

DANIEL 7 NOTES

7:1 Nebuchadnezzar reigned over 40 years. In chapter 2, Daniel may have still been a teenager in the second year of Neb. Now, he would be around 60 years old. We do not know if he had other visions or revelations in that 40-year period, but he stayed faithful and devout toward the LORD his God.

As always, our focus will be the points we can clearly understand or offer what seems the most likely way to understand them. Even though we only understand some of what this is saying, those things give us a good biblical basis to watch, as Jesus commanded us, for the events leading up to his return. There is a major focus on the antichrist, the damage he will do and the kingdom of God's utter triumph over him.

Remember, Jesus told us that we do not know the day or hour of his coming, but we are supposed to watch. As we watch, it's almost entirely for the bad stuff that happens before his appearing. The rise of the antichrist, the abomination of desolation, the great tribulation, the first 5 seals... these are what will tell us his coming is very close. It's not that we are perversely obsessed with the antichrist. We watch for these negative signs looking beyond them to the time when we are gathered to Christ and will reign with him. We long for a restored, righteous world in our resurrected bodies. Before that comes judging mankind and ridding the world of evil and we must be on board with that too if we are truly putting on the mind of Christ.

7:2-3. Four winds of heaven moving on the great sea. There are various opinions and teachings on what this is. The phrase "the great sea" is used of the Mediterranean a number of times. It may be that the rise of antichrist will be strongly associated with the Mediterranean and that is enough to make us watch the Mediterranean area for future end-times events. The problem with that is how does Babylon or Persia arise out of the Mediterranean? Other interpreters say that the sea represents the Gentile world and that makes sense. The sea also represents the unknown, the uncontrollable, the realm of chaos where leviathan dwells. The four winds of heaven are heavenly forces beyond men's control or ability to predict. It seems appropriate for us to understand this as referring to the forces that shape the unfolding of world events, influenced by spiritual principalities and powers and ultimately subject to the sovereign will of God. In FF, we look for what we can understand with a minimum of speculation about the language we do not understand. On that basis, I suggest this is a poetic way of saying that future kingdoms arise from a combination of heavenly influences and earthly, chaotic unknown forces.

7:4-6. Beasts are empires. Common symbol at the time. Photos shared in the video. Daniel was surrounded by these images. There is some controversy over what kings or kingdoms these are, but I recommend accepting the most popular view, which is that this is a reiteration of the Daniel 2 statue vision. First, Babylon, second, Medeo/Persia, third Greeks under Alexander, fourth mentions iron again and describes a terrifying beast different from the others that tramples, devours and breaks in pieces. That is a good description of the Muslim

conquests. They were different and they ground up the conquered. They lost their culture, their languages, their laws, their whole civilizations.

7:7-8. The new and strongest part of this vision is the little horn who will grow to dominate the 10 kings and prevail against the saints for a time. This is, of course, the antichrist. He has his horrific reign, for a time, times and half a time and then is directly judged and destroyed by the ancient of days and everlasting dominion is given to the son of man and his saints. This agrees with Revelation.

FF does focus quite a bit on the antichrist, but we must keep him in perspective. His reign of terror is 3 ½ years, then Messiah reigns on the earth for 1,000 years. From the time of Jesus and the apostles, it has been written and taught that believers should have the expectation that they may be the generation that will go through the trials and tribulations of the antichrist as the final step in ushering in the kingdom of God on earth. It is not a dark subject to be avoided, nor is it a topic to be obsessed with. The Bible's message is that we need to have the character, the endurance, the tenacity, the faith to go through this, knowing that God is in control of these events which are necessary for the judgement and restoration of the world and the revealing of fullness of our salvation when we see Jesus return. The antichrist represents the ultimate end of humanity's evil ways. Most of the world will choose him over the real Christ and thus be fully deserving of the wrath that is coming. For believers, it is a final test to take up the cross and not love our lives unto death so that we may starkly show the contrast between the righteous suffering of Christ and the darkness of sin and idolatry. God will empower our endurance (*hupomonē*) and our faithfulness will glorify God and His Son and will be richly rewarded.

