

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
October 29, 2016

Daniel 7:1–8:27. Visions of beasts, revelations of future events, and seeing the glory of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 1:1–12. Commendations and prophecy of future justice.

Job 41:21–34. The end of God’s discourse on Leviathan.

COMMENTS.

Daniel 7:1–8:27. This reading has two parts. *First, we have the vision of the four beasts from the sea (7:1-28).* Daniel has a fantastic vision of four beasts. They emerge out of a churning sea: a lion with wings which walks like a human being and is given a human heart, a bear with three ribs in its mouth, a leopard with wings and four heads, a nightmare creature with iron teeth and ten horns, more terrifying and destructive than the others. While Daniel watches, a little horn emerges among the horns of the fourth creature. It uproots three of the other horns—and then starts looking around and boasting! The vision continues with God, the Ancient of Days, taking his throne in heaven and sitting in judgment on the earth. The first three beasts are disarmed and the fourth is killed and destroyed. Finally, someone ‘like a son of man’ comes with clouds of glory into the presence of God. He is given authority, glory and sovereign power. He is made king of a realm which embraces all nations and languages. His is a universal kingdom which will last forever. Daniel understands the vision. The beasts are kingdoms which will come and go: a winged lion for Babylon and later emperors, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar; a voracious bear for the Medes and their king, Darius; a four-headed leopard for the Persians and their emperor, Cyrus; a ten-horned monster for the Greeks and their emperor, Alexander the Great. Daniel views the glory of God’s ultimate power and judgment. God disarms the most awesome of earthly empires—and destroys their strutting despots. Jesus is the Son of man. He used the title ‘Son of man’, with Daniel’s meaning, to describe himself. He is our perfect representative before the Father’s judgment throne. It is his kingdom which will be established everywhere and forever. *Second, a vision of a ram and goat (8:1-27).* Daniel saw a vision of a ram with two horns of unequal length, the longer of which grew up after the other. The ram charged westward, northward, and southward, conquering all who opposed it. However, a goat with a long horn then came from the west, shattered the ram’s two horns, and trampled the ram into the ground. None could stand before the goat, but at the height of his power his horn was broken and replaced by four small horns. From one of these horns grew another horn that became increasingly strong and extended its power southward and eastward. It challenged the hosts of heaven, oppressed God’s people, and disrupted the sacrifices in the Lord’s temple. The angel Gabriel revealed the interpretation of the vision to Daniel. The two-horned ram represented the Medo-Persian empire, and the goat, the Greek empire (of Alexander). The four horns reflected the fourfold division of Alexander’s empire following his untimely death. The little horn represented Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian ruler (about 175–164 B.C.) who opposed God’s people and desecrated the temple.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. In this section, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, is presented before the throne of the Father and given dominion over all nations, an everlasting dominion that will never pass away.

Metaphysically speaking, the *form* (which we will investigate in a few months at FBC in our dianoetic study of faith as such) of God's objective revelation in a full and unitive manner is in Jesus Christ: Hebrews 1:1-3, *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.* In sum, when one sees Christ one sees the glory of God. While it is often taught that one has to wait and see Jesus Christ face-to-face to see His glory, this is not what the Bible teaches: 2 Corinthians 3:18, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord;* John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* This glory is seen in biblical faith, but not the faith that comes from categories of modern thinking. Moreover, the common belief that "faith seeks understanding" is not found in Scripture. Biblical faith is an inner understanding that is not derived by modern rational process. Biblical faith does not seek confirmation based on empirical evidence or rationalism. It is immediate, certain, and seeks God in God Himself. Moreover, this faith is undefeatable as long as the principles that bring this light remain. As the believer walks in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*, God brings and increases light of Himself and the glory of Jesus Christ in this life.

2 Thessalonians 1:1–12. In the first four verses, the Thessalonians are commended for their growing faith and maturing love and patience. Following this we have correction of misunderstandings regarding the Day of the Lord. The Thessalonians were enduring persecution and so Paul gives prophecy that illustrate that God will punish the wicked: those who are ignorant of God and those who do not obey the gospel.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. In this section, Paul makes it clear that God will recompense affliction to the lost, but rest to the saved. To recompense means "to repay." Certainly, the wicked who persecute the godly do not always receive their just payment in this life. In fact, the apparent prosperity of the wicked and difficulty of the godly have posed a problem for many of God's people (see Ps. 73; Jer. 12:1; Hab. 1). Why live a godly life if your only experience is that of suffering? As Christians, we must live for eternity and not just for the present. In fact, living "with eternity's values in view" is what makes our Christian life meaningful today. We walk by faith, and not by sight. However, this faith is not some ambiguous, dark, murky, wishful thinking mixed with doubt. Biblical faith is clear, certain, and is an inner knowledge of conviction that reaches down to the depths of man and ultimate reality. As we walk in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*, we live in God and so His light and experience this inner illumination of the things of Scripture. What a wonderful transcendent life in God's light, all based on God Himself and His Word! Wow!

Job 41:21–34. The chapter closes with a description of the leviathan’s anger and courage (25–34). People flee from him in fear (25), but he doesn’t flee from them. In verses 26–29, God named eight different weapons that the leviathan laughs at and treats like pieces of straw or rotten wood. Just as this creature fears nothing around him, so he fears nothing under him; for his underside is protected with a covering like sharp pieces of pottery (30). He fears no enemy on the land or in the water (31–32), for he makes the water to foam like the ingredients in the apothecary’s mixing pot. And when he swims through the water, the wake looks like the white hair of an old man!

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. Note that God’s speeches to Job say nothing about Job’s case or problems. Instead, we have divine discourses on many animals over which Job had no control, especially the dragonlike leviathan, the fiercest, least domesticated, and most awesome of beasts. The overall message is that these are God’s creations. They are under His control. He is the sovereign. The complementary lesson for Job was that he had no authority in these spheres. He too was a creature made by God to be submissive to his dominion. Job had more in common with leviathan, an angry creature stirring up his world, than he did with God, who effortlessly created and continues to control both Job’s world and the entire cosmos. When the believer lives in God *by proper knowledge and proper love*, he does not challenge God or become occupied with “how unfair life is.” The believer who lives in God lives in God’s light and does not entertain any such foolish idea. Living in the inner light of God Himself removes both ignorance and arrogance. As believers in the Church Age of grace, we have been given far more opportunities to live in the light of God Himself. Let us renew our efforts to walk in the light, in proper knowledge and love as we grow in our understanding of God’s glory which effulgently shines in Jesus Christ.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don