**A SCARY DREAM WITH A MESSAGE OF HOPE**

**Daniel 7:1-28**

**WE CAN COME TO THE LORD WITH OUR QUESTIONS**

* *“‘As for me, Daniel, my spirit was deeply distressed within me, and the visions in my mind terrified me. 16 I approached one of those who were standing by and asked him to clarify all this.”* (Dan 7:15-16a)
* **As Christians we have the benefit of coming directly to the Lord with our questions and concerns.**
* *“Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:16)

**GOD REVEALS WHAT HE WANTS US TO KNOW**

* *“So he let me know the interpretation of these things.”* (Dan 7:16b)
* **We need to be careful to not read things *into* the Scriptures that God has not clearly stated.**
* *“Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. 6 Don’t add to his words, or he will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.”* (Proverbs 30:5-6)
* **Focusing on what God did not clarify in Scripture keeps us distracted from focusing on and putting into practice what He *did* say.**

**THE ANTICHRIST WILL RISE TO POWER AND INFLICT SUFFERING ON GOD’S PEOPLE FOR A PERIOD OF TIME**

* *“This is what he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, trample it down, and crush it.... 25 He will speak words against the Most High and oppress the holy ones of the Most High. He will intend to change religious festivals and laws, and the holy ones will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half a time.’”* (Daniel 7:23-25)
* **For all of humanity God’s people have been, and will continue to be, persecuted.**
* *“In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* (2 Timothy 3:12)
* **Darkness hates the Light, sin hates righteousness, and Satan hates the Lord and His children, so he has made it his mission to persecute Christians.**
* Jesus - *“You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”* (Matthew 5:11-12)

**THE ANTICHRIST WILL BE DEFEATED AND JESUS’ ETERNAL KINGDOM WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR HIS FOLLOWERS**

* *“I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. 14 He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.”* (Daniel 7:13-14)
* *“But the court will convene, and his dominion will be taken away, to be completely destroyed forever. 27 The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and obey him.”* (Daniel 7:26-27)
* **We can find hope and solace in our suffering knowing that Satan and the Antichrist will ultimately be defeated, and we will be with the Lord forever.**
* *“The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* (Revelation 20:10)
* *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.”* (Revelation 21:4)

**Connect Group Discussion**

**Understanding:**

* What does Daniel 7:1-28 teach us about God/Jesus?
* What is the main message of Daniel 7?

**Digging Deeper:**

* What is apocalyptic literature? How should we interpret it?
* What do we learn about the Antichrist from Daniel’s dream?
* How should we deal with Scriptures where God does not give all the details? What is the danger of reading things in to the text?
* Why was Daniel troubled by his dream? How are we sometimes like Daniel in response to current suffering and evil in our world?
* Why do God’s people suffer in this life? How do you reconcile the suffering of God’s people with Him being a good God?
* How can we find hope from what we learn in Daniel 7?

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?