

Study of Daniel – Part 2

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- Please take a look at our website (covingtonchurchofchristva.com) for Part 1 of our study of Daniel
- We continue with Part 2: looking at a few prophecies from Daniel – chapters 2, 7, and 8
 - Note: I am not a historian! The references below are my best attempt at comparing these Scriptures with my brief knowledge of historical events not directly recorded for us in the Bible! Please take my historical explanations as such.
- **Daniel 2:31-45**
 - Nebuchadnezzar had a dream
 - And in this dream he saw a great image
 - Its head = fine gold, chest & arms = silver, belly & thighs = bronze, legs = iron, feet = iron & clay
 - A stone crushed the feet, and then everything was crushed and the remnants were carried away by the wind – no trace of them was found
 - But the stone became a great mountain that filled the earth
 - Now if we were left to interpret what this could mean, we as mankind would have 1000's of different ideas
 - But luckily for us, we don't have to interpret it – it is interpreted for us in vs 37-45
 - Nebuchadnezzar – Babylon is the head of gold
 - Another kingdom will rise up after Babylon (the chest & arms of silver) – it will be inferior to Babylon
 - And then a third kingdom will arise (the belly & thighs of bronze)
 - And then a fourth kingdom – this kingdom is strong and crushes the previous 3 (the legs and feet of iron & clay)
 - But this 4th kingdom will be divided
 - But just as it is strong, it is also fragile – as iron does not mix with clay, neither will the people of this kingdom adhere to one another
 - In the days of this 4th kingdom, God will establish another kingdom – and this kingdom will never be destroyed – it will consume all of these kingdoms, even the 4th kingdom in all its might
 - This kingdom shall stand forever
 - I think we all know the identity of all 5 of these kingdoms mentioned here, but let's quickly analyze what we know from just chapter 2
 - The 4 portions of this figure = 4 kingdoms
 - 1st kingdom mentioned – the head of gold = Babylon
 - There's another kingdom outside of these 4 that rises during the reign of the 4th and will never be destroyed
- **Daniel 7:2-12, 16-18, 23-27**
 - This time, Daniel has a dream
 - 4 beasts come from the sea
 - First beast – like a lion with eagle wings
 - Wings were plucked off

- It was lifted up from the earth
 - Made to stand on 2 feet like a man
 - Man's heart was given to it
- Second beast – like a bear
 - Raised up on one side
 - Had three ribs in its mouth
 - Devoured much flesh
- Third beast – like a leopard with 4 wings of a bird and 4 heads
 - Dominion was given to it
- Fourth beast – dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong with huge iron teeth
 - It devoured, broke to pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet
 - It was different than the previous 3
 - It had 10 horns
- Then we're introduced to the Ancient of Days
 - He sits on a throne
 - Garment was white as snow and His hair was like pure wool
 - His throne was fiery
 - Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him and books were opened
- The 4th beast was slain and its body was given to the burning flame
- The other beasts had their dominion taken away as well, but their lives were prolonged for a certain amount of time
- Again, if left to our own wits – we couldn't interpret this
- But we don't have to – vs 16-27
 - The beasts are kings to arise out of the earth
 - But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever
 - The Ancient of Days deemed judgment in favor of the saints over the pompous horn of the 4th beast
 - The 4th beast is a kingdom different from the other 3 (so the other 3 are also kingdoms)
 - This 4th kingdom will persecute the saints of the Most High, but it will be given dominion for time, times, and half a time
 - But its dominion will be removed and the kingdom will then be given to the saints of the Most High – this kingdom will be everlasting

- Daniel 8:1-8, 20-22

- This is another vision of Daniel
- He sees a ram with 2 horns – 1 higher than the other
 - The ram was powerful – became very great
- Then a male goat comes from the west and breaks the horns of the ram
 - No one could deliver the ram from the goat
 - The goat became great and then its horn is broken and replaced by 4 horns
- The interpretation – vs 20-22
 - Ram = Medes and Persians
 - Male goat = kingdom of Greece
 - The large horn is the first king

