

The War against the Saints
Daniel 7:15-22; 1 Peter 4:12-13
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Biblical prophecy is not given by God to satisfy our curiosity about the future. It is given to exalt the Lord who declares the end from the beginning. Biblical prophecy is given to demonstrate who rules and reigns over all of creation and over all history—Jesus Christ. It is given not to lead us to fear the future, but rather to hope in the future, for we see in biblical prophecy that Christ will defeat all His enemies. Yes, there will be times of tribulation throughout history, but we are promised that we will persevere through Christ and will be victorious in Him. We are not defeatists, but more than conquerors through Christ who loves us. That is what we are to learn from a study of biblical prophecy in Daniel 7.

As we continue our study through Daniel 7 today, let us consider the following main points: (1) The General Interpretation of Daniel’s Vision (Daniel 7:15-18); (2) Daniel’s Desire for Further Clarification of the Fourth Beast (Daniel 7:19-22).

I. The General Interpretation of Daniel’s Vision (Daniel 7:15-18).

A. As Daniel has received this divine vision of four beasts and God’s judgment that fell upon them through the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) in Daniel 7:1-14, so he now receives the divine interpretation of what he beheld in the vision (which carries us to the end of Daniel 7).

B. Daniel describes how the prophetic vision grieved and troubled him (Daniel 7:15). Why?

1. Until there is clear meaning attached to the symbols Daniel has seen, he is left in some state of perplexity and wondering what all this means. Daniel as a sincere believer in the Lord wanted to know the meaning of these symbols in the vision. He was not content to have received the vision and leave it there without understanding it.

2. Is that true of us? Do we just read God’s Word and then walk away without understanding what we have read, or do we desire to know the meaning of what we have read? Do we dig for the truth as if we were digging for gold? Do we pray for illumination? Do we search check cross references? Do we read sound biblical teachers in commentaries from the past and present? If we don’t take these steps, the words on the pages of the Bible will be meaningless to us (as meaningless as the symbols in the vision were to Daniel without interpretation).

C. What did Daniel do? He sought out the help of an angel in the vision who could interpret the meaning of the four beasts (Daniel 7:16).

1. The four beasts are four earthly “kings” (Daniel 7:17, or kingdoms, Daniel 7:23). These four beasts are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome (parallel to the four metallic parts of the great image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel 2). These four kingdoms and their history will occupy in some way the rest of history until the fifth kingdom.

2. The fifth kingdom is the kingdom of the Son of Man which will crush the fourth beast (Rome) that has 10 horns and a “little horn” that appears in the midst of the 10 horns (Daniel 7:18; Daniel 2:34-35). This is the millennial kingdom of Christ who reigns from heaven (Psalm 110:1) and will convert and bring all nations to serve Him (Psalm 22:27-28; Revelation 11:15).

II. Daniel’s Desire for Further Clarification of the Fourth Beast (Daniel 7:19-22).

A. Now in the vision, Daniel’s particularly desires to know the truth about the fourth beast (Rome)

that was so terrible that no name of an animal was even connected with it—so dreadful that it crushed and oppressed all of its adversaries (Daniel 7:19,23).

1. Moreover, Daniel sought to know from the angel what the 10 horns on the fourth beast and the “little horn” among the 10 horns signified (Daniel 7:20). We have already anticipated to some degree in previous sermons the interpretation given by the angel to these symbols.

2. In summary, the 10 horns are 10 kings (kingdoms) according to the angel (Daniel 7:24) that divided the Western Roman Empire (Western Europe) in the 5th and 6th centuries: the Heruli, Ostrogoths, Lombards, Visigoths, Suevi, Franks, Burgundians, Anglo-Saxons, Vandals, and the Alemanni. Consider Revelation 17:12. The 10 horns cannot be 10 kings/kingdoms before the Apostle John (Antiochus Epiphanes). Nor can the 10 horns be 10 kings/kingdoms at the time of the Apostle John (the emperors of Rome). Three of those kingdoms were subdued at the time of the “little horn”: the Heruli were wiped out in 493, the Vandals in 534, and the Ostrogoths were eliminated in 538.

3. Thus, if the 10 horns that divided the Western Roman Empire during the 5th and 6th centuries are identified, as well as the 3 horns that fell at that time, who is the “little horn” that grew up in the midst of them? With many biblical scholars past and present, I submit the little horn is the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. Let’s put our evidence together thus far.

a. The papacy is an extension of the 4th beast (the Roman Empire), for it is a little horn on the 4th beast. The very capital of the old Roman Empire (Rome) became the capital of the Western Roman Empire. The title of Pontifex Maximus (supreme priest) was the title assumed by the Roman Emperor as head of the Roman emperor worship. It was likewise the title adopted by the papacy.

b. The papacy began small (a “little horn” Daniel 7:8) and gradually increased in power through the centuries. Three horns (kingdoms) were subdued by means of its influence.

c. The papacy grew in power so that it became “more stout” or strong than the 10 horns (Daniel 7:20)—even claiming a power over kings and kingdoms. Example: When Pope Innocent III came to power (1198), he declared, “Who am I myself or what was the house of my father that I am permitted to sit above kings, to possess the throne of glory?” He excommunicated King John of England in 1209 and absolved all allegiance to the king. The pope deposed the king in 1212 and encouraged King Philip of France to invade England. This brought King John to his knees before the pope. In 1212, Pope Innocent III made “null and void forever” the Magna Carta—which recognized certain freedoms of English freedmen. The papacy’s ecclesiastical/political power is even universally recognized in the world today.

