

Daniel 7:1-12. *The dream that freaked Daniel*. Around 553BC,¹⁹ Daniel had a scary dream, the substance of which he wrote down. Here's how he related it—

Before me were winds of heaven churning up the great sea—four quite different beasts rose up from the waters. The first was a lion with eagle's wings. As I watched, the wings were torn off and it stood on two feet like a human, and the heart of a human was given to it.

The second beast looked like a bear; in its mouth were three ribs. It was told—
"Get up and eat your fill of flesh."

The third beast looked like a leopard, but it had four wings like a bird, and four heads. It was given authority to rule.

The fourth beast was the most terrifying. Powerful, it had large iron teeth, crushing and devouring victims and trampling anyone who was left. And, it had ten horns!

Then, while I was thinking about the horns, there appeared another horn, smaller which in turn uprooted three of the ten horns. This horn had the eyes of a human and spoke quite powerfully—

As I watched all this, thrones were set in place and the **Lord God Himself**²⁰ sat down. His clothing was white as snow; His hair white like wool. His throne had wheels, all ablaze. A river of fire flowed down from Him. Thousands & thousands stood before

DANIEL 7:1-12

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.

²Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.

³Four 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. ¹⁰A 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.)

¹⁹Around 553BC; in other words, the events described in this chapter precede events in chapter 5.

²⁰Or "the Ancient One" (NAB, NRSV, NLT), although the traditional expression is retained in the NET translation because it is familiar to many readers. Cf. TEV "One who had been living for ever"; CEV "the Eternal God."

Him. The court began and the books were opened.

I continued to watch because of the great words the horn was speaking. As I looked, the beast was killed and its body thrown into the blazing fire! Note: the other three had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for awhile.

Q If you had had Daniel's dream, what would have scared you the most?

Q What is your interpretation of his vision? Does it matter, given verses 16ff?

Q To what extent should these images be taken literally?

Daniel 7:13-15. *Seeking the answer from the Ancient of Days*. As I continued to look at what was happening in my dream, before me was one like a son of man [Aramaic, *enosh*, not *ben adam*]—coming not from earth, but with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All peoples, nations, and every language group worshiped Him. His dominion is everlasting—it will not pass away, and His kingdom is one never to be destroyed.

This freaked me out. As these visions passed through my mind, I was troubled; I

was disturbed. So I approached one of those standing there. I asked him the true meaning of all these images and action. So, he told me. His interpretation was insightful.

Q So is the "son of man" here the Christ? Evidence supporting this interpretation? Evidence contradicting this interpretation? Paradox or inconsistency?

Q Did the Christ's kingdom ever get destroyed? Remnant construct.

Q Why was Daniel "troubled in spirit" and "disturbed" by what he observed?

DANIEL 7:13-15

"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. ¹⁴He 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.

¹⁵"I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. ¹⁶I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this.

"So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things:

Daniel 7:17-28. *God's messenger provides the answer.* The angel interpreted —

Four kingdoms will rise. But those set apart by the Most High will receive the kingdom, and possess it forever. Yes, that's what I said — forever & ever.

But I wanted to know more about the fourth kingdom—the fourth beast was unique and terrifying. Iron teeth and bronze claws will do that to you. And, what about the ten horns on its head? And the other horn that came up, the one that was more imposing than the other horns. After all, it had eyes and a mouth that spoke powerfully. This horn was defeating those set apart by the Most High, and then the time came when they possessed the kingdom! What's up with that?!!

The messenger continued—the ten horns are ten kings coming from this beast's kingdom. But after them, another king will arise—different than the others, who will subdue the earlier kings. He will speak against the Most High, and oppress those who serve Him. He will try to change the law and the times. The servants of the Most High will be handed over to him for a while, two and a half years.

BUT, he continued, the court will convene, and his power will not only be relinquished, he will be completely destroyed, forever. Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the set-aside servants of the Most High. His kingdom will not only be everlasting, all rulers will worship and obey Him.

Well, that's that. I was deeply troubled by my thoughts—my face turned pale, but I kept this all to myself until this writing.

Q From where did Daniel seek meaning to his vision? So what?

Q So what are some attributes of the horn which comes after the ten?

Q How long will the set aside servants of the Most High be suppressed by this horn?

Q Who wins? Why? Who gets to rule earth according to the angel's analysis?

DANIEL 7:16-28

The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.'

¹⁹ "Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws--the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. ²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

²³ "He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time [or *for a year, two years and half a year.*]

²⁶ "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

²⁸ "This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself."