

DANIEL 7

THE BEAST AND THE SON OF MAN

Student Guide | Activation Church Bible Study



BIG IDEA

Kingdoms rise and fall, but God rules over them all. So, remain faithful.

PURPOSE

To encourage God's people who were living in captivity to remain faithful in exile because God is in control and His Kingdom will prevail.

THE MOVEMENT OF DANIEL 1-7



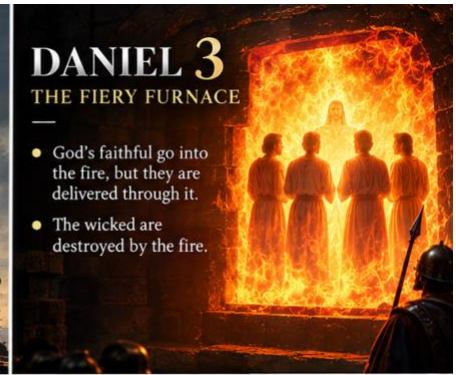
DANIEL 1 FAITHFULNESS IN EXILE

- 605 BC
- Daniel and his friends remain faithful to God while living in Babylon.



DANIEL 2 NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

- Empires will come and go.
- God's Kingdom will last forever.



DANIEL 3 THE FIERY FURNACE

- God's faithful go into the fire, but they are delivered through it.
- The wicked are destroyed by the fire.



DANIEL 4-5 HUMAN PRIDE

- God has the power to humble and remove.
- Nebuchadnezzar is humbled.
- Belshazzar is removed.
- Babylon falls to the Medo-Persian Empire. (539 BC)



DANIEL 6 DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

- God's faithful servant is delivered from the beasts.
- The wicked are destroyed by the beasts.



DANIEL 7 A DIFFERENT LOOK AT DANIEL 2

- Daniel 2 gives us a statue made of different parts.
- Daniel 7 gives us four beasts.
- Both visions picture earthly kingdoms that rise and fall under the rule of God.
- The final kingdom belongs to the Son of Man.

Daniel 1 | Faithfulness in Exile - 605 BC

Daniel and his friends remain faithful to God while living in Babylon.

Daniel 2 | Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Empires will come and go. God's Kingdom will last forever.

Daniel 3 | The Fiery Furnace

God's faithful go into the fire, but they are delivered through it. The wicked are destroyed by the fire.

Daniel 4-5 | Human Pride

God has the power to humble and remove. Nebuchadnezzar is humbled. Belshazzar is removed. Babylon falls to the Medo-Persian Empire in 539 BC.

Daniel 6 | Daniel in the Lions' Den

God's faithful servant is delivered from the beasts. The wicked are destroyed by the beasts.

Daniel 7 | A Different Look at Daniel 2

Daniel 2 gives us a statue made of different parts. Daniel 7 gives us four beasts. Both visions picture earthly kingdoms that rise and fall under the rule of God.

HOW TO READ THE VISION

BIG IDEA

**Kingdoms rise and fall, but God rules over them all.
So, remain faithful.**

PURPOSE

To encourage God's people who were living in captivity to remain faithful in exile because
God is in control and His Kingdom will prevail.

WHENEVER WE READ THE BIBLE, WE SHOULD ASK:

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|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ① When was this written? | ② Who was it written to? | ③ Why was it written? |
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Whenever we read the Bible, we should ask:

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- Who was it written to?
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THE FOUR BEASTS



READ | Daniel 7:1-4

The first beast is like a lion with eagle's wings. Its wings are plucked off, it is lifted up to stand like a man, and the mind of a man is given to it.

- Daniel tells us that the head of gold in the statue is Nebuchadnezzar.
- Babylon is the current reigning empire.
- Jeremiah uses the image of a lion for the Babylonian invader, and Ezekiel describes the king of Babylon as a great eagle with great wings.
- Daniel 4 tells us Nebuchadnezzar was humbled and became like a beast until his reasoning was restored.

READ | Daniel 7:5

The second beast is like a bear, raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth.

- Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire in 539 BC.
- The Persians became greater than the Medes, which could explain the bear being raised up on one side.
- Daniel 8 explicitly identifies the ram as the kings of Media and Persia, with one horn higher than the other.
- Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt are sometimes proposed as the three ribs.

READ | Daniel 7:6

The third beast is like a leopard with four wings and four heads.

- Greece conquered the Medo-Persian Empire under Alexander the Great.
- Alexander conquered with incredible speed. Daniel 8 pictures Greece moving without touching the ground.
- Alexander died young and his empire was eventually divided among four major successor kingdoms.
- Daniel 8 explicitly identifies Greece as the goat that defeats Media and Persia.

READ | Daniel 7:7-8

The fourth beast is terrifying and exceedingly strong, with iron teeth and ten horns. A little horn rises among them and three horns are uprooted.

- This is where interpretations begin to vary.
- It is okay to have different opinions on this. Just because you disagree with someone here does not mean they are not a Christian.

