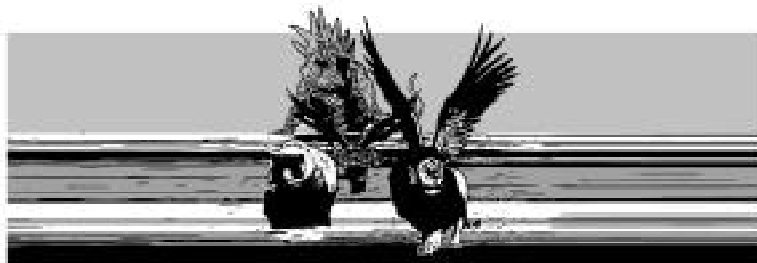


Daniel's History Lesson



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 6

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Daniel 7.

MEMORY VERSE: “Don't [do not] let anyone trick you in any way. That day [Jesus' return] will not come until people rise up against God. It [Jesus' return] will not come until the man of sin appears. He is a marked man. He is sentenced to be destroyed” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, NKJV).

DANIEL RECEIVED THE VISION IN DANIEL 7 ABOUT 553 B.C., the first year of Belshazzar's co-rulership with his father, Nabonidus. This vision is almost the same as the vision in Daniel 2. The two visions are almost the same because:

1. Fifty years had gone by since Nebuchadnezzar had received his vision in Daniel 2.
2. Repeating important matters is a good rule of teaching.
3. Daniel 2 gave a general picture of the future from Nebuchadnezzar's days until the Second Coming. Daniel 7 gives more details for the time period between the fourth empire and Jesus' second coming.
4. Daniel 2 shows the worldly empires from a political and military viewpoint. Daniel 7 includes the spiritual (religious) power that plays an important part in the great controversy (war).

No matter why these two visions are almost the same, Daniel 7 is a powerful prophecy filled with important truth for our time.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What is the important message of the vision in Daniel 7? What is the fourth beast? What is the little-horn power that arises out of, and is still part of, the fourth beast? What excuse did the

medieval church¹ make for torturing its members who disagreed with some of its beliefs? What does the time prophecy in Daniel 7:25 represent?

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, November 13.

SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 7

THE VISION (Daniel 7:1-8).

In his vision, Daniel sees the four winds of heaven bringing a storm to the great sea. As a result of the storm, four wild beasts come out of the water.

What explanations does the Bible give for most of the symbols in this vision?

Winds (Jeremiah 25:31-33; Revelation 7:1, 2) _____

Water (Isaiah 57:20; Revelation 17:15)

The four beasts (Daniel 7:17) _____

Lion (Daniel 2:31, 38) _____

Bear (Daniel 5:18, 28; Daniel 8:20) _____

¹medieval church—the church from A.D. 500–1500.

²ancient—very old.

Leopard (Daniel 8:21; Daniel 11:2)



Winds symbolize destruction and God's great anger over sin (Jeremiah 25:31-33).

Any history book on the ancient² world will support the fact that the great world powers following Babylon were Media-Persia and Greece. But what about the fourth power, the dreadful and terrible beast? The Bible does not name the fourth beast. But history supports the fact that the power that defeated Greece was Rome. So Rome is the fourth beast.

How is the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 the same as the fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 (Daniel 2:40; Daniel 7:7, 23)?

World power may be said to have passed from the Greeks to the Romans at the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C. In this battle, the Romans won a complete victory over Macedonia.³ Macedonia was divided into four parts that later became a Roman territory. After defeating Macedonia, the Romans turned to the other Greek states with plans to reward their friends and punish their enemies. In 133 B.C., Attalus III, king of Pergamum, gave his kingdom to Rome when he died. In 63 B.C., Syria and Judea became Roman territories. During the next few years, Roman armies marched westward and conquered Spain, France, and England. Finally, in 30 B.C., Egypt, the last of the great Greek-controlled kingdoms, came under Roman control. Soon, all the world was united under Rome. Again, history supports what God knew would happen.

MONDAY—NOVEMBER 8

THE LITTLE HORN (Daniel 7:8, 23-25).

The Roman Empire did not fall to another world empire, as the earlier kingdoms did. Instead, the little horn fell apart. From A.D. 330 on, when Emperor Constantine moved the seat of government (the capital) from Rome to Constantinople, a long downfall began in the western half of the empire. Its authority (power) slowly disappeared. Its structure of gov-

ernment faded away. The Germanic tribes from the north carved the empire into many smaller pieces. In A.D. 476, these tribes defeated Romulus Augustulus, the last of the western emperors.



Constantine moved his government from Rome to Constantinople.

