

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

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EARTH'S LAST RULING POWER

Our previous study focused on prophetic history for this world as related through the image of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream and described in Daniel chapter 2 and the ram/goat vision of Daniel 8.

This lesson will now examine prophecy through a different set of symbols. It will be seen that this prophecy as given in Daniel 7, relates to the same period of time as did Daniel chapters 2 and 8, but will reveal more detail. The same four succeeding nations are represented, but special attention is fixed upon the fifth and final power that will have the controlling influence over the inhabitants of this world, just preceding the second advent of Jesus Christ.

We shall learn who/what this power is and that it is now already in the world. Its political and religious structure is significant and will be seen to be quite unlike the four kingdoms that preceded it.

1. Who was king in Babylon at the time of this vision of Daniel?

Daniel 7:1 _____

Note: At the time of this vision, the kingdom of Babylon was soon to fall. It was conquered by the Medes and Persians during the reign of Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.

2. What did Daniel see?

Daniel 7:2 _____

3. What does water represent in prophecy?

Revelation 17:15 _____

4. What does wind represent in prophecy?

Jeremiah 49:35-37 _____

Note: Wind represents the judgments of God, disciplinary measures to correct rebellion. Often in the form of military and political confrontation or war. It may also be in the form of natural disasters, such as earthquake, flood, volcano or fire, or a man-made disaster such as an industrial holocaust (Proverbs 1:27; Zechariah 7:14; Jeremiah 18:17; Job 21:17,18; Isaiah 17:13).

5. What resulted from the strife upon the sea that Daniel saw in his vision?

Daniel 7:3 _____

6. What was represented by these symbols ?

Daniel 7:17 _____

Note: Compare Dan.2:38-43. Four universal world kingdoms are here described in both chapters 2 and 7 and end with the setting up of God's kingdom. Each vision in this series of prophecies (chapters 2, 7, 8) contribute details to enable positive identification. The first three nations have been named, while the fourth and fifth powers are identified by clear distinguishing features.

7. What beast represented Babylon, the first kingdom?

Daniel 7:4 _____

Note: God used this same symbol -- a lion, to represent Babylon prior to this vision given to Daniel (Jeremiah 4:6,7. See Zechariah 2:6,7 identifying the power of the north to be Babylon). The beast is said to also have wings. This symbol is used in Scripture to denote speed (Habakkuk 1:6,8; Deuteronomy 28:49; Jeremiah 4:13) and aptly describes the rapidity with which king Nebuchadnezzar moved through the land conquering one nation after another.

8. What beast followed, representing the second kingdom?

Daniel 7:5 _____

Note: As we learned in our last lesson, the kingdom to follow Babylon was that of Medo-Persia. The bear is raised up on one side signifying that in this dual confederate power, one kingdom would be stronger than the other. And so it was, the Persians were stronger than the Medes. A similar representation may also be seen in the ram of Daniel 8:3 which had one horn higher than the other. The Persians were especially fierce and treated Babylon, Lydia and Egypt with particular severity. This may be represented by the three rib bones held in the jaws of the bear.

9. What special features characterised the third beast?

Daniel 7:6 _____

Note: If two wings were used to represent speed, then four wings would indicate even greater speed. In a short 8 years, Alexander the Great had conquered the nations that would make up the empire of Greece. As the four horns of the goat (Dan. 8:8) represented the four divisions of the Grecian empire, so the four heads of the leopard denote the same four divisions.

10. What is the description of the fourth beast?

Daniel 7:7,23 _____

Compare Daniel 2:33, 40 _____

Note: At the battle of Pydna, in 179 BC., Rome replaced Greece as the controlling world empire. The ferocity of the fourth beast fitly describes the character of the iron Roman empire, for this nation ruled with a relentless cruelty. One of the four horns, out of which grew a little horn that became exceedingly great, though not stated, is the pagan Roman empire (Daniel 8:9). This will become clearer as we proceed through the lesson.

11. There were 10 horns on the head of the fourth beast. What are these said to represent?

Daniel 7:8, 24 _____

Note: For over 100 years the barbarian tribes attacked Rome. Its fall was complete in 476 AD. and Europe was divided into various sections, each ruled by a different barbarian tribe.

12. What also came up out of the fourth beast and after the first ten horns had been established ?

Daniel 7:8 _____

Compare Daniel 8:8,9 _____

Note: For the prophecies to be consistent, the fourth beast of Daniel 7 must represent the same kingdom as one of the four horns on the head of the goat of Daniel 8.

13. What change took place in the first ten horns?

Daniel 7:8, 24 _____

Note: We see that in order for this new power to take prominence, three of the original kingdoms had to be subdued, or overthrown.

