

DANIEL 7 | *The Little Horn, The Ancient of Days, and the Son of Man*¹

1 In the first year of Belshazzar² king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream³ and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down (כתב) the dream and told the sum of the matter.
2 Daniel declared,⁴

The First Three Beasts

I⁵ saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds⁶ of heaven were stirring up the great sea (רַבְּמַא רַבָּא).⁷ 3 And four great beasts (חַיִּוֹן רַבָּרְקוֹן)⁸ came up out of the sea, different from one another. 4 The first [Babylonia] was like a lion and had eagles' wings.⁹ Then as I looked its wings were plucked off,¹⁰ and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.¹¹ 5 And behold, another beast, a second one [Medo-Persia], like a bear.¹² It was

¹ This chapter concludes the section written in Aramaic (chs. 2-7). The order of Daniel's vision—the four beasts and the little horn, the Ancient of Days, and the Son of Man—follows precisely the order of Psalm 2 and indeed the entire biblical story.

² Belshazzar becomes co-regent with his father Nabonidus in 553 bc. This is exactly 50 years after Nebuchadnezzar received his dream of the great image in 603 bc (Da 2). Daniel is about 68 years old. Chronologically, this chapter falls between Da 4 and Da 5. This chapter occurs about ten years before the feast recorded in Da 6.

³ Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Da 2:1; 4:5) precede Daniel's.

⁴ We don't know for sure if Daniel wrote chs. 1-6. But we do know he wrote ch. 7.

⁵ For the rest of the book, Daniel now refers to himself in the first person.

⁶ In the Bible, the wind often represents God's power, heavenly and earthly forces from all directions, influencing the nations as he desires (Re 7:1; 9:14-15). God often uses the wind as a means to attain his ends (Ge 1:2; Ge 8:1; Ex 10:13-19; 14:21; 15:10; Nu 11:31; 1 Ki 18:45; 19:11). Of more than 120 references in the Bible to wind, well over half reflect God's power and sovereignty (John Walvoord, 152).

⁷ In the Bible, the great sea (the Mediterranean) usually stands for the unorganised mass of humanity (Is 8:6-8; 17:12-13; 57:20; 60:5; Je 6:23; 46:7-8; 47:2; Mt 13:47; Lk 21:25; Re 13:1; 17:1, 15; 21:1).

⁸ Gentile empires. **Da 2:38** 38 ...And into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all.... **Da 4:15** 15 Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth.

⁹ Other biblical writers compare Nebuchadnezzar to a lion and an eagle (Je 4:7, 13; 48:40; 49:19, 22; 50:17, 44; 49:22; La 4:19; Eze 17:3, 12; Hab 1:8). Babylon used both the lion and the eagle as national emblems. Huge winged lions guarded the gates of Babylon's royal palaces. The kiwi symbolises New Zealand, the eagle, the United States, the bear, Russia, the dragon, China, etc.

¹⁰ **Da 4:33** 33 Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

¹¹ So far the vision is about the past, not the future. **Da 4:36** 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counsellors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me.

¹² In the Bible, the bear is the most formidable beast of prey after the lion (1 Sa 17:34; 2 Ki 2:24; Am 5:19; Hos 13:8).

raised up on one side.¹³ It had three ribs [Babylonia, Lydia, Egypt] in its mouth between its teeth. And it was told, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I looked, and behold, another [Greece], like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back.¹⁴ And the beast had four heads,¹⁵ and dominion (שָׁלָטָן) was given¹⁶ to it.

The Fourth Beast and the Ancient of Days

7 After this I saw in the night visions,¹⁷ and behold, a fourth beast [Rome],¹⁸ terrifying (דָּחַל), dreadful (אִימָתָן), and exceedingly strong (תְּקִיף).¹⁹ It had great iron teeth.²⁰ It devoured (אָכַל), broke in pieces, and stamped what was left with its feet.²¹ It was different (שָׁנָה) from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns (קַרְנֵיָא).²² 8 I considered (שָׁכַל) the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one,²³ before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And

¹³ The Persian half is to be more powerful than the Median half (Da 8:3, 20).

