

Daniel

From the Stormy Sea to the Clouds of Heaven

Lesson #8 for February 22, 2020

Scriptures: Daniel 7; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Romans 8:1; Mark 13:26; Luke 9:26; 12:8; 1 Timothy 2:5.

1. Our topic for this week is Daniel 7. This chapter, like Daniel 2 and Daniel 8, is a prophecy talking about kingdoms and long time periods, looking forward into the future. The vision was given to Daniel during the first year of Belshazzar's reign as co-regent with his father. Daniel was living in the kingdom of Babylon which was the first major world dominating power. But, he was told about several other kingdoms which were to follow.
2. In this vision, we see strange creatures, some of which look like known animals arising out of a sea tossed by winds from every direction. A dark sea may remind us of creation. The animals which appear are unclean by Hebrew standards and are hybrid. No animals exactly like these have ever existed in the real world.
3. Like the different metals in the vision recorded in Daniel 2, these animals represent powers that would dominate the world for centuries to come. God's domination of the world which He gave to Adam in the garden had by then turned into something very different. But, in the middle of Daniel 7, we can see that a change will eventually come. God will reenter the human arena and, eventually, will return the control of this world to His faithful followers. A heavenly judgment will bring that about.

| <i>Parallels between Daniel's Three Main Prophecies</i> | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|---|
| Identification | Daniel 2 | Daniel 7 | Daniel 8 |
| Babylon (Dan. 2:38-39) | Head of gold | Lion | Not represented |
| Medo-Persia (Dan. 8:20) | Chest and arms of silver | Bear | Ram |
| Greece (Dan. 8:21) | Waist and hips of bronze | Leopard | Goat |
| Divisions of Greece | Not represented | 4 heads and wings | 4 horns |
| Rome, Imperial | Legs of iron | 4 th beast | Little horn, phase 1 |
| Divisions | Feet of iron and clay | 10 horns | Not represented |
| Rome, Papal | Not represented | Little horn | Little horn, phase 2 |
| Pre-advent judgment | Not represented | Heavenly court scene; Ancient of days | Cleansing of the sanctuary at the end of the 2,300 days |
| Kingdom of God | Great stone | Saints of Most High ruled by Son of Man | Not represented |

adapted from various sources

4. After he saw this amazing vision, Daniel hastened to ask one of the beings in his vision to explain things. That will help us to understand what is happening. It is by charting the different visions and comparing Daniel 2, Daniel 7, and Daniel 8 that we can piece together

a fairly detailed explanation of what was coming in the future from Daniel's day.

5. The first three animals that Daniel saw coming out of the windswept sea resembled known creatures. There was a lion, a bear, and a leopard. These were all animals familiar to people living in the Middle East at that time.
6. However, the fourth creature was like nothing that anyone had ever seen. That beast had 10 horns and looked powerful, horrible, and terrifying. It had huge iron teeth with which it crushed its victims and then trampled on them. And then, surprisingly, a small horn seemed to erupt, and it tore out three of the other horns from their roots. However, this horn was quite different, having human eyes and a mouth that was boasting proudly and saying terrible things against God.
7. Winged lions decorated the palace of Babylon. A lion was an appropriate symbol for Babylon. The bear with three bones in his mouth represented the Medo-Persian empire. One side of the bear was raised up higher than the other, indicating the superiority of the Persians over the Medes. During its years of conquest, the Medo-Persian empire conquered the Lydian empire in western Turkey, the Babylonian empire, and Egypt.
8. The Greek empire was represented by a leopard with wings. That would certainly suggest the speed with which Alexander the Great conquered the known world in a little over 3 years.
9. That dreadful and terrible animal with its multiple horns and its cruel and rapacious behavior clearly applies to the pagan Roman Empire which conquered, ruled, and trampled the world with its feet.
10. Biblical critics, of course, have tried to suggest that this book was not written by Daniel but by someone in the days of the Maccabees after most of this history had taken place. There are many reasons why this cannot be true. The language used is the language of Aramaic used in the days of Daniel. Furthermore, Jesus Himself said that portions of Daniel's prophecies were still future in His day. (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14) Thus, thousands of years of human history were predicted and have taken place exactly as predicted.

In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as dependent on the will and prowess of man. The shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. **But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.**—Ellen G. White, *Education** 173.2.[†]

11. The little horn power appeared for the first time in Daniel 7.

Daniel 7:7-8,19-25: ⁷ As I was watching, a fourth beast appeared. It was powerful, horrible, terrifying. With its huge iron teeth it crushed its victims, and then it trampled on them. Unlike the other beasts, it had ten horns. ⁸ While I was staring at the horns, I saw a little horn coming up among the others. It tore out three of the horns that were already there. This horn had human eyes and a mouth that was boasting proudly....

