DISCOVERING DANIEL

7
LESSON

WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 7

The Beginning *of Visions*

DANIEL 7

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

PREPARED FOR ED & PAUL SMITH · BIBLE STUDY

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 7 verse by verse.

1 When did Daniel's dream occur, and what did he first see (Daniel 7:1-2)?

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Daniel 7:1 NASB95

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.

Daniel 7:2-3 NASB95

Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another."

IN MY WORDS

It came in the first year of Belshazzar, and he first saw the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea with four great beasts coming up out of it, each one different from the others.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 57:20** "But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud."—the sea as a picture of restless humanity.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the date matters: this vision came years before the writing on the wall in Daniel 5, while Babylon still looked permanent. God showed Daniel the end of the empire while it was still at its height.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out that the winds of heaven stir the sea—the nations rage, but the agitation itself comes from above. Even the chaos is under orders.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 cover the same four kingdoms, but a king saw a statue of gold and silver while a prophet saw predators rising out of a churning sea. Empires look like treasure from a throne room and like beasts from heaven's vantage point. The difference is not the facts; it is the altitude.

KEY QUESTION

Whose view of the world am I actually living by—the throne room's or heaven's?

2 Daniel saw four beasts. Give a brief description of each one:

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Daniel 7:4 NASB95

The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it.

Daniel 7:7 NASB95

After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

a. First beast (verse 4)

IN MY WORDS

A lion with eagle's wings whose wings were plucked, and which was lifted up to stand like a man and given a human mind—Babylon, and the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:16** "Let his mind be changed from that of a man"—and then restored; the beast that was given a human mind back.

b. Second beast (verse 5)

IN MY WORDS

A bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth, told to arise and devour much meat—Medo-Persia, with Persia the stronger side.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:20** "The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia."

c. Third beast (verse 6)

IN MY WORDS

A leopard with four bird's wings on its back and four heads, to which dominion was given—Greece, moving with terrifying speed and dividing four ways after Alexander.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:8** The goat's large horn was broken, "and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven."

d. Fourth beast (verse 7)

IN MY WORDS

A beast dreadful, terrifying, and extremely strong with large iron teeth, devouring and crushing and trampling, different from all the others, and having ten horns.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 13:1** "A beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that the first three are compared to known animals but the fourth has no animal to compare it to—Daniel can only say it was different, which is itself part of the terror.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the beasts are not merely political. Each carries the character of the empire it represents, and the last one has no natural category because it is the one still to come.

CRITICAL THINKING

Read the sequence and something is decreasing: gold to iron in Daniel 2, and here a lion given a man's heart down to a nameless thing with iron teeth. History does not climb toward civility; on this chart it descends toward appetite. Progress is a story the empires tell about themselves.

KEY QUESTION

Do I believe the world is getting better on its own—and what has that belief cost me in watchfulness?

3 How many horns did the fourth beast have, and what does the little horn that rises among them do (verses 8-9)?

P. 130

Daniel 7:8 NASB95

While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

IN MY WORDS

It had ten horns, and a little horn came up among them, uprooted three of the first horns, and had the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great boasts.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Thessalonians 2:4** "Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god… displaying himself as being God."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati identifies the little horn as the Antichrist, rising out of the fourth kingdom's ten-king confederation and taking power over three of them before the rest submit.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the horn begins little. He does not seize the world in a day; he arrives as a minor figure among larger ones, which is exactly why he is not resisted in time.

CRITICAL THINKING

The two features Daniel is given are eyes and a mouth—intelligence and speech. Not armies, not weapons. The most dangerous man in history is introduced by his perception and his rhetoric, because that is how he will actually take the world: he will out-talk it before he ever out-fights it.

KEY QUESTION

How carefully do I test what I am told by people who are persuasive?

4 Who does Daniel see in verse 9, and what do we see in the surrounding scene, according to verse 10?

P. 131

Daniel 7:9 NASB95

I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire.

