

The Ram, Goat, and Little Horn

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[0:00] Daniel 8. One of the horns was longer than the other, but grew up later.

I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage.

I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him. The goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him and none could rescue the ram from his power.

The goat became very great, but at the height of his power, his large horn was broken off. And in its place, four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

[1:35] Out of one of them came another horn, which started small, but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the beautiful land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens.

And it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the prince of the host. It took away the daily sacrifice from him and the place of his sanctuary was brought low.

Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did and truth was thrown to the ground.

Then I heard a holy one speaking and another holy one said to him. How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled?

The vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot. He said to me, it will take 2,300 evenings and mornings.

[2:45] Then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated. While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man.

I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision. As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate.

Son of man, he said to me, understand that the vision concerns the time of the end. While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground.

Then he touched me and raised me to my feet. He said, I'm going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath. Because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.

The two horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece. And the large horn between his eyes is the first king.

[3:49] The four horns that replace the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation, but will not have the same power. In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise.

He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.

He will cause deceit to prosper. And he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the prince of princes.

Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.

My Daniel was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision.

[5:07] It was beyond understanding. Well, I don't think I've ever seen a popular religious book that said, The End is Not Nigh.

Harold Camping made a lot of waves and a lot of news a few months ago by prophesying that May 21st would be the end. Of course, that came and went, and so he revised his date to October 21st. So if you're doing something this Friday, you might want to keep that in mind. And camping is just one of many people who like to get attention by saying that the end is nigh.

It's close at hand. But it's interesting, the book of Daniel goes to great lengths to say that the end isn't yet. It's not going to be for a little bit.

There's still longer to go. And so it's very contradictory to what a lot of people like to say. Listen to what Ian Dugan said in his commentary on Daniel.

[6:15] Daniel chapter 8 encourages us to face up to reality. We may have a long way yet to go before the resolution of life's pains and injustices.

There is no promise from God that he will rapture us out of this world before our tribulations get too bad. So between now and the end, it's going to be difficult.

It's not going to be easy. And we must endure. You must endure to the end. That was Daniel's message. That was God's message through Daniel to the Jews. And in a lot of ways, that's God's message through Daniel to us.

So Daniel's readers needed to hear this. And I think we need to hear it. They needed to hear it because where they were in God's timetable.

We haven't made much of the historical background of exactly when these visions that Daniel received up to this point. But I think now is the time to see when that is. If you saw at the very beginning, chapter 8, verse 1, this is the third year of Belshazzar.

[7:26] In Daniel chapter 7, it was the first year of Belshazzar that Daniel receives a vision. So you have the first year of Belshazzar, the third year of Belshazzar. In Daniel chapter 9, you're going to see it's the first year of Darius.

And then in Daniel chapter 10, it's the third year of Darius. So they're all taking place. This is the important thing. They're all taking place as the exile is coming to an end.

It's coming to an end and it's just beginning to be over. And so Jeremiah in his prophecy prophesies that 70 years, there's going to be 70 years for the exile.

So from 70 years from the beginning to the end. And so now those 70 years are coming to an end. They're about over. And so what will happen next? Because a lot of the prophets, they prophesied that there would be many great things that would happen after the exile.

We saw one of those things this morning. There were these great, fabulous promises given to God's people after they returned from the exile.

[8:35] And so in this section and Daniel, God is saying, okay, we need to hold on at least for the time being, the immediate future.

Everything is not going to suddenly change. Everything is not going to suddenly come to an end. The old covenant will continue for a time, at least for a while.

And that means that Israel, at least for the immediate future, is still going to be sinning. They're still going to be receiving. They're not receiving the promises.

They're still going to be needing to have God's discipline and judgment. God's kingdom and the son of man aren't going to come immediately after the exile.

And so there's still more pain left. There's still more discouragement left. But in the meantime, God's people need to trust him and endure. So while they're waiting, they need to trust him and endure.

[9:34] And it's very much like how it is for us because we're living on the other side. Now we're in the new covenant. The old covenant is gone. Times have changed in a lot of ways.

The kingdom of God is growing. That stone that is becoming a mountain is growing. But we haven't received everything promised. We can't look at Isaiah chapter 11 and see that actually happening in our world.

