

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Daniel 7:1-28 | Session 12 | B.C. 555

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

- **Chapter 1** was an introduction to Daniel's life which spanned from his captivity and royal service in Babylon at the age of fifteen to his final service under Cyrus, the king of Persia when he was around 80.
- **Chapter 2** was the revealing of The Times of the Gentiles.
- **Chapter 3**, God miraculously rescued Daniel's three friends from the fiery furnace in which they were cast because they would not compromise their faith.
- **In chapter 4**, Daniel will interpret another of Nebuchadnezzar's God-induced dreams. The king dreams of a giant tree cut down, branches and leaves removed, and fruit scattered. The stump and its roots, however, remained. We found out in verse 16 that this tree represented a man whose heart (or mind) would be changed and would be given a heart (or mind) of a beast for seven years. The dream was revealed by *watchers* or angels who told Nebuchadnezzar the ultimate purpose of the dream was *that the living may know that the most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will and setteth up over it the basest of men*. In other words, God is the Ultimate Ruler. But the king has no understanding of what this all means. Daniel can interpret for him.
- **In chapter 5**, Daniel is an older man in his 80's, long forgotten by most in Babylon. The Jews had been in captivity for about 67 years, Nebuchadnezzar died 23 years earlier, and a new king was in power: King Belshazzar, a co-regent with his father, Nabonidus. This time it was not a dream Daniel was summoned to interpret, but the handwriting of God upon a wall. In a grand banquet hall, Belshazzar mocked the One True God by serving wine in the holy vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem 67 years earlier. And in so doing, he praised the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone. In that same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote upon the wall. Daniel read and interpreted the writing: "You have been weighed and found wanting; thy Kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." That night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom.
- **Chapter 6**, Serving in the Persian empire, Daniel does not bow down to worship Darius. He was subsequently thrown into the lions' den, but God's angel shut the lions' mouths, and Daniel was saved from death.

THE BACKGROUND OF CHAPTER 7 (7:1)

Verse 1—

This chapter occurred about 14 years before Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, and along with chapter 8, it is not in chronological order; instead, it is arranged by theme. The theme we saw in chapter 2 was the history of the world under the *Times of the Gentiles* depicted by the giant statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Chapter 7 will present the same theme and remind Daniel, and us, of God revealing the *Times of the Gentiles*. This chapter is a flashback to keep the future of God's people in front of the readers.

As chapter 7 unfolds, **Belshazzar** is still the king. During Nebuchadnezzar's rule, Daniel interpreted dreams and visions, but this was the first dream of his own that he saw. Daniel's **dream and visions** are the same, with the dream (singular) making up the entire event and the visions (plural) showing the details.

He wrote the dream and spoke it. The text doesn't say to whom he **told** it, but it shows how Daniel operated as a prophetic spokesman. Daniel took care to speak the **sum of the matters** (the words). The words of Daniel are of great importance. He is foretelling world events that had not and still have not yet occurred. This is why so many Bible-denying *elites* disregard the book of Daniel. How could he possibly have written about Cyrus and Alexander the Great? They did not appear on the world history scene until years later. I will tell you why; God showed him. First, God revealed the future in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (chapter 2) and then in his dream in this chapter. If we deny the book of Daniel, we have to deny Jesus, for Jesus, 450 years later, quoted Daniel 9:27. Do you see the slippery slope you begin to slide down if you say Daniel is not a credible source of Biblical prophecy? All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16).

Was Daniel a true Biblical Prophet? In the sense that he is forth-telling of a vision, I would answer yes. But he is unlike all other Biblical prophets in that he never had direct *one-on-one* communication with God, which is what the Jews required of a prophet. This is why Daniel is not included among the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) the book of Daniel arranged among the *writings*. Daniel never actually saw or heard God.

FOUR BEASTS APPEAR FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (7:2-3).

Verses 2,3—

I saw.... the four winds of the heaven.... strove. Winds of the north, south, east, and west all blow simultaneously and in the same direction (against all natural laws of science), working together to allow **four great beasts** to come up **from the great sea**. The great sea in Scripture refers to the Mediterranean Sea. My friend, Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, points out that the word **sea** also represents

the Gentile world (Isaiah 17:12-13; Matthew 13:47-50), and the number of the winds and the beasts, **four**, is the same as the Gentile empires seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2, and in Daniel's dream that we will see in a moment.¹ These four beasts are **diverse one from another**. We will see these beasts represent specific world empires that will trample down the nation of Israel during the Times of the Gentiles. Nebuchadnezzar saw these same empires, but he saw them in a positive light. After all, he was the golden head! But Daniel, a Jew whose people would be trampled down, sees these empires as a terrifying picture of wild beasts. Perspective matters. Do we see things from Man's point of view or God's?

THE FOUR BEASTS ARE DESCRIBED (7:4-8).

Verse 4-8—

Beast One: Eagle-winged (but wings were plucked) and lion-like, who stands like a man and has the **heart** (mind) of a man.

Beast Two: Bear-like, raised on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth.

Beast Three: Leopard-like, with four wings and four heads.

Beast Four: Dreadful, terrible, and strong. Diverse from all the beasts, it had ten horns.

We know of whom the **first beast** represents. It is Nebuchadnezzar because Daniel told him so in his interpretation of the statue's image in chapter 2.

The **second beast** can likely be identified from the events of chapter 5:31 when Darius the Median took the kingdom of Babylon.