¹⁹ Then I wanted to know more about the fourth beast, which was not like any of the others—the terrifying beast which crushed its victims with its bronze

claws and iron teeth and then trampled on them. ²⁰ And I wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and the horn that had come up afterwards and had made three of the horns fall. It had eyes and a mouth and was boasting proudly. It was more terrifying than any of the others.

²¹ While I was looking, that horn made war on God's people and conquered them. ²² Then the one who had been living for ever came and pronounced judgement in favour of the people of the Supreme God. The time had arrived for God's people to receive royal power.

²³ This is the explanation I was given: "The fourth beast is a fourth empire that will be on the earth and will be different from all other empires. It will crush the whole earth and trample it down. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will appear; he will be very different from the earlier ones and will overthrow three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Supreme God and oppress God's people. He will try to change their religious laws and festivals, and God's people will be under his power for 3.5 years."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Daniel 7:7-8,19–25). New York: American Bible Society.

12. First of all, it is important to notice that this little horn arises on the head of the ferocious beast that we know represents pagan Rome. So, we would expect this little horn to carry on some of the characteristics of pagan Rome itself. This little horn is described in the following words. It will:

(1) speak pompous words against the Most High, (2) persecute the saints of the Most High, (3) intend to change times and law. And as a consequence, the saints would be given into his hand. Next, the angel gives the time frame for the activities of the little horn: *a time and times and half a time*. In this instance of prophetic language, the word *time* means "year," and so the expression *times* signifies years, a dual form: "two years." Hence, this is a period of three and a half prophetic years, which, according to the year-day principle, [See, for example, Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5-6.] indicates a period of 1,260 years. During this time the little horn will mount an attack against God, persecute the saints, and attempt to change God's law.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, February 17.^{†§}

13. In New Testament times, Paul must have known of the prophecy of Daniel and studied it in detail in his early years. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul described a power which he called *the Wicked One* who is to "oppose every so-called god or object of worship and will put himself above them all. He will even go in and sit down in God's Temple and claim to be God."—*Good News Bible.** (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
14. This Wicked One will claim to perform miracles and wonders and will use every kind of wicked deceit on those who will perish. Strangely, God sends the power of error to work in those who choose to follow this beast, this Wicked One, and thus, have believed what is false. Along with their leader, those people will be condemned.
15. In the central portion of Daniel 7, we read these words:

Daniel 7:9-10,13-14: ⁹ While I was looking, thrones were put in place. One who had been living for ever sat down on one of the thrones. His clothes were white as snow, and his hair was like pure wool. His throne, mounted on fiery

wheels, was blazing with fire,¹⁰ and a stream of fire was pouring out from it. There were many thousands of people there to serve him, and millions of people stood before him. The court began its session, and the books were opened....

¹³ During this vision in the night, I saw what looked like a human being. He was approaching me, surrounded by clouds, and he went to the one who had been living for ever and was presented to him.¹⁴ He was given authority, honour, and royal power, so that the people of all nations, races, and languages would serve him. His authority would last for ever, and his kingdom would never end.—*Good News Bible*.*

16. In order to identify this little horn power, it is very important to recognize that three times in this vision, Daniel saw this sequence: (1) The little horn phase (538-1798), (2) Heavenly judgment, and (3) God's eternal kingdom is established.
17. As a result of this heavenly judgment and the reestablishment of God's eternal kingdom, God's people will be reestablished as rulers on this earth. Of course, they will do so under the leadership of Jesus Christ Himself.

Daniel 7:21-22,26-27: ²¹ While I was looking, that horn made war on God's people and conquered them. ²² Then the one who had been living for ever came and pronounced judgement in favour of the people of the Supreme God. The time had arrived for God's people to receive royal power....

