

Lesson – The Beasts of Daniel 7 are symbolic of kingdoms that would arise.

And four great beasts came up from the sea, different one from another. - Daniel 7:3

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

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Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible text's, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from THE WORD from Online Bible 1.00, or The Power Bible also from Online Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

The prophecy's are Daniel are among the most fascinating in the Bible. They intrigue us as to what the symbols of the images and the Beasts might mean and how they fit in with other similar prophecy's in the Bible such as the Book of Revelation. In this lesson we will take a look at Daniel chapter 7.

Lesson Text - Daniel 7:

1 ¶ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream; he told the sum of the matters.

2 Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, **the four winds of the heavens broke forth upon the great sea.**

Comments -

Representative of a great commotion of peoples and nations, probably as a result of these empires rising and falling.

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, different one from another.

Comments -

These represent four great empires of old that were to come into being, and many commentators see them as the same four empires that Nebuchadnezzar saw as recorded in Daniel chapter 2. That would mean that the first creature described in vs. 4 is symbolic of the then existing Babylonian empire, and in that case the next three after it represent the last three empires of chapter 2 which at the time that Daniel saw this prophecy had not yet come into existence.

4 **The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till its wings were plucked; and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon two feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.**

Comments -

The lion is seen as representative of Babylon. Adam Clarke comments that the King of Babylon is likened to a lion in Jer. 4:7 and Isa. 5:29, and is described as flying like an eagle in Jer. 48:40 and Ezek. 17:3.

*Jeremiah 4: **The lion is come up from his thicket, the destroyer of the nations is on his way; he is gone forth from his place, to make thy land desolate; thy cities shall be laid waste, without inhabitant.***

*Jeremiah 48: **For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab.***

This great kingdom must have been regal and powerful to be properly represented by the kingly symbol of the Lion, chief of the beasts. But it is seen to be humbled, and made to stand upon its feet as a man does and perhaps linked with that thought is the further humbling of its power by being given a man's heart. Maybe this implies that the rulers and the kingdom were forced through their experiences to have feeling and empathy that they didn't in the early days of the kingdom's power. It would make sense that this process began at least during the time that God took Nebuchadnezzar's human reasoning from him specifically to teach him that he was a man and not invincible. See *Daniel 4:28-37*.

5 And behold, another beast, a second, like unto a bear, and it raised up itself on one side; and *it had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and they said thus unto it: Arise, devour much flesh.

Comments -

The second beast, a bear, is reared up on one side with three ribs in its mouth and is understood by many writers as the Medo-Persian Empire. The fact of it being raised up on one side draws attention to the two sides and the Medo-Persian Empire was composed of the two peoples, the Medes and the Persians. It is the only one of the four beasts which is actually instructed to out and conquer more. Adam Clarke lists several ideas about the meaning of the three ribs including that they might represent the three directions "...the east, north and south, which were subdued by the Persians" but indicates that he favored the view that the ribs represented "...Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt which were ground and oppressed by the bear-the Persians..." Media is said to have had the largest bears in its cold mountain woodlands. Commentators have noted that the bear is a voracious predator which they see as a good representation of the Medo-Persian Empire.

6 After this I saw, and behold, another, like a leopard, and it had four wings of a bird upon its back; and the beast had four heads; and dominion was given to it.

Comments -

The third beast is like a leopard but it had four bird's wings on its back, and even more it had four heads! And it was given the ability to conquer, perhaps implying a vaster empire than the two preceding empires. Most of the commentators I have read see this third beast as the Macedonian or Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. Just as the leopard is an agile and quick animal, Alexander the Great conquered rapidly, moving from the Greek area, Illyricum and the Adriatic Sea through to the river Ganges in India. Clarke comments that he had "...in twelve years subdued part of Europe, and all Asia." The four heads, in this understanding, would then symbolize the fact that after Alexander's untimely death at a young age his empire was divided between his four generals "...Cassander reigning over Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus over Thrace and Bithynia; Ptolemy, over Egypt; and Seleucus, over Syria" as per Clarke. The Macedonian Greek Empire of Alexander on its breakup into the four succeeding smaller empires did not have the combined power of the original empire.

7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and exceeding strong; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the rest with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

8 I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another, a little horn, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Comments -

Among commentators who follow this method of interpretation, the fourth beast is understood to represent the Roman Empire which was the next great empire that arose in history after the Greek Empire. It was even larger and more powerful than the other three before it subduing much of the area within the other empires. First Rome conquered Macedonia about a century and a half before the time of Christ, and then Pergamos, Syria and Egypt. The Roman Empire extended its domain into central and western Europe eventually controlling Iberia and a fair portion of Britain.

Of Interest -

I have seen these Beasts interpreted also as representing world powers that could arise in a manner similar to the former ones outlined thus far in our lesson comments. In such an interpretation the Lion, Bear, Leopard, and undescrivable Beast were seen as also forshadowing the modern world powers of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States of America and the fourth again a revival of major portions of the ancient Roman Empire. I don't include this understanding as assured but simply as an interesting understanding in realtion to our current World situation. Probably every generation has seen in these and other prophecies patterns symbolic of their own times.

