

Daniel 7:1-14

Daniel 7:13,14 I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one that shall not be destroyed.

Beginning here in chapter 7 we have the account of Daniel's visions and of the experience he had of God as he sought to gain an understanding of the things that he had been shown. The visions are dated and begin during the reign of Belshazzar and continue into the Persian period. The vision of chapter seven took place between Daniel chapters 4 and 5.

The 4 beasts of Daniel 7 correspond to the 4 kingdoms of Daniel 2. The representation of these kingdoms in chapter 2 is of an image that has human form and that consists of parts that are gold, silver, bronze and iron. The beasts of chapter 7 are unnatural hybridizations of animals of prey, that are much more threatening than any natural counterpart. One interpreter

suggested that Nebuchadnezzar's vision represent a human perspective where Daniel's vision gives the heavenly view of the same kingdoms. As such, the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar was majestic and conveyed the pride of the achievement of the kings who built such kingdoms. Daniel's vision sees beasts of prey made only more destructive by the additions of wings and horns and heads.

One of the key insights provided by the Bible is the truth about human nature. We have been since Adam and Eve in the garden, sinners by nature and by choice. The proposition that power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely will usually ring true in our experience of life. Human sin is as evident though in the alleys of the ghettos as it is in the halls of power. The darkness of sin prevails when the smallest bit of power is used to the advantage of the one who possesses it and to the disadvantage of the one who does not. The succession of empires described by Daniel in the dream of the king provides a vista of the human struggle for dominion and power, a struggle that continues to this day. The succession of beasts in Daniel's vision sees the same empires in the context of the terror they brought to their subjects rather than the romantic view of the

conquests of great kings. One of the lessons of these two versions of the same historical events is the difference between the heavenly and the earthly view.

Of great interest is the 4th of Daniel's beasts as described in this vision. "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 the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns..." A little horn then enters the scene and is identified as a man who speaks pompous words. This is interrupted by the appearance of the throne of the Ancient of Days who sits on the seat of judgment above the kingdoms of the earth. The beast identified with the little horn was slain and its body destroyed. Then, the Son of Man is seen coming in the clouds and establishing the kingdom that shall not be destroyed.

Again, in the Book of Daniel, we are shown that human powers are limited and subject to the power and plans of God. This is the ultimate reality and if so, then it is also the present reality. Sin will not prevail. God's purposes will not be thwarted. His kingdom will come.

