

The Vision of Daniel 7

By

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The Scene on Earth

The night vision recorded by the prophet Daniel in chapter two corresponds to the “dream and visions of his head upon his bed” in chapter seven (Dan. 7:1).¹ The vision in chapter two given by God is from man’s point of view, while the beasts in chapter seven of Daniel correspond to God’s point of view toward man’s nations and government. The dream recorded in chapter seven occurred during the first year of the reign of Belshazzar when the Babylonian empire was still in existence. Chapter six occurred during the Chaldean, or Medo-Persian period, *after* the Babylonian kingdom. Therefore, the chapters are not chronological. There were only ten years between the death of King Nebuchnezzar and Belshazzar subsequently becoming the Babylonian ruler; but chapter six details events during the Medo-Persian reign of Darius, which followed Belshazzar’s reign. Daniel would still be “in his middle sixties”² at the time of this vision in chapter seven, whereas he was in his late eighties by the time of Cyrus, the Persian in chapter six.³

Praise God that He gave us these revelations for us to understand His view of governments, kingdoms, and mankind. What follows in this paper is the attempt to compare God’s truth, which must be studied and correlated to understand the prophetic dreams given to Daniel (2 Tim. 2:15-16). It is only by virtue of the completed Scripture and the “time of the end” that we can better appreciate the visions given to Daniel (Dan. 12:4)

The Sea and Four Winds

The vision begins with the “four winds of heaven” striving “upon the great sea.” The “winds,” representing satanically controlled winds (Eph. 2:2, 6:12, Rev. 7:1),⁴ were bent on

disturbing the “sea,” which is literally the Mediterranean Sea, but typologically represents the “Gentile powers that are hostile to God and to Israel...Isaiah 8:7-8; 17:12-13; 57:20; Jeremiah 46:7-9; 47:2; Revelation 13:1; 17:1,15.”⁵

The Four Special Beasts

In the dream, Daniel saw four beasts come up out of the sea, which parallel the four divisions of the great metallic image of chapter two. “The four beasts...represented four kings and their kingdoms.”⁶ The first beast is a *lion* with eagle wings, which are plucked out, then the beast is made to stand like a man, and finally given a heart like a man (Dan 7:4). The plucked eagle’s wings suggest the kingdom was given a certain conquering ability which was then removed. The man’s heart suggests the empire eventually lost its usual fierceness when Nebuchadnezzar, who was initially given the heart of a beast (Dan. 4:16) had a change in heart (cf. Dan. 4:30 and 4:34-37).⁷ Another reference suggests “the beast is changed to a man; that is, the monarchy which it represents loses its fierceness and becomes mild.”⁸ There is “[n]o doubt Daniel was acquainted with the figures of winged lions that guarded the gates of the royal palace in Babylon.”⁹ This beast corresponds to the head of gold in Daniel 2 and therefore matches the Babylonian kingdom.

The *second* beast, corresponding to the Medo-Persian kingdom, was represented by a *bear* raised up on its side with three ribs in its mouth. “The three ribs indicate that it had overcome three great world powers of its day including Babylon.”¹⁰ The three major kingdoms conquered were Babylon in 539 BC, Lydia in 546 BC, and Egypt in 525 BC.¹¹

“Of the Medo-Persian Empire Larkin wrote, “It was ponderous in its movements, and gained its victories by hurling vast masses of troops upon its enemies. Xerxes’ expedition against Greece was undertaken with 2,500,000 fighting men.”¹²

Medo-Persia was truly a lumbering bear which “devour[ed] “much flesh” (Dan. 7:5). This beast correlates to the silver chest and arms of the image in Daniel two.

The *third* beast was a four winged and four headed *leopard*. A leopard “has been timed at 70 miles an hour during short bursts of speed in pursuit of gazelles and antelopes.”¹³ This is an accurate depiction of the “lightning fast” army of Alexander the Great. The four wings probably add to the image’s characterization of the speed of the Grecian army, while the four heads “denote the dividing of this empire into four kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, and Asia Minor.”¹⁴ When Alexander died in 323 BC, his four generals divided up the conquered territory. Gen. Antipater’s son, Cassander, obtained the European area of Macedonia and Greece; Gen. Lysimachus acquired the Asia Minor area of Thrace and Bithynia; Gen. Seleucus I Nicator took over the area of Syria, Babylonia and the Middle East; and Gen. Ptolemy I Soter ruled Egypt and North Africa.¹⁵

The major interest of the vision in Daniel seven is the *fourth* beast, which was “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” [Daniel 7:7-8]

The Sensational Vision Interpreted

We are not told the identity of the individual interpreting the dream for Daniel (Dan. 7:16) mentioned in Daniel 7:15-28, but very likely he is the same person who was commanded to “make this man to understand the vision” in chapter eight of Daniel (Dan. 8:16), who is Gabriel, or another angel (Zech. 4:4-5, Rev. 1:1).

