

Daniels Visions & Canada Day

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[0 : 0 0] May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be found indeed acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen. We're looking at Daniel chapter 7, and you might just notice, it would really be a help, I think, if you had your Bible open at this.

As a matter of fact, it probably won't be a help all the time, but you could at least start that way. Verse 29 of chapter 5 of Daniel says, Belshazzar commanded, and Daniel was clothed with purple.

A chain of gold was put about his neck, and proclamation was made concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. That very night, Belshazzar called the Chaldean king was slain.

I'll just give you that little glimpse of Daniel in his purple robe and his chains of office and his high place in the country.

I mean, he was in a very senior position. By the time you're in a position like that, it's better if God is not a part of your life.

[1 : 3 7] And if you're in that position, excuse me for saying that. But it's just difficult, I think, to be in positions of great responsibility. Because then you see in chapter 7 and verse 1 what happens to people in great responsibility when they go to bed at night.

And you see a magnificent kind of story of what happens there when there, as he lay on his bed, a dream and visions of his head came.

It would be helpful just to show you how that process works a little bit by having you turn to Job chapter 7 and verse 13, where it talks about God coming after us through dreams.

In chapter 7 of Job, verse 13, which is on page. I'll be there shortly. 4.4.5 When I say my bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint.

Then thou dost scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones. I loathe my life.

[3 : 0 9] I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath. And it's a terrifying thing when even sleep doesn't allow you to escape from the reality of your everyday world.

And in this instance, sleep didn't allow Daniel to escape. If you look at the end of the chapter, chapter 7 again, you'll see what happened to him as a result of this.

As a result of the events which were recorded in the chapter, the chapter ends in verse 27 by saying, I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days.

Sorry, I'm at the end of chapter 8 and I didn't want to get there just yet. Verse 28 of chapter 7, Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me.

My color changed. And I kept the matter in my mind. And that same word is used about Belshazzar when the human hand was writing on the wall and he flushed with alcohol and food and all the joys of indulgence, saw the handwriting on the wall and his color changed.

- [4 : 34] And when Daniel saw these visions, his color changed. Then if you look at the end of chapter 8, you'll see where you are and where I am as we approach chapter 7.
- Appalled by the vision and unable to understand. So, that gives us a kind of introduction to Daniel chapter 7.
- And I have consulted a commentator who's put all these visions in order for me.
- And I'm going to present them to you in the vision that he has worked them out as a scholar. You may not agree with his scholarship, but it does help, I think, to sort the thing out. And these are the four things that happen.
- I don't know if you can see this or not, but this is a lion like that. And he has wings like an eagle.
- [5 : 48] There he is. That was the first vision. Now, the lion is understood to be the Babylonian Empire with Nebuchadnezzar, Ebal Merodach, and Belshazzar, the kings of this Babylonian Empire.
- And you'll notice that the lion is taken up into the midst of the air. His wings are stripped off, and that's the end of it. The Babylonian Empire comes to a terrible end.
- Keep that picture in mind. And we'll move on to the next. The next picture is of a bear. I practiced this.
- And it's the bear that stood like a man. These are monsters.
- And he says that he kept one side up.
- [7 : 09] And the bear is taken to be the kingdom of the Medes. And the one arm up refers to Darius, king of the Medes.
- And because he was relatively good to the Jews, he stood up like a man, and he had a mind or heart like a man.
- This monster, for all the fact that he was a monster, had some fine human qualities about him. Most humans have monstrous qualities, but he was a monster that had human qualities.
- And then the third animal, I don't know what to work here. You, uh...
- He had four heads. And, uh... He had four sets of wings.
- [8 : 22] I mean, four wings. Two sets. And, uh... He was like a leper. Now, the reason I, uh... give you that picture again is because I think that understanding Scripture, it's helpful if you sketch pictures of what you see. And, uh... Even if you can't draw very well, it's still helpful.
- Because then you have the lion, and the bear, and the leopard. And, uh... Those are... And this one represents... Uh...
- The... The bear represents the meads. The leopard, with the four heads and the four wings, represents the Persian Empire.
- And so you see, Daniel had the vision of these four empires as they came and they passed. Now, these are the same...
- [9 : 21] There's another one coming, which is the Greek Empire. These are the same empires that were symbolically represented earlier in the book of Daniel when you had the Colossus, you know, with the four parts and different metals in his body.
- And they were the four empires. And these beasts now represent the same four empires. And the fourth beast is, uh...
- Is... Is one that is... Is so terrible, it's impossible to draw. But it did have ten horns.
- Which is approximately that number. And... And it was the Greek Empire.