We're still waiting for the complete fulfillment of everything God has promised. And while we look to the end, there's still going to be troubles ahead.

There's still going to be difficulty. And we are going to need to endure if we're going to make it to the end. So Daniel chapter 8 is all about what the Jews are going to face in the future.

And in this period of history, while they're still waiting, what they're going to have to endure. And in some ways, Daniel tells us what we are going to have to face.

[10:33] Because then there's a connection. And we're going to see that later between what the Jews faced in their time and what the Christian church is going to face before the end.

And so that's what Daniel sees in his vision. And so we want to look at three things, three things that Daniel saw. And then I want to take from that four lessons. Four lessons that we should apply. So what does Daniel see in his vision? Well, he sees, first of all, a pair of animals. A pair of animals. A ram and a goat. You can see that in verse 3. I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns standing beside the canal.

And the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other, but grew up later. Okay, so you have a ram. And it has two prominent horns, but one is longer than the other one.

It's a very interesting picture. And really, all of Daniel chapter 8 is a very interesting picture.

Thankfully, God doesn't leave us in doubt as to what this ram is.

[11:38] And in verse 20, he gives us the angel. Through the angel, he gives an explanation of what exactly is this ram. And it's the Medo-Persian Empire. Now, we've kind of talked on and off about that.

So after Babylonia ended, the Medes and the Persians came on the scene. And so this is the kingdom that we're talking about. This is the kingdom that Daniel sees as a picture of this ram with two horns, and one's longer than the other.

Remember in Daniel chapter 7, there was a picture of a bear, and it had a hunched up side. So one side was bigger than the other. That was a picture of the Medo-Persian Empire.

And it's the same way, it's the same sort of feature in this picture. One horn is longer than the other because the Persians were much more dominant in the relationship than the Medes were. So the Persians were the dominant partner in the relationship.

And so this ram, this empire, heads out and launches. It charges west and north and south. And it's conquering everywhere it goes. It does everything that it pleases.

[12:42] So Daniel's seeing this, and he's pondering it and thinking about it, when suddenly, out of the west, comes a goat, a shaggy goat.

And he has not two horns. He has one big horn. And he flies out of the west. He doesn't even run. He flies. He leaps.

He bounds out of the west without touching the ground. And he smashes into the ram. And he charges. And it's a great crash. And the two horns of the ram are shattered.

They're obliterated. And the ram falls to the ground. And the goat, can you imagine this? This goat is just trouncing on this. The goat is trampling all over the ram.

And so it's just this bloody mess. And we're not left to wonder what this all means. In verse 21, chapter 8, it says, The shaggy goat is the king of Greece.

[13:44] And the large horn between his eyes is the first king. Now, I'm not sure how much history you have, But the first king that they're talking about of this Greek empire was Alexander the Great.

And no one should doubt that he was great. He didn't earn his nickname because he wasn't great. He was an awesome figure in a lot of ways. In 336 BC, the age of 20.

Now, think of that. You're 20 years old. And he inherits a kingdom. He inherits his father's kingdom. And within 13 years, he ruled the greatest empire that the world had ever seen to that point.

And he was an extraordinary general. Men followed him thousands and thousands of dusty miles because he was great. He devoured kingdoms.

He sacked cities. He crushed the Persian empire. Everyone thought the Persians were so invincible. Invincible. And yet, within two battles, Alexander had destroyed them.

[14:53] But at the height of his power, the age of 32, he died suddenly. Became very sick. And within a week, he was dead. So the large horn, which is the first king, is broken off.

As suddenly as it appeared. And in its place, four horns out of the same goat. It's the same empire. Four horns grow.

Now, after Alexander's death, there was a year or two of strife and conflict. And four Greek generals came to the forefront. And they ruled.

They divided Alexander's empire into four parts. We're not going to cover all that. The two biggest sections, and these are important for you to understand because we're going to see them later again.

The two biggest sections were the northern Seleucid empire and then the southern Ptolemaic. So you're thinking southern is Egypt. Northern is sort of like where present day Iraq and Syria were.

