



The Book of Daniel: No Compromise

Daniel 7:15-28

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Daniel Chapter 7 takes us deep into prophetic territory, revealing visions of kingdoms rising and falling, but more importantly, showing us where our focus should truly rest. We encounter the terrifying fourth beast and the emergence of the Antichrist—a figure who will speak against God, persecute the saints, and attempt to change the very laws of nature.

Yet the most profound truth here isn't about the coming darkness, but about the eternal victory already secured. The Ancient of Days gives an everlasting kingdom to the Son of Man and, remarkably, the saints receive this kingdom not by conquest but as a gift.

This passage challenges us to examine where we're placing our attention in these troubling times. Are we consumed by the chaos around us, or are we looking up toward our redemption? The Holy Spirit currently restrains the lawless one, and believers will be removed before the full tribulation unfolds.

This isn't a message of fear but of hope—a reminder that when we see these signs beginning, we should lift our heads because our redemption draws near. The real danger isn't the Antichrist; it's allowing our love to grow cold while we wait. We're called to remain faithful ambassadors, loving others even as lawlessness abounds, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus rather than the schemes of the enemy.

Key Takeaways:

- ✓ **God is the ultimate victor** - No matter how powerful earthly kingdoms or the Antichrist may seem, they will be consumed by the breath of God's mouth.
- ✓ **The Church will be removed before the Antichrist's reign** - The Holy Spirit's presence in and around believers restrains the lawless one; we will not face the tribulation described here.
- ✓ **Our focus determines our peace** - If we focus on current events and the coming beast, we'll be troubled; if we focus on Christ's return, we'll have hope.
- ✓ **We receive the kingdom; we don't take it** - Our calling is not to establish earthly dominion but to share the gospel and love others.
- ✓ **The signs point to Christ's soon return** - Rather than causing fear, recognizing these signs should fill us with anticipation.

5-Day Devotional and Small Group Guide

Day 1: The Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken

Reading: Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 12:25-29

Devotional: In a world of rising and falling empires, God's kingdom stands eternal. Daniel saw nations described as beasts—powerful, terrifying, temporary. But he also saw the Son of Man receiving an everlasting dominion. Today, political powers clash, economies fluctuate, and societies shift, yet God's kingdom remains unshakeable.

The angel's message to Daniel wasn't primarily about the beasts—it was about the saints receiving the kingdom forever. This is your inheritance. You don't seize it through political maneuvering or earthly power; you receive it as a gift from the Son of Man.

When the news cycle overwhelms you, remember that every earthly kingdom is a mere afterthought to God's eternal reign. Your citizenship is in heaven. Let this truth anchor your soul when everything around you seems unstable.

Reflection: What earthly "kingdoms" (career, politics, finances, position) am I tempted to trust more than God's eternal kingdom?

Day 2: Discerning the Signs Without Fear

Reading: Luke 21:25-36; Matthew 24:32-44

Devotional: Jesus didn't give us prophecy to terrify us but to prepare us. When He described wars, earthquakes, and fearful signs, He immediately followed with instruction: "Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

The signs of the times aren't meant to drive us into panic but into watchfulness. Like recognizing summer by budding trees, we're called to discern our season. Daniel was troubled by his vision until he understood God's ultimate victory. Similarly, we can observe troubling world events while remaining anchored in hope.

The key for a settled heart is where you have your focus. Eyes fixed on chaos produce fear. Eyes fixed on Christ produce anticipation. You're not called to obsess over every headline but to recognize the season and live accordingly: loving well, sharing the gospel, and walking faithfully.

Reflection: Am I consuming news with anxiety or do I simply observe it with the confident and prayerful expectation of Christ's return?

Day 3: The Holy Spirit – The One Who Restrains

Reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; John 14:15-21

Devotional: The mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but someone restrains it—the presence of the Holy Spirit here on earth. He is around all of us, He comes upon us, and He even dwells within the believer. This is profound: His very presence holds back the full manifestation of evil.

Jesus promised He would never leave or forsake you. The Spirit's indwelling is permanent for every believer, which means **He** will not leave unless **believers** are going with Him. Which tells us we need not fear the Antichrist or the tribulation described in Daniel 7. Those who belong to Christ will be removed before the Restrainer is taken away.

This truth should embolden you. You're not waiting fearfully for judgment but expectantly for Jesus. Meanwhile the Spirit—who is around you, upon you, and within you—actively restrains evil within your sphere of influence. Your prayers matter. Your presence matters. Your witness matters. You're not powerless in these days: you're filled with the very power that holds darkness at bay.

Reflection: How does knowing the Holy Spirit dwells in me change how I engage with a darkening world?

Day 4: When Love Grows Cold

Reading: Matthew 24:9-14; Revelation 2:1-7

Devotional: Jesus warned that when lawlessness abounds, the love of many will grow cold. He wasn't speaking about the world but about His followers. The word used is *agape*—God's own love given to us and flowing through us.

