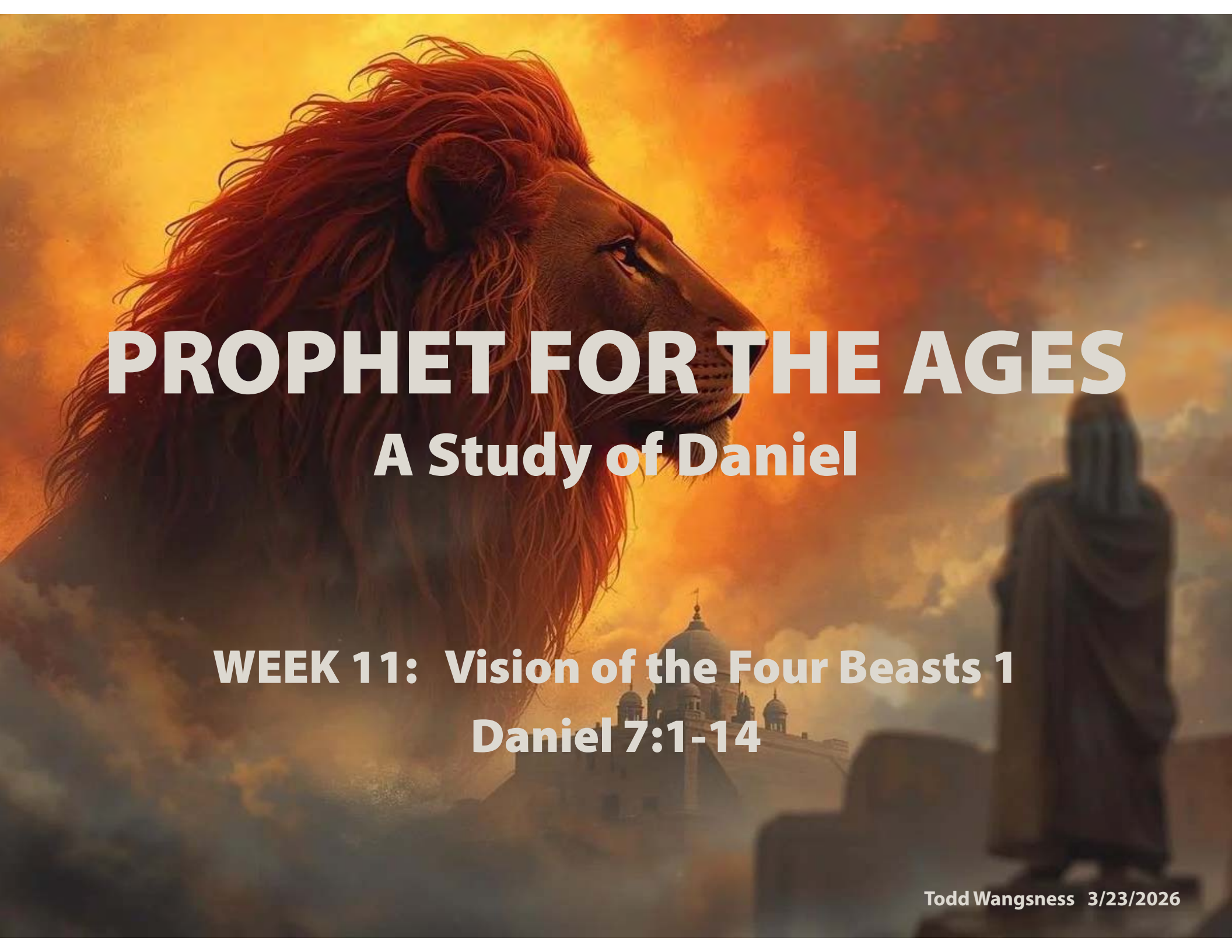




PROPHET FOR THE AGES

A Study of Daniel

WEEK 11: Vision of the Four Beasts 1
Daniel 7:1-14

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Four Beasts

Daniel 7:1-14 Major Themes

The sovereignty of God over human history and kingdoms

- Despite the apparent chaos and power of these beasts, God (depicted as the Ancient of Days) remains enthroned above all. His throne scene (with fiery flames, wheels of burning fire, and millions attending Him) emphasizes His eternal nature, unchanging authority, and ultimate rule over the rise and fall of empires.

Divine judgment on arrogant, blasphemous human power

- The vision focuses especially on the "little horn" that emerges among the ten horns of the fourth beast, speaking boastful (pompous/blasphemous) words. Thrones are set for judgment, books are opened, and the horn's dominion is taken away, with the beast destroyed. This underscores God's justice: He will hold accountable those who oppose Him, exalt themselves, and persecute the faithful.

