horns, he sees the second important figure, the male goat.

Look there to verse 5. He says, A male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground. And this goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.

[ 12 : 34 ] And the goat comes up to the ram. And what happens? He attacks the ram. It says he was enraged against him. And he broke these two horns. And the ram was powerless against this goat.

No one could help him. And where the ram was great, look here, verse 8. It says, This goat became exceedingly great. Again, there's a progression here of evil to more evil to more evil.

And again, leaning on Gabriel's help here, we can see the interpretation. At verse 21, he tells us that this goat is the king of Greece. We've seen this already, haven't we?

If we're following the order that we've already seen, you remember the order here. Daniel is here living in the days of Babylon. The Medes and the Persians are coming next. They will conquer Babylon.

But then there's an after them as well. And who's coming next? It's the kingdom of Greece. You remember from chapter 7, Greece was this leopard with four heads and with four wings.

[ 13 : 37 ] And it's a picture of speed and power. And you see that represented here as well by this goat. He's not even touching the ground as he advances. You know, when I read this, my mind is on basketball.

And I immediately thought of a basketball player named Giannis Antetokounmpo. I don't know if any of you know that name or not. He's one of my favorite basketball players and he just happens to be Greek.

No connection as far as I'm aware to this goat here in the passage. But I have seen Giannis Antetokounmpo grab a rebound on one end, take four dribbles, and dunk on somebody's head on the other end of the court.

It's unreal. Just sheer speed and power and domination. That's what's happening here with Alexander the Great and the kingdom of Greece.

This goat is Greece. Alexander the Great is the horn in the middle. And you might remember that the Greeks, they rose to power just quickly, rapidly.

[ 14 : 39 ] Maybe you've seen some of those videos of fireworks shows where they accidentally set off all the fireworks at once. It's this loud, big bang explosion. All of them explode at once and then the show's over.

That's a little bit what Alexander the Great was like. He became general at age 21, conquered the ancient world by age 26, and then he was dead by age 33.

Over as quickly as it started. But his influence on the ancient world was massive. And his death, it marked the beginning of what we call the Hellenistic period that echoed all the way through the Roman Empire and even to our modern Western civilization.

In fact, after the death of Alexander the Great, there were 40 years worth of wars. And there were four major divisions that came from his Greek kingdom.

Four major powers emerged. It was the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt and the Seleucid Empire in the east. The kingdom of Pergamum in Asia Minor and the kingdom of Macedon.

[ 15 : 45 ] His kingdom splintered into four divisions. Which is exactly what verse 8 said would happen. Look there with me. The goat, Greece, became exceedingly great.

But when he was strong, the great horn, Alexander, was broken. And instead of it, there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

Can we just pause here for a moment and reflect on the beauty of biblical prophecy? And you may look at me and say, Jonathan, there's nothing beautiful about rams and goats and horns getting broken and battering each other.

I happen to disagree. Okay? Listen to this. This prophecy is so exact that critics of the Bible who want to discredit the word of God say, Well, this had to have been written after the fact.

There is absolutely no way that anybody could predict with this degree of accuracy this many events in human history. And to which we would reply, absolutely, you're right.

[ 16 : 55 ] There is no way anybody could do that unless there is a God who reigns and rules over human history. A God who has orchestrated all of the events of human history.

And a God who reveals his plan to his servants in his own wisdom and for their good. That's exactly what's happening here. The passages like this, whether or not we understand every detail of what's happening, passages like this ought to deepen our trust in the word of God.

These prophecies ought to be like solid steel beams that support and uphold and undergird our confidence in God's word. That goat, Alexander, is broken.

These four horns come up just as God said they would. Gabriel tells us that these are the four kingdoms. They weren't as strong as Alexander's Greece. And out of one of those four kingdoms, verse 9, out of them came a little horn.

This is the last and the most important figure in the vision. So here's where we'll camp out for a little bit because he's the centerpiece here. We're told that he's another king of bold face.

[ 18 : 12 ] Verse 23 says he's cunning and he's deceitful. And this little horn, verse 9, it says that he grew exceedingly great towards the south, towards the east.

But here's the focus here. The difference between him and all the others before him is that he grew great towards the glorious land. Now this is new, isn't it?

In other words, what stands out most about him is that he's not just headed in any sort of general direction. This little horn is headed towards the direction of God's people.

This is a narrowing of the vision of human history now. It is no longer concerned with the north and the south and all these other kingdoms of the world.

Now we are zeroing in on one particular little horn and his opposition to the people of God. And this is why God is showing all of this to Daniel.

[ 19 : 12 ] He's not just giving him a history lesson in advance, is he? He's showing him what is to come for the people of God after Babylon, after Medo-Persia, after Alexander's Greece.

