

The Prophets

Lesson #40

Daniel 7:1-9:27

Outline

I. ***The Prophecies Of Daniel (7:1-12:13)***

- A. The vision of the four beasts (7:1-28).
 1. Four great beasts and the succession of empires (7:1-8).
 2. The kingdom of God and the enthroned Messiah (7:9-14).
 3. The vision interpreted by the angel (7:15-28).
- B. The ram, goat and little horn (8:1-27).
 1. The ram and the goat (8:1-8).
 2. The little horn (8:9-14).
 3. The vision interpreted by the angel (8:15-27).
- C. Daniel's prayer of repentance and the prophecy of the 70 weeks (9:1-27).
 1. Daniel's prayer of repentance (9:1-19).
 2. Gabriel's response (9:20-23).
 3. The prophecy of the 70 weeks (9:24-27).

Notes

Daniel 7:1-8

- Chapter 7 goes back to the first year of Belshazzar's co-regency with his father Nabonidus. Daniel 5 spoke of the last night of that reign. Chapter 7 also parallels chapter 2; both set forth four world kingdoms followed by the overthrow of the fourth and a final kingdom established on earth by God.
- God speaks to Daniel through a dream, and Daniel writes down the content of that revelation. The writing down of revelation is attested in Isaiah 30:8, Jeremiah 36:2 and Habakkuk 2:2.
- The "great sea" is a standard title for the Mediterranean Sea. By the time of Daniel, the sea was a symbol of rebellious humanity and the ensuing chaos (Isaiah 17:12; 57:20). The "four winds of heaven" represent the heavenly powers and forces by which God sets the nations of the world in motion (Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 37:9; Zechariah 6:5).
- Like chapter 2, these beasts which arose out of the sea represent "kingdoms which shall arise out of the earth." In the Old Testament, nations are symbolized by beasts (Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9).
- Like the colossus of chapter 2, the vision begins in the present. The lion with the wings of an eagle stands for Babylonia. This hybrid animal becomes humanlike -- reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar's experience in chapter 4. The lion as the king of the beasts and the eagle as the king of

the birds, well corresponds with gold, the most precious of metals. Thus, Babylon is represented by the lordliest of creatures.

- Both the lion and the eagle are predators, as is the second beast that rises out of the sea (2 Kings 2:24; Hosea 13:8; Amos 5:19). The three ribs probably represent the three victories of the Medo-Persian alliance: Lydia (546 B.C.), Babylon (539 B.C.) and Egypt (525 B.C.). The double-sided nature of the Medo-Persian Empire is symbolized by the beast "raised up itself on one side."
- The third beast, the leopard with four heads and four wings, is blazingly fast (Jeremiah 5:6; Hosea 13:7). This terrifying beast points to the incredible speed by which Alexander conquered the ancient Near East and extended his own kingdom. The four heads represent the fourfold division of Alexander's kingdom after his early death.
- The fourth beast is nondescript, but exceedingly powerful. In the Old Testament, the horn symbolizes power (Deuteronomy 33:17; 1 Samuel 2:1, 10; Psalm 18:2). The number "ten" symbolizes the many rulers over the Roman Empire.

Daniel 7:9-14

- The epithet "Ancient of days" refers to God as an old and wise judge sitting in His courtroom. Judgment is about to begin. The deeds of men are recorded in books (Exodus 32:32; Psalm 56:8; 69:28; Isaiah 65:6; Malachi 3:16; Luke 10:20; Revelation 20:12), but here the reference is to the deeds of the four kingdoms and the little horn.
- The "Son of man" emphasizes the humanity of the person Daniel saw. Yet He is only "like" a human being, just as the beasts were "like" a lion (7:4), a bear (7:5) and a leopard (7:6). This person is seen coming with or riding the clouds of heaven, which, in scripture, is the exclusive prerogative of God (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7). In short, this figure represents Jesus.
- Vs. 14 emphasizes the universal and everlasting dominion or rule of the Son of man. Jesus perhaps had this verse in mind when He spoke the words of Matthew 28:18. The word translated "serve" in vs. 14 is used in biblical Aramaic to refer only to the homage due to God.

