Daniel Chapter 7:1-8

Sources: Chuck Smith
NKJV Study Bible

Scene Set Up:

This chapter of Daniel is one of the most important in the entire OT, It's an essential guide to biblical prophecy.
Moreover, the vision of the Son of Man is the centerpiece of OT revelation concerning the Messiah. The Aramaic section of Daniel begins in chapter 2 with Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the colossus (any statue of gigantic size) and ends at the end of chapter 7.

One reason for repeating the similar information in chapter 2 and 7 is that chapter 2 presents the world kingdoms from a gentile perspective, while chapter 7 views the Gentile empires from the perspective of the Jewish people.
Another reason for the repetition is to confirm the certainty of the predictions.

As Joseph said in Genesis 41:32
Pharaoh's dreams were repeated because "the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass".

We see this a lot, and the repetitiveness in the Bible always seems to mean the Lord our God wants to make understood the importance of a matter.

The vision was included to give hope to Israel in captivity, informing the nation that life in the times of the Gentiles would get worse for God's covenant people, but ultimately the messianic kingdom would be established.

Vision of the Four Beasts

Read Daniel 7:1-8

We digress in time back to the first year Belshazzar's reign.

Daniel 7:1
1 In 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.

Explanation:
Here we see the prophet Daniel having having a dream / vision, and we know that these visions are reveled to the prophets by God, we can see from these examples in the verses below.

Reference Verse:
Numbers 12:6
6 Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I , the Lord , make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.

Reference Verse:
Amos 3:7
7 Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

Belshazzar became co-regent with Nabonidus (The father of Belshazzar) in 553 B.C. Assuming Daniel was about 15 when he was exiled to Babylon, he would have received this vision when he was approximately 67 years old.
The events described in this chapter precede those in Daniel chapter 5.

Daniel 7:2
2 Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.

Explanation:
The **four winds** stirring up **the great sea** refers to the convulsions (violent agitation or disturbance; commotion) of the Gentile nations in the times of the Gentiles.
The chapter later indicates that the sea represent “the earth” (**in verse 17**) from which the four kingdoms arise. Moreover, “the sea” is symbolic of gentile humanity in other biblical passages such as:

Reference Verse:
Isaiah 17:12-13
12 Woe to the multitude of many people Who make a noise like the roar of the seas, And to the rushing of nations That make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! 13 The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters; But God will rebuke them and they will flee far away, And be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

Reference Verse:

Isaiah 57:20

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

Reference Verse:

Revelation 13:1

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Reference Verse:

Revelation 17:15

15 Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

Daniel 7:3

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

Explanation:

The four great beasts represent the four nations previously identified in the vision of the colossus in:

Reference Verse:

Daniel 2:31-35

31 “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Explanation continued 2:

These four beasts are increasingly violent perhaps indicating the growing moral degeneracy (decline) of the respective kingdoms they represent.

Daniel 7:4

4 The first 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.

Explanation:

The lion with eagle's wings represents the Babylonian empire. The winged lion was a fitting symbol because some biblical passages represent Nebuchadnezzar as a Lion.

Reference Verse:

Jeremiah 4:7

7 The lion has come up from his thicket, And the destroyer of nations is on his way. He has gone forth from his place To make your land desolate. Your cities will be laid waste, Without inhabitant.

Reference Verse:

Jeremiah 49:19

19 "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the floodplain of the Jordan Against the dwelling place of the strong; But I will suddenly make him run away from her. And who is a chosen man that I may appoint over her? For who is like Me? Who will arraign Me? And who is that shepherd Who will withstand Me?"

Reference Verse:

Jeremiah 50:17

17 "Israel is like scattered sheep; The lions have driven him away. First the king of Assyria devoured him; Now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones."

Explanation continued 2:

And others as an eagle.

Why eagles wings?

Reference Verse:

Lamentations 4:19

19 Our pursuers were swifter Than the eagles of the heavens. They pursued us on the mountains And lay in wait for us in the wilderness.

Reference Verse:

Ezekiel 17:3

3 and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God : “A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, Full of feathers of various colors, Came to Lebanon And took from the cedar the highest branch.

Reference Verse:

Habakkuk 1:8

8 Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle that hastens to eat.

Reference Verse:

Deuteronomy 28:49

49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

Reference Verse:

II Samuel 1:23

23 “Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, And in their death they were not divided; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions.

Reference Verse:

Jeremiah 48:40

40 For thus says the Lord : “Behold, one shall fly like an eagle, And spread his wings over Moab.

Explanation continued 3:

The Babylonian empire used lions to represent itself, and statues with winged lions were common there. Perhaps the wings being plucked off represents Nebuchadnezzar's madness, and the lion's being set on its feet like a man indicates his restoration.

(V4) and a man's heart was given to it.

Reference Verse:

Daniel 4:16

16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him.

Reference Verse:

Daniel 4:34

And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.

Daniel 7:5

5 "And suddenly another beast, 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!'

Reference Verse:

Daniel 2:39

But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

Explanation:

The bear with three ribs in its mouth represents the Meds-Persian Empire and its three main conquests: Babylon (539 B.C.), Lydia (546 B.C.) and Egypt (525 B.C.)

Its lopsided nature expresses the Persian dominance in this joint empire.

Daniel 7:6
6 “After this I looked, and there was another, 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.

Explanation:
The leopard represents the greek empire. Its four wings refer to the great speed of Alexander’s (Alexander the Great) conquests and its four heads repent the four principle sections of the empire.

Which were:
Greece and Macedonia
Thrace and Asia Minor
Syria and Babylon
Egypt and Israel

Daniel 7:7
7 “After this I saw in the night visions, and 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.

Explanation:
The terrifying fourth beast represents the Roman Empire. It was different from the previous three because it was more powerful and had longer dominion.

Horns commonly represent Kings or kingdoms in Scripture

Reference Verse:
Psalms 132:17
17 There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.

Reference Verse:

Zechariah 1:18-19

18 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns. 19 And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these?” So he answered me, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”

Reference Verse:

Revelation 13:1

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Reference Verse:

Revelation 17:12

12 “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.

Explanation continued 2:

As the angel’s later interpretation plainly indicates

Reference Verse:

Daniel 7:24

24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

Daniel 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.

Explanation:

A little… horn represents a king who starts small in power but becomes dominant. The little horn’s eyes like a man’s indicates its shrewdness and its arrogant mouth points to its boasting blasphemous against God

Reference Verse:

Daniel 7:25

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, (God)
Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
And shall intend to change times and law.
Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

(1 time being 1 year, and times being 2 years and half a time being a half year) all totaling to 3 1/2 years

Explanation continued 2:

This little horn is a future world ruler who Scripture also calls “The prince to come”

Reference Verse:

Daniel 9:26

26 “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Explanation continued 3:

The king who “shall do according to his own will”

Reference Verse:

Daniel 11:36

36 “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

Explanation continued 4:

“The man of sin…the son of perdition”

Reference Verse:

II Thessalonians 2:3

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed,

the son of perdition **(Meaning: the future state of wicked , hell, utter destruction or ruin),**

Explanation continued 5:

“The beast”

Reference Verse:

Revelation 13:1-10

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Explanation continued 6:

And “Antichrist”

Reference Verse:

I John 2:18

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the

Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

In Closing Daniel chapter 7: 1-8

We now see when this vision took place, what the vision was and its meanings and we also found out what the four beasts were and or are…

As some of this prophecy has come to pass, and some still lies ahead for the world to still see. But remember we have not a soul of fear.

Reference Verse:

II Timothy 1:7

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

May our father in Heaven continue to bless us and keep His hand of protection on us forever and ever Amen.