¹⁴ Leopards/panthers are less majestic and vicious than lions and bears. Their outstanding characteristics are speed, strength, and cunning (Je 5:6; Ho. 13:7; Hab 1:8). The four wings on this leopard's back make it even faster. In just ten years, from 336-26 bc, Alexander the Great conquered most of the civilised world.

¹⁵ **Da 8:8** 8 Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up *four* conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven. **Da 8:22** 22 As for the horn that was broken, in place of which *four* others arose, *four* kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. Following Greece's defeat at Ipsus in Phrygia, in 301 bc, the Greek empire was divided into four parts under Alexander's four generals. Lysimachus ruled Thrace and Bithynia, Cassander ruled Macedonia and Greece, Seleucus ruled Syria, Babylonia, and the eastern territories, and Ptolemy ruled Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia Petraea.

¹⁶ The first three beasts are all in some sense passive. God is there behind the scenes.

¹⁷ Notice the pause here.

¹⁸ The identification of this fourth beast is "the crucial issue in the interpretation of the entire book of Daniel" (John Walvoord). In contrast to Greece, the rise of the Roman Empire was slow. It began in 241 bc with the occupation of Sicily.

¹⁹ Interestingly, Daniel does not compare the fourth beast to any known animal. It is unique. Truly, the Roman empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilisations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands (John Walvoord). All Rome's designs were imperial. She had no qualms about crushing and stamping underfoot conquered nations (Leupold).

²⁰ The iron teeth remind of the iron legs of the great image in Da 2.

²¹ The four beasts have relative "animal ferocity" (John Lennox, *Against the Flow*, 227).

²² This reminds of the ten toes of the great image. They are surely ten contemporaneous rulers. Many amillennialist interpreters allegorise the number ten here. But there is no clue in the text the number ten should be understood other than literally. **Re 17:3** 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. **Re 17:12** 12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

²³ This must be the future antichrist (Is 27:1; Mt 24:5, 15; 2 Th 2:3-4; 1 Jn 2:18; 4:3; Re 13; 17; 19). A horn symbolises power (Dt 33:17; Zec 1:18-19). This little horn differs from the one in the next chapter. **Da 8:9-11** 9 Out of one of them came a *little horn*, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. 10 It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. 11 It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.

behold, in this horn were eyes²⁴ like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things (רַב).²⁵

9 As I looked,²⁶ thrones (כְּרִסִּים)²⁷ were placed, and the Ancient of Days (עֲתִיק יוֹמִין) [God the Father] took his seat. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool.²⁸ His throne was fiery flames.²⁹ Its wheels³⁰ were burning fire. 10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him. A thousand thousands served (שָׁמַשׁ) him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before (קוֹם)³¹ him.³² The court sat in judgement (דִּין), and the books (סִפְרֵינִי)³³ were opened.³⁴

11 I looked then because of the sound of the great words (מִלֵּיא רַב־רַבָּתָא) that the horn was speaking.³⁵ And as I looked, the beast³⁶ was killed (קָטַל), and its body destroyed

²⁴ Eyes symbolise intelligence.

²⁵ We know these metaphors refer to actual historical empires and events. Revelation reads in a similar way. Therefore, it, too, must refer to actual historical empires and events. Study the “greats” of *Daniel*.

²⁶ Daniel finds himself looking into another world, into the throne room of the universe, into heaven itself.

²⁷ Who sits on these thrones? Is it one great throne (a plural of majesty)? **Re 1:4** 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his *throne*. . . . **Re 4:4** 4 Around the *throne* were twenty-four *thrones*, and seated on the *thrones* were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. **Re 20:4** 4 Then I saw *thrones*, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed.

²⁸ The title Ancient of Days stresses God’s eternity. His pure white clothing pictures his purity and holiness, and his pure woolly hair suggests his purity and mature judgment (Thomas Constable, “Notes on Daniel,” 140).

