

## **Daniel 7:15- 25 – Wretched Beast but Wonderfully Blessed!**

Henry, Poole, Gill, TSK, Young, Leupold, Geneva, INT, HebrewLexicon, GreekLexicon,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God is not a “helicopter” father who hovers over his children to keep them from falling, nor does he keep them in a room with padded walls软垫墙. No, God wanted his children to go through trials - trials that he knew would be good for them. But before they would face these horrors, he assured them that they would make it through their coming hellish sufferings地狱般的苦难 and be gloriously blessed in a never ending kingdom. In a way, God was like a doctor who has to tell a patient what will happen in surgery so he can prepare for the pain and look forward to his recovery and enjoying life in fullness again. This is the message the Lord has for you today.

Our headings are: **That Wonderful Future Blessing**, and **That Wretched 4<sup>th</sup> beast**.

Our goals are: **That you will see how God carries you through your trials when he does not want to remove them from you**, and **that you will continue to look and depend on him through your trials, knowing greater days are waiting**.

### **That Wonderful Future Blessing**

15 "I, Daniel, was **grieved in my spirit** within **my body**, and the visions of my **head troubled me**.

16 "I came near to one of those who stood by, and **asked him the truth** of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

1. **Daniel did not like what he saw in Judah’s future. But that’s an understatement. Daniel was deeply hurt in his innermost being at what he saw! Literally, he “was grieved in his spirit in the midst of his body.” He, like the Jews, might have expected an easier return to Jerusalem and to worship there after captivity. He yearned向往 for that. That is why he prayed facing Jerusalem 3 times every day. No father likes to think that his children will have a harder life than he. A father usually hopes that his descendants will have an easier life and will work for that. So Daniel was grieved.**

17 'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.

2. **How would the troubles come? From 4 beasts. These 4 beasts were 4 kingdoms: the Medo-Persians, Greeks and Romans. Keep in mind that kingdom and kings were often used interchangeably in the Bible. Eg. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that he was the head of gold in the image he saw...and yet that head of gold referred to the whole Babylonian Empire. Daniel 2:37 "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 "and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. 39 "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.**

And in fact, it was a number of kings later after Nebuchadnezzar, during the reign of his grandson, Belshazzar, that the kingdom was destroyed.

18 'But the **saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.**'

3. **Even though Daniel’s vision was referring to future troubles for the people of God, it was yet also a message of hope – glorious hope- for the people of God. Yes, it was going to be some time in the future, but God’s people had a bright future – a greater hope and greater glory than during the reign of Solomon. Solomon’s reign, when silver was like stones, would be nothing compared to the future. You see, God’s children must always think of the big picture, they must always think of eternity. Your thinking must not be limited to the “here and now,” and of your present troubles. This is why at the height of the Roman Empire (the Empire that would kill him) Jesus Christ said:**

**Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**

The future looked bleak严峻 very bleak. Jesus told them that the Romans were going to destroy Jerusalem and the temple in it and that they would murder untold numbers. And yet, there was no panic in Jesus Christ’s words. He grounded it in “all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.” He had asked for the kingdom of the world from his Father and his Father had given it to him.

**Psalms 2:7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.'"**

Whatever is in this the Lord’s hand he is well able to keep! Whatever he has promised he has the desire and the ability to fulfill! And that this was the unstoppable kingdom that would fill the whole earth...that Stone that grew.

**Daniel 2:35...the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

## That Wretched 4<sup>th</sup> Beast

19 "**Then I wished to know the truth** about the **fourth beast**, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled 践踏 the residue with its feet;

1. Daniel realized the uniqueness – the exceptional nature of the 4<sup>th</sup> beast that would bring so much suffering on God's people. (We have already established that this was the Roman Empire. But because we have the rest of the Bible, and Daniel didn't, he asked for more explanations. He found the 4<sup>th</sup> beast amazing, not in an admiring way, but a shocking way. What specifically did he note for concern? The 4<sup>th</sup> beast was fearsome 可怕, had teeth of iron, had nails of bronze, was a devourer 吞噬者, was a breaker in pieces, and was a trampler. This one was worse than the other 3 beasts.

20 "and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. 21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war **against the saints**, and **prevailing against them**, 22 "until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

2. The angel first gave details about the 4<sup>th</sup> beast V21-22, and then gave the interpretation, beginning from V23. The angel did not lie to shield him from the truth about the 4<sup>th</sup> beast.

23 "**Thus he said:** 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall **devour 吞吃 the whole earth**, **Trample it and break it in pieces.**

3. The 4<sup>th</sup> beast, a 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom, would rule, and devour the known world, including Jerusalem: conquer it and then trample it to pieces. Its intensity would be unrivaled. This came true, of course, in AD70. They destroyed the temple, make polluted sacrifices there. They spread salt in Jerusalem so nothing would grow. The dominance of the 4<sup>th</sup> beast is consistent with what you see in the 4<sup>th</sup> part of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2.

