

From the Stormy Sea to the Clouds of Heaven



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 15

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Daniel 7; 2 Thesalonians 2:1–12; Mark 13:26; Matthew 8:20; Matthew 9:6; Luke 9:26.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Then the authority [control], power and greatness [glory] of all the kingdoms on earth will be taken from them. And all they had will be given to the holy people of the Most High God. His kingdom will last [continue] forever. Every ruler will worship and obey him’ ” (Daniel 7:27, Nlrv).

THIS WEEK, we will study the dream in Daniel 7. Daniel's dream shows us the same truth as Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2. But Daniel's dream gives us more information. (1) Daniel sees the sea. Wind stirs the water from every direction. The water helps us remember the earth before God gave it shape and filled it with life. At that time, the earth was empty and covered in darkness (read Genesis 1:2). In Daniel's dream, the wind makes the water rough. (2) The animals in Daniel's dream are mixed with other animals. They also are not clean. So, the animals in Daniel's dream are not anything God made when He made the earth. (3) The animals take control of people and kingdoms on the earth. So, we can see that these animals steal the power that God gave to Adam. (4) Jesus, the Son of Man, comes and gives the kingdom back to the people it belongs to. Jesus wins back everything that Adam lost in the Garden of Eden.

This information helps us to see the big picture of the signs used in Daniel's dream. An angel helps explain the most important parts so we can understand it.



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FOUR ANIMALS (Daniel 7)

Read about the dream in Daniel 7. What is this dream about?

Do you see how each animal in Daniel's dream matches one of the metals in Nebuchadnezzar's statue? In Daniel's dream we get more information about each kingdom. As we said on Sabbath, the animals in Daniel's dream are not clean. They are word pictures for nations that do not worship God. Also, the 1st three animals look the same as animals we already know. But the 4th animal is different. It does not look the same as any animal we know. Each animal shows us something about a different kingdom in history:

Lion: A lion is a good word picture for Babylon. Lions with wings covered the palace walls and were found in other art work. In Daniel's dream, the lion's wings are pulled off. Then the lion stands up the same as a man. The lion gets a human heart. These word pictures show us the evil behavior of the final kings of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar.

Bear: The bear shows the Medo-Persian Empire. Do you see that the bear is raised up on one of its sides? That shows that the Persians were stronger than the Medes. The bear has three ribs in its mouth. Those ribs are the top three kingdoms that the Medo-Persian Kingdom beat in war: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt.

Leopard: The leopard shows us the Greek kingdom started by Alexander. The leopard has four wings. They show that Alexander rose to power very fast. In a few years, Alexander controlled all the known kingdoms on earth.

The Animal With Iron Teeth: Do you see that Daniel says that the 1st three animals **look the same as** a lion, bear, or leopard? That changes. The 4th kingdom does not look the same as any kingdom before it. So, the animal that shows us the 4th kingdom is different from anything we know. The 4th animal has many horns. It is very mean. Its behavior is worse than the behavior of all the animals before it. This behavior makes the 4th animal a perfect word picture for the kingdom of Rome. Rome fought many wars. It stepped on kingdoms with its feet. In this way, it took control of the whole earth.



In Daniel's dream, the lion's wings are pulled off.

THE LITTLE HORN (Daniel 7:7, 8, 19–25)

Read about the little horn power in Daniel 7:7, 8, 19–25. The little horn power comes from the 4th animal and then continues to be part of it. Who is the little horn power?

Yesterday, we saw that the animal with iron teeth is the kingdom of Rome during Bible times. Its iron teeth and brass claws show us that Rome acts very mean. Now we will look at the little horn power. Who is it? As we see in Daniel's dream, the 4th animal has 10 horns. Three of the horns are pulled out to make room for the little horn. The little horn has human eyes. "Its mouth was always bragging" (Daniel 7:8, NIV). It is clear that the little horn rises from the 4th animal, who is the Roman Kingdom during Bible times. In a way, the little horn continues doing the things the kingdom of Rome did. So, the little horn is really the same as the kingdom of Rome. So, the little horn is the kingdom of Rome at a later time in history.

