



Daniel 7

One of the Sublimest Chapters

Sublimest chapters in the Bible

(Excellence, grandeur, beauty
inspiring admiration and awe)

- ✦ Matthew 5
- ✦ Genesis 1
- ✦ John 3
- ✦ Genesis 3
- ✦ Isaiah 9
- ✦ Daniel 8
- ✦ Daniel 7—Prophecy of the nations, little horn, judgment

- ✿ How many beasts are in Daniel 7?
- ✿ How did Daniel initially describe them?

- ✦ How did Daniel initially describe them?
They were great, diverse, and came up from the sea.
- ✦ What were they? Lion, bear, leopard, a dreadful, terrible, and strong beast.

1. Eagle's wings which were plucked off
2. Lifted up from the earth
3. Made to stand upon the feet as a man
4. Given the heart of a man



At first the lion had eagle's wings, denoting the rapidity with which Babylon extended its conquests under Nebuchadnezzar. At this point in the vision a change had taken place; its wings had been plucked. It no longer flew like an eagle upon its prey. The boldness and spirit of the lion were gone. A man's heart, weak, timorous, and faint, had taken its place. Such was emphatically the case with the nation during the closing years of its history, when it had become enfeebled and effeminate through wealth and luxury.

(Uriah Smith, *DAR1909* 127.2)

1. Raised up itself on one side
2. 3 ribs in its mouth between its teeth
3. Arise, devour much flesh



As in the great image of chapter 2, so in this series of symbols a marked deterioration will be noticed as we descend from one kingdom to another. The silver of the breast and arms was inferior to the gold of the head. The bear was inferior to the lion. Medo-Persia fell short of Babylon in wealth and magnificence, and the brilliancy of its career. And now we come to additional particulars respecting this power. The bear raised itself up on one side. This kingdom was composed of two nationalities, the Medes and Persians. (*DAR1909* 127.4)

1. 4 wings as a fowl on its back
2. 4 heads
3. Dominion was given it



The third kingdom, Grecia, is represented by this symbol. If wings upon the lion signified rapidity of conquest, they would signify the same here. The leopard itself is a swift-footed beast, but this was not sufficient to represent the career of the nation which it symbolized in this respect; it must have wings in addition. Two wings, the number the lion had, were not sufficient, it must have four; this would denote unparalleled celerity of movement, which we find to be historically true of the Grecian kingdom. The conquests of Grecia under Alexander have no parallel in historic annals for suddenness and rapidity. (*DAR1909* 128.2)

“The beast had also four heads.” The Grecian empire maintained its unity but little longer than the lifetime of Alexander. Within a few years after his brilliant career ended in a fever induced by a drunken debauch, the empire was divided among his four leading generals. Cassander had Macedon and Greece in the west; Lysimachus had Thrace and the parts of Asia on the Hellespont and Bosphorus in the north; Ptolemy received Egypt, Lydia, Arabia, Palestine, and Coele Syria in the south; and Seleucus had Syria and all the rest of Alexander’s dominions in the east. These divisions were denoted by the four heads of the leopard; B.C.308. (*DAR1909* 131.3)

1. Dreadful, terrible, strong
2. Great iron teeth
3. Devoured, brake in pieces, stamped the residue
4. Diverse and had 10 horns
5. A little horn came up from among the 10 before whom 3 of the first horns were plucked up by the roots
6. The horn had eyes like the eyes of man
7. Had a mouth speaking great things
8. The beast was slain, his body destroyed and given to the burning flame.
9. The little horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.



Daniel considered the horns. Indications of a strange movement appeared among them. A little horn (at first little, but afterward more stout than its fellows) thrust itself up among them. It was not content quietly to find a place of its own, and fill it; it must thrust aside some of the others, and usurp their places. Three kingdoms were plucked up before it. This little horn, as we shall have occasion to notice more fully hereafter, was the papacy. The three horns plucked up before it were the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals. And the reason why they were plucked up was because they were opposed to the teaching and claims of the papal hierarchy, and hence to the supremacy in the church of the bishop of Rome.

(DAR1909 132.4)

1. Thrones were set
2. Ancient of days did sit
3. Thousands ministered unto him
4. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him
5. The judgment was set and the books opened
6. The Son of man came with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days and was given a dominion, glory, and a kingdom



A sublimer description of a sublimer scene is not to be found in the English language. But not only on account of the grand and lofty imagery introduced should it arrest our attention; the nature of the scene itself is such as to demand most serious consideration. The Judgment is brought to view; and whenever the Judgment is mentioned, it ought to take an irresistible hold upon every mind; for all have an interest in its eternal issues.