It's easy to let the chaos around us harden our hearts. We create enemies out of people who, in reality, are captives. We trade compassion for clever comebacks. We focus on being right rather than being loving. The church at Ephesus had sound doctrine but had abandoned their first love...and Jesus threatened to remove their lampstand.

The world doesn't need Christians who can win arguments; it needs Christians who can love sacrificially. When you see lawlessness, remember that people aren't your enemy: they're deceived, bound, and desperately needing the hope only Jesus provides. Your calling isn't to conquer culture but to love people into the kingdom.

Reflection: Has my response to cultural chaos made me more argumentative or more compassionate?

Day 5: Look Up – Your Redemption Draws Near

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14

Devotional: "Look up." Two simple words that redirect everything. When these prophetic events begin unfolding, Jesus doesn't say, "Look around and panic." Instead, He says, "Look up and lift up your heads."

Your redemption isn't a distant hope—it's drawing near. Every fulfilled prophecy, every sign of the times, every indication that the stage is set for the Antichrist is simultaneous evidence that Jesus is coming soon. This should fill you with expectant joy, not paralyzing fear.

Daniel kept these matters in his heart. Do the same. Let the certainty of God's Word shape how you live today. Walk in holiness, knowing you'll soon see Him face to face. Love extravagantly, knowing time is short. Share the gospel boldly, knowing others need this hope. Stand firm, knowing your labor isn't in vain.

Don't let your countenance be changed by world events. Let it be transformed by the blessed hope of His appearing.

Reflection: What would change in my daily life if I truly believed Jesus could return today?

Practical Applications:

Choose at least one of the following to practice this week:

1. **Media Fast:** Limit your news/social media consumption to once per day. When you feel the urge to check, pray instead and "look up" to Jesus.
2. **Love Audit:** Identify one person or group you've begun to see as "the enemy" rather than "captive to the enemy." Pray for them daily and, if possible, look for one practical way to show Christ's love to them.
3. **Kingdom Focus:** Each morning, read Luke 21:25-36. Journal about what it means to "look up" that day and what kingdom work God has placed in your hands.
4. **Prophecy Study:** Read through Revelation 13 and compare it with Daniel 7. Write down the parallels and what they reveal about God's sovereignty.

Memorization:

"When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." - Luke 21:28

Take time to consider: Where are my eyes fixed right now—on the chaos around me or on my coming King?

Related Readings:

- 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (The restrainer and the lawless one)
- Revelation 13 (The beast from the sea)
- Matthew 24 (Signs of the end times)
- Isaiah 14:12-17 (The fall of the enemy)

Small Group Guide: Where Should You Keep Your Focus?

Discussion Questions:

- How does understanding that the saints *receive* the kingdom rather than take it by force change our approach to engaging with culture and politics today?
- In what ways might Christians today be tempted to focus on establishing earthly dominion rather than sharing the gospel, and how can we guard against this?
- What does it mean practically to 'look up' when we see troubling signs in our world, rather than becoming consumed by fear or anger?
- How does the promise that the Holy Spirit will never leave or forsake believers impact our understanding of the rapture and the tribulation period?

- Why do you think the Antichrist's strategy includes wearing down the saints through constant harassment rather than just physical persecution, and what might this look like?
- How can we maintain love for people who oppose God and His truth while still standing firm on biblical principles without compromise?
- What are the dangers of allowing our countenance to be changed by world events rather than keeping our eyes fixed on Christ's return?
- In what ways is the table already set in our current society for the appearance of the lawless one, and how should this awareness affect our daily lives?
- How does Jesus's warning that lawlessness will cause the love of many to grow cold specifically apply to believers today, and what steps can we take to prevent this in our own hearts?
- What is the difference between being aware of prophetic signs and being consumed by them, and how do we find the right balance in our spiritual walk?

Further Discussion Questions:

- What troubled Daniel most about his vision? How does the angel's initial response (verses 16-18) address Daniel's concerns?
- What are the key characteristics of the "little horn" (the Antichrist) described in this passage? List them out as a group.
- In his sermon, Pastor Brad emphasized that "the saints receive the kingdom" rather than taking it by force. What does this tell us about our role as believers in the present age?
- Pastor Brad mentioned that the Holy Spirit restrains the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:7). How does understanding this truth affect your sense of security as a believer?

- Daniel's "countenance changed" and his "thoughts greatly troubled him" after the vision. Have you experienced similar feelings when considering current events? What causes this reaction in you?
- Jesus told His disciples, "When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads" (Luke 21:28). What does "looking up" practically mean in your daily life? What does "looking around" look like in contrast?
- Pastor Brad warned about the danger of our love growing cold when lawlessness abounds (Matthew 24:12). In what ways have you seen this happen, either in yourself or in the broader church? How can we guard against this?
- In his sermon, Pastor Brad mentioned that when love grows cold, "We'll see people as our enemy instead of seeing the *true* enemy as our enemy." Can you think of specific examples where Christians might fall into this trap today? How can we maintain a proper perspective?
- What is the difference between being aware of prophetic signs and being consumed by them? How do we strike the right balance?

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