

SERMON OUTLINE

In Daniel 7:1-28 we are shown 3 responses to the dream and visions Daniel saw in Belshazzar's first year (1a, b).

- I. Daniel wrote down the dream (v. 1c).
 - A. Chaos arises from the sea (vs. 2-8).
 - B. Judgment takes place in heaven (vs. 9-12)
 - C. Everlasting dominion is given in heaven (vs. 13-14).
 - D. A war with an end takes place on earth (vs. 21-22).
- II. Daniel receives an interpretation of the visions (vs. 15-16).
 - A. The summary interpretation of the vision. (vs. 17-18).
 - B. The detailed interpretation of the vision:
 1. The fourth beast (vs. 19, 23).
 2. The ten horns (vs. 20, 24-25).
 3. The judgment (v. 26).
 4. The saints of the Most High (v. 27).
- III. Daniel responds to the dream and visions (v. 28).

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, December 31, 2017

Passage: Daniel 7:1-28

Memory Passage: Daniel 7:13-14

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 7:1-28.** Daniel 7-12 is in the genre of apocalyptic, so first, a bit of background. Apocalyptic is a genre of literature marked by several characteristics: (1) use of visions to convey divine messages, (2) dualism, including antagonism between good & evil, heaven & earth, God & Satan, light & dark, present & future (i.e. this age & the age to come), etc., (3) symbolism, including the symbolic use of numbers and other-worldly creatures, and (4) pessimism about the present and optimism about the future. Apocalyptic is used to encourage those who are struggling under persecution or captivity, noted especially in Daniel and Revelation. Apocalyptic is similar to, but also different from, prophecy: prophecy centers on calling God's rebellious people to repentance, proclaims God's judgment through mostly natural means and local manifestations, and is written in poetry, while apocalyptic encourages God's faithful people to endure and persevere, proclaims God's judgment through total destruction and universal manifestations, and is written in narrative describing extraordinary visions.

- (b) What evidence of these characteristics of apocalyptic do you find in Daniel 7:1-28?
- (c) According to v. 1, where does chapter 7 chronologically fit into the first 6 chapters of Daniel?
- (d) What does the sea represent here, as is often the case in Scripture?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 7:1-28.** In Hebrew thought, the number four often represents universality, as in universally comprehensive or complete. How might this meaning be present in 7:2-3?

- (b) Why are these beasts hybrids, and how is the 4th beast different from the first 3?
- (c) All we learn about these beasts in chapter 7 is that they represent kingdoms (kings & kingdoms are interchangeable in Daniel). Read Daniel 8, consider the similarities between chapters 7 & 2, and identify these kingdoms as far as you are able.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 7:1-28.** Daniel looked away from the little horn (v. 9), and then his attention is drawn back to the little horn which is still speaking (v. 11). How does the fact that both scenes happen simultaneously help you interpret this vision?

- (b) Who is the Ancient of Days, and what do you learn about him (from the symbolism of his description) and his work?
- (c) What is important about the sequence of events in vs. 9-14 (i.e. the events of vs. 9-10, then vs. 11-12, then vs. 13-14)?
- (d) Who is "one like a son of man" and how do you know (for now, use only information you are given in vs. 13-14)?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 7:1-28.** What is the main point of the vision according to vs. 17-18?

- (b) Verses 21-22 seem to show a part of the vision that returns to the events Daniel already saw in vs. 11-12, but expanded with more detail. Explain the interpretation of these verses that Daniel receives in vs. 23-27.
- (c) Who does this little horn represent? Present your evidence first from Daniel 7, and then from other passages of Scripture.
- (d) Who are "the saints (lit. holy ones) of the Most High" (vs. 18, 22, 25, 27), and what happens to them in this vision?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Daniel 7:1-28.** The primary message of Daniel 7 is that throughout human history human kingdoms will come and go, and they will all be evil to one extent or another because they come from sinful humanity. But behind the scenes of human history there is a divine court in session, actively involved in human history, judging evil, and appointing and deposing kings. God's people will be persecuted, but only for a limited time controlled by God. The world will continue in this way until God transfers an eternal kingdom & everlasting dominion to the Son of Man, the Messiah, and His people, who will never perish.

- (b) Spend time today giving several ways this vision encouraged the exiles in Daniel's time, and several ways it encourages the faithful of all times to persevere in their own times. Be specific with regard to how this should encourage you!

DATE: December 31, 2017

PASSAGE: Daniel 7:1-28

The Everlasting Kingdom