



# REVEALER OF MYSTERIES

## the book of Daniel



### Lesson 7

### Daniel 7, 8, 9

The first half of Daniel (chapters 1-6) is comprised of 6 stories that encourage us with examples of people living out their faith in the midst of difficult circumstances. The second half of the book (chapters 7-12) outlines the scope of human history with some of the most thorough and detailed prophecies found in the whole Bible. In these three chapters Daniel has a dream, a vision, and a visitation from a high-ranking angel. Not bad for an old prophet!

**7** 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.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. <sup>3</sup> Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

<sup>28</sup> "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."

### DANIEL 7

Daniel 7 is a parallel chapter to chapter 2. They both discuss the same thing: worldly kingdom including and following those of Daniel's time. The difference is that chapter 2 shows these kingdoms from man's point of view, while chapter 7 is from God's perspective. Chapter 2 tends to show their temporary glory; chapter 7 reveals their inherent wickedness.

- Chronologically, when does this chapter take place, in relation to the previous chapters?
- Both chapters discuss 5 Kingdoms—what are they, and how are they portrayed in each chapter? (Fill out the chart below)

Kingdom	Chapter 2	Chapter 7
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

- What does this chapter add to the information we already had from chapter 2? (see verse 19-27)

#### NOTE:

The "little horn" which arises out of the ten and subdues three others appears to be the evil world leader otherwise known as the "anti-Christ." However, because the fourth kingdom is normally seen as the Roman Empire (which ended in 476 A.D.), this must be a re-emergence of that kingdom in another form, with some kind of 10-nation confederacy, and the "little horn" emerges from that.

## DANIEL 8

8 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. <sup>2</sup>In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. <sup>3</sup>I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. <sup>4</sup>I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

<sup>5</sup>As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground...



When does this chapter take place, chronologically?

One part of the chapter is fairly easy, and the other part of it is difficult. Let's take the easy part first ...

- Which kingdom does the ram represent? (verses 3-4, 20)
- Which does the goat represent? (verses 5-8, 21)

In verse 8 the leader of the "goat" kingdom (the "leopard" of chapter 7) is stopped at the "height of this power". Everyone agrees that this is a picture of **Alexander the Great of Macedon** (northern Greece), who, after conquering most of the known world, was said to have sat down and wept because there were no other kingdoms to conquer. At age 33, back in Babylon, he was suddenly stricken with a fever and died. This was followed by years on infighting, and finally four leaders emerged, each with a distinct portion of the kingdom: **Cassander** retained his hold on Macedonia and Greece; **Lysimachus** held Thrace and the western half of Asia Minor as far as Cappadocia and Phrygia; **Ptolemy** consolidated Palestine, Cilicia, and Cyprus with his Egyptian-Libyan domains; and **Seleucus** controlled the rest of Asia all the way to the Indus Valley. Remember, this prophecy was given around 535 B.C. – 200 years before the death of Alexander!

- **The "little horn"**. Verses 9-11 and 23-25 seem to be describing the same person. What are his attributes?

While this "little horn" seems remarkably similar to the "little horn" of chapter 7, scholars tend to see him as a precursor and foreshadower of the anti-Christ. He is usually identified with a ruler named Antiochus IV Epiphanes 8th in line of successors from Seleucus (see above). Antiochus hated the Jews, killing 40,000 at one time, and profaned the Temple in Jerusalem by looting it and erecting a pagan idol in the midst of the temple, to which he offered a sacrifice of pigs, which was forbidden under Jewish law. His activities are the fulfillment of the prophecies found in verses 11-13. Like Alexander, Antiochus died in Babylon. The 2300 days mentioned in verse 14 seem to refer to the period of Antiochus' intense persecution of the Jews from September 6, 171BC, to December 25, 165 BC.

### An Angelic Messenger

In both chapters 8 and 9 Daniels is aided by the angel Gabriel. Look up "Gabriel" in a Bible dictionary and record here what you find:

- What kind of an angel is Gabriel?
- What does his name mean?
- How often does he appear in the Bible?



## DANIEL 9

**9** In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom— <sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. <sup>3</sup> So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes...

<sup>21</sup> ...while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup> He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup> As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision...

Near the end of his life, Daniel happens to be reading the scroll of Jeremiah the prophet (who had died only a few decades earlier), and he is startled when he gets to **Jeremiah 25:11-13** and **29:10**. READ those passages and record why they catch Daniel's attention:

- Much of this chapter is devoted to Daniel's prayer. What kind of prayer is this?
- Why does Daniel confess, when it seems from what we know of him that he has done nothing wrong?
- How does verse 23 encourage us to pray, even if the answers are not the ones we immediately want?

Since this episode took place in 539 or 538 ("the first year of Darius"; on the identity of Darius the Mede, see ZPEB 2:29), less than fifty years had elapsed since the Fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar (587 B.C.) or the destruction of the temple in 586. The earliest possible terminus a quo for the seventy years of exile would be Daniel's own captivity in Babylon (604 B.C.). While 538 might be three or four years short of the full seventy, it was not too soon for Daniel to begin praying.

NIV Bible Commentary

**Verses 24-27** outline the remainder of human history, through the use of periods of "weeks" or seven years. There are three of these—record your observations of what is supposed to happen in each:

- Seven "sevens" or 49 years
- Sixty-two "sevens" or 434 years
- One "seven" or 7 years

Apparently the first two groups of "sevens" occur together. Using the Jewish calendar of 360 days, from the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah was exactly 483 years to the day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey—the "triumphal entry" in which he offered Himself to Israel as the Messiah, although they rejected him. Jesus was abandoned and crucified; the Anointed One was "cut off" and had "nothing" (verse 26).

What Old testament prophets could not foresee was the gap between the 69th "week" and the 70th. This "gap" is the church age in which we now live. The 70th week will be a seven-year period known as the "Tribulation". The last 3 and 1/2 years of that time will be much worse than the first half, and is referred to as the "Great Tribulation" because evil will be allowed to run free. However, the "end that is decreed" is sure and will be a swift and total punishment as Jesus returns to reign.