Daniel 7:15-28

- Daniel repeatedly declares how troubling it is to receive a vision and an understanding of the future course of history (7:15, 28; 8:27; 10:2, 10-11, 15, 17).
- In the vision the kingdom is given to "one like the Son of man," but in the interpretation section the kingdom is received by the "saints of the most High." These saints can be identified as God's elect or Christians.

The angel does not give additional comment regarding the first three kingdoms; they represent those kingdoms encountered in chapter 2.

- This fourth beast signifies a fourth kingdom (Rome) that would devour and destroy the whole earth. I believe this "little horn" to be Domitian, who the emperor Tertullian described as a "limb of the bloody Nero." Domitian ruled from A.D. 81-96 and was the eleventh ruler of the Roman Empire. He sought to restore the Roman imperial cultus and encouraged worship of himself as lord and god. The concept of emperor worship had a natural evolution in the Gentile world aided by polytheism, ancestor-worship and the subsequent deification of legendary heroes.
- Domitian had every characteristic described in vs. 7-8, 20-25. He was a braggart and a persecutor. He started a policy of persecution that did not end until the Edict of Toleration (A.D. 311). He also claimed the position of deity.
- The "time and times and the dividing of time" occurs several times in Revelation (11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5). It refers to a time when the people of God suffer but are sustained. The Old Testament background appears to be 1 Kings 17-18 where Elijah prayed for a famine which lasted for 3 1/2 years (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). In vs. 25, the beast has power, but it is not a "seven," or a perfect power. It is a "half seven." In Revelation 13, the same idea is expressed as 666. God limits the power of Domitian.
- The defeat of the saints receives fuller treatment in 8:24. Here the downfall of the saints is brief because God will cut short the persecution (cf. Matthew 24:22; Proverbs 10:27). The destructive rule will in turn be completely destroyed. The people of the most High, having endured these trials, will triumph.

Daniel 8:1-8

- This vision follows the one recorded in chapter 7 by two years, but is dependent upon it. Daniel was in Susa, one of the great cities of the Persian Empire (Nehemiah 1:1), a little over two hundred miles east of Babylon, only in vision. The Ulai was an artificial canal that passed by Susa on the northeast.
- In chapter 8 only two animals appear in the vision, suggesting a narrower scope than chapters 2 and 7. According to vs. 20, the two horns represent the kings of Media and Persia. The longer horn is Persia, which eclipsed Media. The bear in 7:5, "raised up itself on one side," parallels this greater horn.
- The three directions correspond to the three ribs in the mouth of the bear (7:5). Vs. 4 summarizes the two hundred years of Persia's world dominance (cf. Isaiah 41:2-3).

- The second animal, introduced in vs. 5 and identified in vs. 21, is Greece. The “notable horn” is the “first king,” the founder of the empire, or Alexander the Great. The speed of the goat parallels the winged leopard at 7:6.
- Coming from the west -- from Macedonia and Greece -- in 334 B.C., Alexander launched an unprovoked invasion, and within three years had decisively routed the Persian imperial forces. Alexander died of a sudden fever at Babylon in 323 B.C., at the age of thirty-three. The sight and sound of horns breaking off typifies the brittle nature of political might.
- In turn, four horns replaced the broken horn. In other words, four kings took over the empire of Alexander the Great. Here, these four kings are passed over without comment. The four-headed beast at 7:6 is an obvious parallel to these four prominent horns.

