

Daniel #11

May 19, 2024

Series Title: Daniel's Visions Of the Ages

Today's Message: The Vision of the Four Beasts and the Interpretation; Daniel 7:1-28

Today we resume our study in Daniel.

The easiest way to remember the basic structure of the book of Daniel is to divide the book in two. Daniel 1-6 as history as it pertains to kings and kingdoms and dreams and visions given to the kings, and Daniel 7-12 as it pertains to God sovereignly ruling over those kings and kingdoms and empires and times of completion—end times!

Daniel chapters 1-6 are primarily related to history as it pertains to Babylon and Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar. I believe this to be true because the majority of the revelation of events both contemporary to Nebuchadnezzar and future events are made known primarily to Nebuchadnezzar through dreams. Although we can't ignore the fact that revelation was also made to King Belshazzar in a vision. And we see a portion of Daniel 2 fulfilled when Darius the Mede conquerors of Babylon and begins to rule. We see these things in Daniel 5 and 6.

Now, in Daniel 7-12 we look at history from the standpoint of God's sovereign rule and reign. It is revealed with perfect clarity that God raises up world powers and God brings down world powers! God is revealing the main players and empires of world history to Daniel in visions and dreams. These visions revealed to Daniel in 7-12 span history from Belshazzar to the culmination of human history when as Revelation 11:15 declares, "The kingdoms of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever."

Another important point to understand is that Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are two sides of the same coin prophetically. Both are a prophecy of the world's history spanning Daniel's contemporaries to the end of history, as already mentioned.

I like how R.A. Torrey succinctly overlays the two chapters: "Daniel 2, the Image with its head of gold, chest of silver, belly of brass, legs of iron, feet and toes of mingled iron and clay, tells of four world kingdoms, to be succeeded by a number of sovereignties, some strong, some weak, which would continue till the God of heaven should set up a kingdom never to be destroyed. Daniel 7, the Four Beasts, is parallel to the Image. The same four world-empires are described; the fourth beast, strong and terrible, to be succeeded by ten kings, who should continue till the coming of the Son of Man, who will set up an everlasting kingdom."

One more important note before we look at our outline today. Of the four empires mentioned—Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece and Rome—Rome, though fallen, still exists today as iron and clay and ten horns; however it's presence and influence has become diluted among the nations of the world. But, as Daniel 7 indicates, out of the ten horns will come a "little horn" that will eventually re-form and *reconstitute* and rule over the other nations and keep dominion until the coming of the Son of Man!

The Main Takeaway: Our God is in Heaven and does whatsoever pleases Him. (Ps. 115:3) You can live knowing that God is in complete control of the rise and fall of world powers and rulers. We can therefore live with the confidence that our times are in God's hand! We can say with David in Psalm 31:15, "My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from them that persecute and cause me trouble."

Our outline of Daniel 7 is simple: 1) Daniel 7:1-12, Daniel's Dream and Visions; 2) 7:13-14, The Ancient of Days, the little horn, and the Son of Man; 3) 7:15-28, Daniel is given the meaning of the dream and visions.

1) **7:1-12, Daniel's Dream and Visions**

- A) (7:1) The introduction to the dream, and visions.
- 1) The first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon.
 - (a) Daniel 7 takes place after Nebuchadnezzar and before the Medo-Persian empire defeated Babylon.
 - (i) This time period then would be inserted between Daniel 4 and 5.
 - (a) Daniel 4 the last word on Nebuchadnezzar.
 - (b) Daniel 5 the demise and death of Belshazzar: The writing on the wall.
 - 2) Daniel's dream and visions.
 - (a) Daniel 7 is the first of four visions recorded in Daniel 7-12
 - (i) Daniel 7 is the broadest of the four.
 - (ii) The other 3 go into greater detail of the general events described in Daniel 7.
 - (a) Daniel simply reports the main facts, just as the Holy Spirit designed!
- B) (7:2-3) The origin of the 4 Beasts
- 1) The Great Sea
 - (a) The 4 Beasts came up from the Sea (Mediterranean?).
 - (i) The empires of the visions each had a connection to the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 2) The Great Wind: Four winds of heaven.
 - (a) From God. Psalm 107:25 describes God stirring up a great storm in the Sea.
 - (i) **See Revelation 7:1.** There are 4 angels holding back the four winds of the earth.
 - (a) An angel of God is in command of the angels. But are these angels of Satanic origin, yet subject to the angel of God and unable to function without permission?
 - 3) The great churning up of the sea.
 - (a) Indicates upheaval, turmoil,
 - 4) The Four Beasts, each different.
- C) (7:4-6) The First 3 Beasts are described.
- 1) The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle.
 - (a) Babylon, under Neb's rule. He is described in this way in Jerimiah 49:19-22. Defeating Edom.
 - 2) The Second was like a Bear.
 - (a) Medo-Persian. Not as majestic as the first beast, but it had crushing strength and an appetite for violent and cruel conquest.
 - 3) The Third was like a Leopard, four wings and four heads.
 - (a) Greece. Greece was known for its speedy overthrow of kingdoms.
 - (i) In 12 years, Alexander the Great had subdued a vast area of Europe.
 - (a) When he died, his empire was divided into four parts and ruled by four lesser men.
- D) (7:7-8) The Fourth Beast was described as "Terrifying/ Dreadful," "frightening/ terrible," "different."
- 1) The Roman Empire.
 - (a) 10 horns suggest a strength in unity. Rome was the largest, strongest, and most unified.
 - 2) The Little Horn. Most boastful. Replaced three of the 10 horns. Represents the 4th Beast.
- II) **(7:9-14) The Ancient of Days, the Little Horn, and the Son of Man**
- A) (7:9-10) The Ancient of Days takes His seat on the Throne above all thrones!
- 1) Daniel describes the glory of the throne and the scene surrounding this Great Throne!
 - (a) The Throne of judgment (judgment of fire; **see also Isaiah 66:15-16.**
- B) (7:11-14) The Little Horn (4th Beast) is conquered by the Son of Man!
- 1) The Eternal Destruction of the Little Horn.
 - 2) The Everlasting Dominion of the Son of Man.
- C) Points to think about:

- 1) The Little Horn: Great boasts. The antichrist of Revelation 13:5-6 made great blasphemy.
- 2) The Little Horn represents the 4th Beast. I think this describes the antichrist and his government.
- 3) When the Millennial reign of Christ comes the antichrist will be no more, but there will be some nations still on earth (See Daniel 7:12) but stripped of their dominating power.
- 4) The Son of Man will come with the clouds of heaven (glory) into the Presence of God (7:13).
- 5) He, then, will come will reign forever (7:14), beginning with the 1,000 year reign on earth with Satan bound for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-7).

III) **(7:15-28) Daniel is given the meaning of the dream and vision.**

- A) (7:15-16) Daniel's spirit was grieved in his body. He was greatly unsettled and disturbed.
- B) (7:17-18) Summary interpretation of the vision:
 - 1) The four great beasts are four great kings. Exactly like the vision of Daniel 2.
 - (a) Consider this: In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar sees the gold image representing the triumph the kings of the earth (a beautiful, grand statue). But Daniel 7 depicts God's view of these four as terrible, destructive, and having an appetite for destruction and turmoil.
 - (b) Quite a contrast to our Lord Jesus. He is the Lamb of God, who came for the salvation and life of His people!
 - (i) Rather than bringing destruction, He brings salvation and righteousness and healing in His wings!
 - 2) (7:18) The saints receive the kingdom!
 - (a) Only after the 4th beast is gone! At the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ! Not before!
- C) (7:19-22) Daniel desires to know more about the 4th Beast and the little horn.
 - 1) Why is the 4th beast unusually violent?
 - 2) Why is the little horn more violent than the 10 horns?
 - (a) The little horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them.
 - (i) This must be the antichrist waging war against those who came to faith (Jew and Gentile) during the tribulation, especially the second half (see Revelation 12:17; 13:7)
 - (a) Rev. 12:17: "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast to their testimony."
 - (b) Rev. 13:7: "It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation."
- D) (7:23-27) Daniel learns the meaning of the 4th beast and the little horn.
 - 1) 4th beast will be different in that it will crush the whole earth and reign for a long time.
 - 2) The ten horns are ten kings who will rule the earth. Perhaps they will be assigned regions to govern? For how long will these 10 horns and their governments rule?
 - 3) Then will come a "little horn" who will subdue 3 of the 10 horns.
 - (a) He blasphemes God: See Revelation 13:5-6.
 - (b) He turns against the "tribulation saints" (my opinion: See Revelation 13:7); And the saints will be turned over to the "little horn" for 3 ½ years (antichrist of Revelation 13:5).
 - (c) He will try to overturn and change "set times and laws (Dan.7:25)": God's order of things.
 - 4) (7:26-27) Then he will be "taken away and completely destroyed forever."
 - (a) And" the kingdoms **of the earth** will be handed over to the people of the Most High".
 - (i) Must be the Millennial Period. Saints will govern. See 1 Corinthians 6:2.
- E) (7:28) At the end of the vision and explanation Daniel was very troubled. News of the terrifying rule of the 4th beast greatly grieved him. But He knew the vision was the True Word of God.
 - 1) We will be unsettled by world events, but "our God is heaven and does whatever He pleases."