
a ***Grace Notes*** course

Daniel

an expositional study
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Lesson 107

Daniel Chapter 7

Daniel 107 – Chapter 7

Contents

Daniel 7	3
Daniel 7:1,2	3
Daniel 7:3-6	3
Daniel 7:7	4
Daniel 7:8-13	5
Daniel 7:14	6
Daniel 7:15-18	7
Daniel 7:19-23	7
Daniel 7:24	8
Daniel 7:25	8
Daniel 7:26-28	9

Daniel	Page 3
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

Daniel 7

Daniel 7:1,2

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

Daniel spoke, saying, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.'

Daniel now turns to a vision of the future of world governments in chapter seven. This chapter is the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy found anywhere in the Old Testament. It gives more detail of world governments than chapter two – Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman. This vision reveals four consecutive world empires. The fifth empire is that of Jesus Christ.

The vision of chapter seven is the first of four visions to Daniel in chapters seven through twelve (also 8, 9; 10-12). This chapter occurs chronologically between chapters four and five. Whereas the first six chapters of Daniel mainly set forth historical ideas, chapter seven introduces the prophetic division of the book (7-12).

Chapter seven is apocalyptic literature and must be interpreted apocalyptically. There are three apocalyptic books in the Bible: Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation. Apocalyptic literature expresses its ideas in symbols. There are three pictures in chapter seven:

1. four beasts rising out of a raging sea,
2. the Ancient of Days sitting in judgment on Gentile nations
3. the Second Coming of the Son of man.

Daniel received direct revelation by dream and visions while he slept, fifty years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This came to him in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar king of

Babylon (553 B.C.). After waking, Daniel recorded the dream.

The Great Sea here is the Mediterranean Sea. The sea in Near Eastern symbolism represents the mass of humanity. God used the four winds of heaven to put humanity into turmoil. There was great instability among mankind when these blasts of wind came along.

PRINCIPLE: God uses nationalism for evangelism.

APPLICATION: God uses national entities to protect citizens who live in those entities. Nationalism tends to balance the powers of the world. Nationalism allows for those who herald the gospel to carry it to the maximum.

There is no countervailing balance in internationalism. That is why internationalism is always satanic. We will see this as we study Daniel.

God concurs with the rise and fall of nations. He is sovereign over all. The nations of the world are unstable. Satan is the prince of the power of the air but he does not have absolute control over the world. God uses dissonance among the nations of the world to accomplish His purposes in the world. He brings instability to the nations of the world as He chooses. God uses international insecurity so that people will take note of the person and work of His Son. It reminds people of their need of trust in the work of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 7:3-6

And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between

Daniel	Page 4
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

The four beasts represent four kings (v.17). Kings personify their kingdoms. This vision is about a panorama of the rise and fall of four kingdoms. With each kingdom comes turbulence, disorder uncertainty and insecurity.

The first beast appeared like a lion but it had the wings of an eagle. Something plucked its wings, made it stand on two feet like a man, and gave it a human nature. This figure represents Neo-Babylonia. The cropping of its wings may refer to the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar.

The second beast was similar to a bear. This bear was raised up on one side. This may allude to the superior power of Persia over Media. The three ribs in its mouth may refer to the three nations that the Medo-Persian Empire conquered: Babylon, Lydia and Egypt. It could refer to Media, Persia and Babylon.

The phrase Arise, devour much flesh may refer to future subjection of nations. Medo-Persia ruled for two hundred years. Alexander the Great conquered it in 331 B.C.

The third kingdom was like a leopard. This is Greece because Greece overthrew Medo-Persia. A leopard is cunning, swift and strong. The four wings emphasize speed. Alexander conquered Persia in twelve years. Therefore, Alexander the Great conquered the world with great swiftness. He moved with lightening speed from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India (334-331 B.C.).

This leopard also had four heads. The empire of Greece divided into four parts. After Alexander's defeat at Issus in Phrygia in 301 B.C., his four generals divided the empire among themselves. Cassander took the home territory of Greece and Macedonia. Lysimachus

governed Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor. Seleucus ruled over Syria and much of the Middle East. Ptolemy ruled Egypt.

