



# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 12 2020

## troubling dream

**Scripture Story:** Daniel 7.

**Commentary:** *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 45.

### PREPARING TO TEACH

#### I. SYNOPSIS

In Daniel 7 God takes Daniel into vision and shows him a troubling dream filled with weird-looking, fear-some creatures. First the lion, then the bear, a leopard, and a dragon-like beast that starts out with 10 horns and later loses three to a little horn with eyes like a man and a mouth that speaks boastfully (Daniel 7:8). Whew!

As Daniel peered through the scene he saw thrones set in place and the Ancient of Days having taken His seat. The scene is a cosmic courtroom, and the books of humanity's record are open (Daniel 7:9, 10). The vision culminates in a blaze of glory as the fourth beast is slain and the Son of man, Jesus, is "given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him" (Daniel 7:14, NIV), and His kingdom lasts forever.

This chapter of the Bible sets the Word of God apart from all other sacred texts because it points the way to the end of time and the ushering in of God's eternal kingdom. Your students must know that in Daniel 7 God has allowed them to peer into the future, to get a good look at how the world will end. He wants them to know that just as God through Jesus has saved us from the power of sin, one day He will save us from the presence of sin. Thus, Daniel 7 is more than strange beasts; it is an unveiling of history designed to prepare us to meet God and give us hope as we wait for His soon appearing.

#### II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that the vision of Daniel 7 is God's way of letting us know that He will save His people from the presence of sin into a kingdom without end. (*Know*)
- Trust God with their future lives since He holds the future. (*Feel*)
- Choose to accept God's invitation to be ready for His imminent return. (*Respond*)

#### III. EXPLORE

- Hope
- Salvation (experience of)\*
- Restoration

\*Fundamental Belief No. 10.

### TEACHING

#### I. GETTING STARTED

##### **Activity**

*Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

*Discuss with the students the answers to What Do You Think?*

What does it take to make accurate predictions? How are human predictions different from prophetic messages given by God? What do the prophecies that

were fulfilled hundreds of years later tell you about God?

Close by making the point that human predictions of the future are extremely unreliable. Then ask the students if they believe God can be trusted with the future. What assurance do we have that God can be trusted when it comes to predicting the future?

### **Illustration**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

“As a captive in a foreign land, Daniel determined in his late teens to be true to God. Ushered into the luxurious banquet hall of the Babylonian king, he refused to worship the king’s idols, drink the king’s wine, or eat the king’s unclean delicacies. Yet he did it with such grace that he eventually won the hearts of his captors. Daniel’s spiritual integrity continued throughout his life. When he was in his mid-80s, he faced perhaps his greatest test. Conniving coworkers schemed against him. They slyly influenced the king to pass a decree forbidding worship of any god except himself for 30 days. Obviously Daniel could not comply. The price for disobedience was high.

“The prophet did not make his decision based on the consequences of his actions. He made it based on faithfulness to God’s Word. Had he considered the consequences, death in the lions’ den, he might have yielded. Anytime the consequences of a decision become the driving force in making a decision, we are likely to yield. One of the most successful coaches in the history of professional football was Vince Lombardi, of the Green Bay Packers. A reporter asked why they gave so much of themselves each Sunday. He queried, ‘Why is your team notably different? Why do you leave everything out on the field?’ The players responded, ‘We are not playing for the crowd in the stands or the millions in the television audience. We aren’t overly concerned about what the news media says. We are playing for one thing: “the coach’s eyes.” When we review the film Monday mornings, we want to know we have satisfied Coach Lombardi.’

“Daniel did not play to the crowd. He lived to please his heavenly Father. He played for the ‘Father’s eyes.’

“When the final films of life are shown, living life to please God is what will truly count. The great heroes of faith all lived for a purpose. They stood above the masses. They viewed life from a different perspective. They did not live to please themselves or the crowd. The prime purpose of their life was to please God.

In making this fundamental decision, Daniel lived a centered life. God’s formula for true peace and lasting success is still the same today.”—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground*, 2003, p. 205

## **II. TEACHING THE STORY**

### **Bridge to the Story**

*Share the following in your own words:*

The Word of God is marvelously concentrated, designed to help us live victoriously in this life and prepare for the life to come. In Daniel 7 God gives us a prophetic view of the nations that would rise and fall at the end of time, the judgment of the wicked, the salvation of the righteous, and the ushering in of God’s everlasting kingdom. The momentous events of Daniel 7 remind us that God is soon to return for His children. The question is, however, “When He comes what will He find us doing?”

### **Out of the Story for Teachers**

*After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- Review what you learned from Daniel 2 about the kingdoms symbolized by the various divisions of the great statue. What symbols are used in Daniel 7 to describe the same kingdoms?
- What are the eight characteristics of the little horn described in Daniel 7:8, 20, 24, and 25?
- Is there a promise in Daniel 7 that spoke to you of God’s love? Which one is it, and why do you think it captured your attention?
- Place an asterisk at the points in the narrative where you see God’s grace. Is there grace in Daniel 7?
- According to Daniel 7:13, 14, who is “the Ancient of Days”? Who is the “one like a son of man”? What significant event is described here? What authority did the son of man receive when He was brought before the Ancient of Days?
- The little horn of the fourth beast is a religious-political power with eyes like a man and a mouth that speaks boastfully. What power is being referred to here?
- Why is it essential for us to have a correct understanding of these prophecies as we pre-

pare for the kingdom of God? What assurance do we have that God is keeping His prophetic promises?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Daniel 12:6-13; John 14:29; Matthew 24:15, 16.

### Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

**Understanding the Symbols.** Here are some of the symbols found in Daniel 7 and what they mean:

**Sea** (Daniel 7:2) means multitudes, people, nations (Revelation 17:15).

**Beasts** (Daniel 7:3) means kingdoms or empires.

**Lion, bear, leopard, and dragon-like beast** (Daniel 7:3-8) represent four kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (Daniel 7:17).

**Ten horns** (Daniel 7:7, 8) means 10 kings or kingdoms.

**A little horn** (Daniel 7:8) represents a power that is not only political, but also religious in nature (Daniel 7:24, first part).

#### Characteristics of the little horn:

1. It came out of the fourth beast that is the symbol of Rome (Daniel 7:8, 24). It ascended from the ruins of the Roman Empire, and therefore its nature resembled that of persecuting Rome.

2. It came after Rome was divided among



### Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

#### Connecting It to Us

To make the material you are sharing practical to the youth, use history to give a subject an up-to-date spin. Try the following:

- Locate maps, photos, symbols that would communicate a sense of the historical significance of the subject matter.
- Consider inviting someone knowledgeable on the history of the subject to make a brief presentation to your class.
- Plan ahead. Give your students an Internet research assignment to find and report an interesting or unknown fact about the subject.
- By sharing or showing a picture of a historic object you might pique the interest of young learners.

the 10 barbarian tribes that conquered it (verses 8, 20). These tribes include: the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Lombards, the Anglo-Saxons, the Franks, the Alemannans, the Heruli, and the Suevi.

3. Initially it appeared to be little, but over time it became greater than all the other powers symbolized by the 10 horns (verses 8, 20). The Roman church became the most important religious and

## Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

#### • Key Text

Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

#### • Flashlight

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book Prophets and Kings. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

#### • Punch Lines

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

#### • Further Insight

Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight convey the point of the story in this lesson.

political power of its time.

4. It uprooted three other horns when it came to be (verse 8). Catholic emperors destroyed three Arian tribes, namely, the Herulis (A.D. 493), the Vandals (A.D. 534), and the Ostrogoths (A.D. 538).

5. It had the “eyes of a man” (verse 8, NKJV) and a mouth that boasted great things (verse 8), against the Most High. Eyes indicate understanding or wisdom (Ephesians 1:18). Eyes like a man indicates a system based on human, rather than divine wisdom. The “mouth that spoke boastfully” (verse 8, NIV) refers to the claims to assume the prerogatives that belong solely to God (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4), such as claiming to have: the authority to forgive sins (i.e., indulgences, penances), to change God’s law, and to be infallible.

6. It attempted to “wear out the saints of the Most High” (Daniel 7:25, KJV). The Roman Church was a persecuting religious and political power as attested by the crusades and inquisitions.

7. It attempted to “change times and laws” (verse 25, KJV). The Papacy endeavored to change God’s law, the Ten Commandments. It claimed to have authority to change God’s day of rest from Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath, to Sunday.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent states this change in the following terms: “The Church of God has thought it well to transfer the celebration and observance of the Sabbath to Sunday.”

8. It was given power for a “time, times, and half a time” (verse 25, NIV). A prophetic day equals one year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Genesis 29:27). This time period is also confirmed in Revelation 11:2, 3; 13:5. According to the reckoning of “a day for each year,” the sum works out to 1,260 prophetic days, or 1,260 literal years. This time period started when Emperor Justinian granted religious and political power to Pope Vigilius (A.D. 538) and ended at the time of the French

Revolution when Pope Pius VI was exiled and lost his political power (A.D. 1798). The time period between A.D. 538 and A.D. 1798 is known in history as the Dark Ages, a time characterized by spiritual darkness, when the study of God’s Word by the common people was undertaken at the risk of great danger and persecution.

(Sources: “Unsealing Daniel’s Mysteries,” a Bible study by Mark Finley for *It is Written*; Seth Pierce, “*Prophecies of Daniel Made Simple*”; William H. Shea, “*Daniel: A Reader’s Guide*”; and Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Daniel for You and Your Family*.)

### III. CLOSING

#### Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

The prophecy in Daniel 7 reminds us that God will not tarry forever, that His coming is sure. Knowing this, how then should we live?

Allow the students to share some of their responses. Then ask for a volunteer to pray that everyone in the class will make preparation for the second coming of Jesus the focus of their lives.

#### Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Through the prophecies of Daniel, God reminds us that He alone sets the sunrise and sunset of human powers. Whether they be political or religious powers, no matter how powerfully they speak or how many weapons at their disposal, they have no power over God.

Daniel 7 reminds us that Jesus is soon to return to earth, that His kingdom will have no end, and all who love His appearing will live forever in the presence of the Ancient of Days.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 45.

\*A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at [www.cornerstoneconnections.net](http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net).