

## Daniel 7

In Chapter 7 we shift back in time to the first year of Belshazzar's reign (553 BC). It has been 50 years since Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue which when interpreted by Daniel was a sweeping panorama of world history ending in the establishment of God's kingdom on earth after He utterly destroys all other governments. The chapter fits chronologically between chapters 4 and 5. Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for 9 years and Belshazzar will reign for another 14 years until Darius the Mede takes over.

The chapter is divided into 2 sections: The DREAM and Visions in the first 14 verses and its interpretation in the last 14 verses. I hope to cover the first 14 tonight...but we won't speed through this chapter because a lot is being said and while the general outline is clear, there are details that need to be discussed.

**(Daniel 7:1 NKJV)** In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head *while* on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

Daniel only had one dream that night but within it were several visions. By his own admission, only the main facts were written down. There is a concept of 'progressive revelation' whereby God only gives us as much as we need at specific times. Seeing revelation in this manner solidifies the truth that He is in control in substance and in timing! And, when we are only given a small portion, we must trust Him for the rest whenever He decides to reveal it.

**(Daniel 7:2 NKJV)** Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were **stirring up the Great Sea**.

Right at the start we are confronted with 2 symbols: the four winds of Heaven and the Great Sea.

Four Winds: this is something that is found both in the OT and the NT:

1. **(Jeremiah 49:36 NKJV)** Against Elam I will bring the **four winds From the four quarters of heaven**, And scatter them toward all those winds; There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.
  - a. What ideas does this invoke?
2. **Mark 13:26-27 NKJV** **Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (27) And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.**
  - a. How about this usage?
3. **Revelation 7:1 NKJV** After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.
  - a. And this one?

We also know that Wind is a symbol of the Holy Spirit who moves powerfully in the world.

(if it hasn't been said, this all implies GLOBAL activity and not LOCAL as in a single country or nation)

Great Sea: This is a reference to the Mediterranean Sea or any very large body of water. What is the normal understanding of this symbol?

1. **Isaiah 8:6-8 NKJV** "Inasmuch as these people refused The waters of Shiloah that flow softly, And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah's son; (7) Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them The waters of the River, strong and mighty— The king of Assyria and all his glory; He will go up over all his channels And go over all his banks. (8) He will pass through Judah, He will overflow and pass over, He will reach up to the neck; And the stretching out of his wings Will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.
2. **Matthew 13:47-50 NKJV** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, (48) which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. (49) So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, (50) and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
3. **Isaiah 17:13-14 NKJV** The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters; But *God* will rebuke them and they will flee far away, And be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. (14) Then behold, at eventide, trouble! *And* before the morning, he *is* no more. This *is* the portion of those who plunder us, And the lot of those who rob us.

The word in the Hebrew for 'sea' describes a roaring, raging, overflowing force. The picture is very often of gentile nations coming against God's people.

**(Daniel 7:3 NKJV)** And **four great beasts** came up from the sea, each different from the other.

Out of the tumultuous gentile nations and kingdoms will come four great beasts; Spoiler alert: v17 says that these are 4 kings and their kingdoms. The visions are confirmation of the Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 – **signifying that all these things are sure to take place!**

Each king represents a unique culture as well.

**(Daniel 7:4 NKJV)** The first *was* like a **lion**, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

Out comes a lion but this one has eagle's wings. The lion is a symbol of Nebuchadnezzar as seen in Jeremiah 4:7.

**Jeremiah 4:7 NKJV** The lion has come up from his thicket, **And the destroyer of nations is on his way.** He has gone forth from his place To make your land desolate. Your cities will be laid waste, Without inhabitant.

Lions are very strong and ravenous. However, this one has **eagle's wings**. What might this represent?

1. **Deuteronomy 28:49 NKJV** The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

By the way, winged lion statues were known to have been placed in front of the royal places in Babylon.

Something happens to this beast: “and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.”.

Somehow it is transformed into something like a man in that it stood on 2 feet AND it was given a man's heart!

So, what's this mean?

**(Daniel 7:5 NKJV)** "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a **bear**. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

The second beast is a bear. This bear is “lopsided”, one side being larger than the other. Symbolically, there's very little in scripture:

**Hosea 13:5-8 NKJV** I knew you in the wilderness, In the land of great drought. (6) When they had pasture, they were filled; They were filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they forgot Me. (7) "So **I will be to them like** a lion; Like a **leopard** by the road I will lurk; (8) **I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs; I will tear open their rib cage**, And there I will devour them like a **lion**. The wild beast shall tear them.

**I will be to them like: this is God speaking!!!**

In its mouth were 3 ribs; since the bear is a king, it is thought that perhaps the 3 ribs are kingdoms conquered by the bear.

