



My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

Lesson #14: "The Prophecy of Daniel 7"

SCRIPTURE READING: DANIEL 7

Memory Verse: "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7.

Daniel was but a youth when God gave him the interpretation of the king's dream about the great image of Daniel 2. In the seventh chapter, Daniel was given another vision. He was now an old man, past eighty years of age. The kingdom of Babylon had also grown old, and was soon to be conquered by the Medo-Persians. The prophecies of Daniel were written to be understood and to reveal the future to men. Jesus Himself referred to "Daniel the prophet" and said concerning his writings, "Whoso readeth, let him understand" (*Matthew 24:15*).

God knows the future (*Isaiah 46:9-10*), and He reveals important happenings of coming years through His prophets (*Amos 3:7*). You will agree, after studying this lesson, that Daniel's vision of the seventh chapter is one of the most important in the Scriptures.

1: WHAT SYMBOLS ARE INTRODUCED EARLY IN THIS CHAPTER?

Daniel 7:2: "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and. Behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea."

First, keep in mind that winds mean strife and war. This is symbolic language. Notice these two texts from Jeremiah:

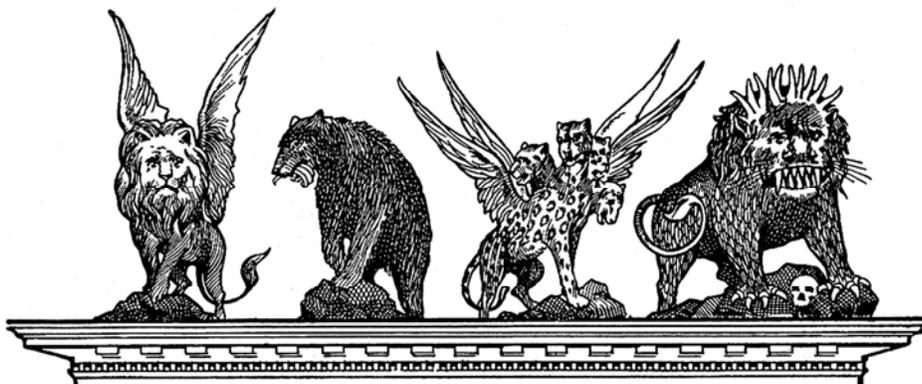
Jeremiah 49:36-37: "And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds: and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life."

Jeremiah 25:32: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth."

Second, we learn that, in Bible prophecy, the sea, or waters, represent peoples.

Revelation 17:15: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Thus winds on the sea denote war and strife among the peoples of earth. The symbolic language here used is perfectly plain. The picture is one familiar on the pages of history, the picture of war and conflict, of battle and blood, of strife and confusion, with one nation coming up and another going down. How wonderful it will be when the bugle of war shall be blown no more, and our ears shall hear only the sweet sounds of peace and harmony. That day will be ushered in only by the second coming of our Saviour.



2: WHAT DO THE FOUR BEASTS REPRESENT?

Daniel 7:17: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth."

Daniel 7:23: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth."

It is very clear that the history of the world, from Babylon to Christ's second coming, is given in Daniel 7 as in Daniel 2. There were to be but four universal kingdoms until the setting up of God's kingdom, according to Daniel 2; history has confirmed this story. Since Daniel 7 also gives us four and they are presented as succeeding one another (*Daniel 7:4-7, 23*), it is evident that we are dealing with Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The fact that the kingdom of God is set up at the end of this line of prophecy is further proof that the same period and kingdoms are set forth in Daniel 7 as in Daniel 2. However, in Daniel 7, certain details bring in two new and important features—the little horn and the judgment.

The lion with eagle's wings represented Babylon, corresponding to the head of gold in Daniel 2. It is common knowledge that the winged lion was one of Babylon's outstanding symbols.

The bear symbolized Medo-Persia. It raised itself on one side. It was a dual monarchy of the Medes and Persians. One power became stronger than the other. This power was Persia (*Daniel 8:3, 20*).

The leopard with four heads and four wings was Greece. The extra wings indicated the almost unparalleled rapidity of Alexander's conquests. He conquered Medo-Persia in five years; and, in eight years, he marched his soldiers more than 5,100 miles. The four heads of the leopard stand for the four divisions of the empire, made after Alexander's death following a drunken debauch. His empire was soon divided among his four leading generals. The dreadful beast represented Rome. The iron kingdom of Daniel 2 is here represented as a beast with great iron teeth (*Daniel 2:40; Daniel 7:7, 19, 23*).