²⁹ Fire is repeated often here. It symbolises holiness and judgment (Ex 3:2; Dt 4:24; 1 Ti 6:16; He 12:29; Re 1:14-15). **He 12:29** 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

³⁰ The wheels symbolise God’s freedom, mobility, and omnipresence (Eze 1:13-21).

³¹ Like “All rise” when the judge enters the courtroom.

³² These are probably angels. **Dt 33:2** 2 . . . Yahweh came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us. He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.

³³ The official records of history that God keeps in his royal archives.

³⁴ This supreme court of the universe is where God renders judgment on rulers and nations (cf. Job 1-2; Is 65:6; Mal 3:16; Mt 25:31-46; Re 20:12). This is one of the great judgment scenes of Scripture. It is in poetic form, following the prose that precedes it.

³⁵ The contrast between the scene of the Ancient of Days and the great words of the little horn is stark.

³⁶ Including its little horn.

(אבד) and given over to be burned with fire.³⁷ 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.³⁸

The Son of Man

13 *I saw in the night visions*, and behold, with the clouds of heaven (עִם־עַנְנֵי שָׁמַיָּא)³⁹ there came one like a Son of Man (כְּבֶרֶךְ אֱנָשׁ) [God the Son, Jesus, the God-man],⁴⁰ and he came to the Ancient of Days [God the Father] and was presented (קָרַב)⁴¹ before him. 14 And to him was given dominion (שָׁלוֹן), glory (קָדַר), and a kingdom (מְלִכּוּת),⁴² that all peoples (עַמֵּי אַרְצוֹת), nations (אֲמִצְיֹת), and languages (לְשׁוֹנוֹת)⁴³ should serve/venerate/fear/

³⁷ This is perhaps a good reason why believers ought to be buried and not cremated. Fire is prominent in this passage. **Da 2:34-35** 34 As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. **Re 19:20** 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur.

³⁸ What does this mean? Will Babylonia, Medo-Persia, and Greece exist in the messianic kingdom, while Rome will not?

³⁹ This detail is super important because it tells us the origin of the Son of Man. He is from above and not from below, and yet he is fully a man. In the Bible, only God comes with the clouds of heaven (Ex 13:21-22; 19:9, 16; 1 Ki 8:10-11; Ps 18:10; Is 19:1; Jer 4:13; Eze 10:4). **Php 2:6-7** 6 ... Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

⁴⁰ See *Son of Man*. The Son of Man who comes on the clouds of heaven is both man and God. The title *Son of Man* implies deity, not just humanity. Jesus commonly used the title Son of Man to describe himself, making this verse the most frequently quoted verse from *Daniel* in the New Testament. It is very significant Jesus used this title above all others when describing himself (31 times in *Matthew* alone). **Jn 1:51** 51 And he said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. **Jn 5:27** 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. **Mk 8:31** 31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. **Mt 24:30** 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. **Mt 26:63-64** 63 But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God. 64 Jesus said to him, You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. **Ac 7:56** 56 And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. **Re 1:7** 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

The Messiah has already been named as God's Son in previous prophecies (2 Sa 7:14; Ps 2:7, 12; Pr 30:4), but now it is emphasised he will be fully human as well. To be saved, we must believe Jesus is the Son of Man and the Son of God (Jn 20:31).

⁴¹ The presentation of the Son of Man to the Ancient of Days is perhaps the greatest event in history. The scene is repeated in Re 5.

⁴² This refers to the messianic kingdom on earth, not the eternal, universal kingdom over which the Trinity always rules. **Mt 28:18** 18 And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

⁴³ LXX πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς.

respect (פּלח, LXX λατρεύω) him.⁴⁴ His dominion (שָׁלְטָן) is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away,⁴⁵ and his kingdom (מְלָכוֹ) one that shall not be destroyed.⁴⁶

Interpretation

15 As for me, Daniel, my spirit (רוּחִי) within me was anxious (כָּרַה), and the visions of my head alarmed (בָּהֵל) me. 16 I approached one of those who stood there⁴⁷ and asked him the truth (יִצִּיב) concerning all this. So he told me and made known (יָדַע) to me the interpretation (פִּיֶּשֶׁר) of the things.