- When it is broken, four kingdoms arise but they do not have the power that the original had
- Let's compare all of these
 - The differences: Nebuchadnezzar's dream utilized a great image of various materials, Daniel's dream in chapter 7 utilized 4 beasts, and his vision in chapter 8 utilized a ram and a goat
 - All are interpreted for us in some amount of detail
 - All of these are representative of earthly kingdoms
 - So let's map this out

Visions in Daniel			
Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Identification
Head of gold (vs 32)	Lion (vs 4)	N/A	Babylon (2:37)
Chest and arms of silver (vs 32)	Bear (vs 5)	Ram (vs 3)	Medo-Persia (8:20)
Belly and thighs of bronze (vs 32)	Leopard (vs 6)	Goat (vs 5)	Greece (8:21)
Legs of iron (vs 33)	Terrifying and frightening beast (vs 7)	N/A	Rome (not directly identified for us)

- Babylon is the head of gold (2:32), the lion with eagle wings (7:4)
 - Babylon is referred to a gold cup in the Lord's hand in Jeremiah 51:7 (no coincidence of course that we have another reference to Babylon being described as gold)
 - Staying in Jeremiah 49:22 – an eagle is described as soaring in and swooping down to destroy Edom
 - Likely a reference to Babylon and its conquest of Edom not long after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC
 - Obadiah 4 also describes how Edom soared like the eagle (not an eagle, but the eagle – likely another reference to Babylon) shortly before God brought her down from that place
 - Obadiah 11-14 seems to allude to the fact that Edom was like one of the nations who looked down on Jerusalem and pillaged it with Babylon as they destroyed the city in 586BC – so maybe they were some sort of an ally with Babylon against Jerusalem around that time
 - That's likely how Edom soared with the eagle and from that place, God took her down in Obadiah 4
 - Many references to Babylon being an eagle outside of Daniel to go with the fact that Daniel's prophecies refer to Babylon as having eagle wings
 - Lots of similarities between Jeremiah 49:7-22 & Obadiah – both prophesying of the fall of Edom
 - Both contain references to an eagle as Daniel 7 also describes Babylon
 - A lion is also mentioned in Jeremiah 49 as part of Edom's destruction, another likely reference to Babylon as Daniel 7 also describes Babylon as a lion

- The lion's eagle wings being plucked off, and it being made to stand on 2 feet like a man, and it being given a man's heart possibly a reference to the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar that we read about in Daniel 4
- Medo-Persia is the chest & arms of silver (2:32), the bear raised up on one side with 3 ribs in its mouth (7:5), and the great & powerful ram with 2 horns – one higher than the other (8:3)
 - Medo-Persia overthrew Babylon in 539BC but was inferior in some way (2:39)
 - The fact that the bear is raised up on one side and that one horn was higher than the other is a likely reference to the fact that there was a dominant nation in the Medo-Persian faction: Persia of course
 - I would be willing to bet most people know more about the Persians than they do about the Medes
 - The 3 ribs in the bear's mouth a possible reference to 3 significant conquests: Lydia in 546BC, Babylon in 539BC, and Egypt in 525BC
- Greece is the belly & thighs of bronze (2:32), the leopard with 4 wings and 4 heads (7:6), and the male goat with a notable horn between his eyes (8:5)
 - We're told that Greece would rule over all the earth (2:39)
 - Dominion was given to Greece (7:6)
 - History tells us that Greece under the military leadership of Alexander the Great conquered the Persian empire in 331BC or 330BC and thus, became the imperialistic rulers over the majority of the known world
 - The 4 wings in Daniel 7 is possibly a reference to how speedily Alexander the Great moved in his military conquests of many territories
 - The notable horn of the goat in Daniel 8 is likely a reference to Alexander the Great
 - History tells us that when Alexander died, his kingdom was split 4 ways as 8:8 refers to – the 4 heads in Daniel 7 are likely also a reference to these 4 successors to Alexander
 - The team of Antipater & Cassander assumed control of Macedon and Greece
 - Lysimachus assumed control over Thrace and Asia Minor
 - Seleucus assumed control over Syria
 - Ptolemy assumed control over Palestine and Egypt
- Think of your knowledge of history to identify this 4th earthly kingdom as it is not directly identified for us as the other 3 are
 - What kingdom was so strong that it could crush Greece and break it into pieces (2:40)
 - What kingdom was as strong as any other earthly kingdom has ever been, but at the same time it was partially divided (2:41-43)
 - What earthly kingdom was imperialistically in power at the time that the Lord's church was established (2:44)?
 - What earthly kingdom followed Greece and devoured the whole earth (7:23)?
 - Of course, the answer to all these questions is Rome

