

Daniel Chapter 7

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Chapter 7 Overview: Daniel 7 is another major chapter of prophecy. It parallels the prophecy of chapter 2 with the final four era's of world history, except it goes into even greater details of end time events, including the final judgment. This vision/prophecy occurred before the fall of Belshazzar to the Medes and Persians. The chapter can be divided into three parts: (1) Daniel's vision of the four beasts in verses 1-8. (2) Daniel's vision of Christ's kingdom in verses 9-14. (3) Daniel's interpretation in verses 15-28.

Daniel 7 : 1 - *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.*

- The date of this chapter was around 555 B.C., the first year of Belshazzar's ascension to the throne of Babylon.
- This time it was Daniel who had a dream and visions during the night.
- He wrote down what he had dreamed and the interpretation of it.

Daniel 7 : 2 - *Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.*

- The vision will parallel that of the image vision of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2.
- However, Daniel's dream began with the four winds (north, east, south, and west) churning the great sea.
- The prophetic application of the great sea likely refers to the masses of humanity—the sea of the nations in all directions. (See Revelation 13:1 and 17:5)
- Daniel looked ahead through prophecy to see the troubled sea of humanity from his time forward.
- Just as winds trouble bodies of water, so humanity and the world will be troubled. (See Isaiah 57:20)

Daniel 7 : 3 - *And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.*

- In Daniel's dream, he saw four great beasts or creatures coming out of the sea.
- As the vision will unfold, these four creatures will clearly represent four successive stages of the world system and four empires rising up from Daniel's day onward.
- This was the same 4 empires visioned in Chapter 2

Daniel 7 : 4 - *The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.*

- The first beast was like a lion and had eagle's wings.
- Its wings were plucked and it was made to stand like a man.
- It also had a man's heart given to it.
- Guess what? The national symbol of the Babylonian Empire was of a lion with eagle's wings.

- The ‘plucking’ of the eagles wings is a reference to the chastening of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in chapter 4.
- The reference to a man’s heart is a reference to the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar.
- He certainly did soften his heart toward God and glorified him in chapters 2 and 4.

Daniel 7 : 5 - *And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.*

- The second beast like a bear is a reference to the coming Persian Empire.
- It was large and powerful.
- And, it’s military was like a bear—relatively slow moving but strong.
- The reference to it being raised up on one side and having three ribs in its mouth is a reference to how that the Persians dominated their alliance with the Medes.
- Medes – Persians were dominated by the Persians\
- The three ribs is a reference to other nations they had devoured including the Babylonians.
- The Persian Empire dominated the world for approximately 250 years.
- It did devour much flesh as it conquered westward to the shores of Greece and eastward as far as India.

Daniel 7 : 6 - *After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.*

- The third beast was like a leopard with four wings and four heads.
- History records that the next major world empire was the Greek empire.
- The Greeks moved with speed like a leopard in their military conquest under Alexander the Great.
- They overran the Persian Empire and added regions such as Egypt to their empire.
- When Alexander died after his brief and victorious career, four of his subordinates divided up the conquered territories of the Greek empire with each ruling over one region.
- After their deaths, their descendants ruled each region for over 300 years.

Daniel 7 : 7 - *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.*

- The fourth beast was awesome and terrifying.
- It was not like any ordinary animal.
- It had iron teeth, it was powerful, and it had ten horns.
- It crushed everything in its path.
- It was totally different from any of the preceding creatures.
- This is a reference to the coming Roman Empire and its era of history.
- The ten horns correspond to the ten toes of the image of chapter 2.
- The ten horns correspond to the final form of the Roman era of the world system yet to come

Daniel 7 : 8 - I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

- As Daniel pondered the ten horns upon this creature, another little horn popped up.
- When it did it rooted up three other horns.
- This new horn had human-like eyes and spoke great things.
- A horn (bull's horn) in ancient times was a symbol of power and authority such as a president or king.
- The little horn described refers to a ruler which will arise in the final days of the Roman era of the world system.
- In his rise to power, he will uproot or displace three other rulers.
- When collated with other prophetic portions of Scripture, we see that the little horn refers to the man of sin, the antichrist.
- He surely will blaspheme the God of heaven. (See II Thessalonians 2:3 and Revelation 13:1-6, and 17:12-18)

Daniel 7 : 9 - I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

- Daniel saw that these four thrones (or eras) of the world system would one day be cast down, implying the end of human history. (See Revelation 11:15)
- At that time, the Ancient of Days will sit (in judgment).
- The Ancient of Days is of course God Almighty
- His throne is of 'fiery flame.'
- The throne area of God is described as a sea of glass mingled with fire in Revelation 15:2.
- The mention of "*his wheels as burning fire*" parallels that of Ezekiel 1:16 and 1:19.
- This may refer to the ancient oriental custom of thrones having wheels so that they might be moved easily.
- Daniel was then allowed a glimpse of the throne room of God Almighty.
- We catch a glimpse of the coming, awesome, holy judgment of God.