Daniel was told that the great beasts were “four kings that shall arise out of the earth” (Dan. 7:17), but that the “saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the

kingdom for ever, even forever” (Dan. 7:18). He was particularly disturbed by the fourth beast (Dan. 7:18) which “devoured” the other beasts, and “shall devour the whole earth” (Dan. 7:19, 23). The ten horns of the fourth beast were representative of “ten kings that shall arise” (Dan. 7:24) and the little horn coming up among them was a king that shall arise and “subdue”¹⁶ (Hebrew שָׁפַל *shâphal*, to humble, abase, put down) three of the kings (Dan. 7:8, 24). The humbling king would blaspheme God, and “[h]e shall set Himself above all that is called God (2 Th 2:4), putting his own “will” above God’s times and laws (Da 11:36, 37)”¹⁷ The little horn corresponds to the Antichrist that “shall come” (1 Jn. 2:18, Rev. 13:5-7).

The fourth beast undoubtedly relates to the legs, feet, and ten toes of the image seen in chapter two of Daniel as well as the beast revealed in chapter thirteen of Revelation. The beast in Revelation described by the Apostle John also rose “out of the sea” (Rev. 13:1). It was a composite of a leopard, a bear, and a lion. The terrible beast seen by Daniel in chapter seven may well have been a composite of the same animals, also, although we are not told. “If our interpretation...is correct thus far, then the Roman empire is here depicted in the fourth beast.”¹⁸

The Scene in Heaven

The first part of the vision in chapter seven of Daniel relates “the sum of the matters” on earth (Dan. 7:1). The second part of the vision communicates the summary of the final operational events in Heaven related to the affairs on earth, which have always been under the control of “the Ancient of days” (Dan. 7:9) in heaven (Dan. 4:35). The vision takes place in heaven.

The Judge’s Throne

The throne in heaven is occupied by the Ancient of days, whose description encourages thoughts of wisdom by virtue of age and hair like pure wool, a suggestion of purity by His white

garment, and the identification of the ultimate judge by the fires around the throne (Dan. 7:9-19). There are ministering agents around the throne “and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him:” and again the scene is reminiscent of the vision seen by the Apostle John. (cf. Dan. 7:10, Rev. 5:11).

The thrones on earth were “cast down,” (Dan. 7:9) undoubtedly by the “stone”¹⁹ mentioned in Daniel 2:34-35, 44. However, some claim the Authorized Version is incorrect, and it should read “I beheld till thrones were placed.”²⁰

“Till the thrones were cast down – The Chaldee word (כרסון *karesavan*) means, properly, thrones – seats on which monarchs sit. So far as the word is concerned, it would apply either to a throne occupied by an earthly monarch, or to the throne of God. The use of the plural here would seem to imply, at least, that the reference is not to the throne of God, but to some other throne. Maurer and Lengerke suppose that the allusion is to the thrones on which the celestial beings sat in the solemn judgment that was to be pronounced – the throne of God, and the thrones or seats of the attending inhabitants of heaven, coming with him to the solemn judgment. Lengerke refers for illustration to **1Ki 22:19**; **Isa 6:1**; **Job 1:6**, and **Re 5:11-12**. But the word itself might be properly applied to the thrones of earthly monarchs as well as to the throne of God. The phrase “were cast down” (רמינו *remyv*), in our translation, would seem to suppose that there was some throwing down, or overturning of thrones, at this period, and that the solemn judgment would follow this, or be consequent on this.”²¹

The Judgment

The throne of the Ancient of days is the “great white throne” (Rev. 20:11) and the books of judgment are the books revealed in Revelation 20:12 because Daniel watched *until* the beast empowered by the dragon, the old devil himself, was destroyed and cast into the flames (Rev. 13:1-4, 20:10). The fourth beast is the last kingdom from which the Antichrist arises (Rev. 13:1) who is cast into the lake of fire mentioned in Revelation 19:20, 20:10, 14, 15. Concerning this scene, Lehman Strauss says,

“Centuries later the Apostle John saw some of the same that appeared in Daniel’s vision (Revelation 13:1-6). Because of his godless and defiant words against the Almighty, “the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (7:11; see Revelation 19:19-21).”²²

Obviously, the vision of Daniel was a panorama of history until the time of the end of the millennium, and it is the same “picture” seen by the revelator, John. It is instructive to note that the dispensation of the church falls entirely under the rule of the last kingdom, which is Rome.

