

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

## *You Must be Born Again!*

*“Hear then His voice today. Perhaps you are made aware of the necessity of a change of heart and life, at some future period, in order that you might die safely. Such a change is equally necessary if you wish to live comfortably now. As long as you are unfit to die, you can have no true enjoyment of life. It is an easy thing to prove that procrastination is highly dangerous. Do you consider how many uncertainties you must presume upon? Are you sure that you will not be suddenly cut off by an unexpected stroke, or visited with fever? Tremble lest such be your end, if you are trifling with God, who is now calling you by His Gospel to seek Him today.” [John Newton]*

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## *The Sovereignty of God Over the Nations*

*February 2nd, 2025*

**Sermon Text:** Daniel 7

**Scripture Reading:**

2 Thessalonians 2

“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, and 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, and that seemed greater than its companions. (Daniel 7:19-20)

I want to focus our attention this morning upon two themes in this book of Daniel (and really throughout the Bible). The first is *the sovereignty of God over the nations, and really it might be better said like this – the sovereignty of God over all of history*. Clearly this is a major, if not the major, theme in this book of Daniel.

Second, I would like us to consider this somewhat mysterious “little horn” which has eyes and speaks “great things.”

These two doctrines, as we will see, are intertwined and it is crucially important that we have a clear understanding of them. There is great comfort for Christ’s people to be found here, and truth which will certainly make our faith stronger.

### I. The Sovereignty of God over the Nations, and over all of History

God is *sovereign*. This is a royal, kingly term. Kings are often

referred to as the Sovereign. You see the word “reign” in it. The Apostle Paul uses it in his first letter to Timothy –

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only **Sovereign**, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:13-16)

The term is related to “power.” A king, a ruler who, therefore, wields power over his subjects. As the term is applied to the Lord, Paul says that He is the **ONLY Sovereign**. King over kings. Lord over lords.

This attribute of God, His sovereignty – power to rule as King – is a major theme in this book of Daniel. For example:

At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; **all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”** At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and

those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (Daniel 4:34-37)

This is no doubt one of the reasons that the Lord permitted Daniel and his friends to be taken as captives to Babylon, because He intended to use them to teach Nebuchadnezzar and the entire inhabited earth that He is Sovereign over all – that the inhabitants of the earth are nothing before Him.

And we saw the very same theme set out in that first vision Nebuchadnezzar had – that great statue with the head of gold, you recall.

He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; (Daniel 2:21)

Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome, and then the Lord’s own everlasting kingdom. He is sovereign over all, and over all of history. It unfolds according to His decree. This is why we have

biblical prophecy and the certain fulfillment of that prophecy:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Because God decrees the end from the beginning. This fallen world around us, in which we live, may look like terrible, pointless chaos. But history is unfolding according to plan – according to the Sovereign Lord’s plan.

And this theme is what we have here in Daniel 7. This vision which Daniel had parallels the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had of that great 4-part statue – Babylon, Media-Persian, Greece, and Rome – followed by a kingdom which shall never end.

Let’s look at it:

[Notice that Daniel saw this dream and visions in the first year of Belshazzar – the king who was

killed by the Medes back in chapter 5 – that handwriting on the wall event, you recall. So chapter 7 is a kind of flashback to the time when Belshazzar was still king.

What are the main elements in this vision then? –

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. (Daniel 7:2-3)

You may remember from our study through Revelation, that we also saw beasts coming up out of the sea there (see Rev 13). We will look there when we consider that little horn. We won’t go into detail here, but the sea often represents mankind, the fallen world of mankind, the chaos of humanity and of the nations.

Ah, the thunder of many peoples; they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations;

they roar like the roaring of mighty waters! (Isaiah 17:12)

Here, the Sovereign Lord stirs up the sea, He moves and energizes so that out of mankind come these 4 beasts – four kingdoms. HE is the one orchestrating and directing. *The Lord Jesus Christ is doing the very same thing today. Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall, borders are changed, there are conquerors and the conquered, economies flourish and then wither...nothing happens apart from the decree of the King of kings, the Sovereign Lord.* And that is what we see here in Daniel's vision. Four beasts, four kingdoms arise, one after another.

The first was like a lion and had eagles' 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. (Daniel 7:4)

We know this because later a being – probably an angel – interprets the beasts in the vision.

“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 the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. **‘These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth.** (Daniel 7:15-17)

As we have seen in chapter two, these four kingdoms, likened to beasts which illustrate their unique characteristics, are:

- Babylon – the lion
- Media-Persia – the bear
- Greece (Alexander the great) – the leopard
- The 4<sup>th</sup> beast, particularly terrifying – the Roman empire

Notice the emphasis in each case on the Sovereignty of God –

- The mind of a man *was given* to it
- And it was told, arise, devour
- Dominion was given to it

And ALL of this is moving toward an Omega point – the everlasting Kingdom of God:

“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. “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 for 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. (Daniel 7:9-14)

And so it was in Nebuchadnezzar’s first dream:

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.” (Daniel 2:44-45)

The Lord means for US to get a firm grasp on this. History, this world, the kingdoms of this world,

the nations – all of them are being moved toward one final, everlasting kingdom – the kingdom of God. We are not moving toward oblivion. The kingdom of God is here now, it is among us, it is the Church.

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” (Luke 17:20-21)

The kingdom of God, the rule and reign of God, has come in among us, but it is not fully manifested. It is seen in the coming of Christ, in the power of His miracles, in His power over the devil, and it is evident among us now:

“The kingdom is present where men and women have subjected themselves to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That is the Church, and the Church is a manifestation of the kingdom of God. When I say ‘Church’ I am not thinking of an external

organization. The Roman Catholic “church” is not the Church, it is not the kingdom of God.

