

Daniel 7:15-28

¹⁵ “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. ¹⁶ I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: ¹⁷ ‘Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings *which* arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’

¹⁹ “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows.

²¹ “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

²³ “Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be

A fourth kingdom on earth,

Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms,

And shall devour the whole earth,

Trample it and break it in pieces.

²⁴ The ten horns *are* ten kings

Who shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them;

He shall be different from the first *ones*,

And shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,

Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,

And shall intend to change times and law.

Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand

For a time and times and half a time.

²⁶ ‘But the court shall be seated,

And they shall take away his dominion,

To consume and destroy *it* forever.

²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion,

And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,

Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.

His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,

And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

²⁸ “This *is* the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.”

So today we will actually come to the end of the 7th Chapter of Daniel I want to clarify that I do not believe that this will be the end of the 7th chapter for our Series, but there is a question that is often asked about Daniel 7 that I want to take a look at in today’s message. The question is why

does the dream trouble Daniel? and why after he is given the interpretation is he “greatly troubled?”

Before we answer the questions I want to review the meaning of the dream and also remind us of the way the dream has been and should be interpreted. Last week we looked at the four beasts, which we are told were four kings. The first beast is a beast like unto a lion and it had eagles wings. This beast represented the kingdom of Babylon. The height of the Babylonian Kingdom was during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar began his reign in approximately 605 B.C. One of his first actions as king was to raid the temple in Jerusalem and this is the event that brought Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to Babylon in captivity, After many difficulties though Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself and turned to God before his death. After his death there were other Babylonian Kings and the dream that Daniel has in chapter 7 took place in the first year of King Belshazzar. Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus who was descended from Evil Merodach, and from Nebuchadnezzar. The first year of Belshazzar was in 539 B.C. Thus Daniel had been in captivity in Babylon for 66 years at this time.

Daniel’s dream is thus at the very end of the Babylonian empire. The second beast in Daniel’s dream is a lion with three ribs in its mouth. This beast is represented by the Medo Persian Empire. The Medo-Persian Empire was the dominant empire of the World from 539 B.C. to 330 B.C. Daniel’s dealings with Darius and the dealings of Cyrus, who is called in Isaiah 45, the Lord’s anointed are all important aspects of the Medo-Persian empire. As for the 3 ribs in the mouth of the bear, one of the things we mentioned last week is we are to view these ribs with the idea of Genesis 2:21-23:

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said:

“This is now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man.”

As God made woman from the rib, the people of God as the Lord's wife are represented by ribs. The Medo-Persian empire took within herself God's people and they ruled with wisdom from inside of the Medo-Persian Empire. Examples are of course, Daniel, who according to Daniel 6 was the first or principal of the three governors that ruled under Darius. There is of course Mordecai in the Book of Esther, and Nehemiah who governed the Province of Judea under the rule of the Persian King Artaxerxes.

The third beast, the leopard with four wings represents the Greek Empire and Macedonia. The four wings represents the rapidness with which Alexander the Great conquered the known world. The Greek empire was dominant from 330 B.C. to 64 B.C .

We spoke also briefly about the fourth terrible beast. This beast represents the Roman empire. But what I want us to take particular notice of is that Daniel when he is being given the

interpretation of the meaning of the different beasts is very curious about the fourth beast in particular.

Listen to verses 19-20:

19 “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

Why of all the beasts, does Daniel seem more concerned about this beast than the others? Well, I think it is somewhat obvious, but we have a beast like a lion, a beast like a bear, and a beast like a leopard and the fourth beast all Daniel sees is teeth, nails or claws, and horns. Lots of horns. There are ten horns on the head of the beast and there is another horn, that comes up from among the other horns. We know, and there is near universal agreement about this, the fourth great beast represents Rome and or the Roman Empire.

Something that is interesting is that each of the previous kingdoms were represented by a single beast. Babylon, even though there were several kings in the Babylonian Empire, were represented by a single beast. The same can be said of the Medes and the Persians and also the kingdom of Greece. The Roman Empire is a single beast but it is separated and divided up into different horns etc. The reason for this is partially described in Chapter 2 of Daniel. The coming of the Kingdom of God, which is the focus of both the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the dream of Daniel is said to be, “In the days of these kings.”

Also of note is that the Beasts, the way they are described indicates a sort of overlapping of their kingdoms. For example, the Medo-Persians began to come into power while the Babylonians still existed. The same can be said for Greece and for Rome. When the fourth beast is spoken of as Rome this is speaking of the first ten Kings of the Roman Empire. Interestingly enough these correspond to the ten toes of the image in Daniel 2.

Historically speaking these kings are Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar was the first of the Caesar's and yet the title of Caesar or supreme emperor was just that, it was merely a title. Julius Caesar is followed by Augustus Caesar. Augustus was the first Caesar to rule as an absolute monarch, It was also during the reign of Augustus Caesar that Jesus was born in the Roman province of Judea. After Augustus came Tiberius. Tiberius was the Caesar at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. He was on the throne until A.D. 37. The next 7 Caesar's, which make up our 10 are Gaius Caesar, most of know him by the name Caligula, followed by Claudius, and then by Nero.

