

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening, we are going to move into a new portion of the book of Daniel.

I had mentioned previously that the first six chapters in the book of Daniel provide us with a historical account of Daniel's life in Babylon.

We learned about the adversity he had to go through, his decision not to compromise and how God continued to use Daniel by opening doors and situated him in places where he was going to remind the rulers who really is in control.

Our chapter tonight begins the prophetic portion of the book of Daniel.

In the next six chapters, we will see a record of four different visions that were given by God to Daniel concerning future events.

And chapter seven is significant because it provides us with a panoramic view from the times where Daniel was living to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

This includes the tribulation period and the antichrist.

Let's pray...

[Dan 7:1-28 NKJV] 1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head [while] on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, **telling the main facts.**

The name Belshazzar should sound familiar to us – he was the king that decided it would be a good idea to throw a big party and use some of the golden cups that his grandfather had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem.

He is the king that saw the writing on the wall.

So, before all of this happened, during his early reign. Daniel had a dream and a vision from God.

What is the difference between a dream and a vision?

A dream indicates it was received as he slept and a vision indicates that it was received as he was awake.

Both the dream and the vision are of divine nature – meaning that they are from God and as we will see, they were both intended to reveal events that were going to happen in the future.

And Daniel writes down the dream he received.

Now, I asked you to make a note that Daniel writes down only the main facts – there is a lot more that Daniel saw in the vision that was not recorded.

As we read Daniel's dream, we are going to see many similarities between his dream and the one that Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter two.

You might remember that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a statue that was made of different metals –

There are similarities but there are also differences. I will point those out.

Let's look at the dream -

2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.

The mention of the Great Sea here in verse two – is most likely a reference to the Mediterranean Sea.

This was the only sea or ocean that Daniel and the rest of the people that lived during this time period would be familiar with.

Interestingly, the Gentile Empires that are going to be mentioned in the vision that is given to Daniel (Babylon, Medes and the Persians, Greece and Rome) – they all had a physical connection to the Mediterranean Sea.

[Show map...](#)

3 "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

So in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we had the four body parts made of different metals – in Daniel's dream, we have these four beasts that come out of the sea – they are pointing to the same empires.

4 "The first [was] like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

Daniel's vision includes four beasts.

When we hear the word beast, we usually think of Bigfoot or the abominable snowman.

But these beasts refer to wild animals that are distinct from each other.

And in the same way, these four empires were distinct in how they came to power and how they ruled.

The first beast in Daniel's vision is described as a majestic beast, the lion is commonly referred to as the king of the beasts and the eagle is also referred to as the king of the bird kingdom.

This beast is King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream – it was the head of gold.

Lions and eagles beasts are very common in Babylonian artwork, even a winged lion.

The plucking off of the wings, standing like a man, and the "man's heart" all seem to refer to Nebuchadnezzar's humbling by God,

Because Nebuchadnezzar would not humble himself before God, he was humbled.

Nebuchadnezzar spent seven years of his life eating and mooing like a cow until he finally looked up and recognized that God was greater than he was (Dan. 4).

5 "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and [had] three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

The next animal that comes out of the sea is the bear – the bear represented the Medo-Persian empire.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, it was represented by the breast and arms that were made of silver.

They were the ones that conquered Babylon.

The reason that it says that it was raised on one side was that the empire was a partnership between the Medes and the Persians and the Persians were the ones that dominated the relationship.

In two weeks when we go over chapter 8, we will see that Daniel has another vision where he sees a ram with two horns – and one of the horns is higher than the other one – and later on in the chapter, Gabriel – the angel interprets that vision and tells Daniel that the two horns on the ram represent the kings of the Medes and the Persians.

The three ribs in the mouth of the bear may represent the three major nations that the Medes and Persians conquered on their way to forming their empire.

6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

The leopard here represents that Greek Empire.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, it was represented by the belly and thighs made of bronze.

Leopards are known for their sudden attacks – it is a fast animal and the Greeks under Alexander the Great conquered much of the area in just 12 years.

From Macedonia all the way to the region of India.

The four heads and the four wings represent how the empire was divided in four parts and ruled by four of his generals after the death of Alexander the Great at the age of only 32.

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It [was] different from all the beasts that [were] before it, and it had **ten horns.**

The fourth beast in Daniel's vision is the Roman Empire.

It is indescribable to the point that Daniel cannot associate it to an animal.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream it was represented by the legs of iron.

This beast had 10 horns and horns in the ancient world spoke of power.

And two of the characteristics of the Roman Empire was that it was powerful and merciless.

That is how it survived for such a long time.

I asked you to make a note of the ten horns because many believe that this is in reference to the ten nation confederacy of the revived Roman Empire during the period of the great tribulation, under the authority of the Antichrist.

8 "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, [were] eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

This little horn is no other than the Antichrist.

Turn with me to the book of Revelation 13,

[Rev 13:4-6 NKJV] 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is

able to make war with him?" 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

The Antichrist will be given the ability to deceive people with his words.