And, uh... It was hideous. And it had a little horn, uh... Which was taken to be and interpreted to be Antiochus Epiphany.

[10 : 24] In, uh... Antiochus Epiphany is in the... In the, uh... Who was the, uh... One of the... Last of the Greek kings.

Or the kings of the Greek Empire. Or the rulers of the Greek Empire. And, uh... So you have these four hideous creatures.

Well then, when you go on from there, you come to an amazing picture which should be done in Technicolor for you. And I'm sorry that it's, uh... That I can't do that.

But, uh... I just want to give you some idea of how to visualize this.

Even if you don't think very much of the drawing. It's, uh... It's, uh... What you have is you have a throne. You see here.

[11 : 26] And, uh... It's an amazing throne which is described in wonderful detail. Uh... If you read that passage which Wendell read for us, look at it in verse 9.

I looked and thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat. Now you have to picture all this in your mind.

His raiment was white as snow. The hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames. Its wheels were burning fire.

A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him. A thousand thousands served him. And ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

And the court sat in judgment and the books were opened. So you get this tremendous picture of the throne of God in the midst of world history and on it is seated the Ancient of Days who is sort of a picture of God in his accumulated historical wisdom who understood all the ages of all time and all of history.

[12 : 53] The Ancient of Days sits on his throne and the books are open and judgment is passed. Now, just to put this all in place, before the throne, if you want, is the abyss, the sea.

And if you go back to the beginning of chapter 7, you will see in verse 2, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea and four great beasts came up out of the sea different from one another.

So that the abyss or the great sea boiled into churning by the winds from the four corners of the compass and out of the terrible death came these awful monstrosities, these horrid creatures.

They came up and they did all the terrible things that are described of them in chapter 7. Do you remember the terrible picture of the fourth beast?

the fact that it was devouring of flesh and stamping and it was just a picture of terrible power and terrible destruction.

[14 : 21] these powers all came up from the abyss, from darkness. But then, if you go on in the passage, you'll see that there's another part of the picture and if you look at verse 13 following, Behold, with clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man and he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him and to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all peoples, nations, languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

So that up out of the abyss come these terrible monsters representing the Medes, the Persians, the Babylonians and the Greeks but then from the clouds of sky full of the light of the sun comes a figure who is like unto the son of man.

Not from the abyss this time. This person comes, this image as it were, this vision is of the fulfillment of all that ever could be in terms of humanity and he isn't conjured up from the abyss, he comes down from the clouds of heaven and to him glory and dominion and power is given.

That's the end of history that the kingdoms will pass away, the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks and the triumphant figure will be one like unto the son of man coming from the, with the clouds of heaven and to him dominion, glory and kingdom are given.

[16 : 31] well, that's the picture that I think you need in order to begin to understand what chapter 7 is all about.

When you go on from there you find that there is a desire in verse 19 following to know the truth concerning the fourth beast which was the Greek empire because it was different from all the rest exceedingly terrible teeth of iron claws of bronze devoured and broken pieces stamped the residue with its feet and concerning the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up before with three of them which had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things and which seemed greater than its fellows.

So here is a picture of awesome arrogance. Out of the pit comes this monstrosity which speaks great things with a voice like a man's and you try to understand as the book of Daniel tries to understand who this is.

Well in order to find out who it is and to get some explanation Daniel turns to one of the angels standing by in verse 16 I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this so he told me and made known to me the interpretation of things and so there is an angel who interprets these things to Daniel.

Well look at verse 26 now just so that you sorry verse 25 when you see what this fourth kingdom tried to do in verse 25 you see that he shall speak words against the most high shall wear out the saints of the most high and shall think to change the times and the law so here was a culture of a people with their religious festivals with their divine law with the ordered structure of their community and along comes this great and powerful empire whose business it is to destroy all the times and and the law that kept this community together.

[19 : 37] Well I find that that's I find there's lots of parallels to our own situation if you look and see how the terrible empire out of the pit is out to in a sense achieve power in the same way that the fourth beast in Daniel 7 achieved power.

You look at our society and you see the public world of facts and the private world of values values. We live by the facts of the public world and our private values are despised and tramped upon chewed up and spat out as being utterly worthless.

