

#10 - Standing Up in a Smackdown World

1/11/2009 - Jim Johnson/Daniel 7:1-28

Daniel taught us in the history of chapters 1-6 how to stand up in a Smackdown world. In chapters 7-12 he gives us a prophetic view as to how God will one day overcome this Smackdown world. Remember that the book of Daniel is primarily the story of how the little nation of Israel was gobbled up by the Kingdom of Babylon and the subsequent Kingdoms that replaced Babylon and how Israel and her King will one day rule the nations.

Chapter 7 is an overview for chapters 8-12. In fact it also is an outline of sorts to the book of Revelation. Daniel gets it all started with verse 1 where we learn that he received a dream/vision from God which he wrote down in summary fashion and passed onto us. What did he see?

A. Daniel saw a _____ of man made empires

The dream is found in verses 2-6. The interpretation is found in verses 5-17. Daniel saw 4 beasts who represented 4 kings who would arise from and rule the earth. (This is very much like Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great statue in cp. 2) The "sea" is often used in the Bible to figuratively portray all the Gentile nations (Is. 57:20; Rev. 17:15). The 4 winds from heaven point to the sovereign power of God. The restlessness of the sea seems to picture the uneasiness of the nations of the earth in relation to each other. From this tempestuous sea, emerge 4 beastly empires.

The winged lion represents _____. (v.4) The national symbol of Babylon was a winged lion (This beast corresponds to the head of gold from the dream in cp 2.) The wings symbolized the power and speed by which this first great empire would defeat her foes. The imagery in the latter part of v. 4 points to Nebuchadnezzar who lost his sanity (acted like a beast) and then regained it later. (cp. 4)

The bear represents the _____-Persian Kingdom. (v. 5) This corresponds to the chest of silver in the vision of chapter 2. This bear was lopsided – raised up on one side signifying that Medo-Persia was made up of an alliance of the Medes and the greater and more powerful Persians. He had 3 ribs in his mouth as if he had just eaten. Indeed Medo-Persia built her Kingdom by gobbling up 3 adversarial Kingdoms - Babylon, Lydia and Egypt.

The leopard is symbolic of the Empire of _____ (v.6) This Kingdom was like a swift leopard and yet graced with the wings of a bird with an insatiable appetite for blood. A winged leopard would be even more swift and agile. This corresponds to the thighs of bronze in chapter 2. The Grecian Empire is distinguished in history for the speed at which it came to be and the speed at which it disintegrated. Alexander the Great led Greece to a victory in only one lightning fast military campaign. He died without a successor and the Kingdom was divided up among his four generals. (the 4 heads)

B. Daniel also saw the biggest and _____ manmade empire.

The dream was given in verses and the interpretation in verses 23-25

The iron toothed beast represents _____ Empire. It was a different kind of beast – "dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet." (v. 7) The fourth beast is so strange and ugly and terrible that no comparison would do it justice. The iron teeth point us to Rome. The statue of cp. 2 also had legs and feet of iron? "Rome was ruthless in her destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands, and selling them into slavery by the

hundreds of thousands.” (Walvoord, pg. 161) Unlike the others, this Kingdom will devour the whole entire earth and tread it down and crush it.

Keep in mind that Daniel began chapter 7 by looking at history (Babylon). But then he saw things that were prophetic to him, but are now history to us. (the Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires.) But now we reach a point in Daniel 7 where we find no historical correspondence. We begin reading about events that are still future to us.

The _____ of the fourth Empire (v. 24)

The ten horns of verse 7 were also 10 kings, and these ten kings all arise from the fourth Kingdom. They all emerge from the Kingdom of Rome. There is nothing in history to correspond to 10 Kings who simultaneously emerge from it Rev. 13:1 and 17:12 however, clearly speak about ten horns who are also ten kings.

Daniel seems to view the Roman Empire as having somewhat of a continual existence from its beginnings with the occupation of Sicily in 241 BC. until the time that Christ finally returns.

Daniel spoke of another one, meaning an 11th leader, but this one is different than the other ten. He will subdue 3 of the kings.” v. 8 tells us that he “*possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.*” Daniel here introduces us, for the first time in biblical history, to the one known as Antichrist. The same person known as the beast in Rev. 13. v. 25 tells us that he will be a political ruler who will attack the very notion of God. By his opposition and persecution he will wear down the people of God. He will work to change the times and the laws, meaning that he will rewrite the laws so that they are hostile to the people of God.

He will do this for a period of time which Daniel calls, “*time, times, and half a time.*” This would be a period of 3 ½ years. Daniel used the word “time” as a synonym for year in Daniel 4:25. So you might read it this way, “year, years (as in 2) and half a year. This corresponds with what we know in Rev. 11:2 & 3, and 13:5 where Antichrist is predicted to rule for 42 months

APPLICATION

Daniel cp. 2 and Daniel cp 7 essentially cover the same things. Both trace the succession of world empires through time. God told the story twice for a reason. Daniel 2 looked at the Kingdoms of this world through the eyes of a man. It was revealed through a dream given to a gentile King. The Kingdoms were portrayed as a beautiful statue made up of precious metals. Chapter 2 viewed these empires as men would view them. Full of the wonder of human achievement and conquest and power and glory

The vision in chapter 7 was not given to a godless gentile King, but rather to a God fearing man named Daniel. In that dream, the Kingdoms of this world were portrayed as beasts. When God looks at world empires, He sees animals. He sees beasts that tear at each other & devour each other. Man without God is not much more than a beast. It’s a common malady among men. We look at life and we just see things differently than the way that God sees them.

Perhaps the message for us here is this: **We need to see as God _____.**

If we are to Stand Up in this Smackdown world then we need to be able to see as God sees.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. When a fouled-mouthed rapper gets a Grammy, how does man’s perception of that differ from God’s?
2. Compare man’s and God’s perceptions in other areas of life. For instance – Winning the Super Bowl; the wealth of Bill Gates; Victoria Secrets Fashion show; the USA and so on.