

## Daniel 7:7-14

Last week we began our study of Daniel chapter 7. We have now entered the mostly prophetic section of the book. As noted last time Dan 7 opens with Daniel experiencing a dream vision which parallels the dream of Neb in Dan 2, however whereas Daniel interpreted the dream for Neb, an angel interprets Daniel's dream-vision. We noted last week the dream of Neb is seeing these empires from man's perspective, while Daniel's vision is seeing these empires from God's perspective.

We noted Daniel's dream-vision had three components:

- a. The first vision is recorded in verses 2-6, where Daniel sees three beasts each corresponding to a part of the image that Neb saw in Dan 2. We noted the first beast was a lion with eagles' wings which corresponded to the head of the image and represented the empire of Babylon.  
The second beast was an asymmetric bear with three ribs in its mouth corresponding to the chest and arms of the image and represented the Medo-Persian empire. The bear was asymmetric because the Persians became greater than the Medes, and it had three ribs in its mouth indicating three major conquests: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt.  
The third beast was like a leopard with four wings and corresponded to the belly and thighs of bronze of the image and represented the Hellenistic empire of Greece-Macedonia. The wings of the leopard emphasized the speed with which Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian empire.
- b. The second vision is recorded in verses 7-12, which describes the fourth beast, the little horn, the Ancient of days, the judgement of the fourth beast and the three other beasts.
- c. The third vision is noted in verses 13-14, which describes events at the end of the age and Christ's return.

### **The Second Vision, vs 7-12.**

The second vision can be divided as follows.

- a. The Fourth Beast, vs 7.
- b. The Little Horn, vs 8.
- c. The Ancient of Days, vs 9-10.
- d. The Destruction of the Fourth Beast, vs 11.
- e. The Three Other Beasts, vs 12.

### The Fourth Beast, vs 7.

*Vs 7, After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its*

*victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.*

In the previous descriptions of the other beasts, Daniel noted they were like animals he knew; the first beast was lion like, the second was bear like, and the third was leopard like. This beast is unlike anything Daniel has seen. He has no words to liken it to. Its characteristics are that it is *terrifying and frightening and very powerful*. It is also far more ferocious than the other beasts.

It is also worth noting a bit of history here. Rome was unique in its state policy of conquest. It incorporated newly conquered peoples and would offer citizenship to willing participants to Romanize them, making them willing collaborators in the Roman imperial system. This system of rewards and incentives allowed Rome to often rule indirectly using natives who were allied with Rome who would control their own people. Rome would also play off one conquered group against another through a complex network of alliances and treaties so they would provide for the common defense.

Resisting Rome was a terrible idea, as Daniel was prescient and noted Rome had *had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left*. The mention of *iron* connects this passage with the iron legs of Neb's image in chapter 2. Rome *crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left*. This is a description of how Rome treated its enemies. Of all of Rome's opponents, Carthage was its greatest threat. After a series of three wars, Carthage was finally annihilated in 146 BC, with the complete destruction of its civilization.

This fourth beast corresponds to the legs and feet of Neb's image in chapter 2. In our discussion of chapter 2, we noted the legs and feet of Neb's image represented a fourth world empire best described as Imperialism. It has multiple stages, three of which are described in chapter 2,

- a. The united stage (2:40)
- b. The divided two-division stage (2:41)
- c. The ten-division stage (2:42-43)

The united stage was fulfilled by the Roman empire, while the divided stage was fulfilled by the Roman empire being split between Rome and Byzantium (later Constantinople). Now here is an important concept. Think of the entirety of western civilization and the locus of its power. From roughly 612 BC to 486 AD that locus was Rome. It then shifted to Constantinople after Rome was sacked in 486 and remained there till 1453 when Constantinople was sacked. It then shifted westward again to the revived remnants of the residual Roman Empire: Italy, France, England, and Spain. Over the years, this locus of power has expanded to North America and Western Europe. But there is also a locus of power in the residual remnants of the old Roman Empire in the East, notably Asia minor, the Middle East, Iraq, Iran, and Russia. What I am saying

is we have an East -West division of power. This is what Daniel meant by the divided stage, we have an East -West division and so today we are still in Daniel's second stage of prophetic history.