[15:56] And we're going to see that again. So northern Seleucid, southern Ptolemaic. So these four generals, these four horns, divide up the kingdom. Now, before we see what happens next, I want you to notice something very significant.

And it's this. That God's people, up to this point, are not mentioned. They're not in this story. They weren't going to be the movers and the shakers.

The great messianic king that was going to rule the world. It wasn't going to be at this time. They weren't going to be a mighty empire.

Instead, they were going to be the victims of the ram and the goat. They were going to be the victims of the four kingdoms that we've already talked about. And in a way, that should encourage us.

Because it's easy for us to be excited when we have political power. But I don't think history bears out that it's good for us to have that kind of power. At least at this point.

[17:11] God doesn't need his people to have political power. For his plans and his purposes to avail in the earth. He has enough authority on his own.

He doesn't need us to have worldly authority. And so the ram and the goat are charging. They're conquering. And God is not disturbed. God's people are weak.

But God is not. So we can find encouragement there. Now, next we see a little horn. In verse 6. So verse 6.

We've seen the two animals. The ram and the goat. Verse 6. The little horn. Out of one of them. So out of one of these four horns. Came another horn.

Which started small. But grew in power to the south. And to the east. And toward the beautiful land. That is. That's Israel. That's Palestine. It's towards Israel. Israel. And now.

[18:11] This is where the vision slows down. It's. I mean. We've just covered like 300 years of history. 400 years of history. And it slows way down. Because we're going to focus on who this little horn is.

It's a little horn that grew very big. And in the angelic interpretation that comes later in the chapter. The angels are talking to each other. And they tell. As they're talking to each other.

Daniel overhears them. And he hears. What exactly is this little horn that grew so big? And it says this. He's called a stern. He's a stern faced king.

A master of intrigue. So you have to imagine. A powerful. Cruel. Stern man. Who is also very manipulative. Very tricky.

Who knows how to manipulate. And get his way. He's a crafty man. And in his time. He will destroy. He will destroy. Mighty men. And. It even says the holy people.

[19:14] Now. In verses 10 and 11. Of Daniel chapter 8. It says. He will grow so big. And he will be so violent. That he will even throw.

Some of the starry. Host. Even the stars. Down. Now. What are those stars? This is an important thing.

For us to understand. I've said this before. I've said this a couple times. Remember in apocalyptic literature. Things are not always.

The. It's showing us what things really are. Because things don't always appear in this world. Like how God sees them. And so you have these stars.

Now. Think about stars. They're brilliant. They're bright. They're wonderful. They live on high. And so there. This is a picture of God's people.

[20:10] Daniel chapter 12. Verse 3. It says. That the saints are like stars. So their citizenship is in heaven. They're not of this earth.

They belong with God in heaven. They're pure and radiant. They're holy. They shine in the darkness. And what does this king do?

He pulls them down. And he tramples. Them to the ground. This king. Wants to attack God. But he can't.

Get. His hands on God. So he attacks. God's people. And in verse 11. It says. That he sets himself up. As to be as great.

As the prince of the host. That's. That is God. God. So he's setting himself up. Not as a God. But as. The God. Now.

[21:06] Looking back. We know exactly. Who in history. This. Character. Is. His name was. Antiochus. Epiphanes. And we're going to meet him again. Several more times.

In this chapter. God wants. The Jews. To be prepared. For this time. God wants the Jews. To be. Prepared. To live. And. He's also teaching us.

And we're going to see how that works out. Antiochus. Epiphanes. He started out as a minor prince. He started out small. He wasn't even in line. To receive the kingdom. And yet.

It was through murder. And intrigue. He. Takes. The throne. Of the northern. Seleucid. Empire. And. His pride.

Knew. No. Bounds. He took the name. Epiphanes. Because that means. God. Manifest. So do you see what he's saying? I am Antiochus. And when I walk among you.

[22:03] You see. God. Now his enemies. Called him. Epiphanes. Which means. Madman. And that's exactly. What he was. So. At the end of his reign.

That's exactly when. Daniel said it would happen. Near the end of his year. In the years as king. He decided. Once and for all. Antiochus decided. Once and for all. That he is going to subdue. His. Jewish. Subjects. And the way he did that. Was through. Persecution. And assimilation. And we've seen that before.

