

EAGLES RENDEZVOUS
UNRAVELING THE FUTURE
STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Monster Rules or The Master Reigns? Daniel 7-8

Daniel 7:1-14

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. 2 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. 3 Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. 4 "The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it. 5 "And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' 6 "After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. 7 "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast-terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. 8 "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. 9 "As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. 11 "Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. 12 (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.) 13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Daniel's dream occurred when the Babylonian Empire had already begun its decline. The scene of the dream is set at the beach of "the great sea," which probably refers to the Mediterranean. But the picture goes beyond a physical location on earth to a scene of spiritual turbulence of cosmic proportions. Four winds blowing simultaneously, churning up the waters of an ocean would be a physical impossibility on earth. Isaiah compares the uproar of the nations of the world to the raging of the sea: Isaiah 17:12, "Oh, the raging of many nations--they rage like the raging sea! Oh, the uproar of the peoples--they roar like the roaring of great waters!" We see

“the four winds of the earth” again in Rev 7:1-3 “After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ‘Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.’” The word translated “wind” is *ruach*, which also has the meaning of “spirit.” The sea, then, is to be regarded as the great mass of Gentile nations, and the winds are the spiritual agencies by which God carries on the history of the world.

The storm at sea can also be seen as a picture of the wars in which the nations of the world continuously clash with one another. The ambition of each of them is absolute power and world hegemony.

Lions and leopards do not have wings and animals with ten horns can only exist in mythology. The first picture, which refers to Babylon, combines the king of the beasts with the king of the birds. The Babylonian Empire was like a lion with the wings of an eagle; it was based on superior strength and it conquered the world with amazing rapidity. But in Daniel’s vision the lion’s wings are torn off. We assume that this makes the beast fall to the ground from which it is lifted up and “the heart of a man was given to it.” Some scholars see in this the gradual decline of the Empire after the death of King Nebuchadnezzar; others think that it refers to this king’s experience of temporary madness and subsequent healing, as in chapter four. When Daniel dreamed this dream, the lion had already become too weak to defend itself and the growling of the Persian bear could already be heard.

Verse 5 contains three points that have caused much controversy among Bible scholars and historians. First the image of the bear, then the raising itself up on one side, and thirdly the three ribs in its mouth. Nations still identify themselves with animal symbols: the American Eagle, the British Lion, (the Lion City?), the Russian Bear, the Chinese Dragon, etc. In a way bears are inferior to lions. A bear may be ferocious but it lacks the swiftness and regal bearing of “the king of the animals.” This corresponds to the chest of silver in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, of which Daniel said: “After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours.” The Medes, an ancient people, and the Persians, a modern tribe, formed one united sovereignty, in contrast to the third and fourth kingdoms, each of which was originally one, but was afterward divided. The idea then would be, ‘it lay on one of its forefeet, and stood on the other:’ a figure still to be seen on one of the stones of Babylon ... denoting a kingdom that had been at rest, but is now rousing itself for conquest. Media is the lower side, passiveness; Persia the upper, active element.

The three ribs in the bear’s mouth constitute another problem of interpretation. Some scholars take this to be an image of the conquest of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt; others believe the number to be only symbolic. It seems better to regard the number three as a general term for a few kingdoms to be conquered. It is also difficult to determine who gives the command to the bear: “Get up and eat your fill of flesh!” We may interpret this as coming from God, although we cannot state that world powers act out the will of God in their aspirations to conquer the

world. Although the empires follow their own plans in pursuit of world hegemony, God is very much in control.

The third animal in Daniel's vision, the leopard, is traditionally interpreted as the Hellenic Empire — that of Alexander the Great and his successors. In the following chapter we have the goat, with its one notable horn, which, on being broken off, is replaced by four. In the eleventh chapter we are told that Alexander's Empire is to be divided to the four winds of heaven. But 'wings' are not prophetically so much the symbol of extensive dominion, as of rapidity of movement. If we turn to the next chapter, the swiftness of Alexander's conquests is the point that most impresses the seer. The conquests of Alexander the Great are dated around 331 BC. This means that Daniel's vision allowed him at this point to look ahead 200 years. That the four wings are mentioned before the four heads, signifies that the kingdom spreads itself over the earth with the speed of a bird's flight, and then becomes a fourfold-kingdom as is distinctly shown in Dan 8:5ff.