Daniel wrote this prophecy at the zenith of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. There was no possibility for this empire to fall at the time. This was long before Persia, Greece or Rome. Clearly, this is prophecy in its pure form.

PRINCIPLE: God will ultimately destroy bestial power of national entities.

APPLICATION: Man looks upon the great kingdoms of the world with awe and pride but God looks on them as wild beasts that play by brute power. God will ultimately destroy these brute beasts because they live by might and blood. They are bestial but God will tame them.

Daniel 7:7

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

The fourth beast represents the Roman Empire. Daniel did not compare this fourth beast to a known animal. This beast was very unique, strong and terrorizing.

The rise of Rome was slow. It began in 241 B.C. with the conquest of Sicily. It expanded over time into Western Europe to Spain and Gaul. It reached as far as Britain. It spread to the east as far as the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Rome fell when the Visigoths sacked Rome in A.D. 410.

The ten horns are very important prophetically. They compare to the ten toes of chapter two. The ten horns are rulers who will come to the fore during the Tribulation period. They are the same as the ten horns of Revelation 13 and 17.

PRINCIPLE: God will fulfill prophecy concerning the future of the Roman Empire by a Revived Roman Empire.

Daniel	Page 5
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

APPLICATION: God will allow for a revival of the Roman Empire in the future. The emergence of the European Union may be a precursor to that Empire. There will be a future form and that will be the Revived Roman Empire.

Revelation 13 speaks of this revival of the Roman Empire during the Tribulation. This will be a ten-nation confederacy. Out of this ten-nation confederacy will come a dictator who will operate under the power of Satan. There will also be a worldwide ecumenical religion in that day (Re 17:3 ff.). Revelation 13 emphasizes the political and Revelation 17 emphasizes the religious aspect of the Revived Roman Empire.

READ Revelation 13

Daniel 7:8-13

I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;

A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.

As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

An eleventh horn came from the ten horns. This horn ousted three of the ten horns. This figure is the Antichrist (Mt 24:5,15; 2 Th 2:3-4; 1 John 2:18; 4:3; Re 13; 17; 19). The eyes suggest personal magnetism and genius. This little horn is the dictator of Revelation 13, 17 and 2 Thessalonians 2.

This little horn is not a nation in himself but a representative of the three nations. He and his party become so powerful that they take over three of the ten nations of the Revived Roman Empire. By plucking them up from the roots, his conquest is total defeat of the three horns.

This verse begins a poetic style (vv. 9-10; 13-14). Poetry situates these verses separately as distinct. Daniel saw thrones established (cf. Re 1:4; 20:4).

The Ancient of Days is God the Father ruling on His throne eternally. God the Father judges in absolute purity and in flaming judgment.

A fiery stream flowed from before the throne like lava. This represents judgment from God's court.

Daniel returns to prose in this verse to show his personal observation of the destruction of the little horn. The destruction of this little horn is the end of Gentile world power, or the times of the Gentiles (Lu 21:24, 27).

The previous three empires were protracted beyond the conquering of their empires. Aspects of their kingdoms continued beyond their defeat. The fourth empire will not continue beyond its defeat. There will be a completely new kingdom after the fourth empire (cf. Re 19:19-20).

Returning to poetry, Daniel introduces the kingdom of the Son of Man (7:13-14). A person like the Son of Man came in clouds of heaven before the Ancient of Days. The angelic

Daniel	Page 6
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

attendants ushered him into the presence of the Ancient of Days.

The title Son of Man implies identity with humanity. The idea may be that this is the God-man. The gospels use the title son of man for Jesus (Mark 8:31; John 1:51). Jesus used this title of Himself (Matthew uses this title 31 times alone). This is why this verse is the most frequently quoted verse from Daniel in the New Testament.

The New Testament portrays Jesus as coming in the clouds (Mt 24:30; Mark 13:26; Ac 1:9; 1 Th 4:17; Re 1:7, 9).

PRINCIPLE: The Second Coming of Christ will resolve all the problems with national entities in the world.

APPLICATION: Jesus will come in the consummation of the ages. He will destroy the carnivorous nation beasts and the final Antichrist. This will be a cataclysmic catastrophe. He will come to judge the nations of the world.

