

Daniel 7

The early American Indians had a unique practice of training young warriors. On the night of a boy's thirteenth birthday, after learning hunting, scouting, and fishing skills, he was put to one final test. He was placed in a dense forest to spend the entire night alone. Until then, he had never been away from the security of the family and the tribe. But on this night, he was blindfolded and taken several miles away. When he took off the blindfold, he was in the middle of a thick woods and he was terrified! Every time a twig snapped, he visualized a wild animal ready to pounce. After what seemed like an eternity, dawn broke and the first rays of sunlight entered the interior of the forest. Looking around, the boy saw flowers, trees, and the outline of the path. Then, to his utter astonishment, he beheld the figure of a man standing just a few feet away, armed with a bow and arrow. It was his father. He had been there all night long.

I imagine Israel felt like they had been abandoned. They were in captivity. Yet, Yahweh had a message for them and for the most powerful ruler & empire on the face of the earth—Babylon. The message? ***Yahweh alone is in control and he has not forgotten about his people.***

With the world seemingly imploding, we can feel like God has forgotten about his promises of returning as well. But we will see in this passage that ***Yahweh alone is in control and he has not forgotten about his people.***

I. Dream/Visions (vv1-14)

Assyrian to Babylon (612 B.C.), to Medo-Persia (539 B.C.), to Greece in (331 B.C.), to Rome (gradually starting in 241 B.C., ended 410 AD)

Intro (vv1-3)

- First year of Belshazaar's reign (553 B.C.), coregent with his father, Nabonidus (hand writing on the wall actually happened on the last day of his life)
- Daniel = about 68 yrs old (captive at 16)
- Vision came during the reign of the last king of Babylon.
- Sea (Mediterranean = sea of humanity), wind or spirit/angels (judgment)

Lion w/ wings of an eagle (v4)

- Kings of their realms
- Babylonians – Nebuchadnezzar had been compared to a lion and an eagle (Jer 4:7; 49:19-22), Babylonian winged lions can be seen in the British museum.
- Humbled (wings were plucked off, if in mid-air, he would have crashed to the ground) and made human (a man's heart/mind was given to it). This could be a ref. to ch 4 or how Babylon was humbled after his death.

Bear (v5)

- Slower and stronger than lion (Arise, devour much flesh!)
- Medo-Persian Empire, succeeded Babylonians (Medes & Persians), one side was stronger (probably referring to Persians, cf. 8:3, 20).
- Three ribs = 3 conquests (Babylon, Egypt and Lydia) or 3 parts (Media, Persia, and Babylon)
- Dan heard voices encouraging the bear to devour much meat

- "The Medes and Persians are compared to a *bear* on account of their *cruelty* and *thirst after blood*, a bear being a most voracious and cruel animal." (Clarke)
- Liberal scholars split Medio Persia and make #4 Greece, so that they can say a second century BC author wouldn't have made any prophecies.
 - o The Median kingdom did not follow the Babylonian in historical sequence, but was contemporary with it, even rising to strength *before* the Neo-Babylonian period
 - o The Median kingdom never had a world position ranking with the Persian, Grecian or Babylonian Empires
 - o The motivation for the interpretation is solely to remove any reference to Rome - and predictive prophecy

v. 2 says that the 4 winds or spirits (angels) churned up the great sea. v. 5 says that they commanded the bear (Medio-Persia) to "Get up and eat your fill of flesh!" **What does this imply about our story?**

Leopard (v6)

- 4 wings like a bird (Swift), sudden attacks
- Alexander the Great (Greece) conquered the world quickly by 28.
- "With the swiftness of a leopard, Alexander the Great conquered most of the civilized world all the way from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India [334-331 B.C.]. The lightning character of his conquests is without precedent in the ancient world, and this is fully in keeping with the image of speed embodied in the leopard itself and the four wings on its back." (Walvoord)
- Four heads = Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who inherited Alexander's domain after his death.
- *Daniel could have guessed Medio-Persia, but not Greece dividing into four parts.*

Fourth beast (dreadful and terrible, composed of the first 3 [Rev 13:2]) ← Most important (**vv7-8**)

- "Rome had no interest in raising the conquered nations to any high level of development. All her designs were imperial; let the nations be crushed and stamped underfoot." (Leopold)
- 10 horns = 10 future rulers (v24) who will rise later and rule simultaneously
- (v8) 11th horn (Antichrist) – displaced 3, human eyes (intelligence), with a mouth that speaks boastfully
 - o Antichrist will be the final human dictator who will speak boastfully (Revelation 13:5-6)

What ideas does the word beasts evoke? (terror, animal, lack of civility, something that should have been under man's control, Adam named the beasts [Israel lost control just like garden])

Ancient of Days and the destruction of the beast (vv9-12)

AofD = Father, stresses his eternality

- Pure white clothing (holiness)
- Pure woolly hair (mature judgment)
- Wheels imply that He can go in any direction & do anything He wants.

(v10) His throne was a fiery flame (judgment, Isaiah 66:15-15), books were open

(v12) The kingdoms will meet their end (cf. Rev. 19:19—20:6).

What does Daniel's name mean? How is that significant in this book? (Nebuch. judged and ran around like an animal, Belsh will die and lose kingdom to Medes [ch 5])

Son of Man's Kingdom = Jesus (vv13-14)

- Corresponds to the stone cut with hands that destroyed the previous kingdoms (ch2)
- Eternal kingdom, never destroyed

II. Interpretation (vv15-28)

- Nebuch.'s dreams (ch2 & 4) saw them from his perspective (statue of precious metals, tree w/ branches)
- Daniel saw them from God's perspective (wild and ferocious animals)

Interpretation of the four beasts (v.15-18)

- vv.15-16 Daniel could not understand 4th beast & little horn
- v17 four kings rose from the sea (earth's population)
- v18 saints of all ages (or just Jews alive at that time – Pentecost believes this since church wasn't revealed in OT). They will reign with Christ for 1,000 yrs.

Why was Daniel so upset? (He had a nightmare!)

Daniel's request for an interpretation of the fourth beast (vv19-22)

- The beast had claws of bronze [fierce nature] (v. 19).
- The little horn was larger than the other horns [ability to rise in the place of three other horns] (v. 20).
- The little horn waged war with the saints (or just Jews – Pentecost) and overcame them [explains one reason for God's final judgment of him] (v. 21)

Interpretation of the fourth beast (vv23-25)

- v23 One-world govt w/ dictator in control
- vv24-25 – Little horn = boastful and will wear down the saints (persecution)
- vv22, 27 – saints possess kingdom & kingdom handed over to saints

How will the future kingdom be different than all earthly kingdoms? (we will take part in it, won't be destroyed, eternal, Jesus will be king, New Earth & Jerusalem)

Rev 21:1-5:

¹ Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"^{2a} for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death'^{2b} or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "**I am making everything new!**"