

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Daniel 7:15 – 8:27 | Session 13 | B.C. 555-553

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

- **Chapter 1:** introduces 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:** revealed 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.
- **Chapter 4:** Daniel interpreted another of Nebuchadnezzar's God-induced dreams of a giant tree cut down, branches and leaves removed, and fruit scattered. The stump and its roots, however, remained. This tree represented Nebuchadnezzar, whose heart (or mind) would be changed and would be given a heart (or mind) of a beast for seven years.
- **In chapter 5:** Daniel is an older man in his 80's, long forgotten by most in Babylon. Daniel was summoned to interpret the handwriting of God upon a wall. That night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom.
- **Chapter 6:** Serving in the Persian empire, Daniel would 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.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVEN.

Daniel has been describing the latter days' prophecy for the nation of Israel known as the Times of the Gentiles. The dream he saw in verses 1-14 of chapter seven, which appears to be the same subject as Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter two, will be explained in more detail in verses 15-28.

Daniel's dream concerns four beasts, and Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a giant statue. But both dreams represent four kingdoms who will rule over and trample down Israel from the time of king Nebuchadnezzar until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory.

It is important to continue to rightly divide the Book of Daniel. The book does not contain prophecy or teaching about the Church or the Body of Christ today. It is about Israel. When we add the Church to Israel's prophecies or promises, we distort Scripture; therefore, while both dreams in chapters 2 and 7 talks of the Kingdom of God and His judgment, the Rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18) is passed over, and not mentioned. In the dispensation of grace, the Church was a mystery and not revealed in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:1-9). Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have no fear of the

Judgment because we are “Saved by grace through faith and that not of *ourselves, we have been given a gift of God.*” (Ephesians 2:8-9, paraphrase).

Chapter seven is not chronological. It steps back into the time of the last king of Babylon, Belshazzar. Daniel is in his 60s.

In our last session, we saw Daniel’s dream and gave some interpretation. In this session, we will add more to the topic.

DANIEL’S DESPAIR OVER THE VISION (7:15)

Verse 15—

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit. Daniel interpreted this dream in another form in chapter 2, and it causes us to wonder why he was **grieved** if he already understood the meaning. Some have said this must have been another dream, but I think we can give a better explanation. Daniel was seeing this dream from a Jewish perspective and the effects of the Times of the Gentiles on his People. In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, he saw it from a Gentile perspective. No doubt Daniel’s dream was much more graphic and horrific. He was grieved in **the midst of his body**, probably meaning it made him sick to his stomach. He was **troubled**, literally, frightened. We might call this type of dream a nightmare.

THE VISION IS EXPLAINED TO DANIEL (7:16-22)

Verse 16—

One who stood by, possibly an angel who stood before the Ancient of days (7:10) **who made known the interpretation of the things.**

Verse 17—

The one who is explaining summarizes the dream for Daniel: **four beasts = four kings.** This is not new information for Daniel but rather a confirmation. **But the saints.... shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever.** While the world empires, controlled by the spirit of the Antichrist, wreak havoc on the world, Israel will remain and not be destroyed. They will overcome through the Tribulation right up to the coming of Christ when they take the kingdom at that time. The word **saints** mean holy ones. We know this is not about us since we are already *with the Lord* when all of this occurs. We do not *take the kingdom*. Christians are not **saints**; we are Christ’s body, complete in Him.

Verse 19—

Daniel understood in the previous three verses, but a part of the dream was **exceeding dreadful.** He requested more **truth** about **the fourth beast.** It **devoured** other nations, **broke kingdoms in pieces, and stamped the residue** (the rest) **with his feet.**

Verses 20-22—

The **saints of the most High** will prevail, however, and will **possess the kingdom.**

MORE DETAIL OF THE FOURTH BEAST IS GIVEN (7:23-28)

Verse 19-27—

The fourth beast: diverse, dreadful, teeth of iron, nails of brass, devouring, destructive, crushing.

I would say most Christians identify this fourth kingdom as Rome. There are some challenges with that interpretation. While Rome did rule with an iron fist, and while it is true that they did conquer nations and tear things down (think of Jerusalem, A.D. 70), their purpose was not **dreadful**.

IS THE FOURTH BEAST ROME?

The primary mission of the Roman military was to preserve the Pax Romana, peace, and order. I don't think it would be incorrect to say that Rome brought relative peace to the world. Often, they are viewed historically as builders. Rome built things. They made roads (some of which are still visible today), cities, aqueducts, and the city of Rome itself was the center of artistic and cultural influence. Rome does not fit the image of what Daniel saw in his vision. Certainly, Rome would not be considered the good guys in everything, but they certainly wouldn't give Daniel an upset stomach. They did control all of Judea, but Rome also allowed the Jews to worship and follow their Jewish faith until A.D. 70. At this juncture, I don't believe Rome was the fourth beast.

IS THE FOURTH BEAST THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATES?

Islam is a different story. The early Muslim conquests of the known world were horrific or dreadful. Islam conquered nearly all the Christian nations throughout large swaths of the world from the 7th century A.D. onward. Their empire stretched from parts of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, across the Middle East, into North Africa, the Caucasus, and parts of Southwest Europe. The rule of the Muslims existed in various forms from A.D. 636 to 1924. They raped, pillaged, murdered, and destroyed. They put entire cities to the sword. In one account, in 1049 (but similar accounts go back to the 7th century), the Muslims reached the unwalled city of Arzden in the Christian kingdom of Armenia. They put *“the whole town to the sword, causing severe slaughter, as many as one hundred and fifty thousand persons”* were killed. The city was filled with bodies, and none could count the number. They even burned priests.¹

In another account, the Muslims destroyed Christian churches and converted others to mosques. One observer noted, *“They ruin the altars with filth and defilement. They circumcise Christians and smear blood from the circumcision over the altars or throw it into the baptismal fonts. They are pleased to kill others by cutting open their bellies, extracting the end of their intestines, and tying it to a stake. Then, with flogging, they drive their victims around the stake until, when their viscera have spilled out, they fall dead to the ground.”*² These horrific stories of **devouring, braking, and stomping** are repeated over and over again for centuries. Could these have been some of the atrocities that Daniel saw?

¹ Ibrahim, Raymond. *Sword and the Scimitar*. Page 105. Hachette Books. New York, NY. 2018.

² Ibid. Page 127.

The fourth beast, or kingdom, will continue in the latter days but in a revived form. We saw this revived empire represented by the ten toes in chapter 2. Similarly, Daniel sees **Ten horns³ that were in** the head of the fourth beast (all representing kings or kingdoms) three of the ten horns fell, but another one came up **that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.** And what did this horn do? **It made war with the saints and prevailed against them.**

But the judgment shall sit. God the Father will judge the little horn, and **his dominion will be taken away.** This will occur at the Second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ when the power of Satan and the Antichrist will be **consumed and destroyed.**

At that time, God's **kingdom and dominion** will come to earth and be **given to the people of the saints.**

Verse 28—

I kept the matter in my heart. Daniel was so **troubled**; that he could not share it at the time. Both his dream and Nebuchadnezzar's cover the span of Times of the Gentiles. Both of the dreams indicate that Israel and her land will be ruled over by world empires, culminating in the worldwide authority of the Antichrist, who will seek to prevent the rule of Christ on earth by destroying His people, the Jews. But in seven years, Antichrist will be destroyed.

This ends the portion of the Book of Daniel written in Aramaic, or Chaldean. Since this first section deals primarily with the Times of the Gentiles, and it was written in the language of the Gentiles, Aramaic. The rest of the book emphasizes not the Times of the Gentiles, but the rescue of the remnant of the nation of Israel and, therefore, will be written in the language of God's covenant people, Hebrew.

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE RAM AND THE GOAT (8:1-27)

HIS LOCATION (8:1,2).

Verse 1,2—

Daniel is still looking back, and while chapter 7 took place in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, chapter 8 occurs in the third year of his reign. Daniel, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes sure the reader knows that the **vision** which **appeared** was **unto me.** He had seen the four beasts in chapter 7, now, **after that,** he sees another vision.

³ The horn is always a symbol or emblem of strength and power.

What we are going to see in this chapter is Daniel focusing on two kingdoms, Persia and the kingdom that would follow it, Greece. He is seeing things that will unfold in the future. There will be allusions to the end times, the Tribulation, and the Antichrist, but in type only. Persia and Greece are the focus.

When he saw this vision, he was in **the palace at Shushan**. **Shushan** was the chief city of all of Persia **in the province of Elam...by the river of Ulai** (oo-lah-ee). He is specific as to his receiving of this vision.

