

The fourth beast and his destruction

Daniel 7: 13-28



In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.

Daniel had a series of visions. This vision was the part of the final, fifth empire – God's kingdom

Jesus refers to this passage as his coming to judge in Matthew 26:64.

He often referred to himself as 'the Son of Man'
It is used of Ezekiel and Daniel to refer to their humanity.

This person is 'LIKE' a son of man ie. human in appearance but he is also something else too.
So this vision refers especially to the end times and Jesus' second coming.

He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.
He was given authority, glory and sovereign power;

He approaches God publicly (before the gathered multitude of angels) to be given full authority to judge and rule the whole world.



all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him.

Several versions translate the word 'worship' here as 'serve'. This chapter, like the previous chapters 2-6 is written in Aramaic. The word used is 'pelach'. The Hebrew equivalent 'avad', can mean both to serve and to worship. However in every occurrence of the word (once in Ezra and 9 times in Daniel) it is ALWAYS used in the context of serving/worshipping, whether false gods or the true God.

Therefore, the Aramaic scripture clearly shows both the humanity of the Messiah and also his Deity - the God-Man.

He rules over a kingdom of true worshippers from all nations.



His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

In complete contrast to the other empires, Messiah's kingdom is eternal - it cannot fade (internally) or be destroyed (externally).

The Millennial reign referred to in Revelation 20 is seen as the earthly commencement of his reign which continues into eternity in the new heavens and earth of chapter 21.



I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things..

Daniel (still in his vision) asked one of the angels standing there what it all meant. We see from the later verses in this chapter that what the fourth beast does to God's people is what particularly disturbs him.



The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth.



This was the explanation of the various world empires that were given in the vision:-

Babylonian : Medo-Persian : Greek : Roman.

But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever--yes, for ever and ever.'



The 'saints of the Most High' refers to true believers
cf. Ephesians 1 – called to be saints,
Revelation 8:4 – the incense = prayers of the saints
Revelation 19:8 – the saints are at the marriage supper
This is the ultimate inheritance that God will give to his people
Eternal life - 'forever' is repeated for emphasis!

Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws--the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.



This is the one that really concerns Daniel. The beast was different Not only in its terrifying power and violence but also in its duration – it continues till the end when it is destroyed.

Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast,
which was different from all the others

How far ahead in time Daniel could see we are not sure, but we know the Roman empire lasted a 1000 years and for these last 1500 years other nations have been dominant. And yet Daniel sees this empire continuing till the end.

The remains of Roman influence are with us still, and it seems that a 'revived' form of European power will be seen at the end of time just before Christ's return.



I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell--the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.



In what way are the 10 horns and the 'little' horn related as part of the fourth beast?

The 10 horns (on its head, where power is exercised) co- exist for a period of time but 3 are removed by the imposing horn with eyes and a blasphemous mouth. It is clearly set in opposition to God. (anti-God , and is known as **the** Anti-Christ).

A word of caution is appropriate here since many times during the history of the church, people have made claims to have identified the final Antichrist. Since he hasn't yet appeared we should stay alert and assess the situations as they arise.

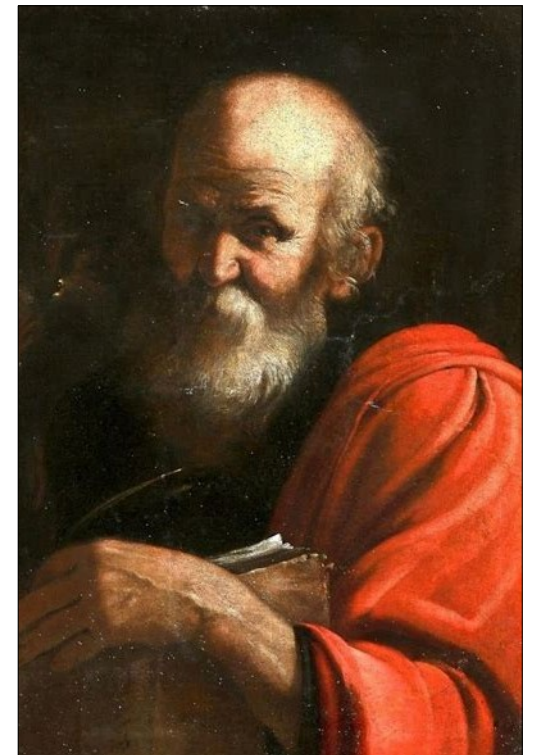


Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians gives particular signs that will help us identify the time and the person.

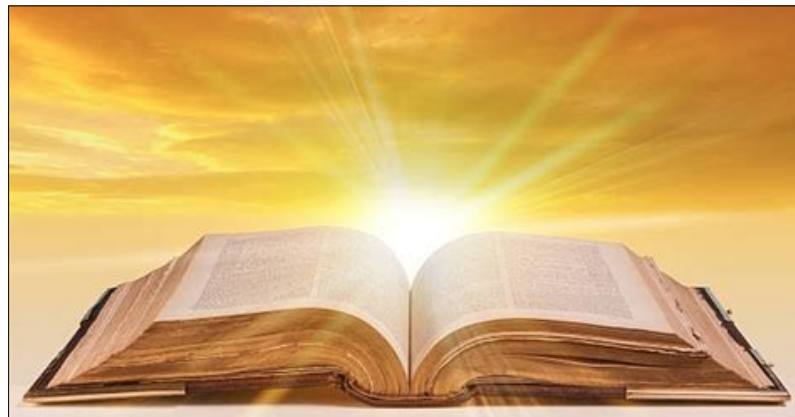
*2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. **And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.***

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

One of the wonderful things about the Bible is that one passage can throw light onto another passage. With regard to Daniel's vision of the fourth beast we can look at Revelation chapter 13. These two visions are separated by at least 500 years ! However, John's vision clarifies several details and answers some of Daniel's questions.