**What happens to the fourth beast?
Daniel 7:19, 20, 24.**

The prophecy does not separate the horns from the beast. Instead, the horns continue the activities of the beast. The horns are the same as the iron with the earthenware (clay) in the feet and toes of the statue in Daniel 2. As in Daniel 2, the fourth empire broke apart. This breaking apart of the fourth empire in Daniel 7 by the ten horns symbolizes the European nations that came from the Roman Empire and continued Roman culture.

³Macedonia—a city state or country in the northeastern part of Greece. Alexander the Great, a famous Greek king, was born in Macedonia.



The fourth beast.

What are the special characteristics⁴ of the little horn? What power does the little horn represent? Daniel 7:8, 24, 25.

Historians⁵ tell us that “out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral (religious) Empire in the ‘giant form’ of the Roman Church.” —Alexander Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval [Medieval] Church* (New York: B. Franklin, 1959), p. 150, quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Sourcebook*, volume 9, article 1142. When the western half of the Roman Empire fell to the Germanic tribes, the Bishop of Rome became an important and powerful leader in the West. Soon he used both spiritual

and political power. “The Roman Church silently pushed itself into the place of the Roman World Empire.” —Adapted from Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* (New York: Putnam, 1901), p. 270; italics provided; quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Sourcebook*, volume 9, p. 1359.

The little-horn power never stops being a Roman power. Why is this point important for us to remember, especially in view of last-day events,⁶ when people guess about who or what is described by end-time symbols in the Bible?

TUESDAY—NOVEMBER 9

PERSECUTION (TORTURING) OF THE SAINTS (Daniel 7:25).

Jesus warned that His followers would be tortured (Matthew 24:9). What do you read in Daniel 7 about the work of the little-horn power that fulfills Jesus’ warning?

Christians were persecuted (attacked) during the time of the pagan⁷ Roman Empire (the fourth beast). But the persecution (attack) in Daniel 7:25 is a persecution of the saints by the little horn. This little horn arose only after the pagan part of the Roman Empire ended. The best known example of this perse-

⁴characteristics—what the character is made of such as patience and kindness, or laziness and anger.

⁵historians—people who study history as their profession.

⁶events—things that happen.

⁷pagan—not believing in God.

cution is the Inquisition.⁸ In the Middle Ages (A.D. 500–1500), the church tried to use political authority (power) to keep “heretics”⁹ under control. Today, with all the talk about Christian unity, these cruel acts are not talked about much anymore. But many Christians died at the hands of the little-horn power described in Daniel 7.

It is difficult for us to understand how people who claimed to be followers of Jesus could persecute other Christians. How did they excuse themselves of persecuting other Christians in the name of Jesus? Read John 16:2, 3 as an example of this kind of thinking.

The reason for the Inquisition was based on Augustine’s (A.D. 354–430) understanding of Luke 14:23. In the parable of the great supper, Jesus says, “ ‘Compel [urge] them [nonbelievers] to come in [join the church]’ ” (NKJV). Augustine took this to mean “Force them to come in, if they do not come in of their own free will.”

The great Roman Catholic theologian¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1224–1274) answered a question about the heretics. He said, “Forgers¹¹ of money and other evil people are punished to death by political authority. Then there is a good

reason for heretics to be both driven out of the church and even put to death.

“But the church can show mercy¹² if there is any hope for heretics to come back to the church. Therefore, the church should give three warnings, as the apostle (Paul) directs. After the third warning, if the heretic is still stubborn, the church no longer hopes for his conversion and looks to the salvation of other people by separating the heretic from the church. Then the church is to deliver the heretic to the worldly court to be removed from the world by death.”—Edited by Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students’ Source Book* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1962), p 465; italics given; adapted.

Aquinas’s thinking is false. But his thinking should warn us that people who believe God is on their side can still do great evil. Then why do we need to be careful in excusing what we do for God and for what we believe to be His work?

WEDNESDAY—NOVEMBER 10

**CHANGING TIMES AND LAWS
(Daniel 7:25).**

In what special way does the little horn try to take upon itself what be-

⁸Inquisition—during the Middle Ages, many Christians were put into prison and made to suffer for disagreeing with the policy of the medieval church.

⁹heretics—believers who are accused of not following church policy. In the Middle Ages, the medieval church accused people of disobedience and called them “heretics,” or false believers. But these people rightly believed that the church was not following the Bible.

¹⁰theologian—a person who studies the Bible as his or her profession.

¹¹forgers—people who make false money.

¹²mercy—kindness we do not deserve.

longs only to God? Daniel 2:21; Daniel 7:25. How does this action compare¹³ with 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4?

The word for “times” in Daniel 7:25 is the same word for “seasons” in Daniel 2:21. God, as the Creator of the times, can change times. But the little horn boastfully claims this power for himself by trying to change the “time” of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the one commandment that points to God in His work as Creator. This work makes Him, and Him alone, God.



Only God can change time, because He is the Creator of time.