9 ¶ I beheld till thrones were set, and **the Ancient of days did sit**: his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was flames of fire, *and* its wheels burning fire.

10 A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

11 I beheld therefore, because of the voice of the great words that the horn spoke; **I beheld till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed**, and it was given up to be burned with fire.

12 **As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away; but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.**

13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, **there came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man, and he came up even to the Ancient of days**, and they brought him near before him.

14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

Comments -

The son of man would surely be Christ appearing before God the Father and this at the time of the end of the Great Tribulation covered in the Book of Revelation. The kingdom of the fourth Beast is understood by many commentators of this method to be revived to a large degree in the future end times and allowed to rule and even war against the Saints of God for a short time. It will then be totally destroyed as is seen here in the verses 9-14. The interesting questions in regard to this thought are from where within the area of the four original great empires covered in this chapter, does the leader of this future revived form come. And further, what areas from the original four are to be involved in this revived form of the fourth empire.

15 ¶ As for me Daniel, **my spirit was grieved in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.**

Comments -

my spirit was grieved in the midst of my body – abound in the churchworld and are often glowing and warm. Daniel was given these prophecies from God..and they seemed to involve enough stress and shock to make him sick physically.

16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the certainty of all this. And he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things:

Comments -

and asked him the certainty of all this– It is often difficult to understand how the many prophecies fit together and the exact meaning..but God is able to lead us in our understanding and especially so if we ask.

17 These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, *that* shall arise out of the earth.

Comments -

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings - The matter is now settled. The four beasts are symbols and they represent four kingdoms, some are to exist and the one, Babylon, surely was already in existance att

eh time of this revelation to Daniel.

18 But the saints of the most high *places* shall receive the kingdom, and they shall possess the kingdom for ever, even to the ages of ages.

Comments -

But the saints of the most high...shall receive the kingdom...and they shall possess the kingdom for ever... - Perhaps the most common understandings of this thought are that these saints are the Jewish people. More properly that would be all of the chosen people of God from all of the Tribes once reunited by God Himself. One prophecy about that is in Jeremiah 3:18.

Jeremiah 3:18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel; and they shall come together out of the land of the north, to the land which I caused your fathers to inherit.

Isaiah seems to prophecy about a general movement of the people of God from both the House of Israel and the House of Judah westerly in general after escape from the captivities in first Assyria and secondly Babylon as noted from the locations given in the prophecy in Isaiah 66:19. Also interestingly, the majority of the world Jewish population today is located in the western world.

Isaiah 66: 19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. - ASV

Identification of the locations in Isaiah 66:19 -

Tarshish— ancient Iberia, modern Spain, **Pul** — north east portion of Africa, **Lud** — many say Libya in northeast Africa, some have thought Lydia, **Tubal** — it seems that many think the Tibarenians..if so this is linked in other prophecies with the Moschi(“ .. Rosh, Meshech and Tubal..” - NASB in Ezekiel 38:2)and both are located directly south of the Black Sea, **Javan** — Greece, the Ionian culture, **isles afar off** — the isles further west down the Mediterranean even to the area around Tarshish (ancient Spain) and possibly beyond the straits to the Atlantic coast side. It's interesting that the Phoenician culture, with which the Bible itself indicates that several of the Hebrew tribes had shipping connections and joint maritime efforts, had connections from very early times even as far as through the straits and up the coast to ancient Britain for mining of tin and lead.

19 Then I desired to know the certainty concerning the fourth beast, which was different from them all, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and its nails of brass; which devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped the rest with its feet;

20 and concerning the ten horns that were in its head, **and the other that came up, and before which three fell: even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth speaking great things, and whose look was more imposing than its fellows.**

Comments -

and the other that came up the little horn of vs. 8 ..before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots.. - the AntiChrist of the Book of Revelation.

21 I beheld, and that horn made war with the saints, and prevailed over them;

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prevailed—but not ultimately. The limit is marked by "until" (#Da 7:22). The little horn continues, without intermission, to persecute up to Christ's second advent (#Re 17:12,14 19:19,20).

22 until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most high *places*; and the appointed time arrived, and the saints possessed the kingdom.

23 He said thus: **The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and**

break it in pieces.

Comments -

The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom...which shall be different from all the kingdoms - A fourth kingdom built upon the base of the previous three kingdoms before it. The fourth beast mentioned in Daniel 2 is described as being very strong like iron but composed of different groups of people that will not adhere together well and this will weaken the empire.

References - Daniel 2:

39 ***And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; then another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.***

40 ***And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth everything, and as iron that breaketh all these, so shall it break in pieces and bruise.***

41 ***And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.***

42 ***And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.***

43 ***And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay.***

24 And as to the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall arise ten kings; and another shall arise after them; and he shall be different from the former, and he shall subdue three kings.

