

# The Book of Daniel

## Week 5: Chapter 7

### Chapter 7

#### Verses 1-8:

Notice that Daniel speaks in third person. Unlike the historical missive of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel does not speak in first person as that would cause the author to be very apparent in the story. But by writing about himself in third person he can distance himself as to remain impartial. Also note that this will NOT happen in chapter 8. Daniel only does this in the Aramaic section of the book.

Now, regarding Daniel's vision four beasts were described with specific details. The first was a lion with wings. What happened to the lion and what previous part of Daniel is it reminiscent of?

The lion lost its wings and was given the mind of a man. It was taken from something ferocious to something docile. It's the same thing that happened to Nebuchadnezzar. He was taken from a great king to a beast of the field eating grass.

The second was like a bear. We are told that it had one side raised up above the other. What might one side being raised up tell us about the bear? What are the three ribs in the bear creature's mouth?

Being raised up has two purposes: 1) We are told that something is raising it up. It's not just disfigured, but something is lifting one side up. This could indicate God's intervention. 2) There are two sides to the bear. Whatever it represents will have two parts. The ribs are most likely the remains of the first beast.

The third animal is a leopard with wings. We are told it was given dominion, but how might the creature itself (leopard) and its properties (four wings) tell us about how dominion would be given? Compare the animal to the second beast.

Leopards are weaker, but quicker than bears. Wings also lend to the speed of the animal. The impression this beast gives is that it will gain dominion much farther and quicker than the previous beast, but will ultimately be much weaker.

The final beast is not compared to an animal. However, it *is* given the most detail. The first thing we're told is that it's terrifying and had iron teeth. What previous image does that detail remind you of in Daniel?

The statue had feet of iron. Clearly there is a connection between the fourth part of the statue and the fourth beast.

The ten horns most likely represent power instead of something specific. Daniel used this number in 1:20 to compare the wisdom of Daniel and his companions to the rest of the wise men. This may just be another symbolic number Daniel uses in his writing. Either way, Daniel quickly transitions to focusing on the one small horn growing and removing three of the larger ones. What detail given at the end of the section helps us understand what this small horn represents?

It has eyes and a mouth. It's most likely representing a person that's doing something. What exactly we don't know yet, but we know it has authority (removing three larger horns) and is exercising it (speaking great things).

We'll put a pin in that vision for now because Daniel is going to talk about it more later in the chapter.

### **Verses 9-14:**

What does Daniel see in his second vision? Why have they gathered?

Daniel sees God on his throne of judgment with his servants before him. They seem to be gathered in a court of judgment to proclaim judgment on something or someone.

What emotion does this picture of the throne room make you feel? Why?

Fear. There are multiple pictures of fire and we're given the picture almost from the perspective of the defendant.

The fourth beast returns in the second vision. We see the small horn still speaking words. What does this indicate about the fourth beast's position in relation to God? What is the result of being in that position?

Speaking in the midst of the court places the fourth beast in opposition to God. He is the one making his defense in front of the most high and his servants. However, his argument holds no weight. As he's speaking he is destroyed. The fire seen in the vision is indeed used for destruction.

Despite being stripped of power, what small semblance of hope is given to the other three beasts? Why is this judgment different from the other three?

The three beasts get to remain in existence. They may lose power, but they will live on. The fourth will be total annihilated, and the difference is that the fourth was the only one speaking in the court. It shows a greater opposition than the others. But we'll get back to the fourth near the end of the chapter.

After the four beasts were judged, Daniel sees another "like a son of man". What happened to him in the throne room and what previous Daniel image are we reminded of?

He was presented before the Ancient of Days and given glory and dominion. The details of his reign are reminiscent of the stone mountain, a kingdom that lasted forever.

### **Verses 15-28:**

Compare Daniel's demeanor in 7:15 here with 5:13, 17. These chapters happen at the same time. How does his current demeanor affect Daniel's actions? How is he comforted?

Daniel, being afraid in the presence of this king, doesn't speak with confidence but instead humbly turns to one wiser than himself and asks for help. The one he asks gives him a simple answer that tells him he is on the right side.

Because the fourth beast was more detailed than the others, Daniel wants to know more about it. We're not told that he asked about it, but he did end up getting information, for the Ancient of Days came forth and spoke his judgment. What does the Ancient of Days convict the fourth beast and its horn of?

He made war with the saints and spoke out against the Most High.

What is the result of these actions?

1. God's people are given into the hand of the fourth beast for a short time.
2. Ultimately God's people will return and the fourth beast will be destroyed.

Daniel ends his recounting of the vision by not describing how it will affect those mentioned in the vision, but by how it affected him. How does Daniel's description of himself lead the reader back to the primary theme of the Aramaic section of Daniel one final time?

Despite his wisdom and knowledge and power, Daniel knows he is nothing compared to the power of the most high, and his response to the vision shows it. He isn't confident and ready to convict the ruler of Babylon, he is scared and ready to hide. He ends the chapter in humility and fear, knowing his place in relation to God. This creates a stark contrast to the Daniel presented in every single other verse of the book, and creates a powerful ending to the story.