

The Vision of Four Beasts and The Advent of the Son of Man

Daniel 7

Part 1; Verses 1-14

Daniel's vision is in parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's dream from Chapter 2. Both portray a series of four world empires followed by the establishment of the Kingdom of God. However, the perspectives on the world empires are different, and Daniel 7 reveals different details about the world kingdoms, God's Kingdom, and the way in which God's Kingdom comes.

Daniel 2



Babylon
605-539 BC

Medo-
Persia
539-331 BC

Grecia
331-168 BC

Rome
168 BC-476 AD

Daniel 7



Daniel 7

Introduction

Daniel 7 is a divine revelation given directly to Daniel alone. It reveals the sinister nature of world kingdoms under whom the persecuted saints must live. Yet, it also offers greater comfort than the dream in Daniel 2 by its fuller presentation of the saints' Messiah and the eternal kingdom He will establish for them. In this respect, this section of Daniel 7 will closely resemble and draw many parallels to the Book of Revelation.

There are four major emphases that emerge from Daniel 7:

1. God governs all world history for the sake of His Kingdom of Grace, which will consist of His redeemed people;
2. God's Kingdom comes through the ministry of the Messiah, who establishes and receives the authority over this eternal Kingdom (vv. 13, 14);
3. The benefit of God's people will be given to them from the Messiah as He establishes His Kingdom, and;
4. Eschatology, more developed in Daniel 7, with many parallels to Rev. 4-5 and 19-20.

Thus, Daniel 7 is the fulcrum point of the entire book; the interlocking device that unites:

Historical Narratives (Ch 1-6) Eschatological Visions (Ch 7-12)



**Daniel
7**

Daniel 7

Introduction

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

The time is the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, which is 553 B.C. Daniel receives this vision in a very important time of world history. Cyrus the Great is about to defeat his grandfather, Astyages, and will then rule the newly formed Medo-Persian Empire.

Notice that this is Daniel's vision. Prior to this time, it was Nebuchadnezzar who has the dreams and Daniel interpreted. Here Daniel has the vision and it's interpreter is an angel of God!

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

The dream is very troubling to Daniel. The doom and gloom it portrays is one of far greater consequence than the fall of Babylon. The details are vivid to Daniel, and as we shall see, it reveals the fate of Babylon and all future powers who, frankly, fail to acknowledge God as God!

It's also important to remember that Daniel writes this chapter in Aramaic, the political language of the day, since it is meant as a warning to Babylon and all succeeding kingdoms.

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

In his vision, Daniel looks, actually the phrase, “*I looked*” or a variation of this phrase, occurs seven times in this chapter. Essentially, in Aramaic, Daniel “*gazes intently*.” He is fixed, in fear and awe, of what he is seeing. Then Daniel sees the, “*four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.*” This is interpreted as meaning that divine influence was going to be involved in the events of coming world events. The sea is often used in Daniel, and in Revelation, as being the affairs of the world and all the churning chaos that is created and out of this chaos will arise four great beasts. Why beasts?

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth



Daniel 7

Verses 1-3

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

As we know from history, human kingdoms often begin with the idea of being good for man, but over time they become oppressive and destructive to its citizens – beastly! And this is what Daniel sees; as does John in Revelation.

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth



The first beast is described as looking like a lion. This represents the predator-like way in which Babylon has subdued the people which it ruled; the symbol

corresponds with the “*Head of Gold*” in Chapter 2. Babylon was the first nation to hold imperial domination. The beast has wings like an eagle, which symbolizes the rapid way in which the Babylonians had conquered the nations.

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth



Daniel sees the wings torn off the lion; its most effective power was now removed. This began as Nebuchadnezzar was humbled (Ch. 4). It was lift up

from the earth – “...*so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it*” represents the humanizing of the beast and its waning domination.

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

There are several places where a bear follows a lion in the Bible. The bear was the beast regarded as the second most dangerous.

“Raised up on one side” refers to the federation that overcame Babylon, but the Persian half was superior to the Median half of the kingdom.



The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

Three ribs are in the bear's mouth...an indication that the new kingdom would reach beyond the borders of the Babylonian empire. The number three has no bearing on the vision other than to point out the greatness of the beast. The Medo-Persian's did indeed conquer a great deal of area. Thus, the ribs may refer to its three greatest conquest; Lydia in 546 BC; Babylon in 539 BC; and Egypt in 525 BC.



The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

The final part of the verse is a command of the bear to do much devouring. Thus, the bear was commanded and allowed to defeat and subjugate many nations. Yet, in the Medo-Persian greed for more and more, they were unable to defeat the next beast.



The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

The march of kingdoms continues, as the next kingdom is seen as a leopard with four wings. This kingdom is characterized by the speed with which it will overtake the earth. The leopard is a swift animal, though not as powerful as a lion.

The leopard is also a beautiful animal. Its fur was used to make expensive coats. The leopard may look beautiful, but its speed and viciousness are also a part of its nature. Thus, this kingdom would appear beautiful but would be no less vicious than its predecessors.

