



An Exploration of Eschatology in Exile

WEEK 7: October 27, 2020, 10 am

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Seneca Church of God of Prophecy

12 Week Discipleship Course

The Four Great Beasts: Daniel 7

Objectives

- Recognize God's Sovereignty
- Acknowledge the Ancient of Days
- Submit all glory and honor to God
- Christ will reign for eternity

Chapter Outline

- Daniel's Vision of the Four Great Beasts (Daniel 7:1-8)
- The Judgment by the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9-12)
- The Son of Man's Eternal Kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14)
- The Interpretation of Daniel's Dream (Daniel 7:15-28)

Review

- Daniel one begins with the history that leads up to this point in history.
- Daniel two discussed the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's interpretation of it, both historically and futuristic.
- Daniel three discussed the King's image of gold and the faith of the three Hebrew boys.
- Daniel four discussed the King's dream of God's judgment against him. The 7 years of judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar occurs.
- Daniel five discussed the hand-writing on the wall.
- Daniel six discussed Daniel's faithfulness to prayer and the judgment pronounced against him to be placed in the lions den.
- Each chapters common thread is that Yahweh is the only true God.
- Chapters 1-4 each end with worship and adoration directed towards Yahweh.
- Chapter 5 ends with the downfall of a wicked pagan king.
- Chapter 6 returns to the end theme of chapters 1-4, in which Yahweh is given honor and glory.
- Chapter 7 breaks with the traditional ending of chapters 1-4 and 6. Instead of glorifying God for all that will be done, Daniel is very troubled and worried about the end of days.

The Four Great Beasts and their Meanings (Daniel 7:1-8, 15-28)

- This vision came to Daniel before chapters 6 and 5. It is very clear that this chapter did not fall in the historical order of Daniel 1-6. Many believe that this vision would have been given somewhere between chapter 4 and chapter 5.
- The vision was given to Daniel while Belshazzar was still King in Babylon. This would have been before the Medo-Persian invasion.
- Chapter 7 and on discusses visions that Daniel had of the future.
- Daniel 7-12 discusses four visions. Chapter 7 is the first of these visions.
- In the first vision Daniel sees the great four beasts that terrify him. He says that the wind stirred the “great sea.” This would have been most certainly the Mediterranean Sea.
 - Hebrews often saw the sea as symbolic of the Gentile nations. Therefore, the “stirring of the sea” would be a reference to God dealing with and stirring the Gentile nations.
- The Four Great Beasts:
 - The Lion and an Eagle: Represented the Babylonian Empire. Jeremiah used both the lion and the eagle as pictures of Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 49:19-22), and Babylon’s winged lions can be seen at the British Museum today.
 - The Bear: Represented the Medo-Persian Empire. The three ribs in its mouth are thought to be the three great conquests by this empire, Egypt, Babylon, and Lydia. They simply overwhelmed their opponents with superior size and strength. “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)
 - The Leopard: Represented the Greek Empire. Alexander the Great quickly conquered the civilized world by age 28. “Nothing in the history of the world, was equal to the conquests of Alexander, who ran through all the countries from Illycium and the Adriatic Sea to the Indian Ocean and the River Ganges; and in *twelve* years subdued part of Europe, and all Asia” (Clarke). After his death his empire was divided into four parts (four heads). Specifically, the four heads were Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who inherited Alexander’s domain after his death.
 - The Indescribable Beast: Represented the Roman Empire. Many view the 10 horns as 10 nation or 10 kings. “There is an unmistakable correspondence between these horns and the ten toes of the dream image (ch. 2), and the mention of iron in the teeth suggests the legs and toes of iron in that image.” (Archer)

- Another horn, a little one... a mouth speaking pompous words: Among the ten horns, three are replaced by one horn that was conspicuous for its dominance (before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots), intelligence (eyes like the eyes of a man), and its boastful talk (speaking pompous words).
- Some see a double fulfillment in the little horn. Some see the Roman Emperor as the little horn; while others see the Antichrist as a possible fulfillment.

The Ancient of Days and the Eternal Kingdom

- We see the Ancient of Days taking His seat among other thrones.
 - It is to be noted that the King James Version translates verse 9 as though the thrones were being “cast down,” or done away with. However, this is not the case. Rather these thrones were to be established. The words “cast down” was an Old English way of speaking of establishing and not doing away with.
 - When the Apostle John saw heaven, he also saw thrones, but he also saw those who sat on those thrones – the 24 elders described in [Revelation 4:4](#). Daniel made no mention of these elders, perhaps because the 24 elders represent the church, and the church was an unrevealed mystery to Old Testament saints ([Ephesians 3:1-7](#)).
- It appears that from verses 9-14 that the Ancient of Days is referring to God the Father and not God the Son. By verse 13 we see the Son of Man being referenced, which would indicate this as Jesus or the Son of God.
- His throne was a fiery flame: This was a brilliant manifestation of God’s splendor and the fierce heat of His judgment. There seems to be something lava-like in the stream of fire pouring from the throne; it was like a river of vast destructive power.
 - [Isaiah 66:15-16](#) describes the judgment of God in terms of fire: *“For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.”*
- Its wheels a burning fire: Many commentators say that in the ancient eastern world royal thrones were often on wheels. Yet it is just as likely that they represent the endless activity of God.
- A thousand thousands ministered to Him: This describes the innumerable company of angels surrounding the throne of God.
- Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: This describes humanity standing before God in judgment.
- Court was seated, and the books were opened: The Bible describes several books before God, and any of these or combination of these could be meant.
 - The book of the living ([Psalm 69:28](#)).