Daniel sees the little horn make war against God's people. The angel tells Daniel that the little horn is a king. He will do three things: (1) He will brag. He will say things against God. (2) He will hurt God's people. And (3) he will try to change the times and the laws that God gave. When that happens, God's people will be under his control for " 'a time, times, and half a time (three and a half years)' " (Daniel 7:25, NIV). The word "time" is the same as a "year." So, "times" is the same as "two years" and "half a time" equals six months or half a year. So, how many real years does 3 1/2 years equal in a special message about time? When we use the year-day rule (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:5, 6), then 3 1/2 years equals 1,260 real years. During this time, the little horn will war against God. The little horn also will hurt God's people and try to change God's law.

Read about the Man of Evil in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12. Who do we believe the Man of Evil is, and why? How is he the same as the little horn?



The little horn will war against God.

GOD'S COURTROOM (Daniel 7:13, 14, 21, 22, 26, 27)

What does Daniel see next in his dream after the four animals and the little horn? Daniel sees a courtroom in heaven (Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14). Thrones are set up in the courtroom. Then God the Father sits down. Hundreds and thousands of angels serve God the Father. The members of the court sit down too. Then God opens the books of record.

Do you see that God's work as Judge happens **after** the 1,260 years are over? As we saw yesterday, the 1,260 years show the time that the little horn will do its work. That work happens from A.D. 538 to 1798 (read Friday's study). So, God's work as Judge happens **after** the 1,260 years but **before** God sets up His final kingdom. We see this information three times in Daniel's dream:

Little horn power (A.D. 538–1798)
God's work as Judge in heaven
God's everlasting kingdom

Read about God's work as Judge in Daniel 7:13, 14, 21, 22, 26, 27. How is God's work as Judge in favor of His people?



God will judge against the little horn.

The Old Testament shows us several examples of God's work as Judge in the wilderness and in His temple. But His work as Judge in Daniel is different. Daniel 7 shows God's work as Judge over every human and power on earth. So, God will judge against the little horn. God also will give the kingdom to His people.

Daniel does not tell us exactly when God's work as Judge will start or stop. But we see that God starts His work because of the little horn's attack on His people. God's work will be worldwide. In Daniel 8 and 9, we will learn when God's work as Judge starts. We also will see that God's work as Judge includes cleaning sin from the temple in heaven. So, Daniel 7 teaches us about God's work as Judge in heaven before the Second Coming. We see that God's work as Judge is good for His people too.

THE SECOND COMING (Daniel 7:13)

Read about the Son of Man in Daniel 7:13. Who is the Son of Man? How do you know? (For the answer, also read Mark 13:26; Matthew 8:20; Matthew 9:6; Luke 9:26; and Luke 12:8.)

As God starts His work as Judge, a most important Person enters the courtroom. It is the Son of Man. Who is He? (1) The Son of Man is someone from heaven. But as His name also shows, there is something human about Him. He comes to take part in God's work as Judge. (2) The Son of Man arrives with the clouds of heaven. These clouds are a word picture in the New Testament for the Second Coming. Do you see that in Daniel 7:13, the Son of Man does not come from heaven to earth? No, He moves from one place in heaven to another place in heaven. He comes in front of God the Father. (3) The Son of Man coming with heaven's clouds shows us something important about the Second Coming. When the Son of Man comes back, everyone on earth will see Him. The clouds of heaven also help us remember the high priest, or holy leader, in the Old Testament. The high priest entered the Most Holy Place at the end of the year to remove sin from God's temple.

The Son of Man also is a king. God the Father gives Him a kingdom and power. The Son of Man also gets glory and honor. " 'People from every nation [country] and language group will serve him' " (Daniel 7:14, ERV). The word "serve" also can be written as "worship." We find this word nine times in Daniel 1–7 (Daniel 3:12, 14, 17, 18, 28; Daniel 6:16, 20; Daniel 7:14, 27). It means to give honor to God. That is why the little horn is so awful. It is a religious power that causes people to worship God in the wrong way. It replaces God's work in heaven for us with the work of a human on earth. No human can take God's place. God's work as Judge shows us that He corrects this false worship. God shows that only the Son of Man can save humans. The Bible says, "There is one God. There is one Man standing between God and men. That Man is Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5, NLV).



