

Daniel 7:1-10

"What's The World Coming To?"

Guys we want to get right to it this morning. But let me just say from the onset that it seems to me that many times we are not as *awe struck* as we should be, when it comes to the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy. It would seem more appropriate to me (if we truly got it) that whenever we're reading or reminded of the word of God fulfilled from prophetic utterance of the past, that we would just stop what we're doing, get on our faces & worship God w/all that we are!

There's no one like our God? Knowing the end from the beginning, speaking of future events as though they've already happened... What other resource in the world (outside of God's Word) dares to stake its integrity, its legitimacy, its genuine authenticity on the fact that it will tell you what's coming down the pike anywhere from later the same day to thousands of years away w/absolute unyielding authority & if it ever misses even once... you can throw the whole thing away & discredit it all? Only God will dare to do that & that's exactly what He's done in Daniel Ch 7.

Vs 1

I'm just going to assume here that if you've been w/us throughout our study of the book of Daniel; you're connecting the dots right now & coming to the conclusion that Ch 7 isn't chronological w/in the book. & You're exactly right. Ch's 1-6 deal w/Daniel's history & Ch's 7-12 deal w/Daniel's prophecy.

If you recall, Belshazzar was the last Babylonian king. He was a co-regent, ruling w/his father; Nabonidus. Nabonidus was the king of the Empire, but being away from the capital so much Belshazzar (his son) ruled the city.

When you get to the end of Ch 4, Nebuchadnezzar is still on the throne. When you come to Ch 5 it's literally the last night of Belshazzar's reign. So the time line of this vision is after Ch 4, but some 14 yrs before Ch 5.

Daniel isn't really on the center stage of the political arena any longer & perhaps he's been giving himself more to the word of God & prayer (we spoke of the essential need for those things just last week). But he finds himself around 70 yrs old at this point.

The Medo-Persian empire isn't in focus yet, but Nebuchadnezzar is no longer on the scene. & Daniel lays down one night & has a dream that's so vivid, so disturbing that he decided to write it down, not every detail (as our curiosity would desire). The Holy Spirit led him to record just the main facts.

Vs 2-3

When Daniel speaks of the “Great Sea”, understand that he’s speaking the Mediterranean Sea. He wasn’t referencing the Atlantic, or the Pacific, those bodies of water simply weren’t apart of his world.

But whenever you find the sea being stirred in a biblical vision, or the sea referenced in a vision (or parable) (that I’m aware of) it’s always an allusion to the nations of the world. The sea of humanity. You can write down & look up later Isa 17:12, 57:20, Ezek 26:3 & Matt 13:47 for a few references. Of course, in Rev 17 when an angel is explaining to John a vision that *he’d* seen, we read plainly, *“Then he said to me, ‘The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.’”*¹

So what we’re seeing here is that these “beasts” that Daniel is about to describe, these Empires that will arise, will all come out of the great sea of humanity which is in a constant state of unrest, chaos & turmoil... *The 4 winds of heaven (N, S, E, W) are stirring it. It’s being tossed to & fro, it’s restless, tumultuous, unsettled on every side. It’s a great picture isn’t it, apropos really (& being the word of God, we’d expect nothing less). Mankind is always in a state of unrest, there’s constant state of chaos & turmoil in the world, there’s no peace apart from the Prince of peace & He’s not a part of this equation (just yet).*

But what’s coming into view here is the fact that though from the human perspective, nations seem to work out their own destinies, the truth is that God is the Author & the Finisher of human history. It’s *His* will that’s being worked out among the nations. If there’s 1 message we see emphasized in the book of Daniel it’s that, “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men” (Dan. 4:32).

But back to the vision. 4 Great beasts emerge from the sea, 4 large, ferocious animals, each one being distinct from the other.

Vs 4-6

Let’s recall the fact that in Ch 2, *Nebuchadnezzar* had a dream. & *His* dream involved a massive, majestic looking statue (head of gold, chest/arms of silver, belly/thighs of bronze, legs of iron etc...) & Daniel informed him that the various segments/metals spoke of different empires that would arise. Babylon being the head of gold & then another would arise after it & then another, so on & so forth.

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Re 17:15]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

In Vs 17 of this Ch, an angel will tell Daniel that these 4 beasts (as I alluded to a moment ago) represent 4 kingdoms/empires. The same sequence of events that Nebuchadnezzar had seen. However; as to where the king saw an impressive image made of valuable metals, Daniel saw ferocious & wild beasts that ruthlessly devoured & conquered peoples & nations w/out conscience.

They're correlating visions, the difference being Nebuchadnezzar's was from man's perspective, Daniel's was from God's perspective. From man's perspective these empires are powerful & impressive. But from God's perspective they were ravenous beasts conquering & feasting on other nations, devouring one another.

So we already know which Empires these beasts represent because they correlate w/Ch 2. The winged lion was Babylon. Interestingly enough, the winged lion was an emblem of Babylon (you can see it anywhere Babylonian artifacts or artwork are displayed). The wings speak of the seeming supernatural speed w/which it conquered. But we note that its wings were plucked off, it was humbled, made to stand on 2 feet like a man & a man's heart was given to it.