There will be a little horn and he will terrorize the people of God. What will he do? What will he do? Verse 9 says he will oppose the land.

He will oppose God's people. That's what verse 10 says. These stars and these hosts that he tramples to the ground are the people of God. He's attacking the saints. At least that's how Gabriel interprets it in verse 24.

He will oppose God himself. Verse 11. If you have a KJV, I actually think that they got the translation correct here. It says, KJV, that he magnified himself even to the prince of the host.

He's not as great as the prince of the host. It makes it clear he's going to be struck down by the prince of the host. But he thinks he's as great. He wants to be as great. He desperately wants to be like God.

[ 20 : 15 ] So he magnifies himself to be like God. He opposes the practices God has put in place for his people. Verse 11. The burnt offering is taken away.

The place of the sanctuary is overthrown. He opposes God's truth. He throws truth to the ground. And in all of this, God says, Daniel, he is going to look like he is succeeding in what he does.

Some of the people of God will be given over to him together with the burnt offering. And if I'm Daniel and I'm seeing this vision of terror against God's people, I'm saying, God, why?

Why is all of this happening? It says, because of transgression. You see that? Because of transgression.

Now, some understand this to be the transgression of the little horn. Of course, he is transgressing, yes. But I think a closer look will show us that all of this judgment, all of this evil coming against the people of God is the judgment of God for their transgression.

[ 21 : 25 ] God is, in his infinite wisdom, revealing to Daniel a plan that would have been horrifying for him. To give some of Israel over into the hands of a deceptive enemy.

To allow his own temple and his own sanctuary to be desecrated. To allow his own word to be overthrown. Why? Because of the continued sinful idolatry and rebellion of his people.

But even so, the vision isn't hopeless. God gives Daniel a glimmer of hope. This judgment would be for a defined, limited time. 2300 evenings and mornings.

And then the sanctuary shall be restored to his rightful state. This vision, he says, is for the time of the end. Meaning the end of this little horn is for the time of judgment against him.

The end of God's wrath and indignation against his people. The end of the little horn. Does any of this cycle sound familiar to you? It should.

[ 22 : 34 ] Because this is exactly what happened to bring Daniel and his friends into Babylon to begin with. They are in Babylon because of God's judgment against their sin.

Their idolatry. And God had told them again in Jeremiah 70 years. And my judgment will be finished. And I will bring you back. Daniel's lived his whole life in hope of that moment.

But here God shows him, Daniel, a return from exile will not fix the problem of your sinful hearts. This cycle will continue to rebel. You will continue to sin.

And your rebellion will continue to earn my judgment. And round and round and round and round we go until I send my own son to solve this sin problem for good.

And bring all my people out of their exile and into the true promised land. Where sin and death and the devil are no more. Chapter 8 is a hard truth for Daniel.

[ 23 : 40 ] We have to see it and read it and understand it in light of the glorious, better hope of chapter 7. He says to Daniel, that promised land that you're hoping for, that's not the ultimate answer for you, Daniel.

There's something even better coming. A glorious kingdom that will be forever. That's purchased and reigned and ruled over by one like a glorious son of man.

But until he comes, you can expect the beastly kingdoms of this world to continue to act like beasts.

Prime example. This little horn wages war against my people. Who is he? Who is he? Who is this little horn?

At first glance, you might think that it's the same little horn as chapter 7. And we heard about a little horn that opposes God and persecutes the saints in chapter 7.

[ 24 : 44 ] But if you look a little bit closer, I think we'll see that's not the case. This little horn comes out of Greece. Not out of Rome. He comes out of this third beast.

Not the fourth beast. He comes out of one of these four horns that came out of Greece. He's not uprooting three horns out of the fourth beast. They're not the same little horn.

And again, as Daniel looks forward into the fuzzy picture of biblical prophecy, we have the luxury of looking backwards and seeing how all of this has played out.

This little horn is somebody named Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus Epiphanes. Let me tell you a little bit about Antiochus.

And you tell me if this fits the description in Daniel chapter 8. Antiochus came out of one of these four divisions of Alexander's Greece.

[ 25 : 38 ] He came out of the Seleucid Empire. He ruled over the Seleucid Empire from 175 B.C. until 164 B.C. And his desire was that everyone would embrace Hellenistic culture.

which meant that everyone would worship the Greek gods, especially Zeus. In fact, Antiochus went so far as to set himself up as Zeus incarnate.

He claimed to be God in the flesh. He gave himself the name Epiphanes. That's not his legal name. He titled himself Antiochus Epiphanes. And Epiphanes, you know what it means?

It means God manifest. He said, I am God in the flesh. He stamped every coin in the empire with the words, God in the flesh.