The mention of the *ten horns* corresponds to the ten toes of Neb's dream. These horns will be more fully explained as we get to verse 8, and 11.

In summary, this fourth beast is unique in that it is indescribable but characterized by its *terrifying and frightening* appearance, its power, and its ferocity.

### The Little Horn, vs 8.

*Vs 8, While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.*

Verse 8 notes that while Daniel was contemplating the ten horns of this beast an eleventh horn appeared which was smaller than the rest. Yet it had strength for it *uprooted* three of the other horns. This horn is also distinct in that it has human characteristics; it *had eyes like that of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully*. The word *boastfully* is also translated "great things" and means arrogance and pomposity.

Note now there are seven of the original horns left with this smaller, powerful, and boastful horn who is now the eighth horn and not the eleventh anymore for three have been torn out.

In chapter 2 Daniel noted the fourth beast had three stages: the unified stage, the divided stage, and the ten-division stage. The ten-division stage of Dan 2 corresponds to the ten-horn stage of chapter 7. If we now compare this information with 7:8, we see there is an additional stage which we can call the little horn stage. This stage will be more fully explained as we move through the chapter.

### The Ancient of Days, vs 9-10.

*Vs 9-10, As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.<sup>10</sup> A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.*

Note the scene now shifts from earth to heaven. *Thrones were set in place* is an indication that a divine meeting is about to take place. Since judgement is to be pronounced this divine meeting can be viewed as a divine court. The phrase to *set in place* comes from the Aramaic root remah and means to cast or throw and in the KJV it is translated to *cast down*. The best analogy here is setting up chairs for judges to sit in a courtroom (see 1 K 22:19).

*The Ancient of Days took his seat.* This is a reference to God the Father and this title only appears in Daniel 7 (see also vs 13,23).

*His clothing was as white as snow.* This phrase emphasizes God's holiness.

*The hair of his head was white like wool.* This is not a reference to age as God is eternal, rather it is a description of God's purity. (see Is 1:18).

*His throne was flaming with fire.* Scripture often associates fire with the presence of God, especially his Shechinah glory (see Ex 3:2, 19:16, Deut 33:2). It is also associated with judgement (see Deut 4:24, Ps 97:1-5).

*Its wheels were all ablaze.* Not only was the throne aflame, it had wheels which were also burning (Ez 1:13-21 describes a similar scene).

*A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him.* This again, is a picture of judgement.

*Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.* Daniel now turns his attention to beyond the throne where God is sitting, and he notes innumerable angels standing before the throne. The book of Revelation makes clear angels are the means through which God mediates his judgements upon the earth. So here we have *thousands upon thousands* of angels awaiting God's command for what they are to do.

*The court was seated and the books were opened.* Walvoord notes this is a reference to Mt 25:31-46 which is known as the sheep and the goat judgement. It is that time in history when God will judge the nations at the end of the Tribulation period and reward and punish them for how they treated the Jews during this period of history.

#### The Destruction of the Fourth Beast, vs 11.

Vs 11, *Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.*

The scene now shifts back to earth and Daniel is again focused on the little horn of verse 8. The phrase, *I continued to watch*, indicates rapt attention. As the Ancient of Days convenes a Divine court of judgment, the little horn of verse 8, spews forth *boastful words*. Then the beast, the fourth world empire described in verse 7, is destroyed. Note the following:

- a. The fourth beast is destroyed in the little horn stage.
- b. The fourth beast is slain.
- c. Its body is destroyed.
- d. Its body will be burned.

