

Bible Study Daniel 7

[PPT 1] Daniel chapters 7-12 move from the historical and biographical accounts of Daniel to the spiritual and prophetic revelations received by Daniel. 7:1 begins with *"In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions"* ... Chronologically Chapter 7 moves back in time to an 18-year period between Chapter 4 (Nebuchadnezzar's temporary insanity) and Chapter 5 (Belshazzar's and Babylonian's downfall).

[PPT 2] This is a comparison of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Chapter 2 with Daniel's dream in Chapter 7. Notice The statue has four parts in this world's history and in Daniel's dream there are four beasts in this world's future. Both the statue's four metals and the four beasts represent kings and kingdoms. There is a detrition from gold to iron mixed with clay and the detrition of the beasts as described in Chapter 7 as almost human like detreating to the last blaspheming beast. In both, the kingdoms are brought to a sudden end and are replaced by an eternal kingdom seen in the bottom two segments.

While Daniel expects us to relate to the similarities between chapters 2 and 7 what is even more important is what is different or new information given in chapter 7.

[PPT 3] Charlies Feinberg tells us what is different: *In chapter 2, the symbols were taken from inanimate objects; here in chapter 7, they are taken from the animate. In chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar saw the splendor of world empires portrayed in the dazzling statue of a man, while the Kingdom of God was symbolized by a stone. By contrast, in chapter 7, Daniel's vision reveals the animalistic character of world empires and the fact that it is only in the Kingdom of God that man's full dignity is realized, in the Son of Man.*

Chapter 2 looks at world history from man's viewpoint as a glorious state. Chapter 7 views world history from God's standpoint in its immorality, brutality, and depravity.

Vs1) As I mentioned the events of chapter 7 are chronologically before the events of chapters 5 – 6. So, why now instead of earlier? Putting it in this order is to help us understand the overall message of the prophecy in the rest of the book of Daniel. These visions are intended to encourage God's people in the past who were living in the middle of exile.

[PPT 4] The overarching message of these chapters to you and me is that God is triumphantly in control of the unfolding of history, and has good goals in store for his struggling and persecuted people. The overall message to the Jews at that time was, it was not the end and that God is in control. Today we also need to know that things will not remain as they are and God is in control of that.

In chapter 7 Daniel will not tell us all of the details but summarize his dream. This allowed Daniel to focus on the real meaning of the message he is trying to communicate through the dream. Daniel does not want to confuse the message he means to communicate to us by giving too many details. The N.T. gospel writers did the same thing.

[PPT 5] John 20:30-31 *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; (their goal in giving a limited account) but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* Too many details would confuse the message they mean to communicate to us.

Vs2) [PPT 6] The word translated “*winds*” may also be translated as “*spirits*,” or *angels*. However, you understand the word, God is the One who stirred up the sea, and from its foaming, raging waters it is God who sent the four horrifying beasts out of the sea.

[PPT 7] To the Hebrews the sea was an unstable, restless element. God compared the wickedness of the nations to the sea in many O.T. scriptures. The stirred-up great sea in the dream represents the gentile nations of the world.

[PPT 8] Isa 57:20 *But the wicked (sinner or lost) are like the troubled sea; when it cannot rest when waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace,” saith my God, to the wicked.*

What does this tell us about world history, and earthly kings and kingdoms? From the human point of view, the nations seem to work out their own destinies, but the invisible winds or spirits of God move over the surface of the water or nations to accomplish His will in His time. The history of the time of the Gentiles which we live in, is the record of God striving with the nations and ultimately bringing them into subjection when Christ returns to reign.

Vs3-4) Notice the word “*like*” used twice in verse 4 “*the first was like a lion*” and “*stand on two feet like a man*”.

This same idea is repeated in verse 5, with the word *resembling*. In verse 6 the word “*like*” is used once again for another beast.

[PPT 9] Although I use animals in these slides what Daniel saw was not real earthly animals, but similar to known animals while having different characteristics. Also, Daniel does not want us to consider the four beast's descriptions only to interpret them by reason alone but with emotion. He means for us to feel the terror of each beast, especially because of its supernatural features. (Rev 13:1-10).

To human eyes, the nations of the world are like Nebuchadnezzar's huge image, impressive and important; but from God's viewpoint, the nations are only violent beasts that attack and seek to devour one another.

[PPT 10] Teachers of the book of Daniel, whether liberal or conservative, generally agree that the first empire represents the reign of Nebuchadnezzar or the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In Daniel's dream the lion's rising on two feet and it's getting a man's mind suggests that the animal lost its beastly nature and showed compassion. This reminds us of how God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar by making him live like a beast for seven years until he recognized God Most High ruled over all in chapter 4.

