

Session 1 The Four Beast Kingdoms (Dan. 7:1-8)

I. OUTLINE OF DANIEL 7:1-8

Today we are beginning our series on the book of Daniel in which we are going to look at the four visions in Daniel 7-12. The book of Daniel is twelve chapters. The first six chapters are historical episodes in Daniel's life. In these first six chapters there are six different episodes in Daniel's life. The final six chapters are the recounting of four visions that have their ultimate fulfillment in the generation in which the Lord returns. This study is focused on those final six chapters, those four visions. Tonight we are going to look at the beginning, the first part of the first vision.

A. Daniel's vision: four beasts symbolizing four world empires (Dan. 7:1-14).

In Daniel's first vision, he sees four beasts, four wild animals. These four wild animals symbolize four world empires. It is very important that you learn the names of these four empires. If you learn the names of these four empires and a few other dates and facts—there are only about ten actual dates and facts in these four visions—you get those ten down, you are going to understand these four visions a whole lot more. Do not be intimidated by the book of Daniel. Once you know about ten facts—and I am going to say them over and over and over in the next ten weeks. I will even quiz you on them throughout the sessions. Of course I always give you the answer before I quiz you—if you get these ten facts, ten or twelve—I have not exactly counted them—and dates, these four visions are going to make a lot more sense. The four visions cover the same time frame as their ultimate focus. That is the generation the Lord returns.

The four empires are four in a row historically: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire. That is it. You got it. The first one, what is it? Babylon. Who defeated Babylon? The kingdom or the empire of Persia. Who defeated the Persians? Alexander the Great and the Greek empire. Who defeated the Greeks? The Romans. You got it. You get those four down. They are going to be repeated over and over.

B. The outline:

1. Introduction (7:1-3)
2. The first three beasts (7:4-6)
 - a. First beast: Babylonian Empire (606–539 BC) – Iraq (7:4)
 - b. Second beast: Persian Empire (539–331 BC) – Iran (7:5)
 - c. Third beast: Greek Empire (331–146 BC) – Greece (7:6)
3. Fourth beast: Antichrist's empire, foreshadowed by the Roman Empire (7:7-8)
 - a. Roman Empire's western and eastern divisions (146 BC–AD 1453)
 - b. Antichrist's empire with a ten-king confederation

II. INTRODUCTION

- #### **A. Daniel 7 describes the first of Daniel's four visions contained in chapters 7-12. God choose to use four world empires as the context to bring Messiah and salvation to Israel and to prepare them for world leadership, while purifying His Church and establishing His kingdom on earth. It reveals the certainty of victory and the intensity of the battle that Israel and the Church will face in the end times as they stand together against the evil that will manifest in the Antichrist's empire.**

Daniel 7 is Daniel's first of the four visions that we just mentioned. It is important to understand that these are world empires. These four empires are the context in which God chose to bring forth the Messiah to the world.

This Messiah would bring forth salvation to the nation of Israel, would bring forth salvation to all the Gentile nations eventually, would prepare Israel for world leadership, would purify the church, and unify Jewish and Gentile believers. God has a master plan that unfolds over 2500+ years. It is all of history, but starting in Daniel 2500 years ago, He told Daniel these four empires and the unfolding of them, the story that builds through these four empires, one conquering the other, and the dynamics that take place related to it. This is the context God has chosen to bring the Messiah to the earth, to fill the earth with the glory of God, to save the nation of Israel, to purify the church, etc.

This is not a random history lesson. This is the all-wise God showing His master plan to fashion history so it would end up in a generation where the greatest measure of righteousness and the greatest measure of wickedness are in full collision, Jesus the Messiah returns, and the glory of God fills the earth. It is the master plan of the Father. He gave it to Daniel 2500 years ago, about 500 B.C. I have the exact dates here in the handout. Daniel 7 reveals the certain victory of God's people, but also reveals the intensity of the struggle, the sure victory but with the intensity of the struggle. Both of them—the manifestation of glory at the greatest measure in history and the greatest intense struggle and resistance—happen together in the same generation, the generation the Lord returns.

- B. In 603 BC, when Daniel was a young man, God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him in a night vision, and gave him insight into the kingdoms that the statue in the dream represented (Dan. 2:19). Daniel received a vision (Dan. 7) about 50 years later, in 553 BC. So if Daniel was about 20 when he received insight into Nebuchadnezzar's dream, then he was 70 when he had the Daniel 7 vision.

The story begins in Daniel 2 where the wicked king Nebuchadnezzar has a dream one night. The wicked king, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, cannot understand what the dream means. What he sees in the dreams are these four empires, but he does not know what they mean. It is figurative language.

Daniel has just been brought as a Jewish slave to Jerusalem. He was taken to Babylon as a prisoner. He is in his teen years, most people believe. Nobody knows exactly what age he is, but let's just say that he is seventeen years old. No one knows for sure, but he is in his youth for sure.

The king has this dream. He sees the four empires. He does not know they are four empires. He is very troubled. God gives the interpretation of the dream to a young Jewish boy that is in slavery. He is a captive of the Babylonian Empire. God gave the revelation to this young man Daniel.

Daniel tells the king, and it absolutely blows the king's mind. Daniel did not just interpret the dream. He told the king the dream he had. He said, "King, I will tell you your dream and the interpretation."

The king though, "That ought to be something." Daniel told him the dream. The king said, "That is exactly what I saw."

Daniel explained, "This is what it means."

Fifty years later, Daniel sees the same four empires again. For the sake of getting the picture of the timing, let's say he was about seventeen in Daniel 2. Now he is sixty-seven. It is fifty years later. Daniel sees the vision of the same four empires. He is nearly seventy years old when God shows him these four beasts.