Revelation 13:1-4 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marvelled as they followed the beast. And they worshipped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"



COMPARE

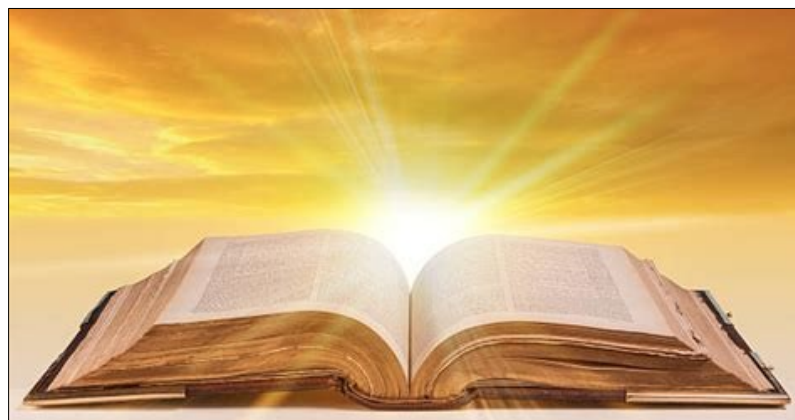
The points of similarity are:-

- 1, The same origin – the sea,
- 2, There are 10 horns
- 3, The composite description – it is made up of parts of all four beasts in Daniel's vision

The extra details are :

- 1, Seven heads – perhaps representing all the Bible empires – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome and the final 'Roman' form.
- 2, It is controlled by the dragon (Satan)
- 3, It appears to have had a 'resurrection' - imitating Christ's

Revelation 13:5-10 And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.



COMPARE



Points of similarity:-

- 1, The length of it's reign – 3 ½ times and 42 months ie 3 ½ years
- 2, Believers (their names are in the Book, ie saints) go through this difficult time before the beast's defeat.

Extra:-

vs. 11-18 describe the beast's 'assistant' – the false prophet.
He looks like a 'lamb' ie. imitating Jesus
He speaks like the dragon - voicing Satan's message.

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,

This was the worrying part for Daniel. God's enemies were succeeding in the war against believers. Daniel would be concerned about how his people will fare during this time.

cf. 1 Peter encourages NT. believers facing trials. Later fierce persecutions came for some believers.

Still today many believers are suffering for their faith.

This appears to intensify during the 'reign' of this horn.

This (as in Revelation 13) suggests that believers will have to face hard times during the period of Antichrist's power.

The victory that overcomes the world may for some mean dying in the faith they hold dear.



As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

The experience of the saints will reflect what happened to our Lord. His death seemed like defeat and a victory for the powers of darkness. He suffered. However, in reality it was our Lord's greatest victory.

But the principle runs true for his people:-
the cross (of suffering) comes before the crown.



The victory comes from God acting against our enemy and judging in favour of (ie. vindicating) his trusting people.

Their reward is to inherit the kingdom.

whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

He gave me this explanation.. `The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will **devour the whole earth**, trampling it down and crushing it.

One major difference with the fourth beast is that it has a global power. Rome had that to some degree, but the latter part in this vision is even more extensive, affecting the whole world. It will be the ultimate reign of evil.



And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom.

The horns are part of the fourth beast, but are contemporary kings and their associated kingdoms.

There is something about them that unites them. Their origin is in the Roman empire.

In their nature they are hostile to God.



After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones;
he will subdue three kings.

In the latter part of this 10 part kingdom one person will appear who is different. In what way it is different is explained in the next verse.

He will come to power by subduing (that sounds like a violent take-over) 3 of the 10 parts of the empire.



He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws.

What marks him as different is his open hostility to God and the things that God has set in place.

He will be a persecutor of believers. He will attempt (how successfully?) to change set times ie. marked seasons in the calendar (eg. Jewish festivals)

He will attempt to undermine God's laws that form the foundation of civilised society.



We have seen these attempts throughout history eg. the French Revolution, Communist regimes, neo-Marxist methods, They are preparing the way for Antichrist.

He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

There will be signs that should alert believers...

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.



The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

How long will believers have to suffer?

3 and a half times ($1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2}$)

(but notice it is stated in an unusual way – spread out -
It starts with one : then doubles it: then tries to double it again
but fails and gets just a half)

Revelation 13:5 gives us
the time as 42 months

(If Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:16)
was 'out of action' for 7 times,
meaning 7 years, perhaps his son
or someone else acted as co-regent
during that period.)



But the court will sit,
and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed
forever.

Revelation 19:20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur.



Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High.

Revelation 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.



His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom,
and all rulers will worship and obey him.`

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.

Having lived through the desolation of the Exile and the destruction of Jerusalem and its people, Daniel must have been deeply concerned about the future of the 'saints' who would be facing this terrible foe before the end came..



The emotion affected his appearance. But he didn't speak about what he had seen – yet.

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and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

