



Lesson 1

Daniel Chapter 7 - Verses 1 - 14

Are we living in the end times?

Few subjects are discussed more with less information than the ‘End Times’. It is misused by people every time a disaster happens that is mentioned in the Bible. They usually do not know anything about the Bible other than a few verses and in this series we want to cover everything in the Bible and know what the God has inspired the various authors of the Bible to record for our education and so that we will know the part of God’s plan that He has made known to us.

Matthew 24:4 – Jesus said “**Watch out that no one deceives you.**” Jesus said this to His disciples – 11 of these 12 would be the pillars of the first century church. These men had spent 3 years watching Jesus handle the attacks of the priests, Pharisees and everyone else. These men had watched all the miracles. Yet Jesus tells them to watch out

that no one deceives them.

Background reading: Daniel Chapter 7

In Chapter 7, Daniel receives his first vision directly. King Nebuchadnezzar had dreams and visions and God gave Daniel the interpretations to share with the King. God had blessed Daniel and Daniel loved the Lord and honored God with incredible faith in the lion's den. God chose Daniel to receive this powerful vision of the future.

7:1 - In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

Daniel is speaking of himself in the third person. As we will see this is a powerful dream but Daniel writes it down. I am sure we can relate to vivid dreams that are so real it even wakes us up. Many years ago I remember my wife waking up in the middle of the night and waking me up and she was mad at me. I asked what was wrong and she said I had done something in her dream that made her quite mad at me. I reminded her it was a dream but that did not make it any less real to her. Just imagine if God gave you a dream of the world 10 – 20 years in the future; now think about Daniel seeing over 2,500 years into the future.

Daniel 7:2-3 – “Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.”

In verse 7:17 an angel interprets these things for Daniel but does not give an interpretation of the “four winds”. Other prophets also referred to “the four winds” Jeremiah 49:36 and Ezekiel 37:9-10. In Zechariah 2:6 God tells Israel *“Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north,” declares the Lord, “for I have scattered you to the **four winds** of heaven,” declares the Lord.*” Some commentaries point out that it may be referring to the four directions – North, East, South and West.

7:4 – “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 human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.”

Understanding Daniel's circumstances can help us to put things into perspective. The time of Daniel was between about 610 BC to 530 BC. So that puts him over 2,500 years ago. What would we think if we were transported 2,500 years into the future ourselves? How will people be traveling? What will cities look like? There are many TV shows and science fiction movies that try to look ahead and see what the future might look like, but none of us have actually been transported ahead in time.

In Daniel's time sending messages around the world instantly would have been some kind of evil sorcery. Traveling 70 miles in 1 hour would be impossible. Flying half the way around the world in 12-16 hours would be unthinkable. Yet for us today these are everyday occurrences.

Keeping that in mind, we get the image of a lion with the wings of an eagle. The wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human and some translations say it was given a man's heart and others say the mind of a man. There are many variations of the meaning of this. Some say it refers all the way back to the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Others place it clearly in the current times. The Bible does not give us enough details to precisely know the time period this vision is describing.

In another example, in chapter 8 Daniel receives a second vision and when this vision is explained we see, Daniel is told this vision concerns the time of the end. Some commentaries assign this prophecy to Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 168- 164 BC. Clearly this would be over 400 years into the future relative to Daniel but the angel said specifically

8:17: As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."

So, one would ask – "How can it refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes if it refers to the time of the end?" Yes, it is confusing, but it lays the foundation for studying God's plan for his people and His sovereignty of all things in time and space.

Returning back to Daniel chapter 7

7:5 – "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!'

Daniel describes it as a bear and it was raised up on one side and it had 3 ribs in between its teeth. We do not know who is telling the bear to eat its fill of flesh. But its meaning is quite clear that it predicts a time of destruction and death.