Of course we know that this Empire was soaring... until Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up in pride & God humbled him (clipped his wings so to speak) & through his humbling he was given a new heart & gave God glory.

The 2nd was like a bear. Not the same majestic demeanor as the lion or eagle, it would be slower, stronger & more crushing, the bear had an appetite for destruction, "Arise, devour much flesh". The bear represented the Medo-Persian Empire which came up on the heels of the Babylonian Empire. Ultimately the Persians dominated the relationship & so we see the bear raised up on one side. As for the 3 ribs the most commonly accepted view is that these point to the 3 nations (Babylon, Lydia & Egypt) that they defeated/devoured.

But again, we note the sovereignty of God in the operations of the nations, the bear was told, "Arise, devour much flesh". The Medo-Persian Empire didn't arise & conquer on its own authority, it was ordained by Divine appointment.

The 3rd was like a leopard. Known for its sudden, unanticipated attacks & agility. Again there was a swiftness to this beast that went beyond its natural capacity (it had 4 wings) & it had 4 heads, & we note that dominion was (again) "given" to it.

What was the kingdom that conquered the Medo-Persian Empire?

The Grecian Empire (Alexander the Great). Any of you who are history buffs (of which I definitely don't claim to be) know that Alexander was known for conquering w/incredible speed. He would use smaller divisions of soldiers that could move w/greater speed than large lumbering ranks like the Persians.

But from the beginning of his crown till the end of his kingdom was only a dozen yrs or so. He conquered & his kingdom came to an end w/inside a very quick span of time & when he died his kingdom was divided into 4 subdivisions (4 heads) 4 of his generals, each overseeing a portion of the kingdom.

& This is what I was speaking about in our time of introduction. The Babylonian Empire dominated in Daniel's day. No revelation there. He may've even been able to guess that the Medo-Persian Empire would be next (especially in Belshazzar's day), no doubt they knew which nations were building momentum & becoming world contenders.

However, there's no way he could've known that the following kingdom would be lightning fast in its conquest & that in the end it would be divided specifically into 4 parts. Beyond that, in a couple yrs he'll have another vision & Gabriel (the angel) will tell him specifically that one of the Empires is Greece... It's a plain principle, God knows the future! He sees the whole parade of human history & He shares certain details (affirming His word & His reality to you & me) through the means of prophecy!

Listen, a lot of people have tried for a lot of years to find discrepancies in the scripture. Don't you think that if any of them were legit, we'd know by now? It's hard to refute fulfilled prophecy! That's why Peter said, "Hey listen, we were w/Jesus on the Mt when He was transfigured before us & we saw w/our eyes His glory, we heard w/our ears the voice from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him!" But then he said, "*And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;*"² I like how the KJV translates there & says, "the more sure word of prophecy, that you do well to heed..." The proof of fulfilled prophecy is incredibly persuasive & impossible to refute...

Vs 7-8

So this 4th beast, this final beast we notice doesn't get a description that's distinct. Meaning, he's not able to say, "It looked like a wild boar or a wolf."

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Pe 1:19]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But rather he says, “It was like nothing I’ve ever seen before. But it was dreadful & terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth & was devouring, breaking in pieces & trampling the residue w/it’s feet.” & He says that it was “different” from all the beasts that were before it.

Of course, we believe that one of the things that makes it different is that it has both past & prophetic elements to it. We know that historically this “Beast” was the Roman Empire which simply crushed & devastated everything in its path. (The legs of iron in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream & the teeth of iron link these 2 together). Rome was ruthless in its conquest, killing &/or selling into slavery any who opposed them.

(Btw, it’s interesting that when you get to Rev 13, John has a vision that’s very similar. But in *his* vision the 3 beast have kind of amalgamated or been incorporated into one another making up the 4th beast [perhaps indicating that there are characteristics of each of the 3 previous empires in the 4th. Rising quickly, w/crushing ferocity & it will dominate globally]. But what’s interesting is that when John sees them, he sees them in reverse order. Why? Because as to where Daniel is looking forward, John is looking back...)

But again, historically this speaks of Rome. However, as we’ve pointed out in previous studies, Rome was never truly conquered by another empire. It sort of disintegrated from w/in. & It’s for that reason (along w/other passages) that we believe there will be a revival of sorts of the Roman Empire. (It probably won’t be called the Roman Empire, perhaps the European Union or something along those lines).

But like the 10 toes in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, we notice this beast had 10 horns... In the ancient world horns personified strength & power... You think of a bull lowering his head & preparing to charge, you’re thinking power, intimidation, there’s a ferocity & intensity there. & That’s w/ 2 horns. This beast had 10 horns... So out of this Empire there will arise 10 emblems of power, 10 rulers, 10 kings, 10 nations (you get the idea). A confederation of 10 nations (we’ll see that specifically in Vs 24).

What’s drawn to our attention here is that while Daniel was “considering” or “contemplating” these 10 horns, he noticed an 11th horn coming up among them. Another person of power before whom 3 of the previous horns were uprooted.

