



STANDING STRONG IN TRYING TIMES

The Book of Daniel

The Beasts and the Son of Man - Part 1

Key idea:

Daniel has a vision of four kingdoms (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), which in their rebellion to God are beastly forces who oppress God's people. However, he also sees the Son of Man who established the eternal kingdom of God that will grow throughout history and defeat all rebellion against God.

Key text:

Daniel 7:1–14

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. ² Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. ³ Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. 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 man, and the heart of a man was given to it. 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!' 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. 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. 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 man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. 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. 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. 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. ¹² (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.) 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. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations

and men 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.

Key points:

1. Daniel 7-12 are apocalyptic visions that present the same key themes as the historical narrative of Daniel 1-6, but with a focus on the future.
2. Daniel 7 gives a vision of four terrifying beasts that are the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, which is parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2.
3. Daniel is also given a vision of God on His throne, the Son of Man (Jesus), and the kingdom of God established by the Son of Man (Jesus).
4. The visions of Daniel 2 and 7 and the teaching of the New Testament make it clear that Jesus established the kingdom of God during the time of Rome, and this kingdom will continue to grow throughout this age and will exist for eternity.
5. The message of this vision is meant to encourage God's exile people to remain faithful to Him and His kingdom, even if this produces persecution and suffering, knowing that God's eternal Kingdom will ultimately replace the kingdoms of this world.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to me? Why?
2. In what ways is Daniel's vision in chapter 7 similar to Nebuchadnezzar's in chapter 2? What differences are there between the two visions? What extra information is given in Daniel 7?
3. What do Daniel's description of the churning sea and the terrifying nature of the beasts communicate to his readers? What does this tell me about these 4 kingdoms that I did not know from chapter 2?
4. Why does Daniel's vision suddenly shift to God's throne room? Why does it shift back and forth between God and His kingdom and the beastly kingdoms? What does this communicate to me?
5. Why does Daniel 7:13-14 refer to "one like a son of man"? What does this title convey?
6. How do I know that the "Son of man" in Daniel 7:13-14 is Divine?

7. Why did Jesus prefer the title “Son of Man” to all other titles? How does Daniel 7:13-14 help me to understand why He used this title for Himself?
8. How do I know that the picture of the Son of Man on the clouds in Daniel 7:13-14 is about Jesus’ ascension, appearance to the Father, and current rule and not about the second coming of Jesus? Why is this important?
9. Who will I call or see to encourage this week?

For Further Study:

[Lion - The True King](#) (December 9, 2018)

[Living Conqueror](#) (April 16, 2017)

[Risen Conqueror](#) (April 20, 2014)

[Systematic Theology - Chapter 28 - Resurrection and Ascension](#)

[Christ and the Kingship](#) (April 4, 2004)

[The Way - Trusting In God’s Sovereignty](#) (May 30, 2021)

[Every Square Inch](#) (September 26, 2010)

Preview of next week: The Beasts and the Son of Man - Part 2