Praise be to the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the previous chapters *(1–6)*, we saw narratives largely describing the experiences of the saints, which focused more on historical events than prophetic visions. However, from Chapter 7 onward, Daniel is shown visions concerning events that will take place in the end times. As we read:

> *Daniel 7:1-8 (ESV):*
> “In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matters.”
> “2 Daniel declared, ‘I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.'”
> “3 And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.'”
> “4 The first was like a lion and had eagle’s wings. I watched until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a human mind was given to it.'”
> “5 And behold, another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh.'”

> “6 After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. The beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.'”
> “7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and strong exceedingly, with large iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the remainder with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.'”
> “8 I considered the horns, and behold, another horn came up among them, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up. And behold, eyes like the eyes of a man were in it, and a mouth speaking great things.”

Historical and Theological Interpretation

When we reflect on Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar saw the statue representing four successive kingdoms that would rule the world until the Most High (Jesus Christ) takes over all earthly dominions. Daniel gave an interpretation:

- The first kingdom was Babylon.
- The second: Media-Persia.
- The third: Greece.
- The fourth: Rome.

This pattern is repeated in Chapter 7, with more detail about the succession and characteristics of the four beasts.

The Four Beasts:

- Origin from the sea: In biblical symbolism, the sea represents the masses of humanity or populous gatherings (Revelation 17:15, ESV). Thus, these kingdoms rise from among people.
- These beasts correspond to the vision in Revelation 13:1-2 (ESV) where John sees a beast from the sea with seven heads and ten horns—the same kingdoms represented collectively here, unified in symbolic form.

THE FIRST BEAST: Lion with Eagle's Wings

This represents Babylon, the first empire that conquered Israel and led them into exile. The lion imagery aligns with Jeremiah 4:5-6 (ESV), which compares Babylon to a lion that destroys nations swiftly. The wings symbolize the speed and efficiency of Babylon's conquest:

> *Habakkuk 1:6-8 (ESV):*
> "For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own... Their horses are swifter than

> leopards, more fierce than wolves of the evening; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour.”

Thus, the lion-like beast reflects Babylon’s swift rise and conquests, which would later be replaced by a stronger empire.

THE SECOND BEAST: Bear

This represents Media-Persia, which rose from the combination of the Medes and Persians to overthrow Babylon. The raised side indicates Persia’s predominance. The three ribs in the bear’s mouth symbolize three conquered kingdoms: Lydia, Egypt, and Babylon.

> *Isaiah 13:15-19 (ESV) prophesied the destruction of Babylon even before Media-Persia’s rise:*
> “Every one found will be thrust through, and every one captured will fall by the sword... I will stir up the Medes against them...”

Media-Persia expanded over a vast territory from India to Ethiopia, as noted in Esther 1:1 (ESV), demonstrating the fulfillment of this prophecy.

THE THIRD BEAST: Leopard with Four Wings and Four Heads

This represents Greece, rising after Alexander the Great overthrew Media-Persia. The leopard's swiftness mirrors Alexander's rapid military campaigns, successfully conquering much of the known world in just 12 years. After his death at 32, his empire was divided among four generals, symbolized by the four heads: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.

THE FOURTH BEAST: Dreadful Beast with Iron Teeth and Ten Horns

This is Rome, corresponding to the iron legs in Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Daniel 2). The iron teeth signify power to crush and destroy. The ten horns represent ten kingdoms formed after the division of Western Rome in AD 476:

1. Alemanni – modern Germany
2. Franks – France
3. Burgundians – Switzerland

4. Visigoths – Spain
5. Lombards – Italy
6. Anglo-Saxons – England
7. Suevi – Portugal
8. Vandals – North Africa
9. Ostrogoths – Italy
10. Heruli – Italy

A little horn rises later, overthrowing three horns, symbolizing the Papacy, which gains temporal and spiritual influence, speaking “great things” and acting in ways opposed to God (Daniel 7:20-21, 25).

> *1 John 2:18 (ESV):*
> “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, so we know it is the last hour.”

The Bible uses the period of “time, times, and half a time” (3.5 years) in Daniel 7:25 to describe the tribulation under the final Antichrist. This historical analysis aligns with the rise of the Papacy after the fall of Western Rome, overthrowing three

kingdoms: Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Heruli.

THE FINAL VISION: The Ancient of Days and Judgment

> *Daniel 7:9-10 (ESV) describes God's judgment:*
> "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; thousands upon thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened."

This emphasizes that God alone is sovereign, holding the final judgment over all human empires and individuals. Every life is recorded in His books, reflecting the eternal accountability of humanity.

> *Daniel 7:27 (ESV):*
> "And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the

> people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

2 Peter 1:10 (ESV) reminds believers to remain steadfast in faith: *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”*

Conclusion

The vision in Daniel 7 provides a prophetic roadmap of earthly kingdoms, their rise and fall, and the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, who will reign eternally with His saints.

Amen!

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