

Winter Texan Bible Study 2019 ~ Pastor Bill Waddell
Prophecies of Daniel, Lesson 1 ~ January 8, 2019

Daniel 7:1-7, Daniel 2

The book of Daniel is divided exactly in half - the first 6 chapters are mainly narrative with some prophecy; the second 6 are mainly prophecy with a little narrative. The Bible is most singly verified through fulfilled prophecy; there is much in the area of archeological verification, and in the area of historical verification; but there is nothing like fulfilled prophecy to verify the Bible. The reason for this is because only God can do what the Bible does: make predictions; taking into account innumerable human contingencies and be accurate about those predictions 100% of the time.

Why study the Bible and obey the Bible exclusively? Because it is the only religious book that demonstrates itself to be of divine origin. If the Bible is accurate when it speaks to the future of the entire world and its events, then it is accurate when it speaks of your future.

A lot of people don't like prophecy because of its intimidating nature. It's not as straight forward as other parts, but it's rendered into signs and symbols to a large extent. Do you believe the Bible was inspired by God? Do you believe it was given to us not to confuse, but to inform us? Do you believe it can only truly be interpreted by God Himself? Do you believe that all believers have all of God living in them? Do you believe that the Spirit of God leads us into all truth?

Part of the reason why Nebuchadnezzar has this dream is because of what he did to Jerusalem: in 586 BC his armies level Jerusalem thus beginning a parade of Gentile kings and kingdoms who'd tread this city underfoot. A Parade that, as we will see, will continue until Jesus returns. Luke 21:24; Matt. 23:37-39. That's where we are today, the Jews don't really control the city - if they did, why are these still standing? Why does the UN get to decide who lives where if Israel is in control?

There will be no peace in Jerusalem until the Prince of Peace returns...exactly what Daniel tells us as he interprets this dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

1. The sweep of history from Nebuchadnezzar to the return of Jesus is covered in this one chapter of Daniel. Why give Nebuchadnezzar this dream? One, because he starts the parade. Secondly, because the question is immediately raised or the assumption is immediately made that God has forsaken His plans and promises to Israel (this is what Muslim theology is built on).
 - He promised to give the land and the city forever to the Jews. Has He now backed up on that by destroying the city and exiling its people?
 - He promised that a king who descended from the bloodline of David would sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem forever. Is that now null and void?
 - He promised that through the Jews all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Is that now forfeited? With those potential questions, God fast-forwards us here to the end to show He was keeping His promises despite the way things may look.
2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation.
 - V. 28 - "in the latter days" is not a phrase restricted to Nebuchadnezzar's lifetime; it is what is called an eschatological statement.
 - Escatos - "last things" is a term referring to the last days of the world as we know it and return of Christ.
 - "latter days" - a repeated prophetic statement in the Old Testament: Gen. 49; Deut. 4; Deut. 31; Num. 34; Jer. 23; Jer. 30; Jer. 48; Jer. 49; Ezek. 38; Dan. 10; Micah 4; and other places. "the latter days" is a term that encompasses Jesus' return and events surrounding His return.

Let's see how it's really going to go: VV. 31-35 - This image represents 4 world empires parading in succession across the stage of history beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and ending with a 5th empire, the rock that will destroy them all speaking of the Coming of Christ.

The first kingdom was Babylon, established and ruled, for the most part, by Nebuchadnezzar – V. 38c.

The second was the Medes and the Persians. V. 39a - “inferior” is sort of an unfortunate rendering of this Aramaic word because that's not really its thrust here. It's probably better rendered “lower” in the sense that it was the next one down. These metals are decreasing in value but they are increasing in strength. The Medo-Persians were a stronger nation than the Babylonians, conquering more territory and having larger armies by far.

Third, they are eclipsed by the even more territory conquered and the stronger armies of the Greeks who are the next nation: V. 39b - Bronze is not as valuable as silver, but it's quite a bit stronger. Greeks were called by the ancients “Brazen coated” because bronze was the main metal they wore in battle.

Fourth, they were conquered by a fourth and final kingdom, Rome. V. 40 – Descending, but not inferior, decreasing in value of metal but increasing in strength. The Roman empire is the strongest the world has ever known. Babylon lasted about 70 years; Medo-Persia 200; Greeks 200; Rome, as a complete empire, lasted for more than 500 years.

Rome is the final empire according to this dream. Who took over for Rome? It was sacked by the Visigoths and Vandals, but they didn't want control, they wanted to rape, pillage and burn and then leave...Rome slowly dissolves into its respective parts that we know today as Europe. Rome is still in charge but to a lesser degree because it is divided, it's brittle like clay, but the strength of iron is in it! Phase I of Rome is Ancient Rome but Phase II will be a reunification of its respective parts which will happen just before the final kingdom: VV. 44-45

All of it, for the most part, was future at the time Daniel wrote Chapters 2 and 7. They are the most comprehensive covering of the entire period from Daniel's life to the return of Jesus Christ. Where we sit in history today, 2500 years later, Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the first 7 verses of Daniel's vision in chapter 7 have been fulfilled exactly, laying the 4 world dominating kingdoms that will arise before the second coming of Christ. This is where we are today, under the dominion of the fourth and final kingdom awaiting the rise of phase II of that kingdom and its leader that we refer to as the antichrist. So, after verse 7 we are looking into the future even today - the trajectory of this disturbing chapter based on what has been fulfilled already means we should expect every bit of this to be fulfilled and that mostly literally.

This image that Nebuchadnezzar dreams of is made of metals of decreasing value but increasing strength. It is also made of metals in decreasing specific gravity - a cup of gold weighs twice as much as a cup of iron – it's top heavy. The top weighs twice as much as the bottom of this thing! You don't build anything this way because it's very prone to fall over. There are so many messages in this - humanity is in a precarious position - we always have been. We see decay working in our society everywhere - nationally, socially, domestically, individually, organically. We are devolving.