

God's Design in the Hebrew Scriptures: Daniel

Chapter 7 — The Vision Of Things To Come — Part I

I. The dream of Daniel, 1-14

7:1 The "dream" refers to Daniel's time of sleep, the "visions" speak of the unfolding components of this "dream."

It came to him in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, 553 B.C. It was fitting that this vision of the downfall of world empires should come to the prophet during the reign of the last king of Babylon. God gave it to him 50 years after the similar revelation of the great image in chapter 2 (cf. Gen. 41:25, 32). Daniel would have been about 68 years old when he had this dream. Chronologically then we can place this chapter between chapters 4 and 5.

Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Da 7:1.

A. The four kingdoms of man seen as beasts, 1-8

Daniel saw the Great Sea, probably the Mediterranean (cf. Num. 34:6-7; Josh. 1:4; 9:1; Ezek. 47:10; et al.), stirred up by the four winds (or spirits) of heaven (v. 2; cf. Jer. 23:19; 49:36; Zech. 6:1-6; Rev. 7:1-3; et al.). The sea in Scripture and in ancient Near Eastern symbolism represented the mass of humanity, the Gentile nations of the earth (v. 17; cf. Isa. 8:6-8; 17:12-13; 57:20; Jer. 6:23; 46:7-8; 47:2; Rev. 13:1; 17:1, 15; 21:1; et al.).

Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Da 7:2.

A number of factors demonstrate that the lion and eagle are apt symbols of Babylon. First, Nebuchadnezzar was symbolized as a lion and an eagle elsewhere by the biblical writers (as a lion in Jer 4:7; 49:19, 22; 50:17, 44 and as an eagle in Jer 49:22; Lam 4:19; Ezek 17:3; Hab 1:8). Second, statues of winged lions, which are believed to have been representative of the empire, have been found in the ruins of Babylon, and lions adorned the famous Ishtar Gate.

Stephen R. Miller, vol. 18, Daniel, Includes Indexes. electronic ed. Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1994), 197

B. The kingdom of God seen in a Man, 9-14

7:9 Identical symbolism in Rev 20:4 seems to remove any doubt that believers will sit upon these thrones, and other Scripture passages teach that the saints will in some manner participate in the judgment (cf. Luke 22:30; 1 Cor 6:2; Rev 3:21).

Stephen R. Miller, vol. 18, Daniel, Includes Indexes., electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1994), 204.

The Times of the Gentiles

God's program for the world chs. 2-7

Daniel wrote 2:4b-7:28 in the Aramaic language. This literary change gives the reader a clue that this part is a distinct section of the book. The content of this section also identifies it as special. It concerns the future history of the Gentiles during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). Aramaic was the common language of the world in which Daniel lived when he wrote. It is natural that he would have recorded what concerns the world as a whole in the language of the Gentiles.

The writer constructed this section of the book in chiastic form.

- A** A prophecy of an image concerning four Gentile nations and their end ch. 2
- B** The supernatural persecution and deliverance of Daniel's three friends ch. 3
- C** God's revelation to the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar ch. 4
- C'** God's revelation to the Gentile king Belshazzar ch. 5
- B'** The supernatural persecution and deliverance of Daniel ch. 6
- A'** A prophecy of animals concerning four Gentile nations and their end ch. 7

"Chapters 2 and 7 explain the succession of four Gentile empires that would exert control over Jerusalem and the Jews until God's kingdom is established. Chapters 3 and 6 warned the Jews of the persecution they would face during this period and exhorted them to remain faithful to God. Chapters 4 and 5 encouraged the Jewish remnant by reminding them that a time would come when even the Gentile rulers would acknowledge that the God of Israel rules over the nations."

Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Dan 1:21.