Daniel 7:10 NASB95

A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

IN MY WORDS

He sees the Ancient of Days take His seat—clothing white as snow, hair like pure wool, a throne of flame with burning wheels—while a river of fire flows out before Him, countless thousands attend Him, the court is seated, and the books are opened.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 20:12** "And I saw the dead… standing before the throne, and books were opened."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the shift in setting is the whole point of the chapter: the beasts rise from a churning sea, but the throne is already set and never moves. Earth is in motion; heaven is seated.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the wheels on the throne—God's throne is not fixed to one location. He brings His judgment seat wherever it needs to be.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel says "thrones" were set up, plural, before the Ancient of Days takes His. There are seats around that throne, and Scripture later tells us who fills them—the saints who will judge. The scene that terrifies the beasts includes chairs for the people they were trampling.

KEY QUESTION

Do I live as though the outcome of history has already been seated?

5 What happens to the horn (or beast) in verse 11, and to the fellow beasts in verse 12?

P. 133

Daniel 7:11 NASB95

Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

Daniel 7:12 NASB95

As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

IN MY WORDS

The beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the burning fire, while the other beasts lost their dominion but were granted an extension of life for an appointed period.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 19:20** "These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that the earlier empires did not vanish when they fell—Babylon's culture outlived Babylon's crown, and Persia and Greece kept shaping the world long after losing power. The fourth beast gets no such extension.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the finality here: the Antichrist's end is not defeat in battle but execution by verdict. The court sits first, and then the sentence is carried out.

CRITICAL THINKING

The trigger for the sentence is the sound of his boasting. Daniel keeps looking "because of the sound of the boastful words"—the mouth that talked him into power is the same mouth that finally draws heaven's attention. Every word was being recorded the whole time.

KEY QUESTION

If my words were the evidence read aloud in that court, what would they establish?

6 Briefly, what do we read about the Son of Man in verses 13-14?

P. 134

Daniel 7:13-14 NASB95

I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

IN MY WORDS

One like a Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven, is presented before the Ancient of Days, and is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom that every people and language will serve—an everlasting dominion that will never pass away or be destroyed.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 26:64** Jesus to the high priest: "you will see THE SON OF MAN… COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN"—He was quoting this verse about Himself.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that "Son of Man" became Jesus' favorite title for Himself, and this is where it comes from. He was not claiming humility with that phrase; He was claiming Daniel 7.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that the kingdom is given to Him, not seized—the contrast with the beasts, who take everything by force, could not be sharper.

CRITICAL THINKING

The high priest tore his robe at Jesus' answer because he knew this passage. A merely human messiah coming with clouds and receiving the worship of all nations is unthinkable in Jewish monotheism—which means Daniel 7:13-14 forces the question of who this Son of Man actually is. Caiaphas understood the claim perfectly. He just refused it.

KEY QUESTION

Do I hold Jesus in the full weight of this passage, or in a smaller version I find easier to manage?

7 How did Daniel respond to the visions he saw (verse 15)?

P. 136

Daniel 7:15 NASB95

As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.

IN MY WORDS

His spirit was distressed within him and the visions kept alarming him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Habakkuk 3:16** "I heard and my inward parts trembled… Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Daniel was a man who had faced a lions' den without recorded fear, and this vision shook him. What frightened Daniel was not danger to himself but what he saw coming on the world.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that the prophets were never entertained by prophecy. Seeing the future accurately is a burden, not a hobby.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had just been shown the throne, the court, the Son of Man, and an everlasting kingdom—and he was still alarmed. Knowing how the story ends does not automatically make the middle of it comfortable. Assurance about the outcome and grief over the cost can, and should, live in the same heart.

KEY QUESTION

Does the state of the world still move me, or have I gotten used to it?

8 What interpretation was Daniel given about the four beasts and the kingdom that follows them (verses 17-18)?

P. 137

Daniel 7:17-18 NASB95

These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.