III. THE FOUR BEASTS (DAN. 7) AND THE GREAT STATUE (DAN. 2)

- A. Daniel 7 confirms and elaborates on what was given in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. We must compare Daniel 7 with Daniel 2 to gain more understanding; they are from different perspectives. Nebuchadnezzar saw four kingdoms represented by precious metals in a statue of a glorious man (2:31-45). The head was gold, the chest and arms were silver, etc. Nebuchadnezzar saw these kingdoms from man's perspective—as glorious, like gold and silver. Daniel saw these same kingdoms, but from God's perspective—as wild beasts that devour all who are in their path.

The four beasts that he sees in Daniel 7 and the great statue that the king saw in his dream fifty years earlier speak about the same truths.

The Daniel 7 vision elaborates on the dream the wicked king had of the statue back in Daniel 2. The reason I am making this point is that I want you to take Daniel 7 and Daniel 2 and compare them together. It is very important to do that. All you are going to do is see the four empires, but there are going to be truths that come to light when you compare the two together. You will get the bigger picture. We have to compare Daniel 2, the statue that the king saw in the dream, with Daniel 7, the vision that the old prophet saw of the four beasts, to get full understanding.

Let's put the PowerPoint slide up here. I have a number of PowerPoint slides that I am going to show you. All these are on the website, quite a few diagrams. Notice—I don't know if you can see it. Maybe it is a little too far away—in this PowerPoint slide you will see that the head of gold in the statue that the king saw is the first beast, the lion, that Daniel saw. It speaks of Babylon. You can look at this statue. It is quite easy to follow; you just have to get familiar with it. The four empires are listed there. The statue spoke of the four empires and Daniel's vision fifty years later spoke of the same four empires. Take a little time; it will take a minute to get familiar with it, if it is new to you, but you will get it.

- B. The head of gold represents the Babylonian Empire (606–539 BC). The chest and arms of silver represent the Medo-Persian Empire (539–331 BC). The belly and thighs of bronze represent the Greek Empire (331–146 BC). The legs, feet, and toes of iron and clay represent the Antichrist's empire, as foreshadowed by the Roman Empire (146 BC–AD 1453).

³¹“You, O king, were watching...a great image...³²This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.³⁴You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet...³⁵The iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together...the stone ...became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” (Dan. 2:19, 31-35)

In chapter 2, when Daniel was a teen, he said, “O king, you were watching, and a great image or a great statue is what you saw in your dream. The head was gold.” We find out later he says that speaks of the empire of Babylon. “The chest was of silver.” That is going to speak very clearly, when you read the whole thing together, of the Persian Empire. “The belly and the thighs are bronze.” That speaks of the Greek Empire. “The legs are partly iron and partly of clay.” That speaks of Rome.

The king said, “Yeah, that is exactly what I saw. I saw that statue. I saw that image. They were exactly that. They were gold, silver, bronze and clay. Exactly like you said. How did you know?”

Daniel said, “The God of Israel told me.” He went on in verse 4, “The part that really confused you, O king, you saw a stone that was cut without any human hands.” This, by the way, speaks of the kingdom of God and

Jesus the Messiah. He said, “You saw this stone coming out of nowhere. It was not cut with human hands.” In other words it is of divine origin. It is more than human. “This stone struck the statue or the image and all four of the empires crashed.”

Nebuchadnezzar, the wicked king, says, “That is exactly what I saw.”

They all were crushed together. That is a key phrase. Together. What we are going to find out later in Daniel 7 that their most wicked traits from all four of these empires are going to be manifest in the Antichrist kingdom. All four of these empires, the worst of them—their greatest strengths in evil—will be expressed in the final empire of man, the Antichrist Empire. The worst of the worst of history will come to light in one empire. They all come down together because there is this one stone that is more than human. It is made without hands.

This stone became a great mountain. That is the kingdom of God filling the whole earth, and the glory of God filling the earth. King Nebuchadnezzar is just awestruck by this, “That is exactly what I saw.”

Then fifty years later, Daniel sees the same truths, but not in a vision of a statue or a dream of a statue, but in a vision of the four beasts.

- C. The two legs represent the two divisions of the Roman Empire—the western (146 BC–AD 476) and the eastern divisions (AD 330–AD 1453). The two feet with ten toes are parallel to the ten horns in the Daniel 7 vision. They represent the ten-king confederation under the Antichrist (Dan. 2:41–42; 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).

⁴¹“You saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided...⁴²And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.” (Dan. 2:41–42)

- D. The stone that struck the image speaks of Jesus and His eternal kingdom (2:35, 44–45). The stone being cut without hands means that it has a divine origin. The stone will consume all the other kingdoms and shall stand forever (2:44). Jesus will do these kingdoms—break them into pieces—what they as a “composite” kingdom under the Antichrist did to others (Dan. 7:7, 19, 23; Ps. 2:9)

⁴⁴“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.” (Dan. 2:44–45)

IV. DANIEL’S VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS (DAN. 7:1-8)

- A. Daniel saw four winds stirring the Mediterranean Sea, bringing upheaval to the nations (7:1-3).

¹In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. ²Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven [angelic and demonic activity] were stirring up the Great Sea [Mediterranean]. ³And four great beasts [empires] came up from the sea, each different from the other.” (Dan. 7:1-3)

1. **The first year:** Belshazzar's reign over Babylon began in 553 BC. This was 15 years before Israel was freed from Babylon (538 BC). This vision gave Israel hope in the midst of their suffering as captives in Babylon. Daniel was about 70 years old when he had this vision.

Verse 1 begins, "In the first year of King Belshazzar." Nebuchadnezzar has died. Belshazzar is the king who came after him. Again, it is fifty years later. Nebuchadnezzar has been dead for a while. There is a new king.

2. **Daniel had a dream:** He had visions in his head while on his bed at night. He wrote down the dream, telling only the main facts.

Daniel had a dream. Notice he wrote down the dream telling the main facts. I tell people this all the time. They say, "Hey, I got a dream I want to share with you."

I say, "No, write it down."

They say, "No, I don't want to write it down."

I reply, "If you don't care enough to write it down, I don't care enough to listen to it." For real. Meaning if you are not convinced enough it is from God that you will take time to write it out, then I don't want to hear it. If it is God, you better write it down. If you are not convinced enough to write it, then I am not convinced enough to listen to it. When you do write it, you can write in full. Then when you share it with somebody, just tell the main facts, the main ideas. This is the principle that Daniel followed.

- B. **Great Sea:** Scripture describes the Mediterranean Sea as the Great Sea (Num. 34:6-7; Josh. 1:4; 9:1; 15:12, 47; 23:4). The empires that are highlighted in this vision include nations near the Mediterranean Sea—nations in the Middle East, Europe, and North Africa.

1. **Four winds of heaven:** These winds symbolize spiritual forces, both angelic and demonic, that stirred up the nations. This represents God's orchestration of history in appointing nations to rise and fall and to set the context for His kingdom purposes to come to pass.

In verse 2 he begins writing what he saw. "The four winds of heaven"—the winds of heaven speak of the angelic and the demonic realm—They are moving. There is a lot of angelic activity and a lot of demonic activity. They are stirring up—and the idea is—the nations by the great sea, the Mediterranean Sea. There is this heightened amount of demonic activity and angelic activity over the last 2500 years stirring up the nations around the Mediterranean Sea. That is where the drama is going to come to a culmination.

2. **Four great beasts:** Daniel saw four wild animals—each represented an ancient empire in the Mediterranean region, which would persecute Israel and caused great turmoil in the region.

Verse 3, "I saw four beasts, four wild animals." We know these beasts speak of four empires. "They came up from the sea," from the intense activity. God is moving, the devil is moving, men are sinning, people are obeying God, and people are resisting God. There is this total collision, a storm that unfolds over 2500 years of all the different components coming together.

- C. **First beast:** A lion with eagle's wings refers to the Babylonian Empire, 605–539 BC (7:4). The lion (Jer. 4:7; 49:19; 50:17, 44) and the eagle (Jer. 49:22; Lam. 4:19; Ezek. 17:3; Hab. 1:8) are both used in the Scripture to describe the Babylonian Empire.

4“The first [Babylon] was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.” (Dan. 7:4)

He describes the first beast in verse 4. It is Babylon. It is the nation that he is a part of, as he is still a captive. It is fifty years later. Nebuchadnezzar has long since died. There is a new king. He sees this as his own kingdom now. He is part of the king’s court. He is on the staff, on the presidential staff, so to speak. He is serving in the king’s court. He is talking about his own nation now. He has undoubtedly come to have some kind of investment in that nation after fifty years, although his love is always Jerusalem and Israel. He said, “The first beast was like a lion.” It goes on to describe it. He is talking about the empire of Babylon. It is quite an accurate description. You can read those details on your own.

1. ***Like a lion***: This speaks of being strong, majestic, and courageous.
2. ***Had eagle’s wings***: This speaks of military speed.
3. ***Its wings were plucked off***: This speaks of being humbled.
4. ***A man’s heart was given to it***: This speaks of being domesticated.
5. ***It was made to stand***: This speaks of standing like a man, instead of like a lion, which cannot attack or devour others when standing on two feet.
6. The reference to the wings being plucked off, being made to stand on two feet like a man, and being given a man’s heart, is reflected in Nebuchadnezzar’s experience in Daniel 4.

D. ***Second beast***: A bear with ribs in its mouth refers to the Persian Empire, 539–331 BC (7:5).

5“Another beast [Medo-Persia], a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’” (Dan. 7:5)

The second beast, in verse 5, was like a bear. That spoke of the Persian Empire. Again, the bear, the wild beast, is parallel to the chest of silver in the statue fifty years earlier. It is the Persians. I am going to leave you the details to read on your own. The details of these visions are quite interesting. They are very accurate historically.

1. ***A bear***: Medo-Persia was like a fierce bear, with slow but steady military progress. The bear, after the lion, was the second most dreaded predator at that time in that region. The bear was larger and more cumbersome than the lion, yet it had great strength.
2. ***One side***: It was raised up on one side. This speaks of the Persian dominance over Media.
 - a. The beast raised on one side represented the greater strength of Persia; it coincides with the two-horned ram of Daniel 8, whose one horn was larger than the other.
 - b. In 550 BC, Cyrus the Great conquered the Medes, and Persia took control of the empire.
3. ***Three ribs***: The three ribs in its mouth represented the three major kingdoms it conquered as it rose to power: Lydia (546 BC), Babylon (539 BC), and Egypt (525 BC).

4. **Arise, devour much flesh:** God mandated that Persia should arise and conquer more nations.
- E. **Third beast:** A leopard with four wings refers to the Greek Empire, 331–146 BC (7:6).

⁶“I looked, and there was another [Greece], like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.” (Dan. 7:6)

The third beast is a leopard. This speaks of Alexander the Great’s empire of Greece. Although like a leopard, on its back were “four wings.” Some of you know of Alexander the Great. One account claimed that he wept because he conquered the whole world and had no one else to conquer. Of course that is an exaggeration, but that is how the story goes. He died at age thirty-two. He became king at twenty-one and conquered so much of Europe and Asia in a twelve-year period of time so rapidly. It is staggering. Even historians to this day say, “Who else conquered that amount of territory that fast?”