It was a little horn, meaning it seemed insignificant initially, but eventually, ultimately it took the primary place of power among them all.

It began to rule all the others (we're seeing here a global dominance/dictatorship). Of this empire, he uproots 3 of the leaders & the rest fall in line underneath him. This is the 1st appearance in scripture of the one who will become known as, "The man of sin", "The son of perdition", "The beast", or more commonly called... "Anti-Christ."

He's noted for his intelligence "eyes like a man" & his arrogance "speaking pompous words".

Vs 9-10

Check it out; it seems like chaos, confusion, intimidation & oppression on earth, but Daniel here is reminded that God is still on His throne... God isn't being thrown off track, caught off guard or taken by surprise. He's seated in power & glory & is prepared to pass judgment upon the dominion of man upon the earth.

This "little horn", this man of the hour upon the earth, who speaks w/pomp & seems to move in power is about to be judged by God. Family this is so important to keep in our hearts & in our minds during our own personal dark times. No matter how chaotic, how confusing, oppressive or seemingly out of control things seem to be... God is on the throne, seated in power & glory & is moving in His sovereignty. It's not always our to understand... I don't always have to know "why" as long as I know "who". God is good, & He is on the throne.

Here we're learning that having assigned authority *to* the nations, He Himself will judge those nations. God always holds us accountable for that which He's entrusted to us... Be it authority, our priorities financially, it doesn't matter.

Daniel watches while thrones were established. When the apostle John saw a vision of heaven, he saw thrones as well. But *he* was given insight into who sat upon those thrones (Rev 4:4). We discover it was the 24 elders. Daniel makes no mention of the elders, perhaps due to the fact that the church is somehow represented in the elders & the church was still a mystery here, not revealed to the O.T. saints.

Next he says, "The Ancient of Days was seated". God the Father comes into view (God the Son will be seen in Vs 13). & We read that His garment was white as snow & the hair of His head was like pure wool... What do these things mean? Does it mean that God is a fragile old man, kind of on his last leg (kind of a thing)?

Not at all... 1st of all let's remember that God is Spirit. He doesn't have a physicality to Him as you & I do. Yet He chooses to reveal Himself in these ways to help give us an understanding of His attributes.

He's called "The Ancient of Days", He's seen w/pure white hair. The idea is that God has been around since before time began, that He is perfect in wisdom & perfect in judgment. The Psalmist said, "*Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*"³ He is eternal in nature, He's sovereign, & He is holy, that's what's coming into view here.

His throne was a fiery flame, it's wheels a burning fire, & something like lava (a fiery stream) issued forth & came forth from before Him... Fire speaking again of holiness & judgment against sin. Isaiah 66:15-16, "*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. For by fire and by His sword The Lord will judge all flesh; And the slain of the Lord shall be many.*"⁴ Heb 12:29, "*For our God is a consuming fire.*"⁵

An innumerable company of angels are seen surrounding the throne & 10,000 x 10,000 stood before Him. What do you do when the judge enters the courtroom, "All rise".

"The court was seated & the books were opened..." The bible speaks of the book of the living (Ps 69:28), the book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16), the book of life (Phil 4:3, Rev 3:5 etc) & any of these books or combination thereof could be in reference here.

There's no escaping what's happening here, judgment is coming. Psalm 96:13, "*For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.*"⁶

He will judge the world in righteousness. (Now what's in view here isn't the White Throne judgment, this is setting the world up for the Great Tribulation, the destruction of the A.C. & the return, rule & reign of J.C. we'll see that next time).

But the application remains. God will judge the earth. & He won't judge the earth based upon whatever mood He happens to be in. He has collected clear & convincing evidence (all the evidence). "The books were opened" records are kept in heaven of the happenings on earth. Not only records of *what* we do, but *why* we do it.

When God judges the world, no one will say they didn't get a fair trial. The only question is, are you ready for *your day* in court? Are you ready to stand before the Judge. Because believe me when I tell you, you may think you'll prepare yourself one day, you're not guaranteed even 1 more day.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 90:2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Is 66:15-16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Heb 12:29]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ps 96:13]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Leave Daniel 7 & let's wrap up in **Luke Ch 12** (16-21).

So many people think they can put off thinking about God until another day... That's a fool's mentality, today's the day. We're never guaranteed tomorrow.

There's only 1 way to be prepared to stand before the Judge. You need a good defense attorney, even J.C. the righteous who not only wants to defend you, but has died for you upon the cross, being made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Believe on the Lord J.C. & you will stand justified in the sight of God for whoever calls upon the name of the Lord... shall be saved. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for the more sure word of prophecy. That You have revealed Yourself unquestionably through sharing the future w/us as though it's history. May we heed Your word & lead lives that honor You, that glorify You, that magnify You... Burden our hearts toward holiness & have Your way in us.

Don't put off for another day, what's right in front of you on this day. If you've not turned from your sin & believed on the Lord J.C. than do so today. God's grace is sufficient for you, He wants to give you a clean heart & life in Christ Jesus, don't resist Him, receive Him even now.