

GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

Visions of Power

Daniel 7

“[T]here before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven....He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all....nations....worshiped him. His dominion is....everlasting...” Dan. 7:13-14

Day 1: Read Daniel 7:1–28.

1. The events of chapter 6 took place during the reign of Darius the Mede. In chapter 7, we step back in time. When does this vision take place? (vs. 1; cf. 5:30–31)
2. List the four beasts Daniel sees, along with some of their features. (vss. 4–7)
3. What do these beasts stand for? (vs. 17)
4. Look back at Daniel’s interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in 2:31–45. What similarities do you see between these dreams? How is this dream different?
5. How does Daniel react to this vision and its interpretation? (vss. 15, 28) Why do you think he responds this way?

Day 2: Read Daniel 7:2–28.

6. What clues in verses 4–6 tell us that there is a power that is greater than these three beasts?
7. In what ways are the fourth beast—and Daniel’s descriptions of it—“different from all the former beasts” (vs. 7)?
8. In the Ancient Near East, horns often indicated power or pride. What do the horns of the fourth beast tell us about it?
9. According to the famous saying, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Where does human corruption in fact come from? (Jer. 17:9; Mt. 15:19) Are we immune? (Rom. 3:10–18) What is the cure? (Col. 1:21–22)

Day 3: Read Daniel 7:7–28.

10. What does the little horn represent? (vs. 24) What does it do? (vss. 8, 11, 20–21, 25) What will be its fate? (vs. 26) What does all this teach us about evil?
11. In what role is God the Ancient of Days chiefly depicted here? (vss. 9–10, 22, 26; cf. Rev. 20:11–12)
12. Upon whom is judgment passed? (vss. 11–12, 21–22, 26)
13. Imagine you are a Christian living in China or North Korea or Sudan or Saudi Arabia. How might your experience affect your reading of Daniel 7? How does this chapter speak to you in your own situation?

Day 4: Read Daniel 7:13–14.

14. Describe this last figure Daniel sees. How is this figure different from the beasts?
15. Who is usually shown riding on the clouds in the Old Testament? (Ps. 68:4; Is. 19:1; cf. Lev. 16:2)
16. Who assumes the title “Son of Man” in the New Testament? (e.g., Mk. 14:62; cf. Rev. 1:7, 12–18)

Day 5: Read Daniel 7:1–28.

17. How is the kingdom of the Son of Man different from those of the beasts? (vs. 14b)
18. How are the values of this King different from those of arrogant, God-hating human tyrants? What route to power does he choose? (Mk. 10:45; Phil. 2:5–11; cf. Lk. 23:33, 36–38)
19. Daniel 7 shows us the majesty and cosmic sovereignty of God, the Ancient of Days, who “changes times and seasons” and “sets up kings and deposes them” (2:21). Look at Mt. 10:29–31. What does Jesus, the Son of Man and “the radiance of God’s glory” (Heb. 1:2), tell us about this same God?

20. Read about God's final, righteous judgment of evil and the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth in Rev. 19:11–21; 21:1–7, 22–27. Praise God for his righteousness and glorious sovereignty.