

# DANIEL — WEEK 9

## WORRY



F. Michael Slay  
*A DEEP Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

## The cover image is Daniel in the Lions' Den by Peter Paul Rubens

This section begins with a vision of the Messiah. The good guys win but war is coming. Daniel is greatly troubled by this vision.

Two years later, Daniel has another vision, worse than the other one. Horrible things are going to happen to his people and their worship. Fortunately, the worst part will only last 2,300 days.

---

We're pleased to provide *the DEEP* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity in the Lord.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. To subscribe to the daily DEEP email, visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) and click the sign-up button at the bottom.

There, you will also discover many other resources, including many email newsletters, such as our worldview study *ReVision*, our devotional newsletter *Crosfigell*, and *the DEEP*.

We are a spiritual fellowship patterned after the Celtic Revival. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

Thank you.

All the individual weekly study guides are available for download here:

<https://www.ailbe.org/resources/itemlist/category/91-deep-studies>

Daniel, Week 9 — Worry  
Copyright 2021 F. Michael Slay  
The Fellowship of Ailbe  
[www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org)

*Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ESV stands for the English Standard Version. © Copyright 2001 by Crossway. Used by permission. All rights reserved. NIV stands for The Holy Bible, New International Version®. © Copyright 1973 by International Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved. KJV stands for the King James Version.*

1 Daniel 7:13–18

*“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.  
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.*

*“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’”*

This is one of the clearest pictures of Christ in the Old Testament. Note these obvious parallels.

*He’s coming with the clouds of heaven.  
To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom.  
All peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion.*

Daniel has to know that this is about the Messiah. Yet, he *was grieved ... and the visions of [his] head troubled [him]*. So, he inquires of *one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this*.

And Daniel gets the answer he longs to hear. The good guys win in the end.

---

Daniel had seen the Messiah, and had seen that His kingdom will be eternal, yet he was *troubled*? Why?

Daniel had this dream in the first year of Belshazzar’s reign. That means he knew Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams and their interpretations. What he didn’t know—and this is critical—is the timetable.

Back in Daniel 2:29–30, Daniel was careful to say that he was merely conveying God’s interpretation of the dream of the statue. He didn’t claim to comprehend what the four kingdoms would be. We now know they encompassed centuries, but Daniel didn’t have that knowledge. For all he knew, Belshazzar might be the silver king. So, it makes sense that Daniel was afraid of what was to come.

If you knew a war was coming, but also knew that your side would ultimately win, would you be scared?

2 Daniel 7:19–22

*“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.*

*“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.”*

Despite the good news given Daniel—that the good guys win in the end—he still won’t stop worrying about the fourth beast. Why?

There’s a great struggle coming. The fourth beast is *exceedingly dreadful*. It does nasty things *with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet*.

Most importantly, the fourth beast isn’t defeated *until the Ancient of Days came*. Before that, the beast’s little *horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them*.

While Daniel has no idea how long that war will last, he’s sure it will be dreadful. As the Boy Scouts say, “Be prepared.”

---

Notice what finally takes out the *horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows*. It wasn’t defeated in battle. Rather, *a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High*.

Think about what that means. The horn is *making war against the saints, and prevailing against them*. Then *the Ancient of Days* shows up and makes a judgement and, pop! The horn is gone. The horn doesn’t win or lose a battle. It’s over simply because *the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom*.

This has a “pro-wrestling” scripted feel to it. The beasts look fearsome and they do fearsome things, but it all doesn’t amount to a hill of beans. When the time comes for the saints to win, it’s over.

This connects with how the forces of evil win battles but never wars. That’s just not in the script.

Here is highlighted a standard Christian doctrine—we are powerless against the enemy. Our victories don’t come from our strength or our strategy. In fact, they shouldn’t even be called “our victories.” They come from the Lord and only the Lord.

So, Daniel isn’t trying to be prepared to win. He just wants to know what he’s up against. Hopefully, that will give him some ideas for how to hang on until the judgement day.

