

## DANIEL CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 presents four beasts and the little horn. In chapter 7, Daniel has a night vision in which four great beasts emerge from the sea. This vision, or dream in chapter 7, is similar to the one that Nebuchadnezzar had back in chapter 2. Daniel's dream has different symbols, but it gives us the same information with some additional details. It covers basically the same time period, but from a different perspective.

*J. Dwight Pentecost notes, "Whereas in Daniel 2 the course of world empire is viewed from man's perspective, in Daniel 7 the same course of empire is viewed from the divine viewpoint, where the empires are seen, not as an attractive glorious image, but as four wild voracious beasts, which devour and destroy all before them and, consequently, are worthy of judgment."*

### A. The Four Great Beasts

#### 1. Verse 1—Introduction to the dream

a. In the first year of Belshazzar: This vision came to Daniel after the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, but before the Babylonian Empire was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. This is approximately fifty years after Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, making him 68-70 years old.

#### 2. Verses 2-3—The Four great beasts and where they come from.

##### a. Wind **strove** upon **the great sea**

(1). **Strove** means to churn up. This has the idea of chaos and turmoil.

(2). **The Great Sea** was the ancient name of what today is called the Mediterranean Sea. This indicates that the empires mentioned in this vision had a geographical connection to the Mediterranean Sea. The sea is also used to picture the Gentile nations.

b. "And four great beasts came up from the sea". In verse 17 Daniel tells us that these four beasts are four kings (kingdoms) ruling over the earth.

### **Daniel 7:17**

<sup>17</sup> **These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.**

3. Verse 4—The first beast is a Winged Lion which is Babylon, the Head of Gold in chapter 2. The symbol for Babylon is a winged lion. This first beast was more majestic than any of the following beasts. But this majestic beast was humbled (wings were plucked off) and made human (a man's heart was given to it).

4. Verse 5—The second beast is a Bear with three ribs in its mouth which is Medo-Persia, the Breasts and Arms of Silver in chapter 2.

a. A bear is slower, stronger, and more crushing than a lion—and this bear had an insatiable appetite for conquest (***arise and devour much flesh***).

b. What do the three ribs represent? Some think they represent Medo-Persia's three great military conquest—Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.

5. Verse 6—The third beast is a Winged, Four-Headed Leopard which is Greece, the Belly and Thighs of brass in chapter 2.

a. Leopards are known for their speed and their sudden, unexpected attacks. The four wings amplify that speed. Alexander the Great had the fastest moving army known. In eight years-time the Greeks marched and conquered more than 11,000 miles of territory.

### **Daniel 8:5**

<sup>5</sup> *And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, **and touched not the ground**: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.*

b. The four heads represent the four divisions of the Grecian empire after Alexander's death.

6. Verses 7-8—Give a description of the fourth beast representing the Fourth Kingdom. The fourth beast that rose from the sea was an indescribable animal. This beast was so terrifying and ferocious that there was no living animal which could represent it. The major thing emphasized concerning this beast was its overwhelming destructive power. (***It had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it***)

a. This beast has ten horns on its head. A little horn comes up between the ten horns, uprooting three of the ten.

b. In verse 19 Daniel asks for more information about this fourth beast and in verses 23-28 the angel answers Daniel's request.

(1.) Verse 24—The **ten horns are ten kings** (kingdoms) that shall arise. ***And another shall arise after them*** (Little horn). It represents an eleventh king and his kingdom. When we examine verses 23-26, it will be seen that the little horn (eleventh king) represents the Antichrist and his kingdom.

(a.) The little horn came up "**among**" the ten horns. This indicates that the Antichrist would begin to come to power while the ten kings or kingdoms represented by the ten horns would be present on earth.

(b.) According to verses 7 and 8, the ten horns and the little horn rose out of and were part of the fourth beast (kingdom). This indicates that the fourth kingdom would experience three stages of history. First, the beast stage; second, the ten horn or ten kingdom stage; and third, the little horn or Antichrist stage. This fourth beast represents the Roman Empire. It corresponds to the legs of iron and the feet and toes of iron and clay of the image in chapter 2.

Scriptures identifying this fourth kingdom as Rome are found in Daniel and Revelation.

### **Daniel 9:26**

<sup>26</sup> *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: **and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;** and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

### **Revelation 17:9**

<sup>9</sup> *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads **are seven mountains,** on which the woman sitteth.*

B. In verses 9-12 Daniel saw the judgement and destruction of the Gentile kingdoms including the fourth kingdom and its king.

1. Verse 9a—**Thrones** were cast down: meaning put in place. When the Apostle John saw heaven, he also saw thrones.

### **Revelation 4:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> *And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*

<sup>3</sup> *And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

<sup>4</sup> *And round about the throne were four and twenty **seats (thronos):** and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

2. Verse 9b—The Ancient of Days was seated.

a. God the Father was called the Ancient of Days, indicating that He has lived throughout the entire course of history as an eyewitness of all the deeds of human beings and kingdoms.

3. Verses 9c-10a—God’s throne consisted of fire, and a river of fire flowed out from before Him. Fire represented the glory of God. The glory of God always signifies the special presence of God. In this instance it certainly signifies God’s special presence on a throne to administer judgment.

**Isaiah 66:15-16**

<sup>15</sup> *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.*

<sup>16</sup> *For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.*

4. Verse 10b—Daniel saw an innumerable host of angels standing before God’s throne waiting to receive His commands which they would obey. (**thousand thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand**)

a. Centuries later the Apostle John saw this angelic host around the throne of God in heaven.

**Revelation 5:11**

<sup>11</sup> *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was **ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;***

5. Verse 10c—Court was seated, and the books were opened.

a. As the judgment session began, books were opened. The scriptures indicate that God keeps records of human deeds.

**Revelation 20:12**

<sup>12</sup> *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works.***

b. Since verses 11 and 12 declare that it was the little horn (**the Antichrist**) and the four beasts (**kingdoms**) which were to be judged, it would appear that the books in Daniel’s dream contained the deeds of the Antichrist and the four Gentile world kingdoms.

6. Verses 11 and 12 tell the sentencing.

a. The beast (the Antichrist) will be destroyed and his body given to the burning flame and his kingdom will be totally consumed by the fire of God’s judgment.

**Daniel 7:26**

<sup>26</sup> *But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion (**kingdom**), to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

## **Revelation 19:20**

<sup>20</sup> *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

b. The rest of the beasts had their dominion taken away. When each of the first three Gentile world kingdoms (represented by the first three beasts) fell, they were not totally destroyed. They were absorbed into the next world kingdom which conquered them and continued to exist as part of that new Gentile world kingdom. Since the fourth kingdom would be totally destroyed in its fall, it would not be made part of the kingdom that would succeed it. Thus, God's total destruction of the Antichrist's kingdom would also be God's total destruction of Gentile world dominion.

C. In verses 13 and 14 Daniel sees Christ receive the Fifth Kingdom—God's Kingdom.

1. The **Son of Man** receives the kingdom. The title **Son of Man** was a favorite self-designation of Jesus, used more than 80 times in the four Gospels.

2. He "*came with the clouds of heaven*".

## **Matthew 24:30**

<sup>30</sup> *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, **and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven** with power and great glory.*

3. He receives all dominion previously held by the beasts and His reign will never end. (**His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.**)

4. Verses 11-14 corresponds with what was portrayed in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 of the stone cut out of the mountain smashing the image on the feet, destroying it and becoming a great kingdom that filled the whole earth.