The Son of Man's Throne

In conclusion, the everlasting kingdom is given to “one like the Son of man,” who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the seed of David (Mat. 9:6, 12:8, 40, 17:9, and many other verses; 2 Sam. 7:12). When the “seed” of David, the Son of man, will come, He will appear to the people of the earth on the throne of His glory, His kingdom, His throne, and His possession of the land of the entire earth at His revelation (Dan. 7:13-14, Rom. 1:3, Gal. 3:16), then the Abrahamic, Davidic, and Palestinian covenants will be fulfilled (Gen. 17, 2 Sam. 7, Deut. 28-30). Christ will share the kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdom with His people, the saints of God (Dan. 7:27, Rom. 8:17, Jam. 2:5).

The Jeopardy on Earth

Before the fourth kingdom is destroyed, there will be a great time of jeopardy on earth. The fourth beast will persecute the saints (Dan. 7:21, Rev. 6:9-11), cause devastation around the world (Dan. 7:23, Rev. 6:1-8), and the Antichrist, which comes out of the fourth kingdom, will continue to wreck havoc by persecuting the saints and attempting to change laws and times for three and one half (3 ½) years.²³ As a result of the iniquity that abounds in the last days against God's people and land, He will draw them into the battles of Armageddon in the valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of decision (Joel 3:1-2, Rev. 16:16).

The Joy of the Saints

“[T]he saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever (Dan. 7:18).” This is mentioned three times in chapter seven of Daniel

(Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). They shall be serving their Saviour, the Son of man (Dan. 7:14) who decimates His enemies with the sword of His mouth (Rev. 19:20). What greater hope and joy is there for a saint than to be with our Lord, serving Him in His kingdom? (1 Thess. 2:19). It was for His joy that He suffered the Cross for us (Heb. 12:2). It is His pleasure to give us the kingdom (Lk 12:32). What a great God!

Endnotes:

¹ M. R. DeHaan, Daniel the Prophet (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1995) 197. The book of Daniel consists of two parts: chapters 1-6 related to history, and chapters 7-12 related to the visions of Daniel.

² Thomas M. Strouse, But Daniel Purposed in his Heart, An Exegetical Commentary on Daniel (Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, Newington, CN, 2001) 102.

³ Wayne A. Brindle, The Liberty Annotated Study Bible, (Liberty University, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1988) Footnotes, p. 1279-1281.

⁴ Lehman Strauss, Daniel (Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ, 1969, 8th Printing 1985) 205.

⁵ Ibid. Strauss, 204.

⁶ Thomas M. Strouse, Op. Cit., 103.

⁷ Jamieson-Faussett-Brown Commentary (SwordSearcher, Version 4.7) Dan. 7:4.

⁸ Family Bible Notes (SwordSearcher, Version 4.7) Dan. 7:4.

⁹ Lehman Strauss, Op. Cit. 206.

¹⁰ M. R. DeHaan, Op. Cit., 201.

¹¹ Thomas M. Strouse, Op. Cit. 104.

¹² Lehman Strauss, Op. Cit., 207.

¹³ George W. Dunne, President, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, *Speed of Animals* (Nature Bulletin, No. 215, <http://www.newton.dep.anl.gov/natbltn/200-299/nb215.htm>, January 30, 1982).

¹⁴ Lehman Strauss, Op. Cit., 208.

¹⁵ Thomas M Strouse, Op. Cit., 105.

¹⁶ J. Strong, The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order. (Woodside Bible Fellowship.: Ontario, 1996, electronic ed.) Hebrew #8214, שָׁפַל [shâphal /shef-al/]...GK 10737; Four occurrences; AV translates as "humble" once, "abase" once, "subdue" once, and "put down" once. 1 to be or bring low, humble. 1A (Aphel) to bring low, humble.

¹⁷ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D., A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and Explanatory Commentary (Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA, 1997) Dan. 9:25.

¹⁸ Lehman Strauss, Op. Cit. 210.

¹⁹ Any student of the Scriptures recognizes the allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ as the "stone" (Deut. 32:4; Psa 18:2, 18:31; Isa. 28:16; Mat. 21:42; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pe. 2:6, etc.)

²⁰ Ibid. 214.

²¹ Albert Barnes, Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible (SwordSearcher, Version 4.8, Broken Arrow, OK, electronic ed.) Dan. 7:9.

²² Lehman Strauss, Op. Cit., 217.

