

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF DANIEL

A SIMILAR VISION (DANIEL 7:1-7)

WE GET INTO A BLEND OF LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE

Apocalyptic writing is filled with metaphors that have literal interpretations. This kicks off early with the "four winds of heaven" that stir up the great sea

- Wind tends to be used as a sign of God's sovereignty and power, and the mention of "four winds" shows completeness

THE "GREAT SEA" IS LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE

God was stirring up the geographical area around the Mediterranean, but the "great sea" is also referring to the "sea of humanity"

- Clarified in Revelation 13 when the Antichrist arises from a "sea" of people
- The "great sea" being stirred up gives the picture of unrest and confusion. This confusion will not be present in the new earth (Revelation 21:1)

THE FOUR WINDS ARE GOD'S JUDGMENT

Four empires (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) will rise and exert their power through the centuries until the Son of Man (Christ) brings a final judgment to them and their ideology. Wind is mentioned 60 times in reference to God's power.

METAPHORICAL ANIMALS AND BIRDS

Apocalyptic writing also has many animal metaphors, and they will coincide with the place or people they represent.

- In v3 they rise from the sea, and in v17 they rise from the earth. This aligns with Revelation 13 where **political and religious corruption is led by the Antichrist** through a "beast of the sea" and "beast of the earth"

THE LION WITH EAGLE'S WINGS

This represents the Babylonian Empire. Its wings have been clipped, so its speed is eliminated and it stands like a man

- This is probably a direct reference to the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. And though he had changed, the empire was still pagan and evil

THE BEAR

This symbolizes the Medo-Persian Empire. The bear is bulky, showing the size and power of the Persians that had as many as 2 ½ million people in their armies. "Raised up on one side" shows dominance and aggression.

- The ribs in its mouth symbolize the 3 major areas it had conquered (Asia Minor, Babylon, and Egypt)

THE LEOPARD WITH 4 WINGS AND 4 HEADS

Babylon took Assyria, Persia took Babylon, but like a leopard, the Greeks came in under Alexander the Great and with 4 generals (heads) and only 35,000 soldiers a piece, they took Persia by storm

- Alexander did the most conquest in the shortest amount of time

THE MOST TERRIFYING BEAST

Represents the Roman Empire and was "dreadful and incredibly strong" and "trampled with its feet whatever was left." It was unique because it had 10 horns.

- The 10 horns are the same as the ten toes in Daniel 2. These represent 10 governments that will join in opposition to God

BUT THAT EMPIRE ENDED

Though the Roman rule has ended, **the ideology** of the longest running empire (over 700 years) still drives our world today

- Most political systems, economics, even most languages in the world are Romance Languages or derived from them

THE LITTLE HORN (DANIEL 7:8,11-12)

THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANOTHER ROME

When Rome fell, it opened the door for more, but weaker, leaders. Not just in the wake of its fall, but even into today. Our world is very divided, not cohesive

- This will set up the ultimate evil leader who will bring cohesiveness to the world through Satan. This is of course the Antichrist, or "little horn"

THIS LEADER ENCOMPASSES ALL REBELLION TO GOD

Revelation 13:2 says that he has the characteristics of all the previously talked about beasts and is empowered by "the dragon," Satan. This is the "man of lawlessness" mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,8

- The eyes like a man's and arrogant speech show this is about an individual more than a specific kingdom

LET'S SKIP TO V11-12

Daniel is setting up the conflict of the ages. As the Ancient of Days is taking His seat, the boastful "little horn" is talking about his authority. Then, the "beast" or "little horn" was killed and thrown

into a fire by God.

- The "little horn" was part of the group of ten other horns (governments), so this casting away rids us of all evil empires

ALLOWED TO LIVE FOR A TIME? (V12)

Many believe this means each empire lived out its pre-determined time, or that each empire lived on in some way (culture, history, systems) throughout the ages until God ended the reign of the Antichrist

- The latter makes sense because we see the Antichrist embodied the ideology of the empires of the past (1 John 4:3)

When we gravitate towards ruthless conquest, materialism, idolatry, lust, greed, perversion, gluttony, drunkenness, and violence, we are in rebellion to God, therefore embodying the spirit of antichrist

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS (DANIEL 7:9-10)

BACK TO V9-10

As the little horn is boasting, the Ancient of Days, God, is in heaven on the throne

- We get a glimpse of God's majesty on the throne in Daniel 7 and Revelation 4-5. We also see the complexity of the trinity as Christ enters and is separate, but also God.
- White hair and clothes is symbolic of purity, respect, and honor
- The flaming throne and river of fire portrays righteousness and judgment

MILLIONS STOOD BEFORE HIM

As the angels stood in support, the books of our lives will be opened in front of Him in preparation for humanity's judgment (Revelation 20)

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE 1000 YEAR REIGN

There will be a millennium after the coming of Christ mentioned in Daniel 7 and Rev. 20 in which we will be seated on thrones and we will reign with Christ

- A time when Christ reigns on earth. It is harmonious, but there will be a 2nd rebellion after the 1000 years when Satan is loosed (Revelation 20)

Exact details are not as important as preparation for hard times that are promised to come. Though we don't know all the details, we know that we are to live righteously in preparation for whatever is to come.

THE SON OF MAN (DANIEL 7:13-14)

THE SCENE CHANGES AGAIN

In addition to the Ancient of Days, Daniel now sees someone "like a son of man," and in light of the NT we know its more than just a human

- "Coming on the clouds" takes us to Exodus 16:10 and Mt. Sinai and to the coming of Christ in Matthew 24:30. Jesus is referred to as the Son of Man

CLOUDS ARE COMMON IN SCRIPTURE

Jesus returned to heaven in a cloud (Acts 1:9), He will return in clouds (Acts 1:11), and clouds often refer to revelation (Exodus 13, 1 Kings 8, Isaiah 19, Jeremiah 4, and Ezekiel 10)

HE WAS GIVEN AUTHORITY TO RULE

- This is in reference to the 1000-year reign. Christ will have unadulterated rule over the earth at this time

THIS SETS UP THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

1000 year reign sets up what will be the eternal Kingdom of God (Revelation 20:9-15)

- After the 1000 years Satan will rebel and lose again and be eternally thrown into the "lake of fire" along with the antichrist and false prophets. After that, we will be eternally judged and the Holy City will come down onto a new earth

DANIEL GIVES THE SCOPE OF ALL TIME

v1-14 tells the history of human empires, then fast-forwards into the last empire that births the antichrist, and finally the return of Christ and His earthly reign

- The focus is not the opposition, but the futility in opposing the One True God. This is His story, and we can choose to be a part.
- **Symbolism is to be taken figuratively, but the interpretation is to be seen as literal.**

IN OTHER WORDS...

- We will not know the exact details or times of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. We do know this; Christ will return and judge mankind. In the meantime, we have grace, the comfort and guidance of the Spirit, and the instruction of the Word, but we must live to the standard of God.
- **The standard of God is not our perfection, but a dependence on His.**