



Ice breaker: Looking back on this past week, where in your life right now do things feel most unpredictable or spinning out of control?

Read and reflect on Daniel 8:1-28: *In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. ² In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. 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. ⁴ I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great. ⁵ As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. ⁶ It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage. ⁷ I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power. ⁸ The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down. ¹² Because of rebellion, the Lord's people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground. ¹³ 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, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord's people?" ¹⁴ He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." ¹⁵ While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. ¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." ¹⁷ 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." ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. ²⁰ The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹ The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. ²² The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. ²³ "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. ²⁴ 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 those who are mighty, the holy people. ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ "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." ²⁷ I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.*

Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion:

1. **God Rules Over It Still (Read Daniel 8: 1-14, 19-22).** Daniel receives a troubling vision filled with powerful, clashing kingdoms (the ram and the goat). Even in the chaos, God is at work and in control. What about



this vision stands out to you most, and why? In real life, what makes it difficult to trust that God is still in control when things feel chaotic or uncertain? Where in your life right now do you most need to trust God's sovereignty?

2. **Things Get Worse Before They Get Better (Read Daniel 8: 23-25)** Faith is not denial—it's trusting God even when circumstances decline. Our hope is not just that things immediately improve, but that God ultimately prevails. When you hear the idea that "things may get worse before they get better," what emotions or reactions come up for you, does this idea produce fear, urgency, hope, or something else? How can we remain spiritually grounded if we experience increasing cultural, moral, or personal challenges? How does this connect with the promise of Christ's return and final victory?
3. **Living Wisely with Prophecy (Read Matthew 24:4–5, 15–16, 36, 42).** Which of these guidelines do you find most challenging, and why? Jesus says to "keep watch." What does that look like in your everyday life—practically and spiritually? Guidelines to consider (Prophecy Do's and Don'ts):
 - *Live ready every day—don't set dates.*
 - *Stay close to Jesus—don't become an "Antichrist spotter"*
 - *Stay spiritually awake—don't drift into complacency*
4. **We Can Have Peace in Chaos (Read Daniel 8: 26-27, John 16:33).** Daniel is overwhelmed—distressed, exhausted, even physically affected. Yet he returns to his responsibilities, carrying both the weight of the vision and trust in God. How do you keep living faithfully in a chaotic world even when you may not fully understand? What are some practical ways you've experienced God's peace during difficult seasons? How does the illustration of the hurricane above the ocean with calm waters only 25 feet deep give an image of how the depth of relationship with Jesus can steady us in a storm?

Digging Deeper (Optional)

- **God's Sovereignty Over Nations and History.** God is actively ruling over the rise and fall of kingdoms—even when events feel chaotic or unsettling. Explore Further: Isaiah 46:9–10, Daniel 2:20–21, Romans 13:1, Psalm 103:19.
- **The Reality and Limits of Evil.** Evil can grow powerful and deceptive, but it is always temporary and ultimately defeated by God. Explore Further: 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 8, Revelation 13:5–7, Job 1:12.

Closing Prayer: Lord, help us trust that You are in control even when life feels confusing or overwhelming. Give us steady hearts to walk in faith and peace and keep our eyes on Jesus no matter what we face.

Faith in Action:

- April 23 – Bible Camp Volunteer Meeting (6 PM, Welcome Center)
- April 25 – All Women Welcome - Women's Workshop (8:30 AM, Welcome Center)
- April 26 – Harvest Sunday (bring non-perishable, non-expired items)