This was still a couple hundred years ahead of time of Daniel’s life. He said, “There is going to be a king like a leopard. He has like wings on his back. He is going to go at such speed.” A couple hundred years later as this was happening, there are historical accounts where Alexander the Great actually heard these prophecies from Daniel, the Jewish prophet who had died a couple hundred years earlier. He heard there was a prophet from Israel who talked about him. I am sure he was very excited about these prophecies about him. Tradition or history says it. You find it in the accounts of history. Nobody knows for sure how true it is.

1. **Like a leopard:** Greece was fierce, agile, fast, and cunning. The leopard is known for its quickness and its cunning.
2. **Four wings:** Having four wings of a bird speaks of its amazing speed in military conquest.
3. **Four heads:** After the death of Alexander the Great, four of his generals divided up his kingdom into four separate kingdoms. This parallels the four notable horns of Daniel 8:8.

Notice in verse 6, this beast, this leopard, had four heads. That is very important. Circle the four heads and say, “Okay, I need to pay attention to those four heads.”

The reason that is important is because after Alexander the Great died at age thirty-two. He conquered so much of Europe, the Middle East and Asia in such speed and then suddenly died. What happened is that his four generals—the four heads—divided up his vast empire after his death. That is exactly what happened in history. Why do we really care about that? It happened hundreds of years ago. Here is why we care. Later on we find in chapter 8:9 that the Antichrist comes out of one of those four parts of the kingdom of Alexander. We care about these four divisions because out of one of them, the area of Syria, the Antichrist comes from that part of Alexander’s kingdom. We know the Antichrist has heritage related to that part of the world.

Some people ask, “Is the Antichrist Jewish? Is he Islamic? Is he Western European? What is he?” There are indications of the Antichrist having heritage in all of those different backgrounds. Daniel sees Alexander the Great’s kingdom divided into four units, and we find out later in chapter 8, in the next vision, that the Antichrist comes from the unit that is related to the nation of Syria, close to that geographically, out of that region. Again, there are indications that he comes out of other parts of Europe, and there are indications of him having a Jewish heritage. Someone might ask, “Which is it?” My guess is all of it is true. That he has a heritage where he is born in one nation, raised in another nation, educated in another nation, had his law practice in another nation, became a regional leader in another nation. Who knows? He may have heritage in a way that would be tying him to many different people groups and nations before it is over.

4. **Dominion:** This spoke of the Greek government and culture pervading the ancient world. The conquered nations were also won over to the Greek language and way of life.
- F. **Fourth Beast:** This refers to the Antichrist, who is foreshadowed by the Roman Empire (7:7-8). This beast has three stages—the *ancient empire* (146 BC–AD 1453); an end-time *confederation* made up of ten kings, and the Antichrist’s *dictatorship* ruling over the ten-nation confederation.
- ⁷**“Behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.” (Dan. 7:7)**

This first vision of Daniel 7 is mostly about the fourth beast. The main point that the angel is communicating to Daniel is about the fourth beast because it is the Antichrist Empire. The reason we want to study this fourth beast is because from this vision we are going to get a lot of information regarding how the Antichrist will be raised up and how he will begin to be recognizable on the world stage. The unbelievers will not believe it. You will appeal to this vision. They will say, “Whatever. Some Jewish prophet 2500 years ago saw beasts, and you are saying this most noble, powerful leader in the world is the Antichrist because of some cryptic vision of a Jewish prophet? You have to be kidding!”

For people who believe the prophetic scriptures, there is a tremendous amount of information here in verses 7-8. As a matter of fact, there are five major signs of the times in verse 8. We will look at it in a minute. Those who have prophetic understanding will be able to recognize different events, as they are emerging, from this very clear vision because we believe the prophetic scriptures. We understand them, and we know them. They are actually quite straightforward, once you are not intimidated by the symbolism. The symbolism is quite straightforward actually. The reason I say that is because the angel tells Daniel what the symbolism means. There is no guessing. When an angel tells you what the symbol means, and it is right there in the vision, hey, you got it. The main point of this entire vision of chapter 7, the first of the four visions, is the Antichrist Empire.

This fourth beast is very different from the other ones, very different from Babylon. Who came after Babylon? I am quizzing you. Persia. Who came after Persia? Greece. Who came after Greece? Rome. Right.

There are three stages to this fourth empire, Rome, which is the fourth beast. Three stages. Stage one is ancient Rome. Stage two of this fourth beast, this fourth empire, is yet future. We are looking for it. Meaning the body of Christ that is paying attention to the prophecies will see this one day. I do not know when, but they will see it. There will be ten kings in the Middle East and Europe that will form a confederation. It will be the most powerful confederation or unity of ten kings in history. These ten kings will be the second stage of this fourth beast. They will be powerful, but they will be thoroughly wicked in their hearts and in their plans. While it will look like there could not be a group of kings more wicked, there is yet a third stage to come. The Antichrist comes out of that context and takes over the ten kings. Before the Antichrist appears on the world stage, the ten kings will appear. The Antichrist will come up among them and then become their leader. Through a violent takeover, he will take over the ten kings.

As these things unfold, when the ten kings come together, the prophetic church will be able to say what is going to happen. Again, unbelievers are going to reply, “You have got to be kidding. This cryptic vision from 2500 years ago from a Jewish prophet, a beast? You are telling us these ten kings, the most powerful union, coalition, confederation of kings in history are somehow indescribably evil and the Antichrist is coming out of it?”

“Yes.” That will not go over very well at Thanksgiving dinner when you share that, if you are alive at that time.

