

Dr. Wendy Widder, Daniel, Session 10, Daniel 7 – God’s Superior King and His Eternal Kingdom Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Widder, Daniel, Session 10, Daniel 7 – God’s Superior King and His Eternal Kingdom, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Wendy Widder's lecture on Daniel 7, titled "God's Superior King and Eternal Kingdom," explores the apocalyptic vision within the book of Daniel. The lecture emphasizes that Daniel 7 is both a pivotal point, connecting the first and second parts of the book. It is the heart and hinge holding the book together by presenting a cosmic view of God's kingdom, offering encouragement amidst oppression. The lecture dissects the chapter into three vision blocks, examining their literary features and formulaic statements. The first vision block speaks of beasts coming from the sea. The lecture then covers the four beasts and divine judgement. The speaker then looks forward to the next lecture, when she will discuss who the four beasts represent. Finally, Widder explores themes of cosmic warfare, divine council, and ultimate triumph, stressing the chapter's message of hope and God's ultimate control.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Widder, Daniel, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Daniel).



Widder_Daniel_Session10.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Widder, Daniel, Session 10, Daniel 7 – God's Superior King and His Eternal Kingdom

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Widder_Daniel_EN_Session10.pdf":

Briefing Document: Dr. Wendy Widder on Daniel 7

Overview:

This document summarizes Dr. Wendy Widder's lecture on Daniel 7, focusing on its significance within the book of Daniel, its genre as apocalyptic literature, and the key visions presented in the chapter. The lecture emphasizes that while the chapter contains historical allusions, its central concern is the cosmic view of God's kingdom, the assurance of God's ultimate victory over earthly powers, and the encouragement this provides to oppressed people.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Pivotal Chapter:

- Daniel 7 serves as a structural and thematic hinge within the book of Daniel. It connects the narrative sections (chapters 1-6) with the apocalyptic visions (chapters 7-12).
- It is thematically tied to Chapter 2, which also presents four earthly kingdoms followed by God's eternal kingdom.
- "Chapter seven holds it together."
- It marks a shift in genre to apocalyptic literature, establishing themes that are further developed in subsequent visions.

1. Apocalyptic Literature:

- Apocalyptic literature is a type of visionary literature where authors depict symbolic, not literal, events that are not yet in empirical reality.
- It shares some characteristics with prophetic literature, but they are not interchangeable.
- Apocalyptic literature features:
- **Symbolism:** Extensive use of symbols, which is "probably the hardest thing about apocalyptic literature".

- **Visions and Journeys:** Often involves otherworldly journeys of the seer.
- **Supernatural Interpreters:** Angels or supernatural beings help the seer interpret the visions.
- **Pseudonymous Authorship:** Often written under the name of a respected figure from the past, drawing on the authority of that person.
- **Persecution & Cosmic Conflict:** Depicts persecution of the righteous, cosmic destruction, final judgment, and recreation.
- **Deterministic Perspective:** Often presents a deterministic view of history with fixed time periods rather than a call to repentance.

1. **Prophetic vs. Apocalyptic:**

- **Prophecy:** "Thus saith the Lord," addressed to real-time situations, focuses on repentance, with an idea that repentance can avert judgment. The world is flawed, but God will ultimately transform it.
- **Apocalyptic:** Revelation through visions, using pseudonymous authors, focuses on historical events as prophecy after the fact (ex-eventu prophecy), emphasizes the need for a clean slate by destroying and recreating the world.

1. **Structure of Daniel 7:**

- Dr. Widder organizes the chapter into three main vision blocks, each starting with the phrase, "I was looking in my visions at night."
- **Vision Block 1 (7:1-6):** Vision of three beasts rising from a tumultuous sea:
 - A lion with eagle's wings (then wings plucked, becomes human-like)
 - A bear raised on one side with ribs in its mouth.
 - A leopard with four wings and four heads.
- The sea represents primeval chaos and disorder. The beasts rising from it are ominous.
- **Vision Block 2 (7:7-12):** Vision of the fourth beast and the divine throne room.
- A terrifying fourth beast, not compared to anything, with iron teeth and ten horns.

- A little horn that arises among the ten horns, uprooting three others, with eyes and a boastful mouth.
- A vision of the Ancient of Days on his throne, surrounded by a multitude of beings.
- The judgment of the beasts.
- **Vision Block 3 (7:13-28):** Vision of the Son of Man and interpretation.
- A figure like "a son of man" coming with the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom and power.
- "In Daniel's vision, Yahweh's on the throne. And there's also a cloud with someone riding on it. What Daniel is seeing in this single vision are two Yahweh figures."
- Initial interpretation: The four beasts are four kings. The saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom.
- Daniel requests more information about the fourth beast, the horns, and the little horn.
- A second interpretation: the fourth beast is a fourth kingdom, with ten kings, and the little horn that will persecute the saints.
- The people of the holy ones will eventually possess the kingdom.