Daniel 8:9-14

- The conflict between the ram and the goat is only a prelude to the focus of chapter 8 -- the small horn of vs. 9, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:10; Josephus *Antiquities* x. 276). This horn comes out of one of the four horns of vs. 8, namely, the Seleucids.
- Antiochus IV Epiphanes was ruler of the Seleucid Empire from 175 B.C. to 163 B.C. He was the son of Antiochus III (the Great). His attempt to Hellenize Palestine led to the cessation of the sacrifices in the temple. The Maccabean revolt led to the rededication of the temple. On the coinage of the later years of his reign, he called himself Theos Epiphanes, “God Manifest.”
- This horn grew in several directions. The south is Egypt (11:5; 1 Maccabees 1:16-19). The east is Babylon, and particularly Elymais and Armenia (1 Maccabees 3:31, 37; 6:1-4). The “pleasant land” is, of course, the land of Palestine (cf. 11:16, 41; Jeremiah 3:19; Ezekiel 20:6, 15).
- The “host of heaven” refers to the whole body of the stars of heaven. Daniel sees the horn grow so great in height that it is able to reach the stars with the hand, throw some of the stars to the ground and trample upon them. On the earth, the sons of Israel form the host of God. As God, the King of Israel, has His throne in heaven, so there also Israel has their true home, and are in the eyes of God regarded as like the stars (Genesis 22:17; Exodus 32:13; Deuteronomy 1:10).
- This horn also raised itself up against the “prince of the host,” or God Himself. Antiochus forbade the permanent practices of worship and desecrated the place of worship (1 Maccabees 1:45-46). The “transgression of desolation” of vs. 13 (cf. 11:31; 12:11) was an altar to Olympian Zeus erected on God’s altar of burnt offerings.
- Vs. 12 summarizes the two-pronged attack of Antiochus against God’s people and the temple. This attack is the consequence of Antiochus’s

rebellion against God. "Truth," the word of God, as far as it is embodied in proper worship, was thrown to the ground, just as was the host of heaven (cf. 1 Maccabees 1:56-57).

- There are two approaches to the literal interpretation of the "two thousand and three hundred days." The first understands 2,300 as referring to the total number of days, approximately six and one-third years. This period of time approximates the length of Antiochus's reign of terror in Palestine. The second understands 2,300 as referring to the total number of sacrifices: 1,150 morning sacrifices and 1,150 evening sacrifices. This approach reduces the timetable to a little more than three years. This interval of time approximates the length of Antiochus's control of Jerusalem and of the temple. However, a figurative interpretation in keeping with the rest of the vision is the most appropriate. It would symbolize an incomplete period of persecution, i.e., less than seven years.
- Vs. 14 predicts the rededication of the temple by Judas the Maccabee on Chislew 25th (or December 14th) 164 B.C. (1 Maccabees 4:36-61). The celebration of this event is currently referred to as Hanukkah.

Daniel 8:15-27

- In the Old Testament, angels are named only in the book of Daniel (cf. 10:13; Luke 1:19, 26; Jude 9). The word "end" does not necessarily mean the end of all things. Daniel may rest assured that there is a time appointed for the end of Antiochus's rebellion and the vindication of the sanctuary.
- Vss. 23-25 provide additional details concerning the character and rebellion of Antiochus. He is determined and unyielding, cunning, arrogant and violent (1 Maccabees 1:29-30). His rebellion against God will cause astounding devastation and bring about the deaths of powerful, political enemies and the saints.
- In spite of his success, he will be destroyed. Second Maccabees 9 gives a gruesome account of the death of Antiochus. His death is attributed to a divine cause.

Daniel 9:1-19

- Beginning with this chapter, we have some of the most detailed prophecies in the Bible which prove the power of predictive prophecy. It is obvious that Daniel was a student of the Old Testament scriptures, particularly those prophecies that related to the destiny of God's people.
- Darius was first named in 5:31. Xerxes I (Hebrew=Ahasuerus) is the king mentioned in the book of Esther. Accordingly, this name must be recognized as an ancient Achaemenid royal title, much like the term

Pharaoh in Egypt. Daniel has in mind the first year of the Persian Empire (539 B.C.).

