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Grace Evangelical Church
Sunday, March 22, 2009
"Am I Living Victoriously In Jesus Christ?"
Daniel 7**

A visiting minister was very long-winded. Worse, every time he would make a good point during his sermon and a member of the congregation responded with "Amen" or "That's right, preacher" he would get wound up even more and launch into another lengthy discourse.

Finally, the host pastor started responding to every few sentences with "Amen, Pharaoh!" The guest minister wasn't sure what that meant, but after several more "Amen, Pharaohs" he finally concluded his very lengthy sermon.

After the service concluded and the congregation had left, the visiting minister turned to his host and asked, **"What exactly did you mean when you said "Amen, Pharaoh?"**

His host replied, "I was telling you to let my people go!"

Of course, words that the Lord told Moses to say to Pharaoh when He wanted Pharaoh to let Israel go from Egyptian bondage around 1400 B.C.

Now we are in a different time period of history when we come to the Book of Daniel we have been considering on Sunday morning in our "Dare To Be A Daniel" series. Israel had been taken captive by Babylon for disobeying the Lord, and Daniel and his three friends who have a heart for the Lord are taken captive with the others. That all occurred around 606 B.C.

When Daniel came with the captives he was probably in his late teens. Some 60 –70 years passed, and God used Daniel, in that time period in a mighty way in the kingdom of Babylon, giving Daniel the ability to know and interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, causing Nebuchadnezzar to promote him to be like his prime minister.

Then God used Daniel to interpret the hand writing on the wall that king Belshazzar saw (from the family of Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon who put his son in power while he retired to Arabia). **Belshazzar promoted Daniel to be the third most powerful in the kingdom.**

When the Persians defeated the Babylonians (539 B. C.) some jealous leaders in the government tricked the Persian king, Darius (Cyrus), into signing a document that those who didn't bow down to the Persian gods or to the king should be thrown into the lions' den.

Knowing that the document had been signed, Daniel, with his faith in the Lord and a part of the king's staff, still prayed on his knees in his house with the window open three times a day toward Jerusalem. **He may have been praying for God's protection, for his enemies, and that God would let his people go,** who had been in captivity almost 70 years, to return to Jerusalem, to the land of Israel. Daniel also knew the prophecy of Jeremiah that foretold that the exile of Israel would be for 70 years, and the time was getting close for that prophecy to be fulfilled. Daniel's accusers came by his house and found him praying to the true and living God. They told the king, and Daniel was thrown into the lions' den. God sent his angel and delivered Daniel. Daniel enjoyed great success in the Persian kingdom.

When we come to our text today in Daniel 7, we don't go ahead in time. Rather we go back in time. For the text in Daniel 7 reads, "In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, which means Daniel was recording events that took place around 553 B.C. about 14 years before the fall of Babylon.

This means that the events that Daniel recorded in our text for today, Daniel 7, and then Daniel 8 occurred before what Daniel recorded and experienced in Daniel 5 and 6. Thusly, what Daniel recorded in our text for today in Daniel 7 would come chronologically after chapter 4.

Why didn't Daniel record the events in his book in chronological order? A good question, and

I'm glad that you asked it. It's been suggested that Daniel may have recorded the other events

in his book first since they are the records and interpretations of the dreams and visions of others, and then he recorded the dreams and interpretations that the Lord gave him (Daniel 7:1-2; 8:1; 9:20-27); 10:1ff). **Certainly, Nebuchadnezzar's dream explained in chapter 2 of Daniel had a wide sweep of application. It was not like the other visions in Daniel 2-6.**

But the dream that Daniel had in our text for today, parallels Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 adding much to it.

In fact, according to Dr. John Walvoord, as interpreted by conservative scholars, the vision in Daniel 7 provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the New Testament.

