

Daniel Chapter 7

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Introduction:

1. Now the Book of Daniel changes from *mainly* history to *mainly* prophecy.
2. This prophecy expands for aging Daniel the vision he saw as a young man of the metallic man prophecy in chapter two where the empires were the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman.
3. The timing of this vision can be seen in verse 1. It was during the reign of Belshazzar, about *two years prior* to the handwriting on the wall.
4. We have moved from the historical portion of Daniel where we can be reasonably sure of being right into the prophetic portion where we cannot be as sure.
5. One anchor point for understanding is if other inspired writers make the same connection.

DANIEL'S DISTURBING DREAM

(7:1.) Earlier, during the first year of King Belshazzar's reign in Babylon, Daniel had a dream and saw visions as he lay in his bed. He wrote down the dream, and this is what he saw.

- We are reading a *summary* of Daniel's video **visions** and **dream**.

(2.) In my vision that night, I, Daniel, saw a great storm churning the surface of a great sea, with strong winds blowing from every direction.

- **Storm:** Was from the Lord.
A Great sea: Probably humanity.

(3.) Then four huge beasts came up out of the water, each different from the others.

- The diversity (**different**) *compares* to the separate metals of gold, silver, bronze and iron in the image in chapter two. The **beasts** (kings) were not alike. The main characteristics of their

rule were presented as animals, enhanced (like adding wings) to portray features such as swiftness.

- The **beasts** arose in succession, not all at the same time.

THE UPRIGHT LION

(4.) The first beast was like a lion with eagles' wings. As I watched, its wings were pulled off, and it was left standing with its two hind feet on the ground, like a human being. And it was given a human mind.



- These were *developing* images. **As I watched** It was unfolding.
- **The first beast** was Babylon. Jeremiah said that Nebuchadnezzar was like a lion.

"The Israelites are like sheep that have been scattered by lions. First the king of Assyria ate them up. Then King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon cracked their bones."

(Jeremiah 50:17 NLT)

- Changes took place with the **winged** lion. Its **wings** were removed and it stood on its **hind feet like a human being**. The changes could describe what happened to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 4 as he lost his arrogance and ruled as a thoughtful statesman.

"When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before. (Daniel 4:36 NLT)



The black-and-white drawing is from *Daniel* by Paul Butler, published by *College Press*. Color added by Amy Kubow for her grandfather.

THE HUNGRY BEAR

(5.) Then I saw a second beast, and it looked like a bear. It was rearing up on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And I heard a voice saying to it, "Get up! Devour the flesh of many people!"



- **The Wycliffe Commentary** says,
 “The bear is an apt symbol of the Medo-Persian kingdom. Strength and ferocity figure in almost every Biblical use of the bear. The ponderous bulk fits the massive Persian armies. Xerxes is said to have moved two and one-half million men to attack Greece.”
 (from *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)
- The Persian Empire was much larger than the previous empire of Nebuchadnezzar. This was one hungry **bear** and he was told to eat even more.
- **Paul Butler** says:
 The Persian Empire was voracious; it devoured quite a bit more than did Babylon and attempted to devour as far as Macedonia and Greece. All in all, the vision emphasizes a greedy voraciousness over against the royal dignity that marked the first beast.

THE LEOPARD WITH WINGS

(6.) Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a leopard. It had four bird's wings on its back, and it had four heads. Great authority was given to this beast.



- While Daniel watched the visions, a winged **leopard** with **four heads** appeared. The **leopard** was the Greek Empire. Whereas a lion is generally peaceful, **a leopard** will attack for the sake of attacking. And its attacks were rapid as though it had **wings**.
- The **four heads**: Following the death of Alexander the Great at 32 years of age, his Greek Empire was divided, Lysimachus receiving Asia Minor and Thrace, Seleucius Nicator receiving Syria and Mesopotamia, Cassander receiving Greece and Ptolemy Soter receiving Egypt, Arabia and Palestine. So the leopard came to have four heads.

THE UNNAMEABLE BEAST

(7.) Then in my vision that night, I saw a fourth beast -- terrifying, dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with huge iron teeth and trampled their remains beneath its feet. It was different from any of the other beasts, and it had ten horns.



