

Daniel 7 – Daniel’s Vision of the Four Beasts

Read Daniel 7 (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtOq7Nf8eo0>)

Vs 1 Notice we are taking a step back in time from Chapters 5 (Belshazzar’s final moments) & 6 (when Darius, Babylon’s conqueror, was king after Belshazzar). The Book of Daniel is not written chronologically. Daniel chapters 1 through 6 describe the life and times of Daniel. Chapters 7 through 12 describe visions Daniel had. In order of events, the vision described in this chapter took place during the time between Daniel chapters 4 and 5. Who is the king at this time? This chapter records events that happened in the first year of King Belshazzar’s reign. What happened to Daniel and what was he compelled to write? He had a dream and visions (*things seen, known, understood*). Notice Daniel tells us the main facts. Daniel could have given us more detail but the Holy Spirit only wanted him to write the main facts.

Vs 2 – 3 What did Daniel “see”? The four winds of heaven (heaven referring to the atmospheric heaven, the four winds perhaps referring to the sovereign power of God striving with men (as in Ps 35:5, 48:7, 107:25 Isaiah 27:8, 41:16) or satanic forces, as mentioned in Revelation 7:1) stirring up the Great Sea. This was most likely referring to the Mediterranean Sea. Each one of the empires mentioned in this vision had a geographical connection to the Mediterranean Sea. Stirring up has the idea of chaos and tumult. The sea is sometimes used as a picture of Gentile nations (Ps 74:13, 89:9, Isaiah 57:20). What did the winds stir up? Four great beasts that came up from the sea. How are they described? Great, meaning *large, ferocious animals*. Each one was distinct from the other, each one comes after the one before.



Vs 4 – 7 Summarize these beasts and their characteristics

Lion (Babylon)	Bear (Medo-Persian)	Leopard (Greek)	Nasty Beast (Roman)
Had eagle wings, which get plucked off	Raised up on one side	4 wings on its back	Dreadful terrible and very strong
Lifted up from the earth	3 ribs in mouth, between teeth	4 heads	Huge iron teeth
Stands like a man on 2 feet	Arose and devoured much flesh	Given dominion	Devoured, broke in pieces and trampled residue
Given a man’s heart			10 horns

Lion: The first beast was more majestic than any of the following beasts (lions and eagles are “kings” of their realms). But this majestic beast was humbled (wings were plucked off) and made human (a man’s heart was given to it). This probably speaks about what happened to Nebuchadnezzar from Chapter 4. The Babylonian Empire, represented by a lion and an eagle, fits in well with the majesty and authority of Nebuchadnezzar in his reign over the empire of Babylon. Jeremiah 49:19-22 Babylon’s winged lions can be seen at the British Museum today.

Bear: The next kingdom to arise is the Medo-Persian empire. In this partnership between the Medes and the Persians, the Persians dominated the relationship. Most think the three ribs represent their three great military

conquests: Babylon, Egypt and Lydia. The slow, crushing armies of the Medo-Persian Empire were well known. 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. The command to arise and devour much flesh indicates the extreme cruelties often practiced by the Persians, and the wide extent of their conquests.

Leopard: The leopard was known for its sudden, unexpected attacks. The leopard described here was especially swift (with four wings), and clever (having four heads). 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 Illyrium and the Adriatic Sea to the Indian Ocean and the River Ganges; and in twelve years subdued part of Europe, and all of Asia. After his death his empire was divided into four parts (four heads).

The Fourth Beast: The fourth beast was indescribable, and uniquely horrific in its power and conquest. It was different in it had ten horns. Recall there are ten toes (Daniel 2) and ten horns (Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17) associated with the rule of this final world ruler. In the ancient world horns expressed the power and fearsomeness of an animal. This fourth beast was so strong it had ten horns. In historical fulfillment, the fourth beast represented the Roman Empire, which was the largest, strongest, most unified and enduring of them all.

Vs 8 What are the details about the horns of the fourth beast? Horns depict kings. Daniel was bothered about them and as he studied them, he noticed a little horn coming up amongst the 10 horns. Right in front of this little horn, three of the front (first) horns were plucked out by the roots. This little horn had eyes like man and a mouth that spoke pompous (*huge (in size); domineering (in character), very powerful*) words.

Vs 9 – 10 Daniel's vision about the beasts is interrupted with a vision of the Ancient of Days. Who is this? God Almighty. After describing God, what does he see? The throne room. What do we learn here? A thousand thousands minister to Him. God's throne is surrounded by a crowd (10,000 x 10,000), representing a court, which gets seated when judgments are decreed. Judgments will be based on books (we studied this in Revelation; Book of Life, Book of Remembrance, Books of Works, etc.).

Vs 11 - 12 The last beast is defeated. All the beasts were defeated. Yet, are they "dead"? Nope, they are were prolonged for a season and a time. I think this is referring to the final judgment.

Vs 13 – 14 Now he sees what? Jesus! What do we learn about His coming kingdom? It's ETERNAL! Notice the contrast to man's "beast systems" that are destroyed sequentially.

Vs 15 – 17 Now Daniel gets into the interpretation of the dream. Who is he asking? The Scripture does not say. It seems Daniel is in a vision now, rather than a dream. He asks someone, I assume an angel or messenger, to help him understand about the beasts.

Vs 18 What do you think this verse is talking about? Us, the body of believers that will rule and reign with Christ during the 1,000 years and into eternity. Notice we receive (*to acquire*) and possess (*to take possession of*) the kingdom. What kingdom is this?

Vs 19 – 22 Now Daniel wants to know about this very strange and dreadful fourth beast. Most commentators interpret the small horn that takes over during the final days of this age is the anti-Christ. Who does this leader make war with? Anyone who proclaims Jesus as Lord (i.e. saints). Does he prevail against them? Yes! Ultimately, Who comes to their rescue? God Almighty. What will be the result of the end of this conflict? Instead of the anti-Christ ruling, the saints will possess (*take possession of*) the kingdom or the world. Remember, from our study of Revelation, after the 1,000 years is over, we will rule and reign on earth. This is what Daniel is referring to.

Vs 23 – 27 Here we have a recap of sorts. What new things do we learn in verse 25? The anti-Christ will intend to changes times and laws (suppress the Jewish religion by prohibiting the observance of religious festivals and other ordinances of the mosaic Law). How long will the anti-Christ be allowed to persecute saints? 3 ½ years. Who will everyone obey and serve in the new kingdom? Jesus the Christ.

Vs 28 How did Daniel feel at the end of this Chapter? His thoughts greatly troubled him and his appearance changed. Did he take this information lightly? No, he kept the matter in his heart, which meant he didn't dismiss it.