IN MY WORDS

The four beasts are four kings who will arise from the earth, but the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess it forever, for all ages to come.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 5:10** "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the deliberate contrast in the verbs: the beasts arise from the earth, but the saints receive the kingdom. One is grasped from below; the other is granted from above.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the repetition—receive, possess, forever, for all ages to come. The Holy Spirit piles up the words because the point is permanence, and permanence is the one thing no empire in the vision has.

CRITICAL THINKING

Four kingdoms get one sentence; the saints get the rest of eternity. The proportion in the interpretation is the correction to the proportion in our news feed. What dominates the vision by volume is not what dominates it by outcome.

KEY QUESTION

What is taking up the most room in my thinking, and how long will it actually last?

9 What will the fourth beast do, according to the last part of verse 20 and verses 23-25?

P. 138

Daniel 7:23-24 NASB95

Thus he said: "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings."

Daniel 7:25 NASB95

He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

IN MY WORDS

It will devour, tread down, and crush the whole earth; ten kings will arise from it and another after them who subdues three; and he will speak against the Most High, wear down the saints, intend to change times and law, and have them handed to him for a time, times, and half a time.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 13:5-7** "There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words… for forty-two months… It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati reads "a time, times, and half a time" as three and a half years—the second half of the seven-year tribulation, matching the forty-two months of Revelation 13.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur draws attention to the phrase "wear down." It is not a single massacre but a grinding, patient attrition designed to exhaust the faith out of God's people.

CRITICAL THINKING

Twice the passage says his power is given—"they will be given into his hand." The most terrifying figure in prophecy operates on a leash and a stopwatch, both held by God. His authority is real, it is granted, and it comes with an expiration date written into the text.

KEY QUESTION

Which of my fears would shrink if I actually believed they were on a leash?

10 What will happen after the court is seated (verses 26-27)?

P. 139

Daniel 7:26-27 NASB95

But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

IN MY WORDS

His dominion will be taken away and annihilated and destroyed forever, and the sovereignty and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One, whose kingdom is everlasting and whom all dominions will serve and obey.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 11:15** "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the three verbs stacked on his dominion—taken away, annihilated, destroyed forever. Scripture is not usually this emphatic; it is making certain no one expects a comeback.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that the same kingdoms the beasts fought over are simply handed to the saints. What the world spent all of history seizing is given away in a sentence.

CRITICAL THINKING

The little horn's career ends in a courtroom, not a battlefield. There is no final war between equals in this chapter—only a bench, a verdict, and a transfer of title. Evil does not get a heroic last stand; it gets a hearing it cannot survive.

KEY QUESTION

Am I waiting for God to win, or living as though the verdict is already recorded?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 As you look at the description of the first three beasts in Daniel 7:4-6, what clues do you see that would help to explain why Daniel was troubled? P. 128

Daniel 7:5-6 NASB95

And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, "Arise, devour much meat!" After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

IN MY WORDS

They are all predators, not men—ribs in the bear's teeth, a command to devour much meat, wings for speed and multiple heads for reach—so what Daniel is watching is not government but appetite, and it is coming for his people.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 5:8** "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that Daniel knew these were the kingdoms his people would live under. This was not abstract prophecy to him; it was the forecast for his grandchildren.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out the passive verbs—the lion "was lifted up," a mind "was given," dominion "was given." Even at their most savage, the beasts only receive what heaven permits.

CRITICAL THINKING

The bear is raised higher on one side and the leopard has four heads—these creatures are lopsided and self-divided, unstable by design. Predatory power is never at rest even with itself, which is why every empire in the vision eventually eats its own. Daniel is watching the anatomy of that instability.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I feeding an appetite that will eventually turn and consume something I love?