It has been suggested that Daniel 7 is the hinge of the book of Daniel. It provides a detailed framework of the kingdoms already given in Daniel 2 but in greater detail tying in with the book of Revelation.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN DANIEL 2 & 7	
Chapter 2	Chapter 7
Nebuchadnezzar's image	The four beasts
Given to Nebuchadnezzar	Given to Daniel
4 kingdoms + 1 in view	4 kingdoms + 1 in view
1 man + a stone	4 beasts + the Son of Man
More general	More detailed
Daniel interpreted it.	An angel interpreted it.
Man's viewpoint	God's viewpoint

Daniel would probably have been about 68 years of age when he had the dream he described in our text today, Daniel 7. Note that Daniel moves from the third person used in Daniel 1-6, but now in

chapter 7 to the end of his book he uses the first person, "I was looking in my vision by night. . ." Perhaps to stress in a greater way the reality of what happened to his readers.

I. God takes the initiative in providing content for his servants (Daniel 7:1-3).

Verse 1 -Obviously, in his sleep, Daniel received this vision, this dream from the Lord. This is a miraculous encounter God had with Daniel and Daniel had with God. It was God's way in the Old Testament, and even in the New Testament of communicating with His people. His word, the Bible was not complete, and God used this means to bring a message to His people and a message that could affect the entire world.

God gave a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king in Daniel 2, and then used Daniel to tell him what the dream was and to interpret it. Now, God gave Daniel a dream directly, and helped him interpret it. I understand that God can still communicate through dreams specifically to the Muslim people to whom the gospel is taken. God tells them about his Son, Jesus, so that they are prepared to receive Him when they hear the message of the gospel.

We need to be very careful about that today, for God communicates directly to us through His Word today.

What did God communicate to Daniel in the vision He gave to Daniel?

Verse 2 – Daniel saw four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea. It would appear that the four winds of heaven refer to the sovereign power and might of the living God. God at will can influence the nations and bring his judgment to bear on them (Revelation 7:1). The Great Sea Daniel saw was probably the Mediterranean Sea, stirred up by the four winds. The Sea would represent the unorganized mass of humanity (Revelation 13:1).

Verse 3 – Daniel saw four beasts coming up out of the sea, each different from the other.

God is not giving visions and dreams like Daniel experienced in his day.

But, thanks be to God, He gives us His complete Word in the Bible so that we can know that He has spoken to us, and he wants us not just to know Him as personal Savior through faith in Christ, but to let His Word influence our minds, wills, and emotions for our good and His glory.

II. God provides content for His servants so they can understand what is happening in the world (Daniel 7:4-28).

1. The vision Daniel received (Daniel 7:1-14).

The four beasts Daniel saw coming out of the sea, and then the Ancient of Days.

(1) Beast #1 (7:4).

Daniel saw a lion with the wings of an eagle. The wings were plucked off. It was made to stand on two feet like a man. A human mind was given to it.

(2) Beast #2 (7:5).

The second beast resembled a bear. It was raised on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, "Arise, devour much meat."

(3) Beast #3 (7:6).

The third beast was like a leopard which had four wings of a bird on its back. It had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

(4) Beast #4 (7:7-8).

The fourth beast had had large iron teeth and ten horns. Another little horn came up from among them, and three of the first three horns were pulled out by the root. This horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.

(5) The Ancient of Days (7:9-14; cf. Revelation 1:12-16; Ezekiel 1:22-28).

Note the action of the Ancient of Days.

**He took the role as the pure and righteous Judge (7:9a, 10c). His throne was ablaze with flames.

**He is in control of His world (7:9c), as seen in the wheels burning with fire.

**He is overflowing with glory (7:10a) – A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him.

**He is in control of the beasts (7:11-12). He destroyed the boastful beast, and took away the dominion of the others.

**He gave authority to the Son of Man to establish His eternal kingdom so that all nations might serve Him (7:13-14).

2. The interpretation of the vision Daniel was given by God (Daniel 7:15-28).

Daniel was distressed in his spirit as he received this vision of the four beasts and the Ancient of Days.

The visions kept alarming him in his mind.

Seeing, one of those, evidently an angel standing by, Daniel asked him the meaning of the vision that God gave him.

