

Lessons 10-11 The Four Beasts: Chapter 7

STUDY GUIDE

1. With the vision of Chapter 2 in mind as a framework, we come now to the study of the first of Daniel's visions. We will spend two lessons on this chapter covering the facts and the revealed interpretation in the first lesson. Read 7:1-14 carefully to get an overall view of the vision itself. Do you see the three parts of it? Give a title to each of these parts.
2. Now work carefully through these verses to list all of the symbols. There are about 17 symbols to be dealt with here. It will help you greatly in dealing with these symbols to make a rough sketch of each of these symbols. After you have listed and drawn them, spend some time learning them.
3. We shall now turn to the interpretation which God gives us of this vision. Read vs. 15-28 to get the over-all impression. Now note carefully vs. 17 and 18 in which a brief summary interpretation is given. Note the two general statements that make up this summary. Relate each of these to your list of symbols showing what symbols are being interpreted. Do you see something added that isn't on your list?
4. A more detailed interpretation is given in answer to Daniel's question (v.19-22). What new material (not symbols) is added in vs. 21? What part of the vision is of special concern to Daniel? Work carefully through vs. 23-27 putting the various points of interpretation beside the appropriate symbol in your list.
5. Did you notice any new material in vs. 23-27, which seems to go beyond the actual interpretation of the symbols? Be sure to note any such material.

NOTES

We see a close relationship between the vision of chapter seven and the vision of chapter two. This vision also is divided into three parts: (1) the establishment of kingdoms and rulers in the ages to come, (2) God enters and destroys the rein of the beast, and (3) coming of the Son of Man who is given dominion over the earth and gives it to the saints.

Again we turn to the symbols of the chapter to gain the facts:

1. lion with wings of an eagle (vs.4)
 - a) wings clipped
 - b) stands like a man
 - c) heart like a man
2. bear (vs.5)
 - a) raised up on one side
 - b) three ribs in its mouth
 - c) devours flesh
3. leopard (vs.6)
 - a) four wings of a bird
 - b) four heads
4. beast (vs.7)
 - a) iron teeth

- b) takes everything before it
- c) ten horns
- d) small horn came up with the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things
- e) small horn plucks up 3 horns by the roots
- f) little horn wages war with the saints, given authority for a time, times, and half a time (3 ½ units)

The climax (vs.9-12): the best is destroyed and burned with fire, the rest of the beasts had prolonged life.

The likeness of a son of man (vs. 13-14): he comes to the one on the throne he is given the kingdom of the whole world.

Interpretations

In verses 17 and 18, we see a brief summary of these kings and kingdoms in interpretation with the saints of God receiving the kingdom for ages to come. Vs. 17: four kingdoms in the earth. Vs. 18: the saints of the Most High shall receive and possess the kingdom forever.

Verses 19-22 offer more interpretation with Daniel seeking greater insight to the four beasts. The small horn that grew and uprooted three became larger than all the others, and in verse 21 began waging war with the saints of God. It seems that this small horn blasphemes God and perhaps seeks to become as God, but judgment is pronounced on him.

We see these kings and kingdoms in a lower nature as they are represented as animals giving us insight into their character. Note in verse four, the beast is *made* to stand like a man. God is giving the beast, Nebuchadnezzar in this case, the power to do this. The bear is raised on one side, the leopard apparently on all fours, indicating their decreased power and authority given by God. The fourth beast attains great power, but when he sees himself as God then judgment is passed so that we see who really is Lord. Power and dominion of the kingdom is given to the saints of God by the Son of Man.

The vision of chapter two was given to a gentile ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, the first in the reign of the Gentiles. He himself, seeing the power of God in his own life, being humbled in his pride and also seeing the power of God in all ages to come. The illustration of chapter two shows the outward political history of the coming kingdoms, but the vision of chapter seven shows the overall character and personality of these kingdoms.

The lion represents Nebuchadnezzar, with the plucked wings being his being humbled by God till he sees who is really in control. The lion is made to stand on two legs. *The bear represents Medo-Persia*, raised on one side showing a decrease in authority given to the second beast. The three ribs are perhaps the three major kingdoms conquered by the Persian empire; Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt. Ribs are an area of strength in the body in the overall basic structure. Persia did indeed wage war and conquer many nations as is indicated by “devour much meat”. *The leopard represents Greece*, on all fours and smaller and swifter than the lion or the bear. The four wings indicate an even swifter road to gain power. *The fourth is simply called a beast and represents Rome*. It is not described as being like any known animal. Such is the case of the Roman Empire, larger with power, and lasting many years.

