God’s Promises
Sustain His People

Summary and Goal
Daniel 7 marks an important shift away from the biographical material found in the first six chapters in order to present some prophetic messages. Because God’s people (the Jews) were in Babylonian exile, this chapter provided immediate hope to a discouraged population. The promises found within these verses, however, are just as comforting in the present as they were in their original context. In this session, we will learn that unlike the temporary kingdoms of this earth, Jesus Christ will reign eternally over the kingdom of God. By forecasting the unrivaled strength of the coming Messiah, Daniel gives us a glimpse into the conclusion of God’s plan for the universe.

Session Outline
1. The world’s kingdoms are set against God and are temporary (Dan. 7:1-8).
2. The world’s kingdoms are under the authority of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9-12).
3. An everlasting kingdom for all people will be given to the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14).
Background Passage: Daniel 7–12

Session in a Sentence
Unlike the world’s temporary kingdoms, God is forming an eternal kingdom that is for all people under the reign of King Jesus.

Christ Connection
Daniel’s vision depicted worldly kingdoms that were set against God and passing away. Daniel also saw the coming of the Son of Man, who would be given dominion over an everlasting kingdom comprised of people from every tribe, nation, and language. Jesus is the Son of Man, the King of kings, who purchased a people for God through His life, death, and resurrection.

Missional Application
Because we have been brought into the kingdom of God through Christ, we recognize and stand against the systems of the world that are in opposition to Him as we place our hope in Jesus, the everlasting King of kings.
Group Time

Introduction

EXPLAIN: Relay the writer’s description on page 47 of the DDG of the Magic 8 Ball® and how its “predictions” contrast with the way the Bible speaks about the future.

Ever play with the Magic 8 Ball®? The Mattel toy company developed the game in the 1950s to give kids a fun way to ascertain “the future.” When children shook the ball, one of twenty different answers would pop up as a response to yes or no questions. With ten positive responses, five that were non-committal, and five that were different ways to say no, odds were you would receive the reply you wanted. When that was not the case, most children learned to reword the question till they got their confirmation.

Perhaps it was our insatiable desire to know the future that led to the toy’s popularity. Though the Magic 8 Ball was a lot of fun, we quickly learned that it was not an accurate predictor of the future. Grown-ups have their own strategies to pinpoint what is ahead, but our attempts to know what is coming are also futile. Thankfully, efforts like these are unnecessary. When we search the Bible, we discover there is no need to predict the things that God has already revealed partly but nonetheless sufficiently.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

In what ways might the current climate in our world make people fearful of the future? (climate change predictions cause some to fear for human life on this planet in the coming generations; the progress of culture away from biblical values leads to an increasing intolerance to a Christian worldview; violence and oppression appear to be growing realities)

SAY: Where is the world headed? While there is a lot we do not know, we can live with certainty that God is building a kingdom that will remain long after the chaos of this world fades away. The wicked systems of the present age will end and Christ will reign over heaven and earth with His people. You can count on it!

SUMMARIZE: Because God’s people (the Jews) were in Babylonian exile, Daniel 7 provided immediate hope to a discouraged population. The promises found within this chapter, however, are just as comforting in the present as they were in their original context. In this session, we will learn that unlike the temporary kingdoms of this earth, Jesus Christ will reign eternally over the kingdom of God. By forecasting the unrivaled strength of the coming Messiah, Daniel gives us a glimpse into the conclusion of God’s plan for the universe.

For session-by-session training videos, please visit MinistryGrid.com/GospelProject. For additional teaching options and other resources, please visit GospelProject.com/additional-resources.
**Point 1:** The world’s kingdoms are set against God and are temporary (Dan. 7:1-8).

**READ** Daniel 7:1-8 (DDG p. 48).

1 In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream with visions in his mind as he was lying in his bed. He wrote down the dream, and here is the summary of his account. 2 Daniel said, “In my vision at night I was watching, and suddenly the four winds of heaven stirred up the great sea. 3 Four huge beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion but had eagle’s wings. I continued watching until its wings were torn off. It was lifted up from the ground, set on its feet like a man, and given a human mind.