Haven't we? In this book. When you. Satan has. Two things. The world has. Two. Two weapons. That it can use. It can use persecution. It can use fear.

And terror. And it can use. Assimilation. Where you're rewarding. Those who. Who come alongside you. Isn't that exactly. What Nebuchadnezzar did. Chapter one. He's trying to assimilate. Shadrach. [22:59] Meshach. And Abednego. And Daniel. Into his kingdom. And then when that doesn't work. We see. He turned angry. And he persecuted them. Now. That's exactly what.

Antiochus did. He deposed. The rightful. High priest. So he takes away. God's appointed. Priest. And he puts in his own. Puppet. And then.

A little bit later. He decides. Okay. That hasn't. Worked yet. And so. He decides. To turn. The temple. Into. A temple. To Zeus.

And he took away. The daily sacrifices. So for year. After year. Morning. And evening. There had been. Sacrifices. And he took those away.

So he. Effectively. Put the daily. Jewish religion. Completely. To a standstill. And he started. Offering sacrifices. Not to Yahweh. But.

[23:54] To Zeus. And then he started. Hellenizing. The entire. Nation. And all that means is. He started to try to make them.

Greek. He was Greek. And so he was going to have. An entire. Greek. Kingdom. And the way he was going to do that. Was. Okay.

You want to have games. They're going to be. Greek. Games. And you want to think. And have school. It's going to be. A Greek. School. And you're going to worship. The Greek gods. They were going to be.

Like everyone else. He was going to make. Everyone. Conform to his religion. His ideas. And those who didn't go along. Were persecuted. To death. So you have it. You have an assimilation. And you have death. And I would love to tell you. That the entire Israelite nation. Stood against him. And all the Jews. Rebelled against him.

[24:49] But that's actually not what happened. Daniel says. During his reign. It was a time of apostasy. Verse 12 says.

Truth. Was thrown. To the ground. So you have truth. Or you have the favor of Antiochus. And truth. Is thrown to the ground.

And then it says. Because of the rebellion. Of the host of the saints. And the daily sacrifice. Because of the rebellion. The host of the saints.

And the daily sacrifice. Were given over to it. So who's rebellion? Why is this a time of wrath? It's because. God's people were still being unfaithful.

They were still being unfaithful. Many at that time. Renounced. Their Judaism. They renounced their faith in God. And they embraced.

[25:47] The culture. Around them. Some men went so far. As to. Have the. Marks of circumcision. Surgically. Reversed. Many Jews.

Gave themselves. Wholeheartedly. To the king. And he was the prevailing power. I mean. What. What else could you do? It was a time of apostasy.

And so that meant. It was a time of affliction. For those who were going to be faithful. And there were those who were faithful. And God's. True people. His holy people.

Were thrown down. And trampled. Verse 13. Says that the host. Is God's holy people. They'll be trampled underfoot. And that's how it was. I don't know.

If Hebrews 11. Is actually talking about this time period. But it's a fitting. Description. When it says. They were put to death. By the sword. They went about. In sheepskins.

[26 : 43] And goatskins. Destitute. Persecuted. And mistreated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts. And mountains. And caves.

And holes in the ground. And so that's what God's people. Were facing. And that's what was ahead. And it turned out exactly how God.

Said it was going to be. The question is. Is there any hope? It's a very dark scene. It's very bleak. The people of God don't have power.

They're destitute. They're persecuted. Their own friends are abandoning them. Their own fellow countrymen. Are leaving them. Is there any hope? Hope. And the answer is yes.

Because while they were persecuted. They were not abandoned by God. And so we've seen the ram and the goat. We've seen this little horn. And the third person that we want to see. Is the prince.

[27 : 41] Of princes. He's mentioned two times. The little horn. Sets himself against the prince of the host. In verse 11. And in verse 25. It says. He will take his stand.

Against the prince. Of princes. And so brothers and sisters. There is hope. Even in the darkest situations. Even in the darkest places.

Where God leads his people. It's because this. When God's enemies. Make war against us. They make war against God.

They make war against the prince. Of the host. Of the armies. Of heaven. So remember. What Jesus said to.

