Sermon followed by Service

Time Line - Daniel 8 Events in Bold

1441 BC - Exodus - God delivers his people from Egypt

1010 BC - David - God sets up his choice as King

~930 BC - Kingdom Split - Israel in the north, Judah carrying the promise

722 BC - Assyrians take Israel (Lost 10 Tribes) - God judges Israel

605 BC - Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonians defeat Judah and Jerusalem (Daniel taken into exile)

597 BC - Judah and Jerusalem don't learn - Lesson Repeated

586 BC - Judah and Jerusalem don't learn - Jerusalem and Temple destroyed

~551 BC - Daniel 8 Vision

539 BC - God Replaces Babylonian Empire (Belshazzar) with Medo-Persian Empire (Darius/Cyrus)

538 BC - Cyrus frees Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem

536 BC - Ezra - Temple Rebuilding Begins

520 BC - Haggai - Rebuild the Temple (How is it right to take care of your house more than God's house?)

520-518 BC - Zechariah - Rebuild the Temple and Look Forward to Jesus

516 BC - Temple Rebuilt

474 BC - Esther - God works through Esther to save his people

445 BC - Nehemiah - Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

~430 BC - Malachi - last of the Old Testament Prophets

333-323 BC - Alexander the Great smashes and grabs the Medo-Persian Empire

175-164 BC - Antiochus IV

167 BC - Temple Desecration; **Evening & Morning Sacrifices stopped**; Maccabean Revolt begins

164 BC - Hanukkah; Evening and Morning Sacrifices return

Setting

In chapter 1, God blessed Daniel so that Nebuchadnezzar noticed Daniel as special and promoted him. In chapter 2, when Nebuchadnezzar was terrified, seeing the end of the world as he knew it, Daniel served Nebuchadnezzar with answers from God, and Nebuchadnezzar promoted him, this time to rule over Babylon. In chapter 4, with wisdom and power from God, Daniel was a somebody before Nebuchadnezzar - somebody who could speak up to the king with the wisdom and power of God whether the king liked it or not. Then Nebuchadnezzar was dead, and the next time we hear of Daniel in chapter 5, it seems he's forgotten, or maybe better, ignored, perhaps retired, pushed off to the side. But not by God; God still had work for Daniel.

Sermon

Do you remember last Monday? Thankfully, I don't. Listening to the news, looking around me, it seemed like it was about to be the end of the world as we know it. How do you look forward when it feels like the end of the world as you know it? Daniel with his Vision of the Evenings and Mornings can help!

Daniel saw himself on the bank of the Ulai Canal in Susa, Elam; today we would say southwest Iran. Daniel could see: Life was about to change, the world was about to change - and it wouldn't all be good. Daniel knew about that kind of change. Fifty-five plus years earlier, Daniel was growing up in Judah, his family in some way nobility or part of the royal family. When he would have been in seventh, eighth grade, he was torn from his home with Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and thousands more like him, force-marched to

Babylon (from Jerusalem to Iraq) where he was put into training to serve his new king, Nebuchadnezzar, king of the most powerful empire in the world. For Daniel, it was the end of the world as he knew it. But Daniel knew how to live with that change; he had God, and no matter what, no matter how things changed, Daniel lived faithful to God. And God was faithful to Daniel.

At the time of our lesson, Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for about a dozen years. It's early in the reign of Belshazzar, the last of the Babylonian kings. Change is coming, and God is getting Daniel and his people ready for that change with another vision. Last week, we saw Daniel's vision of the Four Beasts. That vision started with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire, and then headed into the future with the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Romans Empires. This week, Daniel's Vision of the Ram and Goat narrows in on the future Medo-Persian and Greek empires. Gabriel tells us that the twohorned ram represents the Medo-Persian Empire (Cyrus freed God's people to return to Jerusalem), and the one-horned goat represents the Greek Empire with Alexander the Great. In Daniel's vision, we see the Greek goat smashing and trampling the Medo-Persian ram. In history, we see that's what happened; some 200 years after Daniel, some 300 years before Jesus was born, Greek Alexander the Great smashes and grabs the Medo-Persian Empire for himself.