2 The fourth beast is described in verses 7-8. What clues do you see here that would explain why this beast was especially disturbing to Daniel? P. 130

Daniel 7:7 NASB95

After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

IN MY WORDS

It has no animal name at all, it is dreadful and terrifying with iron teeth, it does not merely devour but tramples what is left over, and it is different from everything before it—so Daniel has no category to put it in.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:40** "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron… it will crush and break all these in pieces."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the trampling is the detail that distinguishes it. The others conquered to rule; this one destroys what it cannot use.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that Daniel has to describe it by negation—not like a lion, not like a bear, not like a leopard, only "different." The vocabulary of the created order runs out.

CRITICAL THINKING

Trampling the remainder is not a military strategy; it is malice with no profit in it. The first three beasts wanted something. This one destroys past the point of any gain—which is the mark of an evil that is no longer merely human ambition.

KEY QUESTION

Have I ever kept hurting something after I had already gotten what I wanted from it?

3 In what ways do you see Daniel's awe and reverence made evident as he describes the Ancient of Days in verses 9-10?

P. 131

Daniel 7:9-10 NASB95

I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

IN MY WORDS

His language shifts into poetry and he reaches for comparisons—"like white snow," "like pure wool"—describing what God is like rather than what God is, and he counts the attendants only in uncountable numbers because exactness fails him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Exodus 33:20** "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Daniel never says he saw God's face. Everything described is clothing, hair, throne, and fire—the reverent periphery of a glory he does not attempt to render directly.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes the title itself is reverence: "Ancient of Days," the One who was there before the beasts, before Babylon, before time had anything to count.

CRITICAL THINKING

Every image Daniel selects is white or burning—purity and consuming fire held together in one figure. He does not choose between a holy God and a fearsome one, because the vision does not offer that choice. The whiteness and the flames are the same attribute seen from two sides.

KEY QUESTION

Which half of God's holiness do I quietly prefer to leave out of my picture of Him?

4 **Reading verses 9-10 again, what aspects of this description convey that the Ancient of Days is powerful and authoritative?** P. 132

Daniel 7:10 NASB95

A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

IN MY WORDS

He is seated while everyone else stands, thrones are set up at His direction, fire pours out from His presence, uncountable multitudes serve Him, and the court does not convene until He takes His seat—then the books are opened.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 47:8** "God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that the books being opened means the record is complete and permanent. Nothing has been forgotten and nothing needs to be investigated—the court reads, it does not discover.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that the fire proceeds from before Him. God does not summon judgment from somewhere; it comes out of who He is.

CRITICAL THINKING

The single most authoritative detail is that He sits down. Standing is the posture of servants and of anyone whose position is not yet secure. In a chapter full of beasts scrambling up out of a churning sea, the One who settles into a chair is making the strongest claim in the room.

KEY QUESTION

What am I still standing anxiously over that God has already sat down about?

5 **Both Daniel 7:11 and Revelation 19:20 describe the judgment and punishment of the Antichrist. How do you think the tone or nature of Daniel's vision would have changed at this key point, with the transition from evil worldly powers to a righteous heavenly power? Yet even with this revelation, why do you think Daniel felt so shaken after the dream was over?** P. 133

Daniel 7:11 NASB95

Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

Daniel 7:28 NASB95

At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.

IN MY WORDS

The tone turns from churning dread to settled order—the noise of boasting is finally answered by a verdict—yet Daniel was still shaken because he had seen how much his people would suffer first, and how long the wearing down would last before the court ever sat.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 6:10** "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood?"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the relief in the passage is real but not immediate—the beast is slain, but only after Daniel has watched him wear down the saints for three and a half years.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Daniel understood the vision concerned his own people, and knowing that the end is good does not remove the weight of knowing what precedes it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel says he "kept the matter to myself"—and he will do it again in chapter 8, where he is told to keep the vision secret and is left astounded with no one to explain it. Some truths are given first to be carried before they are given to be told. That silence is not failure of nerve; it is the weight of a burden being properly borne.

KEY QUESTION

Is there something God has shown me that I need to carry a while longer before I speak it?