17 These four great beasts are four kings (מְלָכִין) who shall arise out of the earth (אֲרֶע). 18 But the saints of the Most High (קִדְיָשִׁי עֲלִיּוֹנִין) shall receive (קָבַל) the kingdom and possess (חָסַן)⁴⁸ the kingdom forever, forever and ever (עַד-עַלְמָיָא וְעַד-עַלְמָיָא).⁴⁹

19 Then I desired to know the truth (יִצֵּב) about the fourth beast (רְיֹוּהַ), which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze,⁵⁰ and which devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped what was left with its feet, 20 and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things and that seemed greater than its companions. 21 As I looked, this horn made war (קָרַב) with the saints (קִדְיָשִׁין) and prevailed against/defeated (יָכַל) them,⁵¹ 22 until (עַד) the Ancient of Days (עֲתִיקֵל גּוֹמֵיָא) came, and judgement (דִּין) was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time (זְמַן) came when the saints possessed (חָסַן) the kingdom. 23 Thus he said:

As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour (אָכַל) the whole earth/land (אֲרֶע), trample (דָּוַשׁ) it down, and break it to pieces (דָּקַק). 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them. He

⁴⁴ **Ge 3:16** 16 Your desire shall be for your man, and he shall rule over you. **Ps 2:6** 6 As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill. **Ps 110:1** 1 The Lord says to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

⁴⁵ LXX ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ ἐξουσία αἰώνιος.

⁴⁶ The crushing of the fourth kingdom will result in a totally new condition on the earth: the 1000-year messianic kingdom (Re 19:19-20:6) followed by eternity future. Jesus' kingdom will never be destroyed or superseded (Ps 2:6-9; 72:11; Is 11; Re 19:15-16; 20:1-6), including by AI! "The law of the jungle will cease for good" (John Lennox, *Against the Flow*, 233).

⁴⁷ Probably an angel.

⁴⁸ "[T]o take possession of, occupy" (*HALOT*, 1878).

⁴⁹ The messianic kingdom will definitely be eternal. Jesus' kingdom will begin the millennium, but it won't stop there.

⁵⁰ This is a new detail.

⁵¹ **Da 8:24** 24 His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.

shall be different from the former ones and shall put down three kings. 25 He shall speak words against the Most High, shall wear out/down (בלה) the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change (שנה)⁵² the times (זמן) and the law (דת). And they shall be given⁵³ into his hand/power (יד) for a time, times, and half a time (עֶדְדֵי וְעֶדְדֵי וְכַף עֶדְדֵי).⁵⁴

26 But the court shall sit in judgement (דין),⁵⁵ and his dominion (שָׁלְטָן) shall be taken away (עדה), to be consumed (שָׂמַד) and destroyed (אבד) to the end.⁵⁶ 27 And the kingdom, the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms (וּרְבוּתָא דִּי מְלְכּוּת) under the whole heavens (pl.)⁵⁷ shall be given (יהב) to the people of the saints of the Most High (לְעַם קַדְיִשְׁי עֲלִיּוֹנִין). His (sing.) kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions (שָׁלְטָן) shall serve (פליח) and obey (שמע) him (sing.).⁵⁸

28 Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed (בהל) me, and my colour changed, but I kept the matter in my heart (לב).⁵⁹

⁵² **Da 2:21** 21 [God] changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

⁵³ God is still in command. His eternal kingdom rules over the little horn's earthly kingdom.

⁵⁴ 3 1/2 years. **Da 12:7** 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream. He raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. **Re 12:6** 6 ...And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for *1,260 days*. **Re 12:14** 14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a *time, and times, and half a time*. **Re 13:5-8** 5 And the *beast* was given a *mouth* uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for *forty-two months*. 6 It opened its *mouth* to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 Also it was allowed to make *war* on the *saints* and to *conquer* them. And *authority* was given it over every tribe, people, language, and nation, 8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

⁵⁵ Vv. 10 and 22.