3 Daniel 7:23–28

*“Thus he said:*

*‘The fourth beast shall be  
A fourth kingdom on earth,  
Which shall be different from all other kingdoms,  
And shall devour the whole earth,  
Trample it and break it in pieces.  
The ten horns are ten kings  
Who shall arise from this kingdom.  
And another shall rise after them;  
He shall be different from the first ones,  
And shall subdue three kings.  
He shall speak pompous words against the Most High,  
Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,  
And shall intend to change times and law.  
Then the saints shall be given into his hand  
For a time and times and half a time.*

*‘But the court shall be seated,  
And they shall take away his dominion,  
To consume and destroy it forever.  
Then the kingdom and dominion,  
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,  
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.  
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’*

*“This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.”*

The explanation of the fourth beast doesn’t help much. Daniel is still *greatly troubled*, and his *countenance changed*. Some translations say his *color* changed. Gee, Daniel, you look like you’ve seen a ghost.

So, Daniel decides to keep the whole thing secret. Not much to tell anyone at this point anyway.

---

Daniel’s vision of the beasts will live in his head throughout all the events of chapters 5 and 6. When he sees the writing on the wall, he’s still worrying about it. He knows “the next beast” in that dream is coming. That’s sure to keep him humble.

That helps explain why he was being so reclusive then—why the queen mother had to go fetch him.

4 Daniel 8:1–8 (NIV)

*In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.*

*As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage. I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power. The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.*

As we'll see later (in verse 20), the ram represents the Medo-Persian empire. After the Babylonian Empire, the Persians become dominant. So, that horn grows larger.

The goat is the Greek empire and the first horn is Alexander the Great. But Alexander only lives to be 32 years old. The four horns that grew in its place represent the four generals who take over after him: Antigonus, Philip, Ptolemy, and Seleucus Nicator.

But Daniel doesn't know these names (and presumably wouldn't care). What does this dream mean to him? How is it useful to him or to his readers? What is God's purpose in this dream?

What matters is what's in the dream. The ram seems invincible. *No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.*

Yet, it's nothing compared to the goat. The goat is even more invincible, *but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off.* It seems that everyone is doing great until they get too great, then they're nothing.

Just as it was with the Ancient of Days showing up in the previous dream, we see that kings and principalities aren't as great as we think they are.

---

This is the lesson for us. We live in an insane culture of celebrity. We deify actors, musicians and sports stars. We put them on a pedestal so high it almost qualifies as worship.

And the worst part is what it does to those stars. Just look at what happened to Ravi Zacharias. Everyone looked up to him—too much. He had no one he could talk to, no one he could confide in.

That's a dangerous burden for anyone.

5 Daniel 8:9–14

*And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.*

*Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”*

*And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”*

This one is scary on a different level. The Glorious Land seems to be referring to Daniel’s homeland, the land of milk and honey that God promised Daniel’s forefathers. So, it tugs at his heartstrings.

But the scariest part is when the vision shows that the little horn *cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them*. In the Bible, “stars” is typically a reference to heavenly beings. So is “host.” As we’ve been saying all along, the action in Heaven is what matters and this time, that’s where the bad things are happening.

Even if “stars” and “host” are references to great saints or other earthly heroes of the faith, this is far more dreadful than any of the other visions.

Then, the vision moves on to some creepy specifics. *He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host*. What could that be other than a reference to deity? This horn is one arrogant fellow.

*And by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down*. That means the cessation of the covenantal system of sacrifices. This guy doesn’t just want to be king; he’s got bigger things in mind—insane things no one should aspire to. The obvious response is, “Oh dear. How long will this last?”

The answer is too specific. *“For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”*

All this was fulfilled under Antiochus Epiphanes.

---

Remember, this vision happens as the end of the 70-year captivity that Jeremiah had prophesied. Daniel is hoping that everyone will soon be able to go home, rebuild the temple, and start proper worship again. Glory days are coming.

This vision trashes that future. It’s so heartbreaking that it will make Daniel physically ill.

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. What scares you the most?
2. What should we be prepared for?
3. Had something ever troubled you for a long time without you telling anyone?
4. Do you want to be a star?
5. Has worry ever made you sick?

*Items for prayer:*