***Daniel 7:15-28 “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’ 19“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. 21“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. 23“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them;   
He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. 25He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. 26‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. 27Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’ 28“This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.”***

So last week, we left Daniel after he described a dream and night vision he’d had. We know that he wrote down the main facts of these visions. We explored and saw that Babylon, Medes & Persia, Greece, and Rome were the four great beasts, kingdoms arising from the Great Sea of humanity.

The week, we pick up the same dream. Verses 15-18 *“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’*Daniel was grieved by the vision he witnessed. It grieved his soul that wickedness and evil abound even unto the end of the age. It must grieve us as well that sin and wickedness, perversity and blasphemies abound. The Gospel is the only answer to our grief.

Dreams are powerful. All of us have likely experienced a dream or a thought that left us affected emotionally. I’ve had dreams that I woke very happy and others where I woke sick to my stomach. This is a powerful vision from God that Daniel saw in great detail and he is grieved in the spirit. In this grief, he draws near to an angel and asks to know the truth. The angel does not hide the truth from him and, by revealing the truth to Daniel, the angel reveals the truth to us as well. The four great beasts are four great nations that will rule the world, as we spoke about last week. But the angel gives encouraging news as well. The angel reveals that these troubles will pass and the saints of the Most High God will receive and possess this everlasting kingdom for all eternity. This must be extremely encouraging to all of us tonight. To receive is one thing. To possess for eternity is another! This speaks for Christ’s Eternal rule and our inheritance in it.

Verses 19-22 *“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. 21“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.* Daniel wished to know the truth of the fourth beast. He’d seen the other three, but the fourth was so different. We know this is the Roman empire. It is ruled differently, politically formed differently, and far more diverse, large, and powerful than the first three. In particular, he is considering the ten horns and the little horn that came up, uprooting three horns. This little horn we know is the antichrist, starting small and growing, speaking blasphemous words about Christ and leading many to be deceived through the pompous words. He leads the persecution of many believers, seeking to silence their witness. Evil speaks until God shuts it down. Evil may seem to prevail for a while, but it will always receive punishment in the end. It was true in this vision and it’s true today. God passes His righteous judgement in His perfect time. Like the parable of the wheat and the tares, God harvests, separating the righteous from the wicked, casting the wicked into the fire. In this vision, the Ancient of Days comes, God Himself, makes a judgement in favor of His saints and *the time came* for the saints to possess the kingdom, which likely refers to the Millennial Kingdom found in Revelation 20:1-4 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years*. Then, as now, we must keep our trust in Jesus, even when evil seems to be winning out.

Verses 23-26 *“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. 25He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. 26‘But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.* We talked about the fourth beast being Rome last week. Rome was different than the others in many ways. It had ten provinces and ten emperors. It consumed the known world and enslaved the people it conquered. It was exceedingly cruel. The antichrist will rise from these roots. He will begin small and become greater and more arrogant as time passes. Blasphemies will multiply, evil will increase, and all the pompous words will be directed against God. Undermining Christ and His Kingdom, leading people from Truth will be the antichrist’s consuming purpose as 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 says, *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* He will seek to change times and laws. He will persecute the saints of the Most-High. He will reign for 7 years and this refers to 3 ½ years of that reign. In Revelation 13:5 it says A*nd he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months*. 42 months is 3 ½ years. In Revelation 12:6, the woman flees and is fed for 1260 days. The earliest Roman calendars, known as the Romulus calendar, had 360 days. In the time of Daniel, this would have been the calendar. 1260 days by this calendar is 3 ½ years. The court will be arranged as Daniel saw in verse 9 and judgement will commence.

Verse 27 *Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’*In Romans 8:14-17 *we read - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*, When we come to Christ and believe on Him, we become joint-heirs. We serve and obey Jesus in His everlasting kingdom. He is King and we are blessed to reside in His Kingdom.

Verse 28 *“This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.”* Though He has had it revealed to him, Daniel is still greatly troubled. Having something explained doesn’t magically resolve our concerns. Daniel keeps the matter in his heart, much as Mary pondered things in her heart in Luke 1 & 2 – when the angel greeted, when the shepherds visited, when Simeon prophesied over Jesus, and when Jesus astonished the teachers in the Temple. There are times to simply keep the mouth shut and ponder, keep the matter in our hearts, until we have a better understanding.

Thus ends Chapter 7 of Daniel, a powerful prophetic book, giving us clear and truthful information about what is to come in end times. Daniel, though grieved to his soul, remained faithful, focused, and fearless, seeking to understand the detailed horrors he witnessed in his vision. May we remain so as we seek to apply the Truth of Jesus to a lost and hurting world. The Bible is not about us waiting on the end. The Bible is about us knowing the end and being urgent and intentional in helping others understand and believe. May we be found Faithful to the Truth, Focused on it’s application, and Fearless in it’s communication, as we seek to do the will of the Father in these wicked and perverse times.