But it doesn't last long. Daniel sees more change coming, and it isn't all good. The Greek one-horned goat loses its horn and 4 horns take its place. Alexander the Great dies and four of his generals divide the kingdom into four. In chapter 11, God focuses in on two of those kingdoms - the Kingdom of the North with the Seleucids and the Kingdom of the South with the Ptolemies. Here in chapter 8, God focuses us in on just one of those kingdom-horns, the Kingdom of the North, and just one of its kings - Antiochus IV. Antiochus liked to

think of himself as a god; in fact, he called himself god (Epiphanes, God Manifest). As we see in Daniel's vision, he fought and ruled in the east to India, and he fought his way south into Egypt. But in Daniel's visions, we especially see him war against God and his people. Through intrigue - lies and broken promises - and violence, he took over the temple, he put a stop to the daily sacrifice to the LORD, he made it a crime punishable by death to have a Bible or any part of a Bible, he burned as many Bibles as he could find, and he set up in the Temple an image of the Greek god Zeus, sacrificing a pig on the altar of incense. We're told some 100,000 Jews were killed as Antiochus warred against God and his people. Change was coming, and it wasn't all good.

We see so much of the same. Around the world, people and powers war against God and his people - some by force, others by twisting truth. Some fight to stop Christians from gathering for worship. Some make it illegal to have a Bible; some make it illegal to share Jesus. Others twist Truth; they put themselvesin place of God and put their gods and their truth in place of God and His Truth. And it doesn't surprise us, does it? Why not? We may not have visions like Daniel, but we have the word of Jesus telling us to expect the same - change is coming and it won't all be good.

What do we do with that? We do what Daniel did. We wonder: "What's the meaning of this?" And we hurt. What Daniel saw coming made him feel sick for days. When we see our world changing and changing for the worse, when we see our world changing and changing against us - what do we do? We do like Daniel. We wonder; we hurt. And then we get up and go back to serving in that world that can be so evil and hopeless. Like Daniel, we go back to serving whether we feel appreciated by the world or not. Like Daniel, we go back to serving whether we seem to be

making any difference or not. Like Daniel, we go back to serving. Why? It's what God has for us to do.

When we see the end of the world as we know it ... when change is coming and it's NOT all good, and we're wondering: "What's the meaning of this?" - where do we turn to find meaning? In our Gospel lesson, how did Jesus set his disciples up for their wondering?

When we see the end of the world as we know it ... when change is coming and it's NOT all good, and we're hurting - what is it that makes us hurt? What made Jesus hurt over Jerusalem?

Why would God have us serve a world that is so determined to change against him (and against his people)?

How could Daniel do that? How can we do that? Like Daniel - we know more than "change is coming and it won't all be good." In his vision, Daniel hears two "holy ones," two angels, talking. One asks: "How long will this take?" The other answers: "Until 2300 evenings and mornings, and then the Holy Place will be consecrated." God had a set time in mind, and then he would deliver. And God did deliver, just as he promised. Roughly 2300 evenings and mornings after Antiochus put an end to the daily evening and morning sacrifices at the temple, God delivered and the daily sacrifices were begun again - Hanukkah.

Did you notice? Did you notice how God shifted the theme of Daniel's vision from the destructive power and politics of this world - the power and politics that can get us so worked up - to the temple and the sacrifices that give peace with God? Some Bibles call this vision

"The Vision of the Ram and the Goat"; the angel Gabriel calls it "The Vision of the Evenings and Mornings," that is the evening and morning sacrifices. Remember, in chapter two, the four kingdoms are replaced by the eternal Rock we know as Christ. In chapter seven, those same four kingdoms are replaced by the Son of Man who rules forever. Here we see the rule of power and politics is brought to an end, and the sacrifices that promise peace with God are made new.

How could Daniel live and serve in a world so against him? Daniel knew that peace and hope aren't found in power and politics, but in the Rock, in the Son of Man, in the sacrifices that hold God's promise of peace and hope. When Daniel saw this vision during the reign of Belshazzar, God's temple in Jerusalem was in ruins, God's priesthood was in exile, God's appointed sacrifices were on hold. But in this vision, Daniel could see the time was coming when the Temple would be rebuilt, the priesthood would be active, the sacrifices would again be promising peace and hope with God. And no matter what no matter how things changed, no matter how things got worse, no matter how the powers of this world and the powers of evil fought against God and his people - no matter what - God would come through for his people and he would deliver. That's how Daniel could face change and change for the worse; that's how Daniel could face the powers and the evils of this world; that's how Daniel could live with peace and hope - a peace and hope he didn't keep to himself.

We get to have that same peace and hope - only better! In a world of change and worse, we don't just have visions, visions of the future, visions of peace and hope. Better than visions, we have the fulfillment of those visions. Better than visions, we have the reality of Jesus. Better than visions, we have the word and promises of Jesus.

