

Daniel 7:17-28

February 2, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

Even when times are difficult, God isn't surprised. He's on the throne and in control. We can have hope, knowing Jesus has already won and He's coming back.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

This week we are continuing Daniel 7, where Daniel had a mysterious and frightening vision. What do you remember about our discussion from last week?

At the beginning of today's passage, Daniel asked for interpretation from an angel of God. Why is it important that we turn to God when we don't understand something or don't know what to do next?

Last week we read about Daniel's prophetic vision of the four beasts, and this week we will read about the explanation that Daniel received when he questioned an angel standing nearby.



UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

🌿 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 7:17-18.

We wrapped up our reading last week when Daniel, deeply distressed by what he had seen (v.15), approached someone standing nearby (presumably an angel) to ask for an explanation. Verse 17 begins the discussion between Daniel and the angel. The angel confirmed what we discussed last week: the four beasts represent four kings.

What promise did the angel give in these verses?

How was this to be an encouragement for God's people in the face of approaching difficulty?

On the heels of his revelation that the four beasts represented four kings, the angel continued with a but: the people of God "will receive the kingdom and possess it forever" (v. 18).

Remember that during the book of Daniel, God's people were in exile, a divine punishment for turning their backs on the living God. But a theme we see throughout the book is hope. Circumstances were dire, but our sovereign God is always in charge and has a plan. We see the same theme mirrored here: Life may feel frightening and dreadful, but God is still on the throne. In Him, we always have hope.

🌿 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 7:19-22.

Revisit the description of the fourth beast and the horn starting in Daniel 7:7. How was the beast described in verse 7?

Daniel recapped this in 7:19-22 and added new detail. What new description did Daniel add?

Daniel was particularly disturbed by the fourth beast and the workings of the little horn, so after the angel gave him an overview of what his vision meant, he asked for further clarification. Here are the additional details Daniel recorded: the fourth beast had fierce claws of bronze (v.19), the little horn was prominent and waged war against the holy ones, prevailing over them until God rendered judgement (vv.21-22).

🌿 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 7:23-27.

How does the description of the beast align with worldly systems of power?

What does verse 26 mean when it says, "his dominion will be taken away"?



What did the angel describe in verse 27? How does this point us to the eternal kingdom of God?

The fourth beast, more terrible and destructive than the others, possibly represented the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was as strong as the iron teeth of the beast it is represented by, and incredibly vast. (You may remember that the Roman Empire thrived during Jesus's earthly ministry.)

Scholars don't agree on the meaning of the ten horns, though Scripture sometimes uses horns to symbolize rulers or royal authority, but the angel confirmed in verse 24 that they are ten kings.

The little horn, or other king, is the antichrist, and Daniel received a brief explanation of what his kingdom would be like (also described in Revelation 13–19). We learn later in Daniel 9 that the antichrist will at first seem to be a friend of God's people, then show his true colors and turn his back on them.

Note that the tide shifts in verse 26 and it says that the antichrist's dominion will be taken away and he will be "completely destroyed." He will never truly be in charge. God is sovereign and good. God can move kings and kingdoms, and His everlasting kingdom—which believers get to be a part of—is coming.

Let's be careful to hold all unfulfilled prophecy with an open hand. The message and main point we should glean from this isn't the ins and outs of the end times, it's hope: Jesus has already won.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 7:28.

How did Daniel respond to the vision from God?

What do you make of Daniel keeping the matter to himself?

What can we learn from this response?

Daniel knew this vision had come from God, believed it, and was terrified by what the Lord had shown him (his pale face an outward sign of his inward distress). He didn't tell anyone what he learned. Perhaps he didn't want to unleash the chaos that may ensue at this news, or maybe the Lord didn't mean for him to share it in that moment.



APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Prophecy can be intimidating to read, and we will keep doing it as we finish out the book of Daniel. How does studying prophecy give you more confidence in engaging with these parts of God's Word?

What is our role as a group in supporting one another as we seek to learn God's Word and to hold to God's truth in every season?

How does Daniel chapter 7 give you hope for the future?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for the hope He gives in the pages of Scripture. Praise Him for being sovereign over the things happening in the world and over us. Ask Him to strengthen your faith and give you understanding as we continue to read prophecy in the book of Daniel.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study of Daniel.

February 9, 2025 --- Daniel 8



COMMENTARY

Daniel 7:17-28

One of the heavenly attendants explained the significance of the vision to Daniel. The four beasts, like the statue seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2), represented four successive empires that would rule the earth. The ten horns of the fourth beast, which was of particular interest to Daniel, represented ten kings who would arise from the fourth empire. The little horn symbolized another ruler, who would supplant three of the ten. This little horn would oppose God and persecute His people for a specified period of time (perhaps three and a half years; compare "a time, times and half a time," 7:25). After this the Lord would destroy this ruler and establish His kingdom.

As in chapter 2, interpreters differ about the identification of the four kingdoms. On analogy with chapter 2, the lion probably represents Babylon. The bear is often associated with the Medo-Persian Empire, with the three ribs understood as symbols of its three major victims, Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt. The leopard may very well represent Greece, its four heads reflecting the fourfold division of Alexander's kingdom after his death (8:8, 21–22). The final beast may represent Rome, with its ten horns symbolizing a later manifestation of this empire prior to the coming of God's kingdom. In this case the little horn may be equated with the New Testament figure of the Antichrist. However, as with chapter 2, others identify the successive kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, with the little horn being associated with Antiochus Epiphanes (see Dan. 8; 11).

The identification of the "one like a son of man" has also occasioned much debate. Many see the title as messianic. Others understand the figure to represent humanity, God's chosen people, or angelic beings (with Michael sometimes being specified as the angel in view).