The Church is a body of men and women who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and who believe in their hearts that He is the Son of God. I mean a body of men and women who are living to His glory, who know Him and who are here to serve Him. That is what I mean by the Church. He reigns in the hearts of His true believers.”

But there is another form of this kingdom and that is one which is to come. There is a day coming, Jesus told the Pharisees, which is the day of the Son of man. It is a day when the kingdom of God will come in a visible, external manner, in a manner when all shall see it and none shall be able to evade it. This will be the end of the present Church age, when Christ comes back again. The Son of Man will come and sit in the throne of His glory. Then the whole world will be purged of all evil.

So the question is, how can I enter this kingdom; how can I be sure

that I belong to it? And the answer is that the kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God only enters into me when I realize that He is the Son of God, by belief in Him as God in the flesh come to redeem me, there I see Him and the kingdom of God.” [Lloyd Jones, *The Kingdom of God*]

This is the major message here in Daniel. The kingdom which is coming, the kingdom of the Sovereign Lord who is King of kings, who has decreed all that comes to pass. The most important question anyone can put to themselves is – *am I a citizen in His kingdom?* And to realize that we can rest in knowing that the Lord reigns and directs in perfect accord with His plan. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

### The Little Horn

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in

pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten 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. (Daniel 7:7-8)

“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, and 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, and 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. (Daniel 7:19-22)

As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. 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. (Daniel 7:24-26)

The fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire, and Daniel is told that ten kings will come out of it. This apparently is the era in which we live. Since the fall of Rome there really has never been a world empire. The nations are separate. But one day this king, represented by that little horn, is going to come into power. He will be characterized by:

- Speaking against the Most High
- Persecuting the saints
- Working to destroy the order of God's creation and His Law
- In God's sovereignty, He will permit this king to enjoy short-lived victory over the Church
- After a short time, God will take away his dominion and he will be destroyed

So, who is this little horn king? Listen to Edward Young explain:

“It is, I believe, that one of whom Paul spoke-  
2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

This one is the Antichrist. Thus, in one remarkable picture, the entire course of history is given from the appearance of the historical Roman Empire until the end of human government.” [Daniel, The Geneva Series of Commentaries, Banner of Truth]

In God’s sovereign decree, this Man of Lawlessness is going to be permitted to come to power for a short time just before Christ returns. He will declare that he is God and the fact that he will “take his seat in the temple of God” seems to indicate that he will declare that he is the head of the Church. You can see why the Reformers believed that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist. And it may well be that the Pope of that day to come will be this man of lawlessness. We cannot be dogmatic about his identity now but Christ’s true people will recognize him when he is revealed.

You also have him described in Revelation:

Revelation 13:1-9 **And I saw a beast rising out of the sea**, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (2) And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. (3) One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. (4) And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?” (5) And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. (6) It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. (7) Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people

and language and nation, (8) and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. (9) If anyone has an ear, let him hear:

This would seem to tell us that the Antichrist's kingdom will be characterized by all of the terrible beastly qualities of preceding kingdoms, and most importantly we are told that it is Satan, the dragon, who empowers the Antichrist. This world kingdom will have a world religion headed by a false Christ and which is actually the worship of Satan. Everyone who refuses to worship the beast will be persecuted and eliminated.

### He is Present Now

Just as the kingdom of Christ is present among us right now, so is the Antichrist kingdom. John tells us-

1 John 4:1-3 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the

spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (3) and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

1 John 2:18-22 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. (19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. (20) But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. (21) I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. (22) Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist,

he who denies the Father and the Son.

And again:

2 John 1:7-8 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. (8) Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.

*Watch yourselves.* It is a mistake to just focus on the future and get all caught up in theories about who the Antichrist is going to be. People who do that are failing to keep watch right now, and they often get deceived as a result. The Antichrist, empowered by Satan, has many, MANY deceivers out and about right now.

Rome certainly is perhaps the major manifestation of Antichrist. The Pope sets himself up as Christ and his false priesthood, false church, false sacraments, and false gospel all are a huge deception, a masterpiece of the devil.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

*Watch yourselves!* How do we watch? *Be watchful!* How?

First, *believe what God's Word says here – Satan is right now constantly at work looking to take you to hell.* How does he do it? Through deception. Through lies. How do we stay on watch against lies? *By knowing and believing God's truth.* Apart from this, without giving ourselves to serious, in-depth, regular study of God's Word, we will be taken down. How does the Holy Spirit teach us truth? Through the Bible, as we read it and think carefully on its truth.

We are immersed in enemy territory in this world. There are lies and deceptions on every hand. And it amazes me how easily so many professing Christians are taken out because they are ignorant of God's Word. Let me give you and example.

If you go to Youtube, you will find many video presentations by people who claim to have “died” and had visions. These visions typically communicate that all is well. That death is not to be feared. That all is well when we die.

But what does God’s Word present to us?

Luke 16:22-25 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, (23) and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. (24) And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ (25) But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

I have seen people who claim to be Christians, church members for decades, and yet (my own mother was one) who embrace universalism. They cling to the possibility created by their own deceptions, that many if not most people are headed for heaven. What does God’s Word say? –

Luke 13:22-23 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. (23) And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them,

That little horn, you see. His spirit is among us now, actively deceiving and always trying to lead us away from Christ.

Let me close with this:

***If you have inverted the broad way and the narrow way, if you have twisted God’s Word into something like this:***

***Enter by the wide gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to life, and those who***

*enter by it are many. (14) For the teaching that the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life is just not true.*

*If you believe that, then you have been duped by antichrist. You have embraced him as your christ and you are headed for hell.*

Let's examine ourselves carefully by the truth of God's Word and repent of any lies we have received, while we still can.