²⁶ "Then the heavenly court will sit in judgement, take away his power, and destroy him completely. ²⁷ The power and greatness of all the kingdoms on earth will be given to the people of the Supreme God. Their royal power will never end and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them."—*Good News Bible*.*

18. Judgments are something that are described fairly frequently in Scripture. But, this one is different. This is a judgment that takes on cosmic proportions, taking place in heaven itself. And it impacts not only the little horn, but also God's faithful people down through the generations.
19. In Daniel 7, we are not given any details about the timing of these events. We will get more details on that in the next two chapters. There will be a pre-advent judgment which will take place in heaven, and it will favor God's faithful people. (Daniel 7:22)
20. So, how should we relate these events pictured in Daniel 2, 7, and 8 to the great controversy as we understand it? There are several passages in Scripture which appear to discuss how God's judgment takes place. See Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 12:7-12; John 3:17-21; 12:47-48; 5:22. A careful review of these verses makes it clear that while the Father in heaven supervises the judgment, as cases are reviewed, the accuser, Satan himself, tries to make our cases look as bad as possible. In response, Jesus explains why He believes things are not the way Satan has suggested. The entire heavenly counsel—hundreds of millions of angels—are watching as all of this takes place. God's government is purely transparent. There is no manipulating behind closed doors. And we judge ourselves by either coming to the light or running away from it!

Romans 8:1: There is no condemnation now for **those who live in union with Christ Jesus**.—*Good News Bible*.*†

21. How is Jesus's death on the cross related to our "living in union with Christ Jesus"?

22. Having viewed the heavenly court scene, we now observe something else interesting. Someone who is described as a *Son of Man* or as a *human being* (See Daniel 7:13 above in *Good News Bible* and below in *The New King James Version*.) appears accompanied by clouds.

Daniel 7:13: “I was watching in the night visions,

And behold, One like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven!

He came to the Ancient of Days,

And they brought Him near before Him.”—*The New King James Version*.*

(1982). (Daniel 7:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

23. **Son of Man is a Hebrew way of saying “human being.”** (See Ezekiel 1:26; Matthew 24:30; 26:64; 8:20; 9:6; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; 9:26; 12:8; Revelation 1:7,13; 14:14.) Jesus often described Himself as a *Son of Man*, that is, a human being.
24. Who is this individual that appears and approaches the throne of God in heaven? While He is described as a human being, He obviously exists in the heavenly court. Furthermore, there are numerous places in Scripture where the Son of Man is described as coming with the clouds of heaven. **It is important to notice that in Daniel 7:13, Jesus is not described as coming to this earth—although that was believed in 1843 and 1844—but rather as approaching the throne of God in heaven.** Furthermore, He receives “dominion and glory and a kingdom” and “all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.” (Daniel 7:14, *NKJV**)
25. By correctly representing the human family before the throne of God, He is able to restore things to the way they should be. It is also important to notice that “there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5, *NKJV**) No Catholic priest or any other priest or theologian can take His place!
26. The little horn representing the Catholic system has made all kinds of boastful claims about its powers and its abilities.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church**:

“It is in the Church that ‘the fullness of the means of salvation’ has been deposited.” #824

“Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation.” #846

“The Church ... bears in herself ... the totality of the means of salvation.” #868

“There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive.” #982

“Were there no forgiveness of sins in the Church, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation.” #983

“The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist [Mass] are one single sacrifice: ... ‘In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.’” #1367—[Online PDF retrieved on December 8, 2019].‡

27. They teach that one cannot be saved outside of the Catholic Church.

28. How does it make you feel to recognize that Jesus is the One representing your case in the courts of heaven? Often, it has been suggested that God the Father is the judge and Jesus has to plead His blood before the Father before the Father is willing to forgive us. Does that mean that the Father is not so friendly? Do we need the Son to plead our case before the Father to convince the Father to forgive us? Remember John 15:25-28 in which Jesus said He was speaking clearly and not using figures of speech when in verse 27 He said, "The Father himself loves you."—*Good News Bible*.*

29. Read Daniel 7:18,21-22,25,27. What will be the result of all these activities?

Daniel 7:27: The power and greatness of all the kingdoms on earth will be given to the people of the Supreme God. Their royal power will never end and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them.—*Good News Bible*.*

30. God's faithful people who remain loyal to Him no matter what the Devil does to them, even including persecution and death, will be rewarded by God. But, eventually, they will be the winners in the great controversy. A victory for Christ is a victory for them.

31. Having seen how history is foretold hundreds of years in advance and now that it has worked out exactly as predicted, does that help you to trust in the Bible?

A cursory look at history reveals that after the collapse of the Roman Empire, which came about by attacks from barbarians from the north, the bishop of Rome took advantage of the overthrow of three barbarian tribes and established himself as the sole power in Rome as of A.D. 538. In this process, he adopted several institutional and political functions of the Roman emperor. From this emerged the papacy, invested with temporal and religious power until it was deposed by Napoleon in 1798. This did not bring an end to Rome, but only to that specified phase of persecution. The pope not only claimed to be the vicar of Christ but also introduced several doctrines and practices contrary to the Bible. Purgatory, penance, auricular confession, and the change of the Sabbath commandment to Sunday are among many other changes of the "times and law" introduced by the papacy.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, February 21.