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6 **In Daniel 7:13-14, we see the Son of Man enter the presence of the Ancient of Days. In what other Bible passage do we see these two meet (see pages 140-141 in Discovering Daniel)? What similarities do you see about the Son of Man in both passages?** P. 140

Revelation 5:6-7 NASB95

And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain… And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Revelation 5:12-13 NASB95

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing… To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.

IN MY WORDS

We see it again in Revelation 5, where the Lamb approaches the One seated on the throne and takes the scroll from His right hand—the same scene of One approaching the Ancient of Days and receiving authority, dominion, and the worship of every nation and language forever.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 1:13-14** John saw "one like a son of man… His head and His hair were white like white wool"—the description Daniel gave the Ancient of Days now given to the Son of Man.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that in both scenes the Son of Man does not take the kingdom by conquest; He is presented, and it is given—the only legitimate transfer of dominion in all of prophecy.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that in Revelation the same worship offered to the One on the throne is offered to the Lamb without qualification. Two Persons, one glory—the doctrine of the Trinity standing in plain sight.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel saw the Son of Man coming with the clouds in power; John saw Him standing as a Lamb that had been slain. Between the two scenes lies the cross—which is why He is worthy to receive the kingdom in the first place. Daniel got the coronation; John got the reason for it.

KEY QUESTION

Do I love Christ for the throne He will take, or for the wounds He already carries?

7 For what two reasons is it foolish for unbelievers to assume they will have enough time to get right with God before they die (see page 149 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 149

James 4:14 NASB95

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 NASB95

For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

IN MY WORDS

First, no one is guaranteed tomorrow—life is a vapor and death gives no notice; and second, Christ could return at any moment, and when He does the opportunity closes with no warning at all.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Corinthians 6:2** “Behold, now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold, now is ‘the day of salvation.’”

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that the rapture requires no preceding sign. A person planning to repent “later” is betting on a schedule that Scripture explicitly refuses to give.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur adds a further danger: repeated refusal hardens the heart, so the man who postpones may still be alive when he has lost the will to come at all.

CRITICAL THINKING

Both reasons share one flaw—they assume the deciding is ours to schedule. But delay is not a neutral holding pattern; it is itself a decision, renewed daily, and each renewal makes the next one easier. The tragedy is not usually that someone runs out of time; it is that they run out of wanting to.

KEY QUESTION

Is there anything with God I have been putting off as though I controlled the calendar?

8 As you read Daniel 7:26-27, in what ways do you see the Lord’s sovereignty clearly stated?

P. 139

Daniel 7:26-27 NASB95

But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

IN MY WORDS

God’s court convenes on His schedule, He removes the Antichrist’s dominion entirely, He hands the greatness of every kingdom under heaven to His people, and every remaining dominion serves and obeys Him—nothing in the sentence depends on anyone’s permission but His.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 46:9-10** “I am God, and there is no one like Me… My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.”

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the phrase “all the kingdoms under the whole heaven.” Not most, not the surviving ones—the whole inventory changes hands at once.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that the last word of the vision is “obey.” Sovereignty is not only that God rules but that rebellion finally ends.

CRITICAL THINKING

Read it in sequence: the court sits, and only then is dominion taken away. God's sovereignty in this passage is judicial rather than merely forceful—He does not simply overpower the beast, He convicts him. That distinction is why the outcome is not just victory but justice.

KEY QUESTION

Do I want God to be strong enough to fix things, or holy enough to judge them—including in me?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 **What do the following passages tell us about the nature and extent of God's sovereignty?** P. 142

a. **Job 42:2**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> God can do all things and no purpose of His can be thwarted—there is no plan of His that anything can block.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 42:2 NASB95** "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted."

b. **Psalm 115:3**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> God is in the heavens and does whatever He pleases—His will is not subject to review.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 115:3 NASB95** "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases."

c. **Proverbs 21:1**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> Even a king's heart is a channel of water in the Lord's hand, turned wherever He wishes—the rulers in Daniel's vision included.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 21:1 NASB95** "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes."

