

A SON OF MAN

Daniel 7:1-28

Key Verse: 7:13

"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."

Chapter 7 seems to be a repetition of chapter 2. The main thought is the same. But the emphasis is different. Chapter 2 showed us the destiny of kings and kingdoms of the world and the general view of human civilization. The main point of chapter 7 is that the Son of Man will come to judge the kings of the world and give his kingdom to his saints.

1. The images of kings of the world (1-8,24,25)

Fourteen years before the destruction of the Babylonian Empire, Daniel received a prophecy concerning the events to come through visions in his dream. So he wrote down the substance of his dream (1). In his vision Daniel saw before him the four winds of heaven which churned up the great sea violently. In this verse the word "winds" is compared to the Spirit of God. Before God spoke, there was the Spirit of God. He was hovering over the "waters." Genesis 1:2b says, "The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." In the Bible, upper water was the sky and lower water was the sea. Jesus explained about the Spirit of God in the best way. Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to wind and said, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). In verse 3, "four great beasts" are compared to kings of the world. The sea is compared to the world. In verses 1 and 2 we learn that God rules the world as he pleases, as the four winds churn up the great sea. God rules the world. From God's point of view, the four kings are nothing but powerful and brutal and hungry beasts. These four beasts are each different in quality, but their degree of doing evil is the same. They could not be shepherds of God's people. Let's see about the four beasts.

First, a lion with the wings of an eagle (4). Look at verse 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." When the sea water was disturbed by the Spirit of God, four beasts, which were each different, came out of the sea. The first beast was like a lion. It also had the wings of an eagle. As we know, the lion is the king of the animals. The lion has keen sense to watch over opponent animals, and its pouncing power over any other animal is indeed remarkable. The eagle is the king of the birds. The eagle's eyesight and flying speed are peerless. A lion with the wings of an eagle

can be compared to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who was likened to the head of gold, and whose dominion and civilization were superior to all other nations. Nebuchadnezzar established the system of totalitarian empire and ruled the world with the eagle's insight and the lion's power. In archaeology we see that the national symbol of Babylon is a lion with the wings of an eagle.

God established Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to shepherd his people. But he was nothing but a devouring lion to his people. God showed him future events to come through Daniel. But he soon forgot the prophecy and he became arrogant. He said, "is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (4:30) The words were still on his lips when God drove him away from people and made him like an animal who ate the grass until he acknowledged the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes (4:32). After 7 years of animal training, God gave back to him the mind of a normal man. Here we learn that God wants the rulers of the world to be normal men and humble enough to acknowledge the Most High God. God also wants the rulers of the world not to be like cruel animals, but to be gentle shepherds. Otherwise, God dethrones them.

Second, a bear which had three ribs in its mouth (5). This is a prophecy concerning future events to come. The character of a bear is simple and very powerful and it has the spirit of never giving up and is compared with the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. They had no strategy in fighting with enemy nations. They simply mobilized a huge number of people to attack their enemies. In order to attack 1,000 enemy soldiers, they mobilized 10,000 army forces. In order to conquer Greece, they mobilized 1,000,000 army forces. They had no strategy. They only overpowered other nations with their "human sea" tactics. The Medes and Persians ruled 200 years until 330 B.C. The bear was raised up on one of its sides. This means that Persia, which was established later, combined with the Medes and Persia became the unique world power. The last part of verse 5 says, "Get up and eat your fill of flesh!" This means that the Medes and Persians would conquer many countries of the Near East and grow bigger than the Babylonian Empire. Three ribs in its mouth means the conquest of Babylonia, Libya and Egypt.