5 “Suddenly, another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up! Gorge yourself on flesh.’

6 “After this, while I was watching, suddenly another beast appeared. It was like a leopard with four wings of a bird on its back. It had four heads, and it was given dominion.

7 “After this, while I was watching in the night visions, suddenly a fourth beast appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns.

8 “While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. And suddenly in this horn there were eyes like the eyes of a human and a mouth that was speaking arrogantly.

**EXPLAIN:** Reference the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 48) as you explain what the beast images represent and the implication of their succession that all human empires are temporary.

Daniel recorded a dream he had of four beasts, which symbolized the succession of world powers from Babylon to Medo-Persia to Greece and then to Rome. The succession implies that these empires are temporary—each one will fall.

- The four nations of “beasts” were also illustrated in order in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the multi-metal and clay statue (see Dan. 2:31-45). In that dream, a stone from a mountain destroyed the entire statue.

- While these kingdoms are temporary, we should not assume that the damage caused by them is minimal. To the contrary, since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, the serpent has masterfully fought to turn humankind against the Creator. Though a remnant of believers in the one true God has always remained, the overwhelming population of history has lived and died in their sins as enemies of God’s kingdom, believing their own empires would last. Yet God remains in control of human history.

**Commentary:** Daniel 7 marks a shift away from the biographical material found in the first six chapters in order to present some prophetic messages. This prophecy came to Daniel not after the lions’ den incident in chapter 6 but before it, sometime between the events of chapters 4 and 5.
INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What are some joys and concerns that come from knowing earthly kingdoms are temporary? (evil kingdoms and leaders will not last forever; God’s judgment will set all things right one day; fear of the unknown can rise with transitions of power and dominance; personal investment in political powers may come to nothing or be for nothing)

SAY: Wicked kingdoms are temporary and God will have the final word, yet we should not dismiss the great calamity that is coming and that has been here in some form since the days of the early church.

EXPLAIN the significance of the little “horn” as a representation of the antichrist, who will oppose God and persecute His people.

- Out of the fourth beast, or under the umbrella of Rome, Daniel revealed that a little “horn,” which stands for an evil figure often referred to as the antichrist, would rise to power (7:8; see also Rev. 13). Though scholars disagree over many of the details, most agree that the reign of this horn and beast will lead to unparalleled evil in the world.

- The apostle Paul warned that in this world things will get much worse before they get better, and he said this with reference to a coming “man of lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:3). But we ought not ignore this warning as pointing exclusively to a future time. The “mystery of lawlessness” is already at work (2 Thess. 2:7) because the spirit of antichrist is already in the world (1 John 4:3), as the apostles stated even during the first century. The satanic characteristics of this world that accelerate in anticipation of Christ’s return are already at work.

- By blasphemying God, the man of lawlessness will wreak havoc during a period of great tribulation (see Matt. 24:21). Daniel laments that he seemingly overcomes the saints, wearing them down with his blasphemies and sweeping religious changes meant to harm them (Dan. 7:21,25).

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 48).

The World Opposed to God: This evil world force operates under Satan’s control, displaying the same self-centeredness and deceit that is found within his character. Christians are called to overcome this world of spiritual evil by faith in the Son of God.

Essential Doctrine “The World Opposed to God”: There are times in Scripture where the term “world” refers to more than the physical planet Earth or the collective human population. In many instances, the term refers to an active and evil spiritual force that is in direct conflict with God and His kingdom. This evil world force operates under Satan’s control (Eph. 2:2; John 14:30), displaying the same self-centeredness and deceit that is found within his character. Christians are called to overcome this world of spiritual evil by faith in the Son of God (1 John 5:4-5).
**Point 2: The world’s kingdoms are under the authority of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9-12).**

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 7:9-12 (DDG p. 49).