One of the important rules for interpreting Scripture is we use the clear passage to interpret the obscure passages and we interpret the Old Testament using the New Testament. But it is interesting that in Revelation 17 we read these words:

⁹ "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

The internal evidence of the dating of the authorship of the Book of Revelation indicates that it was written prior to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. When these 7 kings are spoken of

in this passage and five have fallen, and one is... The one that is, is the 6th king or Nero. The seventh king when he comes, must continue a short time. I believe the Book of Revelation was written during the reign of Nero, and when it speaks of the king yet to come who must continue a short time it is speaking of Emperor Galba who became Caesar in June of A.D. 68 and he reigned until he was beheaded in January of A.D. 69. After Galba was the 8th, Otho, and then the 9th Vitellius. After Vitellius was the 10th King and that was Vespasian who ruled from A.D.69 to A.D. 79. Notice Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian were all Caesar in the year A.D. 69, thus it is known as the year of the 4 emperors.

But again, why was Daniel grieved by this, and I think the answer to our questions comes from verses 19-22 of Daniel 7

¹⁹“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰ and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows.

²¹“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

The Grief of Daniel comes because of this little horn and that is what I want us to look at today.

James Jordan in his commentary on Daniel writes that, “The arrival of the fourth beast in history is the herald of the coming of the Ancient of Days. The Romans emphasized that they brought

law and peace to the world, the Pax Romana or Roman Peace. We should not see this first of all as a counterfeit of the law and peace that the gospel would bring, but as in a sense the fullest expression of God's reign among the nations (not in Israel) before the gospel. It is the perversion of this great law and peace rule that makes the fourth beast so terrible when it becomes an enemy of God's people. The description of the fourth beast is not to be taken as horrible it is very close to the description of Messiah's reign in Psalm 2:9

You will rule them with a rod of iron, like a vessel of clay you will smash them.

Christians often think of the Romans as terrible oppressors of the Jews, yet the Romans delivered the Jews from the evil rulers that preceded them. Jesus praised the faith of the Roman centurion. The Romans also protected the church in the early chapters of Exodus. Pontius Pilate the Roman governor of Judaea saw that Jesus was innocent and sought to deliver Him. The Romans put down rebellions amongst the Jews and in doing that often innocent people were hurt or killed, but it was only in AD 64 when Nero turned against the church that fourth beast became wicked.

The part of Daniel's dream that was so grievous was the little horn with the eyes of a man that spoke pompous words against the ancient of Days.

Notice the little horn grows up among the ten horns. It will eventually destroy three of the horns. It has eyes like a man and speaks pompous words. The idea that it has eyes like a man is meant to make us compare or contrast this little horn with the one like the Son of Man who is coming to the Ancient of Days. The little horn wants to claim the kingdom, but it is a counterfeit. Where the saints of the most high are given a kingdom by the Ancient of Days, the little horn represents those who come to the fourth beast and take some of his kingdom to rule over.

In summary this wicked pompous little horn is representative of a coming wicked Jewish power. It will manifest the rule of Rome in the land of promise during the time of the Roman emperors. It will oppose the saints and seek to change the timing of the decree of God regarding the coming of His kingdom. And he is given power to make war against the saints during the time of Jesus, during the Apostolic Age and right on up to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The reason Daniel is troubled is because he sees and he realizes that it is his own people that are going to be the ones standing against the coming of God's kingdom.

Now I know this is different from the way that many people read this passage, but I want to read an account to us from the Gospel of John in the 11th chapter. Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the dead and I want you to notice the reaction of the Jews to this event.

John 11:45-48

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

Notice their reaction to the coming of the Messiah, the promised one, because he came in such a way as to not respect them or what they were doing.

We have to get rid of him. Verse 53 tells us that from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

In Matthew 21:33-46 Jesus tells a parable to the chief priests and the Pharisees. In this parable he is presenting to them what Daniel saw in the little horn. ³³ "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. ³⁴ Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. ³⁵ And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. ³⁷ Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹ So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*.

⁴⁰ "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

⁴¹ They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will ⁴¹render to him the fruits in their seasons."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

'The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone.

This was the LORD's doing,

And it is marvelous in our eyes'?

⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. ⁴⁴ And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

⁴⁵ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they [Ⓜ]perceived that He was speaking of them. ⁴⁶ But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

In John 11 we see that the Pharisees and teachers of the law were more in love with their own power and their own "Rome Given Authority" so much so that when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, all they could think about was how Jesus was a threat to their power.

Daniel was grieved because here he was looking at the coming advancement of the Kingdom of God and he saw it with a clarity few have ever seen and yet he also saw that many of the people who are claiming to want the advance of that Kingdom are in all of their actions, all of their ways, all of their counsel are working against it.

Daniel has seen in his visions and in the men he has worked with people attempting to exalt themselves. And he has watched them brought low. He has witnessed men who oppose God and his plans and they have been destroyed. Yes we are seeing the Kingdom that will know no end, but we are also seeing that those who are a part of it the saints of the most high are not chosen because of their involvement in nations, it is because of their willingness to kiss the son.