32. Given the identifying characteristics of the little horn in this chapter, is it clear in your mind that this refers to the Roman Catholic Church? There is no way it could refer to a pagan Greek king, as many critical of the Bible have suggested. That pagan Greek king disappeared from history 150 years before the first advent of Jesus!

33. So, we have seen in this chapter four main themes: The little horn, the heavenly judgment, the Son of Man, and the saints of the Most High.

34. What do we know about the three and one-half years of prophetic time that the little horn was to dominate?

History shows that the conversion of the emperor Constantine, the official recognition of Sunday as a day of worship, the fall of Rome to barbarians, and the foundation of Constantinople in the East were important factors that favored the rise of the papacy. With the demise of the pagan western Roman Empire, the bishop of Rome filled the power vacuum that was created in Rome with the transfer of the capital of the Roman Empire to Constantinople.

With the decree of emperor Justinian in A.D. 533, made effective only in A.D. 538, declaring the pope the head of all the churches, the door was open for

the papacy to implement its rule. Now the bishop of Rome held not only religious authority but also political power. The popes soon began to call themselves pontifex [sic] and adopted other customs and laws of the pagan Roman Empire. By means of alliances with temporal powers, the persecuted church became the persecutor. Through the Crusades and the Inquisition, the Roman church inflicted tremendous pain on many who wanted to remain faithful to biblical teachings. So, already during the Middle Ages the pope came to be identified with the Antichrist (*Matthew 24; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 13:1-10*). In 1798, Napoleon put the pope in prison, bringing to an end the 1,260 years of papal rulership.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 107.^{†§}

35. Additional details about the little horn's activities are found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Revelation 13:1-10. It should be surprising and shocking to us to realize that virtually everyone in the world will follow after this false God-imitator, that is, Satan and his associates.
36. Ellen White talked about several books that presumably are involved in the pre-advent judgment. She:
- Mentions the following books in connection with this judgment: (1) the book of life, containing the names of those who have accepted the service of God; (2) the book of remembrance, a record of the good deeds of the saints; and (3) a record of sins (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 480, 481). For the sake of justice and transparency to all those involved in and affected by the final decision, God must conduct an investigation so that no one could cast doubt upon the rightness of the final decision.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 107-108.[§]
37. Who is judged in this pre-advent judgment? To be fair, God must judge for the righteous and against the wicked. There are some passages in our Bible Study Guide as well as some passages in the Bible and from Ellen White which seem to suggest that only the righteous will be judged at this time. That raises a puzzling question: At the second coming, the righteous are taken to heaven and the wicked are left as dead on this earth. That means that the most important decisions are made before the second coming! Therefore, the wicked must also be judged in at least some sense.
38. One important book that is reviewed is called the *book of life*, sometimes called *the Lamb's book of life* where we are told that the names of God's faithful people are recorded from the foundation of the world. See Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Daniel 12:1; and Revelation 21:27.
39. There is also a *book of remembrance* which appears to record all of our deeds and thoughts, and there is a book of the records of the sins of man. See Ecclesiastes 12:14 and Matthew 12:36-37. Compare 1 Corinthians 4:5 and Isaiah 65:6-7.
40. Jesus is the one who is not only capable of associating with us as a human being (Hebrews 2:14; 4:15) but also is God Himself and, thus, is closely associated with the Father. Thus, in this passage we discover that the saints of the Most High are the direct object of persecution by Satan and his little horn surrogate. See Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:17; 19:10; 22:9.
41. Thus, Seventh-day Adventists believe that the testimony of Jesus is revealed by the spirit of prophecy. We are blessed to have had among us one who clearly exhibited that spirit

of prophecy. But, **during the final events of this earth's history, God will need an entire group of people to represent Him in the best possible way despite everything Satan throws at them.** This will be the final nail in the coffin of Satan's kingdom.

42. Are you comfortable with the idea that at the present time, there is a cosmic judgment occurring in which your case could be tried? Given what we know about who is accusing us and who is representing us, do we have anything to fear? Do we really need to be terrified about what accusations Satan might make against us? God's judgments are completely transparent. So, if we are living the kind of lives we should be by following the example of Jesus, His rebuttals to Satan's charges will be clear and decisive; **the whole universe will agree that God has done everything correctly.**
43. It does not make sense for us to carry on our sinful habits in view of all that is going on in heaven. Does our study today make you want to live a better life?

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