9 “As I kept watching, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was white like snow, and the hair of his head like whitest wool. His throne was flaming fire; its wheels were blazing fire. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from his presence. Thousands upon thousands served him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was convened, and the books were opened. 11 “I watched, then, because of the sound of the arrogant words the horn was speaking. As I continued watching, the beast was killed and its body destroyed and given over to the burning fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was removed, but an extension of life was granted to them for a certain period of time.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 49) to present what the details about the Ancient of Days mean and why this vision should give believers assurance about the future.

This magnificent vision of the Ancient of Days is the calming reassurance we need as we look to the future. White clothing points to God’s absolute purity, while white hair speaks of His eternality. The fire surrounding His throne communicates the swift judgment He intends to execute on the wicked. One day He will rid the earth of the nations’ wickedness forever, but not yet.

- The various interpretations of biblical prophecy can intimidate the most devoted Bible student. Admittedly, biblical scholars who accept the Scriptures as God’s inerrant Word sometimes disagree over important details regarding the arrival of the Lord’s kingdom. The universal consensus among evangelicals of every stripe, however, is that Jesus Christ will reign eternally over all creation. Regardless of what you might find difficult to understand, do not miss the essential heart that governs this and all prophecy: We win because our Savior has won.

**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 49).

**God Is Infinite:** God’s infinity means that there are no boundaries on His qualities and existence. For instance, God is infinite when it comes to space and time, meaning He is not confined by material space nor is He restricted by time since He is timeless. God’s infinity also extends to His knowledge of things as well as His power to do all things according to His will.
Essential Doctrine “God Is Infinite”: God’s infinity means that there are no boundaries on His qualities and existence (Job 11:7-9; Ps. 147:5). For instance, God is infinite when it comes to space and time, meaning He is not confined by material space nor is He restricted by time since He is timeless (Ps. 90:1-2). God’s infinity also extends to His knowledge of things as well as His power to do all things according to His will.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How does God’s infinite existence as the Ancient of Days strengthen us as we face uncertain days? (God will always be with us as His children; His moral perfection demands that He is and will be just in dealing with His enemies; God’s infinity means He is never slow to accomplish His will or keep His promises but is always acting according to His perfect timing)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 49) to show that the “beast” and the “horn” will be decisively defeated and judged by the Ancient of Days. Apply the comfort of this passage to your group members.

To exemplify God’s judgment of the wicked, Daniel saw the pinnacle of earthly evil in the fourth “beast” with the arrogant “horn” being killed and destroyed by fire. The horn rises up to oppress the holy ones of God, and he will prevail over them, for a time (Dan. 7:21). But this entire satanic rebellion only exists for as long as God allows it. The devil and his minions are bound according to whatever limits God sets until the final crushing of the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 20:10).

• The antichrist will face the punitive gaze of the Ancient of Days for his rebellion and war against God and His people (Dan. 7:22). So too will the beast; both the beast and his spokesman will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone that will ultimately house all unbelievers throughout history for eternity (Rev. 19:20). Even the serpentine dragon—the devil behind all this evil—will join them in hell, not by choice but by God’s judgment (Rev. 20:1-10). Then these sinister enemies will no longer torment the children of God (Dan. 7:11,26).

Application: Daniel’s prophecy is just as encouraging for contemporary believers as it was for ancient Jews trapped in exile far from their homeland. As our world becomes increasingly chaotic, it is comforting to know that the rampant lawlessness on the evening news as well as the nonsensical heartache in our own neighborhoods will one day come to an end. Evil doers will be punished and suffering will end when, at the pleasure of His Father, Christ assumes His full reign of leadership over the nations. Our world is broken now, but it will not always be this way.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How are you affected by God’s promise of judgment for His enemies? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)
**Point 3: An everlasting kingdom for all people will be given to the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14).**

**READ** Daniel 7:13-14 (DDG p. 50).

13 I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. 14 He was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 50) to show how Daniel’s vision of the Son of Man ruling over all creation corresponds to the end of redemptive history with the new heaven and new earth.