The fourth animal in Daniel's vision defies classification. Daniel himself does not try to compare it to any species known to man. It corresponds to the legs and feet of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The consensus is that it refers to the Roman Empire, or at least to a phase of world dominion that was introduced by the appearance of the power of Rome. The ten horns equal the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, but the appearance of the little horn for which three existing horns are uprooted finds no parallel in the dream about the statue. Speculations as to the interpretation of the ten toes have kept Bible scholars occupied up to the present time. The appearance of the little horn speaks about the coming of the Antichrist. It cannot be denied that this final act of world history has not yet come upon us. It seems, therefore, safe to say that the fourth animal represents a system of government, different from anything that preceded it, rather than one particular kingdom. The three previous world powers were all kingdoms, but Rome was a republic. The fourth animal introduces democracy. Of the four forms of government this world has known, theocracy, monarchy, dictatorship, and democracy, the last one is usually most valued. Here it is represented as the most evil ones.

This fourth beast, which Daniel calls "terrifying and frightening and very powerful" has iron teeth, which it uses to crush and devour its victims. This unusual feature of artificial teeth, in a way corresponds to the ten horns it sprouts, although horns can be seen as part of the animal's nature. The iron teeth could be seen as an image of industrialization, which was unknown in Daniel's time. While Daniel is looking on, he sees a transformation taking place on the head of the beast. Among the ten horns appears another smaller one that overshadows all the others and that seems to acquire an existence of its own, separate from the beast on which it grows. Interpretations of this phenomenon have varied from century to century. Some have identified the ten horns with magistrates within the Roman Empire. *The Adam Clarke Commentary* refers to the Protestant tendency to identify the Antichrist with the pope as head of the Roman Catholic Church. Most modern Protestants would consider this interpretation outdated. Even the tendency to apply the ten horns to the West European Common Market can no longer be maintained, since its memberships exceeds ten at the present time.

Throughout the Scriptures, the horn is used as a symbol of strength, both in the bad and the good sense. In the context of Daniel's vision, as well as in the general use of the word in the

context of human power, it stands for rebellion against God and the force that crushes human beings and nations. But the horn also represents the power of God. Zechariah prophesied at the birth of John, the Baptist: "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David," referring to the Messiah. In Revelation 5:7, John sees Jesus appearing as the Lamb of God and His power to save represented by seven horns. In all instances in Daniel's vision of the fourth beast, we see evil power represented by the horn, culminating in the power of the Antichrist. In the growth of that 'horn,' three of the others were plucked up by the roots. What is fairly indicated by this was not any act of violence, or any sudden convulsion or revolution, but such a gradual growth of power that a portion of the original power was removed, and this new power occupied its place. There was no revolution, properly so-called; no change of the whole dynasty, for a large portion of the horns remained, but the gradual rise of a new power that would wield a portion of that formerly wielded by others, and that would now wield the power in its place. "The little horn" is generally believed to be a picture of the Antichrist. The first partial fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy occurred in the appearance of one of the kings of the Greco-Macedonian kingdom, known as Antiochus Epiphanies. *The Fausset's Bible Dictionary* refers to this king's persecution of the Jews who: "prohibited circumcision, and substituted the worship of Jupiter Olympius, with whom he identified himself as if God, instead of that of Jehovah, in the temple at Jerusalem." This Antiochus was obviously not the Antichrist of the end times but he foreshadowed him by demonstrating most of the features of the Antichrist who is to precede the return of Christ. In the same way as Antiochus Epiphanies appears in Daniel's prophecy as a type, John uses the emperor Nero as a paradigm on which he bases his description of the Antichrist in Revelation.

As Daniel is absorbing this vision of evil, he is given a vision of the Day of Judgment. In the most magnificent terms Daniel describes the appearance of God, the Father, whom he calls "the Ancient of Days." According to *The Pulpit Commentary*, "One ancient of days" would be a better rendering. This description of God is an effort to put into human terms what it means to be eternal. In our languages we have no terms that does justice to any description of eternity that has neither end nor beginning. Time-bound creatures as we are, we can only conceive of day following day. God is not an old man in our terms; He is the Eternal, always young, always old. Daniel's vision of the throne of God is like the eruption of a volcano. The lava of God's holiness streams out of the throne like a mighty river. Elsewhere in Scripture, fire is shown to be an image of God's wrath, which is one of the elements of justice and judgment emphasized here. One of the amazing features of the throne on which God presides over judgment is that it has wheels, which are also ablaze. God judges from His chariot of fire.

A dramatic change occurs in Daniel's version when he observes the appearance of a person, whom he calls: "one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven." The expression "son of man" occurs several times in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Jesus adopts it for Himself; in Matthew's Gospel alone 30 times. Daniel himself is addressed as "son of man" in the next chapter meaning a mortal being. Jesus' adoption of this title for Himself was more than an indication that He was one hundred percent a human being, a descendant of David. We read in Matthew 26:63-64 "The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.' 'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and

coming on the clouds of heaven.” The titles “Son of God” and “Son of Man” are used interchangeably in these verses.

Daniel 7:15-28

15 "I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. 16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. "So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 17 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever-yes, for ever and ever.' 19 "Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws-the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. 20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell-the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. 21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. 23 "He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. 26 ""But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' 28 "This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

The vision left Daniel shaken and troubled. Still in his dream, he approaches one of the characters who is part of his vision and asks for an explanation. We are not told who the person is that enlightens Daniel at this point; we may assume he is one of the angels or archangels. The first thing that strikes us in the answer given to Daniel's question is the identification of the "Son of Man" with "the saints." There is no distinction between the Messiah and those who belong to Him. They share in His glory and His power. Some scholars believe that this fact alters the interpretation of the meaning of the appearance of the "Son of Man." Instead of applying this to the Person of the Messiah, they see it as a collective body, as if Israel would ultimately subdue all the powers of the world.

In his answer to Daniel, the angel draws a line between time and eternity. The four beasts operate in time; they come and go; their power is only operative for a limited time. The reign of the saints of God is forever. The statement is very emphatic. The original Aramaic reads: "forever and forever, ever." Daniel was especially puzzled by the appearance of the fourth beast, which was the most terrifying of all. The most frightening feature of this part of the vision was the appearance and activities of "the little horn" and the fact that "the saints" were delivered into his power for a limited time. In verse 19 "bronze claws" are added in the description of the beast. It is generally understood that the fourth beast depicts the Roman Empire, which existed

from around 60 BC through 476 AD and which covered most of Europe, part of North Africa and West Asia. But even this time span of more than 500 years of human history is not completely covered by the image of this beast. Antiochus Epiphanies undoubtedly fulfilled part of the prophecy concerning the Antichrist, but he was no more than a forerunner of the ultimate man of evil. Scholars have been greatly divided over the interpretation of the details in this vision and the application to world history past and future. Suffice to state that all that is implied in the vision of the fourth beast has not yet been fully fulfilled. There have been episodes in world history in which kings, emperors, and dictators have given a partial fulfillment, but the worst is still to come. The most important feature, the one that puzzled Daniel the most was the fact that there would be a time when God would apparently withdraw His hand of protection from His children and allow them to be crushed and trampled down. This is what shocked Daniel the most, as it still does us. This inexplicable seeming lack of compassion from the side of God is what frustrated Daniel the most.

The interpretation the angel gives to Daniel of the image of the fourth beast seems to hide as much as it reveals. Teachers of prophecy over the ages have tried to apply the picture to the time in which they lived and the attempts have not ceased today. Our eagerness to understand and interpret prophecy can easily degenerate into a carnal desire to know the future and to manipulate it.

The vision affected Daniel both emotionally and physically. Perhaps, the content of what he had seen in his dream made him understand that mankind was not heading for a better future but for a much bleaker one. We may consider it to be the grace of God when the future is hidden from us.

Daniel 8:1-12

1 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. 2 In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. 3 I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. 4 I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. 5 As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. 6 He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. 7 I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power. 8 The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. 9 Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. 10 It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. 11 It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. 12 Because of rebellion, the host [of the saints] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

The two animals that appear are identified as the Median-Persian Empire and the Macedonian Empire. The important role these two animals play is actually carried out by their horns. A period of two years elapsed between this vision and the one recorded in chapter 7. We do not know whether Daniel ever visited Susa and saw the Ulai Canal while he served at the Babylonian court. We may assume he did, for it would be very strange if he were able to identify the place he saw in his vision if he had never seen it before with his physical eyes. The ram with the two horns represents, according to the explanation given by the archangel Gabriel in verse 20, the Median-Persian Empire. The second horn, which did not grow on the ram's head together with the first, but grew up later and became larger, symbolizes the development of the empire. According to a fable that existed at that time, Alexander the Great was the son of Jupiter Ammon, who was thought to be a horned ram. Some scholars have wondered why he is represented in this vision by a goat rather than a ram. However, a goat was a symbol of the Grecian or Macedonian people. Two hundred years before the time of Daniel, they were called Ægeadae, the goats' people.

The words "without touching the ground" are omitted in some of the manuscripts. The picture stands for the amazing speed of Alexander's conquest, which foreshadowed the "blitz" of Adolph Hitler's army during the Second World War. Alexander died at 33 and in the subsequent twenty years, his winnings were divided into four parts among four of his military successors. Two of the resultant divisions -Egypt under the Ptolemies (the last of whom was the famous Cleopatra) and Syria under the Seleucids, the historic kings of the South and the North, respectively, are of importance as neighbors of the Jews. They figure prominently in chapter 11. The little horn that evolved from the others is generally understood to represent Antiochus IV who called himself "Epiphanes," meaning "magnificent." His enemies nicknamed him "Epimanes" – "madman." The author of the First Book of Maccabees mentions him: "And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks." Antiochus had an extraordinary love of art, which expressed itself in grand temples. He wished to substitute Zeus Olympius for Yahweh at Jerusalem. Identifying himself with Jupiter, his aim was to make his own worship universal.

Although Antiochus IV Epiphanes instituted a reign of terror in Israel, forbidding circumcision and defiling the temple by sacrificing swine on the altar, he does not completely measure up to the little horn that in Daniel's prophecy reached the host of the heavens and throws down to the earth "some of the starry host" and tramples on them. This, obviously, points to a cosmic event that involves more than any human acts could account for. However, Antiochus IV must have imagined himself to be endowed with spiritual power. The order to cease the daily sacrifices in the temple was to be accompanied by the erection of a horrible idol statue. Daniel calls this "an abomination that causes desolation."

The character of the rule of the Antichrist over this world is expressed clearly in the statement:

“truth was thrown to the ground.” The Hebrew word is *‘emet*, which, in most cases means “truth.” It sometimes carries the meaning of “right” or “faithful.” The word “amen” is derived from it. When a society is no longer founded on the principle of truth, it cannot survive.

Daniel 8:13-14

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?" 14 He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

These verses are, obviously, still part of Daniel’s vision. He overhears a conversation between two angels who discuss the meaning of what he had just seen. The exchange is made for Daniel’s benefit, because the answer to the question how long the rebellion will last is actually given directly to the prophet. The angelic discussion is interesting to us, because it indicates that the fate of man is a topic of interest among the inhabitants of heaven.