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

This description fits perfectly with the speed and agility utilized by Alexander the Great. He conquered the Medo-Persians with only 30,000 soldiers, by using speedy, agile attacks, counterattacks, and surprise tactics.



This beast also had four heads, thus after the death of Alexander the Great (the first head), the Greek Empire was divided amongst his four generals.

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth



Ptolemy I Soter



Seleucus I Nicator

Daniel 7

Verse 6

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

The next beast is the most terrifying beast of the group. This beast symbolizes the last kingdom and it will be worse than its three predecessors, since it will yield power like has never been seen before as depicted with iron teeth, ten horns, and stomping feet .

The first feature of this beast is its teeth, which are of iron. This would give the teeth the ability to tear and devour. This is a fearsome power. Only one empire ever possessed this power, the **Roman Empire**, which ruled with an iron hand for centuries and kept its subjects under sway by sheer force. If anyone got out of line, the Romans came in and subdued them under foot!

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

The most intriguing symbol of this beast are the ten horns. The number ten represents, in the Bible, completeness.



The dominion of Rome will be completely overwhelming and completely devastating.

Daniel 7

Verse 7

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

As Daniel is contemplating the ten horns, a little horn arises and three horns are uprooted. The verb for uprooted:

אֶתְעַקְרָה is passive. Thus, it's God's action and by His permission.

The eyes and mouth of this horn indicates a human personality/institution. This little horn is in parallel with Rev. 13:11-18, the beast from the earth (the false prophet); later, this beast mutates into the great harlot or false church, that's ultimately cast into the Lake of Fire with the devil.

The Ancient of Days Convenes Court

These verses and 13-14 are written in a poetic style by Daniel as he now gives us a vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man! Again, this vision is quite similar to Rev. 4-5 and 19-20.

The setting is the convening of the Divine Court. The awesome stature of the Ancient of Days, God the Father Almighty, appears to set up His Court. This description of God is one of the grandest word pictures painted by the prophets.

The Ancient of Days Convenes Court

The court is in session and the books were opened. Daniel notes that the horn with eyes and a mouth is still present. Daniel simply reports he watched until the beast was slain--no details were given--then the beast's body was cast into the fire.

God speaks and it is done! Each Aramaic verb used by Daniel is passive – indicating that God is exercising His Divine power as a result of His Divine verdict!

The Four Beasts and The Horn With Eyes and a Bragging Mouth

Daniel notes that the rest of the beasts are stripped of their power, although *“length of time was given them for a season.”* What this means is that the influences of the former kingdoms and world powers would still be part of the world’s culture, but they would not have any power.

The Son of Man

This is the climax of this chapter. Here we have the goal of all human history. This is the victory of the kingdom of Christ over all the kings and emperors that aspire to rule the world.

A figure emerges, not particularly resplendent by appearance. He appears in the “*clouds of heaven.*” Clouds have many times been an indication of God’s presence (cf. Ex.13:21ff; Ex.19:1ff; Is.19:1ff; Ezek.10:4; Ps.18:10).

The New Testament writers all describe Christ as returning to Judge the world as coming in the clouds.

The Son of Man

There can be no doubt that the figure is Jesus, God's promised Deliverer. He is "*like a Son of Man*" which refers to His human nature (cf. Rev. 1:13; 14:14).

In the vision, the Son of Man is brought before the Ancient of Days. This is the GREAT DAY prepared from the foundation of the world, since this Son of Man has been chosen that in His triumph over sin, death, and the power of the devil, all history, even the history of the kingdom of God would reach its consummation.

At this point, Daniel's vision gives place to reality as he beholds the majestic ceremony in which Christ is given domination.

The Messiah's Enthronement

The portrayal of the Son of man is of a Messiah who is both Divine and Human. This matches the claims about Jesus in the New Testament both in respect to the use of this passage and in respect to the two Nature of Jesus Christ.

His Enthronement in Daniel 7 is also enacted in Psalms 2 and 110 as the following chart on the following slide will depict.

Daniel 7

Verses 13-14

Daniel 7	Psalms 2	Psalms 110
Four beasts (nations) come from the sea to rule oppressively over God's people before the Advent of the Messiah (1-8, 17, 19-21, 23-25)	Nations oppose God and His Messiah (vv. 1-3)	
The Ancient of Days convenes His royal Court (8-10)		
Decree of the Divine Court: The Son of Man is installed as eternal King over all nations (13-14)	God's decree: God mocks the rebels and installs His Messiah as King to rule all nations (4-9)	God's decree: God installs David's Lord as King at His right hand to rule over His enemies (1-3)
		God's decree: The Messiah is Priest forever (v.4)
Decree of the Divine Court: the beasts are shorn of power and slain (11-12, 26)	Admonition to the nations: serve the Lord and kiss the Son or you will perish (10-12a)	The Lord and His Messiah crush kings and fill the nations with corpses (5-6)
The Ancient of Days comes and decrees in favor of His Saints; they receive the Kingdom for eternity (18, 22, 27)	Those who take refuge in the Son are blessed (12b)	

¹ Steinmann, Andrew, E. *Daniel*. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008, p.360.