Vs5) [PPT 11] The bear refers to the Medo-Persian Empire (8:20). Bible teachers aren't agreed on the meaning of the three ribs that the bear carried in its mouth. The best explanation I have found is that they stand for Lydia, Egypt, and Babylon, nations that the Medes and Persians conquered. The bear raised itself up on one side probably represents the one-sided union of the Persian and Median Empires; Persia being the more powerful eventually absorbed the Medes.

Vs6) [PPT 12] The leopard relates to the speed of the military conquest of Alexander the Great and the kingdom of Greece (8:21).

Apparently, each wing had some connection with each of this animal's four heads which suggests intelligence. When Alexander died his kingdom was initially divided among five generals, but four of them became dominant:

[PPT 13] (1) (P)tolemy in Egypt; [PPT 14] (2) Cassander in Macedonia and Greece; [PPT 15] (3) Seleu/cus in Syria and Babylon, [PPT 16] (4) Ly/simi/chus in Thrace.

Vs7) [PPT 17] Most conservative Bible teachers believe that the fourth beast represents the Roman Empire. The fourth beast is different from the first three in that it seems more repulsive, more powerful, and much more hostile toward God and His saints. So much so that Daniel finds nothing to compare it to and it had 10 horns or rulers.

Vs8) [PPT 18] If this is scary looking it is because Daniel means for it to be. We live in a world of godless forces; the kind of mutant beasts Daniel sees in rapid succession in his night vision. As such the world often seems as if it is out of control. Identifying this fourth beast as Rome has a major problem in that there is no real connection to the Roman Empire historically and the phrase, "*and it had ten horns.*" Because of this most premillennialist believe that the horns describe rulers who will arise in the future as a revived Roman empire. The little horn that uproots three of the 10 horns is the anti-Christ. The horn's eyes have the idea that no one can escape his sight or hide from him. He will also be a man skilled in using words and promoting himself so that people follow him (Rev. 13:5–6). He will also blaspheme God and ultimately convince the unbelieving world that he is God and to be worshipped (2 Thess. 2:1–12). He is called an antichrist. The Greek prefix anti can mean "against" and "instead of".

The last world ruler will be both an instead of or counterfeit Christ and or against, an enemy who is against Christ.

Vs9-10) [PPT 19] *Who is the Ancient of Days?* The Ancient of Days is a designation for God the Father, found only here in the Bible. It stresses His eternality first, but also His wisdom, and power. The description in verse 9 of God cannot be taken literally, because God the Father doesn't have a body, wear clothes, or grow white hair.

However, some believe Daniel is seeing God the Son as the glorified Christ. In verses 9-10, the pure white clothing pictures His purity and holiness, and his pure white hair of wool suggests His mature judgment and wisdom which gives Him the right and authority to judge. This symbol of authority is also used in the white throne judgment of Rev. 20 and Jesus' riding on a white horse as Judge in Rev. 19.

Daniel saw God's throne as a burning flame, also symbolic of judgment in Scripture (Ps. 18:7-8; 50:3-6; 97:3; Isa. 30:27-28). The wheels probably imply that the throne and God can go in any direction. (Ezekiel 1:15-17). Here in verse 10 and Revelation 20 (Vs11-15), there are two heavenly books mentioned:

[PPT 20] First, the Book of Life (book, singular) which records the names of God's people, that is, believers (Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27).

[PPT 21] Second, as in verse 10 the Books (plural) which record the deeds of humanity, both positive and negative (Isa. 65:6; Mal. 3:16; Rev. 20:12-13). It is apparent that verse 10 is the time of final or "White Throne Judgement" as far as the nations of the world and the lost are concerned.

Vs 11-12) God took away the dominion of each of the earlier three kingdoms one by one, but they continued to exist, in parts of the kingdom that overcame them, for a period of time. However, God will cut off the fourth, the last empire and its parts completely, and they will continue no longer. The end of the fourth kingdom will result in a totally new condition on the earth with those left of the nations saved and entering into Messiah's thousand-year reign (Rev. 19:19—20:6; Matt 25:31-46).

Vs13-14) [PPT 22] *One "like a Son of Man (Adam)" was brought before the Ancient of Days.* The expression, "*Son of man*," in the O.T. usually refers to a person only as a human being. Daniel's usage of the term is the first to focus on its divine aspect! This figure in verse 13 is clearly divine, since no one but God rides on the clouds of heaven; but this figure, as Daniel sees him, is also clearly human as well; he is "*like a son of man*".