Daniel 7 : 10 - A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

- The scene becomes even more dramatic.
- Notice the awesome grandeur of heaven's throne.
- Bear in mind that God is referred to in Scripture as a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29 and Deuteronomy 4:24).
- *Thousand thousands* (untold millions—probably angels) minister before Him.
- *Ten thousand times ten thousand* (an essentially numberless multitude) stood before him.
- This very well may be looking forward to the Great White Throne Judgment where all unsaved people of all time will be judged (see Revelation 20:11-15).
- "*The judgment was set, and the books were opened.*"

- What an awesome scene as the lost and ungodly of all ages are brought before God's eternal judgment.
- There will be no unbelievers or mockers in that crowd.
- But it will be too late for them then.
- Again, the greater scene is of the final judgment of God against the ungodly.

Daniel 7 : 11 - *I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*

- The last half of Daniel 7 is entirely prophetic.
- There are two major themes.
- One is of the *little horn* mentioned throughout the chapter.
- The other is the crushing of the final form of human government and the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- Here (as in verse 8, and 24-26) Daniel speaks of the *little horn*.
- This is the antichrist who appears during the tribulation.
- He is characterized as one who speaks great words.
- Evidently the anti-Christ will be a great orator—maybe like Hitler.
- He will speak against the God of heaven (vs 25). (See Revelation 13:6)
- He shall also “*wear out*” or persecute the saints.
- Here the word *saint* here is a reference to the Jewish people.
- In Revelation 12 we know that the antichrist will fiercely persecute and seek to destroy Israel and the Jews.
- We also know that Satan is at the root of anti-Semitism. (See Revelation 12:13-17, 13:7)
- This evil one will come to full power by the middle of the Tribulation and will have unrestricted authority in those final three-and-one-half years. (See Revelation 13:5 and also Daniel 12:7)
- The reference to the beast being slain is a reference to the fourth beast of the chapter—which is the culmination of human government under the leadership of the antichrist.
- In Revelation, both the antichrist and his government are called ‘the beast.’
- At the end, they become essentially one and the same.
- Notice that the beast is then cast into the burning flame. (See Revelation 19:20 and Isaiah 14:9-12)

Daniel 7 : 12 - *As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*

- This is reference to how the earlier human eras of government faded away as they were superseded by the next form of the world system.
- Babylon was conquered by Persia.
- Persia was overrun by Greece.
- And as Greece faded from world dominance, Rome rose to power.

Daniel 7 : 13 - *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

- Here is a follow-up vision, shortly after the previous one.
- Notice again the titles of the Godhead: the Son of Man is a reference to Jesus Christ.

- This is the first reference to the Son of Man as Christ in the Bible.
- Though there are other references in Scripture to Christ coming with clouds, they all are in the context of His return either in the Rapture or when He returns with power and great glory.
- Jesus Christ on this day is brought before the Ancient of Days which clearly is God the Father.
- The setting apparently is just prior to the return of Christ in power and great glory at the end of the Tribulation.

Daniel 7 : 14 - *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

- This is a striking reference to the return of Jesus Christ in power at the end of the Tribulation to establish His kingdom on this earth. (See Revelation 11:15, 19:11-16, 20:4-6, II Thess.1:8-9, and Revelation 21-22.
- As Jesus Christ meets with His Father prior to returning to earth in power and great glory, with dominion over the earth is given to Him.
- The glory of His Deity is also reconfirmed.
- The Kingdom of God is given to Jesus Christ as He prepares to return to earth.
- Notice the purpose of the return of Christ is to set up His kingdom.
- In it *all* people, nations, and languages will serve Him.
- We know from Revelation that the first 1,000 years of the Kingdom will be the Millennium in a renovated earth.
- Then, it will blossom on forever in a new heaven and a new earth.
- That coming kingdom will never be destroyed.
- It will last forever and ever.
- Even so come, Lord Jesus!

Daniel 7 : 15 - *I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.*

- The Aramaic word so translated as grieved (*kara*) also has the sense of being distressed.
- Daniel was troubled because he didn't yet understand what he had seen.

