

Daniel 7
December 20, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: When you hear about radicalized Islamic terrorists who killed fourteen innocent people in San Bernardino, how safe do you feel in your own country?

Q: As terrorism spreads here in the US, France, Syria, and other nation groups, where is God in this? [Let people struggle with this]

Q: Do you believe that God is still in control? If yes, why? [God has had the plan of salvation and the eternal security of the believer established before the foundations of the world. He has painted a picture throughout Scripture that Satan gets to be the “prince of the air” with many “spirits of the antichrist” for now, BUT there will be a day when Christ comes again and throws the enemy into the Abyss for 1,000 years. There is a day coming when the Enemy is finally defeated, and all believers will enjoy a new heaven and a new earth, with no sin, and living happily ever after with no pain or sorrow in a love relationship with God, through His Son Jesus Christ.

As I watch our own vulnerability to terrorism increase, I find myself confronted with two choices as I live during this eternal chapter of time: Either live in fear of the enemy, or live without fear because I know my Redeemer lives and He is greater than he who is in the world. I can't stand the thought of giving the Enemy any gratification that I am scared of them. Fear is not from God, so I choose to live life with courage, understanding that I might be a victim of a shooting in a restaurant. But here's my comfort: I'm a believer and know my destination. A psychopath or terrorist can kill my flesh, ***but they can never kill my spirit!!*** If I get to make an early exit to meet Jesus, I'm totally resolved and okay with that.

Transition: The times we live in aren't going to get easier, so I think we all need to be thinking about how we embrace the plans God has for us, plans to profit us, not harm us, but to give us a hope and a future – even in the midst of the world we live in. So I'm proposing that ***all believers can trust the sovereignty of God in a turbulent world by understanding the future EVENTS God will bring about to assure a victorious, eternal future with Christ.*** I want you to see that His Sovereignty is intact, and He is purposely letting events unfold now in order to get us to the future EVENTS that will occur. Invite class to look for EVENTS described in Chapter 7.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Dan 7:1-15]

Background before reading: Until now, Daniel has been interpreting the dreams of others, and now God gives him extraordinary visions of his own. It might confuse you to read in v.1 that Daniel is seeing a vision during the first year of King Belshazzar's reign. After all, he was slain in Chapter 5 after the handwriting on the wall event. So for clarification, ***chapter 7 and 8 take place before chapter 5, since Babylon has not yet fallen to the Medes and Persians.*** Also

remember that Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus, was actually king of Babylon (the empire) and Belshazzar was his co-regent in the city of Babylon.

V.1:

- In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

V.2:

- Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.

V.3:

- Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

V.4:

- "The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it.

V.5:

- "And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

V.6:

- "After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

V.7:

- "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

V.8:

- "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

V.9:

- "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

V.10:

- A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

V.11:

- "Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.

V.12:

- (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

V.13:

- “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

V.14:

- He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

V.15:

- “I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: In these first 15 verses, notice that God’s plan includes the history of the whole world. Do we get so wrapped up in our own problems that you forget to pray for God’s work throughout the world?

Q: How have you prayed since the San Bernardino shootings? [Share Prayer Ministry team prayers – destroy evil, eradicate ISIS, etc]

Q v.9-10: Who is the “Ancient of Days?” [The Sovereign God who exercises control over all men and nations]

Q: What is the role of the Ancient of Days? [Judge over the world]

Q: What does the Ancient of Days white clothing and hair represent? [His holiness (Rev. 1:14)]

Q: Notice that the judgment is of the “whole world” which includes us! What are we being judged for at this point? [According to Revelation 20:12 the opening of books refers to a review and judging of one’s stewardship. His judgment is based on works that show our faith. Does God’s book show your loyalty to your love relationship with Him?]

Q v.15: How does this dream impact Daniel? [It was disturbing to him]

Q: Does judgment trouble you? Do you ever think about it?

Transition: Let’s read the remainder of the chapter to get the interpretation of the dream and then see if we can fill in some more blanks.

[Read Dan 7:16-28]

V.16:

- I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things:

V.17:

- ‘The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth.

V.18:

- But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’

V.19:

- “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.

V.20:

- I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

V.21:

- As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,

V.22:

- until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

V.23:

- “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.

V.24:

- The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.

V.25:

- He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

V.26:

- “ ‘But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

V.27:

- Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.’

V.28:

- “This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.”

Process Observations/Questions:

Let’s walk through the EVENTS and identify what each animal represented. [Use handout to go through each one.]

Observation: Notice that God’s plan includes the freedom of human rulers to gain and exercise political control.

Q: Someone re-read just verse 18; someone re-read just verse 22; someone re-read just verse 27. Who will eventually rule the earth? [The saints, God’s people!!]

Q: Do you have faith that God's plan all along is to lead history to the rule of His people in His world? You may not feel optimistic now, but God is allowing the freedom of human rulers to gain and exercise political control – for now. But in the end, we will get to reign with Christ.

Q: What is your observation so far of rulers who oppose God? [They eventually face punishment. We should remain hopeful that vengeance always belongs to Him, and those rulers who have perpetrated evil will be dealt with by God.]

LOOK:

I challenge you to evaluate how confident you are in God's sovereignty, especially during a chapter of history where evil is running rampant. Do you believe you can trust fully in His sovereignty such that you don't live in fear? Do you believe that your place in history is to point people to Jesus so their hearts can rest? We have a wonderful opportunity to be His light in the midst of spiritual darkness, so let's do our part!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Da 7-8)*.

Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Until now, Daniel has been interpreting the dreams of others. Now God gives him extraordinary visions of his own. These two chapters take place before chapter 5, of course, since Babylon has not yet fallen to the Medes and Persians. Remember that Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus, was actually king of Babylon (the empire) and Belshazzar was his co-regent in the city of Babylon. Nabonidus became king in 556 B.C., so we may date chapter 7 in 556 and chapter 8 in 554. Other historians prefer to date chapter 7 in 550, when Nabonidus left for Arabia and put Belshazzar officially in charge. This would put chapter 8 in the year 548. In these visions, Daniel sees the course of Gentile world history and helps us understand what will happen to the Jews in the end times.

I. The Vision of the Four Beasts (7)

The restless sea in the Bible is a picture of the Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15; Isa. 17:12). Here it is the Great Sea, or the Mediterranean Sea, and all of the empires mentioned in this vision bordered on this sea. Daniel saw four beasts, and the angel explained what they meant. Each beast represented a kingdom (v. 17).

A. The lion with wings (v. 4).

Here we have Babylon, corresponding to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image (2:36–38). The winged lion was a favorite image in Babylon; you may see these figures in any museum that has a Babylonian display. The animal made to stand like a man certainly reminds us of Nebuchadnezzar's humbling experience in 4:27–37. Babylon was still ruling the world at this time, but in just a few years (as chap. 5 explains), the empire would fall. So, that takes us to the next beast.

B. The bear with the ribs (v. 5).

Here we meet the Medo-Persian empire, known not for its swiftness or skill, but for its brute force, just like a bear. The three ribs depict the three empires already defeated (Egypt, Babylon, Lydia); and the fact that the bear stood "raised up on one side" indicates that the one half of the empire (the Persian half) was stronger and more honorable (higher) than the other half (the Medes). Medo-Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., but their empire lasted only some two hundred years.

C. The winged four-headed leopard (v. 6).

This is certainly Greece, led by Alexander the Great, who swiftly conquered the world, defeating the Persians about 331 B.C. But the great general died in 323, and his vast kingdom was divided into four parts (and thus the four heads). Four of his leading generals each took a part of the kingdom and ruled it as the monarch.

D. The terrible beast (vv. 7–8, 17–27).

This beast startled Daniel, because nothing like it had appeared in any of the previous revelations. It seems clear that we have here the Roman Empire, corresponding to the iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image. But the picture seems to go beyond history into "the latter days," because we see ten horns on the beast, and these parallel the ten toes of the image in chapter 2, the revived Roman Empire of the last days. Verses 8 and 20 both tell us that a "little horn" (ruler) will appear and defeat three of the ten kingdoms represented by the ten horns and ten toes. This little horn will then become a world ruler, the Antichrist. His mouth will speak great things, and he will persecute the saints (believing Jews and Gentiles during the Tribulation period) for three and a half years (v. 25—time, times, and half a time). This is the last half of the Tribulation period, the "seventieth week" that Daniel will tell us about in chapter 9. According to vv. 11–12, the three previous kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece) will be "swallowed up" and included in this last great world empire, but the Antichrist himself will finally be judged and slain. Read Rev. 13:1–2, where John describes the beast (Antichrist) and uses the very same beasts we find in Dan. 7. But notice that their order is reversed. This is because Daniel was looking ahead while John was looking back.

