

## DAY 6 - JANUARY 13, 2026

### ***Four Beasts and the Son of Man (Daniel 7)***

Many believe that Daniel 7 is the most important chapter in the Book of Daniel. It prophesies the direction of four major empires, culminating in the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. First, we'll consider the heavenly courtroom scene, then the four beasts and the kingdoms they represent.

#### **The Ancient of Days**

The expression “Ancient of Days” (7:9, 13, 22) draws upon the ideas of advanced age, white hair to represent the wisdom of age, as well as the purity and holiness represented by the white garments (Matthew 17:2; 1 Timothy 6:16). The Ancient of Days, of course, is the Eternal God, Yahweh, the Most High God, whom Jesus called “Father” (Psalm 90:2; 97:3; Revelation 20:12).

The presidents and prime ministers and princes of world empires may think that they are accountable to no one, but in Daniel 7 we glimpse the awesome judgment of these seemingly invincible powers. By judgment of this heavenly court, the “little horn” of 7:11-12) is judged. See (Revelation 13:5; 19:20).

**Q1. (Daniel 7:1-2)** What is the relationship of the Ancient of Days (God) to the various beastly nations that rage against each other and against him and his people? What happens to these beast-nations? Why is it sometimes so difficult to believe that God is in charge of the world we live in?

#### **One Like a Son of Man (7:13-14)**

In the Old Testament, the term “son of man” is a Hebraic way of saying “human being” (e.g., Ezekiel 2:1; Psalm 8:4; Daniel 8:17). However, Jesus uses it as the title of “the Son of Man,” rather than Messiah or Son of God. Why?

1. Accurate. Son of Man, drawn directly from the imagery of Daniel 7:13-14 is an accurate description of who he really was and is.
2. Ambiguous. “Son of Man” is ambiguous enough that his enemies aren’t able to seize on the title as blasphemy. Son of Man wasn’t laden with religious or political baggage. If, on the other hand, he had openly called himself Messiah or Son of God, his ministry would have been cut short by his enemies.

#### **The heavenly son of man in Daniel 7:13-14:**

1. Comes with the clouds of heaven (7:13b). This is prerogative of God alone (Psalm 68:4; 104:3b; Isaiah 19:1a; Matthew 24:30b; Mark 13:26; cf. Luke 21:27; Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Revelation 1:7a; 14:14a).
2. Approaches the Ancient of Days (7:13c; Isaiah 6:1-3).
3. He is given authority, glory, and sovereign power (7:14a; Matthew 28:18b-19a; John 20:21).
4. All Peoples Worshiped Him (7:14b). Only a deity is worthy of this kind of worship.
5. Is given an everlasting, indestructible kingdom (7:14c).

This is the kingdom spoken of in Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (2:44).

Thus Jesus’ title as “Son of Man” is a title of divinity, glory, and might! Jesus spoke of the Son of Man as:

1. Coming from heaven (John 3:12-13; 6:62).
2. Judge of all (John 5:27).
3. To be glorified (John 12:23; 13:31-32).
4. To be lifted up, both in glory and as the object of faith on the cross, which is his ultimate glory (John 3:14- 15; 8:28).

5. An atoning sacrifice for sin (Mark 10:45; Isaiah 53).
6. To return in glory (Matthew 16:27; 24:30b; 25:31; Phil 2:10-11).

**Q2. (Daniel 7:13-14)** How do these verses describe “one like a son of man”? What makes us think he is a divine figure? What authority and glory does he receive? Why do you think Jesus called himself “the Son of Man”?

#### **A Summary of the Vision (7:15-18)**

With some clues given in Daniel 8:20-21, it is possible to identify the empires as follows:

1. Lion with wings of an eagle (7:4) = Neo-Babylon Empire.
2. Bear with three ribs in its mouth (7:5) = Medo-Persian Empire.
3. Leopard with Wings of a Bird (7:6) = Greek Empires.
4. The Beast with Iron Teeth, Bronze Claws, and Ten Horns = Roman Empire (7:4-8).

The term “little horn” refers to the size of the horn at the beginning. But later it grew in power. There are two popular views of who the “little horn” (7:8) and the “more imposing” horn (7:20) represent.

1. Antiochus Epiphanes, a Greek king who oppressed the Jewish People in 168-165 BC (held by those who see the four kingdoms as: Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece).

2. The Antichrist. If the fourth kingdom is Rome, then ten horns are ten kings or kingdoms that arise from Rome. Roman domination will be followed by the Antichrist. When we get to 11:36-39, we’ll speak more of “another king” (7:24b) whom I understand as the Antichrist. This lesson is already long, so we’ll wait until Lesson 9 to discuss the Antichrist. However, observe what we learn about the Antichrist figure here. He will:

1. Subdue three kings (7:24b).
2. Speak against the Most High (7:25a).
3. Try to change the set times and the laws (7:25b).
4. The saints will be under his domination for “time, times, and half a time” (7:25c).

There is a sense in which this can be seen as partially fulfilled under Antiochus Epiphanes, but as we’ll see in Lesson 9, this Antichrist figure is larger than any human, and speaks of events long after Antiochus Epiphanes was dead and buried.

**Q3. (Daniel 7:18, 22, 27)** Three times the angel assures Daniel that “the saints of the Most High” will ultimately receive the kingdom and possess it forever (Daniel 7:18, 22, and 27). In what circumstances is this truth most precious to God’s people? Though there may have been partial fulfillments, when do you expect the ultimate fulfillment?

#### **Lessons for Disciples:**

It is very easy to feel overwhelmed at this point, by the visions and prophecies. So it’s important for us to look at the big picture and draw some lessons from Daniel 7 for modern-day disciples.

1. God will judge the nations (Psalm 2; 82:8; 96:10; 110:6; Isaiah 2:4; Joel 3:12; Acts 17:31; Rev. 19:11; etc.).
2. The kingdom of God will triumph in the End (Daniel 7:17-18, 25b-26)
3. Jesus is the Son of Man to whom all power is given (7:13-14).