

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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DANIEL HAD A DREAM

*“In the first year of Belshazzar king of
Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of
his head upon his bed: then he wrote the
dream, and told the sum of the matters”*

Daniel 7:1

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Daniel 7

I. THE VALUE OF PROPHECY

The book of Daniel is a book of prophecy. The first 6 chapters of the book are mostly narrative but they set the stage for the messages of Daniel's visions for his future. Daniel gives us an outline of all Gentile history till the end of time. He begins with the nation of Babylon and completes the prophecy with the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. W. A. Criswell, in his commentary on Daniel gives us three purposes of prophecy. Prophecy is given to us to:

1. Authenticate and to confirm God and His Word.
2. Authenticate and to confirm the Messianic ministry and Lordship of Jesus Christ.
3. Authenticate and to confirm the promises of God for the future.
(Criswell. Vol. 4. P. 11-22)

Our Heavenly Father tells us to trust Him and gives us reason to believe that He will do what he says He will. His word tells us that we can count on His promises.

*“Assemble ourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: **who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD?** and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”* (Isaiah 45:21) Peter in his second epistle tells us that he was an eyewitness to the glorification of the Lord Jesus. Yet, he has something more sure than his own personal testimony to the deity of the Lord Jesus. *“**We have also a more-sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*** (II Peter 1:17 – 21)

II. THE PROPHECY OF THE FOUR BEASTS

In verse 1 of chapter 7 Daniel dates the occurrence of this vision at about 541 B.C.. This means that Daniel is now a man in his eighties. The vision of chapter seven has really three separate parts. There is the vision of the “*winds of heaven*” with the four great beasts. There is the vision of the great judgment of the nations as they stand before the “*Ancient of Days*” and the “*Son of Man.*” Finally, there is the interpretation of the vision in verses 15 – 28.

The vision begins with the mention of “*the four winds of heaven*”. “Usage elsewhere indicates that the winds represent God’s providential power by which He controls the nations, setting them in commotion or setting them in peace.” (Wycliffe. P. 789) These winds strove upon the Great Sea, or the Mediterranean Sea. Daniel was shown four strange beasts. Each of the beasts represents one of the four succeeding kingdoms of the earth. Each of these kingdoms dominated the entire earth for a stated period of time.

1. The Lion symbolizes Babylon. The wings speak of swiftness and strength.

2. The Bear is a symbol of the Medo-Persian kingdom that conquered and replaced Babylon as a world power.

3. The Leopard speaks of Alexander's Grecian (Macedonian) kingdom.

4. The dreadful fourth beast with its ten horns represents Roman Empire in all its manifestations. The fourth beast is characterized by its possession of 10 horns. Then a little horn appears and dominates the others. Later in this chapter we will learn that this little horn is identified as the Antichrist. These four beasts remind us of the four parts of the great image of the statue that was presented in chapter two. Interestingly when Nebuchadnezzar saw his dream, he saw an impressive, triumphant image of a standing man. In Chapter seven God sees the kingdoms as wild beasts acting as beasts in their brutality. They were conquered and one day Christ will conquer them as the statue too, was conquered by the great stone that *"was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter."* (2:45) Beginning in verse 9 we see these beasts (nations) as they are judged by the "Ancient of Days."

III. THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the

pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." (Vs. 9) "These are the two visions that Daniel sees about the consummation of the age. We shall first seek the truth of the two Personalities who are represented here; namely the Ancient of Days and the Son of man. The identification of the person called the 'Son of Man' in the second vision is most clear. He is the incarnate Christ. 'I saw . . . one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.' Both in the apocalyptic chapter in Matthew 24 and in the text of the Apocalypse in Revelation 17, the Son of man is identified as Jesus in His glorious coming to rule over the earth. . . . He is Jehovah Jesus." (Creswell. Vol. 4. P.36) Who, then is the "Ancient of Days"? Our first thought might be that it is God the Father. However, we must remember that the Father is never described as a person in the Bible. (I Tim. 6:16) He is spirit and cannot be seen. (Co. 1:15; I John 4:12; 20) The purpose of the Ancient of Days in this vision is to be on the throne and to judge the nations. John 5:22 specifically teaches that God does not Judge man. "*For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*" "Then who is this Ancient of Days who is described here and who has come for Judgement? The answer according to the Word

of the Lord is very plain. This vision of the Ancient of Days is a Theophany [Christophany], it is an epiphany, it is a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ. It is none other than Jehovah-Jesus.” (Criswell. Vol.4. P. 38) There are several appearances of Jesus as judge in the Old Testament. (Cp. Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 3 {in furnace}) We see a strikingly similar description of Jesus the Judge in Revelation 1. *“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.”* (Rev 1:13-15) We see this judge again at the Great White throne of Revelation 20. *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away”* (Rev. 20:11)

Daniel has given us a disturbing vision of the history of the Gentile nations till the Lord consummates all of History. The interpretation of this great vision begins in verse 15 and must wait till the next lesson for our study.

We should remember that our loving Lord Jesus will one day judge to people of this world. The believer's sins were judged on the Cross of Calvary. Our job is to warn a dying world that they must repent and trust the Savior before he becomes their Judge and they are cast into the Lake of Fire. (Rev. 20:15)

Notes