It is very important for the church to see him coming, and to see that as the final 3 ½ years of this age before the age to come. Sort of like the 2-minute warning in a football game. They players know they must pour out their all in those final few plays of the game. We will know what we must do and be divinely empowered to do it. The big deal is not the kingdom of the antichrist, but the everlasting kingdom of Messiah.

What are the red flags here that will let us know when the antichrist is rising to power? Let's assume for now it is correct that the 4th kingdom is the Islamic Empire and that this little horn will arise out of a modern-day, 10-nation alliance of nations in the Middle East and North Africa. He will start out as a little horn, not seemingly powerful. He will speak great things. Other verses talk of flattery, deception and blasphemy. He will overthrow and take control of 3 of those 10 nations. "Plucked out by the roots" is quite an overthrow. If future episode, we will see that biblical "Gog" is the antichrist and prophecies indicate he will arise from within modern day Turkey. Some of the 10 nations are named in Ezekiel 38. Persia, Cush, Put (Iran, Sudan, Libya). The current leader of Turkey is a dictator who has eliminated opposition and public speaks of reviving the Islamic Caliphate. In August of 2020, he officially made "Hagia Sophia", the oldest Christian cathedral still in existence, a mosque. In his public statement he said that today it is Hagia Sophia and soon they would take the Al Aqsa Mosque on the temple mount in Jerusalem. It is unlikely that Erdogan is the antichrist, but the point is that the stage is set for

the little horn to arise from what he is setting up. We will see a leader from Turkey, speaking great things take control of 3 countries by pulling the horns out of the sockets. Let's be responsible and not alarmist or asleep at the switch as we watch world events.

7:9 Ancient of Days. Notice His throne and this divine counsel. Ps 82, "in the midst of the Elohim". There seems to be a counsel of heavenly beings, whom God created, called Elohim, through whom God may rule and makes certain decrees. 24 Elders we covered in Ep 13. This whole scene reminds us very much of Rev 4 & 5. 7:11 this little horn goes too far with his great words. It says because of that he is burned with fire.

7:13-14. Son of man coming on the clouds. Reminds us of Jesus's trial with the high priest, what the angel said at the ascension in Acts 1, Matt 24:30-31, I Thess 4:15-17. He will be given the everlasting dominion. Clearly, this is an actual earthly dominion, not just over Israel, but over all people, nations and languages.

7:15-18 is the interpretation from a heavenly being, like John get at various places in Revelation. Like the vision of the statue in Dan 2, there are four main kings or empires and the happy ending is that the saints receive and possess the kingdom forever and ever. This is not talking about going to heaven when you die or going to heaven at the rapture and spending eternity with Jesus in heaven. "qaddish" = holy ones. Only in Daniel. Other words for "saints" in Old Testament are different Hebrew words. It is also used in Daniel of heavenly beings. Notice how Daniel's use of the word "saints" is similar to how it is used in Revelation.

7:19-22 Daniel wants to know about this 4th terrible beast, the 10 horns and the little horn. This is some of the new part of this vision, this revelation that wasn't detailed in Neb's dream. He wants to know about the one we call the antichrist.

7:23-27 the heavenly being gives him this interpretation

Quite a few things are clear, but we are in awe of what have read and have other questions. Low hanging fruit. What do I mean by that? Some of the easiest themes and how they fit with the overall mosaic of the rise of the antichrist and Messiah's return to destroy him and set up his kingdom. After this you'll know enough to be dangerous. Learned and godly scholars have wrestled with some of the deeper meanings for a couple hundred years in modern times and early church fathers wrote about their understanding of Daniel. Stay humble. If you are hungry to know more, there are plenty of resources. Probably none are perfect. As you study them, seek the God in prayer for the understanding that only he can give.

Summary

1. The 4 beasts are probably the same as chapter 2.
2. The 4th beast was the Islamic Empire
3. The little horn will first overthrow 3 of those nations
4. Antichrist will lead a 10-nation revived caliphate
5. Will prevail over the saints for 3 ½ years

6. Ancient of days will wipe him out
7. Kingdom given to the son of man and his saints