14. What kind of words were spoken by this last rising horn?

Daniel 7:25 _____

Compare Daniel 8:11 _____

15. How would this power treat God's true people?

Daniel 7:25 _____

Compare Daniel 8:9,10 _____

16. What did this horn think he could change?

Daniel 7:25 _____

Note: This text could not be a reference to the changing of the laws of men, as this is a common occurrence in every country. However, if it were God's law that he was attempting to change, then this would be significant. For an authority to have such aspirations, they would need to rank with the most powerful and influential kingdoms of earth's history. It would take such power to convince men that the changes were authentic, or to compel men to conform, as they enforce their dogmas. Of course no-one can change God's law, they may pretend to do so for a time, but one day they will face the judgement for leading men away from God (Matthew 5:17-19).

The first four world kingdoms have been identified, but who is the fifth world power, represented by prophecy's little horn?

THE LITTLE HORN IDENTIFIED

The book of Daniel, chapters 7 and 8 reveal a collection of parameters by which we may identify the little horn power, the last world authority to dominate this earth. We will examine the details given in chapter 7, verses 7, 8, 24 and 25. The points raised in chapter 8 verses 9-12 and 23-25 are somewhat a reiteration of chapter 7, but their greater impact will be seen when we refer back to these in our study on Revelation 13. Thus we have observed the identifying features of the little horn to be :-

1. Arose out of the fourth beast
2. Came up among the ten horns.
3. Looked more stout than his fellow horns
4. Came up after the first ten were established.
5. Uprooted three other horns in establishing itself.
6. Was diverse, or different, from the other horns.
7. Wore out the saints of the Most High.
8. Spoke great words against the Most High.
9. Sought to change times and laws.
10. Continued for a time, times, and the dividing of time.

Looking back through history, what power on earth can meet all of these identifying features?

The line of prophetic symbols and the confirmation of history shows the succession of world ruling nations to be:

Babylon	605 - 539 BC
Medo-Persia	539 - 331 BC
Greece	331 - 168 BC
Rome	168 BC - 476 AD

When the Roman Empire collapsed in 476 AD, it fell into 10 divisions or separate kingdoms (Daniel 7:25; 2:41-43). These were:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ◆ Anglo-Saxons (England) | ◆ Franks (France) |
| ◆ Alemanni (Germany) | ◆ Burgundians (Switzerland) |
| ◆ Lombards (Italy) | ◆ Heruli |
| ◆ Suevi (Portugal) | ◆ Vandals |
| ◆ Visigoths (Spain) | ◆ Ostrogoths |

Rise Of The Little Horn

Now, what power rose out of these ten established nations? Remember, what we are looking for is a different (diverse) kind of power to the ten kingdoms and even different to the previous 4 empires. These nations were political and military in character. The nature of the little horn power, we shall see to be religious. So what religious power grew out of the fragments of the fallen Roman Empire? Let us back up to the time of Emperor Constantine, of Rome, about 330 AD.

The "Christian" churches were desirous of swelling their numbers that they may outweigh the pagan population and magnify their influence, especially their influence with the emperor.

To gain the needed weight of numbers, pagans were invited to accept the Christian faith and join with the Church. To make this proposition attractive to the pagan world, pagan rites, symbols, images and ceremonies were introduced into the Christian church. To placate the Christian fraternity, these pagan objects of worship were given so called Christian names, which gave a semblance of the worship of the true God and leant a kind of dignity to the apostasy.

The worship practices of the church now satisfied the pagan congregation and left the blind Christian, who listened to the persuasion of men and not reading his Bible, to be led into a totally false and blasphemous worship system.

17. What warning was given to the faithful saints of the early Christian Church, that they may be alert to the deception and stay firmly in the truth of God's word?

Acts 20:28-31 _____

The churches grew in power as the years passed and this is particularly true of the church of Rome where political influence gave that Church a decided advantage. The Bishop of the church of Rome aspired to be head of all Christendom, but there were three major obstructions to his realising this objective. There were three kingdoms that opposed the unscriptural doctrines of the Church of Rome and the dogmas of its Bishop, a thorn in the side that needed to be removed.

Using the power and authority of the state, the Roman church persecuted these people and secured the co-operation of the eastern emperor, Justinian and his military forces to crush the remains of these tribes. These people were:

- ◆ Heruli crushed 493 AD.
- ◆ Vandals crushed 534 AD.
- ◆ Ostrogoths crushed 538 AD.

With the removal of the last opposing tribe in 538 AD, the Bishop of the Church of Rome was declared to be Bishop over all of Christendom and all churches. The year 538 AD marked the beginning of a cruel and bloody world domination that was to last for 1260 years.

Conservative estimates suggest that during this period, some 100 million people lost their lives for no other crime than following the teachings of the Bible, as opposed to the dictates of a pagan, pseudo-Christian church. Truly this is a wearing out of the saints of the Most High (Dan.7:25).

Speaking Against The Most High

What claims are made of the Bishop of the Church of Rome, otherwise known as the Pope? The following are typical and representative of a myriad of such claims.

1. *The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under veil of flesh.* Catholic National, July 1895

2. Pope Pius (1857-1934) in the Vatican throne room on the 29th. April 1922, made this statement - *"You know that I am the Holy Father the representative of God on the earth, the Vicar of Christ, which means I am God on earth"* Quoted in the Bulwark. Oct. 1922 page 104.

3. *"We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty"* Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903). The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII, page 304.