While the identity of the little horn is yet to be revealed, we can infer from verse 11 he is the embodiment of the last beast and will be destroyed. Note its body will be burned. This ties to the *river of fire* coming from God's throne in verse 10 and is consistent with Rev 19:20, *But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*

### The Three Other Beasts, vs 12.

Vs 12, *The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.*

Verse 12 now addresses the three other beasts described in verses 2-6. I like the NASB translation which states, *their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.* This verse can be interpreted in two ways, and both are true. First, we know from history the empires of Babylon, the Medes and Persians, and the Greeks, have all passed away, yet we live with the remnants of these empires today. Though Babylon is fallen we still have the nation of Iraq. Though the Medes and Persian empire is gone, we still live with the nation of Iran. Though Alexander is dead we still have the nation of Greece. So, the remnants and descendants of these empires are still in the world today.

A second interpretation is derived from Rev 13:1-2, *The dragon<sup>[a]</sup> stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.*

The description of John's beast is like Daniel's description. The body of John's beast resembles a leopard, its feet of a bear, and its mouth of a lion. In Daniel's vision the leopard is analogous to the Hellenistic empire, the bear the Medo-Persian empire, and the lion, the Babylonian empire. The similarities between John's beast and the three beasts of Daniel's vision suggest that these three empires left their mark on the fourth. In other words, somehow the remnants of the past three empires of Daniel's vision in chapters 2 and 7, will influence and make a mark on the later stages of the fourth empire (beast) to come.

### **The Third Vision, vs 13-14.**

Daniels third vision is noted in verses 13-14. Verse 13 describes Christ's second coming while verse 14 describes the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

Vs 13, *In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,<sup>[a]</sup> coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.*

The phrase, *son of man*, is used frequently in the OT is a reference to human beings (see Jer 49:18, Ez 2:1). In the NT it is used 88 times and again refers to one's humanity. The Messianic connotation of this phrase comes from this verse and Ps 80:17.

Note Christ comes *with the clouds of heaven*. Acts 1:9 notes Christ ascended into heaven in a cloud. He will return to earth a second time in the clouds (see Mt 24:30, Lk21:27, Acts 1:11, Rev 1:7).

Used symbolically, the term cloud means God's Shekinah Glory (see Ex 13:21, 40:35, 1 K 8:11, Ez 10:4). This all means when Christ comes again, He will return not only with physical clouds but with his full Glory. This is why Rev 1:7 states, *Look, he is coming with the clouds,<sup>[b]</sup> and "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him."<sup>[c]</sup> So shall it be! Amen.* Everyone will see him because his Glory will light the whole earth.

The latter phrase of the verse, *He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence*, notes that prior to coming to earth, Jesus will be led (by angels) to God's throne (a reference to verse 9). Here Jesus will receive the mandate to rule over the earth (see verse 14).

As an interesting aside, Jesus had the imagery of this verse in mind at his trial in Mt 26:57-64. Note vs 63-64: *But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."* <sup>64</sup> *"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.*

Jesus interpreted Dan 7:13 in reference to Himself. He is the Son of Man who at his second coming, will come in full glory with the clouds of heaven.

Vs 14, *He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

Verse 14 describes the mandate God gave Jesus. Note the following characteristics of Christ's mandate,

- a. He was given *authority*. Jesus is given authority (some translations have dominion). This means Christ will rule as an absolute dictator. He will reign absolutely as the verse notes, all nations and people will worship him.
- b. He was given *glory*. Some translations have honor. Authority means Christ will have control over what all men do. Honor means he will have control over what all men think. Everyone will give Christ honor.
- c. He was given *sovereign power*. Jesus is given power to rule His own Kingdom—the Messianic Kingdom.
- d. Note the scope of Christ's Kingdom extends to *all nations and peoples of every language who will worship him*.
- e. Note this Kingdom is *everlasting*. The other earthly kingdoms were destroyed but this one will not be. It will be forever and not subject to the power-hungry desires of men.

This verse states the end of the times of the Gentiles. History will culminate in Christ's return and the establishment of His reign within his Kingdom upon the earth A kingdom where everyone will worship Him, and it will last forever.