**No human can take
God's place.**

GOD'S HOLY ONES (Daniel 7:18, 21, 22, 25, 27)

Read about God's people in Daniel 7:18, 21, 22, 25, 27. What happens to them?

The "holy ones of the Most High" (Daniel 7:18, NLV) is a name for God's people. God's holy people are loyal to Bible truth. That is why the little horn hurts them. The little horn is a word picture for the Roman Catholic Church. Yes, the kingdom of Rome (the 4th animal power) also hurts Christians. But in Daniel 7:25, the attacks against God's people come from the little horn. The little horn rises to power only after the kingdom of Rome ends.

God's people will not suffer forever. God's kingdom will replace all the kingdoms on earth. Let us look at something interesting about the kingdom. In Daniel's dream, we see that the Son of Man is given "authority [power], glory and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:14, NIV). But what happens when the angel explains the dream to Daniel? The angel says that God's "holy ones" get the kingdom (Daniel 7:18, NLV). Who is wrong? Daniel or the angel? Both are right! The Son of Man is God. He also is part of the human family. So, when He wins, then God's people win too.

When the top religious leader asks Jesus if He is the Savior, Jesus answers: " 'I am. And in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Powerful One. And you will see the Son of Man coming on clouds in the sky' " (Mark 14:62, ICB). So, Jesus is the One who stands for us in heaven's court. He already beat Satan. He shares His victory with the people who come close to Him in their hearts. That is why there is no reason to fear. As Paul says so clearly: "In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ [Jesus], who has loved us. I am absolutely [fully] sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can separate us. Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation [everything God made on earth] can separate us" (Romans 8:37-39, NIV) from God's love.



"Not even death or life can separate us from God's love."

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: When the kingdom of Rome ended, the top holy leader of the Church in Rome made himself the top leader of the city of Rome. That happened in A.D. 538. Then the Roman Catholic Church and the old kingdom of Rome blended their power. So, the church's holy leader, or pope, behaved the same as the Roman king in many ways. That is why the church controlled religion and governments. Then in 1798 Napoleon ended the church's power. Napoleon's attack against the Roman Catholic Church did not end Rome itself. But Napoleon's war did end the church's attacks on God's people. So, the church's power on the earth ended—but not its teachings. The church continued, then and now, to teach ideas that go against Bible truth. The church says that the pope stands in Jesus' place on earth. The church brags that the pope has all Jesus' power to be king and forgive sins. The church also brags that it changed the Sabbath to Sunday. One of the church's many false teachings is purgatory. Purgatory is a place where the church says that people's souls go after they die. They go to purgatory to suffer so they can be made good and clean. After they have suffered enough, God will let them in heaven. The church also teaches that humans should confess their sins to human priests, or holy leaders. But are not these holy leaders sinners too? Also, the church teaches the lie that you can earn your way into heaven by faith plus your good works and not by faith alone.

“In his own power, man cannot answer Satan's attacks against him. Satan accuses man of wrongdoing. Man stands in front of God. Man wears clothes that are dirty with his own sins. He confesses his guilt. But Jesus is man's Lawyer in heaven's court. Jesus asks God to show mercy to everyone who has turned from sin to Him in faith. Jesus asks God to pardon these people and to remember everything He did for sinners on Calvary. That is how Jesus wins every time for us against Satan. Jesus' obedience to God's law was perfect. His perfect record gives Him all power in heaven and on earth. So, Jesus asks His Father to have mercy on guilty humans. Jesus brings humans back to God. . . . Zechariah 3:4.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pages 586, 587, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

- 1 Look again at all the clear information we learned this week about the little horn. Why should this information help protect us from false ideas about who this power is?



“Man wears clothes that are dirty with his own sins.”