

# HOPING IN BABYLON

Devotional | March 12, 2023

GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

**Discuss:** Why do you think God provides prophecies and their fulfillment in the Bible?

**Key Text:** Read *Daniel 7:1-28*

During the first and third years of Belteshazzar's reign, Daniel had two visions (recorded in Daniel Chapters 7 and 8) of future Gentile world powers.

## 1. In his prophetic vision, Daniel sees four Gentile kingdoms (7:1-8).

The phrase "*the four winds of heaven*" (7:2) is sometimes used to refer to God's providential actions among persons or nations (Jer.49:36; 51:16). The word "*sea*" (7:2) is sometimes used to represent people or nations (Is.17:12-13; 57:20). So, Daniel's vision is about God's providential actions among Gentile people and nations. The "*four great beasts*" (7:3) refer to the violent Gentile nations – Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome – already seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2.

**Discuss:** Divine providence refers to the fact that God knows, cares for, and directs all things in the universe. What words and phrases about God's providence do you see in Psalm 66:7; 103:19; Matthew 5:45; Luke 1:52 and Galatians 4:4? Does it comfort you to know that God is in control of all things? Why or why not?

In Daniel's dream, four beasts emerge from the earth in sequence.

- The 1st beast (7:4) looked like a lion with wings of an eagle. As Daniel watched, the wings were torn off and the beast stood like a man and was given the mind of a man. This beast likely represents Babylon (Babylon was a powerful nation). The clipping of the wings represents Nebuchadnezzar's humbling (see 4:28-37).
- The 2nd beast (7:5) looked like a bear, raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth. A voice told the bear to eat all it wanted. This beast likely represents the Persian kingdom, and the three ribs allude to Persian's three great conquests of Babylon, Egypt, and Libya.
- The 3rd beast (7:6) was like a leopard with four wings and four heads. This likely represents the Greek empire established by Alexander the Great. The four wings and heads allude to the four generals who divided the kingdom when Alexander died.
- The 4th beast (7:7) was the most terrifying of them all with ten horns and large iron teeth to crush and devour its enemies. This beast likely refers to the Roman Empire, which became dominant in the 2nd century B.C. and surpassed the other three empires with superior administrative and military capabilities. Its ten horns allude to Rome's ten emperors. Daniel then saw a little horn with eyes like a man and a mouth overpower the three horns and speak arrogantly against God, claiming its own divinity. This little horn alludes to the Satan-energized Antichrist (see Rev.13:1-5) who will rule on earth temporarily after Christ's return (7:8). (For more information on the end times, the Antichrist, etc., see the "For Further Study" section at the end of this lesson.)

## 2. In his vision, Daniel sees Jesus judging and destroying the little horn (7:9-14).

Another kingdom, different from the previous four, comes into Daniel's view. Unlike the others, this kingdom does not violently overthrow people; rather, it judges those who practice evil. In 7:9-12 God's Son, Jesus, who is called "*the Ancient of Days*" (denoting sovereignty) has clothing "*white as snow*" (denoting purity), hair like "*pure wool*" (denoting eternity), and a throne of flaming fire, with wheels of fire, issuing fire (denoting judgment) that destroys the little horn even while it was still spewing blasphemies, and throws it into fire where it is killed (7:9-12). In the final part of his dream, Daniel sees a coronation. No one is worthy to appear before God except the Son of Man (Jesus) who walks dramatically on the clouds of heaven and approaches God who gives Him a mighty, glorious, and eternal kingdom (7:13-14).

**Discuss:** How does Daniel's dream give us hope for eternity?

**Discuss:** What evidence is there that you have placed your hope in Christ alone

## 3. The Interpretation of Daniel's Vision (7:15-28).

Daniel was alarmed—he understood that judgment was coming, and he wanted more explanation regarding the fourth empire. So, he asked the angel Gabriel (see 9:21) who explained that the four ancient kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome will give way to God's glorious eternal kingdom (7:15-18). Daniel then desires clarity about the fourth beast (7:19-22). Angel Gabriel responded that while the fourth beast would devour the earth (7:23-24) and defy God (7:25), he would ultimately be destroyed by God (7:26-27). Daniel is overwhelmed by all of this, especially as he considers how Israel would be impacted (7:28).

**Discuss:** What key words and phrases regarding God's call for His people to patiently endure trials and tribulations stand out to you in these verses: James 1:12; 5:7-9; 1 Peter 1:6-7?

**Discuss:** What lessons does God teach us about time in these verses: Psalm 31:15; 62:8; 106:3; Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5; James 4:13-17?

**Discuss:** What impacted you most about today's lesson?

**NOTE:** Daniel's vision raises a lot of questions about the end times, Christ's return, the Antichrist, the Tribulation, etc. Please see the "For Further Study" resources below for more Bible-based information on questions and issues Daniel's vision raises.

### For Further Study:

Free online commentary on the Book of Daniel at [www.enduringword.com](http://www.enduringword.com)

"Who is the One like a Son of Man in Daniel 7:13?" article at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

"Is the Little Horn in Daniel 7 the Antichrist?" article at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

"Who is the Antichrist?" article at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

"What is the Tribulation?" article at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

Numerous Bible answers to questions about the End Times at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)