These verses not only give us a glimpse into the culmination of Daniel’s vision but also of redemptive history. Daniel described the eternal dominion of “one like a son of man”—who is indeed the Son of Man—over a vast kingdom and the glory that will encompass it, all of which commences with what the Bible refers to as a new heaven and new earth (Isa. 65:17-25; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). At that time, the Lord will once again dwell among His people in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of Man.

**Voices from Church History**

“What we proclaim is not one single coming of Christ but a second as well, much fairer than the first. For the first presented a demonstration of longsuffering, but the second wears the crown of the kingdom of God ... He adapted himself when he came then and taught humankind by persuasion, but this time it is they who will be forced to bow to his rule, whether they will or not.”

—Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313-386)

- Jesus often referred to Himself as the “Son of Man” in the Gospels. But when He connected this identification to the “one like a son of man” who would come on the clouds of heaven in Daniel’s vision, the high priest began to grasp the depth of Jesus’ claim: not only was He human but He was the divine “Son of Man” who would rule over all creation for all eternity (Matt. 26:63-65).

- When the nations gather in God’s presence and kings bow to His glory and in service to the Son of Man, the King of kings, then for the first time since the garden of Eden, creation will function as God intended.

**Commentary:** In this passage we see the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man as two distinct figures. But this didn’t stop the apostle John from using a description of the Ancient of Days for the Son of Man in Revelation 1:13-14: hair like the whitest wool (Dan. 7:9). The two—indeed, three—persons of the Godhead, the Trinity, are co-equal in their divinity with unique roles in the work of salvation. Because of His substitutionary atonement for sinners, Jesus Christ, the divine Son of Man, receives from His Father the promised eternal kingdom of God along with a name above all other names (Dan. 7:13-14; Phil. 2:5-11).
**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

**?** How should the future exaltation of Jesus enhance our worship of and service to Him now? *(the honor of Christ should be our first priority every moment of every day; our worship should not merely be rote but an expression of love for Jesus with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength; our sovereign Savior is deserving of our best effort and work as we serve others in Jesus’ name)*

**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 50) to affirm how the kingdom of God differs from the temporary empires of history and why its permanency is good for both humanity and creation.

Contrary to the fallen empires throughout history, including those represented by the beasts in Daniel’s vision, the future kingdom of God will bring joy and blessing to all its inhabitants forever. While it is true that the kingdom is a present reality in the heart and life of every Christian, the contentment of living for Christ now is but a foretaste of the endless satisfaction that will accompany being with Him forever. As the nations experience healing in His presence (Rev. 22:2), He will wipe away every tear, and mourning, pain, and death will be no more (21:4). And with the curse removed, God will make all things new (21:5).

- In addition to enjoying the dominion of our Savior, Daniel’s vision reveals that the greatness of every kingdom will be given to the saints (Dan. 7:27). The Bible also teaches that as His joint-heirs, we will reign over creation with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26; 5:10; 22:5). Free from sin, we will care for the earth just as Adam tended to the garden of Eden for a time. These wonderful promises assure us that the quality and duration of Christ’s kingdom will be unlike anything the world has ever known. With every knee bowing and every tongue confessing Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, we will finally enjoy our God as we were created to do.
EXPLAIN: The kingdoms of earth are passing away, but we must remember that our real citizenship is not of this world. No matter who ruled the ancient world, God was busy behind the scenes building His kingdom. Likewise, regardless of who has power in the present, the Lord is preparing a place for us to exercise dominion with Him. The moment Christ redeems us out of sin’s bondage by faith in Him, He guarantees us a place in His family and a role with Him in the age to come. Until then, we must actively share our faith in order to make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:18-20). We must pray for the nations to believe and purify ourselves because we know Jesus is pure and He is coming (1 John 3:2-3).

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 51), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we have been brought into the kingdom of God through Christ, we recognize and stand against the systems of the world that are in opposition to Him as we place our hope in Jesus, the everlasting King of kings.

