

Bible Study Notes

Daniel 7: Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts

Daniel 7 (likely written around 555 BC); a parallel writing to Daniel 2.

v1: The NIV states that Daniel only recorded the substance or general meaning of his dream, rather than the entirety of it.

v2: **The Four Winds** – the winds of God or the power of God, which are under the control of four mighty angels, referred to in Revelation 9:14. Could represent God's judgments coming against the world from all directions. Commentaries note, in the successive rise and fall of the four empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, these destructive forces will exert their power through the centuries to come, till the final triumph of the Son of Man.

v3-7: Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

- v4: **The First Beast – The Winged Lion**: nearly all theologians agree that this is Nebuchadnezzar. The plucking of its wings refer to the reduction of pride and power at the time of his insanity. The lion was the symbol of Babylon, used throughout its history on gates and buildings
- v5: **The Second Beast – The Bear**: due to the way that it is described, most theologians believe that it was to be a conglomerate of several powers, which is the Medo-Persian Empire (the three ribs could be kings Cyrus, Xerxes, and Darius).
- v6: **The Third Beast – The Four-Winged / Four-Headed Leopard**: most believe the four wings symbolize the Greek Empire's division into four parts, not long after Alexander's death.
- v7: **The Fourth Beast – The Ten-Horned Beast**: experts believe the similarities of the ten horns of this beast and the ten toes of the statue in Daniel 2 are undeniable. The iron teeth correspond to the iron legs on the statue. The very way that this beast is described shows that the Roman Empire, which this beast symbolizes, was mightier than the other empires before it.

v8: Daniel sees the ten-horned latter-day ten-state federation and sees that one of the smaller horns will show its dominance by uprooting and destroying three of its adjacent horns. This horn symbolizes an arrogant ruler rather than an entire kingdom. This is a ruthless world-dictator of the last days who is referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8, as "the man of lawlessness [*anomias*]" or "the lawless one [*anomos*]," who "exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess 2:4). This arrogant ruler is most widely known as the anti-Christ.

v9-12: This ushers in the Fifth and Final form of world power – God the Father, the "Ancient of Days" takes His throne. A river of fire issued from God's presence. This fire is not just a symbol of God's brilliance, but of His judgment on sin and those opposed to His authority. This is where the Anti-Christ, the wicked, and the unrepentant will be finally judged. The Anti-Christ continues to spew out blasphemy against God and man until he is thrown into the fire. All of the world powers are done away with

v13: Daniel now sees the glorified Son of Man, Jesus Christ. This is the verse from Daniel that the NT quotes most frequently. Jesus is like a man, but is the heavenly Sovereign Son of God, and "given authority, glory and sovereign power" by God the Father.

v16-27: Daniel is given the meaning of the dream:

- The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth; but the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever.
- The fourth beast is different, and will devour the whole earth.
- The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom (the former Roman Empire).
- After the ten kings, another king will arise, different from the earlier ones and he will subdue the three kings. This new leader will speak against the God and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws (anti-Christ).
- The holy people will be in the hands of the evil ruler for a time, times and half a time (3 and one-half years).
- The power of the evil ruler will be taken away and completely destroyed forever, and God will establish His kingdom with His holy people; an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.