In a world of change and worse, for our worse and our worst, for the ways we have changed to fit in with the world, for the times our wondering about the world has turned to arguing against God, for the times our hurting has turned to anger against God, for our worse and our worst, we don't just have lamb after lamb slaughtered and sacrificed by some priest and who knows whether he's going with God or just going through the motions - we have the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. We don't just have vision; we have fulfillment! God himself offered his own Son to take our worst to the cross. Your worse and your worst is taken by Jesus, paid for by Jesus, forgiven and forgotten by God - never to come back forever. And today, with Easter life and Easter power, Jesus gives you his best. His best life to cover you right with God. And his best life to power you alive with God.

How do we go forward when it feels like the end of the world as we know it? How do we go forward when change is coming and it's not all good? We do like Daniel - we wonder, we hurt, and we serve God in that world - not like that world is against us - but we live and serve with peace and hope. We have the Jesus who delivers; we have the Jesus who will make life right. Amen.

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we see so many changes. It can seem like the end of the world as we know it. And we might wonder: "How can we feel fine?!"

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... Daniel sees the end of the world as he knows it; he sees changes, and not for the better. What did he do? In the changes we face, how can we live with the peace and hope Daniel had?

OPENING HYMN

"How Firm a Foundation" Hymn 800

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent Word! What more can he say than to you he has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed, for I am your God and will still give you aid; I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call you to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow, for I will be with you, your troubles to bless, and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie, my grace all-sufficient shall be your supply; the flames will not hurt you; I only design your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose I will not, I will not, desert to its foes; that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

OPENING SENTENCES



CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

- M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.
- C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.
- M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.



COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Amen.

Almighty God, in your bountiful goodness, keep us safe from every evil of body and soul. Make us ready, with cheerful hearts, to do whatever pleases you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

FIRST READING Daniel 8 (EHV)

In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me—I, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me previously.

I saw the vision, and as I watched, I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam. I saw in the vision that I was beside the Ulai Canal. I looked up and right there in front of me I saw a ram standing beside the canal. He had two horns. The two horns were large. One, however, was larger than the other, but the larger one had grown up later. I saw the ram pushing toward the west, north, and south, and no beast was able to stand in his way. Nothing could rescue anyone from his power. So he did as he pleased and made himself great.

As I was thinking about this, I saw a male goat coming from the west, moving across the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground. The goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came up to the ram with the two horns that I saw standing beside the canal, and he ran at him with fierce anger. I saw him coming up to the ram, and he was enraged against him. He struck the ram and broke his two horns. The ram had no power to stand up against him, so the goat threw the ram to the ground and trampled him. There was no one who could rescue the ram from his power.

The male goat made himself very great. But as he became strong, his large horn was broken, and four conspicuous horns grew up in its place toward the four winds of heaven.

Then from one of these horns a single horn came up. It began small, but it became very large toward the south and the east and toward the beautiful land. It exalted itself against the army of heaven. It made some of that army and some of the stars fall to earth, and it trampled them. It exalted itself against the Prince of the Army.

It deprived him of the continual sacrifice, and the place of his sanctuary was thrown down. The army and the continual sacrifice will be handed over to the horn during the rebellion, and it will throw truth to the ground. It will succeed in doing this.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one speaking, "How long is the vision about the continual sacrifice and the rebellion that causes desolation going to last—this handing over of both the Holy Place and the army to be trampled?"

He said to him, "Until two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings, and then the Holy Place will be consecrated."

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I tried to understand it. Then suddenly there was someone standing in front of me who had the appearance of a man. I heard a human voice coming from between the banks of the Ulai. It called out and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

So he came beside the spot where I stood, and when he came, I was terrified and fell facedown. He said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision concerns the time of the end." When he had spoken with me, I fell into a deep sleep, facedown on the ground. He touched me and made me stand up.

He said, "Listen, I am about to make known to you what will happen during the last part of the furious anger, because this concerns the appointed time of the end.

"The ram that you saw had two horns, the kings of Media and Persia. The male goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. He is the one who was broken, and four others arose in his place. Four kingdoms will arise from his nation, but not with the same power he had.

"In the latter part of their kingdom, when the rebels have reached their full measure, a merciless king who understands intrigue will arise. His power will be very great, but not from his own power. He will destroy wonderful things, and he will succeed in doing this. He will destroy mighty men and the people of the saints. Through his cunning, he will deceive in order to succeed by his power and will also exalt himself in his heart.

He will destroy many who are at ease, and he will rise up against the Prince of Princes. However, he will be broken, but not by human power. The vision of the evenings and the mornings that was spoken is true. But you—seal the vision, because it concerns a time many days in the future."

I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up and carried out the king's business. I was stunned by the vision, but I did not understand it.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.



Hear my voice when I / call, LORD;

be merciful to me and / answer me.

Do not hide your / face from me,

do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my / helper.