In fact, he will make peace with the people initially – especially the Jews.

But once he tries to force them to worship him, they will reject him and then he will turn on them.

We will be seeing Daniel making more references to the Antichrist in the next few verses and chapters.

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the **Ancient of Days** was seated; His garment [was] white as snow, And the hair of His head [was] like pure wool. His throne [was] a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

The Ancient of Days is in reference to God.

He is described in human terms as being "ancient" with white hair. He has been around since before time began.

God's age doesn't mean He is fragile and ready to die. It means that He is wise and perfect in His judgment.

And that is what we have here in verse 10 – this is judgment day.

Church, God's judgment isn't going to be based on what kind of mood He was in when you faced Him, His judgment is going to be based on clear evidence, all the evidence.

"The books were opened" indicates that there are records in heaven of what happens here on earth.

When God judges the world, no one will be able to say that they didn't get a fair deal.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

Here in verse 11, we have the destruction of the Antichrist.

And in the book of Revelation 19:20, it says that when Jesus returns, He will cast the antichrist into the lake of fire.

12 "As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, [One] like the **Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.**

14 Then to Him was given 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 [the one] Which shall not be destroyed.

This portion of scripture describes the transition from human dominion to divine dominion.

The title Son of Man is found 83 times in the gospels and of course, it refers to Jesus Christ.

This is Jesus Christ setting up His everlasting kingdom.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, this was the stone that was cut out without hands that struck the image.

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within [my] body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 "I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

As Daniel is seeing this vision, he is troubled by what he sees.

This entire thing with the four beasts and the little horn is really troubling him.

He could not make sense of the vision that he was given to him.

So just like God used him to provide the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar –

Someone provides the interpretation to Daniel – most likely, it came from an angel.

17 'Those great beasts, which are four, [are] four kings [which] arise out of the earth. 18 'But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

The interpretation that was given to Daniel is very brief.

The four beasts are four different empires – but they will ultimately be succeeded by the kingdom of God and that kingdom will have no end.

I believe we find the theme to the vision here in verses 17 and 18.

Daniel wants more insight on all the beasts – yet, the interpretation given to him is – God is in control.

19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, [with] its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, [which] devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 "and the ten horns that [were] on its head, and the other [horn] which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance [was] greater than his fellows. 21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 "until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was

made [in favor] of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Daniel wants a more detailed interpretation.

The fourth beast interested Daniel because of its great destructive power, because of the conspicuous horn, and because of its fight against God's people (the same horn was making war against the saints).

The world will never know anyone as ruthless as the Antichrist.

Not only does Daniel give us insight on some of the attributes of the Antichrist – look at what Paul says in 2 Thes 2,

[2Th 2:5-12 NKJV] 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains [will do so] until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they

should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The reason that he will be able to deceive so many people and act so wickedly is because Satan will empower him to do so.

23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all [other] kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns [are] ten kings [Who] shall arise from this kingdom. And **another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first [ones], And shall subdue three kings.**

The ten horns are ten kings that come out of the old Roman Empire.

Many believe that this is the revived Roman Empire –

This portion hasn't happened yet –

The Roman Empire was never divided into 10 kings or 10 kingdoms.

This is something that will happen before the 2nd coming of Christ.

These 10 horns are also described in the book of Revelation.

That is why there is so much speculation that the Antichrist will emerge from somewhere within Europe.

He is the other horn that is spoken of in verse 24.

He will rule politically, militarily, economically and even spiritually over the people.

25 He shall speak [pompous] words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then [the saints] shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

Not only is the Antichrist going to speak blasphemous words against God - he will attempt to change what God has already done.

He will also persecute the saints, he will harass them.

And there are some who will point to this verse and say, Daniel 7, proves that the church will go through the Tribulation.

However, the thing that they forget is that there will be people during the Tribulation period that will repent and turn to God.

There will be people that will not take the mark of the beast -

These are the saints that Daniel speaks of here.

And Daniel tells us that this persecution will occur for a three and half year period.

26 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy [it] forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people,

the saints of the Most High. His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

Once again, this is a description of Jesus Christ returning to the earth and overcoming the fourth beast and establishing a period of 1000 years, known as the millennial kingdom.

28 "This [is] the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart."

Daniel is incredibly disturbed by what he's seen.

It deeply bothers him.

The question becomes, why was Daniel so disturbed knowing that in the end, as we saw in verse 27, Jesus establishes His kingdom and the 4th beast is wiped out.

The reason that Daniel is so disturbed is because he saw the trouble and the persecution and the chaos that was going to occur before Jesus' sets His Kingdom.

Church, one of the things that we must ask ourselves this evening is, are we bothered by prophecy.

Do we truly believe what the word of God says ? –

because Daniel believed what he saw in the vision and it bothered him.

When we read about what the bible says about what is going to happen in the future, does it stir us to go out and tell other people the good news?

Because that is what God's prophetic word is supposed to do.

Let's pray...

