

Daniel 7

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[0 : 0 0] God, Lord, we pray we'll continue to be faithful to us as we continue to be faithful to him in holding forth not ourselves and not building a big program or a big building or a big anything, but that we would hold forth the gospel of Jesus Christ and that he would build his church.

If you're wondering, the stained glass window is over here in the side so you can look at it after the service. If you're wondering, where in the world is that? I've never seen that. It's because it's over here.

All the parents know it because they go to children's ministry. All right. I'm going to ask you this morning to stand for the reading of God's word. We're looking at Daniel chapter seven this morning. And as usual, I forgot the page number. It's 744. So if you want to pull out your pew Bible and read along with us, we're going to read the whole chapter.

And I thought it'd be good for us to stand to honor God's word and to stretch our legs. So let's read God's word 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.

[1 : 1 4] Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. Daniel declared, 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 eagle's 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 the four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads and the 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.

[2 : 2 4] It devoured and broke it in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it. And it had 10 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 on his head was like pure will. His throne was fiery flames. Its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him.

A thousand thousand served him and 10,000 times 10,000 stood before him. The court sat in judgment and the books were opened.

[3 : 2 6] 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 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. As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious and the visions of my head alarmed me.

I approached one of those who stood there and asked him for the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things. These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth.

[4 : 41] But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever, and ever. Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet.

And about the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things that seemed greater than its companions.

As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High.

And the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth which shall be different from all the kingdoms and it shall devour the whole earth and trample it down and break it to pieces.

As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall rise and another shall rise after them. He shall be different from the former ones and shall put down three kings.

[5 : 58] He shall speak words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High and shall think to change the times and the law and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

But the court shall sit in judgment and his dominion shall be taken away to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the dominion and the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. Their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey them. Here is the end of the matter.

As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me. My color changed. But I kept the matter in my heart. This is the reading of God's word.

Let's say, thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. Take a seat and let's pray. God, we pray for help this morning.

[7 : 06] As we encounter this text and we recognize indeed how foreign this text is to the way we think and the way we communicate in our day and age today, Lord, we ask for your spirit to give us wisdom and insight that we might know the truth that you are speaking to us through it.

Lord, thank you for the many who have gone before who can help us to understand this rightly. And Lord, we pray that as we hear this word spoken to us that we might have, Lord, great confidence in you.

Lord, that though this world with devils filled should often threaten to undo us, we will not fear for Lord, you have triumphed through us.

We praise you for that this morning. Lord, I ask for your help as I speak that I might speak your words and Lord, for all of our hearts that we'd be receptive to what you have for us today.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. At the risk of sounding like Chicken Little, the sky is falling.

[8 : 25] Or at least that's what it feels like a little bit. We live in a world that is today perhaps feeling, to me at least, a little chaotic, a little scary, a little troubling.

regardless of your election cycle, your election predilections, whichever side you fall on, the sky is falling if the other person wins and the world seems like it will end.

If we open the nightly news, what you will hear is about war and rumors of war and famine and natural disasters. If you turn to a more benign thing like the health page, you find stories of super viruses and things that are outpacing our ability to try to treat them and take care of them.

You turn to the environmental section and you hear about global warming and the increased severity of natural disasters. Maybe you don't think about this every day, but if you have eyes to see, the world is a chaotic and a scary place to be often.

And that's just on a global scale, on an impersonal scale. How about your own life? What does your workplace look like? Peaceful, serene, everyone gets along, they work together for the benefit of your workplace and the success.

[10:06] Is that what it looks like? Or does it look chaotic, competitive, striving against one another for success, uncertain about the future, what it's going to look like?

What's the nature of your extended family? Is it characterized by sniping and gossip and power struggles? how about for those of you who are in school?

Those of you who are in high school, what is it like as you walk down the class, down the hallway between classes? The clicks, the glances, the whispers, the condemnation, the rivalry, who's in, who's out, who's cool, who's not.

It can be a frightening world to live in. You may be facing any number of personal crises where your internal world may be falling apart even as you feel like you're trying to hold it together on the outside.

