

Bible Study #26

4/5/22

Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented in the Parish Hall every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 10:30 A.M.** beginning **September 14, 2021** and ending **May 17, 2022** except for the **following Tuesdays** related to a holiday:
 - Nov 23, 2021 – Thanksgiving Week
 - Dec 21, 2021 – Christmas Week
 - Dec 28, 2021 - New Year's Week
 - **Apr 19, 2022 – Easter Week**
- The same class will be given in the Parish Hall every Tuesday evening from **7:30 P.M. until 8:30 P.M.**
- Both Tuesday classes will be available live and via Zoom using the same sign in as use last fall and this spring (It will be posted on the Parish website later in the week)
- Inclement weather decisions will be **based on announcements posted on the Parish Website**
- Contact info: email: biblestudy@straymonds.org ; Tel: (703) 644-5873

Daniel 7

- **Daniel 7:1-4** *“In the first year of Balthazar the king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed...and the mind of a man was given to it”*
 - Daniel, a prophet during the late exilic period, experienced dreams and visions of events of his time as well as what was to take place thereafter
 - The **lion** is the image of ferocity in the Middle East at that time
 - Today, there are no longer any lions in the Middle East, as the Romans used them for their games
 - **Eagles** were the symbol of great speed (there was nothing faster in the ancient world)
 - So we are talking about something that was ferocious and initially had great speed, but later slowed down with the wisdom of a man
 - This is about the **Babylonian Empire**

Daniel 7

- **Daniel 7: 5** *“And behold another beast, a second one like a bear....it was told arise and devour much flesh”*
 - As discussed, this was about the **Medo-Persian Empire** which was imbalanced (Persian dominated the Medes)
 - The three ribs were the three major cities of the empire: ***Libya, Babylon*** and ***Egypt***
 - Following the Medo-Persian Empire, the **Greek Empire** emerged in the image of a leopard

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:6** *“After this I looked, and lo, another, like a leopard,...and dominion was given to it”*
 - This **leopard** had four wings meaning that it moved with the great speed of Alexander the Great
 - The four heads represent the four generals who succeeded Alexander upon his death
 - Once again, the Romans most probably eliminated leopards from the region for their games
 - Father then directed us to look at Daniel’s dream in **Daniel 8** for a similar representation (different images, but the same historical events)

Daniel 8

- **Daniel 8:1-4** *“In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me Daniel...and magnified himself”*
 - Again, this is not just a **ram**, but an image of something else
 - This **ram** had two horns which represented the **Medo-Persian Empire** under *Cyrus*, just as we saw in **Daniel 7** where a **bear** represented the Medo-Persians (Look at **Isaiah 44:28 – 45:5**)
 - At the time, the Medo-Persian empire was in control all the way from *Ephesus* to deep into Babylon
 - They even built a road traversing the entire empire for trade purposes

Daniel 8 (Cont)

- **Daniel 8:5-14** *“As I was considering, behold a he-goat came from the west...then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state”*
 - Here, coming from the west, was a **he-goat** representing **Greek Empire**
 - The one big horn between his eyes was the first great king, *Alexander the Great*
 - Again, the wings represent the great speed of Alexander’s invasion of the Medo-Persians
 - When Alexander died, he was succeeded by his four generals who divided the empire into four kingdoms

Daniel 8 (Cont)

- **Daniel 8:15-26** *“When I Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it,...for it pertains to many days hence”*
 - When these four generals each received a portion of the Empire upon the death of Alexander they each became a king
 - Father reminded us that this is about the historical period from the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity (**587 BC**) until the time that Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire with the *Edict of Milan* in **513 AD**
 - At the time of Jesus, the Kingdom of God was established in the midst of the Roman Empire
 - With this background, we can once again see this history as it played out in Daniel’s earlier dream in **Daniel 7**