- According to Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10, the “desolations of Jerusalem” would last 70 years (2 Chronicles 36:21; Zechariah 1:12; 7:5). Cyrus would be the deliverer of the Jews (cf. Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-2). Given the urgency of Daniel’s prayer, he undoubtedly sensed that the 70 years of Jeremiah had just about run their course.
- Daniel petitions God to forgive Israel, ending Israel’s exile and returning her to Jerusalem and to the temple. His prayer is based upon the great mercy of God, not Israel’s merit. In fact, mercy presupposes sin -- Israel’s sin. Israel had literally compelled God to bring on them the promised curses (Leviticus 26:39-45; Deuteronomy 28:45-63; 30:1-5). Daniel’s great grief over Israel’s sin is the haunting sense of this prayer.
- Daniel uses many expressions for Israel’s total defection from the will of God. In addition to God’s mercy, Daniel also reflects on other characteristics of God. God’s revelation of Himself in the past, especially in the events associated with the Exodus, is the basis for Daniel’s future hope.
- Like Moses in his prayer of intercession (Exodus 32:12-13), Daniel was concerned about God’s reputation (vss. 18-19). With the collapse of both Jerusalem and the temple, the nations may have assumed that Judah’s God was either powerless or a delusion (Isaiah 63:11-14; Jeremiah 32:20). However, it was God who brought Israel under Babylonian control (cf. Lamentations 2:2-5).

Daniel 9:20-23

- The Lord’s response came swiftly. Daniel had not even finished his prayer before Gabriel came to reveal God’s will to His faithful servant. Gabriel responded to his prayer at the time of the evening sacrifice, i.e., at sunset.
- Gabriel began his teaching by encouraging Daniel; his faith was precious in God’s eyes. The Lord is more eager to answer than we are to ask, and in Daniel’s case there were powerful grounds for a speedy reply, reassuring him of the Lord’s intention to bring to an end the seventy years of Israel’s captivity.

Daniel 9:24-27

- Vs. 24 states the approach of “seventy weeks” during which God would accomplish His plan of redemption for Israel. This period of time was a figurative representation of the time which would elapse before the accomplishment of six great achievements for the holy city and Israel. The first three relate to the removal of sin; the second three to the restoration of righteousness.

- The first portion of the prophecy explains the primary purpose of Christ's mission on the earth. The Messiah would deal with the problem of human sin. That entire theme is developed throughout the New Testament (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4).
- Christ did not put an "end" to sin in the sense that wickedness was removed from the earth. The work of the Savior was to introduce a "system" that could effectually and permanently provide freedom from sin. The era of "everlasting righteousness" is a reference to the gospel age and is made known through the gospel (Romans 1:16-17).
- With the coming of the Savior to effect human redemption, and with the completion of the New Testament record which sets forth that message, the need for "vision and prophecy" along with other gifts have ceased (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 13:8-13). There are no supernatural visions and prophecies being given by God in this present age. The expression "most Holy" is an allusion to Christ Himself. The "anointed" is a reference to the Lord with the Holy Spirit at the beginning of his ministry (Matthew 3:16; Acts 10:38). The anointing of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 61:1). Therefore, the statement "anoint the most Holy" refers to Christ.
- Those who take the weeks as representative of years claim that the beginning point of this period of time was to coincide with a command to "restore and build Jerusalem" (457 B.C.). However, there is no proof that the "weeks" were meant to represent years (cf. Genesis 15:13; Jeremiah 25:11; Isaiah 7:8).
- In A.D. 66, the Jews, who were subject to Rome, revolted against the empire. This sparked several years of bloody conflict with the Romans. Titus, the son and successor of the famous Vespasian, overthrew the city of Jerusalem after a five month siege in the summer of A.D. 70. The holy city was burned and the temple was demolished (Matthew 22:7).
- Christ had informed His disciples that the day was coming when the Jew's "house" would be left desolate (Matthew 23:38). Not one stone would be left upon another (Matthew 24:2). This event was referred as the "abomination of desolation" because the city of David was desolated by the Roman army. It was an abomination because of its idolatrous nature. Even the Jews recognized that the destruction of their nation was a fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. Josephus said, "Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them" (*Antiquities*, X.XI.7).