It can be a chaotic and a frightening world to live in. And where do our hearts go at this time? It's easy, isn't it?

[11:24] In times like this, to become like Daniel in a reading we just had. I was anxious. The color drained from my face.

I was afraid. And of course, Daniel had good reason to be that way. If you remember or if you're here visiting and you haven't been keeping up with us, we're preaching through the book of Daniel and what we've learned in the first six chapters is that Daniel has been uprooted from his childhood home.

He's been taken forcibly into exile as functionally a slave and he has now lived through probably at this time of Daniel 7 probably close to 50 years of seeing foreign king after foreign king rule over his country.

Rule over his life where he's been taken into exile. And not only that, but he's seen these kings throw those that oppose him into fiery furnaces. And he will, he hasn't gotten there yet, but he will see them thrown into lion's dens.

The Babylonian kingdom was not a pleasant place. Certainly not for a slave, an exile, and an outsider. They faced lots of uncertainty.

[12:45] What is the next ruler going to be like? Nebuchadnezzar seemed like he might be moving towards God through the course of his life. But here in chapter 7, Daniel is receiving this vision under one of his successors, Belshazzar.

And if you remember Greg preaching on chapter 5, Belshazzar had no regard for God. He was proud and arrogant and he exalted his own power and his own person in a way that if you've ever been in a place like that, it's frightening and scary to know that that person has all the power.

It feels like they have power over your life. It feels like your success or your failure, your happiness is completely in the hands of someone else who doesn't love you and doesn't care for you.

And it's alarming and it's frightening. But Daniel 7 has a word for us this morning.

Daniel 7 tells us that in the midst of the terrifying beastliness of the world that we live in, that there is one, a God most high who will come and with his people he will triumph over all of those kingdoms and he will reign forever.

[14:18] And that's a word of hope for us today. So let's dive in a little bit to this passage. As we do that though, we need to remember a little bit about where we are in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 7 is in many ways a bit of a hinge chapter. The people have been, the people of God have been brought into exile. They are under a foreign ruler. They are in a place where the dominant culture and the power brokers worship another God.

And there is an overall question, what will happen to God's people? Where is God in the midst of this? This is a part of what the book of Daniel was written to address to remind them of God being with them in the midst of it.

And then as we come to chapter 7, this hinge chapter, I call it a hinge for two reasons. One is that, if you remember as we explained, when the book of Daniel was originally written, chapter 1 and chapters 8 through 12 are written in Hebrew.

Chapter 2 through chapter 7 seem to have been written in Aramaic. And so chapter 7 is the end of this section. The end of this section where it seems what the writer has been doing, what Daniel has been doing is giving an account of what God has done in Aramaic, which was the trade language of the day, so that all the nations would hear of what God was doing and how God had acted for his people in the midst of this incredibly difficult circumstance.

[15 : 51] And so this is the end of that chapter. And interestingly, there's some parallels with chapter 2 where, if you remember, there was a vision of a statue in four kingdoms and that those kingdoms would fall.

And so, just for your further research, you can see that this section was bookmarked by this theme that we're looking at today. But it's also a hinge chapter because at the beginning it's very easy to split Daniel into 1 through 6 and 7 through 12.

And the reason is, as you heard this morning, this is not like what we saw in chapter 6. Chapter 6 is a nice narrative story. We're familiar with that.

It tells about a person doing real things in the real world. And suddenly, Daniel, the content of most of this chapter is a vision and you just think, what in the world do I do with this?

This is called apocalyptic literature and we will see that this is the nature of the book for the rest of the way out. That it's apocalyptic literature. What does that mean?

[16 : 59] What it means is that the Bible is written in different literary genres to communicate truth through different forms. And so, there are stories, narratives, that tell truths about how God has acted in the world.

There is poetry in the Psalms that remind us of the nature of God in various ways. There are gospel narratives that tell about the life of Jesus. There are letters from the apostles written to the church. And in all of these different literary forms, God is communicating truth to us about who He is and what He's doing in the world and what He calls us to in response to Him.