Daniel 2:40 "And the **fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron**, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters 砸碎 everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

The two legs of this 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom likely pictured the 2 sources of power of the Roman Empire: the emperor (Imperial) and the senate (Senatorial). Rome, at the behest of the Jewish leaders, severely persecuted Christians. Of this 4<sup>th</sup> Beast – Rome - Daniel later wrote:

Daniel 8:24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive 凡事顺利 He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

24 The **ten horns are ten kings** Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another **shall rise after them**; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall **subdue three kings.**

4. The 10 horns were 10 kings in that 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom. Ten Horns and 10 Crowns refer to the governors of the 10 imperial provinces of Rome. One of those 10 rulers becoming powerful. Rome was a city set on 7 hills.

Revelation 13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and on his horns **ten crowns**, and **on his heads a blasphemous 亵渎 name.**

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, **Shall persecute the saints** of the Most High, And shall intend to **change times and law**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For **a time and times and half a time.**

5. One of those Roman leaders grew large and pompous 自大 man. He would be most contemptible, speaking words against God. This is consistent with what is in Revelation.

Revelation 13:5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle 帐幕 and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

He even subjugated the Triumvirate – the 3 leaders of Rome- and made himself god.

6. He changed laws concerning the regulations and methods of worship...demanding that people worship him...It is true that Emperor Nero changed the laws so that living as a Christian was near impossible in the Roman Empire. He is called many terrible names by the Apostles, including the "Man of Sin," and the "lawless one."

7. He persecuted the people of God terribly, trampling them. He rolled their bodies in wax and lighted his garden with them as candles. Yet, he could not totally destroy them. (It looked like he could.) He died before he accomplished that. He fed Christians to lions, crucified them, or if he were merciful, beheaded them. Yes, the beast even constantly blasphemed God. But God stopped him.

8. But what does “time, times, and half a time” mean? It means 3½ years? (1+2+1/2) Forty-two months or 3 ½ years were a broken 7. It means a broken fulfillment – and unfulfilled task. It is a symbolic figure in prophetic language showing an end of trouble when God’s enemies seem to be in power. So “three and one half years” are not a sign of eternal judgment; it was a sign of hope and comfort to God’s people. It reminds us of God’s mercy. Jesus used similar language.

Matthew 24:22 - "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

It is also true that the Dragon had oppressed 压迫 the Old Testament saints for 42 generations. Matthew 1:1-17- 3 ½ years. It is further true that Nero persecuted the church for 42 months, from the middle of November 64 to beginning of June 68. It is true that Jesus’ ministry was 3 ½ years...and he was killed but rose again? Coincidence? I don’t think so. Christ’s ministry was broken, but restored. In the case of Roman persecution, it showed the greatness of God...and God’s love...in that he limited the power of the wicked in order to protect his people.

9. The hope, as you will see, it that the suffering was not forever. (And this applies to the church in general and to you personally. And even through the suffering, God provided for his Bride. Revelation 12:15-16) **God doesn’t always take people out of the fire, but he is always with you**...even in the fire. God destroyed the lawless one and set his people free so they could go about their call to make disciples in all the world.

2Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

### **Conclusion:**

Dark days were ahead for God’s children. God gave this prophecy so that his people would find hope and keep looking him. How would they find hope? Each time God destroyed one of their enemies they would remember what was ahead: a Stone cut without hand was going to fill the earth. Through that stone that will crush the nations, they, God people would inherit the kingdoms of this world...not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit and Word of the Lord. The church’s future was going to be bright.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. It is true that the church might sometimes seem to struggle, but when you look at the big picture 大图画 and the promises of God, you must remember that the Gospel is unstoppable. So don’t judge by the North American church – the close-up picture. If you do, you would see here a struggling church. But keep looking to God’s Word. You will see Jesus Christ’s church is marching 行军 on in this endurance race with him. Fight. Ride with the king in his might. Don’t let the enemy triumph. Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. He died to save you. He died to give you dominion

2. There are some who like the idea of a defeated church with a bad future. This way they don’t have to do anything, but wait for Christ’s return. The thought of working hard for the kingdom is out of their thoughts. But it ought not be so. Christ shall have dominion. Will you fight for him? He is your Lord.

Finally, if you are not in Christ’s church you will meet the same end as the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, and Romans...but in a worse way. You will be destroyed by the Ancient of Days for eternity. But you can escape hell’s fires if you grab hold of the promise you have in Jesus Christ. His promise: If you believe in me you will not perish, but have everlasting life.