- The book of remembrance ([Malachi 3:16](#)).
 - The Book of Life ([Philippians 4:3](#), [Revelation 3:5](#); [13:8](#); [17:8](#); [20:12](#), [15](#); [21:27](#) and [22:19](#)).
- The sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking: Here the “little horn” of the fourth beast again speaks pompous words. The final human dictator we commonly call the Antichrist will be characterized by his boastful, blasphemous speech ([Revelation 13:5-6](#)).
 - Because of the distinction between the fourth beast and the horn, some conjecture that the beast of [Revelation 13](#) is not the Antichrist but his government or administration. If this is so, it is a small distinction. To a large extent, a man does represent and personify an entire government or system. When we think of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the figures of Hitler as an individual and Nazi Germany as a state are virtually the same.
- I watched till the beast was slain... the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: The fourth beast is destroyed and the others may continue, but without dominion of their own.
 - Some scholars argue that when Jesus sets up His kingdom, the empire of the Antichrist will be completely crushed, yet some nations will continue into the Millennium.
- One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven: The title Son of Man was a favorite self-designation of Jesus, used more than 80 times in the four Gospels. He receives all dominion previously held by the beasts and His reign will be permanent.
- His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away: The reign of Jesus does not last 1,000 years – it is permanent. However, Jesus will rule over this earth before it is remade, with Satan bound for 1,000 years.
- Daniel expresses that his spirit was grieved within the body. This is a strong verse of scripture that reminds us that we are body and spirit. Therefore, our spirit is within the body until the moment of our death. At which time, the sinner will be released to go to Hell and the saved will be welcomed into heaven.
- **SPOILER ALERT:** The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom: When the day of the fourth beast is over, then God’s people receive the kingdom. Yet we know the Roman Empire is long gone – and it doesn’t seem that the saints have received the kingdom.
 - This is what prompts many to look for some kind of restoration of the Roman Empire in the last days, one that will literally fulfill the prophecy of the ten horns and the little horn as well.
 - Shall receive the kingdom: **The saints receive the kingdom.** God gives them the kingdom at the return of Jesus. They do not gain dominion over all these earthly kingdoms before the return of Jesus.

- The Fourth beast really worried Daniel. The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth: This initial description of the fourth beast fits well with the Roman Empire of ancient history. It did devour the whole civilized earth, and dominate it completely for about a thousand years.
 - The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom: These ten kings *do not* have a literal fulfillment in the Roman Empire of history. If they are literal, they are still in the future.
 - The conspicuous horn must be the Antichrist, arising out of some group of ten nations that is in some way part of a restored Roman Empire.
- Shall persecute the saints of the Most High: This speaks of a cruel and systematic pressure, coming from the word “to wear away” or “to wear out,” as friction wears clothes or shoes.
 - “To wear out the saints means to harass them continually so that life becomes a wretched existence.” (Wood)
 - “The Bible predicts no peace-loving world ruler for the last days. We can expect nothing more than greedy commercialism and political imperialism under the most beastly and barbaric type of warfare.” (Strauss)
- Shall intend to change times and law: This little horn will intend to change times and law.
- Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time: The power of the little horn over the saints is limited. It will last for three-and-one-half years (time and times and half a time). This phrase is used in Revelation (11:2-3, 12:6 and 13:5) to refer to half of the last seven-year period of man’s rule on this earth (the seventieth week of Daniel).
- They shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever: In the day of persecution by this blasphemous ruler, the Messiah will establish His kingdom for His people.
 - Because the kingdom of Jesus immediately succeeds this fourth kingdom, no event in the past answers this prediction in the smallest degree. Certainly, the church did not cause a sudden and catastrophic fall of the Roman Empire. “It is questionable whether the Roman Empire had any serious opposition from the Christian church or that the growing power of the church contributed in a major way to its downfall.” (Walvoord)
 - It is with good exegesis that we concur that the fall of the Antichrist Empire will be at the return of Jesus. This is futuristic, not past. This is literal, not spiritual.
- At the ending of the chapter, Daniel was so troubled. He stated that his countenance changed in him. However, he was very specific that he kept the matter in his heart.