

17-18 Bible Study #9

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Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 4** Presents a **second dream of King *Nebuchadnezzar*** concerning the loss of his power and glory until he recognizes the Most High God
- **Daniel 5** Presents the story of Daniel interpreting the **word written on the wall of King *Belshazzar's*** (incorrectly identified as the son of Nebuchadnezzar in Dn 5:22) banquet, predicting that the king would die and his kingdom be given to another
- **Daniel 6** Presents Daniel being thrown into the **lion's den** for failing to worship King ***Darius the Mede*** who had become king of Babylon and declared himself a god *

Daniel (Cont)

- King Belshazzar is referred to in the Book of Daniel as the son of *Nebuchadrezzar*
- Historical documents indicate that he was the eldest son of *Nabonidus*, **who was king** of Babylon from 555 to 539 BC, and of *Nitocris*, who was perhaps a daughter of *Nebuchadrezzar*.
- King *Nabonidus* was often the co-regent of Babylon with his son *Belshazzar*.
- *Cyrus the Great* made his entrance into Babylon a few days after it surrendered without fighting; *Nabonidus* was captured *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:1-4**

- In the first year of King *Belshazzar*, **Daniel had a dream** about four great beasts
- The first beast was a ferocious (lion) who had the speed of an eagle
- Suddenly, it loses speed and gains the wisdom of a man

Daniel (Cont)

- We discussed images like these in **Ezekiel 1** where we saw
- the four graded symbols of the creative power of God
 - Man is a symbol for wisdom
 - Lion is a symbol for ferocity
 - Ox is the symbol for brute strength
 - Eagle is the symbol for speed
- So what is going on here in Daniel 7?

Daniel (Cont)

- It may be about the conversion of King *Nebuchadnezzar*, or a peaceful period in Babylon when no one was attacking or being attacked
- Initially the Babylonians attacked their enemies with great ferocity and speed
- During the second half of the empire they were sitting back and enjoying their power

Daniel (Cont)

- The “Great Sea” refers to the land of the gentiles surrounding the Promised Land
 - Is 17:12
 - Jr 5:22
 - Ez 26:3
 - Gn 16 water borders of Israel
 - Gn 1 dry land (Garden of Eden) appearing out of the waters *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:5-8**

- This is talking about the **Medo-Persian Empire** in which one side was more powerful than the other
- The Medes were seen as the leopard with four wings which referred to Alexander the Great
- Again, the wing is the symbol of speed and we all know just how fast Alexander's army moved to conquer the known world (336 – 323 B.C.)

Daniel (Cont)

- The beast with four heads represents the **four generals** who were awarded the empire in 323 BC by **Alexander the Great** just before his death
- The great iron teeth should remind us of *Nebuchadnezzar's* dream

Daniel (Cont)

- We are looking at **two different dreams** that basically **say the same thing** about four human kingdoms
 - Babylonian
 - Medo-Persians
 - Greeks
 - Romans
- During the time of the fourth kingdom a little stone will appear and destroy it all and then expand into a massive kingdom which will remain forever (Dn 2:34) *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 7**

- We are presented with **another dream, this time of Daniel** during the time of **King *Belshazzar*** that was parallel to King *Nebuchadnezzar's* dream in Daniel 2

Daniel 7 (Beast)

Lion

Bear

Leopard

Beast w iron teeth

Empire

Babylon

Medo-Persian

Greek

Rome

Daniel (Cont)

Daniel 2:31-35

Daniel understood that the king's dream was about a statue reflecting the coming empires

Statue

Gold

Silver

Bronze

Iron

Empire

Babylon

Medo-Persian

Greek

Rome

This statue will be destroyed by a small rock "uncut by human hands"

The dream also covers the time from Daniel to Christ

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 7: 9-12**
- Daniel looked up at the heavenly throne and saw “**one like the son of man**”, wearing a white raiment (also seen as Jesus in the Book of Revelation)
- Everlasting dominion sounds like **2 Sam 7**
- “The horn was speaking” was about one of the horns on the fourth beast (empire) and was the king speaking some sort of blasphemy by claiming his divinity
- As we know that was the at the time of the advent of Christianity *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:13-14**

- “One like the Son of Man”*is like the “little stone not cut by human hands”
- Most stones were cut by men from a human quarry
- In this vision the image looks like a man but there is something different in his origin
- “All peoples, nations, and languages” should remind us of **Daniel 3:4** which describe the statue that King *Nebuchadnezzar* set up

Daniel (Cont)

- We can see that this is basically another version of the way to talk about the historical developments of the time from the Babylonian kingdom until the Kingdom of God
- These are two different dreams talking about the same historical realities
- This will be clarified in **Daniel 8** where we hear about a dream of **King Belshazzar**

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 8: 1-4**

- Daniel had a vision in the third year of King *Belshazzar* at *Susa* the capital of the province of *Elam* by the *Ulai* river
- The bank of the river from the Babylonian perspective faced the Medo-Persian Empire on the other side of the river
- The bear with two horns referred to the *Medes* and *Persians*
- No beast could stand before the Medo-Persian Empire as it expanded across the Fertile Crescent *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 8:5-14**

- This indicates that the beast (a ram -Medo-Persia) was really moving fast
- The “he goat” from the West was *Alexander the Great* coming to attack the Medo-Persians
- Thus the “he goat” kills the ram *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 8:15-22**

- The Angel *Gabriel* explains to Daniel the meaning of his dream
- The kings are the horns
- The he-goat with one big horn is the King of the Greeks
- Alexander the Great died in 323 BC without any sons so he handed over his kingdom after conquering the Medo-Persian Empire to his four generals
- We will see this again in **1st Maccabees 1:1-9** many years after the event takes place