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:7** *“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast,...and it had ten horns”*
 - As mentioned, the four wings on the leopard refer to the speed of Alexander the Great as he conquered the Medo-Persian empire
 - The four heads represent the successor generals
 - Then, we see a fourth beast with **iron teeth** and **ten horns** (representing the **ten kings** of this last and greatest earthly kingdom (the **Roman Empire**))
 - Look at the parallel here to the **“iron legs”** with clay and iron feet on the great statue in **Daniel 2**

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- As mentioned, all of these dreams reflect the events of the same historical period
- At the end of the Roman period, the stone not cut by human hands (**Daniel 2:45**) which became a mountain (the Kingdom of God) will dominate (this means that God was coming)
- Each succeeding empire engaged in many battles to defeat the previous empire
- Thus, the early Christians are going to be a part of these battles against the Roman Empire, but they were using spiritual weapons instead of the weapons of war

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:8-12** *“I considered the horns,...but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time”*
 - As we just saw, the horns represent the kings of the Roman Empire preceding the establishment of the Kingdom of God
 - The theme of a season and a time is a brief window into how all this worked
 - These kingdoms (just like the 10 toes of clay and iron on Nebuchadnezzar's statue) will crumble when the Kingdom of God is made the religion of Rome
 - Father pointed out that almost every biblical scholar with a PhD would teach these same points
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Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:13-14** *“I saw in the night vision,... and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed”*
 - “One like a son of man” was someone who looked like a human being
 - This was what King Nebuchadnezzar wanted when he built the all golden statue to the Babylonian god Marmaduke, (gold from head to toe - Daniel 3:1-7*)
 - This was his way of trying to force his kingdom to last forever
 - This did not end well for him as he would eventually lose his kingdom

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- In the text here in **Daniel 7**, we discover a framing device back to the earlier dream in **Daniel 3** where the king demands all obedience to his golden statue
- In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we had four kingdoms before the Kingdom of God (5 total kingdoms)
- Daniel's dream has the same five kingdoms
- Father pointed out that the Medo-Persian Empire arose during the time of the Babylonian Empire
- Each succeeding Empire arose by defeating the existing Empire including the Kingdom of God

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:15-16** *“as for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious in the visions of my head alarmed me,...and made known to me the interpretation of these things”*
 - At this point Daniel, had not as yet seen his vision in Daniel 8
 - He will not be around at the end of this process a couple of centuries later
 - Yet, here we are 2500 years later looking back on this history, and it all came true
 - This is why Daniel became a bit perturbed in his day

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:17-18** *“there four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most high shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, forever, and ever”*
 - The saints are the holy ones of the Kingdom of God
 - They will be set apart; they will be different
 - *Kadosh* means holy, set apart, different

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:19-20** *“Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast,...this horn made war on the saints”*
 - Daniel was very interested in this 4th beast (the final one)
 - He even focused on its feet which was parallel to the feet of the fourth kingdom in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (ten horns here and ten toes in the King's dream)
 - We now know from **Daniel 8** that the horn represented a particular king
 - So, when a horn fell away, it was replaced by another horn
 - This meant that there must have been a particularly powerful king in the Roman Empire

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- Many have suggested that this was *Emperor Nero* or *Domitian* (depending on how one reads the history in Revelation)
- This king made war on the saints (Christians) because each empire had fallen to the following empire after being defeated in many battles
- Father said the same thing happened to the Roman Empire who was fighting against the Kingdom of God
- This meant that the Romans were going to make war on all of the saints

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- These soldiers, however, were going to fight using the “Word of God” (spiritual weapons), instead of the weapons of war
- There will be many battles, many people are going to die, but eventually (just as in the earlier wars) the Kingdom of God will prevail over the Kingdom of Rome
- This is what Daniel will say next

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- **Daniel 7:21-22** *“As I looked, this horn made war with the saints, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom”*
 - Father recommended we highlight this verse as it comes up frequently in the New Testament
 - It was extremely important to the Christians in the 1st Century
 - This horn (Roman King) made war on and prevailed over the saints (members of the Kingdom of God) until the arrival of the “ancient of days”
 - With this historical picture in mind, we know at this point this Kingdom was legalized at the time of Emperor Constantine

