



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:
PROPHETIC INSIGHT INTO THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES
Daniel 7:15-28

Daniel was “**a man greatly beloved**” of God and the Lord gave him “**skill and understanding**” beyond any prophet of his day. He had insight into “**the times of the Gentiles.**” He had been used of God to interpret the king's dream which revealed things that “**shall come to pass**”, things that “**shall be in the latter days**” (Daniel 2:28,29). God's revelation always had a great impact on Daniel as he meditated on what God was about to do. When he saw and understood the judgment coming on Nebuchadnezzar, he “**was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him**” (Daniel 4:19). At a later time when he had more revelations concerning the future suffering of the world under kings and emperors, it is recorded that he was deeply, physically and emotionally affected – “**And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it**” (Daniel 8:27). His understanding of God's revealed plan, purpose or prophecy led him to fervent prayer and supplication. “**I Daniel understood, and I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications. I prayed unto the LORD my God**” (Daniel 9:2-4).

If the prophetic revelation concerning one man (Daniel 4) or one nation (Daniel 9) so deeply affected Daniel, how did the revelation concerning the suffering of the whole world affect him? In the middle of this chapter he said, “**I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.**” At the end of the chapter he said, “**As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart**” (Daniel 7:15,28). Meditating on the things “**which are coming on the earth; distress of nations, with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear**” (Luke 21:24-26) made him sorrowful, heavy and sad. Meditating on God's revealed, prophetic truth always has a salutary effect on the soul. Without meditation, knowledge leads to pride (1 Corinthians 8:1b). “**Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all**” (1 Timothy 4:15).

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FEROCIOUS BEASTS

Daniel 7:15-18; 8:15-19; 9:21-23; 10:10-12; 12:5-10; 2:37-40; 8:19-25; 11:2-4,16-19; Jeremiah 30:4-7; Zechariah 9:12-17.

It was Daniel's desire to understand “**the truth of all this.**” Without understanding the revelation would still be a mystery and would not benefit him or profit those who read. Without being made to understand “**the vision is become as the words of a book that is sealed**” (Isaiah 29:11) and “**who shall prepare himself?**” (1 Corinthians 14:8). The wise will always desire and demand to understand God's revealed truth so he can prepare to meet the LORD, his God (Amos 4:12). As Daniel asked to know the truth and “**sought for the meaning**” he was made to “**know the interpretation of the things.**”

“**These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.**” Four kings, four kingdoms shall arise and have dominion on earth, one after the other. These kings, or emperors will arise out of the earth, they shall be of the earth, earthy. Their nature and foundation will be from beneath, as from the dust of the earth, which eventually shall return to the dust. They shall rise one after the other and they shall fall one after the other. They shall have dominion but each shall eventually have damnation. They shall rule as beasts out of the sea and they shall be slain as beasts meant for the slaughter.

Each of these four kings will persecute and oppress “**the saints of the most High**” but the hatred and cruelty of “**the fourth beast**” shall be extremely dreadful and terrible. He shall make “**war with the saints, and prevail against them.**” “**He shall wear out the saints of the most High.**” “**He shall magnify himself in his heart, and shall destroy many.**” “**He shall cast down many ten thousands.**” “**He shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.**” “**He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown.**” “**He shall scatter the power of the holy people**” (Daniel 7:21,25; 8:25; 11:12,16,41; 12:7).

Will God, the most High, allow the beasts to completely overcome and destroy His people? Will the dreadfully fierce beast, the fourth beast, destroy the saints of the most High and the glorious land with a perpetual desolation? No, the beast's indignation could only continue “**until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of**

the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever (Daniel 7:22,18).

THE INVASION OF THE FOURTH BEAST

Daniel 7:19-22; 2:40-43; 8:9-12; 11:3,16,36,37; Matthew 24:15-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:7,8; Revelation 13:5-7; 19:19,20.

“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast.” Daniel desired to know what the fourth beast symbolized because of its peculiar features. He well understood what the first three beasts represented but this dreadful, fierce, terrible monster puzzled him. He mentioned the details in which the beast was fearfully or strikingly different from all the others – (1) the teeth of iron, (2) the nails of brass, (3) ten horns on its head, (4) a little horn making three horns to be plucked up by the roots, (5) that horn having eyes, (6) the same horn having a mouth that spoke very great things, (7) the stout, terrifying look or appearance of the horn. The little horn which appeared last became more prominent and dominant than the rest. The beast itself was so unusual, peculiar and uncommon. ***“And the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them”*** (Daniel 7:21). The oppression, cruelty and wickedness of the king, represented by the little horn will be without comparison. The suffering on earth will be so great, ***“such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”*** (Matthew 24:21). The oppression and suffering caused by ***“the little horn,”*** the king of fierce countenance, will not be limited to Israel but will extend ***“over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations”*** (Revelation 13:7).

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE FUTURE BEAST

Daniel 7:23-28; 2:40; 8:23-25; 11:31,36-38; 2 Thessalonians 2:4-8; Revelation 13:1-18; Ezekiel 35:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Psalm 2:4-12; Revelation 11:15.

“Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.” Daniel had asked one of the angels who appeared to him about the meaning and interpretation of what he saw that perplexed him. The interpretation is clear and the fulfilment is still future. This future king ***“shall devour the whole earth.”*** His reign of terror ***“shall tread down and break in pieces.”*** He would be Satan-incarnate, without pity, mercy or compassion. He would crush and subdue the whole world by brutal force, diabolical hatred, inhuman strategies and unprecedented military power. He will have no regard for God or man, no sympathy for children or women, no compassion for the weak or the feeble. He will openly and defiantly blaspheme God and delight in rebellious acts and reproachful words against the true God. He would have absolute control over the riches and resources of the world and would have unlimited access to the use of international means of communication. ***“He shall wear out the saints of the most High”*** with vicious, violent, unbearable persecution. ***“He shall think to change times and laws.”*** He will attempt to change Christian times, seasons and religious calendar that remind people of sacred things. He will plan to change and alter the moral laws instituted by the God of heaven and replace God’s laws with his contradicting codes of redefined laws so as to set himself up to be worshiped, ***“shewing himself that he is God”*** (Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). It will be such a terrible period of suffering on earth that ***“except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened”*** (Matthew 24:22). Such frightening suffering of the Great Tribulation will continue ***“Until a time, and times and the dividing of time”*** or ***“forty and two months”*** or ***“a thousand two hundred and threescore (1,260) days,”*** that is three and a half years (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2; 12:6). ***“But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him”*** (Daniel 7:26,27).

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