

CAPITOL STUDIES

FEBRUARY 28, 2024 • WEEK 8



DANIEL:
CHRIST'S CIVIL
SERVANT IN
BABYLON

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Verse of the Week

Daniel 7:18

But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.

Crumbling of World Empires



TO PROPERLY STUDY DANIEL and other prophetic books, we must understand they are about the *here and now* just as much as they are about the *there and then*. This is apocalyptic narrative and writing. So many believers have ignored this. They've focused entirely on using prophecy as a tool to predict the future. They have ignored Jesus' warnings in Matthew 24 and Acts 1 where He *plainly* said: "No one knows about the day or hour [of My return], not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36) and "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority" (Acts 1:8).

There is a long list of people who have been so enthralled by predicting the future that they have disobeyed the spirit of these clear teachings and, in so doing, have made themselves look very foolish. A book was written in the 1980s entitled *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Must Take Place in 1988*. The author said that even though Jesus said we couldn't know the hour or the day, that didn't mean we can't know the week, month, and year. And he was serious.

Pastor Arin Hess, *Chaplain, Capitol Studies*



He said Jesus would return during the second week of September 1988. The book became very popular. It was sad that people were duped. The date came and went without fanfare. The truly sad fact about all this is that, in spite of the fact this author got it wrong, the next year he published another book entitled *89 Reasons Why the Rapture Must Take Place in 1989*. And people bought that book almost as fast as they bought the prequel!

INTRODUCTION

“From the human point of view, the nations seem to work out their own destinies, but the invisible winds of God blow over the surface of the water to accomplish His will in His time. If there’s one message that is emphasized in the book of Daniel it’s that ‘the Most High rules in the kingdom of men’ (4:32 NKJV).”¹

Here in chapter 7, history gives way to prophecy, and Daniel the sage becomes Daniel the seer. It is generally thought that this chapter refers to the same prophecy contained in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of chapter 2. Daniel’s dream here adds certain details that were not introduced in chapter 2, however. It is the center of the book and is probably central to Daniel’s teachings.

This first dream or vision of Daniel actually occurred during the reign of Belshazzar after Nebuchadnezzar had passed from the scene. The second vision (chapter 8) came two years later; the third occurred at the beginning of the reign of Darius the Mede (chapter 9), and yet another came during the reign of Cyrus (chapter 10). You will note that the book is not written chronologically.

This is an unusual chapter. It is a reminder of the book of Revelation, which alternates between Heaven and earth. Sometimes we find ourselves in the highest height of Heaven, and the next moment we find ourselves down in the deepest depths of earth. We begin with beasts, then we suddenly find ourselves in the councils of Heaven. We come back to these beasts on earth, and then we are back in Heaven, and so on through the chapter.

I. THE DREAM

Daniel 7:1

*In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.*²

Chapter 7 turns the clock back to the beginning year of Belshazzar’s reign when Daniel was given a series of divine revelations through a dream made up of four visions: 1) the vision of the three beasts, 2) the vision of the fourth beast, 3) the vision of the judgment scene, and 4) the vision of the coming of the Son of Man.



A. The Four Winds

Daniel 7:2-3

Daniel said, “I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. ³And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another.”

A terrible tempest is unleashed upon the great sea. “Thus, the peoples of the earth are portrayed as a great sea of humanity in a constant state of unrest, chaos, and turmoil—an apt description of today’s world.”³ The four winds suggest all directions of the compass as violent agitation concentrates upon the territories bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Perhaps the same four angels of Revelation 7:1, those responsible for restraining universal commotion and catastrophe, allow the storms to rage uncontrollably.

B. The Four Beasts

Daniel 7:4-8

The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. ⁵And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, “Arise, devour much meat!” ⁶After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, 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. ⁷After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

Out of the surging, billowing waters arise four tremendous beasts, all different, all grotesque and extraordinary. Daniel describes each, beginning with the first that appears like a **lion**, continuing on to a **bear**, and a **leopard** and concluding with so **ferocious and unique a beast** that Daniel could compare it with no known creature. It had iron teeth and ten horns. In contemplating the ten horns, Daniel noticed the rise of an eleventh horn, occasioned by the uprooting of three of the other horns.