What one message do the following verses have for us, in view of today's lesson? Genesis 2:1-3; Exo-

dus 20:8-11; Isaiah 40:28; Isaiah 44:6-8; Isaiah 45:5, 6.

As Adventists, we love to pass out all kinds of quotes from early Catholic authors laughing at Protestants¹⁴ who take the Bible as their rule of faith, but then keep Sunday as their day of worship. Sunday-keeping is not commanded in the Bible. Sunday-keeping was started by the Roman Church.

Why did the Roman Church change the day of worship to Sunday? Both outside and inside pressures on the church forced many Christians to break away from the Jews. The struggles between the Jews and the empire caused many of these Christians to separate themselves from the Jews. They wanted to avoid any association (connection) with the Jews under Roman control. Meanwhile, the Jewish-Christians who wanted to strictly follow certain rules of Moses helped push many other Christians to disconnect themselves from the Jewish religion in every way possible.

Christians of the first four hundred years never confused Sabbath with Sunday. But for a while, they worshiped on both Saturday and Sunday as shown in the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles¹⁵ (pseudonymous work,¹⁶ c. A.D. 375). “Keep the Sabbath and the Lord's day festival (Sunday). This is because the Sabbath is the memorial of the creation. And the Lord's day is the memorial of

¹³compare—how things are the same.

¹⁴Protestants—Christians who are not members of the Catholic Church.

¹⁵apostles—God's disciples who preached the gospel after Jesus returned to heaven.

¹⁶pseudonymous work—something written by someone who did not use her or his real name.

Jesus' resurrection."¹⁷—Adapted from the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Student's Source Book*, volume 9, article 1414.

The change from Saturday worship to Sunday worship did not happen overnight. Slowly but surely the backsliding from God's fourth commandment began. But it happened only because people let it happen. If church groups had stayed faithful to the Sabbath, the change would have never come. What can we learn from how worshiping on Saturday was changed to worshiping on Sunday?

THURSDAY—NOVEMBER 11

A TIME PROPHECY (Daniel 7:25).

The time period of three-and-one-half times, or three-and-one-half years, in Daniel 7:25, is again mentioned in Daniel 12:7 and in different ways in the book of Revelation.

All of the following verses are talking about the same time prophecy. What can we learn by comparing these verses? Daniel 7:25; Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2; Revelation 11:3; Revelation 12:6; Revelation 12:14; Revelation 13:15.

All of these verses show that a prophetic year has 360 days. Three-and-one-half years is the same as 1,260 prophetic

days, or 42 prophetic months. As Adventists, we have long believed that these prophecies show the year/day rule.¹⁸ The Bible reasons for the year/day rule are: (1) The visions are symbolic. For this reason, the times should also be symbolic. (2) As the visions are for long time periods, the times should also be for long periods. (3) The special way in which the time periods are explained also show that they are symbolic. For example, the word *years* is never used in any of the prophecies. Then we can assume (decide) that the verses follow the year/day rule. (4) The test of the year/day rule in Daniel 9:24-27 shows that days really mean years.

Think carefully about the work of the little-horn power in Daniel 7:7, 8, 19, 20, 26, 27. Notice that this is a power that comes out of pagan Rome, the fourth beast. And it continues until the judgment scene that leads to the end of the world. What does this time measure tell us about why the year/day rule is used in these verses? If the year/day rule were not to be used, how else could we interpret properly the prophecy that covers so long a time period?

FRIDAY—NOVEMBER 12

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy [War]*, pp. 51–55.

¹⁷resurrection—coming back to life after dying.

¹⁸year/day rule—a day in prophecy time equals one year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6).

Notice how Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are the same. We can clearly see how Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are dealing with the same event.

Daniel 2	Daniel 7
Babylon	Babylon
Media-Persia	Media-Persia
Greece	Greece
Rome	Rome
Second Coming	Second Coming

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Adventists love to quote Roman Catholic authors who boast of Rome's authority (power) in changing the Sabbath to Sunday. In most cases, these are older quotes. Today, Rome appears to be using a different method for explaining the church's authority (power) to change the Sabbath. The best example of this method is Pope John Paul II's 1998 letter, called *Dies Domini (The Lord's Day [Sunday])*. In this letter, the pope tells members to be more faithful in keeping "the Lord's day." Instead of boasting about the church's authority to change the Sabbath day, the letter in some places reads much like an Adventist defense of the seventh-day

Sabbath. The pope goes back to the Genesis Creation story as part of the reason for keeping Sunday. He even quotes Genesis 2:2. Why do you think Rome has changed its way of defending the Lord's day? How does this change fit with our understanding of last-day events?

SUMMARY: God gave Daniel a quick look at world history from the days of Babylon to the time when the saints will receive God's kingdom. After the four world powers (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome), there is to come a power that will use both church and politics to change God's law. This power will continue its work until the time of the end.