E. The judgment (vv. 9–14, 26–28).

It must have shocked Daniel to see a man in heaven. He saw Jesus Christ, the glorious Son of man. Of course, God could not permit the beast to control the world. He will send His Son to judge the beast and destroy his kingdom, and then to set up His own glorious kingdom, with the saints of God reigning with Him.

This vision complements and supplements the one in chapter 2. There we have man's view of the nations (precious metals), and here we have God's view (ferocious beasts). See Ps. 49:12.

Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1349–1355). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

F. The vision of the four beasts (chap. 7)

1. THE VISION (7:1–14)

a. The four beasts (7:1–8)

7:1. The vision recorded by the Prophet **Daniel** in this chapter was revealed to him **in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, 553 B.C.**, when **Belshazzar** was made coregent with Nabonidus. Daniel's dream predated by 14 years his experience in the lions' den (chap. 6) which occurred in or soon after 539. When the **dream** came Daniel was about 68 years of age, for he was taken captive (at about the age of 16) 52 years earlier in 605 B.C.

The revelation was given Daniel in **a dream** through **visions** (cf. 2:28; 4:5, 10). In referring to the experience as "a dream" (sing.) Daniel was emphasizing the unity of the revelation and in referring to it as "visions" (pl.) he emphasized the successive stages in which the revelation was given. (Five times in chap. 7 he said "looked" [vv. 2, 6–7, 13] and once "I kept looking" [v. 11].) The dream refers to his being asleep, and the visions refer to what he saw while dreaming.

Sometimes, however, a person had a vision while he was awake (cf., e.g., 9:23). Because of the great significance of Daniel's dream, he immediately **wrote down** a summary of it.

Daniel had been the interpreter of two dreams by Nebuchadnezzar (chaps. 2; 4). Then the prophet-statesman became the recipient of four dreams or visions (chaps. 7; 8; 9:20–27; 10:1–12:5).

7:2. In the first six chapters, **Daniel** wrote in the third person; in the last six chapters he wrote in the first person. **In his vision** Daniel first saw **the great sea** churned by the action of **four winds**. The word translated “winds” may also be rendered “spirits,” that is, angels. Elsewhere in Scripture this word is used to refer to God's providential actions in the affairs of men through angels (Jer. 23:19; 49:36; 51:1; Zech. 6:1–6; 7:14; Rev. 7:1–3). Throughout the Old Testament the Mediterranean Sea is referred to as the Great Sea (Num. 34:6–7; Josh. 1:4; 9:1; 15:12, 47; 23:4; Ezek. 47:10, 15, 20; 48:28). This vision then related specifically to the Mediterranean world.

7:3–4. The second thing Daniel saw in the vision was **four great beasts** emerging from **the agitated sea**. As explained to Daniel later (v. 17) the four beasts represented four kingdoms. **The first beast was like a lion**, an animal symbolizing power and strength. This lion had eagle **wings**, which speak of swiftness. Interestingly the lion and eagle were both symbols of Babylon (cf. Jer. 4:7, 13; Ezek. 17:3). The violent wrenching of the **wings** from the lion would deprive it of its great mobility. This could refer to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity or to his empire's deterioration after his death. The lion's rising up on **two feet** (its hind legs) made it look more **like a man**. The fact that it got a man's **heart** suggests that the animal lost its beastly nature and showed compassion. The lion's rising on its hind legs and having a man's heart may refer to Nebuchadnezzar's humanitarian interests.

7:5. The **second beast** was **like a bear**, an animal of formidable strength (1 Sam. 17:34; Amos 5:19; Hosea 13:8). This represents Medo-Persia, the empire that followed Babylon. The Medo-Persian army was strong and fierce (Isa. 13:15–18). Unlike the grace of the man-like lion, the bear was ponderous and ungainly. It was evidently reclining with **one** side higher than the other. This suggests that though Persia rose later than Media, Persia soon overshadowed the Medes in their united kingdom. The **three ribs** in the bear's **mouth** may represent the kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, which had preceded the empire represented by the bear. Or they may represent Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, three nations conquered by the Medes and Persians. The bear **was told** to devour **flesh**. This command suggests that kingdoms operate by divine appointment, not their own authority. In devouring other kingdoms and extending its territory into a vast empire, the bear was fulfilling God's purpose.