Daniel 7 (Cont)

- Some scholars proposed, due to the accuracy of this history, that it must have been written after the fact
- Unfortunately for them, the Book of Daniel cannot be dated any later than the 2nd Century BC
- And, since it tells us that the saints will prevail and inherit the Roman Empire, which we know occurred with Constantine who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, and then the Empire split into two parts
- This is one of the most beautiful examples of history and bible prophecy and the inspiration of God (this could not have been made up!)
- We will now return to **Revelation 13**

Revelation 13 (Cont)

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- Be sure you have highlighted **Daniel 7: 21-22**
- This gives us the background that is critical to make the leap between **Revelation 12** and **13**
- John assumes that his audience knows this history very well
- He is assuming a Christian audience in the 1st Century
- Biblical scholars will tell us that the 1st Century Christians knew the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament) like the back of their hand

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- They could recite from memory huge sections of scriptures
- Many had memorized the **Psalms**
- Father said that this should give us a window into what is going on in the head of the 1st Century Christians
- This is information John was expecting us to know as he presents the next episode

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- **Revelation 13:1-4** *“And I saw a beast rising out of the sea,...and who can fight against it?”*
 - As discussed earlier, this 4th beast is the Roman Empire
 - This means that it inherited the power and strength of the beasts that came before which were: the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, and the Greek Empire (bear, leopard, and lion)
 - The dragon from **Revelation 12** was Satan
 - Here, we see a different beast (the Roman Empire) who has been given the powers of Satan
 - Satan was controlling everything (the puppet master)

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- This one particular horn that was very powerful was what we saw in Daniel
- Satan was controlling everything and he had given this power to the Roman Empire
- Many people (at that time) asked who could fight against these Romans
- Father said that we should go back and read the Book of **1st Maccabees**, when the Greeks surrendered to the Roman Empire

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- **Revelation 13:5-7** *“and the beast was given a mouth uttering and blasphemous words,...And authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation”*
 - This beast (Roman Empire) was given authority and other haughty things (right out of **Daniel 7:21**) for a period of **42 months** (3 and ½ years, the time the Roman besieged Jerusalem)
 - It was also allowed to make war on the Saints (**Daniel 7:21**)
 - Tribe, people, tongue, and nation (**Daniel 7**)
 - All of these things will eventually be given to the *Son of Man*, thus someone must have had all this before
 - This authority and power (from Babylon to Rome) was finally given to the Kingdom of God (Father asked that we highlight the word “saints”)

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- **Revelation 13:9-10** *“If anyone has an ear,...and faith of the saints”*
 - This is right out of **Revelation 1**, where John was telling his listeners to endure faithfully the present persecution and tribulation
 - At this point in time, the Roman Empire was forcing the Christians in Asia Minor in the 90s to worship false gods (especially the king of the Roman Empire and all its gods)

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- **Revelation 13:11-12** *“Then I saw another beast which rose out of the earth...whose mortal wound was healed”*
 - We have an extra beast, which Daniel did not tell us about
 - This one came from the land (those from the sea were Gentile, those from the land were coming from where people were standing)
 - This beast looked like a lamb, it had two horns, and it rose out of the earth
 - As we now know, the first beast was the Roman Empire

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- This, second beast, had the authority of the Roman Empire and it makes the inhabitants worship the first beast
- This means that the beast that comes from the land where God's people were living, was forcing them to worship the Roman Empire
- In the 90s, the pagan religious authorities of Asia Minor (those running the temples of Zeus and Venus) were forcing the polytheistic worship of the Roman gods on all of the people
- Most were polytheist and had no problem with this

Revelation 13 (Cont)

- The Christians, on the other hand, were not going to do this
- In particular, at that time, they required the worship of the king of Rome (*Caesar*)
- Father pointed out that enforcing *Caesar* worship is historically documented starting in the 90s in Asia Minor