Saul of Tarsus. Remember. Saul is breathing out. Threats. He's locking up Christians. And Jesus said. Saul. Saul. Why are you persecuting me?

[28 : 39] And so what must happen? What must happen? What will happen? When man. Rages. Against. God. Only destruction.

And haven't we seen that again. And again. And Daniel. When you. Confront. And. Put yourself. Up against God. You.

Will. Be humbled. And here it is again. In verse 25. Yet. So this little horn. He's raging. Against God's people. And he's wanting to attack God. And yet. Verse 25 says.

Yet. He will be destroyed. But not by human power. And so with the sweep of God's hidden hand. This little horn that created such. Ruin. Is laid low.

So what happened to Antiochus? Well. About six and a half years. After he started his. Crusade. To make God's people. Conform.

[29 : 39] And his attack on God's people. Which comes out to about. 2,300. Evenings and mornings. If you want to know. That's what that means. This whole time period.

So from the beginning. To the end. So six and a half years. About. After six and a half years. He's driven out of Israel. By. Rebel forces.

And a month or two later. He dies. Mysteriously. He dies. On the backside of the desert. Somewhere. He remembered.

But not. Mourned. He was an evil king. God. Resists the proud. But gives. Grace. To the humble. And so when you confront.

The prince of princes. It's not a question. Of if you will be humbled. It's only a matter of when. Will you be humbled immediately? Or will God give you.

[30 : 37] Time to repent. Let no one be deceived. God will not. Be mocked. God. And our God is a consuming. Fire. And so.

All the sin. And all the rebellion. There is a price to pay. And the little horn. Daniel says. We'll pay it. Now.

We go into a lot more detail. In this chapter. Even as we read it. I thought. Wow. There's a lot of things. That I could be saying. But hopefully. That gives you. A little. A grasp. And so maybe. If you read it on your own. You can at least. Put it together. And you could study. More in detail. But. I want you to take. Four lessons away. From this passage.

And the first lesson. Is this. And this is how. It connects to us. And to. Where we are. The events. That surrounded. The little horn. So all that rebellion.

[31 : 32] And apostasy. And persecution. And assimilation. All those things. That surrounded. The little horn. Are typical. Of what is going to happen again. And what happens. Over and over. Again in history.

Now. In Daniel chapter 7. There was another little horn. Remember who that was. It was the antichrist. That comes at the end. And Jesus destroys him. With the splendor of his coming. Now. We. Kind of get a foretaste. We get a picture. Of what that's going to be like. When we look at. Antiochus. This little horn. So this little horn. And. In chapter. The little horn. In chapter 7. And the little horn. In chapter 8. Are not the same. But they're very similar.

They do the same things. They think the same way. They use the same. The same. Modes of operating. They. They. They hate God. And they hate God's people.

[32 : 30] And so to look at what. Antiochus. Did to the Jews. Is to see what's going to happen. In a certain way. What's going to happen to Christians. When the antichrist. Rules. When that final.

Blasphemous king. Will do. What he'll do to the Christians. Now. To kind of. Put. This all in historical perspective. Antiochus.

Was just one of. Many. Of these kind of characters. One of many antichrists. Who have appeared. And they're all leading up. To the final one.

The final one. Jesus will destroy. So. Antiochus. Uses his political power. To. Force.

God's people. To worship him. To force God's people. To assimilate. Into the culture. To coerce them. And so. Do things like that.

[33 : 24] I mean. Was that the only time. Those kind of things have happened. The answer is no. Not at all. Those things happen. Constantly. In this. In this world. That we live in.

God's people. Are under constant threat. From government powers. To assimilate. Into their own. Culture. And so. We haven't really faced it. In our country. To any great degree.

But people have. And people are. So the German. The German church. Under Hitler. You know. Hitler decided. He wasn't just going to totally.

Get rid of the Christian religion. But he was going to use it. And he was going to warp it. And he was going to make it. Say what he wanted to say. He was going to use it. As his instrument. And so. The Christians at that time.

Were forced to either assimilate. Or to suffer. And many did suffer. And then. Even in. China. To this day. The communist party.