The **lion**, with the strength and majesty of the king of beasts, compares favorably to the mighty empire of Babylon (Jeremiah 49:19-22). This winged lion manifests its great ability and agility in conquest and control. The **bear** symbolizes the Medo-Persian empire with its reign of strength and terror. The **leopard** or panther is a picture of Greek elegance, refinement, grace and beauty. Alexander the Great brings country after country under the orbit of the ever-expanding dominion of Greece. Wings represent the speed with which he conquerors. The leopard’s four





heads refer to the division of the Greek empire into four parts after the death of Alexander. Daniel chapter 8 clarifies more of these details.

The last animal is **horrible in appearance and vicious in action**. Its iron teeth coincide with the statue's iron legs in chapter 2. This beast well pictures the Roman empire ruling with an iron fist and plundering without mercy and in much cruelty. What they could not control, they smashed and spoiled. Rome rules with an iron fist and claims all the area occupied by the former empires.

C. The Ancient of Days, The Everlasting One Reigns

Daniel 7:9-12

I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. ¹⁰A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. ¹¹Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. ¹²As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

Seats (or perhaps smaller thrones) have been arranged around a central throne on which sits the **Ancient of Days**. This is a picture of God, the Father (the Everlasting One). “His dazzling white garment proclaimed His unsullied holiness. His hair, like pure white wool, advertised His eternal being, His countless years, His experience, His majesty. His throne was like a wheeled chariot. All about Him fire played—His throne was bathed in fire. Everything reminds us that ‘our God is a consuming fire’ (Heb. 12:29).”⁴ Millions of His angels minister to Him. Others stand in His presence.

God is the Chief Justice governing the affairs of men on earth. In Heaven, as the holy Sovereign of Heaven and earth, God must judge earth's citizens for their awful wickedness. The record books are opened. “God's judgment is not arbitrary. He keeps records, not because He needs them but so that those who are about to be condemned might face the record of their own actions and words. No incident—however small or seemingly insignificant—in all of the long history of man's tenure of this planet, has escaped the all-seeing eye of God. It is all written down.”⁵ He judges righteously, not overlooking or excusing the works men have done. This judgment occurs before the millennial kingdom and determines the destiny of the fourth beast.

D. The Son of Man Comes

Daniel 7:13-14

I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of



Days And was presented before Him. ¹⁴And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

Daniel shares a vision of the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, coming with the clouds of heaven. (Compare Revelation 4, Matt. 24:30; 26:64.) This revelation of Christ puts special emphasis upon His humanity, His relationship to Israel as the Messiah, and His role as the Governor of nations. “Son of Man” is one of Jesus’ favorite titles for Himself (e.g., Matt. 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 20:18; etc.). He is called by that name 88 times in the New Testament.⁶ Jesus has proved Himself qualified to rule and reign. He is worthy of glory, honor, and dominion (Revelation 4:6-11; 5:8-13). His kingdom will encompass all people, nations, and languages. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

II. THE INTERPRETATION

Daniel 7:15-18

As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. ¹⁶I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

¹⁷“These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. ¹⁸But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.”

Daniel is troubled because he does not understand what God is showing him. He asks one of the angels for help. The angel interprets the vision for Daniel. The four beasts are four kings. Their successive empires were previously introduced in Daniel 2. Finally, saints, or holy ones, will receive the kingdom forever.

Daniel 7:19-27

Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, ²⁰and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates. ²¹I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them ²²until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. ²³Thus he said: “The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. ²⁴As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.





²⁵He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. ²⁷Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.”

A. The Ten Horns

Daniel asks for further explanation, which the angel gives him. The ten horns on the fourth beast are ten kings who will rule over the area that Rome controlled at one time. A ten-nation confederation empire will govern the world at the beginning of the great tribulation period. These ten kings did not exist at the time of the previous Roman empire. The ten horns here and the ten toes of chapter 2 represent a future world empire controlled by ten united states of the Mediterranean world. As indicated by the iron mixed with the clay, the Roman empire will again play a major role in this confederation.

