

DANIEL 7

A VISION OF WORLD GOVERNMENTS

1. Icebreaker

Example: Have you ever heard or made a prediction that seemed too radical or ridiculous to believe? What was that prediction based on? How confident or fearful were you that it would come to pass?

2. Opening Prayer

Ask if someone wants to volunteer before leading the prayer

3. Tell the Story

Non-obligatory outline to help prepare for the "storying" of the scripture reviewed during LG

Daniel moves out of a chronological sequence to begin the description of his visions. These were the days when Daniel was retired from public service. Daniel in the Old Testament and John in the New Testament were given many great prophecies about the future. Both of them were close to 90 years old and "greatly beloved" by God (Daniel 9:23, John 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20).

v.2 The "sea" usually refers to the nations (Revelation 17:15).

v.3 The dream of Nebuchadnezzar was also about world governments, but Nebuchadnezzar's dream was from man's perspective. Daniel's dream was from the heavenly perspective (Revelation 13:1).

v.4 The man's heart given to the beast is probably symbolic of the conversion of King Nebuchadnezzar, the first world ruler.

v.5 The three ribs probably refer to the three kingdoms that comprised the Medo-Persian empire then it assimilated Babylon.

v.6 The Grecian empire built by Alexander the Great was divided into four parts, represented by the beast's four heads.

v.7 The Roman empire was awesome and powerful. The ten horns of this beast are the counterparts of the ten toes of the feet of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The last world government will be a partial revival of the ancient Roman empire (Matthew 24:29-34, Jeremiah 24, Hosea 9:10).

v.8 Three of the ten nations will give their power to the Antichrist. The Antichrist (also called "beast") will be able to sway men by his persuasive speech (Revelation 13:5-6).

v.9 The "Ancient of days" means "days without beginning." The Ancient of days is a title given to Jesus and to God. The context helps us determine which one is indicated (Revelation 1:14-16, 5:11, Micah 5:2, John 1:1, 5:27).

v.10 This isn't the Great White Throne Judgment; it's the judgment by Jesus of the people who have survived the Great Tribulation (Matthew 25:31-46, 24:29-30).

v.14 In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a stone that broke the image and then filled the earth. Daniel could see more clearly that the Son would destroy the world government and would be given an unending world dominion (Daniel 2:35, 44).

v.18 When we pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," we're praying for this kingdom (Colossians 3:4, Revelation 1:6, 5:10, Psalm 2:9, Isaiah 9:7).

v.19-20 We usually describe this person as Antichrist, though the Bible calls him the beast and the son of perdition. As Jesus is the Son of God and does the will of the Father, the Antichrist will be like the son of Satan. He'll seem to have the answers for the world's problems, and he'll do miracles that

will convince people to trust him (Revelations 13:2-8, 17:8). The "saints" in these verses are the Jews who have turned their hearts to God in the troubled times for Israel.

4. Read the Story (Daniel 7)

Read out loud as a group, 4-5 verses per person, let everyone know they can opt out if they want to

5. Breaking it Down

Questions to be used (as appropriate based upon meeting dynamics) to facilitate discussion and understanding

5.1 What four world empires do the four beasts likely represent? (1---8)

- Lion: the Babylonian empire
- Bear: the Medo---Persian empire
- Leopard: the Grecian empire
- Dreadful, terrible, exceedingly strong beast: the Roman empire

5.2 In the second vision, what two scenes appear before Daniel? (9---14)

- Judgment by the Ancient of Days
- The coronation of the Son of Man

5.3 What takes place between the two scenes? (11---12)

- The fourth beast with the pompous horn is slain
- The other beasts have their dominion taken away, but live for awhile

5.4 What is Daniel told is the meaning of the two visions? (15---18)

- The four beasts represent four kings (kingdoms, cf. Dan 7:23)
- The saints of the Most High will receive and possess the kingdom forever

5.5 What is Daniel told when he inquires about the fourth beast? (19---27)

- The fourth beast represents a kingdom that will devour the earth
- The ten horns represent ten kings, but the pompous horn will subdue three of them
- The pompous horn will make war with the saints, but will succeed only for a short time
- The pompous horn and its kingdom will lose its dominion and be destroyed
- The kingdom and its dominion will be given to saints of the Most High, whose kingdom will be everlasting and all dominions will serve Him

6. Application

Sample questions (as appropriate) to tie to life application

- 1) What does this passage teach us about God?
- 2) What does this passage teach us about mankind?
- 3) What is a command to obey in this passage? What has God revealed in your life that needs changing? What truth can be applied to your life about the gospel?

Personal Reflection/Application:

1. Daniel is troubled and anxious after having this vision and hearing its interpretation. Are you surprised with his reaction based on what you know from previous chapters? What does this say about human nature when it comes to things we do not understand?
2. What characteristics of God do we see in verses 9-12? How does this influence the way you view or interact with God? Do you think this is compatible with a merciful view of God?
3. Verses 13-14 describe the coming of the Son of Man. Do we look forward to the future coming of this Son of Man? How does your life reflect that? What are some practical ways that can help us “long for his appearing” as mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:8?
4. After considering how God’s way of operating is different from our way of operating (God’s economy vs. man’s economy), how does this affect the way you live in the face of persecution and trials? What decisions have you made recently (like taking a stand for Christ) that have brought persecution or “exile” in the culture that you live?
5. We know how the story ends: with the coming of the Son of Man. How does this provide peace or confidence when facing the world’s kingdoms (politics, a more post Christian culture/set of beliefs)?

7. Prayer Requests

Have a designated person to capture and share (as appropriate) within the LifeGroup. What happens in LifeGroup, Stays in LifeGroup

8. Closing & Prayer

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1. Icebreaker

2. Opening Prayer

Consider volunteering for prayer.

3. Tell the Story

Consider volunteering to Read the Story at your next meeting.

4. Read the Story (Daniel 7)

Read out loud as a group, 4-5 verses per person, let everyone know they can opt out if they want to

5. Breaking it Down

Review the scripture through question, discussion.

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5.2 In the second vision, what two scenes appear before Daniel? (9---14)

5.3 What takes place between the two scenes? (11---12)

5.4 What is Daniel told is the meaning of the two visions? (15---18)

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8. Closing & Prayer

Don't forget – when are you meeting next? Who is facilitating? Who is Telling the Story?