- We all know that Rome plays a big part in the book of Revelation and the beast described in Revelation 13:1-10 is nearly identical to the 4th beast in Daniel 7:7-8
 - So though this kingdom is not directly identified for us, we can fairly confidently conclude that the references to this great and powerful earthly kingdom point to the Roman empire
- So we can clearly see that God is in control of these nations
 - One kingdom rises and takes over another – serves the purpose that God intended and then the next kingdom arises, serves God’s intended purpose, etc.
 - Each of these kingdoms were allowed to live for a season and a time
 - God had a purpose for them – and they fulfilled that purpose
 - Had Medo-Persia not taken over Babylon, maybe the Jews in captivity would not have been released according to the timeframe that God had chosen for them to be in captivity and had already prophesied in Jeremiah 29:10
 - Had Greece not overtaken Medo-Persia, maybe the Persians and Romans would have gotten along and Rome would have never grown to the size that they did
 - And had Rome not done that, Rome wouldn’t have been around for the Jews to make war with that would ultimately result in the total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Matthew 24)
 - Ultimately, we know that God’s will is going to be done
 - Isaiah 55:8-9 – *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”*
 - This was the way that He had planned to execute His will
 - Romans 13:1 – *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*
 - God was clearly in control of these earthly kingdoms – He brought them to power to execute His intended plan, and they fell when it was time for the next kingdom to arise and further execute God’s will
- Most importantly – chapters 2 & 7 allude to another kingdom
 - This is the kingdom that crushed all the other kingdoms (even Rome – the powerful 4th earthly kingdom) and it will stand forever (2:44)
 - This is the kingdom with the Ancient of Days seated on its fiery throne. A fire that consumed the powerful 4th beast (the Roman empire) mentioned in 7:9-11
 - This is the kingdom that was given to the Son of Man in all its dominion and glory, that all may serve the Son of Man (7:13-14)
 - And again, it will never pass away (7:14)
 - This of course is the Lord’s church – the body of Christ(Ephesians 1:22-23) – the bride of Christ(Ephesians 5:22-24)
 - Jesus was raised from the dead, seated at the right hand of God, and is reigning over this kingdom right now (Acts 2:29-36)
 - Christ is the head and the Savior of the church (Ephesians 5:23)
 - Matthew 16:18 – *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

- The rock there of course being the confession of Peter the Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, not Peter himself
 - Jesus says on that rock will I build my church – and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it
 - And that’s exactly what Christ did
 - And that kingdom is still going strong today
 - And if you remain a faithful member of the kingdom, you will be saved by the grace of God through the precious blood of our king and savior (Ephesians 2:1-10)
- Let’s conclude with a practical application
 - Though there may be times over the course of our lives that the Lord’s church seems to be losing – but this is not true
 - The lesson we just studied from Daniel proves that God is in control of absolutely everything and proves that the Lord’s church will stand forever
 - And God is in control today – that’s why His church is as strong and as powerful as it ever has been and as it always will be
 - You and I must remain faithful – because we know the outcome (**Revelation 20:7-10**)
 - God is going to win and the choice of whose team we’re on is up to us
 - Why would anyone choose to be on the losing side?
 - Let’s all make the right choice, do our reasonable service, and submit ourselves as living sacrifices to God Almighty (Romans 12:1)