Apocalyptic literature is perhaps the most foreign and most unknown to us, particularly, of these genres. Genre is just a word for a literary form.

What does that mean? Well, here are a couple of things that are true about apocalyptic literature. I'm just going to go through this real quick, but I feel like it's going to be helpful. First of all, it's metaphor rich.

[18 : 03] It gives you lots of likes and as and pictures, not of what is really true, but pictures that help you think about something. This is the second thing that's true about. Not only does it give you those pictures, but it teaches by analogy.

That is, it talks about something you don't know anything about by referring it to or making it like something that you do know something about. So it doesn't mean there are actual beasts.

It just means what I'm picturing is like a beast, for example. Third, we need to recognize that images in this kind of writing, they speak truly and accurately, but not precisely.

Images preserve mystery about the ideas that are, in trying to communicate about ideas that at some level are beyond our comprehension.

Tremper Longman, an Old Testament scholar and one of the real leading ones on this kind of literature says this, it is a travesty to interpret apocalyptic images too finely, to press them in their details.

[19 : 14] Because that's the nature of how it communicates. Those details are meant to give an image or an impression, not to give us an allegory where every little detail has some corresponding reality to it that we must identify.

And so, apocalyptic literature is a different form than what we're used to. And we're going to be in it for about five weeks, so buckle your seatbelts and get ready because here we go.

Apocalyptic literature. So what do we do with this chapter in light of it? How do we understand its meaning? Well, as I've already said, I think the main idea of this chapter is that the terrifying kingdoms of this world will ultimately be overcome by the triumphant kingdom of the Most High and His saints.

And in that, you see there are basically two main points that he's putting forth. One is, there is this frightening vision of the kingdoms of the world and then there is the vision of the King of the God Most High who will come and triumph over them.

So we're going to look at them in that order. As we look at the first one then, the terrifying kingdoms of the world, the images he uses are beasts and then the fourth beast has horns and there are horns that grow out of horns and horns that overcome and pluck out horns and again, you recognize this is not a literal description, right?

[20 : 40] It's pointing towards something else and so thankfully, in verse 17, in the middle of this chapter, it gives us the interpretation of it so we don't have to wonder, oh, what are we talking about here?

Look with me at verse 17. Verse 17, Daniel asks people in this vision, there are others around him who are hearing this or who are seeing this and he asks them, what is this about?

Verse 17, the four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. Okay, so this is what we want to know. First and foremost, these kingdoms, these beasts represent kingdoms of this world, kingdoms of humanity that will rise out and what do we learn about them?

Well, we learn a whole lot of things by the images, right? First of all, we recognize that they come out of the earth so that they are earthbound, they are not heavenly kingdoms, they are earthly but not only that but look at where the beasts come from, the beasts come from the sea and if you study the ancient Near East, you recognize that the sea is almost always pictured as a, an image of chaos, an image of disorder.

Think about even how God accommodated this and addressed it when he wrote about how God began to make order out of the chaos of the ocean in the creation narrative when he talked in Genesis about how he put boundaries on the ocean and how he did those things.

[22 : 12] Those were speaking about the chaotic nature of the sea that would have been understood in the ancient Near East that we don't really think about unless you happen to live in North Carolina or Louisiana or a few other places where you've seen the terrifying nature of the ocean when it comes into your backyard.

So, here's, so, you have this image of chaos and disorder, something that is not out of, not under control. You see this idea that from the four winds, these kingdoms are going to cover the whole part of the earth.

The four tends to be connected to the four points to the compass. So, these winds come from the north and south and east and the west. And so, there's a sense of the universal picture of it.

And the beasts, without trying to identify them specifically right now, what are they? Well, whatever they are, they aren't natural. They are not normal.

You have a lion with eagle's wings. You have a leopard with wings. You have a bear. All of them are being unnatural in various ways.

[23 : 19] And you see in the third one, the command, arise and devour the flesh. They are fierce animals. They are things that if you met in your backyard, you would be terrified.

That's the impression that you're supposed to get. Whatever these, whatever these beasts are, whatever these kingdoms are, they're terrifying and they are powerful. They're predatory.