Let's look at this fourth beast. There are three stages to this fourth empire, and the stages become quite clear when all the information is out. We are not going to put it all out tonight. I want you to get the grid for the three stages. As we unfold the three visions, Daniel 7, Daniel 8, Daniel 9, and then Daniel 10-12, you can compare them with Revelation 17. Again, many Bible teachers see this. This is not a new revelation or a new insight. This is in many, many commentaries by people who have taught the prophetic scriptures in the book of Daniel.

By the way, I always like to start every new semester by saying that if ever you hear something in this pulpit, any classroom, anywhere, not just here, anywhere, that you cannot see with your own eyes in your own Bible, do not accept it. Do not take an idea of what a Bible teacher says, "Hey, Mike Bickle says this or Allen Hood says this." If you cannot see it in your Bible with your own eyes, do not say it. Do not say, "Mike said," "Allen said," "Wes said." Say "The Bible says" or do not say it. Challenge everything you hear. Do it with humility, but challenge everything. When I lay out these three things, you should be thinking, "Ancient empire, confederation of ten kings, and then the third stage is a dictator. I want to see this with my own eyes." Good response. That is the response you want. Do not buy it. Challenge it until you see it. When you do challenge it, just do it with humility. Do it with a spirit of kindness and humility, but challenge everything.

That is not just here. That is wherever you are at all of your days. I challenge everything I hear. I do it in kindness, but even with my good friends here on the mission base, when they say something, I may say, "I don't see that. I think it is wrong." That is healthy conversation. It really is, because truth is never hurt by scrutiny. Never. It is only strengthened by scrutiny.

Let's look at this fourth empire, this fourth beast, that has three stages. Verse 7, "Behold, a fourth beast. It is dreadful and terrible. This fourth empire is exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth." Again, this corresponds with the iron in the statue back fifty years earlier in Daniel 2. This empire is devouring other empires, other nations. This empire is breaking nations into pieces. It tramples the residue of the nation that it conquers. It is up to no good. It wants world conquest. When it conquers a nation, it rapes the nation of all of its resources. It tramples it and uses its resources, its people, its gold, its oil, and all its natural resources in order to further its kingdom. It tramples the people that it conquered. The image I get instantly is Hitler. When the Nazi regime conquered an army, they trampled the people and stole the resources to promote the Nazi vision and regime.

It goes on to say at the very end of verse 7, "But this kingdom is different than the others." This is a very key phrase. It is different, different than all the others. That is mentioned four times, it is so important. Very few things are emphasized four times in a vision. Four times this idea is highlighted, that this fourth kingdom is very different. The angel wants us to understand this is a very critical point.

It had ten horns. What does that mean? In that statue it was ten toes of the legs. Here it is the ten horns on the fourth beast. Again, if this vision is new to you, with just a little bit of familiarity, within an hour you will get it, if you just look at it and compare a few ideas. There are only a few details to it. You will get the picture clearly. Do not be intimidated by the new information of this wild beast. There are only a couple points to it, and you will have it. I encourage people to get into small groups, talk to each other, compare it and kind of tease it out and debate it out a bit. An hour later you will have the four or five key points.

1. ***It had ten horns:*** A ten-nation confederation will align with the Antichrist. The ten end-time nations are symbolized here by ten horns; in Daniel 2 they are seen as ten toes (2:41-42; 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).

²⁴***"The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this [Rome's] kingdom."*** (Dan. 7:24)

¹²***"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings..."*** (Rev. 17:12)

Clearly they speak of this confederation of these ten kings at the end of the age. Some folks thought it was the European Union [known as the European Communities] in the seventies. I remember I was really into end-time prophecy in the seventies. At the university we were all studying it. There were ten nations in the European Communities. We thought, “Oh my goodness!” Now there are thirty or twenty-nine I think. There are eight or nine more that are applying, so there will be forty. So, “Okay, that did not work.” My theory is that the European Union will be one of the ten nations. It is not like all the nations that are there. I think there will be a unity. That is just a guess. That is an opinion. That is not a doctrine.

Daniel 7: 24, the angel says about these ten horns, “Hey Daniel, don’t be confused. They are ten kings. There is no mystery to it. They are going to arise out of this kingdom.” What kingdom? The Roman Empire. Out of the territory and the people groups of the ancient Roman Empire, there will be another kingdom that will arise made up of ten kings leading it. It is really clear. It will have a geographic proximity to the ancient Roman Empire, and it will have a correspondence to the people groups, the ethnicities of those nations of the ancient Roman Empire. Daniel 7:24, “These ten king will rise up out of this kingdom,” meaning the ancient Roman Empire, in approximately the same geographic area, and representing approximately the same people groups. There will be some variance, but that will give you some idea of who it is.

In Revelation 17, John the apostle saw the same thing Daniel saw. Ten horns. The same thing Daniel saw. The angel tells John in the book of Revelation the same thing the angel told Daniel 500 years earlier.

2. **Dreadful and terrible:** Daniel was deeply troubled by the terror of this beast (7:15, 28). If we are not troubled by what Daniel shared about the Antichrist, then it means that we have not yet understood what he saw. Iron teeth speak of the ability to devour anything—unstoppable. The huge, massive teeth emphasize its overwhelmingly destructive power.

Notice this empire is dreadful and terrible. We find out, and I will emphasize this in the future sessions, right here in Daniel 7:15 and then in verse 28, that we will look at next week as well, Daniel responds and says, “I was so deeply troubled by this fourth beast.” He is talking about something far more serious than the Roman Empire. He said it was terrible. He said that he was grieved by it. He was deeply troubled by this fourth beast how terrible, how dreadful it was.