As it is the second, the bear is thought to symbolize the Medes-Persians; They were a “lopsided” kingdom where the Persians were much more in charge of the empire than the Medes ever were. The 3 ribs to represent either Babylon, Lydia, and Media or Babylon, Egypt and Assyria (all of these were conquered by the Persians).

Like we discussed in chapter 2, there's a “Greek” view of the empires and a “Roman” view. The “Greek” view sees the Medes and Persians as separate entities taken over by the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom of Alexander the Great, that is, Greece. The Roman view has them combined into 1 empire, followed by the Grecian and Roman empires. Most scholars and theologians believe the 2<sup>nd</sup> view (Roman) is better supported by scripture!

**(Daniel 7:6 NKJV)** "After this I looked, and there was another, like a **leopard**, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> beast was like a leopard but quite strange in that it had 4 heads and four wings.

Most agree this symbolizes the Grecian Empire of Alexander the Great who conquered the Persians and other kingdoms in a swift moving charge across much of Asia and even as far as India. This is what the wings symbolize.

The swiftness was known by all who encountered this king.

The four heads fit nicely into the history of Alexander the Great. When he died, the empire was divided up into 4 regions headed by his 4 generals.

[\(Daniel 7:7 NKJV\)](#) "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, **dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong**. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns.

There then arose a 4<sup>th</sup> beast. He is described as dreadful (terrifying), terrible as in mighty and exceedingly strong. This one was not likened to any known beast, but it is described as having huge iron teeth and large legs and feet that would trample any "leftovers" from the devouring teeth!

(( I saw illustrations of the 4 beasts and this one was liked to a T-Rex!)).

The reference to iron and the chronological arrangement points to the Roman empire; They were known as savage conquerors who either killed or took into slavery the people of the nations they came against. This beast was so different than the other 3 that Daniel made special note of it... It is supposed that the differences are related to its form of government, religions, customs and culture etc.

There's an interesting reference to this beast in Revelation 13:2

[Revelation 13:2 NKJV](#) Now the **beast** which I saw was like a **leopard**, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a **lion**. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

This beast totally subdued the other three beasts but still had some characteristics of the others (culture and customs passed down through the people it captured).

Plus, this one had **ten horns** (presumably on its head). Horns has been used consistently in Scripture as a symbol of strength.

[2 Samuel 22:1-3 NKJV](#) Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. (2) And he said: "The LORD *is* my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; (3) The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence.

Prophesying about Jesus, the father of John the Baptizer said:

**Luke 1:67-69 NKJV** Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: (68) "Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, (69) And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David,

We know that the horns represent 10 strong kings/kingdoms that will come from this 4<sup>th</sup> beast. Of course, not right now...but I'll read what it says in Revelation 13:

**Revelation 13:1-2 NKJV** Then I stood on the sand of the sea. **And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns**, and on his heads a blasphemous name. (2) Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

*The horns have a parallel in chapter 2 – the ten toes of iron and clay. These, while attached to legs of IRON and the horns of the beast with IRON teeth, have a connection to the original Roman empire but both “symbols” (toes and horns) are somehow related but not part of the Roman Empire which collapsed over 1500 years ago. But something “roman-ish” still exists or perhaps will exist in the near future.*

**(Daniel 7:8 NKJV)** I was considering the horns, and there was **another horn, a little one, coming up among them**, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

As Daniel was contemplating the horns, a “little horn” started to grow out from among the other 10. This little horn took out (so to speak), three of the existing horns.

But the description of this “**little horn**” is :

1. He is little; I heard that this could refer to his original stature, that is, he was somewhat unknown at first and then came to great prominence. I also have read that “little” could mean young, that is, coming up after the others were “fully grown”.
2. He was still strong
3. There were eyes of a man in the horn and it had a mouth that spoke pompous words. The “eyes” might symbolize his intelligence and his mouth, while pompous, was very persuasive!
  - a. **Revelation 13:5-6 NKJV** And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. (6) Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

Since this section is just a description, we will hold off seeing its interpretation in full. However, that this is an end-times view is undeniable. Remember when I talked about progressive revelation? Let's look to Revelation 17:3,7 12-16 for more details about the HORNS (the Beast will come later)

**Revelation 17:3 NKJV** So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I

saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

**Revelation 17:7 NKJV** But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

**Revelation 17:12-15 NKJV (12)** "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. **(13) These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.** **(14)** These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful." **(15)** Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

That this is end-times is clearly seen because we do not yet have ten distinct kingdoms (nations). Also, the beast here in Daniel, being symbolic of the Roman empire, is so much more.

Somehow, and is it not clear, he is somehow related to this "roman empire". Some think its political, some believe it is religious...we will discuss this at a future time.

Things are a bit fuzzy because we still need to finish this section and the section containing the interpretation.

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Verse 9 sees a sudden shift of scenery: The scene now suddenly switches to heaven. This is where we stop for tonight.