- How will confidence in the coming kingdom of God in Christ change how you live today?
- How can your group live with increased anticipation of Christ’s coming?
- How is the certainty of God’s kingdom an evangelistic tool to reach those who are rattled by the political realities of the present?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, though this is indeed Your world, the world does not act like it. Thank You for the hope that Jesus as the Son of Man will one day reign as the true and everlasting King, putting an end to the nations’ harmful yet ultimately futile opposition. For the sake of Christ, equip us by the Spirit during the meantime to live faithfully and counterculturally amidst the world’s idolatrous systems of unbelief. Amen.

PACK ITEM 7: VISIONS IN DANIEL: Pass out this table to assist group members as they read the devotions.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 52-54), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 55) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 52-54) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 55) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 52-54) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 3 as a part of point 3 in the session: With a dominion that will last forever, Jesus Christ will restore what was lost in the garden of Eden. He will dwell among us as our God, and the wounds of our fallen past will be wiped away.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- Day 2: “Despite the dismal forecast on the nightly news, God’s victory is coming without delay. Our great Savior will restore our fallen home for His glory.”
- Day 5: “Daniel’s words prod us to remember that we will win in the end precisely because our Savior will not be denied the glory due His name.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 55) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

- Encourage group members to help one another determine whether they have more of a heavenly-minded hope or an earthbound affection.
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
Additional Commentary

Point 1: The world's kingdoms are set against God and are temporary (Dan. 7:1-8).

“Generally the four empires in this chapter are interpreted in the same manner as those described in chapter 2. Adherents of the traditional view of Daniel almost unanimously agree that the kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; whereas those who accept the Maccabean thesis usually consider the four empires to be Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece … These four beasts are said to be ‘different’ from one another. Daniel may have meant only that the kinds of animals varied and that the beasts represented different realities. Yet it seems that the differences extend to the empires themselves; that is, the four empires would be diverse in character … The Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires were all different in size, power, and in many other ways.”

“The terrifying fourth beast represents the Roman Empire. It was different from the previous three because it was more powerful and had longer dominion. Horns commonly represent kings or kingdoms in Scripture (Ps. 132:17; Zech. 1:18; Rev. 13:1; 17:12), as the angel’s later interpretation plainly indicates (Dan. 7:24). A little … horn represents a king who starts small in power but becomes dominant. The little horn’s eyes like the eyes of a human indicates its shrewdness and its mouth that was speaking arrogantly points to its boasting blasphemously against God (cp. v. 25). This little horn is a future world ruler whom Scripture calls ‘the coming ruler’ (9:26); the king who ‘will do whatever he wants’ (11:36); ‘the man of lawlessness,’ ‘the man doomed to destruction’ (2 Thess. 2:3); ‘the beast’ (Rev. 13:1-10); and the ‘antichrist’ (1 John 2:18).”

Point 2: The world’s kingdoms are under the authority of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9-12).

