

GLOWING TERMS

“He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:14, NIV)

THERE ARE TWO REASONS THAT TICKETS TO THE MASTERS are the most coveted in sports. Those who have never been want to see if Augusta National and the tournament environment really live up to all the glowing terms spoken of them on the TV’s fawning broadcasts. And those who have been know that those terms are right on—they want to see it again.

It’s easy to be skeptical about high praise. At our core, we are all realists needing to ascertain the authenticity of what’s before us. We may lean toward doling out “the benefit of the doubt,” but at least for a time doubt is there. It’s a real-world irony that the most liberal in a society are also those who “try out” a sexual relationship in cohabitation before committing to marriage. In fact, doubt may haunt the tolerant most of all, so they “pre-forgive” in anticipation of failed expectations.

But this talk is not only of cultural practices. It strikes right at the heart of what we do with the words of Scripture, especially where it speaks of the wonders of God.

If doubt and faith contend against one another, we must recognize that readers will come to the pages of the Bible with two different mindsets. Some are eager to believe it all, others to doubt nearly every word. The former buy license plate frames that read: “God said it, I believe it, that settles it.” The latter hesitate to concede that Jesus of Nazareth was a historical figure, never mind the Son of God.

So when we come to a passage like Daniel 7, where the description of Christ’s eternal reign is presented in what can only be described as “glowing terms,” it’s easy for those with doubts to start squirming. These promises sound like one of those junk emails that clutter your Inbox even when you have a decent spam filter. An everlasting dominion that cannot be destroyed? Hmm...

But when you are one who believes—in this case, one whose heart has been seized by the Holy Spirit—so much wonder resides in these words that you suffer your own untidy troubles of trying to wrap your mind around what thrills your heart. At times like these, we do best to receive Scripture in meditative consideration, slowly taking in the excellence of God revealed through the beauty of his Word.

Opening questions What kind of advertising turns you off? Does it come across as offensive, unrealistic, or silly? • Where do you place yourself on the spectrum of belief when opening the Bible?

READING 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Daniel 7:1-14

The mind of Christ

In 1 Corinthians, how did Paul describe the difference in understanding between those who have the Holy Spirit and those who do not?

What is the most important characteristic of those who understand God’s Word? How might we secure this characteristic for ourselves (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 18-19)?

Daniel’s vision

What are some of the most striking aspects of Daniel’s vision for the end of time? How would you define *authority*, *glory*, and *sovereign power*—those three rewards that will be given to Jesus (the “son of man”) for all time?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2014 Links Players International.