[34 : 19] Has their own. Christian church. And they are happy. To have people going to it. And they preach. Their moralism. And they control everything. And.

They're just glad. To use the Christian religion. To further. Their kingdom. And so. Should we be surprised. If something like that. Happens to us.

Should we look at it as. Oh. This is something totally new. If it ever comes upon us. Yes. And the answer is no. We shouldn't be surprised. But we also shouldn't be.

Really quick to say. Okay. This guy is the last one. I mean. Aren't people always saying that. This is the antichrist. We know who he is now. And time and time again. It's proven wrong. John says. Many antichrists have come. And they are coming. And. Instead of focusing on. Identifying them. We need to focus on. What Daniel tells us to do. And that is to endure.

[35 : 13] To the end. We have to do our part. To trust God. To be faithful. And to endure. And that's what the believers. In Israel had to do. They weren't going to. Suddenly. Out of the exile.

Come into this wonderful kingdom. They had to endure. They had to stay faithful. And brothers and sisters. We have to do the same thing. If we are going to receive. Eternal life.

We will have to endure. To the end. That's the first lesson. The second lesson. Is this. That God is in control. Of history. God is in control. Of history. If we don't see.

And appreciate that. From this book. And we're really missing. The main message. Of the whole book of Daniel. God knows the future. He's in control.

Of the future. And he tells Daniel. Exactly what is going to happen. Haven't we seen that? Who would have thought?

[36 : 09] This vision comes in about 530 BC. And no one would have thought. At that time. That that far away. Little tiny country.

Greece. That was no more than just a few city states. Greece. Would ever become a world. Power. But God knew. God had it planned.

Who would have ever thought. That Greece would conquer. The whole ancient. Near East. And yet. That's what exactly. Happened. Because God. Is in control. Of history.

And so when he speaks. About what is going to happen. We can trust him. And so we're meant to look at that. And to trust God. If he controlled the past. And we've seen that in Daniel.

Then we can know that he's going to control. Our future. There's a lot of things going on. Isn't there? There's a lot of people.

[37:05] Worried about the future. They're fighting for change. In a lot of ways. They're concerned about the future of our country. The future of our world.

And it's good. It's right. To be concerned about those things. But brothers and sisters. Let's do it. As Christians. As people who know.

Our God. Rules. And so there should be a difference. Between how you think about. The future. And how you think about our country.

And how you think about. Political things. There should be a difference. Between you. And your unbelieving neighbor. There should be a difference. Between you. And the talk show host. On the radio.

Your father. Is in control. He knows the end. All the way from the beginning. And so. We as Christians.

[38:03] We as God's people. Have the right to smile. And relax. Somewhat. Because. Our father's in control. All. The world is in.

His hands. So that's lesson number two. God is in control of history. When you look out. And when you read the papers. And read the internet. You need to think about that. This world is not out of control.

What's going on. It's not out of control. God is in control of history. Here's lesson three. Out of the darkness. Christ knows how to bring. Light. Out of darkness.

Christ brings. Light. Light. Things were going to get pretty bad. In Israel. God's people were going to be trampled. And we are going to face similar things.

And yet we are not to be discouraged. We shouldn't despair. Because Christ. Our king. The son of man. Knows how to bring.

[39:01] Light. Out of darkness. John 1. 5. Says it so beautifully. The light shines. In the darkness. And the darkness. Has not overcome it.

Do you ever feel like. The darkness. Is overcoming the light. And. Jesus came into this world. The light of the world.

The brilliance. Of God's glory. Full of grace. And truth. And he entered the dark world. And the darkness. Sensed the light. And they hated it.

They hated the light. And so now. Sinful men. Can get their hands on God. They have God. Within their grasp. And they did.

Their worst. So the religious hated him. And the political powers. Crucified him. And John.

[39:58] And John chapter 13. Says. And it was dark. Outside. And it was dark. Dark. But Jesus knew. Even greater darkness. Because his father.

Was about to turn his face away. And he did turn his face away. And so the sun. Refused. To shine. On something so appalling.

As the son of God. Being crucified. And in that. Inky. Dark. Blackness. God's. Anger. Struck. Because.

