

Staying Power: The Great Illusion

Daniel 7

Small Group Discussion

Intro question (try to give everyone a chance to answer):

- Share about a challenge you faced in the past. What kept you “anchored” during that challenge?
- What does it mean to stay “anchored” in the storms of life?

READ Daniel 7:1-8, then discuss the following.

- In v. 1, we learn when Daniel experienced this vision. What about this time affects how Daniel perceives the vision?
- What do you know about King Belshazzar? (Review Daniel 5 if necessary).
- What might Daniel have been feeling at the start of Belshazzar’s reign?
- What do you know about apocalyptic literature in the Bible?
 - How does the interpretation of apocalyptic differ from the interpretation of narrative or prophecy?
 - What are some important principles for interpreting apocalyptic literature?
- Symbolism is a key element of apocalyptic literature. Try to decipher the symbolism of the following images in the passage:
 - The four winds of heaven
 - The churning of the Great Sea
 - Great Beasts

READ Daniel 7:15-25, then discuss the following (we will come back to vv. 9-14 shortly).

- In this section, an angel gives Daniel an explanation of his vision. What do we learn about the beasts?
- What do you know about meaning of the 11th horn on the 4th beast?
 - Pastor Josh said this on Sunday: *This fourth empire, the Seleucids, in Daniel’s vision, is represented by the most fearsome and violent of the four beasts. We’re fairly certain that the little horn, which was especially arrogant and violent, represents the Seleucid king Antiochus IV. He was the author of the greatest persecution in the life of Jewish people during this whole 600-year span. He desecrated the temple, and tortured and murdered many Jews.*
- Why would God give Daniel this preview of difficulties to come in the future?
- Why do you think Daniel is disturbed by what he sees (v. 15)?
- What commonalities are there between Daniel’s world in 550 BC, the vision he saw of the next 600 years, and our world today?

READ Daniel 7:9-14 and 26-28, then discuss the following.

- Why does Daniel see (plural) thrones?
- Who is the “Ancient of Days?” What is the significance of this name?
 - What aspects of the description of this figure strike you? What is their significance?
 - Relative to the people in attendance for the worship of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue in ch. 3, what is the significance of the numbers in this scene?
- What was the meaning of the idiom, “son of man,” in Daniel’s day? See the NIV footnote on v. 13? What did it mean in its original context here?
 - What is significant about the treatment of this “son of man” figure in the vision?
 - How might this aspect of the vision have contributed to Jewish expectation of God’s future actions on their behalf?
- If you were Daniel or his friends, living in Babylon, or Jewish people suffering under the persecution of Antiochus in the 2nd Century BC, how might this prophecy have been comforting to you?
 - Does it have the same benefit for you today? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Jesus chose the title “Son of Man” as his favorite title for himself?
- Using either a concordance or the “search” feature on your Bible app, look up Jesus’ use of the term, “Son of Man,” in the four Gospels. Try to identify at least three different types of contexts in which Jesus used the term.
 - Jesus’ most frequent use of the term was in contexts such as the following:
 - “He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected ... and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.” (Mark 8:31)
 - “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10.45)
 - What is the relationship between Jesus’ use of the title in this way, and Daniel’s vision/prophecy in Daniel 7?
 - In light of Jesus’ first coming, what can we say about Jesus’ second coming, based on Daniel 7?
- Drawing all of these observations together, what do they say about how we anchor our hope in the turmoil of this world?
 - Have you ever had to “cut your anchor line,” using Pastor Josh’s metaphor, and re-position your hope? What was that experience like for you?
- What does this passage show us about *staying power*?

Share and pray

- The writer of Hebrews says, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”
- Invite people to share about current challenges. Pray for the hope of Christ to be the anchor for their souls.