

Daniel's Vision of Things to Come

Lesson Eight: Daniel Seven

Introduction:

- A. In this section we find strange visions that unveil God's future plans for man. They were not intended to answer every question, but they give us a panoramic view of what God has in store for both believers and unbelievers.
- B. These are unusual times. We have all felt the rumblings of collective panic at times. But scary as it is to live with global pandemics, governmental and education cooperation to capture the minds and hearts of our children and the evil perverseness of satanic movements, **these are good days to be a Christian**. And good days **to be the church** and have the **Word of God in our hands**.

DANIEL'S DREAM

- A. Daniel is no stranger to difficulty. God gave him this vision about five and a half centuries before Christ, when Daniel was in exile. The situation was dire and had been for about seventy years. In this context God gave Daniel a vision **to shock** and **to comfort** him.
- B. Daniel's dream can be divided into **two sections**: the dream and the interpretation.
- C. There are four scene changes:
 - 1. The four great beasts (vs. 2-8).
 - 2. Then the Ancient of Days takes his seat (vs.9-10).
 - 3. Then the beasts are judged and the fourth is destroyed (vs. 11-12)
 - 4. And finally, God gives the eternal kingdom to one called "The Son of Man" (vs. 13-14)
- D. The second section is even simpler.
 - 1. In verse fifteen we learn the **effect** the vision had on Daniel.
 - 2. Then Daniel asks one follow-up question in verses nineteen through twenty, and the angel answers in verses twenty-three through twenty-seven.
 - 3. All that is left is verse twenty-eight where we find again the effect the vision had on Daniel.
- E. This prophecy is not meant to turn readers into investigators, but to inspire faith, hope and worship. It is designed to affect us as it did Daniel.
- F. The vision is future to Daniel, but it is partly future and partly past to us.

- G. Chapter seven covers the same ground as chapter two. It takes in the whole course of the times of the Gentiles. The difference is that chapter two sees it from the standpoint of man and chapters seven sees it through the eyes of God.

THE VISION OF WINDS AND ANIMALS

- A. The four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea.
- B. Evil powers terrorize God's people.
1. In verse three, Daniel sees coming up out of the sea (which represents chaos and disorder) four beasts. Each is different from the others, and more threatening than the one before. Verse seventeen tells us that they are "**four kings who shall arise out of the earth.**"
 2. The first one is like a lion with eagle wings – Babylon.
 3. The second is like a bear with three ribs in its mouth – Medo-Persia.
 4. The third is like a leopard with wings and four heads – Greece. *A pattern is developing here of escalating evil and power and rebellion against God.*
 5. Finally, comes the fourth beast which is "**different from all the beasts that were before it.**" (v.7)
 6. The final beast (which is just a beast, not identified with any known animal) has ten horns, a symbol of power. Verse eight tells us "**There came up among them another horn, a little one.**" Twice Daniel mentions it "**mouth speaking great things.**" (vs. 11, 20)
 7. This little horn has two targets: God and his people. (vs. 21-25)
 8. So, we have a snapshot of history: evil powers arise and terrorize God's people. Then the scene shifts.
 9. Important things to notice:
 - Each beast is of such a character as to picture the leading feature of the empire.
 - These kingdoms are successive in their rising, but one does not completely destroy the other.

THE VISION OF THRONES AND JUDGMENT

- A. Here Daniel's dream shifts from a vision of the antichrist on earth to a vision of future things in heaven.

- B. Into the confusion and terror of these threatening, escalating, seemingly uncontrollable beasts, the vision pivots and Daniel sees that ***“thrones were placed”*** (this is a judgment scene) and ***“the Ancient of Days took his seat.”*** (v.9)
- C. Ancient of Days emphasizes his eternality. ***“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”*** (Psalm 90:2)
- D. Verses nine and ten tells us that he is clothed in white to reflect his purity and his hair is like wool to reflect the wisdom amassed from endless ages.
- E. Verse ten says that ***“the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.”***
 - 1. Now the beasts face the reckoning for their evil.
 - 2. Verse twelve says the lives of the first three beasts ***“were prolonged for a season and a time,”*** but the fourth is immediately destroyed and his arrogant mouth silenced. (vs. 11, 26)
 - 3. No threat, no challenge and no prolonged struggle.
- F. This is what the book of Daniel has emphasized, in stunning fashion, from the very beginning.

THE SON OF MAN RECEIVE THE KINGDOM

- A. Who is the ***“Son of Man?”***
- B. This passage describes the transition from human dominion on earth to divine dominion.
 - 1. This is what God promised David in 2 Samuel 7:13-16.
 - 2. This is what God says to his Son in Psalms 2.

THE SAINTS JOIN WITH CHRIST

- A. A people called ***“the saints.”***
- B. The people of God, the saints, the Church play a stunning part in the culmination of history.
- C. God meant for this to give great comfort to his people, through Daniel, in exile, 2500 years ago.

HOPE FOR THESE TIMES

- A. The glimpse of the end is meant to give great hope in our times of chaos.

1. It gave great hope and comfort to Jesus, the Son of Man, when he stood in front of Caiaphas the high priest, and said as did Daniel, ***“You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*** (Matthew 26:64)
 2. It gives hope today in our chaos and anxiety.
- B. Our God is in control and heaven rules.
- C. Daniel’s dream and Jesus’s fulfillment as the Son of Man, and God’s promise to us as his church that we will reign with him, gives us solid hope.