And then, we get to the fourth one and Daniel begins to lose his language for it. Well, it's not like anything. It's actually different. He says it's different four times in verse 7 and verse 19 and verse 23 and verse 24.

He says, whatever the fourth one is, it's going to be different in some ways and yet it still shares the same characteristics. And as we saw, as we read through the whole chapter, this was a more violent, there was more internal strife, there was more violence towards others.

This little horn that would come up out of this kingdom and be a part, it seems like that's referring to a particular human ruler maybe because it's given human eyes and a human mouth to speak but also, it is a boastful person.

[24 : 37] It is a boastful kingdom and in this boastful kingdom it wages war specifically against the saints of the Most High. And so there is this picture of these kingdoms that are fearsome and scary and that are attacking God's people.

And this is the overall impression that we ought to get from these visions. Now, typically, as people have tried to map them onto human history, they have said the first beast seems like it's Babylon, the second beast seems like it's the Persian Empire, the Medes and the Persians, the third one seems like it's Greece and the fourth one seems like it's Rome.

But again, the fourth one seems to defy category here. I think it's probably something bigger than just that. And Pastor Greg will get more into the identity identity of the little horn next week because the little horn comes back in chapter eight and in fact is more central and we'll see how it seems that the best understanding of that might be that it connects to the Greek Empire.

But I'm going to let him cover that next week. So come on back or make sure you go to the website and hear that. So this is the picture, this is the vision that God is giving Daniel.

Fierceness, frightening, overpowering, predatory nations. I don't know how that strikes you. So I was meditating on it.

[26 : 18] I realized that, you know, we in America particularly, we live in a world where we just really think things are going to get better. We always think it's going to get better. Right?

That the best thing is just around the corner. It's the next thing to come and we live in this world of improvement. Now, here's the thing. God in his grace, in his common grace to this world, there's lots of good things that are happening.

People don't die in childbirth at the same rate that they used to, either the women or the children. Diseases that used to ravage people no longer ravage them. There is lots to be thankful for.

But friends, let us put on our eyes of history just a little bit to recognize that the development of human history has not been moving from chaos to order.

But the story of human history has always had both God's common grace of goodness and the kingdoms of the world rising up and railing with ferocity and devouring people.

[27 : 26] I was a history major. Just think about the 20th century. Go back to the slaughter of the Armenians by the Turkish government where Idi Amin's rule in Uganda or Mao and the Cultural Revolution in China or Stalin in Russia the Civil Wars in Rwanda and South Sudan the Shining Path in Peru and I could go on and on and on and talk about how much in the last 100 years our world has been characterized by that.

And lest we in our North American cocoon think that we are above all of this recognize that we are the ones who dropped the atomic bomb and killed millions of people.

Not only that on a global sociopolitical level but think about it on a societal level. We in America who believe that we are progressing that we are getting better that we are doing better at treating one another friends is this really happening?

We've lived through the last two years where racial division and racial violence have been devastating. We live in an election cycle where the things that have been talked about have been just disgusting.

And the attitudes that have embodied hatred sexism racism it's been terrible.

[29 : 05] and let us not think that lest you think that I'm standing on one or other side of this this election thing recognize as well that the social progressive policies of the elite can be just as destructive in some ways as maybe the more blatant nature on the other side.

I am not hopeful. I see our political system and I am I am not hopeful. I think beasts that are ferociously devouring is far more characteristic than anything else.

And friends recognize that in the middle of this the persecution of God's people has simply increased in the last 100 years. There are more martyrs in the 20th century. Some of that's just population growth but some of it is the reality of opposition to God's kingdom.

I searched online currently over 100 million Christians are living in a place where persecution against the church is regular. And interestingly one statistic I found statistics aren't always true but it said 70% of the world lives in a religiously intolerant context.

Friends the beasts ravage our world. The kingdoms of this world are not going to save us.