The rise and persecution by an arrogant, blasphemous power (the "little horn")

- The climactic moment is the arrival of "one like a son of man" coming with the clouds of heaven. He is presented before the Ancient of Days and receives everlasting dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages will serve. Unlike the temporary, destructive earthly kingdoms, this kingdom is eternal—it will never pass away or be destroyed.

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Notable Quotes About Daniel 7:1-14

"This is a prediction of what we call, in Daniel 7, the little horn. But he is none other than the Antichrist. He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High. The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. The kingdom of Christ will follow Him."

■ John MacArthur

"The Messiah is here called the Son of man — one like unto the Son of man; for he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, was found in fashion as a man. The great event foretold in this passage is Christ's glorious coming, to destroy every antichristian power, and to render his own kingdom universal upon earth."

■ Matthew Henry

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Daniel 7:1-14 Overview

- Chapter 7 begins the Second Division of the Book: *Daniel's Visions*
- Daniel wrote in the third person in the first six chapters
 - Starting in Chapter 7 through the end of the book, he writes in the first person
- According to verse 1, Daniel described this as a series of a dream and visions
 - Dream: The Great Sea and the first three beasts (:2-6)
 - First Vision: Fourth beast and the little horn (:7-8)
 - Second Vision: Ancient of Days (:9-12)
 - Third Vision: Coming of the Messiah (:13-14)

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Daniel 7:1-14 Overview (cont.)

- Very similar in content to Chapter 2, except for the following differences:

Category	Chapter 2 (Great Image)	Chapter 7 (Four Beasts)
Received By	Nebuchadnezzar (Gentile King)	Daniel (Holy Prophet)
Interpreter	Daniel	An Angel
Perspective	Human Perspective	God's Perspective

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Daniel 7:1-14 Overview (cont.)

- **Timeline of Daniel's Visions in Chapters 7 through 12**

Chapter	Topic	Timeframe
7	Vision of the Four Beasts	1 st year of Belshazzar - after Ch 4, before Ch 5 (553 BC)
8	Visions of the Ram and Goat	3 rd year of Belshazzar - Before Ch 5 (551 BC)
9	70 Weeks Prophecy	1 st year of Darius the Mede (536 BC)
10-12	Visions of the Time of the End	3 rd year of Cyrus (533 BC)

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Daniel's Vision

Dan 7:1-2 *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. 2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea."*

- According to verse 1, Daniel only recorded the "main facts"
 - He apparently did not record everything he saw, but focused only on the essentials
- He saw a Great Sea that was agitated
 - The agitation of the sea was peculiar, as it was moved by "the four winds of heaven"
 - This symbolizes heavenly powers and forces initiated by sovereignty of God
 - The Great Sea in scripture typically refers to the Mediterranean Sea (Jos 1:4)
 - However, every time sea is used symbolically in scripture, it always refers to the Gentile world (Isa 17:12; Mat 13:47; Rev 13:1; 17:1,15)
 - Accordingly, we will interpret the "Sea" in this passage as the Gentile world

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Daniel's Vision (cont.)

Dan 7:3 *And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.*

- Consequently, this vision describes four kingdoms from the larger Mediterranean area which would arise from among the Gentiles
- What are the “beasts”?
 - The Aramaic word, “*cheivan*”, simply refers to wild animals
 - However, in verse 17, Daniel is told the beasts refer to kings
 - ***Dan 7:17 “Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth.”***
 - Hence, the four beasts are representative of four Gentile empires
 - We are told each empire would be “*diverse*” from the others
 - Chapter 7 elaborates on the prophecies regarding these kingdoms given in Chapter 2

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The First Beast

Dan 7:4 *The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.*

- As we saw in Chapter 2, the first beast was the Babylonian kingdom represented by the head of gold
 - Nebuchadnezzar had his wings clipped and lost his sanity for seven years
 - At the end of the seven years, he was lifted up from his period of insanity and stood on two feet like a man and was restored to his kingdom
- Interestingly, the famous Ishtar Gate in Babylon had depictions of a lion with wings on the gate
- *Jer 50:1, 44 The word that the LORD spoke against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. 44 "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the floodplain of the Jordan against the dwelling place of the strong"*
- *Eze 17:3 "... "A great eagle with large wings and long pinions, full of feathers of various colors, came to Lebanon ..."*

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The Second Beast

Dan 7:5 *“And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’”*

- The second beast was the Medo-Persian empire, depicted in Chapter 2 as the chest and arms of silver
- Daniel observed one side was higher than the other (non-symmetrical)
 - The lopsided characteristic of the second kingdom was noted as the Persians were the dominant power over the Medes
- The *three ribs* mentioned likely represent three kingdoms the Medo-Persian conquered, namely, Lydia (544 BC), Babylon (539 BC), and Egypt (525 BC)
 - *Isa 13:17-18*
- Just as a bear moves more slowly than the lion, so did the Persian Empire’s armies move more slowly in their military campaigns
 - The Medo-Persian forces conquered by sheer force of numbers