1. **Symbolic Interpretation:**

- While the visions contain potential references to specific historical kingdoms, the emphasis of the chapter is not on identifying those kingdoms, but rather on "the cosmic view of God's kingdom."
- Numbers like "four" and "ten" might be more symbolic and represent completeness.
- "We're talking cosmic significance here. There's a universality to this fourth beast."

1. **The "Son of Man":**

- The "one like a son of man" coming with the clouds is significant because cloud imagery in the Old Testament is often associated with theophanies or appearances of God.

- "What Daniel is seeing in this single vision are two Yahweh figures."
- It depicts a divine figure sharing power with the Ancient of Days, possibly a foreshadowing of the New Testament's understanding of Jesus.
- "This Old Testament concept of the divine council is the perfect structure for moving to the New Testament and understanding the person of Jesus. "
- This figure receives the kingdom and shares it with the "saints," emphasizing the encouragement this gives to the oppressed.

1. **The Little Horn**

- This figure's arrogance and wickedness is symbolized by his human eyes and speaking mouth. This little horn represents a powerful persecutor.
- The vision shows the little horn making war with the saints and prevailing, until God ultimately intervenes to bring judgement.

1. **The Divine Council:**

- Daniel 7 presents a vision of the divine council where Yahweh (the Ancient of Days) shares power with the Son of Man, which stands in contrast to other Ancient Near East stories.
- "What Daniel 7 suggests is that in the Israelite divine council, we have Yahweh, the Ancient of Days, and we have a vice regent given the right to rule who shares his essence."
- This imagery provides understanding of the triune God in the New Testament.

1. **Ex-Eventu Prophecy:**

- Dr. Widder introduces the concept of ex-eventu prophecy in relation to the book of Daniel. This is the idea that the book was written after the events it describes, particularly those related to the Greek kingdoms and Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
- In the ex-eventu view, the author takes on the name of Daniel and writes history as prophecy to give his people hope.
- This view also states that the prophet likely got some details wrong because in some instances the historical record does not match with his predictions.

1. Encouragement and Cosmic Struggle:

- The chapter's overarching purpose is to provide encouragement to those suffering persecution by showing God's ultimate sovereignty and victory.
- It highlights that the conflict on earth is part of a larger cosmic struggle between good and evil and that God's people are not alone in the struggle, both earthly and heavenly beings are fighting for good.
- "This war is going on between the Little Horn and the Holy Ones... this is a cosmic struggle. This is not just their fight on earth or their struggle on earth."

Conclusion:

Dr. Widder emphasizes that Daniel 7 is not primarily about identifying specific historical figures or kingdoms. It's about God's ultimate authority, the hope for the oppressed, and the promise of an eternal kingdom. The chapter's message provides comfort by assuring that God's people are part of a cosmic struggle that is ultimately under God's control and that the divine kingdom will ultimately prevail. The key to understanding Daniel 7 is its symbolic interpretation, not a literal one.

4. Study Guide: Widder, Daniel, Session 10, Daniel 7 – God’s Superior King and His Eternal Kingdom

Daniel 7: God's Superior King and Eternal Kingdom - Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the significance of Daniel 7 in the overall structure of the book of Daniel?
2. How does apocalyptic literature differ from prophetic literature, as described by Dr. Widder?
3. Describe the four beasts that rise from the sea in Daniel’s vision and what each one represents.
4. What is the significance of the "Ancient of Days" and his throne room in the vision?
5. Who is the “one like a son of man” and what does he receive in Daniel’s vision?
6. Why is the little horn so significant in Daniel's vision of the fourth beast?
7. What is the divine council, and how does it relate to the vision in Daniel 7?
8. What is the concept of "ex-eventu prophecy" and how does it relate to the book of Daniel?
9. How does the interpretation of Daniel's vision relate to the theme of God's eternal kingdom?
10. According to the lecture, who are the "holy ones of the Most High," and what is their role in the vision?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Daniel 7 serves as a pivotal point in the book, transitioning from narrative to apocalyptic vision. It thematically connects to chapter 2 regarding the rise and fall of kingdoms but also sets the stage for the apocalyptic visions that follow.
2. Apocalyptic literature is characterized by symbolic visions, otherworldly journeys, and a deterministic view of history, whereas prophetic literature often includes a "Thus says the Lord" message, real-time settings, and calls to repentance.

Additionally, prophecy focuses on reforming the current world, while apocalyptic sees the need for a new world.