Antiochus Epiphanes, the most illustrious God. This man was so power hungry and evil that many of his contemporaries called him Epiphanes, which is a little twist on Epiphanes.

[ 26 : 39 ] And it doesn't mean God in the flesh. It means madman. He magnified himself to be like God. And this man set his sights towards the promised land.

He went into Jerusalem, and Antiochus killed 40,000 Jews within a span of three days' time. He outlawed many of the requirements of God's law.

He forbade them from practicing circumcision. He forbade them from holding their feasts. He forced the Jews to profane the Sabbath. Antiochus Epiphanes, he prevented sacrifices, burnt offering sacrifices, from being offered for three whole years.

He burned the scriptures. He made the Jewish people eat unclean meat. And then listen to this. He marched himself into the temple, into the Holy of Holies, that is the most sacred place of the temple.

And he placed idols there, set up statues of Zeus there and what was left of the temple. And he sacrificed pigs and human flesh there in the temple of God.

[ 27 : 53 ] It was a horrible, awful, offensive time in human history. This awful persecution of God's people and attack on God himself.

But here's my question and maybe you're wondering the same thing. If that isn't the little horn of chapter 7, then why in the world do they sound so similar?

Are you asking that question? They share the same playbook, don't they? Speak against God. Deceive and destroy God's people. Overturn God's laws. Discard God's truth.

In fact, I think you can go a step further and you can rightfully say that Antiochus Epiphanes is anti-Christ. Jesus Christ hasn't appeared on the scene of history quite yet, but you think about it.

Everything that Antiochus opposed pointed to and is fulfilled by Jesus Christ. He persecutes the people of God, the body of Christ.

[ 28 : 55 ] He attacks the temple of God, truly fulfilled, and Christ, the true temple. He discards the sacrifice of God, pointing us forward to the true ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ himself.

He opposes the priesthood of God, which pointed us forward and is fulfilled by Christ, our great high priest. He discarded the word of God, Christ, the living and true word of God. Everything Antiochus represents is anti-Christ, and that's exactly the point.

Here's the point, church. In every age, the spirit of Antichrist wages war against God and his people.

In every age. This is the hard news. This spiritual battle is not just simply something that's left entirely for some future generation to experience.

We are in it. The spirit of Antichrist echoes throughout history. That's the hard news, but here's the better hope. The good news of the gospel.

[ 30 : 02 ] That Christ Jesus has triumphed over the powers of sin and darkness. Christ Jesus has triumphed over the powers of the enemy and his perfect life in our place, in his sacrificial death on behalf of sinners and in his victorious resurrection from the grave.

So we say, death has no claim on us. He triumphed over the powers of sin and darkness in his first coming, and when he comes again, he will finally destroy and defeat every enemy.

1 John 2:18 tells us, children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many Antichrists have come.

See, that final Antichrist of chapter 7 will be of the same mold as the thousands of Antichrists that have come before him. It is nothing new.

So if we want to know what that final little horn will be like, all we need to do is look at all the other leaders and rulers and teachers throughout human history who have opposed opposed the kingdom of God.

[ 31 : 17 ] We can look at Pharaoh or Herod or Nero or Domitian or here, Antiochus Epiphanes. And if we want to know how that final horn will play out, we can look at what happened here to Antiochus.

What does it say? He waged war with God's permission, with God's own strength, and he was squashed by God's own power as soon as God said it's done.

All of this would have been earth-shattering for Daniel to hear. Again, he lived his entire life waiting and hoping just to get back to the land, but here in chapter 8 God gives him a look at the future and shows him, Daniel, you are not home yet.

This present evil age is marked by a prolonged underlying spiritual conflict that began in Genesis chapter 3 and will not be finished until the Lord Jesus returns.

There is no perfect promised land here. So how does Daniel respond? How should we respond?

[ 32 : 30 ] You know, some look at texts like this, the back half of Daniel, Daniel chapter 8, and their minds go immediately to the end end, to the end of all things.

They obsess over it. They think that every war, every persecution, every current event is a sign of the end. Harold Camping, anybody recognize that name?

Harold Camping. He predicted the end of the world 12 times. He wrote a best-selling book, 1994, in which he predicted the end of the world in 1994.

It sounds silly, but the thing is, church Christians eat this stuff up. In that book, it went on to sell over a million dollars worth of copies in just four weeks.

The Millerites, you may know that name. This is the group that eventually became the Seventh-day Adventists. William Miller studied this passage. He studied Daniel chapter 8.

[ 33 : 32 ] He determined, with what he said, was 99.9% confidence that Jesus Christ would return on October 22, 1844.

The people believed him. Many quit their jobs, moved their families, gave away their possessions. October 23rd came, and they eventually had to go on with their lives.