d. **Isaiah 46:9-10**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> God alone declares the end from the beginning and says His purpose will be established and He will accomplish all His good pleasure.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 46:10 NASB95** "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Isaiah 46 offers the ability to declare the end from the beginning as the proof of deity—which is exactly what Daniel 7 is doing to four empires in advance.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that Proverbs 21:1 answers the fourth beast before it ever rises. The heart of the most powerful man on earth is water in God's hand.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice that these verses do not say God will permit only good outcomes. They say His purpose cannot be thwarted—which includes the three and a half years He hands to the little horn. Sovereignty is not the promise that nothing terrible will happen; it is the promise that nothing terrible will happen outside His purpose.

KEY QUESTION

Am I trusting God's sovereignty, or only trusting that He will do what I want?

2 In what ways are you encouraged by the above passages?

P. 143

Romans 8:28 NASB95

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

IN MY WORDS

They tell me nothing in my life has escaped His attention or slipped outside His plan, so I do not have to hold the outcome of anything—including the things I have no power over at all.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 46:10** "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that Daniel could sleep in a den and live under three empires because he was certain of who actually sat on the throne.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik reminds us that God's sovereignty is a comfort only to those who trust His character. The same truth that steadies a believer terrifies a rebel.

CRITICAL THINKING

The encouragement in these verses is not that my plans will succeed but that His will—and that mine are safe inside His. That is a smaller comfort than we ask for and a far more durable one, because it survives the failure of everything I was counting on.

KEY QUESTION

What outcome am I gripping that I could hand back to God this week?

3 What do the following passages inform us about the Lord's future judgments against Satan, the Antichrist, and unbelievers?

P. 145

Revelation 20:10 NASB95

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:12 NASB95

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

a. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

IN MY WORDS

Those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Thessalonians 1:9 NASB95** "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

b. **Hebrews 9:27**

IN MY WORDS

It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment—there is no second life and no negotiation afterward.

CROSS REFERENCE **Hebrews 9:27 NASB95** "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."

c. **Revelation 19:20**

IN MY WORDS

The beast and the false prophet are seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 19:20** This is the fulfillment of Daniel 7:11—the beast slain and given to the burning fire.

d. **Revelation 20:10**

IN MY WORDS

The devil is thrown into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet already are, and they are tormented forever.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 3:15** "He shall bruise you on the head"—the sentence pronounced in Eden, carried out here.

e. **Revelation 20:12-15**

IN MY WORDS

The dead stand before the throne, the books are opened, they are judged according to their deeds, and anyone not found in the book of life is thrown into the lake of fire.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 7:10** "The court sat, and the books were opened."—Daniel saw the same courtroom John describes.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that judgment is "according to their deeds" but salvation is by the book of life. The record convicts; only the Lamb's book acquits.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet all share the same end—there is no separate outcome for the deceiver and the deceived leadership.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel saw the books opened without being told what was in them. John saw a second book—the book of life—which Daniel's vision never mentions. The judgment was always certain; the way of escape from it is the part of the picture that had to wait for the cross to be revealed.

KEY QUESTION

Am I certain my name is in the one book that decides the verdict?

4 What comforting truth do we find given to believers in Romans 8:1?

P. 148

Romans 8:1 NASB95

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

IN MY WORDS

That there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus—the court in Daniel 7 will sit, but for me the verdict has already been given and it is not guilty.

CROSS REFERENCE **John 5:24** "He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik draws attention to the word "now." Not eventually, not if I finish well—now, while I am still failing, the condemnation is already gone.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that the whole basis is the phrase "in Christ Jesus." The security is not in my performance but in my position.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel 7 is a chapter about a courtroom, and Romans 8:1 is the believer's standing in that courtroom. The books will still be opened and the deeds will still be read—but the sentence for those in Christ was served at Golgotha. The trial is real; the outcome is settled.