The time mentioned by the angel during which the sanctity of the temple is violated is “2,300 evenings and mornings.” Some scholars take 2,300 evenings and mornings to mean 1150 days. Others believe that it stands for 2,300 days based on the reckoning in the Genesis account of creation. We read there: “And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day.” Another problem is that, according to the explanation given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, the fulfillment of this prophecy “concerns the time of the end.” Trying to reconcile the figure on the basis of events pertaining to the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes seems, therefore, to be pointless. The mention of a time of limited duration appears to emphasize the fact that the desolation will be relatively short.

Daniel 8:15-27

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. 16 And I heard a man’s voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." 17 As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end." 18 While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet. 19 He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. 20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. 22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. 23 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. 24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. 26 "The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future." 27 I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king’s business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

The first thing that strikes us in this section is Daniel's reaction to the approach of the angel Gabriel: he faints. Any encounter of a mortal human being with a supernatural one is shocking for the physical frame. Gabriel explains that the vision pertains to "the time of wrath" and "the appointed time of the end." In most instances it refers to the wrath of God, but that is not necessarily the case in this instance. It could refer to the state of mind that inspired Antiochus Epiphanies to commit his dastardly acts and to the spirit of the Antichrist. The question is whether "the time of wrath" and "the time of the end" are the same periods. We often find a telescopic view of events in history, which give an optical illusion as if events that are separated by centuries appear as a single occurrence. It seems most likely that Gabriel issues a warning about the upcoming persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanies in the immediate future and that at the same time he makes reference to the Great Tribulation instigated by the Antichrist in the last chapter of world history. The references to the empires of Media-Persia and Greece are clear enough. The description of "a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue," who will "take his stand against the Prince of princes," in verses 23-25, may refer to both Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his antitype, the Antichrist.

The immediate purpose of the explanation was to arm the people of Israel that, after their return to the Promised Land, there would be a time of intense persecution. The warning could serve as an encouragement for them to persevere. As it turned out, the people who eventually returned would buckle even before the fires of persecution became too hot. In the days of Haggai and Zechariah, those who had set to the task of rebuilding the temple, cowered and ceased their labor at the faintest threat of violence.

Scholars have been baffled by the words of vs. 24: "He will become very strong, but not by his own power." Most of them limit their application to the person of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and then take various views about the way he ascended the throne. Some see in the wording an explanation of the fact that Antiochus became king with the help of others; others believe that the "power" is the power of God who used the wicked king for His own purposes. There is also the possibility that demonic power may be meant here. The appearance of the Antichrist and his forerunner may be a manifestation of the powers of darkness, but their destruction will be through another power, the power of God.

The vision left Daniel completely exhausted and sick. He spent a number of days in bed, trying to get his strength back. As soon as his strength returned sufficiently, he set himself again to the task of serving the king of Babylon in the position in which God had placed him. Daniel had seen the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man. He had been ushered into their presence. No one on earth had been closer to heaven than Daniel. His heavenly experiences did not make him unfit for earth. As a matter of fact, the perspective he had gained with the experience made him the best and most faithful of the king's subjects on earth. Our visions of heaven ought to have the effect on us that, whatever we do on earth, we do as unto the Lord.

Interpretating Apocalyptic Literature

1. Be reserved. It is not a riddle to be discovered and pieced together with perfect answers.
2. Be imaginative not literal. Images communicate truths but not with precision.
3. Be symbolic. Numbers are symbolic and must be interpreted as such.
4. Be encouraged. It is a common style of writing in the ancient world often used when pointing to the future and speaking powerfully to people under persecution.

APPLICATION

1. **God will bring** _____.

2. **It's going to be** _____ **but God is** _____.

3. **We know how** _____.

4. **God gives** _____.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

God is just. God is pure and holy. God is powerful.

1. Which of these attributes do you need most now and why? How do you want to experience this attribute of God in your life?

2. If you know someone who is discouraged and seem to be on the verge of giving up, what can you do to help them see that God is on the throne?