Third, a leopard with four wings on its back (6). As we know well, the leopard belongs to the tiger family and it can go up and down a tree and run in a vast prairie with great speed. It has boxing ability in its front two paws. This leopard is compared to Alexander the Great of Greece. He began to conquer from Macedonia, then North Africa and part of India. His conquest was as speedy and sudden as a hurricane that strikes a corn field. They say that after Alexander conquered all the nations of the world, he cried aloud, "I have no more nations to conquer." He ruled the world for 8 years from 330 B.C. to 323 B.C. After world conquest, he soon died as a result of excessive debauchery, drinking and immorality. Here, four heads might be his

four generals who divided Greece into four parts and ruled each part. After Alexander the Great, the world was divided into four parts. They were kept in brutal fighting. Alexander the Great is known in world history as the greatest conqueror. But from God's point of view, he was a man who died young because of his corrupted life. God gave him the privilege of shepherding his people in the world. But he only destroyed innumerable people of God.

Fourth, a beast with iron teeth (7). Look at verse 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." This beast not only had iron teeth, it had ten horns.

Around 241 B.C. Roman power originated from Sicily. Rome conquered Spain, Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. In 10 B.C. she conquered Jerusalem. During the next 10 years she conquered England, France, Belgium, and Germany. By 17 A.D. the Roman Empire had conquered all European countries and part of India and rose to be the greatest empire in human history next to Babylon. The Roman Empire was ruined in 476 A.D. The cause of its destruction was yuppie mentality. When the Romans became powerful, they lived an easygoing life in the suburbs. They only watched gladiator fights and indulged in immoral sins. Finally Rome with iron teeth and ten horns became like a paper tiger and crumbled.

When the Roman Empire was powerful she did many evil things beyond imagination. When they conquered other nations, they destroyed all inhabitants; killing weak people and dragging strong people and selling them as slaves to other nations. Their cruelty was well revealed when Pilate crucified Jesus. The Roman Empire is a symbol of ignorance and cruelty. It has no cultural achievements or contributions to human civilization. It was nothing but a destructive machine. It was because in their laziness, they did not study math and science. We must pray earnestly that we may not be like the Roman Empire, but a priestly nation.

Fifth, a little horn (8,24,25). Look at verse 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." While Daniel was thinking about the horns and their cruelty and the injuries and wounds of impaled people, a little horn came up among the ten horns. Here, "ten horns" symbolizes powerful nations of the times, and no more. The little horn looked small in size, but it uprooted three horns. It had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully, not humbly. Biblically, a mouth that speaks boastfully is the Antichrist.

This one not only destroys mankind, he also stands against God. Read verses

24 and 25. "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. 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." This Antichrist persecutes God's children. He wants to change the set times. There are many Antichrists these days who want to change the set times. For example, the time of the second coming of Jesus is not mentioned in the Bible. Jesus said that only God knows the time of his second coming. But there were many Antichrists who prophesied that Jesus would come in 1992. They lived a shamanistic way of life. Those who set the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ or want to change the set times are clearly revealed here to be the Antichrist. They also change the laws of God. In other words, Antichrists interpret the Bible according to their crooked ideas and make use of them to trap weak-minded people and empty their pockets by threatening them with the horror of hell.

The four beasts are the representatives of the four evil kings, who ruined innumerable human lives and used people like cows and mules and objects of their pleasure. We can think they were the worst enemies of mankind. But they were the second worst enemies of mankind. The first enemies of mankind are the Antichrist and antichrists, because they prophesy at random and make weak minded people stumble. As a result, they speak against the Most High and oppress his saints. We must know our worst enemies are not the beasts but the Antichrist in the guise of the servant of God. These days, true Christians' enemies are not non-Christians, but rather, nominal Christians who distort the word of God.

11. The throne of God (9-28)

First, the Son of Man. The throne of God is the place where the Son of Man and the Saints of God can dwell. Look at verse 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.'" At the moment Daniel was distressed looking at the arrogant Antichrist, who spoke boastfully, suddenly he saw that the throne of God was set in place and the Ancient of Days took his seat. Here the word "Ancient of Days" means one advanced in days more than anyone else from the beginning of the world. Therefore the "Ancient of Days" is God himself. The son of man (13) is Jesus Christ-the one and only Son of God. Though Jesus is the Son of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, he humbled himself to be like a slave or servant. Though Jesus is the one and only Son of God he did not use his glory and power over the people of the world. Rather, he became the eyes to the blind, a friend to the lonely tax collector and a man of sorrow to the sorrowful. He is truly worthy to be our Shepherd King.