The four beasts represented four kingdoms that would arise from the earth. Of course in Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar was given the vision of the different Gentile nations in a statue. Here Daniel is given the vision of the Gentile nations all in beasts or birds of prey.

On commentator remarked that Nebuchadnezzar saw the imposing outward power and splendor of the Gentile powers, whereas Daniel saw the true character of the Gentile world government as ravenous and warlike, established and maintained by force.

(1) The first kingdom – Beast #1 – the kingdom of Babylon (636-539 B.C.)

The lion, the king of beasts, represented Babylon, suggesting its royal strength. The wings of the eagle represent Babylon's swiftness. I understand that huge winged lions guarded the gates of the royal Babylonian palaces.

(2) The second kingdom – Beast #2 – the kingdom of Medo-Persia ((539-330 B.C.).

The bear, the most formidable beast after the lion represented Medo-Persia, The bear suggests strength and ferocity. **The bear appeared stronger on one side than the other, suggesting perhaps the superior strength of the Persian part of the empire.**

The three ribs in its teeth may stand for the three nations or three parts of one nation that the Medo-Persia empire had devour or would devour.

We need to remember that when Daniel received this vision, Babylon was still in power and Medo-Persia had not conquered Babylon, so the three nations may be the Babylonian, Lydian, and Egyptian Empires.

Daniel heard a voice to devour much meat, perhaps telling that Medo-Persia would conquer many nations. Persia ruled for 208 years, and was eventually conquered by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

(3) The third kingdom – Beast #3 – the kingdom of Greece (330 – 63 B.C.).

The **leopard** represented Greece, suggesting not so much their majestic power, but rather their speed, strength and cunning. The **four wings** on its back made it even faster. With the swiftness of a leopard, Alexander the Great conquered most of the civilized world all the way from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India (334-331 B.C.).

Evidently each of the four wings has some connection with each of the four heads, suggesting intelligent direction. It's interesting that Greece had four governmental divisions with one person heading each division.





(4) The fourth kingdom – Beast #4 – the kingdom of Rome (63 B.C. – 475 B.C.) Note Daniel 7:19, 23.

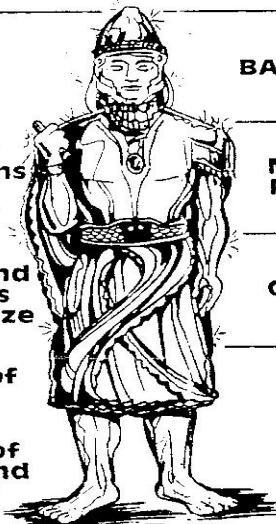
There was no particular beast given as a description of the Roman Empire. Rather it was unique. It was dreadful, terrifying, and extremely powerful. Its large iron teeth crushed and trampled with its feet all that was left of the former beasts. It was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands, and selling by the hundreds people into slavery.

Then on the head of this beast were 10 horns. The identification of these horns is not the easiest. It seems that there is some similarity between the 10 horns here and the 10 toes of the statue in the vision Nebuchadnezzar was given in Daniel 2.

Believing that the number 10 should be interpreted literally, the 10 horns could describe the 10 rulers who will arise in the future and reign simultaneously. Since the Roman Empire is no longer in existence, this would seem unlikely. It seems, therefore, that there will be in the future a revival of the Roman Empire into ten different kingdoms or countries. I encourage you to watch what continues to develop in Europe and the other nations.

THE FOUR KINGDOMS

Head of Gold	BABYLON	 Winged Lion
Chest and Arms of Silver	MEDO-PERSIA	 Lopsided Bear
Belly and Thighs of Bronze	GREECE	 4-Headed Leopard
Legs of Iron	ROME	 Terrifying and Frightening Beast
Feet of Iron and Clay		



(5) The fifth kingdom – The little horn – the 11th horn - Satan's kingdom (Daniel 7:20-21, 24-25).

This little horn arose among the 10 horns, and displaced 3 of them. The little horn had eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts, larger in appearance than its associates. He will have rule over the other 10 horns conquering 3 of those horns – evidently, the revived Roman Empire, which is yet going to develop as we just mentioned.