“At the center of Daniel’s vision was the heavenly courtroom, with thrones (perhaps for the saints, cf. Rev. 4:2-4; 20:4) set up for judgment. The Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9), God himself, sat on the central throne. His clothing was white as snow, representing uncompromising and radiant purity (cf. Ps. 51:7; Isa. 1:18; Rev. 19:14); his hair was as white as pure wool, symbolizing the wisdom that comes with great age. His chariot-throne was flaming with fire and its wheels were ablaze (cf. Ezekiel 1), images of the divine warrior’s fearsome power to destroy his enemies. A stream of fire flowed out from before him (Dan. 7:10), and he was surrounded by myriads upon myriads of angelic attendants. The scene depicts in powerful imagery a judge who has the wisdom to sort out right from wrong, the purity to persistently choose the right, and the power to enforce his judgments. Even though the beast with the boastful horn continued to mouth defiance at the heavenly court, it was swiftly slain and its body thrown into the fire.”
“Even as the little horn boasts, the scene changes to a throne room so splendid that poetry is required to describe it (7:9). The Ancient of Days is a title that most likely refers to God’s eternal existence, while his white clothing and hair symbolize his moral purity or righteousness as well as his wisdom and experience. Fire is associated with God’s appearances to humans, for instance to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:1-6), on Mount Sinai when God made his covenant with Israel (Ex. 19:16-18) and in the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 13:21-22). The flaming throne with wheels also matches Ezekiel’s vision (Ezek. 1:15-28). Fire is also associated with God’s judgment (Deut. 32:22; Ps. 78:21-22; Isa. 30:27), and opening the books in court suggests a trial (7:10). Books kept in heaven record people’s deeds. These books will one day be opened for judgment (Ex. 32:32-33; Luke 10:20; Rev. 20:12). The court appears to pass judgment on the little horn for its boasting against God, and the beast is executed and its body burnt (7:11; see Rev. 19:20). The other beasts have their authority taken away, but they are allowed to live for a set period (7:12).”

**Point 3: An everlasting kingdom for all people will be given to the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14).**

“‘One like a son of man’ has been interpreted in three primary ways—as an angel (Michael), a personification of the people of God (Israel), and the Messiah. The NT apostles (see John 12:34) and Christ Himself (Mark 14:61-62) confirm the latter view, specifically that the ‘son of man’ is Jesus of Nazareth. Early post-biblical Jewish literature (e.g., 1 Enoch 46:1; 48:10; 4 Ezra 13) also reflects the messianic view. That the ‘son of man’ of verse 13 was considered a divine personage is affirmed by the high priest’s charge of blasphemy (Mark 14:64) when Jesus identified Himself as the One ‘coming with the clouds of heaven’ (Mark 14:62). Jesus’ use of this title for Himself is one of the strongest evidences that He claimed to be the Messiah. ‘Son of man’ is especially common in eschatological passages (see, e.g., Matt. 16:27,28; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31), and the phrase ‘a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven’ is an allusion to the second advent of Christ, as Matthew 24:30 makes clear.”

“The grand purpose of the Ancient of Days is to give dominion over ‘all peoples, nations, and languages’ (v. 14) to one ‘like a son of man,’ who comes ‘with the clouds of heaven’ (v. 13) in the establishment of an eternal kingdom ‘that shall not be destroyed’ (v. 14). The image so closely parallels Christ’s description of himself (Matt. 24:30; 26:64; cf. Acts 1:11) that we must conclude Daniel here is seeing the ultimate victory of the messianic kingdom that gives every believer hope in a world often dominated by great evil.”

**References**

Think about the encouragement people often share to help others through times of adversity. We might hear someone speak of how pressure is required to transform coal into a diamond; thus, pressure can be good for us, transforming us into someone better. Or we might be told of the hatchling that has to work to break through its eggshell, and that struggle is good for this creature—even necessary—so that it grows strong. Likewise, adversity strengthens us and positions us to be who we were meant to be.

While these illustrations might provide encouragement, they reveal something quite important about the world’s view of adversity. The world sees adversity as an opportunity for a person to dig deep, gaze within their soul, and discover who he or she truly is. But the gospel tells a different story—a better story. The gospel sees adversity as an opportunity for a person to look high above, gaze upon Christ, and see who He truly is. For it is Christ, not ourselves, who carries us through all trials and suffering. Adversity positions us to rely on Christ’s power, not an inner human strength that has been lying dormant.

In this volume we pick up the story of Scripture with the Jews living in bondage in a foreign land, the result of their rebellion against God. But even in the midst of judgment, God’s faithful love still shines forth brightly. We will witness God continuing to guide, strengthen, and protect His people in their time of great adversity, not to help them discover who they were but rather to understand who He is. At the same time, we will see God continue to drive the events of history toward the fulfillment of His ancient promise to provide the Rescuer, the One who would free people from an even greater bondage, that of sin and death.