

Life in the Lion's Den
"The Four Beast of Daniel's Dream"
(Daniel Chapter 7)
Lesson #8

Scripture: Hebrews 12:28 *"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;"*

Introduction:

There are some pretty cool cities on this planet. I was watching a show on TV the other day about Dubai in the U.A.E., these guys are so rich that they are building islands out in the sea that have the shape of a palm tree. They have so much money coming out of their pockets that in the middle of a hot desert region they have built an indoor ski slope.

Paris also came to mind with its Eiffel Tower, its romantic little shops filled with tourists from around the world.

Buckingham Palace in England where Queen Elizabeth lives seems so stately and in many ways is the overstatement of opulence.

Italy is another seemingly great city. With its Sistine Chapel and wouldn't you like to see Venice.

Our own country is filled with great earthly things from the Rocky Mountains great memorials that lie around the White House.

If you had to pick which is the greatest country on earth...what would you pick? It turns out that you don't really need to answer this question because Walt Disney declared Disney Land the greatest kingdom on earth.

Transitional Statement:

In Daniel Chapter eight Israel has been in captivity almost 70 years. The second half of Daniel has one purpose and to miss it would be detrimental. It shows how the kingdoms of this earth will fall away and it points to the coming of the kingdom of Christ that you are a part of.

Daniel looks into the future with perfect accuracy. God's people who will live during the 400 years of inter-testament times, through this book can be assured that God doesn't abandon His people and He is very much in control....sounds like an applicable message for us today.

I. In the first year of Belshazzar

Daniel 7:1

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.

- A. The first 6 chapters of Daniel have been a chronological record of Israel in Babylonian captivity. By chapter 6 Babylon had fallen and the Medes and the Persians were in control of Babylon.
- B. Here, Chapter 7 backs up to the time of Babylon because the story will include Babylon.
- C. Up until now Daniel has been interpreting everyone else's dreams....but now he has his own dream.
 - 1. Not just a dream....but a "vision", which points to prophecy....future events.

II. Daniel's Vision:

Daniel 7:2-8

2 Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. 4 "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. 5 "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' 6 "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7 "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

- A. First, Daniel saw the 4 winds of heaven stirring up the great sea.
 - 1. The "great sea" is specifically a designation for the Mediterranean Sea
 - a. So this gives us a geographical location for the dream, and it's people.
 - b. But the sea has a deeper meaning here as set forth in scripture.
 - 1) Isa. 17:12-13 – roaring of the seas = the rushing of the nations.
 - 2) Rev 17:15 – the many waters = multitude of people out of which the nations and kingdoms are formed.

2. So the winds of God churned up the worldly sea, in the area of the Mediterranean sea, until 4 beasts came out...all different from each other.
 - a. These 4 beasts, per the interpretation in Daniel 7:17, are 4 kingdoms that will arise out of the earth.
 - 1) These 4 kingdoms will simply serve as a fuller explanation of Daniel chapter 2's kingdoms of the great statue...parallel
 - a) Babylon
 - b) Medo-Persia
 - c) Greece
 - d) Rome

B. So let's look at the 4 Beasts of Daniel dream:

1. The first is the **Lion** with eagle wings.
 - a. Ancient Babylon had lions carved on the walls of their city
 - 1) Babylon is represented as a lion who ravaged Judah (Jer 50:17,43-44)
 - b. Babylon is described in Ezek 17 as an eagle that swooped down and carried Judah into captivity.
 - 1) Eagles are birds of prey and so was Babylon
 - c. At some point it's wings were plucked
 - 1) And made to stand like a man...given a man's mind.
 - 2) So the lion was humiliated and made to become what it was not.
 - a) Nebuchadnezzar had the same thing happened to him when he was put out to pasture and given the mind of an animal.
2. Then a **Bear** raised up on one side
 - a. The Medes and the Persians were the next kingdom as we saw in chapter 6
 - 1) But there was a dominant side of this kingdom. The Medes only played a puppet roll per say to Cyrus the Great of Persia who ruled the roost....so the Persia side of this kingdom was raised up.
 - b. The bear had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth.
 - 1) Ribs are the strong part of our body that protect our most vital organs.