Do not reject me or for-/sake me,

God my / Savior. Refrain

Though my father and mother for-/sake me,

the LORD will re- / ceive me.

I remain confi- / dent of this:

I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the / living.

Wait / for the LORD;

be strong and take heart and wait / for the LORD.

Glory be to the Father and / to the Son and to the Holy / Spirit, as it was in the be- / ginning, is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Hebrews 1:1–2

Alleluia. In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 15:18–21; 16:1–4, 33

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

"All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them.

I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise be to you, O Christ!

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN "Day by Day"
Hymn 803

Day by day, your mercies, Lord, attend me, bringing comfort to my anxious soul.

Day by day, the blessings, Lord, you send me draw me nearer to my heav'nly goal.

Love divine, beyond all mortal measure, brings to naught the burdens of my quest;

Savior, lead me to the home I treasure, where at last I'll find eternal rest.

Day by day, I know you will provide me strength to serve and wisdom to obey;
I will seek your loving will to guide me o'er the paths I struggle day by day.
I will fear no evil of the morrow, I will trust in your enduring grace.
Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow till in glory I behold your face.

Oh, what joy to know that you are near me when my burdens grow too great to bear; oh, what joy to know that you will hear me when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.

Day by day, no matter what betide me, you will hold me ever in your hand. Savior, with your presence here to guide me, I will reach at last the promised land.

SERMON Daniel 8

HYMN "By Faith"
Hymn 868

By faith we see the hand of God in the light of creation's grand design, in the lives of those who prove his faithfulness, who walk by faith and not by sight.

By faith our fathers roamed the earth with the pow'r of his promise in their hearts, of a holy city built by God's own hand, a place where peace and justice reign.

Refrain

We will stand as children of the promise; we will fix our eyes on him, our soul's reward. Till the race is finished and the work is done, we'll walk by faith and not by sight.

By faith the prophets saw a day when the longed-for Messiah would appear with the pow'r to break the chains of sin and death and rise triumphant from the grave.

By faith the church was called to go in the pow'r of the Spirit to the lost to deliver captives and to preach good news in ev'ry corner of the earth. *Refrain*

By faith this mountain shall be moved and the pow'r of the gospel shall prevail, for we know in Christ all things are possible for all who call upon his name. *Refrain*

OFFERING

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PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy Church of God throughout the world, that God the almighty Father gather and guide it so that we may worship him in peace and tranquility:

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ. Guide the work of the Church. Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your Word, and bring salvation to people everywhere. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our pastors and teachers and all leaders of the Church, and for all the people of God:

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy. Strengthen and uphold all who serve you and your people. Keep them in health and safety for the good of the Church. Help each of us to do faithfully the work to which you have called us. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who do not believe in Christ, that the light of the Holy Spirit may show them the way to salvation:

Almighty and eternal god, enable those who do not acknowledge Christ to receive the truth of the gospel. Help us, your Church, to grow in love for you and for one another, so that we become more perfect witnesses of your love for all people. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who serve in public office, that God may guide their minds and hearts, so that all of us may live in true peace and freedom:

Almighty and eternal God, graciously direct those who have been set in positions of authority among us, so that people everywhere may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation. Lord, in your mercy,

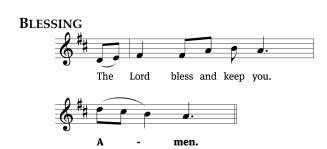
Hear our prayer.

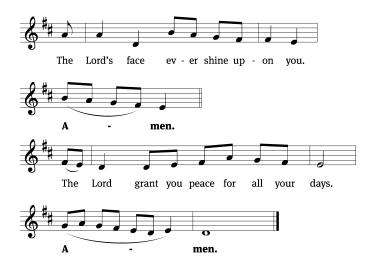
Let us pray that God, the almighty and merciful Father, may heal the sick, comfort the dying, give safety to travelers, and free those unjustly deprived of liberty: Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary and new courage to those who have lost heart. In your mercy hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble, that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**





CLOSING HYMN

"Jesus, Still Lead On" Hymn 842

Jesus, still lead on till our rest is won; and although the way be cheerless, we will follow, calm and fearless. Guide us by your hand to our fatherland.

If the way be drear, if the foe be near, let not faithless fears o'ertake us; let not faith and hope forsake us, for through many' a woe to our home we go.

When we seek relief from a long-felt grief, when temptations come alluring, make us patient and enduring.

Show us that bright shore where we weep no more.

Jesus, still lead on till our rest is won. Heav'nly leader, still direct us, still support, console, protect us till we safely stand in our fatherland.

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