3: WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEN HORNS OF THE FOURTH BEAST?

The ten horns represent ten kings. The king stands for a kingdom (*Daniel 7:24*). So ten main kingdoms were to arise out of Rome's empire. Some of the modern nations of Europe are the outgrowth of these divisions. They can never be permanently united by men, as we have studied (*Daniel 2:43*).

4: WHO IS REPRESENTED BY THE LITTLE HORN?

Daniel 7:8: "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."

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All students of history know that Rome had two phases: pagan Rome, and papal Rome. When Rome fell under the invasion of the barbarian tribes, the bishop of Rome picked up the scepter. Christianity was nominally accepted by the barbarians in general, and the pope became the chief power in Europe. No history of this period is complete without that important chapter; *The Rise of the Papacy*. The papacy is the government of the "papa," or pope. For more than 1,200 years, the threads of European history were interwoven with those of the papacy.

James P. Conroy said: "Long ages ago, when Rome through the neglect of the Western emperors was left to the mercy of the barbarous hordes, the Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection, and asked him to rule them . . . and thus . . . commenced the temporal sovereignty of the popes. And meekly stepping to the throne of Caesar, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were to bow in reverence through so many ages." Catholics, Protestants, and all historians know that, after the breakup of pagan Rome, the papacy, or papal Rome, became the outstanding force among the ten kingdoms of Europe. There simply is no other power that answers to the ten points set forth by Daniel concerning the little horn. We shall briefly touch each point" (*American Catholic Quarterly Review, April, 1911*).

1. It came up among the ten horns.

Daniel 7:8: "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn."

The little horn was to come up among the ten horns. This power must come up in Europe, or at least in that region. The papacy arose with its seat at Rome itself.

2. It came up after them.

Daniel 7:24: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them."

It was evident that the little horn was to come up after the ten horns, as the papacy did so. The roots of the papacy were there, but it rose to power and prominence after Rome's division.

3. It was to uproot three horns.

Daniel 7:8: "Before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots."

Daniel 7:24: "And he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings."

The little horn was to uproot three horns, or kingdoms. These three powers are generally recognized as the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals. They were opposed to some of the teachings and claims of the papal hierarchy. The papacy triumphed over them with the assistance of the armies of the other seven nations.

4. It was to be different from the others.

Daniel 7:24: "And he shall be diverse from the first."

The little horn was to be different from the others. It was a religious-political power, persecuting Christians who refused to recognize its decrees. It was a mixture of religion and politics; it was also a mixture of Christianity and paganism—of Christian and pagan rites and ceremonies and philosophy. One need only to read the Holy Scriptures to know, beyond any doubt, that many teachings and practices of the papacy are not supported by the teachings of the Holy Bible.

5. It was to be the leading power.

Daniel 7:20: "And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows."

The little horn was to be the leading power. Emperors, princes, and rulers were crowned by the pope. They kissed his feet and held his saddle stirrup. Said Henry E. Manning (Roman Catholic cardinal):

"The Vicar of the incarnate Son of God, anointed high priest, and supreme temporal ruler [the pope], sat in his tribunal, impartially to judge between nation and nation, between people and prince, between sovereign and subject" (*The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ [1862], p. 46*).

6. It was to speak great words against God.

Daniel 7:25: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High."

The little horn was to speak great words against the Most High. The pope is given titles that belong only to the Godhead. The Council of Trent defines papal power thus: "We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the whole world" (*Labbe and Cossart [RC], The Most Holy Councils, Vol. XIII, col. 1, 167*).

Pope Leo XIII wrote, "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty" (Encyclical letter, June 20, 1894, in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, p. 304*).

The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "This judicial authority will even include the power to pardon sin" (*Volume XII, art. "Pope," p. 265*).

The papacy makes claims belonging only to the Godhead. The papacy is either what it claims to be or the real Antichrist; both Catholics and Protestants admit this.

7. It was to make war on God's saints.

Daniel 7:25: "And shall wear out the saints of the Most High."

The little horn was to make war on the saints. It was to persecute dissenters. The noted Catholic, Thomas Aquinas, said that convicted heretics should be put to death just as surely as other criminals. His philosophy was put into practice for hundreds of years.