- This **fourth beast** was the Roman Empire. There was no animal like it, so no name was assigned.
- It was more ferocious than any previous **beasts**.
- The **iron teeth** are consistent with the **iron** in the lower part of the metallic man in Daniel 2:40.
- Daniel used **horns** to represent kings. A sample is:

The shaggy male goat represents the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes represents the first king of the Greek Empire. (Daniel 8:21 NLT)

THE LITTLE HORN AROSE

(8.) As I was looking at the horns, suddenly another small horn appeared among them. Three of the first horns were torn out by the roots to make room for it. This little horn had eyes like human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly.



- Here the beast had 10 **horns**, perhaps 10 indicating a large number rather than specific, nameable powers.
Leupold suggests that the whole idea between the ten with the three that are rooted up, and one which supplants the three, is comparative. If one replaces three, it becomes quite a bit larger than any one of the others, yet the **small horn** does not grow as strong as the others horns combined.

MILLIONS AT THE HEAVENLY COURT

(9.) I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One sat down to judge. His clothing was as white as snow, His hair like purest wool. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire, (10.) and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from His presence. Millions of angels ministered to Him; many millions stood to attend Him. Then the court began its session, and the books were opened.

- This is a heavenly **throne** room scene. Nothing else could qualify.
- **Paul Butler** says,

“The Eternal One is well aware of all the deeds and acts of men and kingdoms and is, therefore, well able to pronounce judgment in all justice. He is clothed in holiness and purity, symbolized by his white garments, and His nature is wisdom symbolized by His white hair.”
- Those **attending** (vs. 10) are **millions of angels**.
- Judgment was based on law written **in books** (vs. 10), not on personal feelings. Even God does not judge men that way.

(11.) I continued to watch because I could hear the little horn's boastful speech. I kept watching until the fourth beast was killed and its body was destroyed by fire. (12.) The other three beasts had their authority taken from them, but they were allowed to live a while longer.

- **Albert Barnes** writes:

“The little horn continued speaking (vs. 11) great things. Daniel looked on until he saw a solemn judgment passed on this fourth beast, as if God had come forth in his majesty and glory to pronounce that judgment, and to bring the power and arrogance of the beast to an end.” (from *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)
- The language the world marketplace in New Testament times was *Greek*, so the Greek empire had its life extended because of its language's popularity. The *Latin* language was mainly for legal purposes outside of Italy.

THE SON OF MAN IS GIVEN A PERMANENT KINGDOM

(13.) As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into His presence.

- The four beasts had arisen from the *earth*, Vs. 3,17, while this **son of man** comes with the **clouds of heaven**, pointing to a different place of origin. The animal figures are dropped and now the vision takes on a very literal form.
- The phrase **son of man** occurs in the Old Testament and especially in Ezekiel where it is used more than 80 times by the prophet to refer to himself. Jesus used **Son of Man** to reveal Himself to His listeners, but also to conceal His identity too, not always calling Himself the Messiah. Jesus was fully man (Luke 24:39) as well as fully God (John 20:28) and His humanity is seen in this, His favorite name for His earthly self.
- Jesus called Himself the **Son of Man** frequently and applied *this very verse* to Himself when He was tried before Caiaphas, the high priest.

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Well, aren't You going to answer these charges? What do You have to say for Yourself?" But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to Him, "I demand in the name of the living God -- tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus replied, "You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, "Blasphemy! Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard His blasphemy.**" (Matthew 26:62-65 NLT)**

Caiaphas knew that Jesus was not claiming to be Ezekiel, but that He was applying this Daniel passage to Himself. Caiaphas also knew that Daniel's **Son of Man** was the Messiah of Israel and that was the claim Jesus was making. The High Priest charged Jesus with *blasphemy*, but he was the *blasphemer*

because he rejected all evidence that Jesus was Daniel's **Son of Man**.