Beloved, there is an empire coming. First the ten kings will be dreadful and terrible. That is only stage two. In the ultimate stage, stage three, the dictatorship of the Antichrist, will be a global empire. He will not conquer all the nations of the world, by the way. He will **influence** all the nations, but he will **not conquer** them all. There will be nations resisting him to the end. This idea that he will have an influence and even a presence in all the nations does not mean he will have a dominance of all the nations. He does not. He wants to, but he comes up short. Jesus kills him before he actually achieves what he is after. It is a global empire, though again it is not a domination of all 200 nations of the earth. There are about 200 nations in the earth right now according to the United Nations. Approximately 200.

Daniel saw something about the third stage of this fourth beast, the Antichrist Empire, which was so troubling. If we are not troubled by the revelation of the Antichrist in these visions, that means we have not seen what Daniel saw. Obviously we have not. I ask the Holy Spirit, “Let me see and feel what Daniel saw and what Daniel felt.”

Right now the Antichrist, the doctrine of the literal Antichrist in much of the body of Christ is kind of an eccentric, extreme teaching. It is extreme, trust me, but it is real. They think that is not really practical. Somebody far more powerful than Adolf Hitler is going to emerge on the world scene. Daniel said, “It is dreadful beyond anything I have ever seen.”

There is a spirit of stupor on the church right now about the Antichrist. It is like, “It does not really matter. It is not really practical.” I do not know when he will emerge, but I know one thing. We are getting closer to the time that he will. There are a number of things that are coming into place. Nobody knows the day or the hour, but it is not too early to equip your children or your grandchildren if you are my age. It is not too early to equip the next generation with what the Bible says about this most dreadful hour of human history in which the glory of God and the purity of the church and the salvation of Israel will happen at the same time.

The enemy, Satan, wants the church unaware of these visions so that they get deceived because this man will initially appear noble, powerful, helpful, beneficial, benevolent. He wants the church deceived. And if they are not deceived, he wants them offended, “How could God let a man like this rise up in power?” They are not informed of what the Bible says about the storyline. Others will be fearful, just overcome with fear because they do not get the purpose of God. They do not get the certain victory of the saints. They do not see the glory that will come out of it.

We need to understand what God says about this man and this empire in that time in history, whether it is in your generation or the next one or the next one after that, but it really might be in your generation or the generation of your children.

3. ***Trampling the residue with its feet:*** This speaks of continuing to trample a nation when it has already been defeated. The Antichrist will show no mercy toward those he conquers; he will be ruthless. He will trample everything not initially destroyed in the hostile military takeover.
4. ***It was different:*** The Antichrist’s empire will be energized by demonic power (Rev. 13:2). It will function in a new order of evil, cruelty, and supernatural power. Daniel emphasized four times that the Antichrist is different from all other kingdoms (7:7, 19, 23, 24).

¹⁹“...***the fourth beast, which was different from all the others...***” (Dan. 7:19)

²***The dragon [Satan] gave him [Antichrist] his power, his throne, and great authority. ¹³He performs great signs...he even makes fire come down from heaven (Rev. 13:2, 13)***

Four times he says that this empire is different. This will be totally unique and unprecedented. Nothing in history will have equipped us for the measure of evil, the measure of cruelty, and the measure of demonic, supernatural power of this kingdom. It will be beyond any other example in history. It is completely different in that regard. Meaning it is of another order, a new order of evil, a new order of supernatural power, far beyond Adolf Hitler, far beyond ancient Rome, far beyond even the ten kings that will be dreadful and terrible first, but there will something more dreadful that will come after them. They may function for a few years before the Antichrist emerges out of them. We do not know.

Revelation 13 tells us one reason why this empire will be so different. Look at Revelation 13:2, “Satan gave the Antichrist his power, his throne, and his authority.” A man with a human body on the earth will have the throne, the authority of Satan, and the supernatural-miracles-dimension realm associated with having command over the entire demonic realm. Could you imagine if Adolf Hitler would have had authority over the demonic realm and they had obeyed him, what he would have done to the nation of Israel, what he would have done to the rest of Europe and the world? The reason I focus on Adolf Hitler is because he is to me the clearest picture in modern history of the wickedness of this man. This man will be far more sophisticated, far more powerful militarily as well as having human resources of the numbers of armies and nations unified with him,

the amount of intellectual power and resource. Then he will have a supernatural dimension far beyond any leader of history.

Verse 13, “There will be great miracles that will happen and great signs.” Even the elect, Jesus said, will look at them and they will say, “It must be God.” He will function in a new order of evil, cruelty and supernatural power.

Look at the end of paragraph four. The Antichrist and his empire will be different from all others Daniel emphasized this four times. It is remarkable when a detail of a prophetic vision is mentioned four times; it has the highest emphasis of its importance. It is like the Lord is saying, “I want you to know this man will be of another order that you cannot comprehend.”

The reason we care about this is not that we would be afraid, but that we would be girded, I am talking about the body of Christ that will be alive on the earth when this happens. It may be you. It may not be you. It may be the generation after you. It may be the one after that. I do not know. I believe we are racing towards that time. It is my personal belief that there are people alive on the earth right now that will actually see this. It is not a prophecy. It is an opinion. When I look at the signs of the times, the biblical signs of the times, to me I think it is reasonable to believe there are people on the earth who will actually see this. I do not know that I will in my lifetime, but I believe at least some people on the earth now will see it. That is an opinion. That is not a prophecy. If that is true, or even close to true, if it is just a little after, it is time for the body of Christ to grasp this so we see the sovereignty of God and the power of God in the midst, so that we are not offended that God lets a man this evil rise to that sort of power.

Many believers will be offended by this. They will say, “How could a God of love let this happen?” The answer is to study the whole storyline, get the whole picture ahead of time, so that you will be prepared in your mind to see the wisdom and power of God in the whole thing. To figure it out in flight when all this horror is happening, to try to figure it out then will be hard to do because objectivity will be blurred.

