

Thriving in Babylon

Theme: Live faithful and hopeful

Daniel teaches us two things:

- The **sovereignty** of God in **ALL** things.
- How to live in Babylon!

Reminders from last week:

- Understanding God's Word requires His help.
- Understanding God's Word prepares us for what lies ahead.
- Understanding God's Word can be weighty.
- The final word doesn't come from ram or goat, but from a lamb!

Getting started:

- The latter part of Daniel is apocalyptic and cosmic. **It continues to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of God over all things.**
- Why all the apocalyptic prophecy? To encourage people despised by the world.
- It also reveals that God will impose His kingdom on the wreckage and rebellion of mankind. It uses wild, scary imaginative, bizarre and head-scratching imagery.

Pay attention to the sovereignty of God over ALL things, because there's a bigger story being written (Jesus).

Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it.

Corrie ten Boom

Scripture: Daniel 9:1-23

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that,

according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. ³ Then I turned my face to the Lord God, **seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.** ⁴ I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the **great** and **awesome** God, who **keeps** covenant and **steadfast** love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. ⁷ To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. ⁸ To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him ¹⁰ and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. ¹² He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. ¹³ As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. ¹⁵ And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. ¹⁶ “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy

hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. ¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

- Our prayers must be honest.

Confess our sin.

Worship God.

Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude—an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God.

Arthur Pink

²⁰ While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God,²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

- God's plan is a rescue plan. Our need, is for sin to be defeated once and for all. Jesus is our rescue plan.

The rest of Daniel 10-12 reads very similar to the apocalyptic literature of Revelation. Scholars and theologians have debated their meanings for centuries. There has yet been given a comprehensive interpretation of these verses that completely fits.

Key truths that we need to take away from Daniel's visions:

- **There will be constant turmoil in our world.** Earthly kingdoms will come and go.
- **The godly will be persecuted.** The faithful must expect it to get worse. Jesus himself reminds us of this reality.

God is still Sovereign.

He is always at work.

- **The church will face hardships.** We don't get a pass as Christ-followers. We grow best when the heats on. Pain and discomfort are opportunities for us to lean in on Him.
- **Live hopeful.** You will experience hardships. Remember He is working, and ALWAYS in control.

Finally

The book of Daniel ends with Gabriel speaking on behalf of God to Daniel on how to continue in light of these visions and prophecies.

Scripture: Daniel 12:9-13

⁹ He said, "**Go your way**, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. ¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who **waits** and **arrives** at the 1,335 days. ¹³ But **go your way** till the end. And you **shall rest and shall stand** in your allotted place at the end of the days."

Go on your way. Live your life, go about your business. Don't check out. Keep redemptively engaging your culture.

Don't focus on the responses. Sharing the gospel story is our mandate. Stop worrying about getting the message perfect, just share!

There are people WAITING for an invitation to hear the message of hope (Jesus)! Just tell your story!

Live hope. Gabriel repeats the adage - go on your way because one day there will be a reward.

Daniel shows us there is a way to seek the blessing of the place of our exile without compromising what it means to follow God.

- It means we are faithful without being dogmatic.
- It means having discernment on what battles to fight, and the bravery to fight the ones we should.
- It means speaking His story with a tender boldness, not an angry arrogance. It means living with godly wisdom, not chasing after earthly desires. It means living with an unshakeable hope. A hope that is anchored in God's sovereignty, in His unconditional love, in His unrelenting mission to put His Kingdom inside our hearts so that one day we will no longer have to pray, "make it on earth as it is heaven because it will be so (Matt. 6:10)."

Our goal is to win them over, not to wipe them out.

Larry Osborne

How do I respond this morning?

Question:

- Faith in Christ is where we find rest, peace, and assurance. Do you have that assurance this morning?
- Are you having hope issues this morning?