



STANDING STRONG IN TRYING TIMES

The Book of Daniel

The Beasts, The Little Horn, and the People of God

Key idea:

Daniel has a vision of four great beasts and a little horn that oppress God's people, but the Son of Man has established the eternal kingdom of God which grows throughout history and will be given to God's covenant people.

Key text:

Daniel 7:15–28

“I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ¹⁷ ‘The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever — yes, for ever and ever.’ ¹⁹ “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws — the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. ²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell — the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. ²³ “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. ²⁶ ““But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’ 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.”

Key points:

1. The fourth beast in Daniel's vision, Rome, was far more terrifying than the other beasts, and it had ten horns which represented the authority and power of Rome.
2. The fourth beast Rome also eventually had a 'little horn' that probably represented the line of Caesars, and especially Nero.
3. The 'little horn' was arrogant and boastful, spoke against God, persecuted the people of God, tried to alter the faith and worship of God's people, and was allowed to persecute the people of God for a season so intensely that it appeared they would be eliminated from the earth. But God intervened and judged and removed the little horn and spared His people.
4. The kingdom to focus on in Daniel 7 is not any of the four beastly kingdoms but rather the eternal Kingdom of God established by the Son of Man during the time of the fourth beast, which is eternal and will replace all human kingdoms.
5. Despite all of the suffering they endure in this world, the people of God will survive and will inherit the eternal kingdom of God while all other kingdoms will be destroyed.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. How does the angel summarize the message of the vision in verses 17-18? Why is it important that the angel summarizes all the details of the vision into this short statement?
3. What is Daniel so interested in the 4th kingdom as opposed to the other kingdoms?
4. There are many different interpretations of the ten horns and especially the 'little horn'. How do I interpret these symbols?
5. Read Revelation 13:1-7. How is John's vision in Revelation 13 similar to Daniel's vision in Daniel 7? How are they different? How do they help me interpret one another?
6. In what ways is 'the little horn' a good representation of the Roman Caesars, and especially Nero? Can I think of other rulers in human history who seem to have the 'spirit' of the little horn active in their attitudes and actions?

7. The message of the persecution of the people of God by the little horn and then God's deliverance of His people and their inheritance of the eternal kingdom of God is repeated three times in the chapter (7:17-18; 21-22; 26-27). Why would the angel repeat this same message three times?
8. If Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, then why is there still so much evil in the world? Why do the people of God suffer so much persecution if He has already established the Kingdom of God?
9. How am I to respond to persecution? How should I pray regarding persecution? How should I pray regarding the forces of persecution?
10. How does Daniel respond to the vision? How do I respond when I hear this vision? Does it make me fearful? Does it give me hope? Why?
11. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For Further Study:

[The Way - Trusting In God's Sovereignty](#) (May 30, 2021)

[The Church - The Persecuted Community of Faith](#) (November 8, 2020)

[Smyrna - The Persecuted Church](#) (March 5, 2017)

[The Normal Christian Life](#) (June 22, 2014)

[Imprecation - Avenge Your People O God!](#) (January 11, 2004)

Preview of next week: Daniel 8