From the 10th century popes have claimed and repeatedly exercised a power of coercing kings, and have punished them when refractory by suspension, by deprivation, and by the transfer of the allegiance of their subjects (McClintock, John. Strong, James. 'Temporal Power of the Pope'. *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*).

d. The papacy claims to have “eyes” infallible knowledge in matters of faith and morals (Daniel 7:8,20).

The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful - who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 891).

e. The papacy has “a mouth speaking great things” (Daniel 7:8,20,25).

The Saviour Himself is the door of the sheepfold: 'I am the door of the sheep.' Into this fold of Jesus Christ, no man may enter unless he be led by the Sovereign Pontiff; and only if they be

united to him can men be saved, for the Roman Pontiff is the Vicar of Christ and His personal representative on earth (Pope John XXIII in his homily to the Bishops and faithful assisting at his coronation on November 4, 1958).

In his encyclical, "The Reunion of Christendom" (1885), Pope Leo XIII stated that the pope holds "upon this earth the place of God Almighty."

f. The papacy is "diverse" or different from the other 10 kingdoms (Daniel 7:24). It is not chiefly a political kingdom like the "first" 10 kingdoms. The papacy is chiefly an ecclesiastical power that exercises political power.

g. The papacy through its alliance with kings/rulers has made war against the faithful saints throughout the ages and has prevailed against them (Daniel 7:21).

(1) Those historically who have refused to bow in giving the worship and absolute obedience to the Roman Papacy, and have resisted his usurped authority of Christ's titles and rights, these faithful witnesses by the hundreds of thousands were imprisoned, slaughtered in their homes and in the fields (men, women, and children), tortured with unimaginable cruelties, hauled before unjust courts, and burned alive at the stake as heretics for adhering to the sound doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture and faithful Confessions of Faith.

(2) The use of torture was authorized in 1252 by Pope Innocent IV. The purpose of torture was to extract confessions supposedly to save the soul. Some methods of torture included flogging, burning/mutilating various parts of the body, the rack in stretching the body, the boot that slowly crushed the leg and foot as it was tightened.

(3) Even when the war against the saints moves away from such forms of torture due to 21st century sensibilities, the war continues against the true religion by way of using its power to join with other kingdoms in the Great Reset to bring about a one world government/religion in which those who profess the true religion will be targeted as trouble-makers, disrupters, and haters because they will not conform and bow the knee to Beast and the little horn.

h. Next Lord's Day (God willing), we will consider the last two prophesied characteristics about the little horn (the papacy): (1) its changing times and laws; (2) its extended war against the saints for 1,260 years.

i. A most important note to leave with you. Let us not confuse the papacy with the people who are under the papacy. We pray for the prophesied destruction of the papacy, but we pray for the salvation of those under the papacy (Revelation 18:3).

B. In conclusion, let us not fail to read and rejoice in Daniel 7:22.

1. If our eyes can only see the growth, spread, and oppression of antichristian nations and of false religion (especially that of the papal antichrist), then our view of Christ will be one of a helpless, striving King that is trying to defeat His enemies, but just cannot seem to muster the power to do so. We must keep our eye of faith and hope upon Christ, King of kings. We must walk by faith not by sight or feelings. It is easy to become discouraged by what we read and hear about the plots and plans of world leaders. It is easy to become discouraged by the daily trials (in health, home, work, and temptations we face). But that is what being a Christian is all about—walking by faith in God's promises that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). He is even able to show His almighty power in you by granting to you perseverance in not quitting or giving up, and in helping you to stand seven times if you fall.

2. God has revealed to us here in Daniel 7 not to be surprised that we will suffer persecution and tribulation as faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ: "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" Acts 14:22; 1 Peter 4:12-13). So many Christians in America have forgotten that the Lord declares through His apostle that if we would reign with Christ, we must first suffer with Him. We must

first take up the cross, and then we will receive the crown (just as our blessed Savior did).

3. Dear Christian, you are more than conquerors through Christ who loved you. You are not defeatists. Don't give up. Don't quit. Don't panic at what you see and hear. Jesus is King of kings. His kingdom will be victorious over all kingdoms. He will put down all His and our enemies. He will convert the nations and bring them to worship and serve Him. "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

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