You see in our society the assertion of rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. rights. But that pursuit of rights is going on blindly, failing to recognize that the society that has engendered the pursuit of rights no longer has the structure to provide the rights which people demand.

And so in our country everybody is striving for rights, but there's nobody left to give them. because as in the story in verse 25 the times have been changed and the laws have been changed.

And we live in a place where there is an individual world where I must find my fulfillment for me. That we are creating a world of individuals, of people who find that fulfillment in this life is to be found if they travel alone and allow no one to interfere with where they are going or what they are doing.

[21 : 44] They are utterly individual and alone and they consider that to be the great driving force of their life to find fulfillment in that awesome individuality which our society has promised to them.

And then there's been changes in the times. You know the fact that our world no longer has a Sabbath day and that you may think is a great loss to our Judeo-Christian tradition that we no longer observe the Sabbath.

But it may be an even more desperate loss if we suddenly discover that no man whether he is Jew or Christian, whether he reads the Bible or the Koran or whatever he reads, needs a Sabbath, that that's part of what human life is all about.

And we have done away with it. And so increase the pace of our life and the tension of our life to the point where even the saints grow weary.

And where we have changed A.D. to C.E., where Christmas is being claimed as a festival but where we must deny Christ, where Easter is changed as a festival of profound spiritual significance in terms of the biblical revelation of God in Christ and has been turned into a rite of spring.

[23 : 28] For we've tried to hold our society together by the invention of Mother's Days and Father's Days, where we have been careful in denial of what it says in Daniel chapter 7, to call this Canada Day and not Dominion Day.

It would be a great thing if we recognized that we are under dominion, dominion of the one who is like unto the Son of God.

It is said that the little horn that is spoken of here and is spoken of at other places in Scripture as well, represented Antiochus Epiphanes and that it was he that went into the Holy of Holies, into the very center of Jewish worship, into the temple, the heart of the temple in Jerusalem, and there he set up a statue of himself.

So you see how Daniel has this great vision of one of the great powers that has come up out of the abyss and has spoken with arrogance and with authority and with power and all the people have been deceived by him.

And you see how our human cultures coming up out of the abyss claim with the same kind of arrogance and the same kind of power, the same kind of authority.

[25 : 07] The chapter ends beginning at verse 26 when it says but the court shall stir in judgment and his dominion shall be taken away to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole of heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

Their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him. And that's the faith which we as a community within the kingdom within the kingdoms of this world.

We as a community who are under the control of the beast and I'm not trying to over dramatize that or anything but you can see that it's not something new that we're inventing in our world.

It's something that has happened time and time again as super world powers have achieved dominion and authority and power and spoken with arrogance and thousands have followed them even in this century.

[26 : 26] And yet they ultimately must fall because judgment comes.

And there is this picture you see that human society is not to come up out of the abyss but like the son of man to come down with the clouds of heaven and circling him and he comes down into our world to establish this kingdom and it's our faith in that kingdom which motivates us and which drives us and which gives us our vision and goal which is the focus of our faith which is the hope that we've been given which allows us to endure and endure and endure and endure and never to lose the awareness that there there is only one kingdom and that is the kingdom of our God and of his Christ it is said of this figure in Daniel 7 of the son of man that like these were imaginary creatures that represented earthly kingdoms the lion and the bear and the leper and the monstrosity the indescribable monstrosity with the ten horns these were imaginary figures that came up out of the abyss and this too was a vision but that in the course of the history of the people of God this vision has become incarnated in Jesus

Christ and he indeed is not just a vision of Daniel concerning the ruler of a great kingdom and the one who will bring that kingdom to be but he is the one who has come into the world and the beast has come up out of the mire and out of the slime and nailed him to the cross and said that's the end of that failing to recognize that in fact it was only the beginning and that all that Daniel saw as he lay on his bed was recognizing something which for centuries would be hidden that's how Daniel closes he says I kept the matter in my mind and so this hidden reality which

Daniel experienced on his bed at night is the hidden reality of the ultimate triumph of the son of man and the establishing of his kingdom which is at the heart of our faith Daniel served in his time the empire of Babylon and the empire of the me but you see ultimately he knew that there must be another kingdom and we as Christians are called to be servants to the empires of this world but only can we submit to that when we recognize that there is another kingdom that there is one like unto the son of man who has come among us as Jesus

Christ these words again as I close the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey them here is the end of the matter here is indeed the end of all history and here is the focus of the faith in which we are called to believe as the disciples of Jesus Christ Amen