

Spiritual Growth Questions for May 7, 2023

Opener: Why is seeing the bigger picture helpful?

- I. **Read Daniel 7.** Reflect on your first impressions of Daniel's vision in chapter 7. How familiar are you with the apocalyptic literary style? What struck you the most? What new insights did you gain? Describe how Daniel 7 can be viewed as the heart of the entire book. What is the overall significance? Why do you think Daniel's readers would be comforted by the message "God is in control." What verse stands out to you as you read Daniel 7?
- II. **Read Daniel 7:1-14.** What do each of the beasts suggest about the strengths of their respective kingdoms? What weaknesses do these images suggest? How is God shown to be sovereign even over the beasts (i.e., kings and their kingdoms) in verses 4-8? How is God shown to be sovereign even over the beasts (i.e., kings and their kingdoms) in verses 9-14? Summarize the importance of Daniel 7:9-14 to theology (of God), Christology (of Christ), and eschatology (doctrine of the end times)?
- III. **Read Daniel 7:15-22. In verses 16-18,** what initial interpretation of the visions does Daniel receive and from whom? In verses 19-20 how does Daniel further desire for understanding? What is he concerned about? What additional details from the vision are unfolded in **verses 21-22**? Ultimately, what would happen to the fourth beast? Who ends up ruling?
- IV. **Read Daniel 7:23-26.** Summarize the explanation for these things as given in verses 23-26. In light of the ongoing evil so vividly envisioned in Daniel 7, what is your own understanding of the wickedness of this world? Are you truly realistic about it? Or are you naïve in regard to its horror, strength, and durability? How would you evaluate yourselves in this regard? What helps you to see the bigger picture?

Deeper Study: Notice that the one whom Daniel observes in 7:13 is seen "coming with the clouds of heaven." Tell how this might be connected with the cloud-filled scenes mentioned in these passages: Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Acts 1:9-11. Notice in Mark 14:62 how Jesus quoted from Daniel 7:13-14 in his answer to the chief priest, who asked if He was the Christ, the Son of God. How does Jesus' answer clarify and expand the meaning of this passage in Daniel? **Lord, Show me the bigger picture!**

Living for God in a Broken World: A Study of Daniel Show Me the Bigger Picture May 7, 2023, Pastor John Lloyd

How do we live for God in ungodly times-like our own. Is it worth standing firm and obeying God when His kingdom seems so far away? How can we live courageously and confidently in nations that do not seek to live under God's rule? How is it possible to be a blessing to our nations and show the power and goodness of our God, even in a time such as ours? This is the context that Daniel found himself in. This story will exalt God as king and His kingdom in ways that will ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus. Daniel 7 is considered the very heart of the book. Daniel has a dream/vision that he needs help to understand. His vision will explain what will happen after the Babylonian captivity and beyond. It has both bad and good news in it. God was showing Daniel the bigger picture so that he, the exiled Israelites and us can navigate through the struggles on this earth. "Show me the bigger picture."

Big Idea: Our world is in a constant state of intense conflict and violence.
Dear Lord, please show me the bigger picture!

"The book of Daniel shifts into an entirely different mode with this chapter, as we enter a visionary world in which the primary phenomena are symbols rather than people and events such as we encounter in daily life."Lifechange

Daniel 1 I _____ you. **Ch.2** I will _____ you. **Ch. 3** I am right _____
Ch.4 I will _____ the humble. **Ch.5** I will _____ the proud.
ch. 6 What do you expect of me? _____ me. Bryan Chappell

The vision (7:1–14) and the interpretation (7:15–28).

- I. Our _____ world reveals our _____ to see the bigger picture.

Daniel 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. 2 Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. 4 The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.

Great sea represents chaos- Isaiah 57:20
Monsters clearly intended to represent symbolically great nations. NT Wright

Daniel 7: 5 And behold, another beast, a second one, like a *bear*. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' 6 After this I looked, and behold, another, like a *leopard*, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, *terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong*. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. (Read 7:17-18)

**The Bible reminds us of the horrors of human evil.
Dear Lord, show us the bigger picture.**

II. See the bigger picture: the hold of _____ is _____!

Daniel 7:9 "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. 10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. 11 "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

Daniel 7:13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Son of Man- 81 times in the Gospels.
(Romans 3:10-20 no one will escape God's judgment)

God will defeat seemingly unconquerable powers that oppress his people.

**God is good! God will bring justice! God is greater than evil!
Keep reminding me of and showing me the bigger picture.**

III. Here's the bigger picture: God _____ and triumphs over _____!

Daniel 7:15 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. 16 I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. (See Daniel 7:19-21)

Christians sometimes serve in hard places where the church will not thrive, where the community will oppose, where our families will question, where we will feel alone, and where we will wonder if there is any obligation because our lives seem to make no difference. For such times and places, Daniel is a great grace. He is God's provision of hope—the message that individual lives can make a difference in difficult places. Bryan Chappell (See Daniel 7:22-23)

7:24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones and shall put down three kings. 25 He shall speak words against the Most High and shall *wear out the saints of the Most High*, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel 7:26 But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. 27 And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.' 28 "Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart."

In a word, though human evil thrives in the present, God is in control and will have the final victory. Remain faithful in spite of appearances. God will win this cosmic battle. This is good news for all those who follow God, especially those who feel the cruel hand of their evil oppressors. Tremper Longman

I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world. Jn 16:33

Philippians 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Thank you for the victory you have given through Jesus Christ!
Dear Lord, please show me the bigger picture!**