KEY QUESTION

Do I actually live like someone against whom there is no longer any charge?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Taking Daniel 7 off the page and into the week.

1 **Think back upon what you've read about Daniel in the previous chapters of Discovering Daniel. Consider his choices about not eating the king's food, about how to handle the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, about being forthright to Belshazzar about the message written on the wall, and about the law regarding prayer to King Darius (and the penalty of being thrown into the lions' den). In what ways did Daniel show an immovable trust in God's sovereignty, and how God would sustain him in those difficult situations?**

P. 150

Daniel 2:20-21 NASB95

Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding."

IN MY WORDS

In every case he obeyed first and left the consequences to God—refusing the food before he knew the steward would agree, asking for time before he had the dream's answer, telling Belshazzar the truth on the last night of the empire, and praying at open windows under a death sentence.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 1:8** "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself"—the pattern was set at seventeen and never revised.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that Daniel refused the reward Belshazzar offered before he gave the interpretation. He would not let a payment be attached to the truth.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Daniel 2:21 is the theological key to the entire book—"He removes kings and establishes kings." Daniel had already settled the doctrine that Daniel 7 would later illustrate.

CRITICAL THINKING

In each episode Daniel acted before he had any evidence it would work out. The food, the deadline, the writing on the wall, the windows—none of them came with a guarantee attached. Trust in sovereignty is not confidence about the outcome; it is willingness to obey without one.

KEY QUESTION

What obedience am I holding back until I can see how it will turn out?

2 What are some ways you've shown a lack of confidence in God's sovereignty in past situations you've faced?

P. 150

Proverbs 3:5-6 NASB95

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

IN MY WORDS

By worrying about outcomes I could not affect, by trying to manage other people into doing what I thought was needed, and by delaying obedience until I had a plan that made the risk feel acceptable.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 6:27** "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that anxiety is functional unbelief. We rarely deny God's sovereignty as a doctrine; we deny it as a practice, one worried hour at a time.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that leaning on our own understanding is not a failure of intelligence but of trust—the mind is doing exactly what it was made to do, just without reference to God.

CRITICAL THINKING

The clearest evidence is not what I say I believe but where my mind goes at three in the morning. Doctrine is what I affirm; trust is what I default to when nothing is under my control. Daniel's default was an open window.

KEY QUESTION

Where does my mind actually go first when something goes wrong?

3 What are some ways that we, as believers, can demonstrate our trust in God's sovereignty when it seems things are out of control?

P. 151

Philippians 4:6-7 NASB95

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

IN MY WORDS

By praying first instead of last, by giving thanks in the middle of it rather than only afterward, by continuing the ordinary duties in front of me, and by refusing to manipulate a situation into the shape I want.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 5:6-7** "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God… casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes Daniel's response to a death decree was to keep his appointments with God. Faithfulness in the ordinary is what trust looks like when the extraordinary arrives.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out that Paul includes thanksgiving in the prescription, not as a nicety but as the mechanism—gratitude reorients the heart toward what God has already done.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul's remedy does not promise the circumstance will change; it promises the heart will be guarded. That is a garrison word—peace posted at the gate of the mind like a soldier. God's first answer to chaos is usually not to fix the situation but to secure the person inside it.

KEY QUESTION

What is the one thing I could pray about this week instead of managing?

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4 **Daniel 7 includes a court scene and makes it clear that God will not let the Antichrist and the enemies of God's people go unpunished. In what ways does this truth comfort you?** P. 151

Daniel 7:22 NASB95

Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

IN MY WORDS

It tells me no injustice will finally stand, that the wrongs I cannot correct are not being ignored, and that I can leave the settling of accounts to a Judge who has every fact and no bias.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 18:25** "Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that judgment is "passed in favor of the saints." The court does not merely sentence the guilty; it vindicates the people who were worn down.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that this is the answer to the martyrs' cry of "how long"—not never, and not now, but at the appointed session of a court already scheduled.

