

Christ's Coming Kingdom, Part 1

Daniel 7:1-28

September 15, 2019

To this point in the Book of Daniel, Daniel has prophesied events pertaining primarily to Babylon through the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the inscription written during Belshazzar's feast. Chapter 7 begins a new section in which God speaks to Daniel through dreams and the angel Gabriel. Daniel switches from narrating in the third person, to narrating in the first person of what he saw and heard.

It is important to note that the prophecy of chapter 7 is very similar to the prophecy of the golden image in chapter 2. Both prophecies foretell the progression of kingdoms which climax in the kingdom of Christ, the "Son of Man." It is interesting that Nebuchadnezzar saw an image of beautiful metals representing coming kingdoms, while Daniel saw those same kingdoms as viscous animals leading up to the kingdom of Christ. To human eyes, the nations of the world are like Nebuchadnezzar's great image, impressive and important; but from God's perspective, the nations are ferocious beasts that attack and devour one another.

1. The Historical Setting (7:1)

- a. "The first year of Belshazzar" was likely a year of international turmoil. Likely, the Persians had already begun to close in on the Babylonians through conquest of portions of the empire. These events would have occurred 14 years before Belshazzar's Feast (Daniel 5).
- b. God spoke to Daniel through a dream with successive visions while he lay on his bed.
- c. "Then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters" – This gives us a picture of how the Scriptures were written. After receiving Divine revelation, the prophet immediately wrote down a summary of the revelation (inspiration; 2 Timothy 3:16), and then declared it.

2. The Details of Daniel's Visions (7:2-14)

a. Important Notes (2-3)

- i. "Upon the great sea" is a direct reference to the Mediterranean Sea throughout the Old Testament. This indicates that the center of Bible prophecy is the Mediterranean.
- ii. "The four winds of heaven" indicate that it is God that sets the nations of the world in motion ("Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind" Jeremiah 51:1).

b. The First Beast: The Lion Representing the Babylonian Kingdom (4)

- i. The Lion is a symbol of Babylon and relates to the head of gold in Daniel 2:37-38.
- ii. Jeremiah 4:6-7 "Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction. The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way..."
- iii. Nebuchadnezzar was also depicted as a lion in the numerous sculptures throughout Babylon; he wanted all to associate him as the king of men just as the lion was the king of the animal kingdom.
- iv. The "eagle's wings" speak of swiftness of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests.
- v. The plucking of his wings appears to be a reference to his conquest coming to a quick end.
- vi. The last part of the verse seems to be a direct reference to God's restoration of Nebuchadnezzar after his 7 year humiliation (Daniel 4).

c. The Second Beast: The Bear Representing the Medo-Persian Kingdom (5)

- i. The bear symbolized the empire of the Medes and Persians who defeated Babylon (Daniel 5) and parallels the arms and chest of silver of Nebuchadnezzar's great image (2:39).
- ii. The bear was raised up on one side because the Persians were stronger than the Medes.
- iii. The three ribs in the bear's mouth likely represent Lydian kingdom (fell 546 B.C.), the Chaldean (fell 539), and the Egyptian kingdom (525), all which were conquered by the Medes and Persians.

d. The Third Beast: The Leopard Representing the Grecian Kingdom (6)

- i. The Leopard stands for the Grecian kingdom of Alexander the Great and his successors and corresponds to the belly and thighs of brass in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:40-43).

- ii. The four wings represent the *speed* of Alexander's conquest in which he expanded his kingdom by conquering the Medo-Persian empire and beyond in only 10 years with only 30,000 men!
 - iii. The four heads of the leopard represent the four-fold division of Alexander's kingdom by his four generals after his death.
- e. The Fourth Beast: The Dreadful and Terrible Beast Representing the Roman Kingdom (7-8)
 - i. The "dreadful and terrible" beast represented the Roman Empire, as strong and enduring as Iron and as uncompromising as a beast on a rampage.
 - ii. The Roman armies swept across the ancient world and defeated one nation after another until the empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean east to the Caspian Sea and from North Africa north to the Rhine and Danube Rivers.
 - iii. Just as in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, elements of the Roman system of government continue through the present day until the kingdom of Christ.
 - iv. The ten horns represent a form of this Roman government that is still yet future. This government will be a league of 10 nations represented by the leopard's 10 horns and the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image.
 - v. The little horn is identified with the Antichrist later in this chapter. We'll look at verse 8 later.
- f. The Final Kingdom (9-14)
 - i. God, the Ancient of Days, judges the kingdoms of this world, seated on His throne along with the 24 elders (Revelation 4:2-4).
 - 1. His kingdom is eternal; while all other kingdoms come and go; God's kingdom is eternal.
 - 2. His white hair and garments picture His holiness (Isaiah 57:15).
 - 3. His throne and wheels of fire picture His judgment (10; Hebrews 12:29).
 - 4. God judges the Beast, the Antichrist, giving him up to the burning flame (11).
 - 5. "The rest of the beasts," the lion, bear, and leopard, have their dominion removed to be given to Christ; their lives are prolonged only by the will of God (12).
 - ii. Jesus, the Son of Man, is presented before the throne of the Father and given dominion over all nations, an everlasting dominion that will never pass away. This is the prelude to the stone being cut out of the mountain to destroy the kingdoms of the world (13-14; cf. 2:34-35, 44-45).
 - 1. Jesus' favorite name for Himself, was the Son of Man. It is used 82 times in the Gospels. In this title, Jesus identifies with us as our, representative and Savior (Philippians 2:1-12).
 - 2. The Son of Man's second coming is in the clouds just as was foretold (Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 1:7).
 - iii. It is important to note that this kingdom is still future; Jesus has not returned to earth in the clouds and the loudmouthed, blaspheming "little horn" has not yet appeared even though he has many similar predecessors.
- g. Application:
 - i. While the empires of this world may inspire awe and admiration, in God's eyes, they are monstrous, destructive, and evil. Therefore, do not be enamored or intimidated by this evil world!
 - ii. The kingdoms of this world are temporary, but Christ's kingdom is forever. Which are you living for?
 - iii. All of us will stand before the Son of Man one day. Will you face Him as Savior, or as Judge?