

Community Group Sermon Notes March 29, 2026

Senior Pastor, Kevin Flannery

Series: Exiles in Babylon: Living as Strangers in a Fallen World

Sermon Title: When Beasts Rise, Look to the Throne

Big Idea: When life in this world feels ruled by beastly powers, God calls His people to lift their eyes to His throne, trust His judgment, & take courage in the everlasting reign of the Son of Man.

Spring Term: Week 13 of 20



Ice breaker: What's one moment this past week where you felt especially encouraged—or discouraged?

Read and reflect on Daniel 7:1-14: *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.² Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.³ Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.⁴ "The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.⁵ "And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'⁶ "After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.⁷ "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.⁸ "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.⁹ "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.¹¹ "Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.¹² (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)¹³ "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion:

1. A Vision for Weary Exiles, Daniel 7:1; John 16:33; Romans 15:4

- This chapter is "not mainly for prediction... but for courage." Why is that important?
- Where do you see the world not just as broken, but as something more deeply distorted or "beastly"—in nations, institutions, workplaces, or even within ourselves? Where does power turn predatory, public life lose its sense of shame, truth become twisted, pride gets rewarded, and violence becomes normalized, causing people, made in the image of God, to act less and less human?

2. Earthly Kingdoms Become Beastly When Human Power Rebels Against God. Daniel 7:1–8 Genesis 1:26–27; Romans 1:21–23.

- What stands out to you about the imagery of the beasts rising from the sea? Describe the four beasts.
- Later in the chapter Daniel is told that these beasts represent kings and kingdoms. From below, kingdoms can look glorious, strong, and secure. But from above, from heaven's perspective, when

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human power cuts itself loose from God, it becomes beastly. How does this passage challenge the way we normally view power, success, or influence?

- The Bible never asks us to be naïve about evil or pretend that Babylon is harmless - it tells the truth! Have you worked in environments where success mattered more than integrity; lived in families where power was used to wound rather than protect; or are honest enough to know there are places in your own soul where the beast still stirs? (i.e., Pride that wants to rule. Anger that wants to crush. Desire that wants to consume.) Where do you see “devouring, crushing, and boasting” patterns?

3. The Ancient of Days Reigns and Judges (Daniel 7:9–12, Psalm 103:19; Ecclesiastes 12:14)

- What differences do you notice between the chaos of the sea and the calm of God’s throne room?
- How does the glorious image of the “Ancient of Days” in verse 9 [white as snow (perfect purity), white like wool (eternal wisdom), a throne of fire (holy judgement)] reshape your view of God’s character?
- What emotions does the phrase “the books were opened” stir in you—comfort (for those who suffer under beastly power), a warning (for all of us), or both? (History is not random, it is accountable. Every boastful word, every hidden abuse of power, every injustice, every proud defiance of heaven has a discoverable receipt.) The courtroom of God is good news for the oppressed, but it is not casual news for sinners (see verse 11).

4. The Son of Man Reigns Forever; Living as Exiles with Courage (Daniel 7:13–14, Matthew 26:64; Philippians 2:5–11, Hebrews 12:1–3; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18)

- What contrasts stand out between the beasts and the Son of Man? How does Jesus fulfill this vision through His life, death, and resurrection? Practically, what does it look like this week to fix your eyes on the throne and on Christ?

Digging Deeper — (Work through one together, over the week, or assign portions to different members.)

- Trace the Theme of Kingdoms. Compare Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. How do these visions together deepen your understanding of earthly vs. God’s kingdom?
- Examine Your Heart. Where do you see “beastly” tendencies (pride, control, self-exaltation) in your own life? Pray through *Psalm 139:23–24* and journal what God reveals.
- Study the Son of Man. Read several Gospel passages where Jesus calls Himself “Son of Man” (e.g., *Mark 10:45; Matthew 24:30*). How do these connect back to Daniel 7?

Closing Prayer: Lord, we confess how easily we fix our eyes on the chaos around us instead of on You, trying harder in our own strength instead of lifting our gaze. Teach us to look above the beasts, above the headlines, above the noise and instability of this age, and to see Your throne. Help us to see You, Ancient of Days, and Jesus, the Son of Man, reigning with power and glory over all things. As we leave, fill us with courage and steady faith, knowing You are in control and we belong to You.

Holy Week and Easter: March 29 - April 4, Prayer Experience, 8 AM – 8 PM, Lobby Building A; **April 3**, Good Friday Service, 7 PM, Sanctuary; **April 5**, Easter Sunday, 7:30 AM, 9 AM, 10:30 AM, Sanctuary