All of our sins. Were on him. Laid. And so. There was this darkness. In Jesus heart. That we will never comprehend. A midnight.

And he died. Light of the world. By darkness slain. We sing. And so this was. Really the horror of horrors. This is the low point.

[41:00] This was humanity's. Darkest hour. We murdered. The light of men. And we murdered. Our greatest. Friend. But out of that darkness. Jesus brought light.

The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness. Has not overcome it. So Jesus overcame. The world's darkness. Then the world. And the humanity. Our sinfulness. And our midnight of soul. Where we hate God. We hate our maker. And Jesus triumphed over all that. By his death and resurrection. And so he triumphed over hell. And he triumphed over sin. And death. And that means that no matter how dark things get from here on out.

No matter how dark it gets for you personally. No matter how dark it gets for our nation. Or our. What we experience here. No matter how dark it gets for the church. There is hope. Hope. And the reason there is hope. Is because Jesus has been to darker places. And out of that darkness. He brought light. And so in the worst hours of your pain.

[42:01] And your failure. And the worst hours of your discouragement. And disappointment. And heartache. Jesus says by the end. Children.

Will forsake their parents. Children will give their parents over to authorities to be killed. And parents will do the same to their children. And if.

So when. And if. That happens to us. When that nightmare. Of betrayal. Drives a sword. Into your hearts.

You can know. That you still have a faithful high priest. Who can. Sympathize with you. And you still have a mighty king.

Who's seated on the throne of heaven. And he's coming soon. And. So there's always hope.

Because Jesus brings. Light. Out of darkness. And here's the fourth lesson.

[42:58] You must endure to the end. You must endure to the end. That was Daniel's words to his original audience. You must endure to the end to be saved. You're going to have to make it past this.

This terrible time. This time of wrath and indignation. This time of punishment and apostasy. You're going to have to make it. Past that. And if you give up. When the pressure is on you.

You will not be saved. If you abandon Jesus. Hebrews talks about this. If you forsake him. There is no hope for you. So we must endure.

And over. And over again. In the book of Revelation. Which takes so many of its themes from Daniel. It says. The church. Has to overcome. To those who overcome.

I promise this. To those who overcome. To those who overcome. Come. And so brothers and sisters. The battle. Is still on. And if you're thinking. All those things are.

[43:52] All the things that we've even talked about. Are just distant. Future realities. Then you're not seeing. What the world is trying to do to you. Right now. Because the spirit of the antichrist.

The spirit of lawlessness. Is at work. So what do you experience at school? What do you experience at work? What do you experience in your family? It's the same thing.

Assimilation or persecution. And if we do not resist those things. Now. Then we will not endure to the end. And brothers and sisters.

If you are caving in. Now. If we are caving in. Now. How will we hope to stand. On the days. When it gets really bad. If you're assimilated. Now. Where will you stand. When your life. Is on the line.

[44:50] So I ask. What would enduring look like right now? If you're enduring. What does that look like? And if you're not enduring. What does it need to look like? Two things.

The first one. Is going to be powered by faith. All that I said about Christ. You have to believe that. Or you will not stand. If you don't stand by your faith. You will not stand.

We heard that this morning. If you aren't trusting in God. If you aren't daily feeding your soul. On his promises. And his love. And his concern. And his power.

And his control. And his sovereignty. And his strength. And his rewards. And his warnings. And all the things. That he has said to us. If you're not exercising faith. On those things. If those things are not real.

Daily realities. In your life. You will not endure. To the end. You will not endure. Out through the end of the day. You will either stand by faith. Or you will not stand at all.

[45:45] Number two. Enduring means saying no. To the friendship of this world. There was great pressure. In that day. To compromise.

Your life was on the line. Your family was on the line. Your job's on the line. That's kind of. Those kind of things happen. In our day. And it happened then. And if we are compromising.

With the world. If we're taking the benefits of the world. But we're not taking the persecution of this world. Then we. Will not stand. Because there were great benefits.

From walking away from God. And. When Antiochus was king. When the little horn was ruling. It was a good thing. Physically speaking. To walk away. There were benefits.

There was safety. There was promotion. There was the ability. To get ahead in the world. And all it meant was. You just have to be his friend. All you have to do.