The **third beast** causes us to speculate; a leopard is swift, and so was Alexander the Great when he set out to conquer; the Romans were also quick in spreading out via their building projects and road construction. The leopard has four heads. I am speculating that this is a combined kingdom of Greco-Roman influence. But what do the four heads represent? More study is needed.

The **fourth beast** also requires speculation. Most believe this is the Roman empire, but I have included Rome in my speculation of being the third beast. So Rome does not fit here. This fourth beast which is **dreadful and terrible, and strong.... with great iron teeth: it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and was diverse from all the beasts that were before it....** As I speculate, it may represent the Islamic Caliphate and Ottoman Empire (See the description of the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue, 2:40). The Islamic Caliphates fit the description entirely. Caliphates were political entities based on Islam. They were murderous and

¹ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*. Rev. ed. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003. Print.

dreadful. From A.D. 636 to 1924, they attacked, pillaged, raped, and destroyed Christian nations, Israel, and the Jews. These Caliphates fit the description of the fourth kingdom and the fourth beast precisely.

The **Ten horns**, with three plucked out, may represent a revived Caliphate centered in Babylon. This would bring this vision full circle from Nebuchadnezzar to a revived Babylon and seems to make more sense. The **Little horn**, as we will see later and I don't think requires speculation, represents the Antichrist **speaking great things**. E.W. Bullinger² says the title; the **little horn** is the first of twelve titles given to the *power commonly known as "The Antichrist."*

1. The little horn (Daniel 7:8).
2. The king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4).
3. The Assyrian (Isaiah 14:25).
4. Lucifer, son of the morning (Isaiah 14:12).
5. The prince that shall come (Daniel 9:26).
6. The king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23).
7. The vile person (Daniel 11:21).
8. The willful king (Daniel 11:36).
9. The man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
10. The son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3).
11. That wicked (or lawless) one (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 13:18).
12. The beast with ten horns (Revelation 13:1).

Verse 9—

I beheld till the thrones were cast down. The Hebrew word for **thrones** in verse 9 is *korsay*. It is only used in Daniel. It is the same idea as *a royal throne*; it might be more about the position, i.e., the throne or seat of power. E.W. Bullinger's take on this is that these are *seats of Judgment*. *They are cast down by God, who is ready to judge*. I like that interpretation.

A note about speculation: To speculate means trying to form a theory without firm evidence: speculating means one has to keep an open mind and be prepared to change his theory as evidence is uncovered or revealed. Do not be afraid to speculate, but be sure to make it known that is what you are doing.

² Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *The Companion Bible: Being the Authorized Version of 1611 with the Structures and Notes, Critical, Explanatory and Suggestive and with 198 Appendixes*. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2018. Print.

THE SCENE IN HEAVEN OF JUDGMENT (7:9-14).

Verse 9—

The Ancient of Days, this phrase is only used in Daniel. This is probably where people get the idea of God sitting on His throne as an old man. God does not have an age. He is not a man. It probably means *The One from everlasting to everlasting* as in Psalm 90:2. He can be identified as God the Father from verse 13, and He is sitting on his throne. **Garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head was like pure wool.** This is a similar description of the Son of Man in Revelation 1:14, but here it describes the Ancient of Days. The **white** and **like pure wool** probably denotes purity and translucence, which both God the Father and the Son manifest in glory.

As Daniel saw it, the throne of God was like the fiery flame, and his wheels (the wheels of His throne) as burning fire.

Verse 10—

With the judgment of the nations in mind, Daniel sees **a fiery stream** from before the Ancient of Days. **Thousands upon thousands ministered to** the Ancient of Days. This numerical figure of speech indicates the number could not be counted: innumerable. Psalm 68:17 says, *“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.”* In Revelation 5:11, John records, *“Round about the throne...was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”*

Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. Are these servants standing ready to serve? Or are these who will be judged? **The judgment was set.** Is this judgment before the Tribulation or after? It appears to be at the end, and therefore the dream of Daniel skips the entire seven-year Tribulation, which won't be revealed to him until chapter 9. **And the books were opened**, coinciding with what is called *The Great White Throne Judgment* in Revelation 20:12-13,

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Verse 11—

The presumptuous little **horn spoke** in a **voice of great words**. The words of the Antichrist are not recorded because they are irrelevant. It reminds us of Psalm 2:1-5,

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.”

No longer is the Antichrist in charge, his power gone, and Daniel watched **till the beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame.** The apostle Paul wrote about this in 2 Thessalonians 2:8,

“The Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”

Revelation 19:20 confirms the end of the *beast with ten horns* (see above: #12 title for Antichrist), *“And the beast was taken, and with him, the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”*

Verse 12—

As concerning the rest of the beasts, i.e., The four Gentile empires representing the Times of the Gentiles, **they had their dominion taken away**; no longer would they rule over Israel: **Yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.** It appears the nations of the earth will continue to exist throughout the Millennial Kingdom of God.

Verse 13,14—

Not like (KJV states), but, the Son of man (KJV makes it sound like someone *similar* to the Son of man is coming), but literally, it reads, *Messiah was coming as a son*. The term **Son of man** designates the reigning role of the Messiah on Earth. This is the second coming of Christ. He appears before the Father, who hands over **dominion, glory, and a kingdom. We often talk about this future, physical kingdom of Jesus Christ on Earth.** Daniel is seeing it come to pass. In this kingdom, **all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion; the Times of the Gentiles has ended, forever. His Kingdom shall not pass away, neither shall it be destroyed.**

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| In verses 15-28, Daniel will receive an interpretation of his dream, much of what we have already covered, but we will begin with that next week as a review. |
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