Who is the little horn? Note what that little horn does, that individual power, who evidently has a kingdom.

He wages war against the saints (7:21). He will subdue 3 of the other horns or kingdoms (7:24), and he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time (7:25).

This can be none other than the Antichrist, referred to in Matthew 24:5, 15; II Thessalonians 2:3-4- The man of sin; Revelation 13:17, 19 – the beast. This is the Antichrist empowered and ruled by Satan who will establish his one world government, one world economic and religious system to rule the world during the great tribulation period, with his control completely displayed during the time, times, and half a time, the last three and one half years of the tribulation period.

But the Antichrist's reign over the world will not last.

(6) The sixth kingdom – The Ancient of Day's kingdom, The kingdom of the Son of Man (Daniel 7:22, 26-27) – He will prevail forever.

As mentioned from Daniel 7:9-10, the Ancient of Days is God the Father in His eternality and purity. He passed judgment on the fourth beast, the Roman Empire. He gives authority to the Son of Man (Mark 8:31: Luke 19:10). the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come and defeat the Antichrist, and establish His eternal kingdom (Daniel 7:18, 22, 26-27). **The term Son of Man identifies Jesus Christ with humanity, while Christ is also called the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7:22, stressing His deity and identity with the Father in the Godhead.**

No kingdom will destroy the eternal kingdom of the Son of Man. It will be global in extent and endless. This is the kingdom of Daniel 2 referring to the stone cut out without hands that destroys the fourth kingdom and all other kingdoms.

Yes, the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Roman have come and gone. Daniel's prophecy was right on target, for God's Word is always true. Thusly, what was prophesied, and still needs to be fulfilled, will take place, the revival of the Roman Empire, the coming of the Antichrist, and the eventual coming of Christ to earth to set up His everlasting kingdom.

The Saints of all the ages, the saints of the HIGHEST ONE will reign with Him forever. All sin, evil, death, the devil, along with the Antichrist and his false prophet, and all those who reject Christ, will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). **The saints will reign with Christ forever. What a day that will be!!! We will be victorious in Christ forever.**

III. Applying God's content to our daily lives.

Right now, all believers in Jesus Christ are in the church through faith in Jesus Christ.

In fact the church wasn't mentioned in the 7th chapter of Daniel, or in other passages in Daniel, or other prophetic Old Testament Scriptures. The blessings upon the Gentiles were foretold through Abraham, but the Jew and Gentile in one body was a mystery, something hidden in the past but now it has been revealed after the death, burial, bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The blessed hope of the believer in Jesus Christ is His coming for His church, which could happen at anytime according to I Thessalonians 4 and I Corinthians 15. Then the events of Daniel 7 with the rise of Antichrist as depicted in Daniel 7 and Revelation 6-19 will unfold.

So what does that mean for us as believers serving the Lord today?

John tells us that he that has this hope, this blessed hope of Christ's any moment return should purify himself as He is pure (I John 3:1-3).

Paul tells us in Titus 2:11-13, that the Grace of God instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Christ's any moment return for believers in Jesus Christ should provide an impetus for us to seek to please the Lord each day in the power of the Holy Spirit. Knowing prophetic Scripture should cause

the believer to be ready when Christ returns, to live victoriously in Jesus Christ.

Let me summarize what's involved in the believer's relationship with Jesus Christ this way.

1. Faith

(1) For salvation.

Make sure one has accepted Jesus Christ as one's Savior (Romans 10:9-13), and one is confident in the Word of God that nothing can separate the believer from the love of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:38-39). No one or nothing can pluck the believer out of the hand of God the Father and Jesus Christ (John 10:27-29).

(2) For sanctification.

****Realize** one's position in Christ, one is a saint, set apart as His possession, His property. I belong to God, bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus Christ – I am a temple, a home for God the Holy Spirit. Christ lives in me!

****Act** like the Lord depending on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Take into account that you have died to the old ways, that old nature is rendered inoperative, and you have a new nature, the life of Christ, and now you can say **YES** to righteousness and **NO** to that which is unrighteous.