(14.) He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey Him. His rule is eternal -- it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

- He was given authority:

Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18 NLT)

- He was given . . . honor:

Now He is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as He had promised, gave Him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. (Acts 2:33 NLT)

- He was given . . . sovereignty:

Jesus had something real people to rule over. Many translations use *kingdom* in place of **sovereignty**. Peter speaks of the **eternal kingdom**:

Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11 NLT)

THE TERRIFIED PROPHET

(15.) I, Daniel, was troubled by all I had seen, and my visions terrified me. (16.) So I approached one of those standing beside the throne and asked him what it all meant. He explained it to me like this:

- Looking back from our time, the animal visions fit the rise of kingdoms. Looking forward from **Daniel's** time, the **visions** were painful and scary.

(17.) "These four huge beasts represent four kingdoms that will arise from the earth. (18.) But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever."

- There is a **kingdom** that the **holy people** possess. It is that eternal **kingdom** ruled by the Son of Man. Vs. 14.

(19.) Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, the one so different from the others and so terrifying. It had devoured and crushed its victims with iron teeth and bronze claws, trampling their remains beneath its feet. (20.) I also asked about the ten horns on the fourth beast's head and the little horn that came up afterward and destroyed three of the other horns. This horn had seemed greater than the others, and it had human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly.

- Daniel was especially inquiring about the **fourth beast**.
- Daniel's inquiry centered on the **ten horns** and the **little horn** that had **eyes** and a big **mouth**.
- This **little horn** achieved more power than the others.

(21.) As I watched, this horn was waging war against God's holy people and was defeating them, (22.) until the Ancient One -- the Most High -- came and judged in favor of His holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

- This militant **horn** was waging war against God's holy people and was winning until **the Most High** intervened. **The Ancient One** came and judged.
- **Taking over the kingdom** seems equivalent to inheriting the kingdom in other passages.

(23.) Then he said to me, "This fourth beast is the fourth world power that will rule the earth. It will be different from all the others. It will devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in its path.

- **This fourth beast** is the *Roman Empire*. The vision of the metallic man in chapter two points to the same conclusion.
- It covered a wider area than the previous empires. It can be viewed in segments as indicated by the ten horns.

(24.) Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will subdue three of them.

- After the **ten kings** will be the diverse one that puts down **three** of the **ten kings**.

(25.) He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time.

- Big Mouth is more than political, he speaks against **the Most High** and oppresses **the holy people**.
- Big Mouth will attempt to change the calendar and **laws**. **Wayne Jackson**, editor of the *Christian Courier*:

The Roman church was the most powerful force in Europe — a little horn that became more stout than its fellows. By the time cardinal Hildebrand became pope (1073), he was affirming that the Roman pontiff should not only be the universal head of the church, but also the ruler of the world.

Jackson says later in his article:

In conclusion, we believe that, taking all factors into consideration, there is no entity in history that so fits the description of the “little horn” of Daniel 7 as that of the papal dynasty of the Roman Catholic Church.

Burton Coffman draws the same conclusion in his work on 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. He points out that this view was held by Alexander Campbell, Martin Luther, Pope Gregory I (!), and was in the *Westminster Confession*, controlling document of the Presbyterian Church.

(26.) "But then the court will pass judgment, and all his power will be taken away and completely destroyed.

- **Judgment** here is more than an event, it is an ongoing process. The *Roman Catholic Church* is still in the world, but crumbling.

(27.) Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last forever, and all rulers will serve and obey Him."

- The **kingdom** of Big Mouth declines and is eventually destroyed while the **kingdom** ruled by **the Most High** expands and is permanent.

(28.) That was the end of the vision. I, Daniel, was terrified by my thoughts and my face was pale with fear, but I kept these things to myself.

- *The Message Translation* says:

"I, Daniel, was in shock. I was like a man who had seen a ghost. But I kept it all to myself."

- **Daniel** only *wrote* his vision. He did not *proclaim it* to those nearby or the Jewish community.
- **Daniel** would be terrified as he thought about his own people and Big Mouth. This insight would frighten any person with a heart for his own people.

MUSIC BOX

Come, let us sing to the LORD! (Psalms 95:1 NLT)

Verse	Search for:
7,13	Ancient of Days