

## **ROME -- "DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE" (7:7)**

### **TEXT: DANIEL 7:7-12**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. There is no question that the first beast in Daniel 7:4 is Babylon. This beast (a lion with eagle's wings) corresponds with the head of gold in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2.
2. Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold" (Dan. 2:38).
3. It is also very easy to interpret the second and third beast. The Media-Persia Empire and the Greek Empire followed the Babylonian Empire.
4. Furthermore, Media-Persia and Greece are referred to by name in Daniel 8:20 and 21.
5. The Roman Empire followed the Greek Empire; however, Daniel does not mention Rome by name. In fact Rome is not mentioned at all in the Old Testament. However, there is no doubt that the fourth beast represents the Roman Empire.
6. Daniel passed quickly over the first three beasts, but goes into more detail in describing the fourth beast (cf. 7:19). Much of this part of Daniel's prophecy awaits a future fulfillment, meaning there will be a revived Roman Empire which will be headed up by the antichrist.

#### **I. HISTORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE**

1. The dominion of Rome began with the occupation of Sicily in 241 B.C. After that, Rome conquered Spain, and then Carthage at the battle of Zama in North Africa in 202 B.C.
2. After subjugating the area north of Italy, Rome then moved east, conquering Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor.
3. The ancient Roman Empire dominated most of Europe, extending control to southern Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany west of the Rhine River.
4. The Roman Empire continued to grow gradually for four centuries or more (reaching its height in A.D. 117).
5. Its decline began in the third century, and became obvious in the fifth century, when the Roman army left Britain in A.D. 407, and the city of Rome was sacked in 410 by the Visigoths, nomadic tribes of Germanic peoples.
6. The sacking of 410 is seen as a major landmark in the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Jerome, who was living in Bethlehem at the

- time, wrote that "The City which had taken the whole world was itself taken."
7. The Roman general Pompey took over Jerusalem in 63 B.C. That is why when we read the New Testament we see that Israel was under Roman subjugation.
  8. For example, we read in Luke 2:1, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed."
  9. Caesar Augustus (Octavius) is considered the founder of the Roman Empire, and its first emperor, ruling from 27 B.C. until his death in 14 A.D.
  10. Augustus was the great-nephew of Julius Caesar, and following the assassination of Julius Caesar, Augustus took the throne because Caesar's will named him as his adopted son and heir.
  11. From that time, all the Roman emperors were called Caesar. The Roman Empire never really died. Julius Caesar became the Pontifex Maximus in 63 B.C., and from this point on, *Pontifex Maximus* was one of the many titles of the Roman Emperor. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the popes of Rome took over the position and title. That is why people refer to the Pope as the "pontiff."
  12. The Latin word *pontifex* literally means "bridge builder," and today the pope is busy building bridges with Muslims, socialists, homosexuals, and other enemies of the Gospel.
  13. The German word *Kaiser* and the Russian word *Czar* are derived from *Caesar*.
  14. In 800 A.D. the pope of Rome crowned Charlemagne "Emperor of the Romans." Later on, the German Otto the Great revived the Roman Empire, and he called it "the Holy Roman Empire" (962-1806).
  15. Others who have tried to build a new Roman Empire include Napoleon, Otto von Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm I & II, Mussolini, and Hitler.
  16. Today the revived Roman Empire is known as the European Union. When they drew up the constitution for the EU, there were proposals to mention Christianity or to at least to mention God in the preamble of the text, but the idea faced so much opposition that it was dropped.

## **II. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LITTLE HORN**

1. The fourth beast is described as "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" (7:7). It has great iron teeth which distinguish it from any known animal.

2. The "little horn" (7:7, 20, 21, 24, 25, etc.) is the antichrist, and he will come out of the ten horns on the fourth beast (7:8).
3. The ancient Roman Empire never consisted of a ten-nation confederacy ("it had ten horns" -- 7:7), so there must be a revived Roman Empire. Ten actual kingdoms will have to form an alliance during the coming tribulation period in order for the prophecies of Daniel 2 & 7, and Revelation 13 & 17 to be literally fulfilled.
4. In his dream, Daniel observed the beast (Rome) as he devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue of the preceding kingdoms.
5. In John's description in Revelation 13:2, the beast (the antichrist) with seven heads and ten horns was like unto a leopard (Greece), and his feet were as the feet of a bear (Media-Persia), and his mouth as the mouth of a lion (Babylon).
6. Furthermore, we are told "the dragon (Satan) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. 13:2).
7. The antichrist, empowered by Satan, will control the revived Roman Empire, and he will combine all the elements and characteristics of Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece, but will be far more dreadful and terrible in his power and blasphemy.
8. "Rome at times has boasted that she did not destroy the cultures of the nations she conquered but rather incorporated them into her own" (Lehman Strauss, *Daniel*).
9. The Roman empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands. Rome was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth..." (7:7).
10. But the revived Roman Empire, under the leadership of the antichrist, will be far worse. Revelation 20:4 says those who will not worship the beast, and those who refuse to receive his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, will be beheaded.
11. Right now in Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are beheading and slaughtering so many people that even the leader of al-Qaeda has disavowed them. The antichrist will be more brutal.
12. In verse 8, Daniel saw the little horn emerge from the head of the beast, and in the process, uprooting three of the first horns. The little horn is described as having eyes like the eyes of a man and "a mouth speaking great things."
13. Daniel 7:25 says, "And he shall speak great words against the most High." Revelation 13:5 and 6 says, "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given

- unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."
14. It is helpful to compare Daniel 2 and 7. The ten toes in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream belong to the fourth empire, Rome, and they will be broken in pieces when our Lord returns to establish His kingdom (2:44).
  15. Daniel describes the ten toes part iron, and part clay, meaning "the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken" (2:42). Iron and clay do not mix so the revived Roman Empire will be a colossal failure.
  16. The ten horns in Daniel 7 correspond with the ten toes. They represent ten kings (Dan. 7:24). Revelation 17:12 says, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."

### **III. THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR LORD'S RETURN (7:9-12)**

1. Both Daniel 2 and 7 describe our Lord's return (2:44, 45; 7:9-12).
2. Daniel 7:9 says, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down..." The *Scofield Study Bible* margin says the thrones were "placed." In other words they were not thrown down but put in place.
3. This prophecy should be compared with the heavenly scene in Revelation chapters 4 and 5.
4. Just as Revelation 4 and 5 are in preparation for the judgments that follow in Revelation 6, Daniel 7:9 prepares us for the judgments that follow. Verse 10 says, "The judgment was set, and the books were opened."
5. "The Ancient of days" will sit on His throne of judgment (7:9). This is God the Father. God the Son is pictured in verses 13 and 14.
6. The fire in verses 9--11 refer to the fiery judgment of God. Deuteronomy 4:24 (and Hebrews 12:29) says, "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire."
7. Second Thessalonians 1:8 says when the Lord Jesus comes back to judge this wicked sin-loving world, it will be "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."
8. In this scene of fiery judgment, innumerable saints and angels are pictured as ministering to God -- "ten thousand times ten thousand" (7:10).

9. "In the glorious presence of God, the books are opened and the judgment is set...This is the hour of final decision as far as the nations of the world are concerned" (John Walvoord, *Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*).
10. The books will be opened, and the antichrist and his associates will be killed (7:10). We know from Revelation 20 that God keeps accurate records, and the wicked will be judged "every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:13).
11. Daniel 7:11 says, "the beast (the little horn, the antichrist) was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." This does not refer to annihilation, but to eternal torment in hell.
12. For example, Revelation 19:20 says the beast and the false prophet will both be "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."
13. Revelation 20 refers to the millennial kingdom. The words "a thousand years" are repeated in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
14. Revelation 20:10 says, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
15. After a thousand years the beast and the false prophet will still be suffering in the lake of fire and brimstone.
16. This verse (and many others) speaks of eternal torment.
17. Second Thessalonians 2:8 and 9 says, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."
18. The Greek word translated "destroy" means "to reduce to inactivity, to render inoperative, to inactivate." The Lord is going to put him out of business. He will not be annihilated but tormented in the lake of fire.
19. Daniel 7:12 says the rest of the beasts had their lives prolonged even though their dominion was taken away. The Babylonian, Media-Persian, and Grecian empires were to some extent continued in their successors. That is clear from Revelation 13:2.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. A while ago, the headline for an article in *The Scientific American* caught my attention. It was entitled, "Effective World Government Will Be Needed to Stave Off Climate Catastrophe."

2. I found this very interesting because both the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation predict the rise of a one-world government which will be headed up by the antichrist.
3. I will not read you the entire article, but will read two interesting questions asked by the author of the article: "How do we create new institutions with enforcement powers way beyond the current mandate of the U.N.? Could we ensure against a malevolent dictator who might abuse the power of such organizations?"
4. Of course, this "malevolent dictator" they are seeking will be the "little horn" of Daniel 7:8. Daniel 7:21 says, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."
5. This is the beast of the book of Revelation, better known as the antichrist, and there will be no way to stop him from "abusing" his power!
6. Only the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be able to stop the antichrist's reign of terror (cf. Rev. 19:19, 20; II Thess. 2:8; Daniel 7:11; 8:25).
7. If you keep up with the news, you will notice that the proponents of a socialist, one-world government often speak of correcting so-called "climate change" as their catalyst for creating a new world order.
8. The Bible teaches that this new world government will be directed by the antichrist and empowered by Satan. Its primary objective will be to force the whole world to worship Satan and his human representative, the "beast."
9. Revelation 13:4 says, "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast."
10. John Walvoord says, "The purpose of Satan to take the place of God in this future great tribulation is the motivating power behind Satan's activities today. Satan's desire to be like God originally plunged the universe into sin (Isa. 14:14). His program has never changed, and he is seeking today as throughout his career to lure men to obey him instead of God. In the great tribulation this purpose will be transparently clear, and after its manifestation it will be brought into divine judgment" (*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*).