

## ***Session 1 The Four Beast Kingdoms (Dan. 7:1-8)***

outline of Daniel 7:1-8

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introduction

Daniel 7 is Daniel's first of four visions in Daniel 7-12. It highlights how God will use four world empires for His purpose of bringing Israel to salvation and preparing them for world leadership, as He establishes His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. It also reveals the certainty of victory and the intensity of the battle that Israel and the Church will have in the end times, as they stand together against the unprecedented evil that will manifest in the Antichrist's empire.

In 603 BC, while Daniel was a young man, possibly in his late teens, God gave him prophetic insight into the same kingdoms that He revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream (Dan. 2) the four Beasts (Dan. 7) and the great statue (Dan. 2)

Daniel 7 confirms and elaborates on what was given in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. We must compare Daniel 7 with Daniel 2 to gain more understanding; they are from different perspectives.

Nebuchadnezzar saw four mighty kingdoms represented by precious metals in a statue of a glorious man (2:31-45). The head was gold, the chest and arms were silver, and the belly and thighs were bronze, etc.

Nebuchadnezzar saw these kingdoms from man's perspective—as glorious, like gold and silver. Daniel saw these same kingdoms, but from God's perspective—as wild beasts that devour all that are in their path.

The head of gold represents the Babylonian Empire (606–539 BC). The chest and arms of silver represent the Medo-Persian Empire (539–331 BC). The belly and thighs of bronze represent the Greek Empire (331–146 BC). The legs, feet, and toes of iron and clay represent the Antichrist's empire as foreshadowed by the Roman Empire (146 BC–1453 AD).

<sup>31</sup>“You, O king, were watching...a great image...<sup>32</sup>This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,<sup>33</sup>its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.<sup>34</sup>You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet...<sup>35</sup>The iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together...the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” (Dan. 2:31-35)

The two legs of iron represent the two divisions of the Roman Empire—the western division (146 BC–476 AD) and the eastern division (330–1453 AD). The two feet with 10 toes are parallel to the 10 horns in the Daniel 7 vision. They represent the 10-king confederation under the Antichrist (2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).

<sup>41</sup>“You saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided...<sup>42</sup>And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.” (Dan. 2:41-42)

The stone that struck the image speaks of Jesus and His eternal kingdom (2:35, 44-45). The stone being cut without hands means that it has a divine origin. The stone will consume all the other kingdoms and shall stand forever (2:44).

<sup>44</sup>“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.<sup>45</sup> Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.” (Dan. 2:44-45)

Daniel’s vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7:1-8)

Daniel saw four winds stirring the Mediterranean Sea, bringing upheaval to the nations (7:1-3).

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven [**angelic and demonic activity**] were stirring up the Great Sea

[**Mediterranean**]. <sup>3</sup>And four great beasts [**empires**] came up from the sea, each different from the other.” (Dan. 7:1-3)

**The first year:** Belshazzar’s reign over Babylon began in 553 BC. This was 14 years before Israel was freed from Babylon. This vision gave Israel hope in the midst of their suffering as captives in Babylon. Daniel was about 70 years old when he had this vision.

**Daniel had a dream:** He had visions of his head while on his bed at night. He wrote down the dream, telling only the main facts.

**Great Sea:** Scripture describes the Mediterranean Sea as the Great Sea (Num. 34:6-7; Josh. 1:4; 9:1; 15:12, 47; 23:4). The sea represents the kingdoms of man being filled with chaos (Isa. 57:20). The empires that are highlighted in this vision include nations near the Mediterranean Sea—nations in the Middle East, Europe, and North Africa.

<sup>20</sup>“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest...” (Isa. 57:20)

**Four winds of heaven:** These winds symbolize spiritual forces, both angelic and demonic, that stirred up the nations of the Middle East, Europe, and North Africa, etc. This represents God’s orchestration of history in appointing nations to rise and fall.

**Four great beasts:** Daniel saw four wild animals—each represented an ancient empire in the Mediterranean region, which persecuted Israel and caused great turmoil in the region.

**First beast:** A lion with eagle's wings refers to the Babylonian Empire, 605–539 BC (7:4).

The lion (Jer. 4:7; 49:19; 50:17, 44) and the eagle (Jer. 49:22; Lam. 4:19; Ezek. 17:3; Hab. 1:8) were both used in the Scripture to describe the Babylonian Empire.

<sup>4</sup>“The first [**Babylon**] 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.” (Dan. 7:4)

**Like a lion:** This speaks of being strong, majestic, and courageous.

**Had eagle's wings:** This speaks of military speed.

**Its wings were plucked off:** This speaks of being humbled.

**A man's heart was given to it:** This speaks of being domesticated.

**It was made to stand:** This implies standing like a man instead of like a lion, which cannot attack or devour others when standing on two feet.

The reference to the wings being plucked off, being made to stand on two feet like a man, and being given a man's heart, is seen in Nebuchadnezzar's experience in Daniel 4.