⁵⁶ **Is 24:21-23** 21 On that day Yahweh will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth. 22 They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit. They will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. 23 Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for Yahweh of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders. **Mt 24:29-31** 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

⁵⁷ The fourth beast rules over all the land, but the saint rule over the kingdoms under the whole heaven, which seems broader. Perhaps the fourth beast rules over only the Middle East.

⁵⁸ In the messianic kingdom, there will be sub-government across the globe, all under the head government of Jesus, based out of Israel.

⁵⁹ Daniel did not immediately tell anyone about his dream. Later, he wrote the dream down.

Overview

1. The Importance of Daniel 7.

- a. This chapter offers the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. It establishes a framework for more detailed revelation about these kingdoms in Da 8-12, *Matthew, 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, and *Revelation*.
- b. This chapter is *Daniel's* central hinge. It concludes chs. 2-7 linguistically (Aramaic) and structurally (chiasm)⁶⁰ and sets the stage for Daniel's three final visions (Da 8-12).

(1) Ch. 2: A vision of four kingdoms and their end (Nebuchadnezzar)

(a) Ch. 3: Faithfulness and a miraculous rescue (the three friends)

1) Ch. 4: Judgment presaged and experienced (Nebuchadnezzar)

2) Ch. 5: Judgment presaged and experienced (Belshazzar)

(b) Ch. 6: Faithfulness and a miraculous rescue (Daniel)

(2) Ch. 7: Vision of four kingdoms and their end (Daniel)

- c. Chapters 2 and 7 are obviously connected.

(1) "In chapter 2, the symbols were taken from inanimate objects; here in chapter 7, they are taken from the animate. In chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar saw the splendor of world empires portrayed in the dazzling statue of a man, while the Kingdom of God was symbolized by a stone. By contrast, in chapter 7, Daniel's vision reveals the animalistic character of world empires and the fact that it is only in the Kingdom of God that man's full dignity is realized—in the Son of Man."⁶¹

(2) The visions in chs. 2 and 7 both concentrate on the fourth and fifth kingdoms.

- d. This is the first of four visions that Daniel records in chs. 7-12 (chs. 7; 8; 9; 10-12).

(1) The first two he saw during the Babylonian period; the second two he saw in the Medo-Persian period.

(2) Daniel is organised thematically, not chronologically.

- e. Daniel 7 has been an extremely accurate prophesy (so far).

(1) Leadership over the Middle East and the land of Israel passed from Assyria to Babylon in 612 bc, from Babylon to Medo-Persia in 539 bc, from Medo-Persia to Greece in 331 bc, and from Greece to Rome in 63 bc.

Chapter 2	Chapter 7
Nebuchadnezzar's image	The four beasts
Given to Nebuchadnezzar	Given to Daniel
4 kingdoms + 1 in view	4 kingdoms + 1 in view
A 4-part image + a stone	4 beasts + the Son of Man
More general	More detailed
Daniel interpreted it.	An angel interpreted it.
Man's viewpoint	God's viewpoint

Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chaps 10—12
1 st Vision	2 nd Vision	3 rd Vision	4 th Vision
First Year of Belshazzar	Third Year of Belshazzar	First Year of Darius	Third Year of Darius
553 BC	550 BC	539-538 BC	536-535 BC

⁶⁰ John Goldingay, 157-58.

⁶¹ Charles Feinberg, 83-84.

2. The four beasts are Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

- a. “In this interpretation and opinion, all the world are agreed, and history and fact abundantly establish it.”⁶²
- b. Critics hold the real author of Daniel lived in the time of the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 bc) and that the fourth kingdom is Greece, not Rome.
 - (1) Their order is Babylonia, Media, Persia, and Greece.
 - (2) They view the little horn of Da 7:8 as the same little horn in Da 8:9, that is, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
- c. However:
 - (1) The Medo-Persian empire was a joint empire (Da 6:8, 12, 15), not successive empires.
 - (2) The little horn of Da 8 foreshadows/typifies the little horn of Da 7, but they are distinct persons in distinct empires.
 - (3) Jesus spoke of an aspect of the fourth kingdom as still future (Mt 24:15; cf. Da 12:11).
 - (a) **Mt 24:15** 15 So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)....
 - (4) *Revelation*, written near the end of the first century ad, predicts the fulfilment of some aspects of the fourth kingdom in the future (Re 13).
 - (5) Da 9:26 predicts the cutting off of Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, both of which happened in the first century ad, during the Roman empire.
 - (a) **Da 9:26** 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [this happened in ad 70].
 - (6) Such critics are philosophically biased against predictive prophecy.