THE RAM (8:3,4).

Verses 3,4—

There stood before the river a ram which had two horns. Verse 20 describes this ram at the kings of Media and Persia. You remember that they came into power during Daniel's lifetime, when he was in his 70s or 80s, and when he interpreted the handwriting on the wall for Belshazzar. That night the Babylonian empire was overthrown, and the Medes and Persians took the world stage. **One horn was higher than the other.** One of the kings evidently became greater than the other. This ram was hostile because it **pushed** the boundaries of world domination and **became great.**

THE HE-GOAT (A MALE GOAT) BREAKS THE POWER OF THE RAM (8:5-8).

Verse 5-7—

The **He-goat** is defined in verse 21 as the Kingdom of Greece. And is likely Alexander the Great. This goat had a **notable horn between his eyes** (horns always symbolize power). The **goat, in the fury of his power, ran unto the ram, and moved with choler** (bitterness) **smote the ram, and broke the two horns**, defeating the ram.

Verse 8—

The **goat** became **very great**, but eventually, **the great horn was broken**, and from the one horn **came up four notable ones.**

A DESTRUCTIVE LITTLE HORN COMES FORTH (8:9-12).

Verses 9,10--

When Alexander died and left the scene, the Grecian empire was divided, and four dynasties rose up. One of them was called the Seleucid Dynasty, which later came a leader named Antiochus Epiphanes who would come up against Israel in a big way. He is the one who **came forth as a little horn** and becomes great and set his sights on **the pleasant land**, that is, the promised land, Israel. And he will become a great persecutor of God's people. The next phrase is more difficult to determine what is meant by **cast down some of the host and of the stars...** Nonetheless, the horn has an agenda to trample down and **stomped upon** Israel.

Verse 11—

The goal of the **little horn** is to **magnify himself** by forcing Israel to stop their **daily** religious ceremonies from taking place in the Temple or **sanctuary**.

Verse 12—

A host was given to him against the daily sacrifice, the *host* here is probably an army that he will use to go up against the Jews and **desolate** the place of the **daily sacrifice**. History records that Antiochus took a pig (Jews don't eat pigs) and sacrificed it on the Temple's altar to humiliate the Jewish people. He even took a statue of Zeus and set it up in the temple. And much of this foreshadows what the Antichrist will do to the Jews and the Temple during the Tribulation

Verses 13,14—

How long shall be the vision concerning this transgression of the sanctuary? Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. This doesn't appear to be a prophecy of the seven-year tribulation. It fits better with a Greek king named Antiochus (who certainly was a foreshadowing or a type of the Antichrist who is to come, as noted in verses 17,23). His persecution of the Jews is well noted in history. He issued decrees forbidding many traditional Jewish practices and halting sacrifices in the Temple. And the cleansing came 2,300 days later when a Jew named Judas Maccabeus led a revolt against Antiochus and won.

DANIEL SEEKS THE MEANING OF THE VISION (8:15-28)

Verses 15,16—

Gabriel. This is the first time the name of an Angel is given.

Verse 17—

O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. This is a good indication this vision goes beyond Antiochus.

Verses 18-19—

End of the indignation, or wrath. This phrase or similar is used in Daniel 11:36; Isaiah 10:25 and is a reference to the end of days. Is this referring to the end of the Times of the Gentiles?

Verses 20-21—

Grecia is translated here anachronistically. The term **Greece** would not have existed but would have been called *Javan*. But the **great horn** is clearly a reference to Alexander the Great, who broke the power of the Persians.

Verses 22-25—

Not in his power. Other kingdoms rise but were not as powerful as Alexander the Great. Daniel is seeing a vision of the destruction of Antiochus, but as already mentioned, it is a foreshadowing of the future Antichrist.

Verse 26-27—

Daniel is instructed to seal the vision until a future time. For Daniel, this was a difficult vision to understand, but it caused him to faint and be sick for days. He went back to work but remained **astonished** by what he saw, and it could not be **understood**.

You might say, what can we possibly learn from a passage like this?

1. We can rest assured that no matter how bad things may get, God is still in control, and He will win in the end. For the Jews, it took 2,300 days. For you, it may be shorter or longer, but hold on to your faith because help is on the way.
2. Similar to #1, Live for the Lord, put Him first, acknowledge Him, and you will have the strength to live in this crazy world.