[30 : 40] They are going to devour us. And recognize that it's not just out there. Recognize that it's probably in your own life as well.

think about how the fierce teeth of divorce or abuse rip apart your soul. Recognize how the claws of success and achievement tear at your meaningful work and study.

Recognize that the fierce competition in your workplace makes it a battleground where others are adversaries instead of partners. Recognize that in our materialistic world where we cling to those things where we are living in the most materially well provided country probably ever yet lack of home lack of medical care social isolation and poverty continue to characterize some of your lives even today.

Recognize that in the world we live in here in New Haven that the educated elite can be condescending arrogant superior in a way that is not sharing and building but is destroying what is good about this world.

There are beasts. Now the good news is this is not all that is true and please hear me when I said earlier God's grace is still working it is not all bad in this world there is a place for us to be working to counteract and fight against those things and to contribute to the world being a better place but that is not the message of Daniel 7 the message of Daniel 7 is to exiles who are experiencing life like that who are seeing that this is really true and they are wondering how can we endure God where are you and this is what the second half of the chapter the second part of it a vision there is a vision that comes up and we know that in this vision of the courtroom that those beasts will be defeated verse 11 and 12 and verse 18 show that none of those beasts ultimately will stand none of them will last forever in fact there is a striking transition in the vision from 3 to 8 it is all visions and

little horns and fierceness and destruction and then in verse 9 it almost shifts abruptly to something else it is like the one who is giving the vision wanted us to say okay now you know what your context is but look this is what I want you to really see this is what I really want you to understand there is a vision of a courtroom a heavenly courtroom and in that courtroom the ancient of days sits that ancient of days is a picture of moral purity and perfection with his whiteness his white hair and his white robes those are pictures of moral perfection and purity in the imagery we also see that he is one from whom flows fire which is a picture of judgment and so this ancient of days comes and he sits like the judge and you see that in this courtroom the books are open and he is ready to begin to pronounce judgment and he sits in a place of high authority where thousands and ten thousand serve him and come before him and we see just a little further on in verses 14 and 15 that he is the one to whom the second person in this vision of hope comes there is one who is like a son of man and he comes to the ancient of days and the ancient of days gives to him the dominion and the power forever he is the one who receives the ultimate rulership over the world now who is this son of man what do we know about him well there are a couple things we know one is that the term son of man in the bible is used a lot if you read the book of ezekiel you would see that that was the common designation that god would call ezekiel son of man do this son of man go speak for me and in that sense as it does in like psalm 8 what is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you are take thought of him it simply means you are part of humanity as opposed to being divine or angelic so at some level it's saying this is this is a real human being but interestingly he is a son of man who who comes riding or sitting on the cloud and again this imagery if you read through your old testament the cloud is an image of

[36 : 24] god's presence over and over again as they left exile in in egypt god went before them a cloud of fire and a cloud of a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud right when god descended on the temple and said i am now going to dwell among my people it was he came down in a cloud and further and further on you see this imagery of god's presence of divinity and so there is this picture of one like a son of man both divine and human and it says in verse 14 and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom and all the peoples and nations and languages should serve him and his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed and this is then reaffirmed again at the end in chapter 27 there's a little footnote that you might wonder about who's ruling at the end is it is it god's people or is it the son of man is it a plural or a singular and they have it in in the text one way and in the footnote the other way but i believe that in the end the vision is going to bring those things together we'll talk about that in just a minute verse 27 says in the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him so what we see is this one who comes and the ancient of days who is the judge of all gives him dominion over all of these beasts and over all of their kingdoms and over all of their and all of their fierceness and all of their power and all of their chaos and all of their devouring will end and friends i'm sure many of you know but when you go to the new testament when jesus christ comes to earth this is his favorite name for himself nobody else actually calls him the son of man but he calls himself the son of man self-referentially over and over and over and over again often in relationship to his authority often in relationship to his suffering in mark 13 as he's talking about the days to come this is a little apocalyptic part of the gospel of mark he says but this is chapter 13 verse 24 but in those days after the tribulation the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heaven will be shaken and then they will see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds from the ends of the earth and the ends of heaven and then one chapter later as jesus is standing trial before the jewish leaders in caiaphas and they're asking him are you the christ the son of god jesus says this i am and you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven jesus was very comfortable saying i am he i am the one who has come to fulfill what daniel was pointing to i am the son of man who will come and i am the one who the ancient of days will give all dominion and power to jesus presents himself as the victor he is the victor over sin and death as he lives a perfect life and dies a