Now in the power of the Holy Spirit the believer can be a sifter, to have discernment between what is right and what is wrong, and the power of the Holy Spirit do the right.

2. Fill

Let your mind, your life become familiar with the Word of God.

Tuck some verses away in your **mind that you can use when temptation comes from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life. That's why Jesus defeated the evil one when he came tempting the Savior. He used the Old Testament Scriptures 3 times and finally the evil one left Jesus.** He resisted the evil one by using the Word of God. We can do the same thing. In our men's Bible Study and prayer group this past week, our lesson was about some of these same areas. I mentioned that I use I Peter 1:16 – "Be you holy for I am holy." Or John 17:17 – "Sanctify them through your truth, your Word is Truth."

We had the privilege in one of our churches to take the young people on different mission trips using the church bus. In preparation for one of the ventures, I had the students memorize different Scripture verses and then we acted out different situations and applied the verse or verses to that happening.

I remember one of the gals saying later that she had memorized Galatians 6:2, and when she was feeling tired in what she was doing, God brought to her mind, this verse in Galatians which says, "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time you will reap if you do not grow weary." She experienced an extra measure of strength at that time.

3. Flee

Paul told the young pastor Timothy in his second letter to him, "Flee (continually, all the time, it is a present tense, imperative, command – it is not an option). "Flee continually youthful lusts," (II Timothy 2:22), that which God said will bring you down spiritually, and cause you to sin. One can say, well, I'll do what I feel like, or it won't hurt to dabble in this book or what's on the internet, or that movie, I can have the friends I want – I can handle it. God's says, Flee all the time those kinds of thoughts and attitudes. Many have fallen, don't be apart of that number.

Don't play with fire, or you will get burnt. Be like Daniel. Stand faithful to the Lord in the midst of the temptation to do what the crowd does.

4. Follow

Again Paul told the young pastor Timothy in II Timothy 2:22, "Follow – Continually, a present tense, imperative, command, do it all the time, it is not an option." Follow continually righteousness, faith, love peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." Paul is telling young Timothy and us to have a passion for God's character of holiness, joy, love, self-control (the fruit of the Spirit), and fellowship with those of like faith." Keep following after what delights God's heart. Have a hunger and thirst after God.

5. Fight

In his first letter to young Timothy, Paul penned, "Fight the good fight of Faith, take hold of eternal life to which you have been called." (I Timothy 6:12). Again, the word, fight is in the present tense, fight continually, and it is an imperative, a command, so it is not an option. The word, fight, was used to describe the agony and excitement in the public games, the struggle in the contest to be a winner.

This is one of the best times of the year for me, March Madness. Did you happen to see the Wisconsin-Florida State game on Friday evening? My that was some game. Talk about a contest, agony, struggle, and excitement. I thought at half time that the Badgers down by 12 would go home in embarrassment.

But would you believe they came alive in the second half and looked like another team. The game was tied in the regulation period, and went into overtime. Then Hughes, with about 8 seconds on the clock drove in turned around and made a basket plus was fouled. He made his foul shots and the Badgers won the game.

Of course in basketball, the team is not always going to win every game. But that Badger game reminded me of what the believer has to do in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. He has to keep fighting in Jesus Christ to win the battle, to win in the game of life.

Where the analogy breaks down is that believer in Christ is already a victor in Christ, a conqueror in Him. That is the believer's position in Christ.

But then there is the life of knowing Christ by faith, living by faith, filling one's mind with the word of God, fleeing youthful lusts, following hard after God and His righteousness, and fighting the good fight in Jesus Christ. It's a life-long battle in Jesus Christ, but we are victors in HIM.

And when we pass from this life, God will reward the believer for his or her faithfulness, for it's required of a steward to be faithful. The reward for faithfulness is the crown of righteousness (II Timothy 4:7-8).

Let's live as victors in Christ this week!! Let's live by faith, fill, flee, follow, and fight, all to the glory of God!!