John 5:22,23. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The United Nation's headquarters in New York City has a portion from Isaiah adorned on a marble wall which reads, **They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore** (2:4). However, they conveniently left off the first part of the verse that reads, **And He [God] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.** They left off the only means whereby the latter part of the verse can be achieved. World peace will not come by the human efforts of the United Nations but by the supernatural intervention of God.

Daniel 7:14

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

The Son of Man is the important person in the vision. The Ancient of Days gives Him dominion, glory and a kingdom. This is not referring to His inherent dominion, glory and kingdom as God, but to His victory as the God-man through His death and resurrection. God gives Him global rule over everything. His kingdom is to be everlasting in contrast to the termination of the previous four kingdoms.

Jesus' first coming did not destroy the Roman Empire, so this does not refer to His first coming but to His Second Coming. When He comes, His kingdom will end all other kingdoms. He will rule as a benevolent Dictator. Dominion refers to rulership of the entire earth and glory carries the idea of glamour.

There will be peoples, nations and languages in the millennial kingdom of Christ. Peoples refers to races, nations references geographical boundaries and languages carries the idea of linguistic divisions. All will serve the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom that will not be destroyed. There will be universal prosperity, a chicken in every pot. There will be universal knowledge of God (Is 11:9). Perfect world government will rule the day (Zach 14:9). Animals will lose their ferocity; the lion and the lamb will lie down together. A child will play on a cobra's den.

PRINCIPLE: Jesus will be King Jesus, absolute benevolent Dictator of the world in the millennial kingdom.

APPLICATION: Jesus reign is one of universal dominion. The Bible never presents His kingdom before His coming. He comes, and then follows His kingdom.

Daniel	Page 7
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

Man his helpless on his own. The world is not getting better and better. The ultimate triumph will come at the Second Coming after the Tribulation. That event will be cataclysmic where Jesus will interpose into the affairs of the Gentile nations of the world. Then Jesus' kingdom will have universal dominion.

Revelation 1:7. Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Daniel 7:15-18

I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’

Daniel now turns to interpreting the meaning of the four beasts (7:15-18). The vision bewildered him.

There was a mystery to what Daniel saw. He sees himself in the vision interacting with someone who interpreted the dream for him.

The interpreter clearly says that the beasts are four kings. The kings represent four kingdoms.

The interpreter continues by explaining the fifth kingdom of the Son of Man, a kingdom that lasts forever, even forever and ever. This is a promise to Israel of an earthly, literal kingdom that displaces the previous earthly Gentile kingdoms. The saints are believing Jews.

PRINCIPLE: Ultimate hope for man lies not in the nations of this world but in the kingdom of Christ.

APPLICATION: Although man has accomplished great achievements, he has not dealt with the sin capacity in man. Human reform cannot change man but regeneration can transform him from within. We will continue to see brutality and depravity in man until that happens.

God permits the nations of the world to act beastly toward one another only for a time. Their coercive, wanton and cruel acts toward each other will end by God's power. God is preparing a kingdom that will have no cruelty. In the final consummation, the kingdoms of the earth will become the kingdom of King Jesus. He will reign forever and ever, world without end. World empires exist only as long as God permits them to exist.

The believer should not look for ultimate hope of world peace via nations of the world. If he or she looks to national entities to resolve the problems of man, then that will end in despair. We look for a different King and kingdom.

Daniel 7:19-23

Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;

and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,

until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be

Daniel	Page 8
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.'

Daniel understood the meaning of the first three beasts but he specifically requests an interpretation of the fourth beast or the fourth kingdom (vv. 19-22).

The ten horns are of particular importance in prophecy. From this point to the end of the prophecy, Daniel concerns himself with the person represented by the little horn.

The little horn comes after the ten horns and is contemporaneous with them. He defeats three of the ten horns. This pompously speaking horn will wage war with Jewish believers during the Tribulation period and triumph over them (Revelation 12:13-17; 13:7; 17:7).

This pompous horn prevails over the saints until the Ancient of Days comes, when he is defeated (cf. Revelation 19:19-20).