The Son of Man is also the holy God. During the time of his earthly

ministry, Jesus became like a humble farmer. But he is the Holy God. Once Jesus revealed his original figure on the Mount of Transfiguration. Mark 9:3,4 says, "His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus."

The most amazing thing is to know who the Son of Man is and what the character of his throne is. Verse 9b says, "His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool." The gospels describe it as "dazzling white." In the Bible, whiteness symbolizes the holiness of God. Our God is the holy God; the Son of Man is Savior God and at the same time he is the holy God. Any brutal beasts or abominable things cannot stand in the presence of the holy God. Even those who ate unclean animals cannot stand before the holy God. Those who committed detestable and immoral sins cannot stand before the presence of the holy God. Our God who is love, and who is righteous, is the holy God. Holy, holy, holy is his name. This holy God wants us to be holy as he is holy.

Those who are not holy, God cleanses with fire to make holy. Look at verses 9c and 10. "His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A 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." The throne of holy God is flaming with fire. Flaming fire is like a river of fire which was flowing, coming out from before him. We know well about the power of fire. The power of fire burns down everything and makes it clean. The fire of God burns all the unclean things. So all the unclean people will be put in the lake fire of burning sulfur to be burned and to be purified.

The throne of God is also a court where thousands upon thousands attend him when he judges the wicked and unclean with fire. The last part of verse 10 says, "The court was seated, and the books were opened." The son of man refers to the books at the court to see if each one's name is in the Book of Life, and he judges the wicked and unclean people according to the teachings of the Bible. Therefore we should live according to the teachings of the Bible, not according to our calculations. Also, we must check to see if each of our names is written in the Book of Life.

Look at verse 14. "He 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." The kingdoms of the world appear and disappear like mosquitoes in the summertime. But the Kingdom of God is forever and his dominion is everlasting. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away. And his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. It is because it is the kingdom of the holy God.

Second, the saints of the Most High. Look at verse 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." These days there are no kings in the world. Since democracy is widespread, each person seems to be his own king and each one's apartment seems to be his own kingdom. But we must remember that the worldly kings are compared to beasts, and beasts will be judged and destroyed with -flaming fire. Therefore we saints of God must imitate the life of Jesus. We should not be like the four beasts which were cruel to God's people when they had to shepherd his people according to God's will. We Christians should not be slaves of selfish ambition like the four beast-like kings.

Most of all, we should not live a life of corruption like those beastlike kings. They were kings. But in reality, they were nothing but wild animals without any moral codes. These days many claim to be Christians. But there are so many immoral people. Even though they claim to be Christians they cannot come to God because our God is holy God. Therefore, Christians should be holy pilgrims in the sight of God. We must also shepherd his flock as our own children and pray for them. This is the way of life for those who are waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ. If we do so, God will give his kingdom to us-the saints of the Most High. Read verse 22. 11 ... 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."

Look at verse 28. "This is the end of the matter. 1, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself." It is amazing that Daniel saw the prophecy of God in a vision of his dream around 553 B.C. Daniel was not intimidated even before Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar. But when he saw the prophecy of God in a vision he was frightened and could not eat for several days. It was too scary to think about. Why-was he so scared? It was because it was certain that the prophecies would come to pass. He was horrified that the kings of the world are like brutal beasts. He was also terrified that the judgment of God is so severe that no one could survive, but all would be burned to ashes.

In this passage we learn that we should not worship beasts. We should not try to receive recognition from beasts. We must worship the holy God and the son of man who judges all mankind one by one. Most of all, we learn here that we should not live an unclean life, but we must live holy lives before the holy, holy God Almighty. Then God will give us his kingdom as our inheritance.