7:6. The third **beast** Daniel saw was **like a leopard**, an animal noted for its swiftness (Hab. 1:8), cunning, and agility (Jer. 5:6; Hosea 13:7). This beast **had four wings like ... a bird**, stressing a swiftness beyond its natural capacity. An additional feature of **this beast** is that it **had four heads**. Also **authority to rule** was **given** it. The kingdom that conquered Medo-Persia was Greece, which did so with great speed, conquering the entire empire between 334 and 330 B.C. A few years after Alexander died his kingdom was divided into four parts (cf. Dan. 8:8, 22).

7:7a. Daniel now described **a fourth beast**. Instead of likening it to some known animal Daniel simply called it a beast. Apparently it was a mongrel composed of parts of a lion, bear, and leopard (cf. the beast in Rev. 13:2). This fourth beast was more **terrifying** and **powerful** than the three preceding beasts, which were all ferocious and destructive. This beast **had large iron teeth** with which it was able to crush and devour its prey. The empire represented by this

mongrel beast had **crushed** and assimilated into itself the three previous empires described by the lion, the bear, and the leopard (it **trampled underfoot whatever was left**; cf. Dan. 7:19).

7:7b–8. A significant feature of this fourth and **different** beast was that **it had 10 horns**. According to verse 24 they represent 10 kings. As Daniel focused his attention on **the horns**, he saw **another horn** begin to emerge among the 10. This **little** horn had an insignificant beginning but in its growth it was able to uproot **three of the** existing **horns**. This little horn was noted for its intelligence (it had **the eyes of a man**) and its blasphemous claims (it had **a mouth that spoke boastfully**; cf. vv. 11, 20, 25). (See vv. 19–26 for comments on the identity of this fourth beast and its little horn.)

b. The Ancient of Days (7:9–12)

7:9–10. In this portion (vv. 9–12) of the vision Daniel saw **thrones** of judgment **set up**. One throne was occupied by **the Ancient of Days**. This is the sovereign God (cf. Isa. 43:13; 57:15a) who exercises control over men and nations. His white **clothing** and **hair** speak of His holiness (Rev. 1:14). Daniel’s description of the glory surrounding the One seated on the flaming **throne** with **wheels** recalls the description of the glory of God which Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:4–28). The **thousands** who surrounded the throne were God’s servants, angels who execute His will. When Daniel saw God the Judge take His seat, **the court** (cf. Dan. 7:26) was convened, **and the books were opened**. (Interestingly, as stated earlier, Daniel’s name means “God has judged” or “God is my Judge”; cf. 1:7. Here Daniel saw God as the world’s Judge.) In Revelation 20:12 the opening of books refers to a review and judging of one’s stewardship. Thus God, who assigns power to kingdoms, will judge those kingdoms.

7:11–12. As Daniel was watching the little **horn** because of its boasting (cf. v. 8) he saw that the fourth **beast was slain** and consigned to **blazing fire**. This event will terminate “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24, 27). The kingdoms represented by the three preceding **beasts had** already **been stripped of their** power by military conquest. But the fourth beast will be relieved of its power not by being conquered militarily, but by divine judgment (cf. Dan. 9:27; Rev. 11:15; 19:15). Each of the three, however, had been **allowed to live for a short time**. This may mean that the cultures of each of the first three conquered empires were assimilated into the conquering nations.

c. The Son of Man (7:13–14)

7:13–14. In the third major portion of this **vision** Daniel saw the **Son of Man** approaching **the Ancient of Days**. Jesus Christ, taking the title “Son of Man” from this prophecy, frequently used it to refer to Himself (as recorded in the Gospels; cf. comments on Mark 8:31; John 1:51). When the Son of Man was brought **into the presence** of the Ancient of Days, all the **authority, glory, and sovereign power** that had been exercised by rulers in the four kingdoms over **all peoples, nations, and men of every language** (cf. Dan. 3:4, 7; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25) was conferred on Him and those peoples **worshiped Him**. This is in keeping with the Father’s promise to the Son in Psalm 2:6–9, and will be fulfilled at Christ’s Second Advent (Matt. 24:30; 25:31; Rev. 11:15).

The Son of Man will establish **an everlasting dominion** or kingdom (cf. Dan. 4:34; 7:27). That kingdom will **never be** conquered by another (cf. 6:26). His reign will be established on earth (Rev. 20:1–6). At the expiration of the 1,000 years of the Lord’s millennial reign, He will surrender the kingdom to God the Father, after which Christ will be appointed as Ruler over God’s eternal kingdom forever (1 Cor. 15:24–28).

2. THE INTERPRETATION (7:15–28)

a. *The four beasts explained (7:15–17)*

7:15–17. Like Nebuchadnezzar before him (cf. 2:1; 4:4–5), **Daniel** was **disturbed** by his dream (cf. 7:28). Though he had demonstrated the ability to interpret dreams on previous occasions (chaps. 2; 4), he could not interpret this one or his next one (8:15). So he called on **one of those standing** nearby, apparently the angel later identified as Gabriel (8:16; 9:21), to interpret the vision to him. It was explained that **the four great beasts** represent **four kingdoms**. As stated earlier, the four kingdoms are Babylon, represented by the lion; Medo-Persia, represented by the bear raised up on one side; Greece, represented by the winged leopard with four heads; and Rome, represented by the mongrel beast. (See the maps of these four empires.)

b. *The promise to Israel (7:18)*

7:18. After the destruction of the fourth beast at the Second Advent, **the saints of the Most High** (cf. comments on “the Most High” at 3:26) **will receive the kingdom** (cf. 7:22, 27). The “saints” refer to the believing Jews (cf. comments on v. 25), not to believers of the Church Age. The existence of the church in the present Age was nowhere revealed in the Old Testament. The nation Israel has been set aside by divine discipline in the present “times of the Gentiles,” which began with Nebuchadnezzar. During the “times of the Gentiles” four empires, Daniel was told, would rise and rule over the land and people of Israel. Yet God’s covenant to David (2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:14) stands and will ultimately be fulfilled. The “saints” (believing Jews when Christ returns to earth) will enjoy the kingdom, the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel.

c. *The details of the fourth kingdom (7:19–28)*

(1) The request.

7:19–20. Daniel seems to have had no difficulty in interpreting the significance of the first three beasts. It was **the fourth beast** that caused him consternation, and he asked the angel (probably Gabriel; cf. 8:16; 9:21) to interpret the **meaning of the beast** and its **10 horns** and **the other horn that came up** among the 10 and was so **imposing**. What is represented by the 10 horns and particularly the little **horn** is of great significance. For from this point on to the end of the prophecy, Daniel concerned himself with the revelation about the person and work of the individual represented by this little horn.

(2) The judgment on the beast.

7:21–22. Several facts about **this little horn** had already been revealed to Daniel (v. 8): (1) It came after the 10 horns (kings; cf. v. 24) were in existence and then was contemporaneous with them. (2) It uprooted 3 of the 10 horns (kings). (3) It was intelligent (it had the eyes of a man). (4) It was arrogant and boastful (cf. v. 11).

Now (vv. 21–22) three additional facts are given: (5) He will persecute **the saints of the Most High** (cf. v. 25; on “the Most High” see comments on 3:26). Obviously the horn represents a person. In 7:24 he is said to be a king. As in verse 18, **the saints** refer to the nation Israel. His persecution of Israel will take place in the Tribulation. (6) He will overcome (he **was defeating**) the nation Israel and will bring that nation under his authority (Rev. 12:13–17; 17:7). (7) He will be judged by God (cf. Rev. 19:19–20), and Israel, no longer under the rule of the little horn, will enter into her covenanted blessings in **the kingdom** (cf. Dan. 7:18).

(3) The scope of the beast's kingdom.

7:23. Though historically the sphere of **the fourth beast**, though greater than the extent of each of the previous three kingdoms, was limited, the sphere of this coming ruler in the **fourth kingdom** will be worldwide. Daniel was told that this empire **will devour the whole earth** (cf. Rev. 13:7). And it will be a ferocious conquest, in which that kingdom will trample and crush those who oppose it. This anticipates a coming one-world government under a worldwide dictator.

(4) The ten horns and the little horn (7:24–25).

7:24. The angel then interpreted the meaning of **the 10 horns**, stating that they **are 10 kings** in **this kingdom**. The fourth empire, in spite of its great power (vv. 7, 23), will be characterized by progressive weakness, deterioration, and division (cf. comments on 2:41–43 on iron and clay in the fourth part of Nebuchadnezzar's image). When the hordes from the north conquered the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D., they did not unite to form another empire. Instead individual nations emerged out of the old Roman Empire. Some of those nations and others stemming from them have continued till the present day. The present Age, then, is the 10-horned era of the fourth beast. (Other premillenarians, however, hold that the time of the 10 horns is yet future, that the present Church Age is not seen in this vision, and that 10 kings will coexist over a future revived [or realigned] Roman Empire.)