The interpreter now gives the meaning of the fourth beast and especially of the little horn (vv. 23-25). The idea of kings with their kingdoms becomes obvious in this verse.

The fourth kingdom began with the Roman Empire but it would be different from the previous three kingdoms. This fourth kingdom is more than a single nation; it is a collection of nations (Revelation 17). It will dominate the world by a unity of ideals and principles.

PRINCIPLE: The Roman Empire will be revived and defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Coming.

APPLICATION: Western languages and culture have dominated the world since the Roman Empire. Greek, Latin, Spanish and English became the languages of commerce, trade and diplomacy. The Roman Empire has made its impact on the world and will continue to make an impact until the Tribulation period, when its empire will be revived. When Jesus appears in His Second Coming, He will defeat the last vestiges of the Roman Empire.

Daniel 7:24

'The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. '

The interpreting angel continues with the meaning of the ten horns. The ten horns are ten kingdoms. One horn (v. 8) will subdue three kings and kingdoms. The horn is a king, not a kingdom. He differs from the ten kings (Revelation 13:1; 17:12).

PRINCIPLE: A final world dictator will arise during the Tribulation who will deceive the world into believing that his programs will be the answer to the world's problems.

APPLICATION: The final form of the fourth kingdom is the Revived Roman Empire. Two great political changes must occur before the return of Jesus Christ in glory:

- 1) The restoration of the Jews to Palestine.
- 2) The establishment of the Revived Roman Empire by a world dictator.

An ultimate Caesar will rise during the Tribulation period. He will be a vibrant personality. The world will fall for his solutions to world problems.

Daniel 7:25

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

The horn is pompous and boastful against the Most High (Revelation 13:6). He will persecute the saints (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9; Rev. 12:13-17; 13:1-10, 16-17).

God will permit him to have his way for a time and times and half a time. This is three and a half years (4:16; Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5). This period is equivalent to the 1,260 days

Daniel	Page 9
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

(12:6) and the forty-two months of Revelation (11:2; 13:5). This is the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, or in other words, the Great Tribulation. Jesus' Second Coming takes place at the end of this three and a half years.

The Antichrist wants to eradicate the past. He desires to change the times. He wishes to reorganize civilization in a way that suits his values. In doing so, he will change law (singular). This is not Bible law but the foundational law fundamental to the state of society.

PRINCIPLE: God always puts limits on man.

APPLICATION: The last world dictator will attempt to remake societal laws after his own fashion. This will revolve around humanistic thinking. He will change the constitutions of national entities in an attempt to resolve man's problems by means of man. He will disregard natural law and ignore laws of economics, government and morality. He will dare to think of himself as the solution to the problems of man. This delusion will last for three and a half years in the Tribulation. His power will be limited to a very definite period, and then God will pull the plug on him.

Revelation 13:5-8. And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Daniel 7:26-28

'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.

When the fourth beast's kingdom ends, then God launches His kingdom (7:26-28). God will destroy the fourth beast's kingdom forever (2 Th 2:7,8; Re 19:20). Gentile world rule will collapse when Jesus Christ comes in His Second Coming (not the Rapture).

This verse records a promise to believing Jews that they will have a future kingdom. After God defeats the Antichrist, He will launch the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of the Son of Man. Saints will be the center of God's blessing during this kingdom. Jesus will be King Jesus, King of the World. His personal reign is the solution to all of mankind's problems.

Daniel notes the end and his personal response to the vision.

PRINCIPLE: Jesus' kingdom will triumph over all problems and foes.

APPLICATION: Jesus' kingdom is triumphant. It is the final and eternal kingdom. There will be a redeemed, reformed and glorified people of God there. Nations will be there, bringing the glory of their history. People of all cultures and colors will be there. No animal will be carnivorous. There will be no more war, for swords will be turned into plowshares. All things will be new. There will be universal knowledge of God.

Isaiah 11:9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

Daniel	Page 10
Daniel 107, Chapter 7	a Grace Notes study

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of
the Lord

As the waters cover the sea.

Revelation 21:24-26. And the nations of
those who are saved shall walk in its light,
and the kings of the earth bring their glory
and honor into it.

Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there
shall be no night there).

And they shall bring the glory and the honor
of the nations into it.