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

READ | Daniel 7:9-12

Daniel sees the Ancient of Days seated in judgment. The court sits, the books are opened, the fourth beast is destroyed, and the other beasts lose their dominion.

- It looks like the empires are in charge, but above them all is One seated on a throne: the Ancient of Days.
- The court sits in judgment and the books are opened. These kingdoms may be powerful, but their authority is temporary.
- The first three beasts lose their dominion, but their people, culture, and influence continue for a time.
- The little horn also comes under God's judgment.
- The fourth beast is ultimately destroyed.
- The text does not require the little horn and the fourth empire to lose power at exactly the same time.
- BIG IDEA: None of these kingdoms gets the final word. God does.

THE SON OF MAN

READ | Daniel 7:13-14

One like a son of man comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and receives dominion, glory, and a Kingdom that will never be destroyed.

- Where does the Son of Man go? To the Ancient of Days.
- What does He receive? Dominion, glory, and a Kingdom.

The title "Son of Man" can simply refer to a human being. It does not automatically mean Messiah. But this is the title Jesus repeatedly chose to use for Himself, and before the High Priest He uses the language of Daniel 7.

READ | Matthew 26:63-64

Jesus tells the High Priest, "from now on" he will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

READ | Acts 2:32-36

Peter says Jesus was raised, exalted at God's right hand, and made both Lord and Christ.

READ | Matthew 28:18

After His resurrection Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Jesus isn't waiting for everything that opposes Him to be removed so that He can begin reigning.

- The King has been enthroned.
- The Kingdom has come.
- The Kingdom continues to advance.
- We have not yet seen the full removal of everything that opposes His rule.

One day we will, when He returns and the fullness of His Kingdom is revealed.

BACK TO THE BEAST

READ | Daniel 7:15-28

Daniel is told the four beasts are four kings. The saints will receive the Kingdom forever. The fourth kingdom has ten kings, another ruler arises, puts down three, speaks against the Most High, wears out the saints, thinks to change the times and law, and rules for a time, times, and half a time. Then his dominion is taken away.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- There will be ten kings and then a little horn.
- He will speak against the Most High, wear out the saints, and think to change the times and the law.
- The saints are given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time - 3 1/2 years.
- His reign will not last either.

THREE INTERPRETIVE VIEWS

Each view has strengths and weaknesses.

1 | ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES

- 175-164 BC: He ruled over part of the divided Greek Empire.
- He exalted himself against God by attacking God's Temple, stopping the sacrifices, and desecrating the sanctuary.
- He persecuted the saints by brutally attacking the Jewish people and attempting to force them away from obedience to God.
- He attempted to change the times and the law by outlawing Jewish practices and interfering with worship.
- His persecution fits the 3 1/2-year language. His intense persecution began around 167 BC, and the Temple was restored and rededicated in 164 BC.
- His reign came to an end. Antiochus died in 164 BC.

2 | FIRST-CENTURY ROMAN RULER

- Rome fits the progression of the four kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, then Rome.
- Rome was ruling when Jesus came.
- Rome violently opposed the saints. Nero persecuted Christians beginning around AD 64, while the Roman war against the Jewish people began in AD 66.
- The 3 1/2-year language can be connected with Nero's persecution, although exact dating is debated.
- Galba, Otho, and Vitellius fell rapidly in AD 68-69. Some connect them with the three horns that fall.
- The conflict culminated in AD 70 when Titus captured Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed.

3 | FUTURE ANTICHRIST / REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE

- Not all futurists interpret every detail exactly this way, but this is a common futurist understanding.
- The first three beasts are Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece, and the fourth beast is Rome.
- This view sees a long gap within the fourth beast. Ancient Western Rome comes to an end in AD 476, but the ten horns appear at the end of the age.
- The Roman Empire will reemerge in some form, often called a revived Roman Empire.
- The ten horns are ten future kings or kingdoms. The little horn is a future Antichrist who brings down three.
- The Antichrist speaks against God, persecutes the saints, and attempts to change the times and the law.
- The 3 1/2 years are future, often connected with the 42 months in Revelation 13.
- His reign ends with Christ's return and final judgment.

THE BIG DIFFERENCE



- The first two views read the kingdoms and the little horn as unfolding within the historical sequence of those kingdoms.
- The futurist view sees a gap within the fourth kingdom before the ten horns and little horn appear.

SO WHAT IS THE POINT?

No matter which interpretation you believe, the point of Daniel is not for us to spend all of our time trying to figure out who is who.

This was reassurance for Daniel and the Jewish people living in exile that what they were experiencing would not last forever.

Kingdoms come and go, but God's Kingdom lasts forever.

Babylon came and went. Medo-Persia came and went. Greece came and went. Rome came and went.

Until Jesus returns, we will continue to see evil kingdoms and powers rise and fall. At the same time, we will continue to see the Kingdom of God grow until one day it fills the entire earth.

No matter what happens around you, remain faithful to Christ.

Kingdoms rise. Kingdoms fall. Jesus is King. And His Kingdom will last forever.