Daniel 7 : 16 - *I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.*

- Still in his vision, Daniel approached an angel and asked the meaning of all of this.
- Everything was explained to Daniel

Daniel 7 : 17 - *These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.*

- Daniel was informed that the four great beasts he had seen in the vision were in fact four kings or kingdoms which would arise.
- The four beasts were the four kingdoms or eras which would follow Babylon on to the end of human history (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome).

Daniel 7 : 18 - *But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.*

- Though a powerful world system would manifest itself through four eras of human history, the day is coming when the people of God will receive the Kingdom of God and possess it forever.
- This of course refers to the coming Millennium and the Eternal Kingdom to follow.
- For the people of God, total victory is ahead.
- We truly are on the winning side!

Daniel 7 : 19 - *Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet.*

- Daniel wanted to further understand the fourth most dreadful beast.
- The final form of the Roman era would have ten horns (kings) of which three fall before the horn that has eyes and a mouth speaking great things—the anti-Christ.

Daniel 7 : 20 - *And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.*

- Daniel also wanted to know more about the ten horns of the fourth beast, and especially of the horn which had eyes and a great mouth which was greater than the other horns.
- Daniel is given further information, especially about the fourth beast in the text to follow.

Daniel 7 : 21 - *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.*

- During the final portion of the Tribulation, the beast will turn his full fury against the Jews (saints). (See Revelation 12:13-17 and 13:7)
- The final showing of anti-Semitism and holocaust against the nation of Israel will take place in the final dark years of the Tribulation.
- If it wasn't for divine intervention, the devil in the person of the antichrist would succeed in destroying the Jewish people which he hates.

Daniel 7 : 22 - *Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

- The antichrist will prevail until the Ancient of Days (God) intervenes.
- The thought is not of God the Father Himself descending to intervene, but rather His power.
- In fact, Jesus Christ, God's Son, returns in power and great glory, destroys the antichrist and his power, delivers Israel, and proceeds to establish His kingdom, giving it to His people.
- The thought is how that God, in the person of the Son, will intervene to protect Israel and establish His kingdom forever.

Daniel 7 : 23 - *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.*

- Daniel was given more information regarding the Roman era, as he had requested.
- Rome conquered the known world of its day and forcibly assimilated it into its empire.
- To this day, the world, though not politically called Rome, or under Roman military might, is influenced by western (Roman) culture.
- We remain in the Roman era of the world's system.

Daniel 7 : 24 - *And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.*

- Further explanation is given about the final form of the Roman era of human government: the ten kings and their notorious successor.
- The final political form of the Roman era of government will be some sort of ten-nation coalition, probably in the same general geographic region of the old Roman Empire.
- A case certainly can be made which would include the United States as an extension of Roman culture and civilization.
- Since the little horn arises from the midst of the ten horns, many believe that the antichrist will arise out of the west.
- Because he is initially accepted by the Jews as their Messiah, many also believe that he may be a Jew.

Daniel 7 : 25 - *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

- In the final days of the Roman era, the Tribulation, the little horn (the antichrist) will blaspheme the God of heaven and persecute the Jewish race (the saints of the most high).
- His changing of times and laws refer to changing Jewish holy days and longstanding rules regarding Jewish worship.
- He ultimately will desecrate the rebuilt Temple of God, setting himself up there as God.
- At the middle of the Tribulation, the antichrist will turn against Israel and they will suffer greatly at his hand for the last three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation.
- The phrase “**time and times and the dividing of time**” refers to three-and-one-half years.
- A time is one year.
- Times is two years.
- A dividing of time is one-half year.

Daniel 7 : 26 - *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

- Even with the terrible persecution against the people of God during the Tribulation by the antichrist God Will still prevail!!
- When Jesus Christ returns in power and great glory at Armageddon with the armies of heaven (see Revelation 19:11-15), they will take away the worldwide dominion of the antichrist and destroy it altogether.

Daniel 7 : 27 - *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

- Notice how the coming kingdom of God is described.
- It is a dominion or kingdom.
- It will be worldwide and it will be everlasting.
- It will be given to the people of the saints of the most high—God’s people.
- And, all nations on the earth will serve and obey Jesus Christ.
- What a day that will be!
- For the people of God, there is a bright future.
- Once again, we are on the winning team, on the winning side!
- In that day, Jesus shall reign!.
- His kingdom will spread from shore to shore!

Daniel 7 : 28 - *Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.*

- Daniel’s vision of the four beasts is concluded.
- Daniel was burdened as he realized the time of trouble still ahead for his people.
- Even his demeanor was transformed.
- He kept the whole matter in his heart before God.