Sometime after the rise of the 10 horns—and no clue was given Daniel as to how much later—**another king** (the little horn, 7:8, 20) **will arise**. In his rise to power **he will subdue 3 kings** (called 3 horns in v. 8), that is, he will bring 3 of the 10 nations under his authority in his initial rise to power.

7:25. Besides several facts already given about this coming king (see comments on vv. 21–22), three additional ones are now revealed: (1) He will oppose God's authority. **He will speak against the Most High** (cf. Rev. 13:6). On "the Most High" see comments on Daniel 3:26. (2) He will **oppress His saints** (i.e., Israel; cf. comments on 7:21). (3) He will introduce an entirely new era in which he will abandon all previous **laws** and institute his own system. As in 9:27a, he will appear as Israel's friend, but will become Israel's persecutor (**the saints will be handed over to him**) and he will occupy Jerusalem as the capital of his empire (11:45) for three and one-half years (Rev. 12:6; 13:5). **A time, times, and half a time** (cf. Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14) refer to the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation, with "a time" meaning one year, "times" two years, and "half a time" six months. This equals the 1,260 days in Revelation 12:6 and the 42 months in Revelation 11:2; 13:5. (Cf. comments on "times" in Dan. 4:16.)

(5) The promise to Israel.

7:26–27. When the Judge, God the Father, convenes **the court** (cf. v. 10), that is, when He judges the little horn, his **power will be removed** and he will be **destroyed** (cf. v. 11; 2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:20). This will occur at the Second Advent of Christ. At the beginning of the Millennium the Son of Man will be given authority to rule (cf. Dan. 7:14), and He will rule over **the saints, the people of the Most High** (cf. comments on 3:26), that is, the nation Israel (cf. 7:18, 22), which has been bound to God by God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1–6; 13:14–17; 15:18–21). This **kingdom** will not be overthrown and superseded by another. It will continue in the Millennium and on forever (cf. Dan. 4:34; 6:26; 7:14). **All peoples and kings will worship and obey Him**.

(6) The response of Daniel.

7:28. This prophetic panorama of the times of the Gentiles was so awesome to **Daniel** that he **was deeply** moved. He did not share the vision with anyone at the time. But later when he wrote the prophecies that bear his name, he recorded what had been revealed to him in the vision.

One cannot escape the parallels between the truths revealed to Daniel on this occasion and what was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar early in his reign (chap. 2). Both cover the span of the times of the Gentiles. Both dreams indicate that Israel and her land will be ruled over by four successive world empires. The first was Babylon, represented by the head of gold and the winged lion. The second was the Medo-Persian Empire, represented by the chest and arms of silver and the bear raised up on one side. The third was the Grecian Empire, represented by the belly and thighs of bronze and the four-headed winged leopard. The fourth was the Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron with feet mixed with clay and by the mongrel beast. The iron-like strength of the fourth empire is seen in the iron legs (2:40) and the beast's iron teeth (7:7). Sovereignty passed from Assyria to Babylon in 609 B.C., from Babylon to Persia in 539 B.C., from Persia to Greece in 330 B.C., and from Greece to Rome in the first century B.C.

Toward the end of the times of the Gentiles, worldwide authority will be exercised by one called "a little horn" who will seek to prevent Christ's rule on the earth by destroying God's covenant people. His short reign of seven years (see comments on "one seven" in 9:27) will be terminated by the Second Advent of Christ. At His coming Christ will establish His millennial kingdom on earth in fulfillment of God's covenant with Israel.

The amillenarian view that the "little horn" has already appeared sometime in the past (but since Christ's First Advent) is wrong because: (a) no such ruler has attained worldwide status (7:23), (b) no such ruler has subdued 3 of 10 kings who were ruling at once (v. 24), (c) no such ruler has persecuted Israel (v. 21) for three and one-half years (v. 25), and (d) no such ruler has been destroyed forever (v. 26) by Christ's return. Nor could this "little horn" be the Roman Catholic papacy because: (a) the "little horn" is a king, not a pope, (b) the papacy's power has not been limited to three and one-half years, (c) the papacy has not concentrated on persecuting the nation Israel, and (d) the papacy has not been destroyed by the return of Christ to the earth.