

# SERMON STUDY GUIDE



October 29, 2023 // Thriving in Babylon // The Pattern & The Promise



## ABOUT THIS SERMON SERIES

We live in a defining hour of history. The Western world and our country's moral landscape have changed and are changing faster than we can keep pace. What was once wrong is now right and what was once unacceptable is now celebrated. We are living in a type of **"Babylon"** and the question is how will we respond? How will we find hope when it seems all is lost?

## ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- If you could know the future, would you want to know it? How would knowing the future impact your life today?
- If you had a time machine, would you go back in time or into the future? Why?

## GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

*“God’s plan always has a pattern and a promise.”*

**Read Daniel 7:1-8**

**Point 1 – The Pattern: The kingdoms of this world will rise and fall.**

What does Blockbuster, Tower Records, and Toys “R” Us all have in common? They were all once thriving and now are all bankrupt. Blockbuster was taken over by digital streaming services like Netflix and Youtube. Tower Records was replaced with shopping at home or on your phone with iTunes and Spotify. Toys “R” Us was taken over by Amazon (such a bummer)! As a kid, I thought Toys “R” Us would be here forever but things changed. Presidents come and go, clothing trends change, and technology progresses. Life is always in a constant state of change. What once was, will no longer be.

Daniel knew the stories of the kingdom of Israel in all of its grandeur under King Solomon. He heard the stories of how the kingdom broke apart years later under other kings. And now here he was, serving with another ruler in the kingdom of Babylon. Daniel knew better than most that the kingdoms of this world, and their worldly rulers, would rise and fall. This was the pattern throughout the world.

In Daniel 7:1-8, God gives Daniel a dream of what is to come. Daniel takes the time to write down his dream so he can study it and try to understand it. We may not know precisely what his dream meant as there is some debate over which kingdoms were being referred to here. What we do know is that he was being shown that kingdoms were going to come to power and then be defeated and other kingdoms were going to rise in their place. We can attempt to “decode” the future but the most important thing to remember is that all kingdoms of this world are temporary.

When we put our hope in the kingdoms of this world, we will always be left unsatisfied with the outcome.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you write down your dreams? Have you ever asked God to show you what they mean? Why do you think God gives us dreams?
- Have you ever put your hope in an earthly leader only to have your trust broken? Why do you think it's easier to trust a king we can see than our Heavenly King that we can't?
- How do you guard against putting your hope in a human government/kingdom? What helps you keep an eternal perspective?

## Read Daniel 7:9-14

### Point 2 – The Promise: The Kingdom of God will rise and never fall.

Over and over again in Scripture we see God's plans unfold, sometimes slowly (400 years slowly), sometimes quickly (3 days in the tomb). But no matter how long God takes to work His plan out, we always see that He is victorious. God shows Daniel in his vision that no matter what happens to these other kingdoms, His kingdom is coming and it will be an eternal kingdom that will never fall.

In verse 9, an awesome scene starts to take place in the throne room of God. Daniel sees God and He refers to Him as the "Ancient of Days." This title given to God speaks to His timeliness, eternity, wisdom, and incomparable glory. He is the triumphant King who sits on His throne, unmoved and unshaken by the kingdoms of this world, ready to judge justly with the "books" open.

In vs.13, we are introduced to another character in this vision who was like the "son of man." He came riding triumphantly on the clouds. We know from Psalm 104:3 that only God can make the clouds His chariot. Who is this other person in the vision? We know Him to be Christ, the Son of God. Jesus referred to himself as the "Son of Man" many times in the New Testament (Matthew 12:32, 13:37, Luke 12:8).

In Daniel's vision, the one like the "son of man" was led into the presence of God and was given "authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped Him" (vs.14). All this is said in the past tense. In vs.15, the tense changes to present tense and a promise is given. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." All kingdoms of the earth will fall but nothing will ever be able to triumph over God's eternal Kingdom.

While we may not know when the final Kingdom is going to reign over all for all of eternity, we do know that it is promised to us. We also know that God is always faithful to keep His promises.

In the midst of our changing and challenging world, this truth should give us great hope to hold onto. Our Savior, and His Kingdom, will never be overcome (Matthew 16:18).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Take a moment and look back at the description of the “Ancient of Days” found in verses 9-10. What do the descriptions of His clothing, hair, throne, and attendants tell us about the “Ancient of Days?” White clothing- moral purity, white hair- sign of old age, fiery throne- Fire is symbolic of judgment and judging the nations, attendants- those serving the King
- How do you see current events in light of God’s promise in vs.14? How does it change the way you think about the current political/social climate?
- As referenced in Matthew 16:18, Jesus has made His Church an unstoppable force that cannot be overcome by hopelessness, pain, the kingdoms of this world, and all demonic forces. How does this truth offer us hope and courage today?

**Read Matthew 26:60-65 & Matthew 28:19-20**

### **Point 3 – The Plan: The Kingdom of God grows as the people of God go**

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells us His plan to expand His Kingdom here on earth. After Christ’s death and resurrection, Jesus told His disciples (and us today) to “go” into the world and “make disciples of all nations.” We aren’t supposed to be spectators, watching and cheering on God from the sideline. On the contrary, Christ challenges each of us to bring the good news of God everywhere we go. We aren’t bystanders but active participants in His Kingdom.

If we want to see the world change, if we want to see the Kingdom of Heaven reign on earth, God has a plan for that and it involves you. It involves serving our neighborhoods, sharing with our friends, loving our families, and using our finances to help reach the lost. Like the Robin is a harbinger of Spring, we are harbingers of the eternal Kingdom that is to come. We get to share that there is hope found in God’s plan and there is a place for every man, woman, and child.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the command to “Go and make disciples” found in Matthew 28:19-20, challenge your plans for your life? What does that look like on a daily basis for you?
- When was the last time that you shared your faith with someone who doesn’t know Jesus? How did it go?
- How did someone share their faith with you? How are you currently sharing your faith?