They call it the great disappointment. Let me just say, church, as we apply this passage to us this morning, that is not how we ought to respond to this text.

How did Daniel respond to all of this? How did he respond? I just want to apply these responses to us as we close. Look there with me to verse 27. See, three ways that Daniel responded.

for one, he was concerned. He was concerned. So concerned that it says he was physically sick.

[ 34 : 34 ] It's amazing to me to think that Daniel knew that this was far down the line. He knew that this wasn't happening to him. It wasn't happening in his lifetime. But he was so deeply concerned for God's glory and the good of God's people that Daniel was sick to his stomach about what he saw.

That's one response. You know, church, it ought to bother us the terrible persecutions that our brothers and sisters in Christ go through all over the world right now.

And we shouldn't ever be deceived by the relative ease that we have had here into thinking that, well, that won't ever happen to me. If we aren't bothered by the spiritual war that we're in, then something's off.

we should be concerned and we should take those concerns to a sovereign God in prayer against the forces of spiritual darkness and evil that are at work against us, that are at work against our church, that are at work against our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Daniel was concerned. Second, he was also confused. He was also confused. You know, the end of this chapter ought to make us all feel a lot better, shouldn't it? He said, I was appalled by the vision and listen to this, I did not understand it.

[ 35 : 54 ] He didn't understand every detail of this vision. He didn't have charts and graphs and timelines that you see tossed around with his book. He didn't set dates. He didn't know.

What he knew and what he was content with knowing is that there is a God who rules over human history. That God is guiding his people through. Yes, the danger lies ahead but at the end he knows God will triumph.

I'm so thankful for Daniel's confusion. It makes me feel a lot better. We don't have to have it all mapped out. God does. That's enough.

There's one final response here, church, and it's third, that he was constructive. He was constructive. Look what he did. He has just peered into the pages of the future.

What does he do? He doesn't sell his stuff. He doesn't quit his job. He doesn't build a bunker. What does he do? He says, Then I rose and I went about the king's business.

[ 37 : 02 ] He got up and he went back to work. Church, I need us to realize this morning, Do you understand? We know far more about what the future holds than most people do in this world.

We know with certainty what the future holds. Maybe not every detail but big picture. We know what the future holds. What do we know? We know that soon and very soon Jesus Christ will return.

That Jesus Christ has conquered sin and death. Jesus Christ has risen. Jesus Christ is reigning from heaven and he will return to judge the living and the dead. We know with confidence that when he comes he will finally put an end to every enemy.

He will put an end to sin, to death, to the devil for good. He will wipe away every tear from our eye. We know with confidence that those who belong to him will reign with him for the rest of eternity.

We know with confidence nothing here will last. No treasure here will last. No kingdom here will last. And we know with confidence that when he comes there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth for all who don't know him and joy and relief and worship and celebration for those who do.

[ 38 : 20 ] We know with confidence and with much greater clarity than Daniel that when Jesus comes everything that Daniel hoped for will be realized finally and in full. All the people of God, Jew and Gentile alike from every tribe, tongue, and nation will be brought out of our exile and into the true promised land.

The new heavens and the new earth to be with our king for the rest of eternity. Church, we know that this is where all of human history is headed. The right response to this incredible knowledge is to go about your business as usual with the sovereign plan of God shaping everything you do.

Live faithfully as an exile. Live faithfully in your God-given role as a father, as a mother, as a husband, as a wife.

To teach your children about this king, to live faithfully in your role as an employee at work. To work as unto the Lord and not for man. To live faithfully as a member of this community.

To love your neighbor. To seek every opportunity to do good for the glory of God and to share this message of the gospel with those who are perishing. This is what it looks like to wait on the Lord.

[ 39 : 50 ] The call for us and for God's people in every age is to look to Him in faith. To trust in His goodness and His sovereignty and to live as His people wherever you may be.

Does this describe your life? How will you respond to knowing with certainty what the future holds? You know, for some that may mean for the first time trusting in the Lord this morning.

Calling out to Him and saying I'm lost without you. I need to repent of my sin and put my faith in Jesus Christ. That may be your response this morning. For others, it may be simply to ask ourselves once more, what does it look like for me to live faithfully in my God-given roles of my life right where I am as I wait on the return of the Lord?

I'd like to close this morning with the words of 2 Peter. He says, Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

[ 41 : 19 ] Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn?

But according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish and at peace.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank You for Your sovereign goodness in which we trust.

And although we don't know all the details of what will happen this very afternoon, Lord, You do. And You are working all things for our good and for Your glory, for the exaltation of Your Son who has come and conquered every enemy and who will come again soon to establish His kingdom forever.

We love You, Lord, and we pray that You would be honored and that we would be transformed as we reflect on these truths. We love You and pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 42 : 35 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.