During Jesus' earthly ministry, the people thought the Messiah would be a military leader who would free them from Roman rule. Because of this instead of using the title Messiah, Jesus chose the "*Son of man*," to refer to Himself in the N.T. It describes the Messiah as both fully God and fully human (I John 4:1-3). As a title for Jesus Christ; "*The Son of Man*" is used eighty-two times in the Gospels, most often by Jesus Himself. There are many titles for Jesus in the New Testament. He is the "*Lord*," "*Messiah*", the "*Good Shepherd*," "*the Alpha and Omega*." But Jesus never chose those titles for himself. Others gave them to him. He chooses this title which reveals the pleasure of deity, the eternal second person of the trinity, had in identifying with us as a human being. A man will eventually rule this world, the God-man. When Jesus chose the title "*Son of Man*" it should have taken Jesus' hearers back to Daniel 7:13-14, where His deity as the God-man is in view.

Vs15-18) The saints of verse 18 are also mentioned in verses 21, 22, 25, and 27, and in those verses refer to the people of God living on earth during the tribulation period. The apostle John makes it clear in Revelation Chapter 7 that there will be both believing Jews and Gentiles on the earth during the 7 years of the tribulation.

Three of the verses describe the saints as victorious over their enemy's verses 18, 22, and 27 while two verses tell us that the Lord permits them to be defeated before their enemies in verses 21, 25.

However, the emphasis of the angel's explanation is positive. While Daniel had been shaken by the darkness of his vision, he is reminded by the interpretation of the outcome, the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

Vs19-25) [PPT 23] *How important is it for us to identify the anti-Christ? Are we supposed to discover his identity and if so when?*

The angel told Daniel that the beasts in his vision are kings, but he was not told the identity of any of the kings. We only know who three of them were at this point in time by looking back into history and with the information given in the next chapter. This prophecy is not to tell who future kings will be, but rather what they will be like.

[PPT 24] After the Anti-Christ's appointed time is over, God will destroy him and his kingdom and establish Christ's eternal kingdom on the earth. Today this is what we need to know from Daniel's vision, rather than the identity of the fourth beast.

[PPT 25] Dan 7:25 = *'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.*

The eleventh horn may hope to change the time, but in God's plan this king is granted "*a time (one), times (two), and half a time*"; three and a half years to oppose and oppress the saints. This three-and-a-half-year period is also called the "Great Tribulation," a phrase Jesus used to describe the last half of the seven-year Tribulation in Matt. 24 (vs21). God grants this king success and His saints suffering, but only for an appointed time.

Vs26) *'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.* [PPT 26] Verse 27: *Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be **given to the people of the saints** of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'* To my knowledge, Daniel 7:27 is the first mention in the Bible, that the saints will rule with Jesus and not just that Jesus will himself reign.

Vs28) It was not easy for Daniel to be God's mouthpiece. It never is for any man or woman. It seems that Daniel's distress is the result of the wickedness and oppression by the world kingdoms which are represented by all the beasts, and that the saints, especially the Jewish people will be oppressed and even overcome for a period of time by the fourth beast. A major theme of the Book of Daniel is the contest between the kingdom of man which originated in Babel and the kingdom of Messiah as the only eternal kingdom.

[PPT 27] A quote from Robert Dean = "*Men always try to reestablish the kingdom of Babel. Every major political leader, whether you're talking about Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Caesar or you come up into more modern times with Napoleon and Adolph Hitler, every major political leader in human history has tried to reestablish the kingdom of man and to bring the entire world under one governmental system.*

[PPT 28] *Why? Because man wants to control his destiny independent from God; he wants to set up a society and all the structures in society, from education, politics, economics, law, he wants to set everything up completely free from divine interference.*

[PPT 29] *And what we see in this is the seed of the Biblical critique of human culture, that man tries to continuously establish his social structures, his intellectual, his political existence independent from God and free from the authority of His Word, but God is not going to allow that to happen and it continuously fails."*

Two Conclusions:

[PPT 30] 1) God has chosen to settle His accounts with men slowly. God's plan and program are carried out on His schedule, not ours (2 Peter 2:8-10). The study of prophecy is needed so that men are reassured of divine deliverance and blessing, as well as divine judgment (2 Peter 2:4-9).

[PPT 31] 2) Prophecy is revealed, not to give us the specific details of things to come, but *to change our perspective*. Prophecy is necessary because God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. Prophecy reveals that in God's economy, things are not what they appear to be. We do not walk by sight but by faith. When we least expect it, the Lord will return, the wicked will be punished, and the kingdom of God will be established forever. We are not to act on what we see with our human eyes as much as on what God has said.