(DAR1909 134.3)

The Interpretation—vs. 17, 18

- ✦ The beasts are kings, but the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess it for ever.



The Dreadful Beast

- ✦ Shall devour the whole earth
- ✦ 10 horns are 10 kingdoms
- ✦ Little horn shall subdue 3 kings; speak great words against the most High; wear out the saints and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and the dividing of time; think to change times and laws



To Daniel was given a vision of fierce beasts, representing the powers of the earth. But the ensign of the Messiah's kingdom is a lamb.

While earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power, Christ is to banish every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion. His kingdom was to be established to uplift and ennoble fallen humanity (Letter 32, 1899). (*14LtMs*, Lt 32, 1899, par. 9)

Verses 2, 3—That the language here used is symbolic, is evident from verse 17, which reads, “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth.” And to show that kingdoms are intended, and not merely individual kings, the angel continues, “But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.” And further, in the explanation of verse 23, the angel said, “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth.”

These beasts are therefore symbols of four great kingdoms; and the circumstances under which they arose, and the means by which their elevation was accomplished, as represented in the prophecy, are symbolic also. **The symbols introduced are the four winds, the sea, four great beasts, ten horns, and another horn which had eyes and a mouth and rose up in war against God and his people.** (Uriah Smith, *DAR1909* 123.4)

- ✦ Winds—in symbolic language, denote strife, political commotion, and war. (Jeremiah 25:31–33)
- ✦ Sea—is peoples, and nations, and tongues. (Revelation 17:15)
- ✦ Beasts—kingdoms
- ✦ Ten horns—ten kings, or kingdoms, which should arise out of this empire. Rome was divided into ten kingdoms, enumerated as follows: The Huns, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Franks, the Vandals, the Suevi, the Burgundians, the Heruli, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Lombards.
- ✦ Little horn—This little horn is the papacy.

Commenting on the prophecy that the little horn should “**wear out the saints of the Most High**,” Barnes, in his Notes on Daniel 7:25, says: “Can any one doubt that this is true of the papacy? The Inquisition, the persecutions of the Waldenses, the ravages of the Duke of Alva, the fires of Smithfield, the tortures of Goa—indeed, the whole history of the papacy, may be appealed to in proof that this is applicable to that power. If anything could have worn out the saints of the Most High—could have cut them off from the earth so that evangelical religion would have become extinct—it would have been the persecutions of the papal power. In year 1208 a crusade was proclaimed by Pope Innocent III against the Waldenses and Albigenses, in which a million men perished. From the beginning of the order of Jesuits in the year 1540 to 1580, nine hundred thousand were destroyed. One hundred and fifty thousand perished by the Inquisition in thirty years. (*DAR1909* 155.1)

In the Low Countries fifty thousand persons were hanged, beheaded, burned, or buried alive, for the crime of heresy, within the space of thirty-eight years from the edict of Charles V against the Protestants to the peace of Chateau Cambresis in 1559. Eighteen thousand suffered by the hand of the executioner in the space of five years and a half, during the administration of the Duke of Alva. Indeed, the slightest acquaintance with the history of the papacy will convince any one that what is here said of ‘making war with the saints’ (verse 21), and ‘wearing out the saints of the Most High’ (verse 25), is strictly applicable to that power, and will accurately describe its history.” (*DAR1909* 155.1)

And shall “**think to change times and laws.**” What laws and whose? Not the laws of other earthly governments; for it was nothing marvelous or strange for one power to change the laws of another, whenever it could bring such power under its dominion. Not human laws of any kind; for the little horn had power to change these so far as its jurisdiction extended; but the times and laws in question were such as this power should only think to change, but not be able to change. They are the laws of the same Being to whom the saints belong who are worn out by this power; namely, the laws of the Most High.

(DAR1909 159.1)

And has the papacy attempted this? Yes, even this. It has, in its catechisms, expunged the second commandment of the decalogue to make way for its adoration of images. It has divided the tenth commandment to make up the number ten. And, more audacious than all! it has taken hold of the fourth commandment, torn from its place the sabbath of Jehovah, the only memorial of the great God ever given to man, and erected in its place a rival institution to serve another purpose. (*DAR1909* 159.1)

“And they shall be given into his hand until **a time and times and the dividing of time.**” The pronoun they embraces the saints, the times, and the laws just mentioned. How long a time were they to be given into the hands of this power? A time is one year; two times, the least that could be denoted by the plural, two years, and the dividing of time, or half a time half a year. We thus have three years and a half for the continuance of this power.

We must now consider that we are in the midst of symbolic prophecy; hence in this measurement the time is not literal, but symbolic also. The inquiry then arises, How long a period is denoted by the three years and a half of prophetic time? The rule given us in the Bible is, that when a day is used as a symbol, it stands for a year. Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34. The ordinary Jewish year, which must be used as the basis of reckoning, contained three hundred and sixty days. Three years and a half contained twelve hundred and sixty days. As each day stands for a year, we have twelve hundred and sixty years for the continuation of the supremacy of this horn.

After describing the terrible career of the little horn, and stating that the saints should be given into his hand for 1260 years, bringing us down to 1798, verse 26 declares: “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” In verse 10 of the same chapter we have substantially the same expression relative to the judgment: “The judgment was set.” It would seem consistent to suppose that the same judgment is referred to in both instances. But the sublime scene described in verse 10 is the opening of the investigative Judgment in the sanctuary in heaven, as will appear in remarks on Daniel 8:14 and 9:25–27. The opening of this judgment scene is located by the prophecy at the close of the great prophetic period of 2300 years, which terminated in 1844.

The prophecy of ch. 7 covers essentially the same span of history as the dream of ch. 2, both reaching from the prophet's day to the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar saw the world powers represented by a great metallic image; Daniel saw them as symbolic beasts and horns, and saw also aspects of history related to the experience of God's people and the outworking of His plan. (*SDA BC*)



The prophecy of ch. 7,
like those of the
remainder of the book,
was given especially for
the people of God in
order that they might
understand their part in
the divine plan for the
ages. (*SDA BC*)



This great Antichrist is the papal power. Of this there can be no just doubt. The four beasts of Daniel 7 are in that chapter explained to be the four great kingdoms that have successively ruled the whole world. The ten horns of this fourth beast are the ten kingdoms into which the fourth empire is divided. The little horn arises in the midst of these ten kingdoms, a different power from these, ruled by a priest-king and warring against the cause of God. Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2, presents us this great monster of iniquity as “that Man of Sin,” and as “that Wicked,” “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.” (J. N.

Andrews, *Sermons on the Sabbath and the Law* 128.1

He tells us, moreover, that the mystery of iniquity had, even in his time, begun to manifest itself, but that it was restrained by the existing hindrances, i.e., by the pagan government that then controlled the world. Several hundred years of apostasy and rebellion against God were necessary to develop and mature this “Man of Sin,” before he was able to fill the place assigned to him in the prophecy of Daniel. Many acts of rebellion against God, and of wicked and blasphemous conduct toward his law, may, therefore, justly be expected of this great apostasy long before it reaches the place where it can stand up in the midst of the ten kingdoms of the fourth empire, in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy, to war against God, and his law, and his saints. (*SOSL* 128.1)

Here are the actors in these two prophecies — Christ and Antichrist. Their character is not more unlike than is their work. One shall magnify the law and make it honorable; the other shall think himself able to change it. One shall act in perfect subjection to its precepts; the other shall deem himself superior to the law, and able to change it to suit his own purpose. The work of Christ has no connection with that of Antichrist. The work of changing the law of God is wrought alone by Antichrist. In this work, the Son of God has no part.

(SOSL 129.1)

It is the work of Christ to magnify the law and make it honorable. Our Lord did this when he testified that not one jot or one tittle should pass from it till heaven and earth should pass away. He did it when he taught that those who do and teach the commandments should be highly esteemed in the kingdom of Heaven, and those who break them and teach men so should not be thus esteemed. Matthew 5:17–19. (*SOSL* 129.2)

He magnified the law when he showed that it extends even to the intents of the heart. Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28. He also magnified the law when he founded the golden rule upon it. Matthew 7:12. In like manner he did this when he made the keeping of the commandments the condition of entering eternal life. Matthew 19:17. He did it when he taught that any worship which makes void God's commandments is vain in his sight. Matthew 15:1-9. (*SOSL* 129.2)

He did not only magnify the law by such teaching as all this; he did it by his acts. He kept the law of God in every particular. 1 John 3:4, 5. And well he might, for this law was written upon his heart. Psalm 40:8, 10. And yet, by something greater than all this did he honor the law of God. He took the sins of men upon himself, and let the law of God strike him down in the place of the sinner. And by this act he attested his sense of the absolute perfection of the law, and that it was unchangeable and eternal. (*SOSL* 129.2)

Such was the work of Christ toward the law of the Father. There is no fellowship between him and the Man of Sin, and no connection between the work of the one and that of the other respecting the law of God. Whatever, therefore, is done by way of striking down the law of God, or changing it, pertains solely to the Antichrist, and not, in any degree or in any sense, to the Son of God. The following propositions are worthy of the attention of all thoughtful persons: (*SOSL* 129.2)

1. It was no part of the work of Christ to change the law of God.
2. It was his express mission to magnify the law of his Father.
3. The record given in the New Testament shows not one trace of changing the commandments of God on the part of the Saviour.
4. But it does show that by his doctrine his obedience, and his death, he did in the highest degree magnify the moral law.
5. The change of God's law is the work of Antichrist alone; and with that change Christ has no connection.

6. The apostasy which produced this Antichrist began, according to Paul's testimony, in the days of the apostles.

7. We may, therefore, expect to find early traces of the grand heresy which distinguishes Antichrist; viz., the doctrine of the change of the law of God, or of its repeal.

8. In the beginning, the work of apostasy pertained to efforts to change or set aside the second and the fourth commandment as ceremonial; but when the power of Antichrist had reached its greatest height, he was declared to be able to change even virtues into vices and vices into virtues.

The advocates of the sacredness of Sunday suppose they have gained their cause if they have found some evidences that this day was observed with some respect in the early ages of the church. They seem to be certain that the day was then regarded as the Christian Sabbath, and that it had taken the place of the Sabbath of the Lord. They even argue that the testimonies which they produce out of the so-called fathers of the church are ample proof that the apostles changed the law of God, though the New Testament bears testimony in every way to the contrary of this. (*SOSL* 131.3)

How Does Man Acquire Divine Knowledge?

Among the ancient Babylonians, Assyrians and Hittites there was interest in acquiring divine knowledge. In a prayer uttered during the course of a prolonged plague in his land the Hittite emperor Mursili II expressed avenues of divine revelation used by the ancient Near Easterner: “If people are dying for some reason other [than the sins we have discovered thus far], then either let me see it by a **dream**, or let it be determined by **oracular inquiry**, or let an ecstatic **prophet** declare it, or, as I have instructed all the priests, they shall practice incubation.” (Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., “Ancient Views of Prophecy and Fulfillment,” *Journal Evangelical Theological Society*, September 1987, with slight edits)

Oracles, Incubation

- ✦ Oracle from Latin *orare*, “to pray,” or “to speak”— divine communication delivered in response to a petitioner’s request. Oracles were associated with a definite person or place.
- ✦ Oracular shrines were numerous in antiquity, and at each the god was consulted by a fixed means of divination. The method could be simple, such as the casting of lots or the rustling of tree leaves, or more sophisticated, taking the form of a direct inquiry of an inspired person who then gave the answer orally. One of the most common methods was incubation, in which the inquirer slept in a holy precinct and received an answer in a dream.
- ✦ Invalids, for example, slept in the hall of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine and claimed to receive cures through dreams.

- ✦ Attempts to predict the future have included signs in nature, such as lightning, thunder, flocks of birds overhead, the cries of birds, and bird entrails.
- ✦ Things which occurred casually, such as the unexpected appearance of animals connected to false gods—a bear, a wolf, an eagle, a serpent, or an owl—or the accidental spilling of salt, sneezing, stumbling, or the creaking of furniture. Such things were thought to be a communication from the gods to them.
- ✦ Casting of lots, astrology, dreams, numerology, and many other ways were also considered ways to know the will of the gods.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
but we will remember the name of the
LORD our God. (Psalm 20:7)

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:22)

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light
unto my path. (Psalm 119:105)

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Jeremiah 13:1-5

Jeremiah 27, 28

- ✦ Jehoiakim's reign started 609 BC; died natural causes
- ✦ Zedekiah's started 597 BC, 12 years later; died in prison. During his reign the second rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (588–586 BC) took place. Jerusalem was captured after a lengthy siege. The temple was burned and Zedekiah was blinded and taken into exile.

Kings often took prophets or diviners with them on military expeditions. (Hoffner, Ibid.)

Faced with a dangerous Philistine attack, King Saul sought dreams, the Urim and Thummim, and prophets to know what to do. He was afraid. When these failed, he went to the witch of Endor. (1 Samuel 28:4-7).

Nonroyal persons also needed predictions. Business plans were dependent upon good weather, international peace, security on the roads, and the availability of resources and markets. Some Mesopotamian omens predicted the rise or fall of prices. It is likely that through all levels of ancient society there was a brisk interest in obtaining knowledge of the immediate future. (Hoffner, Ibid.)

And they did this through fortune-telling, dreams, nature, etc.

But we have a more sure word of prophecy.

2 Peter 1:16–2:2
Deuteronomy 18:9–15