1st Maccabees

- **1st Maccabees 1:1-9**

- The Land of *Kittim* was the land of the seagoing people of Greece
- This is talking about the he-goat hitting the ram
- Then comes the rest of the story of the remnants of the Greek Empire leading to the arrival of the Romans
- With this history we can understand the message of Daniel 7 concerning the four kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persians, Greeks and Romans
- The 4th beast of *Nebuchadnezzar's* dream was the Roman Empire seen as the iron kingdom with iron legs and feet of iron and clay

Daniel (Cont)

- This kingdom, described earlier as a little “stone not cut by human hands” (in Dn 2:34) grew into a mountain that was the Kingdom of God
- Here he was described as one like “the Son of Man” riding on the clouds who comes to the ancient of days and receives all the power of the Kings
- This little stone, and the one like the son of man, was Jesus who will bring about the Kingdom of God

Daniel (Cont)

- This creates a real problem for today's Jews because it means that the Messiah has already come
- The Roman Empire is long gone some 2000 years ago
- This chronology becomes even more specific in **Daniel 9** *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 9:1-2**
 - This dream happens during the Medo-Persian Empire
 - We saw in Jeremiah that the Babylonian Captivity would last 70 years (Jr 25:11, 12; 29:10) *

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 9:3-7**

- Daniel is saying that God has done what He promised to do, while the people failed to do what they were supposed to do
- God established a covenant and the people violated the conditions of that covenant
- Here, Daniel is saying that the people received what they deserve
- Now Daniel was asking for God's mercy

- **Daniel 9:13-14**

- Daniel presents the calamity that was promised in Deuteronomy 28 and 29 *

Daniel (Cont)

- Daniel 9 is a pivotal chapter providing an explanation for the prophecy of 70 years (Jr 25:12; 29:10)
- Flashes back to Lv 26:14,18, 21, 23, 33-40
- Also predicted in Du 28
- It contains the great prayer of the 80 year old prophet (Dn 9:4-19) lamenting the sins of Israel after the predicted 70 years have been completed

Daniel (Cont)

- This section provides the response by the angel Gabriel with the clue to the remaining time for the Exile – 7×70 years = 490 years
- This turns out to be 70 years of dishonored Sabbaths
- This can be interpreted two ways using a Catholic understanding:
 - During the period of Maccabees
 - During the 1st century with Jesus

Daniel (Cont)

- The “anointed one”
 - Jesus Christ
 - A religious priest and political messiah
- A Kingly historical figure
 - Cyrus will be referred to by God as his “Christ” who will rebuild Jerusalem
 - Antiochus Epiphanes IV who will desecrate the temple
- Both traditions depend on the dates used for the declaration for the rebuilding of Jerusalem

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 9: 20-24**
 - The **holy hill** was **Mt. Zion in Jerusalem**
 - Gabriel was an angel
 - Seventy weeks of years is not the same as 70 years
 - The Exile was not just the destruction of Jerusalem
 - It meant the time until the following three things had come to pass before the Kingdom of God was restored
 - The temple was rebuilt by a son of David (2nd Sam 7)
 - The city of Jerusalem was rebuilt
 - The Messiah returned and the glory cloud was returned to the temple
 - This meant that God was once again dwelling among His people

Daniel (Cont)

- So the people begin to return after 70 years
- But it will take another 490 years (70 weeks of years) before everything would be completed (the temple, city of Jerusalem and the protecting walls of the city were rebuilt) *
- Something however, is still missing – the return of the Glory Cloud and the ark of the covenant

Daniel (Cont)

- **Daniel 9:25-26**

- This indicates that after the city of Jerusalem is rebuilt and the anointed one returns, **the city will be destroyed again!**
- We are not sure how this will play out, or when the 490 years will be completed
- The rebuilding of the city depends on which of the following three kings (anointed one) is used for the calculation
 - Cyrus
 - Darius
 - Artaxerxes
- No one has been able to figure this out accurately as there are too many variables

Daniel (Cont)

- Who was the “anointed one”?
 - Jesus
 - Cyrus the Mede who was called the Christ in Isaiah’s prophecy
 - One of the other kings
- Whatever the case, Daniel gives a prophecy of fulfillment of all the destruction and restoration within 490 years
- Depending on where you start counting, it ends somewhere between 100 years before to 100 years after Jesus

Daniel (Cont)

- This is why during the 1st century the Jews were on high alert for the coming of the Messiah
- Also, why John the Baptist was of such concern to the Pharisees as he proclaimed that the kingdom of God at hand
- Even though they probably thought that he was a nut for living in the desert and eating grasshoppers, the Pharisees came to ask him if he was
 - The Messiah
 - The Prophet like Moses
 - Elijah

Daniel (Cont)

- John finally tells them that he is the “voice crying in the wilderness” as prophesied by Isaiah (Is 40:3)
- There were all sorts of people proclaiming to be the messiah during this period *

Daniel (Cont)

- After the 1st return in 538 B.C. there were several delays in the reconstruction of the temple
- Thus the people of the 1st century were still looking for the messiah at the time of Christ
- People of that day named their children after historical figures
 - Marian (sister of Moses)
 - Judas, Simon, Jonathan and Joshua (Maccabees)

Daniel (Cont)

- Father Sebastian concluded the overview of Daniel with a couple of additional issues:
 - The **abomination desolation** in **Daniel 9:27** will be seen again in **Daniel 11:31;12:11**
 - This most likely is a prediction of the decimation of the Temple and Altar by the Greeks under King Antiochus Epiphanes in 1st Maccabees 1:29-50
 - The story of **Daniel and Susanna** (Daniel 11)
- Eventually the Medo-Persians conquer the Babylonian Empire which signals the end of the geographic exile for the Jews, but not the end of the exile and all of its details

Transition

- Next, we will look at the post-Exilic period via **Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, Obadiah, and Malachi**