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The Third Beast

Dan 7:6 “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

- The third beast was the Greek Empire, denoted in Chapter 2 as the belly and thighs of bronze
- The third beast was *“like a leopard ... [with] four wings of a bird”*
 - Daniel also noted it had four heads
- This kingdom started with Alexander the Great as its head, renown for his lightning-fast military campaigns
- After the death of Alexander, the kingdom split into four regions:
 - Syria: General Seleucus *
 - Egypt: General Ptolemy *
 - Greece & Macedonia: General Cassander
 - Asia Minor: General Lysimachus

* *Regions important in prophecy*

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The Fourth Beast

Dan 7:7 *“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.*

- The fourth beast is the Roman Empire, described in Chapter 2 as the legs of iron
- As iron is stronger than all the other metals, so is this beast described as *dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong [with] huge iron teeth*
- We see from verse 24 that the 10 horns are 10 kings that arise out of this empire
- The 10 horns in Chapter 7 correspond to the 10 toes in Chapter 2 ... as well as the 10 kings of Revelation 13:1 and 17:3-14
 - *Rev 13:1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.*
 - *Rev 17:12-13 “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.*

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The Big Mouth

Dan 7:8 *I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.*

- Reference Rev 11:36; 13:5-6
- This “little horn” had an insignificant beginning but – during its growth – it was able to uproot three of the existing horns
 - We will see in verses 19-26 the identity of this fourth beast and its 11th horn
 - According to Rev 17:12 we just read, these 10 horns are 10 kings that shall arise
- This *little horn* is characterized by a personality with a big mouth speaking arrogant and boastful things
- After the little horn uproots three other horns (leaving only seven of the original 10), it becomes an eighth horn

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Vision of the Ancient of Days

Dan 7:9-10 *"I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened."*

- In this 3rd vision, Daniel is no longer on the earth, but in the throne room of heaven
- *"Put in place"* should be more accurately translated, *"Until the thrones were cast down"*
- Here Daniel provides a vivid description of the God Almighty on His throne!
 - The description is consistent with that of Rev 1, Eze 1 and 10
 - A 1000 Thousands (at least 1 Million!) directly ministered to Him
 - 10,000 x 10,000 (100 Million) stood before Him!
- Very interesting to see that in virtually every single instance of the Lord on His throne in Heaven, the scene is that of a courtroom, with Him presiding as Judge!
- *"Books were opened"*: Likely the Books of Life and Remembrance (Isa 65:6, Mal 3:16, Dan 12:1, Luk 10:20, etc.)

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The Fourth Beast Slain

Dan 7:11-12 *"I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.*

- From the context of this passage, we see that the *little horn* was controlling the 4th beast
- Daniel watched with rapt attention as the beast was slain, its body destroyed, and cast into a fire
- This event corresponds to the *stone cut without hands striking the image on the toes* we studied back in chapter 2
 - When the final kingdom is destroyed, the whole image vaporizes and turns into dust and blows away in the wind
- *"As for the rest of the beasts..."* John in Rev 13:1-2 provides a description of the 4th beast as having characteristics of the previous three
- Each of the empires left their mark on civilization which would persist for a time

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Dominion of the Son of Man

Dan 7:13-14 *"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

- ***"One like the Son of Man"***: Obviously a reference to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!
- ***"Coming with the clouds of heaven!"***: Virtually every reference to the theophanies (pre-incarnate manifestations) of the Logos (2nd person of the Godhead) includes His appearing in a cloud of Shekina glory
 - Yet another proof that the Messiah is separate from God the Father!
 - Psalms 104:3 and Isaiah 19:1 describe the clouds as the chariot of God
 - Hence, this verse describing the Son of Man clearly indicates He is Deity!

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Dominion of the Son of Man (cont.)

- Jesus at His crucifixion clearly stated He is the One referenced in this verse in Daniel
 - *Mat 26:63-64 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"*
 - *64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."*
- This passage in Daniel 7:13-14 mirrors that of Isa 9:6-7
 - *Isa 9:6-7 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

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Questions To Ponder

- **How does the connection between Daniel 7:13 and New Testament references to the Son of Man deepen our understanding of biblical prophecy and its fulfillment?**
- **What are some modern-day examples of "wings being torn off" in terms of nations or leaders experiencing a humbling, and how should Christians respond to such events?**
- **What parallels can you draw between the judgment scene in Daniel 7:10 and other biblical passages that discuss divine judgment?**
- **Many prophecy teachers discuss a "Resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire" in the last days. Let's discuss various opinions on this view and whether Rome needs to be central to "end times" events.**