**Surviving in Dangerous Times – Lesson 5 – Daniel 7**

I. Review

II. Daniel has his own dream and vision (v1)

 A. Timeframe – 553 BC – the 1st year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon

 B. Wrote summary of dream – so it would help his countrymen and future generations

 C. First of Daniel’s apocalyptic prophesy chapters (7-12) – a theology of hope for believers

 D. Continuation of dream in Daniel 2, which occurred 50 years earlier

 1. Overall purpose of Daniel – God is in charge of history – therefore, trust Him

 2. Don’t expect to unlock all mysteries of this apocalyptic passage

III. The Dream, Part 1 – four beasts appear in sequence (v2-8)

 A. Setting – four winds of heaven stirring the great sea – seas represent great evil and chaos in a sinful world stirring against God

 B. Four great beasts appear – identity of the beasts not important, otherwise that would have been given

 1. Coming up from the sea – gives good picture of their moral character (Is 57:20)

 2. All different from one another – succession of fearsome beasts – from bad to worse

 C. First beast – probably Babylon

 1. Like a lion with wings of an eagle – lion was recognized symbol of Babylon

 2. Its wings were plucked

 3. It was lifted from the ground, made to stand on two feet like a man

 D. Second beast – probably Medo-Persia

 1. Resembled a bear – raised up on one side represents Persia’s ascendancy over Media

 2. Three ribs in its mouth between its teeth

 3. Was told to arise and eat much (devour) meat

 E. Third beast – probably Greece

 1. Like a leopard with four bird-like wings on its back – swift like Alexander’s conquest

 2. Had four heads – division of Greece into four separate regions after Alexander died

 F. Fourth beast – most say Rome

 1. Dreadful, terrifying, extremely strong – not “like” any created beast of the earth

 2. Had large iron teeth – devoured, crushed and trampled down the remaining beasts

 3. Different from the other three beasts

 4. Originally had ten horns, but another little horn appeared, and three of the first ten were pulled out by the roots

 5. Little horn had eyes like those of a man and mouth uttering great boasts

 6. Similarities to beast of Rev 13 – grotesque, 10 horns, very powerful, came out of sea

 7. Is it really Rome? – maybe it represents last human kingdom

 G. Summary – history is “beastly” – countless millions died by cruelty in past 150 years

IV. The Dream, Part 2 – Ancient of Days and One like Son of Man arrive (v9-14)

 A. Thrones were set up, and Ancient of Days took his seat – a judicial setting

 1. Term used in contrast to all short/terminal kingdoms of men that are doomed

 2. Garment like white snow = radiant purity – basis for judgment (Rev 1:14)

 3. Hair was like pure wool – wisdom that comes with age to sort out right from wrong

 4. Throne ablaze with flames – reality of judgment – power to enforce His judgments

 a. Represents God’s presence (Gen 15:17, Ex 3:2,13:21,19:18)

 b. Fury of God’s judgment by fire (Lev 10:1-2, Num 11:1-3,16:35)

 5. Throne’s wheels – burning fire; river of fire was flowing from before Ancient of Days

 6. Thousands upon thousands were attending him – majesty of the scene

 7. Myriads were standing before him – we are not alone

 8. Court was convened and books were opened wide

 B. Little horn speaking boastful words

 1. Fourth beast eventually killed

 2. Body destroyed and given to the burning fire

 C. Dominion removed from other beasts, but their life was extended for an appointed period of time

 D. One like the Son of Man arrives with clouds of heaven, not from the sea (Mt 26:63-66)

 1. Was presented to the Ancient of Days after His ascension (Acts 1:9)

 2. Given an empire, glory, and sovereignty – coronation (Jn 5:27, Rev 14:14-20)

V. Interpretation, a short summary (v15-18)

 A. Daniel expresses distress and alarm

 B. The short summary interpretation

 1. Dream, Part 1 – four beasts are four kings (kingdoms implied) who will arise on earth

 2. Dream, Part 2 – saints of Supreme God will receive kingdom and possess it forever

VI. Interpretation, a longer version (v19-28)

 A. Daniel perplexed – asks about the fourth beast in particular

 1. Reasons for asking

 a. It was so different, exceedingly dreadful

 b. It devoured, crushed, and trampled the remaining beasts

 c. The horns were confusing

 2. Judgment passed against the horn and in favor of the saints, and the saints took possession of the kingdom

 B. Dream, Part 1 – further explanation of fourth beast – fourth kingdom

 1. Will be different and will devour and trample and crush the whole earth

 2. 10 horns will be ten kings that will arise – no unity, no cohesion, constant fighting

 3. The little horn will arise that is different than the previous 10 – will be an 11th king who subdues 3 kings

 4. The 11th king will speak against God and wear down the saints – saints will be given into his hand for 3½ years – many think this represents Antichrist, last world ruler before Christ comes again (II Thes 2:3-10, I Jn 2:18)

 C. Dream, Part 2 – victory of the saints

 1. Court will sit in judgment on the fourth kingdom – horn’s dominion will be removed, annihilated, and destroyed forever

 2. Future of the saints

 a. Dominion and authority of all kingdoms on the earth will be given to the saints

 b. That dominion will be everlasting – all other dominions will serve and obey God

 D. Daniel’s reaction

 1. Revelation ended at that point without further or full explanation

 2. His thoughts were greatly alarming

 a. God has won the war, but it is not over yet

 b. Life will not be easy because the battle rages

 3. His face grew pale

 4. He kept the whole matter to himself – he did not completely understand every detail

VII. Some concluding remarks

 A. There is no timeline for the events or names of the beasts of this chapter given to us

 B. We cannot completely understand every detail of Daniel’s dream as to how it actually has already or will in the future work out

 C. World powers are temporal, especially evil ones

 D. The chapter does proclaim a final victory for God’s people through the work of the Ancient of Days after a harrowing time