G. While focusing on the ten horns, he saw a little horn (7:8).

⁸“I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.” (Dan. 7:8)

While focusing on the ten horns he saw a little horn. He sees the ten horns, the ten kings and says, “Wait, there is something more peculiar than the ten kings. There is another king, and he starts off as a little horn.” Let’s read in verse 8.

There are five key points in verse 8 that are signs of the times. You read it, and you might go, “Really?” Yes, really. There are five very significant events that are going to happen, and all are mentioned right here in verse 8. They will be signs of the times that the prophetic church, if they understand this vision, will see emerge. These five things are confirmed a number of other times in the book of Daniel, in Zechariah, in Revelation.

Let’s read verse 8. “I was considering the horns”—the ten horns, the ten kings—“then there was another horn, a little one.” That is point one. “He comes up among them.” There is going to be a little leader, “little” meaning a man with a regional authority or political influence. He will not be a world leader. He will start off as a regional leader who will be accepted by the ten kings. He will come up among them. He will have unusual favor. There is coming a day when a regional leader in the Middle East or Europe will find unusual favor with the ten kings. He will come up among them. He will be accepted as their peer. It will be distinguishable. It will be recognizable when this happens.

“Before this man three of the first horns”—the first kings—“will be plucked up by the roots.” I will fast-forward; this man is going to have three of those ten kings, those powerful kings, assassinated and murdered. It will be a global story. Can you imagine when a major leader in the world is assassinated? Can you imagine three of them at one time being killed? It is not just three kings. It is three of the ten from the powerbase. They are killed by one man, this new guy who is rising up. The other seven kings will look at him, and we do not know all that happens, but we know they give their authority to him and make him the leader over all of them.

This man, “this little horn has eyes of a man.” That talks about his supernatural intelligence. He is going to have intelligence far beyond human ability, but it will be intelligence that amazes humans. He will come up with ideas that will really resonate with the multitudes of the earth. They will respond, “Wow, your insight is really what we are crying out for. It is the very things we want and long for.” He will have eyes of a man. He will have insight that seems beneficial, amazing, and exciting to the human population. “He will have a mouth speaking pompous words.” Let’s just take a minute. I am out of time, but I am going to take another three or four minutes on this.

1. **Little horn:** It speaks of a political leader who starts out “little,” or with a small sphere of authority and influence, as a seemingly insignificant regional leader. The fact that the little horn is mentioned four times (7:8, 11, 20, 21) tells us how important this detail is.

Number one. Key sign number one. There will be a little horn. He will be a regional leader. He will have a small sphere of authority to start with. He will not start off as a king of a nation. He will start off as a regional leader or maybe a small nation. He will not be a big player when he starts.

- a. The little horn is the Beast of Revelation and the man of sin in Paul’s teaching (2 Thes. 2:3). He is also the wicked prince who will take away the sacrifice in the temple (8:11; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Mt. 24:15). The little horn of Daniel 7 is the same little horn of Daniel 8:9 and is the despicable person of Daniel 11:21.
- b. Hitler is an example from recent history of a leader who started out as a “little horn,” an insignificant regional leader who became a “big horn,” a major world leader. In 1928 he ran for political office in Germany and received only 2% of the vote. Then, within five years, he became chancellor of Germany, in 1933. His rise to power came suddenly.

Again, Adolf Hitler is an example of this kind of thing. You know Adolf Hitler was an insignificant political leader in Germany. He started the Nazi Germany party. In 1928, five years before he was the chancellor, the leader of the nation, in the popular elections he only got two percent of the vote. The merchants, the wealthy men and women in the nation of Germany and the top political leaders thought he was a kook. They thought he was crazy. They said, “He is eccentric, out of control. He is nobody to take seriously.” When they put him in power the far more powerful leaders of Germany said, “We will put him in power because we need him for this one reason: we know we can control him.”

Within thirty days, he declared a police state, marshal law, and killed a number of the top leaders. He had them killed. He silenced the newspapers, instituted marshal law, made Germany a police state within thirty days of being in power, and killed those men. Nobody could report it because the newspapers could not tell the story. He was in control just like that! A little insignificant political leader of Germany was now the leader of the nation overnight.

Sign of the times number one: this man will start off as a regional leader. He will not be recognizable at that point. When he is accepted by the ten kings who are the real powerbase in the nations, that will be a remarkable reality.

2. **Eyes like a man:** In this horn were eyes like a man, which speaks of great intelligence.

Number two. He will have supernatural intelligence. He will have intelligence that amazes and moves men. He will meet the needs that men are crying out for. This will give him great credibility. He will have unusual skills, way beyond everyone else. That will become apparent once he gets into power.

3. **Mouth speaking pompous words:** The Antichrist will speak pompous, arrogant words. These arrogant words will create fear (threats) and/or excitement (false promises) in the nations. His arrogant words are emphasized four times in this chapter (7:8, 11, 20, 25).

⁸***“In this horn [was]...a mouth speaking pompous words.” (Dan. 7:8)***

Number three. He will have a mouth speaking pompous words. That is not just that he will boast and say, “Am I not amazing?” It is much, much more sophisticated than that.

4. He shall speak blasphemies against the true God (11:36). He will claim things about himself that are shocking, as he speaks with terrible boldness against God (7:8, 11, 20, 25; 2 Thes. 2:4). He shall speak of “great things”—things so unique and extraordinary, as well as new things never heard of before (Rev. 13:5).