3. The four beasts, rising from a chaotic sea, represent earthly kingdoms with varying degrees of power and evil. The first is like a lion with eagle's wings, the second is like a bear, the third is like a winged leopard with four heads, and the fourth is a terrifying, indescribable beast, each unique in their description and symbolic representation.
4. The "Ancient of Days" is a representation of God, seated on a fiery throne, symbolizing divine authority, judgment, and eternal sovereignty. The throne room scene depicts the divine council, reinforcing God's power over all creation.
5. The "one like a son of man" is a human-like figure who arrives with the clouds of heaven and receives dominion and a glorious eternal kingdom from the Ancient of Days. This figure represents a vice-regent of God.
6. The little horn is a powerful and blasphemous figure that emerges from the fourth beast, characterized by arrogance and opposition to God. This figure becomes the focus of the vision's second part, as it speaks boastful things and wages war against the saints.
7. The divine council is a heavenly assembly, which in ancient Near Eastern culture, was a gathering of deities with a high god and vice-regent. However, in the Israelite understanding of it, the high god and the vice-regent share the same essence and power.
8. "Ex-eventu prophecy" refers to prophecies written after the events they describe, often using a respected figure from the past as a pseudonym. This genre was often used to encourage oppressed people and emphasize God's control of history, though the historicity of that genre in Daniel is debated.
9. The interpretation of Daniel's vision emphasizes that while earthly kingdoms rise and fall, God's eternal kingdom, represented by the "one like a son of man," will ultimately triumph and be shared with his people, the saints, which brings encouragement in the face of adversity.
10. In the Old Testament, the holy ones are generally understood as heavenly beings or supernatural forces. While their presence blurs the line between human and heavenly realms, they are involved in a struggle that reflects the suffering of God's people on earth.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the use of symbolism in Daniel 7, specifically focusing on the beasts and the little horn. How does this symbolism contribute to the overall message of the chapter?
2. Compare and contrast the characteristics of apocalyptic and prophetic literature, drawing on examples from Daniel 7 and other biblical texts. Discuss how understanding these literary differences enhances the way a reader interprets scripture.
3. Explore the significance of the "one like a son of man" in Daniel's vision. How does this figure relate to the Ancient of Days and the concept of the divine council, and what implications does this have for understanding the nature of God?
4. Discuss the challenges in interpreting apocalyptic literature, particularly concerning the identification of historical figures and kingdoms within the symbolic framework of Daniel's visions. How should these interpretations inform the reader's understanding of the text?
5. How does the vision in Daniel 7 provide encouragement to people who are suffering or facing oppression? Discuss how the vision's focus on God's eternal kingdom and ultimate triumph provides hope in the midst of adversity.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Apocalyptic Literature:** A genre of writing characterized by symbolic visions, otherworldly journeys, pseudonymous authorship, cosmic destruction, and the promise of a new creation. It often provides encouragement to oppressed people.
- **Visionary Literature:** A broader category of writing that includes both prophetic and apocalyptic literature, characterized by authors seeing things not yet in empirical reality that are often symbolically described.
- **Prophetic Literature:** A type of writing in which a prophet delivers a message from God, often involving calls to repentance, warnings, and promises of restoration, usually in reference to their current situation.

- **Space-Time Referent:** The specific setting in time and place that grounds a vision or narrative, often providing context for the reader. In Daniel, these date formulas link the visions back to the narrative chapters.
- **Vision Block:** A large section of a vision introduced by a formulaic statement (e.g., "I was looking in my visions at night"). It helps organize the vision's structure.
- **Vision Element:** Individual visions or sub-sections within a larger vision block.
- **Ancient of Days:** A title for God in Daniel 7, emphasizing his eternal nature, power, and authority.
- **Divine Council:** A heavenly assembly of divine beings, led by God, that governs the cosmos. In ancient Near Eastern cultures, it often included a high god and a vice-regent.
- **Ex-Eventu Prophecy:** Prophecy written after the event it describes, often used in apocalyptic literature to emphasize God's control over history. The claim is that a historical event is treated as if it were a future prediction.
- **Holy Ones of the Most High:** Typically refers to heavenly beings or supernatural entities who are associated with God and his kingdom. In Daniel, they can also be interpreted as the people of God on earth.
- **Son of Man:** A human-like figure in Daniel's vision who is given dominion and an eternal kingdom by the Ancient of Days, typically understood as a vice-regent of God.
- **Little Horn:** A powerful and blasphemous figure that arises from the fourth beast, characterized by arrogance and opposition to God.
- **Pseudonymous:** The practice of writing under a false name or the name of a respected figure from the past.