death that he didn't deserve because he was sinless and rose again from dead to to defeat the power of sin and death so that we could be free from the worst beast and the most ferocious power in our lives which is the power of sin and death but not only has he done that but he has promised

that he will come back and when he comes not only will sin and death be defeated but all the kingdoms of this world will be brought into alignment as paul says in philippians 2 that when jesus exalted to the heavens when he returns every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that jesus christ is lord to the glory of god he is the one who will reign he is the one who will defeat all the enemies and yet here's the most wonderful thing and it must have been great for daniel to hear this because it's not just him but it's all of his saints with him did you see that it was listed twice it was smoking twice for once in verse 27 and then once again um in oh i lost it uh verse 19 no 18 i think i didn't put my glasses back on so you have to bear with me um so but twice we see it's not just jesus or this son of man who will have that dominion but all of his saints with him can you imagine how wonderful that would have been for daniel to hear oh my though i live in this world where i feel like they have all the power and all the control and all the suffering that i am enduring and all the trials and even the death that i might face for being faithful to my god but i'm gonna reign over them one day i will have this victory over them not in this world in the world that's to come but i will reign the ultimate victory does not happen now in this chapter the ultimate victory is at the end and when that victory comes when judgment comes the beast will be shown to be nothing and the saints of the most high will sit with those with him who reigns over all and has this everlasting kingdom and so friends this is what we are to take from daniel though we live in a world that is chaotic and is frightening there is a king who will come and rule these things will not end last forever because one day he will come and he will have the everlasting kingdom and we who have faith in him will be with him in it so what does this mean first of all it means don't be surprised this is what peter wrote in the passage it was read earlier don't be surprised when you face various trials don't be surprised that we live in a world full of ferocious beasts whether they be political kingdoms or little power kingdoms in your world don't be surprised this is normal this is real in our world and it will be until that day when jesus returns and ends it all so gear yourself up for it get ready for it at one level it's not getting better not in the short term it's going to be hard so gear up for that but secondly know that evil will not win and i know this is hard sometimes when you faced it personally when you've been the victim of it when you in a tender conscience you look at the world and you think why does it seem like why does it seem like evil is winning daniel says no it is not going to win there is one who will come and when he comes he will reign in righteousness and evil will be judged and evil will be punished and evil will end and what continues forever is this kingdom of righteousness that he will bring and so endure with patience to the end know that you are not going to be on the losing side as you cling to him and third recognize that your life is in the hands of the one who will have all dominion you are not outside of his hands even now in the midst of your suffering god has not forgotten you even now in the most frightening circumstances god is not far off but he is near to you this is what we've seen in all of daniel one through six in these narratives now we see it in a very different way communicated the same message what jesus said before you send it into heaven and lo i am with you always to the end of the age he has not forsaken you you are in his hands and he's the king and one day his kingdom will be ours to share in and so on november 9 no matter who is elected or as you head back to your workplace tomorrow morning and you see the scars and the claws are out again as you face your own private stories of the ravages of this world know know that there is one there's one who has come one who has won the victory at the cross and at the resurrection and one who in whose hands your life is even today by faith in him hold fast to him and keep going don't give up one day you will reign with him let's pray lord we thank you for this word of hope and encouragement lord we acknowledge that there are times when we doubt lord when we face the ravages of this world when we see how fearsome it can be lord we shrink back but lord thank you that you are gentle and kind in reminding us lord that that's not the whole story and that as we fix our eyes on you and remember that you are the victorious risen one and the coming conquering king lord that will help us in these moments to walk in faith and to trust in you and to have hope hope not that this world will get better now but hope that you will come back and make it one day and that we will reign with you what a great hope that is we pray these things in jesus name amen