³⁶***“The king...shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods.” (Dan. 11:36)***

⁵***He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies...⁶he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle... (Rev. 13:5-6)***

Revelation 13:5 says, “He will have a mouth that will speak great things.” He will proclaim things. Hitler did the same thing. Hitler is not the perfect picture, but Hitler is the best picture I know of in modern history. Hitler came on the scene and spoke of great things to the oppressed nation of Germany. He spoke of the destiny. He spoke of a new order. He spoke of the greatness. He spoke of a nationwide highway program, the recovery of the economy, everybody having food, everyone having a job. He had many great plans of where the nation would be going, their destiny and their superiority to everyone else. The nation was moved by the great things he said. This man will speak far greater unusual, extraordinary plans. It is not just that he will say, “Am I not amazing?” He will speak things that are remarkable and will move the masses.

5. **Three horns plucked out:** Three of the first horns (kings) will be plucked out by the roots or killed in a violent overthrow led by the Antichrist. This is part of how he will seize control of the ten-nation confederation and enter the world stage as a leader. When these three world leaders are killed, the Church will understand it as a prophetic sign of the times.

⁸***“There was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots.” (Dan. 7:8)***

This is mentioned three times. He will kill three of those kings. Three times in Daniel 7 this is highlighted. I do not think we can understand how dramatic this will be. The ten top leaders will have a superiority beyond any other block of leaders in the world. To have one of them assassinated would be such world news. Three of them

assassinated in a very short period of time all by one man, a man that was in the midst with them would be astounding. Again, that is what Hitler did on a smaller stage within the political sphere of Germany. He did that. He killed a number of the top leaders. The other leaders just kind of looked at it and went, “Huh.”

It will be pretty clear who this man is even at this level. There will be a regional leader with unusual intelligence who will have the most powerful speaking gift. He will speak great things, pompous things, of the destiny and the grandeur of man and where things are going. He will kill three of the top leaders of the earth. Instead of them killing him, those three will be replaced, and then those ten will say, “Would you now be our leader over us?” That is a remarkable reality. This storyline could not possibly be true in the human sense because the world would never put up with this. This man has a unique power, a unique speaking ability, a unique supernatural dimension, and unique intelligence. It will unfold just like Daniel said.

6. **Coming up among them:** The Antichrist will first come up “among them” (7:8) as a peer; then he will “arise after them” (7:24) and seize control of the ten-nation confederation.

He will come up among them. First he will start off as a peer. This regional leader will be accepted in the midst with them.

V. THREE STAGES OF THE FOURTH BEAST

Here I just develop a little bit more of the three stages of this fourth beast so you can get familiar with it a little bit more. I gave you a little bit more information on that.

- A. This beast has three stages: the *ancient empire* (146 BC–AD 1453); the end-time *confederation* made up of ten kings, and the Antichrist’s *dictatorship* ruling over the ten-nation confederation.
- B. **Ancient Roman Empire:** This includes the western (146 BC–AD 476) and eastern (AD 330–1453) divisions of the empire. The Eastern Roman Empire, also called the Byzantine Empire, lasted for 1,000 years after the fall of Rome and the Western Roman Empire. The eastern division was started either by Diocletian in AD 285 or Constantine in AD 330, when the capital transferred from Rome to Byzantium, later known as Constantinople and Nova Roma (New Rome), and today as Istanbul in Turkey. It was the most powerful economic, cultural, and military force in Europe at the time.
 1. The Roman Empire did not end in AD 476, but continued until 1453 in its eastern division; from this we see that the Antichrist’s empire may have historic roots in Islamic nations. The eastern Roman Empire covered part of the Middle East. In 1453, the Eastern Roman Empire fell to the Ottoman Empire, with its dominant Islamic rule and culture.
 2. The Antichrist may come from the geographic territory associated with the eastern division of the Roman Empire (8:9). This overlaps with the region where Antiochus ruled the Seleucid Empire—the overlap includes Syria and parts of Turkey and Babylon (Iraq), etc.
- C. **Ten-nation confederation:** An end-time empire will arise that will initially be under ten kings geographically and ethnically; it will cover geographic areas that include parts of the eastern and western divisions of the ancient Roman Empire.

²⁴*“The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom.” (Dan. 7:24)*

¹²“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...¹⁷ and to give their kingdom to the beast...”
(Rev. 17:12-17)

- D. **The dictatorship of the Antichrist:** The Antichrist will “arise after” the ten-nation confederation is in power. He will arise to subdue or remove three kings (7:24), leading a violent overthrow of the government to seize control of the ten-nation confederation by having three of the kings killed.

²⁴“...and another [Antichrist] shall rise after them [the 10 kings]; he shall be different...”
(Dan. 7:24)

¹²“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...¹⁷ God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast...” (Rev. 17:12-17)

I want to encourage you not to be intimidated by these visions. Meaning, don't look at them and think, “They are just too confusing.” They really are not. There are really only ten or twelve pieces of information. You will have it clearly. Four empires. What are the four empires? Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome. The Roman Empire has three stages. Stage one is ancient Roman Empire, stage two is ten kings, and stage three is the Antichrist dictatorship. You got it. Three or four more facts and you are going to have the storyline laid out. You already got it. You guys are amazing! You are end-time Bible teachers. Actually I am not even joking. Only for this reason: we are all called to disciple people. We open the Bible and we can share this one-on-one over coffee with friends. It is not out of your reach. This is understandable. It really is.

Amen. I am going to shift gears. We are going to go back to where we were after the first class because it really is the same subject. You may think, “How could we go from the Antichrist back to that?” Because this teaching about the Antichrist is about spiritual warfare and strongholds. Beloved, we are the Lord's beloved. The body of Christ is the darling of God's heart. God is orchestrating the plans of the nations that His people would walk in the glory of God. No matter how terrible it gets in evil, there will be a corresponding dimension of glory and power in the midst of the church. I am going to ask folks to come who would like ministry in breaking strongholds in our thinking and over our heart.