CRITICAL THINKING

The comfort here is not that my enemies will suffer but that the record will finally be read correctly. Most of what wounds us is not only the harm but the fact that no one saw it accurately. Daniel 7 promises a hearing in which nothing is misunderstood.

KEY QUESTION

What wrong am I still trying to get someone to acknowledge, that God has already seen in full?

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5 **In Romans 12:19, we are told, "Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."** P. 151

Romans 12:19 NASB95

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

a. Why do you think God wants us to let go of any thoughts of avenging others?

IN MY WORDS

Because I cannot see the whole record or weigh a heart, so my justice would always be partly wrong—and because carrying vengeance slowly turns me into the thing I am judging.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:20** "For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

b. Would you agree there is a freedom that comes from leaving vengeance in God's hands? Why or why not?

IN MY WORDS

Yes—handing the debt to God means I stop being the one responsible for collecting it, and a burden I was never strong enough to carry finally goes to someone who is.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 11:29-30** "Take My yoke upon you… for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

c. What do the following passages tell you about the fairness of God's judgment? (1) Romans 2:11 (2) Colossians 3:25 (3) 1 Peter 1:17

IN MY WORDS

Romans 2:11 says there is no partiality with God, Colossians 3:25 says the wrongdoer will be repaid without partiality, and 1 Peter 1:17 says the Father judges impartially according to each one's work—so no one gets a discount and no one gets overlooked.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 1:17 NASB95** "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the phrase "leave room." Revenge crowds God out of a situation; forgiveness clears the space for Him to act in it.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to Daniel as the working example—never once did he retaliate against men who twice tried to have him killed, and both times God settled it Himself.

CRITICAL THINKING

The three passages on impartiality cut both directions, and 1 Peter says so explicitly—the same impartial Judge examines my work too. That is why the command is bearable: I am not being asked to let the guilty off. I am being asked to step out of a chair I am not qualified to sit in.

KEY QUESTION

Would I still want perfectly impartial justice if it were being applied to me?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In Daniel 7, the part of the dream that bothered Daniel most is the part that has not been fulfilled yet. During the end times the Antichrist will establish a global empire rampant with deception, blasphemy, and evil. Scripture calls him "the man of lawlessness… the son of destruction," the one who "exalts himself above every so-called god" and takes his seat in the temple of God "displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He is "that lawless one" whose coming is "in accord with the activity of Satan" (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9). Revelation 13:2 tells us the dragon gave him "his power and his throne and great authority." His power comes directly from Satan himself.

So cruel will he be that he will "make war with the saints and to overcome them" (Revelation 13:7). His right-hand man, the false prophet, will cause anyone who refuses to worship the image of the beast to be killed, and no one will be able to buy or sell without his mark (verses 15-17). Daniel 8 says he will "destroy to an extraordinary degree" and cause deceit to succeed by his influence (verses 24-25). No wonder Daniel was so bothered — and no wonder his face grew pale and he kept the matter to himself.

But God has already set a limit on the length of that rule. Daniel was told it would last "a time, times, and half a time," and Revelation counts the same span as forty-two months. When the time is up, Christ will return. Out of His mouth comes "a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations" (Revelation 19:15), and in an instant the beast and his forces are finished — not defeated in a long war, but slain by a verdict already entered in a courtroom Daniel watched centuries ago.

> *"His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed."*
>
> **Daniel 7:14**

Daniel saw four beasts come up out of a churning sea and one Son of Man come with the clouds of heaven. The beasts arrived from below, taking what they could hold for as long as they could hold it. The Son of Man was presented before the Ancient of Days and was given what the beasts had spent all of history fighting over. That is the difference the whole chapter turns on — and it is why the last word of the vision is not "destroyed" but "obey." The kingdoms of this world are loud, and they are brief. The kingdom of the Son of Man is quiet in its coming and everlasting in its reign, and every knee that ever bowed to a beast will bow to Him instead.

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