5. FAQs on Widder, Daniel, Session 10, Daniel 7 – God’s Superior King and His Eternal Kingdom, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Daniel Chapter 7

- 1. What is the significance of Daniel 7 within the book of Daniel?**
- Daniel 7 is a pivotal chapter, acting as both a thematic bridge between the earlier narrative sections of the book and the later apocalyptic visions. It connects back to the themes of earthly kingdoms in chapter two, while also introducing the apocalyptic genre which will be prevalent for the rest of the book. It is also described as the heart and hinge of the book, presenting a cosmic view of God's kingdom, and provides encouragement to oppressed people with a vision of an eternal reward. The chapter's themes and structure also prevent easy divisions of the book by genre or language, holding it together.
- 3. What kind of literature is found in Daniel 7, and what are its common characteristics?**
- Daniel 7 is written in the genre of apocalyptic literature, a type of visionary writing that uses symbolic language to depict events that may literally happen, but in a symbolic way. This type of literature features heavy symbolism, visions, otherworldly journeys, and often involves a seer who is a respected figure from the distant past (though the author is anonymous and takes on a pseudonymous name). Apocalyptic literature commonly includes themes such as the persecution of the righteous, cosmic destruction, final judgment, and recreation. Key differences between apocalyptic and prophecy are that prophecy often uses the formula "thus says the Lord" and is directly tied to contemporary events, while apocalyptic literature reports visions not directly linked to the time of writing and utilizes more extensive symbolism.

5. What is the significance of the four beasts that rise from the sea in Daniel 7?

6. The four beasts represent earthly kingdoms and are depicted as strange, mutant creatures, emerging from a tumultuous sea representing primeval chaos and disorder. The number four, like the four winds, suggests a sense of totality or all-encompassing scope. While the specific identities of these kingdoms are not emphasized in the lecture for this session, the text is more concerned with the transfer of sovereignty from these beastly kingdoms to the saints and their shared dominion with God. The sea itself is not only literal but has mythological meaning, representing a chaotic threat to order.

7. How does the fourth beast differ from the other three?

8. The fourth beast is unlike the previous three, and is not compared to a specific animal. It is described as terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly strong with iron teeth. Instead of having things done to it like the other beasts, this one actively devours, breaks into pieces, and stamps what is left, indicating a particularly oppressive nature. It also possesses ten horns, symbolizing great power. The fourth beast has a more active role and seems to be a stronger manifestation of the worst attributes of earthly kingdoms.

9. What is the significance of the "little horn" in the vision?

10. The "little horn" emerges among the ten horns of the fourth beast, uprooting three of them, and it dominates the vision from that point forward. It is characterized by having human eyes and a mouth that speaks boastful and arrogant things. This "little horn" is a symbol of wickedness, irreverence, and extreme arrogance. The focus shifts to this little horn from the fourth beast, highlighting its importance in the broader narrative.

11. Who is the "Ancient of Days" and the "one like a son of man" mentioned in the vision?

The Ancient of Days refers to God, seated on his fiery throne in the divine council with a court of thousands before him. The "one like a son of man" is a human-like figure who comes with the clouds of heaven, a figure associated with theophanies and who rides the clouds like a chariot, receives the kingdom and is given authority and eternal dominion by the Ancient of Days. This figure represents a vice-regent, sharing essence with God, as the Israelite view of the divine council contrasts with other Ancient Near Eastern views, where a vice-regent would not share the same essence as the high god. This imagery is key for understanding the concept of Jesus as the Son of God in the New Testament.

- 1. Who are the "holy ones" and what role do they play in the vision?**
2. The "holy ones" are primarily heavenly beings, often understood to be supernatural beings like angels. However, the book of Daniel blurs the lines, as there's a parallel between the struggles of the heavenly holy ones and earthly people. The oppression of the holy ones in the vision is also reflected in the suffering of God's people on earth. These holy ones, both heavenly and earthly, are depicted as ultimately inheriting the kingdom and sharing in the dominion given to the "one like a son of man".
- 3. What is the significance of the vision's conclusion, and how does it relate to the overall message of Daniel 7?**
4. The conclusion of the vision highlights the judgment of the beasts, particularly the fourth beast and the little horn, and the eventual triumph of God's eternal kingdom. Although Daniel is troubled and alarmed by the vision, especially with its focus on future oppression, there is also encouragement that comes with the knowledge that God's eternal kingdom is ultimately going to triumph. The vision offers comfort that the saints, both in heaven and on earth, are not alone in this struggle. It reveals that what they are experiencing on earth has cosmic significance and is ultimately under God's control. Additionally, Daniel's inability to understand the vision underscores that even those who are able to interpret dreams and visions are left with unanswered questions, and it's okay to have mystery in the interpretation.