The first biblical reference to a bear as an animal is with David as he is telling King Saul that he will take on Goliath in

1 Sam. 17:33-34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.

This is a very interesting parallel – the term sheep frequently refers to God's people and notice David refers to a lion or a bear – the first two beasts in Daniel 7. Jesus is descended from the house of David and David points out that he killed both the lion and the bear as Jesus will destroy those who try to take His people away from Him. The lion and the bear definitely symbolize beasts that are symbols of destruction for people.

In Isaiah 11, God reveals to Isaiah a vision of the time in the future where the wolf will lie down with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the goat and it is the root of Jesse (David's father) that will lead the people clearly describing Jesus and His Kingdom on earth.

7:6 – "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."

The 3rd beast in Daniel's vision is a leopard and it also has wings like a bird. A distinction is being made between the wings of an eagle and the wings of a bird. The four heads usually refers to four rulers. This beast is given the authority to rule. Remember in Romans 13:1 Paul reminds us:

Romans 13:1 - Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority

except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Whatever governments these beasts represent – God has established them to accomplish His purpose at His appointed time. The four wings and heads are not explained later but we can comfortably connect the 4 heads to 4 rulers but we cannot tell if they rule together or sequentially nor can we tell if they are 100 years after Daniel or if they were rulers within the last 100 years.

7:7 – “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.”

The lion and the bear and the leopard weren't as ferocious as the fourth beast. By contrast, in Daniel's vision he perceives this beast to be much, much greater. This vision pretty much speaks for itself – it will crush and devour its victims – notice Daniel did not say enemy. This beast only has victims. It is ruthless and trampling underfoot would mean once it destroys something it is pretty much done with it.

7:8 – “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 human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.”

Daniel is watching this – right before him in the vision. The little horn is rising up among the other 10 horns and it uprooted three of the horns that were part of the ten horns. So, this would tend to indicate that the little horn gained enough power to overthrow these three rulers. It spoke boastfully – very prideful. As we know God hates a prideful heart. This characterization of the final ruler more clearly identifies this ruler with Satan's own pride that led him to attempt to overthrow God when he was in Heaven.

7:9 – “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.

Daniel is getting to watch the angels set the thrones in place for God. Daniel is seeing

God as God wants Daniel to see Him. Wouldn't it be amazing to see this incredible event. Apparently, this throne has wheels and God will sit in the flames.

7:10 – 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.

Can you imagine – thousands upon thousands – just attending to Him. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. That is 100 million!!! We are not sure who is in the court but it probably includes the 24 elders referred to in Revelation, but that is only a guess.

7:11 – “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.

This ties in perfectly with Revelation 19:20 - But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

Both Daniel and John are seeing and recording the same thing. So the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet will be thrown in the lake of fire. Daniel makes note of the boastful words that the beast is making. Daniel's attention is totally focused on this event.

Everything about the vision is quite perplexing and drives your curiosity crazy but Daniel has seen the vision and one thing really is bugging him. Of all the questions he could have asked this one was really important to Daniel.

7:12 - (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

We need to think about what this means. Bouncing back to v. 7:7 is where this 4th beast is described and since they are numbered it is logical that the other 3 came before the 4th beast. Since these are all referred to as beasts and it indicates that their authority has been stripped away from them that they might be active at the same time period.

7:13 - *“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.*

7:14 - *He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples 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.”*

We need to look at these two verses together. It seems obvious that this is referring to Jesus Christ but certainly not in Jesus first visit to the earth. However, if you think of Jesus' followers as the Kingdom of God on earth and it has lasted 2,000 years already but all nations do not worship Jesus at the present time. That is yet to come.

Lesson Goals - What did we learn?

God chooses whom he will visit and give visions and dreams to and God will determine to whom He will provide an interpretation to of the dream.

As Christians we are to study God's word and pray for understanding. We are to be watching the events around us looking for God's intervention. If we never look for God we do not find Him but if we start looking for God we will definitely find Him.

Prophecy is God's way of proving Himself and His sovereignty over all the world to those who believe in Him.