B. The Little Horn

After the ten kings have declared authority over this vast future empire, another king will make his appearance. He has an insignificant arrival—little horn—but he will soon make his authority felt. Note the following facts: he overcomes opposition from three kings and is catapulted to absolute sovereignty over the reorganized empire. He is remarkable for diabolical intelligence. His eyes mesmerize his audiences. He is a master of persuasive oratory as he speaks great things. This is the Antichrist. He will be given power of dictatorship for three and one-half years—the last half of the seven-year tribulation. Revelation 13:1-10 gives the clearest analysis of the character and conduct of the little horn of Daniel 7. In John’s vision in Revelation, a beast rises out of the Mediterranean Sea—a beast which already has ten horns. John paints the same portrait of the beast that Daniel unveils—bestial, blatant, blasphemous, and belligerent. Some believe this will be a European beast-dictator. His ruthlessness will primarily be directed against the most high God and the tribulation saints. The phrase “wear down the saints of the Highest One” describes the Antichrist’s continual oppression of God’s people.

C. The Demise of the Antichrist

War will be waged on the saints by the Antichrist. God Himself will intervene on behalf of His children. Judgment will be pronounced. His empire will forever be destroyed at the second coming of Christ (vv. 11, 26). It will be smashed by the stone “cut out without hands” pictured in Nebuchadnezzar’s earlier dream (Daniel 2:34).



D. The Reign of the Saints

Once the kingdom of the Antichrist is destroyed, the saints will take possession of the kingdom (Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:10-12; Revelation 1:6, 2:26, 3:21, 5:10, 20:6). God will bring the **times of the Gentiles** to an end in that day.

Daniel 7:28

At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.

It's a dangerous thing to study prophecy just to satisfy our curiosity or to give people the impression that we are great Bible students. If divine truth doesn't touch our own hearts and affect our conduct, then our Bible study is only an intellectual exercise to inflate our own ego. A. W. Tozer said, "The Bible doesn't approve of this modern curiosity that plays with the Scriptures and which seeks only to impress credulous and gullible audiences with the amazing prophetic knowledge possessed by the brother who is preaching or teaching!"⁷

CONCLUSION

"At the headquarters of the United Nations in New York City a portion of the book of Isaiah [2:4b] is inscribed on a marble wall: 'They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.' But why was the first part omitted? After all, it tells how these blessings of peace and prosperity among nations are to be achieved! 'And He [God] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.' Is there a solution to earth's problems? Can we ever expect to see permanent peace on earth? The Scriptures give us a positive answer, but affirm that the solutions to our problems will not come by the efforts of man in any World Court, League of Nations, or United Nations. The permanent solution will come when God intervenes once again in human history by sending His Son Jesus Christ to judge and reign on this earth."⁸

"God has mapped out your future; He will not make mistakes! Since God can handle the plans for nations, He can handle your needs! Life may appear to be a collage—it is, in reality, the unfolding of a perfect pattern designed for God's glory."⁹

Pastor Arin Hess



Theme Verse

Daniel said,
“Let the name of God be **blessed** forever and ever,
For **wisdom** and **power** belong to Him.
It is He who changes the **times** and the **epochs**;
He **removes** kings and **establishes** kings;
He gives **wisdom** to wise men and **knowledge** to men of understanding.”

Daniel 2:20-21



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Capitol Studies Offices
4547 Calvert Street • Lincoln, NE 68506



FOOTNOTES

1. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute (Daniel): Determining to Go God's Direction*, David C. Cook, Kindle Edition, 2000, pg. 110.
2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
3. Stephen Miller, *Shepherd's Notes: Daniel*, Broadman and Holman, 1998, pg. 50.
4. John Phillips, *Exploring the Book of Daniel: An Expository Commentary*, Kregel Publications, 2009.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Book of Daniel*, Ariel Ministries, 2023, pg. 253.
7. A. W. Tozer, *I Call It Heresy*, Christian Publications, 1974, pg. 144-145.
8. Donald Campbell, *Daniel: Decoder of Dreams*, Victor Books, 1977, pg. 87-88.
9. Some of this material is taken from Edward Watke, Jr., *Study of the Book of Daniel*, Revival in the Home Ministries, 1992.

Personal Study Notes

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
108th Legislature's
Second Session

SENATORS

6:45–7:45 A.M. Wednesdays
Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 P.M. Wednesdays
Capitol Building:
Warner Chamber



www.CapitolStudies.org
info@capitolstudies.org
Social: @CapitolStudies