**Second beast:** A bear with ribs in its mouth refers to the Persian Empire, 539–331 BC (7:5)

<sup>5</sup>“Another beast [**Medo-Persia**], 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!’” (Dan. 7:5)

**A bear:** Medo-Persia was like a fierce bear, with slow but steady military progress.

The bear, after the lion, was the second most dreaded predator at that time in that region.

The bear was larger and more cumbersome than the lion, yet it had great strength.

**One side:** It was raised up on one side. This speaks of the Persian dominance over Media.

This parallels the ram with one horn raised higher than the other (8:3).

The beast raised on one side represented the greater strength of Persia; it coincides with the two-horned ram of Daniel 8, whose one horn was larger than the other.

**Three ribs:** The three ribs in its mouth represented the three major kingdoms it conquered as it rose to power: Lydia (546 BC), Babylon (539 BC), and Egypt (525 BC).

**Arise, devour much flesh:** God mandated Persia to arise and conquer more nations.

**Third beast:** A leopard with four wings refers to the Greek Empire, 331–146 BC (7:6).

<sup>6</sup>“I looked, and there was another [**Greece**], 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.” (Dan. 7:6)

**Like a leopard:** Greece was fierce, agile, fast and cunning. The leopard is known for its quickness and its cunning.

**Four wings:** Having four wings of a bird spoke of its amazing speed in military conquest.

**Four heads:** After the death of Alexander the Great, four of his generals divided up his kingdom into four separate kingdoms. This parallels the four notable horns of Daniel 8:8.

**Dominion:** This spoke of the Greek government and culture pervading the ancient world. Alexander did not simply conquer kingdoms militarily. He won them over to the Greek language and way of life. Hellenization impacted the whole ancient world.

**Fourth Beast:** This refers to the Antichrist as foreshadowed by the Roman Empire (7:7-8).

This beast has three stages—the *ancient empire* (146 BC–1453 AD); an end-time *confederation* made up of 10 kings and the Antichrist’s *dictatorship* ruling over the 10-nation confederation.

<sup>7</sup>“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.” (Dan. 7:7)

**A fourth beast:** The ancient Roman Empire prophetically foreshadowed, or pictured, the Antichrist’s end-time empire made up of a 10-nation confederation (Rev. 17:12-13).

**It had ten horns:** A 10-nation confederation will align with the Antichrist. The 10 end-time nations are symbolized here by 10 horns; in Daniel 2 they are seen as 10 toes (2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).

<sup>24</sup>“The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom.” (Dan. 7:24)

<sup>12</sup>“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast [**Antichrist**]. <sup>13</sup>...they will give their power and authority to the beast... <sup>17</sup>God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.” (Rev. 17:12-17)

**Dreadful and terrible:** Daniel was deeply troubled by the terror of this beast (7:15, 28). If we are not troubled by what Daniel shared about the Antichrist, then it means that we have not yet understood what he saw.

**It had huge iron teeth:** Iron teeth speak of the ability to devour anything—unstoppable.

The huge, or massive, teeth correspond to the legs of iron in the statue (2:33, 40-41), emphasizing its overwhelmingly destructive power.

**Trampling the residue with its feet:** This speaks of continuing to trample a nation after it is already defeated. The Antichrist will show no mercy or kindness towards those he conquers; he is ruthless and cruel, and will crush and trample everything that was not initially destroyed in the hostile military takeover.

**It was different:** The Antichrist’s empire will be energized by demonic power. The beast was so terrifying and ferocious that there was no animal to compare it to.

<sup>2</sup>The dragon [**Satan**] gave him [**Antichrist**] his power, his throne, and great authority... <sup>13</sup>He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven... (Rev. 13:2, 13)

Daniel emphasized four times that the Antichrist is different from all other kingdoms (7:7, 19, 23, 24). This detail is far too important to overlook.

<sup>19</sup>“...the fourth beast, which was different from all the others...” (Dan. 7:19)

23. “The fourth beast... shall be different from all other kingdoms...” (Dan. 7:23)

24. “...another shall rise after them; he shall be different...” (Dan. 7:24)

The Antichrist is the “composite beast” in which all the former beast kingdoms will culminate and find expression. He is more than *a* beast, but is *the* beast, who incorporates all the former beast kingdoms, including the evil spirits, territory, and ethnicity of the four former kingdoms.

While focusing on the 10 horns, he saw a little horn (7:8).

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.” (Dan. 7:8)

**Little horn:** It speaks of a political leader that starts out “little,” or with a small sphere of authority and influence, as a seemingly insignificant regional leader.

The fact that the little horn is mentioned four times in this vision (7:8, 11, 20, 21) tells us how important this detail is. It is very significant and must not be overlooked.

The little horn is the Beast of Revelation and the man of sin in Paul’s teaching

(2 Thes. 2:3). The little horn is the wicked prince who will take away the sacrifice in the temple (8:11; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Mt. 24:15). The little horn of Daniel 7 is the same little horn of Daniel 8:9, and the despicable person of Daniel 11:21.

Hitler is an example from recent history of a leader who started out as a “little horn,” or an insignificant regional leader, who became a “big horn,” a major world leader. In 1928 he ran for president of Germany and received only 2% of the vote. However, within five years (1933), he became chancellor of Germany. His rise to power came very suddenly, and it surprised many.