4. *"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man but as it were God and the Vicar of God. He is the divine monarch and supreme emperor and king of kings. Hence the pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions."* Lucius Ferraris, Prompta Bibleotheca Vol. 6, article "Papa 11"

5. Inscribed upon the Pope's tiara (three tiered, or triple crown) is his title, the Latin words VICARIUS FILII DEI, meaning, "Vicegerent of the Son of God". Which is to say, that he has been appointed by God to act with all the authority of Jesus Christ in heaven and in earth. Notice that Jesus said, all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). The pope's title is a claim to possess this power. Speaking great words against the Most High, is blasphemy, the Church and the pope claim the titles that belong to God alone (Dan. 7:25; John 10:33).

He shall think to change times and laws (Dan.7:25). Does this church even assert to have authority to change the laws of God? Lucius Ferraris, an official of the Franciscan order, while holding a high position in the Roman Catholic Church, states in the Ecclesiastical Dictionary:

"The pope can modify (change) the divine law".

18. The apostle Paul warned of the influence that would cause a falling away from the truth. How did he describe the character and claims of this power?

2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4 _____

Variations to the law of God, orchestrated and imposed by the authority of this church alone, are now observed by almost every church in Christendom. The nature of these changes will be the subject of a later lesson.

The Period Of Reign Of The Little Horn

It shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and the dividing of time (Daniel 7:25). The expression "time, times and the dividing of time", is a reference to the period during which this little horn power would have authority and dominion. The Hebrew word **IDDAN** from which "time" is translated, means a fixed period of time and is commonly used in the Hebrew to designate one year (also used in Dan.4:23,32 and written as one year in the Greek Septuagint writings).

Considering that "time" represents one year, "times" would represent two years and the "dividing of times" would represent half of one year (Dan. 12:7; Rev.12:14). For reckoning of prophetic time, a calendar year consisted of 12 months, where each month was of 30 days duration. Hence one prophetic year had a total of 360 days.

To verify the 30 day month, Genesis 7:11 states that the rain of the great flood began on the 17th. of the 2nd month. Genesis 8:3,4 indicate that the flood abated after 150 days and gives the date as 17th of the 7th month. The calendar span from the second to the seventh month, is exactly five months. This period is also stated to be 150 days.

$$\text{Hence...} \quad \text{one month} = \frac{150}{5} = 30 \text{ days}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{time} + \text{times} + \text{dividing of time} &= 1 + 2 + 1/2 \text{ times} \\ &= 3 \frac{1}{2} \text{ years of prophetic time.} \end{aligned}$$

Expressed in days, this would be:

$$3 \frac{1}{2} \times 360 = 1260 \text{ prophetic days.}$$

Revelation 12:6,14 uses "1260 days" and "time times and half a time" in respect to the same given period and events, which further confirms that these two units of time measurement are equal. In Daniel 7:25 "time times and dividing of times" is stated as the period of reign of the little horn power, the period in which he would wear out the saints of the Most High with fierce persecution. Revelation 13:5-7 is similar language to Daniel 7:25 and in fact refers to the same earthly power and circumstances, as we shall see in a later study, but here the time period is given as 42 months. Allowing 30 days to a month, we confirm the 1260 day reckoning:

$$42 \times 30 = 1260 \text{ prophetic days.}$$

There are two instances mentioned in Scripture where God applies a year for a day (Numbers 14:32-34; Ezekiel 4:6). While these are not essentially prophetic in nature, it suggests that this concept of one day used to represent a year is open to investigation in respect to prophecy. On this basis, three and a half prophetic years, or 1260 days, may be understood as 1260 actual years.

While this may appear somewhat inconclusive, the proof of the reasoning may be acknowledged in the records of history. The little horn power, now seen to be the Roman Catholic Church, was prophesied to exercise its power for a period of 1260 years.

With the full onset of authority received in 538 AD., 1260 years would result in the ending of this reign in the year 1798 AD. It was this year, just after the French revolution, that the French General, Berthier, of the Napoleon army, entered the Vatican, seized the pope and cast him into exile. It was this destruction at the hand of the French, that dealt the papacy its mortal wound and ended its reign of terror of exactly 1260 years.

History is destitute of any other explanation for the details presented in Daniel (and the parallel prophecies of Revelation). Some people believe that the cruel plundering and persecution of the Jews and the desecration of the Hebrew sanctuary by Antiochus Epiphanes IV during his reign (176 to 164 BC.) is the fulfilment of this prophecy. But this tender fails as does every other suggested fulfilment of the prophecy, because there has been no other power on earth, other than the Roman Catholic Church, that can satisfy all of the identifying parameters at the same time. The Roman Catholic Church, is the prophesied last world controlling power, immediately before the second coming of Jesus Christ.

While this church did receive a deadly wound in 1798 AD, that is not the end of the prophecy concerning this world power. Revelation 13 and other chapters in this book, disclose a healing of the wound with its corresponding resurgence of world domination and the tyranny of the dark ages. This latter prophecy will be the subject of another study.

References:

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