8. It would "think to change" God's times and laws.

Daniel 7:25: "And think to change times and laws."

Lucius Ferraris (Roman Catholic) says: "The Pope can modify divine law" (*Prompta Bibliotheca, "Papa," art. 2, translated*).

If you will read the Ten Commandments in almost any Catholic catechism, you will note that the second commandment is removed entirely. The tenth is made into two, and the fourth is changed. This power was to "think to change" God's law (2 *Thessalonians* 2:3). A power that changes God's law exalts itself above God. This matter is of such urgent importance to the destiny of millions of souls living today that we will carefully discuss it in the next study.

9. It was to be in supremacy for 1,260 years (A.D. 538-A.D. 1798).

Daniel 7:25: "And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

The little horn was to be in supremacy for 1,260 years. Read Revelation 12, verses 6 and 14, and note that "time, and times, and half a time" are 1,260 days. In prophetic time, a day stands for a year (*Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6*). This method of interpretation is Biblical, and proves itself in practice.

The legally recognized supremacy of the pope began in A.D. 538, when there went into effect a decree of Emperor Justinian, making the bishop of Rome head over all the churches, the definer of doctrine, and the corrector of heretics. Twelve hundred and sixty years later would reach to the year A.D. 1798.

10. Its dominion was to be taken away.

Daniel 7:26: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end."

The little horn's dominion was to be taken away. In 1798, just 1,260 years from A.D. 538, the French general, Berthier, took the pope prisoner, and he died in French exile some eighteen months later. The papacy received a "deadly wound" (*Revelation 13:3*). This was later to be healed. Therefore, the papacy will come back into power again for a short time, according to prophecies in the Revelation. No other power of history remotely approaches the point of meeting the ten requirements listed by Daniel. A great host of Bible commentators believe the papacy is the little horn. We agree with them.

5: WHOM DID DANIEL SEE SITTING IN JUDGMENT?

Daniel 7:9-10: "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. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

Sometime between A.D. 1798 and the setting up of God's kingdom, God sits in judgment in heaven. Christ will bring His reward with Him when He returns. So all cases must be decided beforehand. This judgment began, as we have already seen, in 1844.

6: WHAT GREAT EVENT FOLLOWS THE JUDGMENT?

Daniel's prophecy pictures Christ receiving His kingdom, at last, and the saints entering into their eternal rest with Him.

Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Daniel 7:18: "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (verse 27).

This prophecy ends the same as does that of Daniel 2. The definite truth is set forth, that the "Son of man" is to rule and the saints are to inherit the kingdom with Him. As we shall see in later lessons, the time for Christ to give the kingdom to His saints is very near at hand!

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The Bible picture of saints and the popular concept of saints are two different things entirely. Here is the Bible definition of saints. Be sure to look up each text:

1. Those in Christ (*Philippians 1:1*).
2. Those who love the Lord (*Psalms 31:23*).
3. Those who pray (*Revelation 5:8*).
4. Those willing to suffer persecution (*Revelation 16:6*).
5. Those who keep the faith of Jesus (*Revelation 14:12*).
6. Those who keep the commandments of God (*Revelation 14:12*).

Sin is almost a forgotten word today, and a saint is ridiculed. Nevertheless, Christ Jesus came to save sinners and transform them into saints for His kingdom. We are "called to be saints" (1 *Corinthians 1:2*). And you, friend, may be numbered among them.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

"Honored by men with the responsibilities of state and with the secrets of kingdoms bearing universal sway, Daniel was honored by God as His ambassador, and was given many revelations of the mysteries of ages to come. His wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself; but before his life labors closed, he was given the blessed assurance that 'at the end of the days' - in the closing period of this world's history - he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. 'Shut up the words, and seal the book,' he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; these were to be sealed 'even to the time of the end' (Daniel 12:4) . .

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. 'The wise shall understand' (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God's people all through the centuries, the promise is, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy' (Revelation 1:3) . .

"From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld,- power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring,-how completely has it passed away! As 'the flower of the grass,' it has perished (James 1:10). So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome. And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.

"A careful study of the working out of God's purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, will help us to estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen, and to learn what is the true aim of life. Thus, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may, like Daniel and his fellows, live for that which is true and noble and enduring. And learning in this life the principles of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, that blessed kingdom which is to endure for ever and ever, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession." *Prophets and Kings*, 547-548