

Bible Discussion 34: Suffering and Sovereignty

Text: Daniel 7:1-14

Purpose: To develop a realistic theology for suffering and to continue to lean into the hope of God's sovereignty.

Opening Question: *What's the best dream you've ever had?*

Resources: [Summary and Outline](#) / [Daniel Overview Video](#)

Read and Discuss: Daniel 7:1-8

Israel is besieged by King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel and others of nobility are taken to be trained in the king's court. They refuse to take the king's food and God blesses them. Over time they were trained to be counselors to the king interpreting dreams. In Daniel 7 the prophet records a night vision that God gave him concerning the four world empires symbolized as four beasts. An angel helps Daniel understand the meaning of this vision. The four empires will have a certain amount of power and authority in this world, but only for a certain length of time. These four empires create war with each other, destroy countries and wreak havoc on the earth. God gives this vision to Daniel so he can navigate himself and Israel through a broken and unstable world.

1. Daniel's vision paints a challenging picture of the reality of a sinful world where people suffer, even today. *How do you respond to suffering in your own life?* (Ignore it, escape it, grieve it, accept it, turn to God with it, etc.)
2. *How well prepared do you believe you are if suffering were to enter your life? If you are currently going through a difficult season, how are you doing in trusting in a God that promises judgment, justice and a greater kingdom?*

Read and Discuss: Daniel 7:9-14

Daniel's vision is threatening and hard to accept. Everything that he saw and wrote down came to pass just as he saw it. But as the vision goes on we are reminded that God is not to be left out of this problem. Although earthly kings rule and kingdoms rise and fall God is not passive or checked out. God will one day bring peace and unity to this earth. God will one day bring His kingdom to this earth. As God's kingdom comes there will be judgment for the unrighteous and justice for victims. Daniel's vision is great hope for us as we look forward to a greater kingdom to come.

3. When God's kingdom comes a right judgment will come with it. *How does believing in Jesus give you relief from judgment and motivation for devotion to God?*
4. God will bring His justice to this earth or His ability to make what is wrong right again. *What does this tell us about God?*
5. *How does knowing that God is going to bring a greater kingdom to this earth affect your devotion to God's mission? How does it affect your suffering?*