3. Important Cross-References.

- a. Da 2:31-45.
- b. Ps 2.
- c. Re 4-5.
 - (1) Daniel’s vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man is very similar to what John sees in Re 4-5.
- d. Re 12-13.
- e. Re 19-20.

4. The church age, the one in which we live, is not pictured in Daniel’s vision.

- a. Jesus’ first coming in the first century ad did not destroy the Roman empire, as Da 2 and 7 predict (Da 2:34-35, 44-45; 7:11, 26).
 - (1) The destruction of the previous kingdoms (Babylonia, Medo-Persia, and Greece) was literal, not allegorical. It is reasonable to expect the destruction of the fourth kingdom (Rome) by the fifth kingdom (Israel under Messiah) to be literal and not allegorical.

⁶² Martin Luther.

- (2) At his second coming, Jesus will destroy the fourth kingdom (Rome) and the little horn (the antichrist) and initiate the fifth kingdom (Israel under Messiah).
- b. The prophetic picture Daniel saw did not include the church age in which we live. The church age is an unforeseen mystery revealed only when Israel rejected Jesus at his first coming. The church age will conclude with the rapture, and then Daniel's vision will proceed literally and not allegorically.
- (1) **Mt 23:37-39** 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
- (2) **Eph 3:4-6** 4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Messiah, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6 This mystery is that the nations are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Messiah Jesus through the gospel.
- c. The little horn cannot arise as long as the church is present on the earth (2 Th 2:1-12).
- (1) **2 Th 2:1-12** 1 Now concerning the coming (παρουσία) of our Lord Jesus Messiah and our being gathered together (ἐπισυναγωγή)⁶³ to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord [Jesus] [including his second coming] has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day [the day Jesus' second coming] will not come, unless the [church age?] rebellion (ἀποστασία) comes first, and the man of lawlessness [Antichrist] is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat [at the midpoint of the tribulation] in the temple of God [in Jerusalem], proclaiming himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what [the Holy Spirit in the church] is restraining him [Antichrist] now so that he may be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he [the Spirit in the church] who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 And then [as the tribulation begins] the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming (παρουσία). 9 The coming (παρουσία) of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power, false signs, and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

5. The Final Kingdom.

- a. **Da 7:13-14** 13 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented

⁶³ "...[A] gathering together to or toward at some location, *meeting*, of a Christian group...the action of ἐπισυνάγεσθαι, *assembling*" (BDAG, 382).

- before him. 14 And 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* one that shall not be destroyed.
- b. **Da 7:17-18** 17 These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the *kingdom* and possess the *kingdom* forever, forever and ever.
- c. **Da 7:21-22** 21 As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the *kingdom*.
- d. **Da 7:27** 27 And the *kingdom* and the *dominion* and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. His *kingdom* shall be an everlasting *kingdom*, and all *dominions* shall serve and obey him.
- e. Cross-references.
- (1) **Da 2:44-45** 44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a *kingdom* that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the *kingdom* be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, 45 just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.
- (2) **Da 4:3** 3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His *kingdom* is an everlasting *kingdom*, and his *dominion* endures from generation to generation.
- (3) **Da 6:26** 26 I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever. His *kingdom* shall never be destroyed, and his *dominion* shall be to the end.
(a) Darius recognises his kingdom as relative to God's eternal kingdom.
- (4) Is 2:1-4; 9:2-7; 24:21-23; Eze 37:21-28; Zec 8:1-8; 14:1-9, 16-21; Mt 24:3, 29-31; 25:31-46; 1 Co 15:22-26; Re 19:11-20:6
- (5) See *Verses on Jesus' Second Coming* and *Verses on Messianic Kingdom*.