- 2) These three ribs in most likely hood were the three strongholds conquered by Cyrus the Great: Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.
 - c. This bear was told to “Arise, devour much meat”
 - 1) Told by who?
 - 2) Who is above the bear to instruct it?
3. Next in Daniel’s vision is a **Leopard** with 4 wings of a bird and 4 heads.
- a. Greece under Alexander the Great had a swift victory over the Medo-Persian empire.
 - b. The leopard is the fastest of all animals and when you add bird wings to it ...there is nothing that can escape its clutches....and so was Greece.
 - b. This beast had four heads.
 - 1) After Alexander the Great at the age of 33 dies of a fever and too much drinking, and the Diadoch wars were fought to divide his kingdom. When the dust settled his kingdom was divided into 4 parts....which we will talk more about in chapter 8
 - c. Dominion was given to it.
 - 1) That is sovereignty above all others.
 - 2) If it was sovereign who gave it dominion?
 - 3) Who is above the leopard?
4. But now Daniel’s dream takes a turn for the worst....The Fourth Beast.
The Terrifying Beast with Iron Teeth and 11 Horns.
- a. This is Rome
 - b. Dreadful and terrifying ...Rome devoured the previous kingdoms with its strong iron teeth.
 - 1) Historians all agree that Rome conquered the Greeks and expanded its rule over the areas ruled by the former Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires.
 - c. This beast was very different from the others and had 11 horns
 - 1) Daniel 7:24 shows these to be successive kings of this kingdom
 - a) First Daniel saw 10 horns and then a little horn with eyes and a boastful arrogant mouth.
 - b) When this last horn came up, 3 of the other horns were subdued (Hebrew = despised) before it.

2) Rome had 11 emperors (horns)

- a) Augustus-----41 years
- Tiberius-----23 years
- Caligula-----4 years
- Claudius-----13 years
- Nero-----31 years
- Galba-----6 months
- Otho-----4 months
- Vitellius---9 months
- Vespasian-----10 years
- Titus-----2 years
- Domitian-----15 years

b) Domitian is the 11th horn, little, boastful and arrogant.

- Domitian was in Rome when Galba, Otho, Vitellius short term emperors, during Roman civil war, were uprooted and he despised them.
- He spoke out against God
- He was waging war with the saints and overpowering them/ wearing them out (Daniel 7:21,25)
- He tried to change the times and the laws...setting himself as God.

*Until !

III. The Ancient of Days steps forward.

Daniel 7:9-12

9 "I kept looking

Until thrones were set up,

And the Ancient of Days took His seat;

His vesture was like white snow

And the hair of His head like pure wool.

His throne was ablaze with flames,

Its wheels were a burning fire.

10 "A river of fire was flowing

And coming out from before Him;

Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,

And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;

The court sat, And the books were opened.

11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking;

I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

12 "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

A. God sets up His court and takes His seat.....courts now in session.

1. But notice it's not welcome robes that He has out.
2. It's fire flowing from His throne.
 - a. The wheels of the throne are blazing fire also...see Ezek 1:15 where wheels are instruments of crushing judgments.

B. So God opens the Books

1. The beast was judged and slain...its body was destroyed and thrown into the fire.
2. The other beasts
 - a. Had their dominion removed but their influence was to remain for a period of time.

IV. Then the Son of Man (Jesus) comes forward

Daniel 7:13-14

*13 "I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
14 "And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.*

A. Jesus was to be given God's kingdom...a spiritual all powerful kingdom

1. Dominion, glory were to be His.
2. All the peoples, nations and men of every language to serve Him.
3. His kingdom will last forever....Not ever destroyed....Eternal.

V. The Interpretation

Daniel 7:15-28

*15 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. 16 "I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:
17 "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth.*

18 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

19 "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, 20 and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates. 21 "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 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. 26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 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.' 28 " At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

Conclusion:

Why tell this in advance.....where was God

The beast can only go where God allows...He instructs them toward His end.

Have faith even when you don't understand.

Why does this matter to us.....Church you are the kingdom