²³ Ibid. 226

 Comparison Chart of the Images in Daniel and Revelation

Kingdom	Name	Image Man/Stone Dan. 2	Beasts Dan. 7, 8	Beast Rev.	Comment	Scripture	Period
First	Babylonia	Gold Head	<i>Lion</i> with eagle wings, made to stand on two feet; given a mans heart		Nebuchadnezzar, given power by God & is head of gold; Walls & gates (as Ishtar Gate)of Babylon had carved lions, bulls, dragons; gold everywhere. Winged Lions guard gates of royal palace of Babylon. (Strauss, p. 206) 4 beasts are four kings—Dan. 7:17	Dan. 2:32, 37, 38; *4:17,* 7:4, 17, 18, 22, 23, 27; Babylon = city of gold—Isa. 14:4, autocratic rule. (Strauss, 75) “time of the Gentiles” = Lk. 21:24 Lion Jer. 4:7, 48:40, 49:19-22, 50:17, 43-44; Eze. 17:3, 12	605-539 BC
Second	Medo-Persia	Silver Breast and Arms	<i>Bear</i> , raised up on one side; three ribs in its mouth; <i>Ram</i> with two horns, one higher than other, broken by the He-goat.		Two arms & two horns = Median and Persian combined empires; Ruled by Darius the Mede and then Cyrus the Persian. Persians more prominent = higher horn. Ram rammed by He-goat of third kingdom, Greece, representing Alexander the Great. Ram was national emblem of Persia	Dan. 2:32, 39; 7:5; 8:3, 4, 6, 7, *20*; Oligarchic rule	539-331 BC

Third	Greece	Brass Belly and Thighs	Four headed, winged <i>leopard</i> , fast, representin g the lightening fast arm of Alexander the Great; He-goat, with a “notable” horn, which is broken, and four horns come up, which correspond to the four heads given power.		He-goat waxes strong, and the four horns that “came up” from which arises a little horn, a type of the final little horn of the 4 th kingdom. The four horns are: Gen. Cassander (Euopean area of Macedonia and Greece), Gen. Lysimachus (Asia Minor area of Thrace and Bithynia), Gen. Seleucus (Syria and Babylonia), Gen. Ptolemy (Egypt & N. Africa)	Dan. 2:32, 39; 7:6; 8:5, 6, *21*, 22, 23 (little horn = a king of fierce contenance), type of the antichrist revealed in 8:25; many days in the future, 26. The little horn is believed to be Antiochus known as “Epiphanes the Madman” from book of Maccabees (see p. 239 Strauss, <u>Daniel</u>) Dan. 11:2-4 = Greece;	331-146 BC
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Fourth	Rome	Iron/Clay Legs, iron; Feet & Toes, clay	<i>Beast</i> , fierce & Powerful, with 10 horns , & a <i>little horn</i> with eyes like a man's eyes, & a mouth arises from them, which plucks up 3 horns,	Beast with 10 horns , seven heads, like a leopard, bear, lion, one head wounded to death, healed, all wondered; Spoke “great” blasphemy . Power from Dragon = Antichrist (Satan) Rev. 13:1- 6, 2 nd beast like lamb with two horns, cause all to worship the beast, spoke as dragon, does wonders and deceives = false prophet who give a mark. Rev. 13:16	Represents Rome & Caesar, Nero, etc. Iron is strong; latter stages (10 toes) 10 kingdoms divided, partly strong & broken, Composite of other beasts. Little horn speaks “great things.” Thrones cast down & last beast destroyed; the other beasts dominion removed but life spared.	Dan. 2:33, 40, 41, 42, 43; 7:7, 8, 9, 11, 12; Rev. 13:1-2 , 4, 6, 17:3, 7, 12- 18, Imperialistic rule to democratic at the end. (Strauss p. 75); four winds = Rev. 7 bent on hurting, & Satan called prince of the air Eph. 2:2, Heavenly places Eph 6:12 “sea” = Mediterrania n & represents hostile Gentile powers, Isa 8:7-8, 17:12- 13, 57:20; Jer. 46:7-9, 47:2; Rev. 13:1, 17:1, 15;	146 BC – AD 410 Future—the 10 King confederacy , but soon.
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Fifth	Messianic	Stone, cut out without hands	One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, He shall reign for ever and ever. Rev. 11:15		Stone crushes man image to “chaff,” becomes great Mtn filling earth. Son of man given an “everlasting dominion,” 70 weeks determined on nation of Israel, 69 weeks until Messiah the Prince cut off, a time break, then 1 wk. when the “prince” (Antichrist) shall come.	Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:13, 14, Stone/rock Isa. 26:16, 32:1-2, Exo. 17:3-6, 33:22, 1 Cor. 10:4, Mat. 21:44 Gospel of the kingdom preached, Mat. 24:14) Dan. 7:9-10 Messiah rules with “fire”, See Deut. 4:24, Heb. 12:29, 2 Thes. 1:8, Psa 104:4, Gen. 19:24, Lev. 10:2, Rev. 19-20:4; comes with clouds—Exo. 13:21, 19:9, 24:16, 34:5, Lev. 16:2, Psa. 18:11-12, 78:14, 97:2-4, Isa. 19:1, Jer. 4:13, Eze. 10:4, Nahum 1:3, Mat. 17:5, 14:30, Lk. 21:27, 1 Thes. 4:17, 14:14	Future, but when He comes He will reign forever.
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