

Daniel 7: The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days

A short Bible study from The Son Of Man Daniel 7

Daniel 7 is the chapter this ministry takes its name from. In one night vision Daniel sees the kingdoms of this world rise and fall, a final ruler who wars against God's people, and the everlasting kingdom given to "one like a son of man". Read the whole chapter first, then work through the sections below.

1. Four beasts from the sea

Daniel spoke and said, "I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the sky broke out on the great sea. Four great animals came up from the sea, different from one another.

Daniel 7:2–3 (WEB)

A lion with eagle's wings (v. 4), a bear (v. 5), a leopard with four wings and four heads (v. 6), and a fourth beast, "terrible and powerful", with iron teeth and ten horns (v. 7). The angel explains them:

'These great animals, which are four, are four kings, who will arise out of the earth.

Daniel 7:17 (WEB)

2. The little horn

"I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking arrogantly.

Daniel 7:8 (WEB)

He will speak words against the Most High, and will wear out the saints of the Most High. He will plan to change the times and the law; and they will be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time.

Daniel 7:25 (WEB)

This final ruler speaks against the Most High, wears out the saints and tries to change times and law, for "a time, and times and half a time". Compare the beast of Revelation 13:5–7, who is given authority for forty-two months and makes war with the saints.

3. The court of heaven

"I watched until thrones were placed, and one who was Ancient of Days sat. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames, and its wheels burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came out from before him. Thousands of thousands ministered to him. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set. The books were opened.

Daniel 7:9–10 (WEB)

Whatever power the beasts seem to have, the real throne is in heaven. The court sits, the books are opened, and the beast is judged (v. 11).

4. One like a son of man

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. Dominion was given him, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:13–14 (WEB)

Jesus' favourite title for Himself was "the Son of Man". At His trial He quoted this very passage:

Jesus said to him, “You have said so. Nevertheless, I tell you, after this you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of the sky.”

Matthew 26:64 (WEB)

5. The saints receive the kingdom

I saw, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Daniel 7:21–22 (WEB)

The kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole sky, will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey him.’

Daniel 7:27 (WEB)

Notice the order: the horn makes war against the saints *until* the Ancient of Days comes and judgment is given. God's people are on earth during the little horn's reign, and they are vindicated when the kingdom is given to them.

Questions for reflection

1. What does Daniel 7 teach about who is really in control of history (v. 9–10, 26)?
2. How does Jesus' use of Daniel 7:13 in Matthew 26:64 show who He claimed to be?
3. According to verses 21–22 and 25, will the saints face the little horn? How should that shape the way we prepare?
4. Read Revelation 13:5–7. What links do you see with Daniel 7?