

The Prophecy Of Daniel Seven The Judgment Scene

by Stephen Haskell

The three preceding powers were symbolized by three of the mightiest beasts of the earth, but when the fourth beast was considered, there was no animal with a character to represent its terrible nature; so a beast without name, having iron teeth, brass nails, and ten horns, was presented to the prophet.

The angel had said to Daniel, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged." Each one, before being destroyed, was merged into the succeeding one. The same truth was represented in chapter four when the tree representing Babylon was cut down, but the roots remained in the ground. The roots represented the foundation principles upon which Babylon was built, and they have remained in the earth ever since.

When Medo-Persia fell, she left her principles of government, education, and religion still alive, transmitting them to her posterity, the nations of earth. Greece did likewise, and with each succeeding empire, those foundation principles which were so clearly

portrayed in Babylon, which were placed there by the prince of the power of the air, instead of appearing in a weakened state, sprung into life with renewed vigor. So it was that when the fourth kingdom appeared, those principles of government which were the counterfeit of heaven's underlying principles were so strong that no natural beast could symbolize even pagan Rome.

Rome in religion renewed all the religious errors of Babylon, and in education she followed in the footsteps of her great mother. But as the prophet watched, things still more wonderful appeared. The fourth beast,

Rome, which succeeded Greece in 161B.C., had ten horns, which, said the angel, "are ten kings that shall arise." This fourth beast is identical with the legs of iron in the image shown to Nebuchadnezzar, and the ten horns correspond to the mixture of iron and clay in the feet of that image. Each of the preceding kingdoms had fallen into the hands of some strong general who took the rule, but with Rome the case was different. The details of this history are given in the eighth chapter of Revelation under the symbol of the seven trumpets. Barbarian hordes from the north of Europe and Asia swept over the Roman empire between the years 351 and 483 A. D., crushing the government into ten parts.

There was a time when the Roman empire had a most wonderful opportunity to accept the true God. Rome was the universal kingdom during the life of Christ. To Babylon God sent his people, the Jews, to scatter the truths of his kingdom and lead men to repentance. The Medes and the Persians received the gospel from this same people, and representatives from Greece came to Jerusalem, into the very temple, in touch with the priests, in order that there might be no excuse for their refusing Christ. But to the Roman kingdom, heaven itself was poured out in the person of the Saviour, and it was Rome that nailed him to the cross. It was a Roman seal on his tomb, and a Roman guard at his grave. The early church suffered persecution at the hands of this same power. Judgment came to Rome when these barbarians overran the empire with fire and sword, and the kingdom was divided into ten parts.

But Roman history did not end with the division. Daniel watched, "And, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." A new power, a power outside the empire is here represented by the little horn. The three

divisions which were plucked up were the Heruli in 493, the Vandals in 534, and the Ostrogoths in 538 A.D. Justinian, the emperor, whose seat was at Constantinople, working through the general Belisarius, was the power which overthrew the three kingdoms represented by the three horns, and the reason for their overthrow was their adherence to Arianism in opposition to the orthodox Catholic faith.

The little horn which was in power on the plucking up of the three, was diverse from all the others. It had eyes "like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things;" his look also was more stout than his fellows.

Rome was dropping into ruin; her cities had been sacked, her government broken. As from the decaying log of the marsh the mushroom springs up in a night, gaining its life from the decay, so there arose in the Roman Empire a power which was nourished by this national decay. This power was the little horn known as the papacy.

It is written that Babylon, the mother of harlots, fell because of imputing her power unto the gods of the heathen. Pagan Rome fell because she presumes to hold authority over the person of Christ and his followers. Then arose the little horn, and it "made war with the saints and prevailed against them."

"He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws."

Rome in the days of Christ was the center of the world. Paul and others preached the gospel in that city. A church was organized, and for years this church of Rome ranked with the churches of Jerusalem, Constantinople, and others. Gradually but surely, worldliness took the place of the spirit of Christ, and Roman bishops became exalted. The mystery of iniquity of which Paul wrote in his letter to the Thessalonians, was at work in Rome. At the time of the division of the empire the bishops were greedy for civil

power, and in the time of national distress the church grasped the reins of government; the little horn had received power. This was A. D. 538, when the last of the three horns was plucked up and the decree Justinian made in 533 went into effect. (See Gibbon, chapter 41.) Paganism on the throne had been cruel enough, but when those pagan principles which had lived since the days of Babylon took the name and outward form of Christianity, the power which bore sway was still more cruel. Not only would the little horn speak stout words against the Most High, but it would "presume to change the appointed times and the law." (Spurrell's trans.)

Unholy hands had been laid in years past upon the temple of God and the consecrated vessels in the temple, and upon God's people, but the little horn laid hands upon the very law of God, attempting to change the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The little horn had the power of Babylon. In government it was an absolute monarchy, holding authority over all the thrones of Europe. Kings rose and fell at the dictates of Rome. From a religious standpoint, it was the ruling power dictating to the consciences of men, bringing them before her tribunal and peering into their very thoughts. The rack and the inquisition were her instruments, and no man escaped the scrutiny of the man's eye in the little horn. The means by which this power was maintained was its system of education, which kept Europe in darkness for over one thousand years.

This was a long-lived kingdom. "They [the saints, the times, and the laws] would be given into his hands for a time and times and the dividing of times." The reader is referred to chapter 11:13, margin; to the seventh verse of chapter 12, and to Rev. 12:6; 13:5, and Num. 14:34 for different expressions giving the same time and referring to the same power. This time, three and one half years, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred and

sixty years, as it is variously designated, began in 538, when three horns were plucked up to make way for the establishment of this one power, the little horn. It continued until 1798, when his dominion was taken away. His power, however, is not yet destroyed.

Daniel in his vision was shown not only earthly kingdoms and powers, but after listening to the voice of the little horn, which spake great words against the Most High, his attention was called to scenes in the heavenly court which would transpire simultaneously with the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the nations of the earth.