

## The Book of Daniel

### Week 7

Chapter 7 is a key transitional and very pivotal chapter in the book of Daniel. It begins the “visions” or “apocalyptic” section of the book (ch 7-12). Often times this form of literature can be very hard to understand. This is often do to the fact that the events are being described through the use of symbols, ciphers, codes and usually by means of angelic mediation. Eugene Peterson wrote this as he was speaking to the reality of something being a mystery “Mystery is not the absence of meaning, but the presence of more meaning than we can comprehend.”

#### 1. Understanding Visionary Literature

- a. Given to interpretation of current events and prediction of future events.
- b. Uses symbols, ciphers and codes to describe events, places and characters.
- c. Apocalyptic literature us “crisis” literature typically conveying specific messages to particular groups of people caught up in a dire situation.

#### 2. Basic Questions to ask of this literature

- a. Who is being addressed and by whom?
- b. When is this happening and in what setting is it happening?
- c. For what reason and how does it connect with the rest of the message of scripture?

This literature announces an end to the way things are and opens up alternative possibilities to the audience as a result of God’s impending intervention in human affairs.

#### 3. Usually the Message Revolves around

- a. Message of encouragement to the oppressed
- b. Warning against those who are doing the oppressing
- c. Call to faith for those wavering between God’s truth/promises and human/worldly wisdom

#### 4. When reading “visions” & “apocalyptic” literature Be Ready...

- a. For a reversal of the ordinary
- b. To use your imagination to picture a world that transcends earthly reality.
- c. For a series of diverse, self-contained units that tend to be kaleidoscopic in nature instead of looking for a smooth flow of narrative.
- d. To identify the historical event or theological reality and salvation history represented by the symbolism in the passage; to do so, observe the obvious, grasp the totally seen, and do not press every detail of the vision for hidden meaning.
- e. To do extra research and reading to uncover the truths of the writing
- f. To recognize the element of mystery and the supernatural quality of the Bible and be willing to humbly admit that exact understanding of a given vision may be beyond us.

#### 5. Four major interpretive approaches to vision & apocalyptic literature

- a. Preterist – Views all events described in the vision as PAST
- b. Futurist - Views all events described in the vision as FUTURE
- c. Historicist – visions trace the ideological or theological development of an age or an era
- d. Idealist – symbolic representation of the timeless conflict between good and evil