Comments -

and another shall arise after them... This is the AntiChrist mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

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24. ten horns—answering to the ten "toes" (#Da 2:41).

out of this kingdom—It is *out of* the fourth kingdom that ten others arise, whatever exterior territory any of them possess (#Re 13:1 17:12).

rise after them—yet contemporaneous with them; the ten are contemporaries. Antichrist rises after their rise, at first "little" (#Da 7:8); but after destroying three of the ten, he becomes greater than them all (#Da 7:20,21). The three being gone, he is the eighth (compare #Re 17:11); a distinct head, and yet "of the seven." As the previous world kingdoms had their representative heads (Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar; Persia, Cyrus; Greece, Alexander), so the fourth kingdom and its Antichrists shall have their evil concentrated in the one final Antichrist. As Antiochus Epiphanes, the Antichrist of the third kingdom in #Da 8:23-25, was the personal enemy of God, so the final Antichrist of the fourth kingdom, his antitype. The Church has endured a pagan and a papal persecution; there remains for her an infidel persecution, general, purifying, and cementing [CECIL]. He will not merely, as Popery, substitute himself for Christ *in Christ's name*, but "deny the Father and the Son" (#1Jo 2:22). The persecution is to continue *up to Christ's second coming* (#Da 7:21,22); the horn of blasphemy cannot therefore be past; for now there is almost a general cessation of persecution.

25 And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most high

places, and think to change seasons and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and a half time.

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25.

time . . . times and . . . dividing of time—one year, two years, and half a year: 1260 days (#Re 12:6,14); forty-two months (#Re 11:2,3). That literally three and a half years are to be the term of Antichrist's persecution is favored by #Da 4:16,23, where the year-day theory would be impossible. If the Church, moreover, had been informed that 1260 years must elapse before the second advent, the attitude of expectancy which is inculcated (#Lu 12:38 1Co 1:7 1Th 1:9,10 2Pe 3:12) on the ground of the uncertainty of the time, would be out of place. The original word for "time" denotes a *stated period or set feast*; or the interval from one set feast to its recurrence, that is, a year [TREGELLES]; #Le 23:4, "seasons"; #Le 23:44, "feasts." The passages in favor of the year-day theory are #Eze 4:6, where each day of the forty during which Ezekiel lay on his right side is defined by God as meaning

a year. Compare #Nu 14:34, where a year of wandering in the wilderness was appointed for each day of the forty during which the spies searched Canaan; but the days were, in these two cases, merely the type or reason for the years, which were *announced as they were to be fulfilled*. In the prophetic part of #Nu 14:34 "years" are literal. If the year-day system was applied to them, they would be 14,400 years! In #Eze 4:4-6, if *day* meant *year*, Ezekiel would have lain on his right side forty years! The context here in #Da 7:24,25, is not symbolical. Antichrist is no longer called a horn, but a *king* subduing three out of ten *kings* (no longer horns, #Da 7:7,8). So in #Da 12:7, where "time, times, and half a time," again occurs, nothing symbolic occurs in the context. So that there is no reason why the three and a half years should be so. For the first four centuries the "days" were interpreted literally; a mystical meaning of the 1260 days then began. WALTER BRUTE first suggested the year-day theory in the end of the fourteenth century. The *seventy years* of the Babylonian captivity foretold by Jeremiah (#Jer 25:12 29:10) were understood by Daniel (#Da 9:2) as literal years, not symbolical, which would have been 25,200 years! [TREGELLES]. It is possible that the year-day and day-day theories are *both* true. The seven (symbolical) times of the Gentile monarchies (#Le 26:24) during Israel's casting off will end in the seven years of Antichrist. The 1260 years of papal misrule in the name of Christ may be represented by three and a half years of open Antichristianity and persecution before the millennium. Witnessing churches may be succeeded by witnessing individuals, the former occupying the longer, the latter the shorter period (#Re 11:3). The beginning of the 1260 years is by ELLIOTT set at A.D. 529 or 533, when Justinian's edict acknowledged Pope John II to be head of the Church; by LUTHER, at 606, when Phocas confirmed Justinian's grant. But 752 is the most likely date, when the *temporal* dominion of the popes began by Pepin's grant to Stephen II (for Zachary, his predecessor's recognition of his title to France), confirmed by Charlemagne. For it was then first that the little horn plucked up three horns, and so became the prolongation of the fourth *secular* kingdom [NEWTON]. This would bring us down to about A.D. 2000, or the seventh thousand millenary from creation. But CLINTON makes about 1862 the seventh millenary, which may favor the dating from A.D. 529.

26 And the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

27 But the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high *places*. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Comments –

The little horns empire is not destined by God to last for long or ultimately prevail. It is for a limited time. The ultimate kingdom will be given by God to His Chosen people and it will be an everlasting one.

28 So far is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my thoughts much troubled me, and my countenance was changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart.

Summary

The prophecy's in this chapter 7 of Daniel are understood to refer to ancient kingdoms that arose and affected the chosen people of God in very strong ways. The final kingdom is indicated to in the future last days be revived in some form for a short space of time and it will once again persecute the people of God until finally destroyed by God Himself.