**Eyes like a man:** In this horn were eyes like a man, which speaks of great intelligence.

**Mouth speaking pompous words:** The Antichrist will speak pompous, arrogant words. His arrogant words will create fear (threats) and/or excitement (false promises) in the nations. His arrogant words are emphasized four times in this chapter (7:8, 11, 20, 25).

8. “In this horn [**was**]... a mouth speaking pompous words.” (Dan. 7:8)

20. “...that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words.” (Dan. 7:20)

25. “He shall speak pompous words against the Most High.” (Dan. 7:25)

36. “The king... shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods...” (Dan. 11:36)

**Three horns plucked out:** Three of the first horns or kings will be plucked out by the roots, or killed, in a violent overthrow led by the Antichrist. This is part of how he will seize control of the 10-nation confederation and come onto the world stage as a leader. When these three world leaders are killed, the Church will understand it as a prophetic sign of the times—knowing that the Antichrist will soon be manifest on the world stage.

8. “...before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots.” (Dan. 7:8)

**Coming up among them:** The Antichrist will first come up “among them” (7:8) as a peer, then he will “arise after them” (7:24) and seize control of the 10-nation confederation.

Three stages of the fourth beast

This beast has three stages: the *ancient empire* (146 BC–1453 AD); the end-time *confederation* made up of 10 kings, and the Antichrist’s *dictatorship* ruling over the 10-nation confederation. The ancient Roman Empire prophetically foreshadowed, or pictured, the Antichrist’s empire.

**The ancient Roman Empire**: This includes the western (146 BC–476 AD) and the eastern (330–1453 AD) divisions of the empire. The Eastern Roman Empire, also called the Byzantine Empire, lasted for 1,000 years after the fall of Rome and the Western Roman Empire.

The Eastern division was started either by Emperor Diocletian in 285 AD or Emperor Constantine in 330 AD, when the capital transferred from Rome to Byzantium, later known as Constantinople and Nova Roma (New Rome), and today as Istanbul in Turkey. It was the most powerful economic, cultural, and military force in Europe at the time.

By seeing that the Roman Empire did not stop in 476 AD, but continued until 1453 AD in its eastern division, we see that Antichrist’s empire has historic roots in Islamic nations. The eastern Roman Empire covered part of the Middle East. The former beast kingdoms will “live on” in the future beast kingdoms. The Roman Empire “lives on” through the influence of countries in the territory of both its eastern and western divisions.

In 1453 the Eastern Roman Empire fell to the Ottoman Empire, with its dominant Islamic rule and culture, which swept into the Middle East and Europe. The “spirit of Rome” lives on in the Islamic governments that have ruled and still rule that region.

The Antichrist may come from the geographic territory associated with the eastern division of the Roman Empire (8:9). This overlaps with the region where Antiochus ruled the Seleucid Empire—the overlap includes **Syria**, and parts of Turkey and Babylon (Iraq), etc. Antiochus Epiphanes’ rule was a type of the Antichrist—foreshadowing his reign.

<sup>8</sup>...the large horn [**Alexander the Great**] was broken, and in place of it [**Greek Empire**] four notable ones [**four Greek generals**] came up...<sup>9</sup> And out of one of them came a little horn [**Antichrist**] which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. (Dan. 8:8-9)

**A 10-nation confederation**: An end-time empire will arise that will initially be under 10 kings.

It will cover geographic areas that include some territory from the eastern and western divisions of the ancient Roman Empire, geographically and ethnically.

<sup>24</sup>“The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom.” (Dan. 7:24)

<sup>12</sup>“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast [**Antichrist**].<sup>13</sup> ...they will give their power...to the beast.” (Rev. 17:12-13)

Geographic territory and ethnic continuity are important in understanding the end-time implications of this vision.

This confederation will probably be made up of mostly Islamic nations, leaders, and people living throughout the Middle East, Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

The Antichrist’s 10-nation confederation will probably be mostly Islamic. A non-Islamic leader ruling the Islamic world against Israel is unlikely.

Ezekiel prophesied that the Antichrist would bring with him various Islamic nations to fight Israel (Ezek. 38:5-6). Gomer and Togarmah both refer to modern-day Turkey.

<sup>5</sup>“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them [**Antichrist’s army**], all of them with shield and helmet; <sup>6</sup>Gomer [**Turkey**] and all its troops; the house of Togarmah [**eastern Turkey**] from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you.” (Ezek. 38:5-6)

The fourth beast may be divided between the east and west—the two legs (2:33), and separate toes (2:41-43). It

may be that one leg is in the east and one is in the west.

**The dictatorship of the Antichrist:** The Antichrist will “arise after” the 10-nation confederation is in power. He will arise to take it over (7:24). He will lead a violent overthrow of the government to seize control of the 10-nation confederacy by having three of the kings killed.

<sup>24</sup>“The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise...and another shall rise after them; he [**Antichrist**] shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.” (Dan. 7:24)