

I. The Vision of the Four Beasts (Daniel 7:1-28)

A. Introduction

Daniel 7 is the center chapter of the book of Daniel. It is also a transitional chapter between the Aramaic and Hebrew portions of the book. “Chapter 7 seems the climactic piece of the Aramaic ‘stories’ section and yet it is not a story but a vision. So language-wise chapter 7 belongs to 2-6 and yet category-wise, as a vision, it introduces a series of visions (8-12) and itself stands as the first vision in chronological sequence (7:1; 8:1; 9:1-2; 10:1). Chapter 7 then has an overlapping function in the book’s structure. It both climax and preface.”¹⁵⁷

Earlier dreams recorded in Daniel (Dan 2, 4) were to Nebuchadnezzar which Daniel interpreted for him. But in chapter 7, God spoke to Daniel himself through a dream vision, which was interpreted by an angel. Related to that, Daniel wrote chapters 1-6 in third person but shifted to first person in chapter 7.

A chiasmic pattern for chapters 2-7 exists and may be summarized as follows:

- Vision of the four world empires (2)
- Deliverance of Daniel’s friends from the fiery furnace (3)
- Judgment of Nebuchadnezzar – resulting in repentance (4)
- Judgment of Belshazzar – resulting in death (5)
- Deliverance of Daniel from the lions’ den (6)
- Vision of the four world empires (7)

Thus, the theme of chapter 7 is very similar to the theme of chapter 2. Daniel 2 contained Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of a great statue, each part representing four Gentile nations whose rise and fall would characterize the times of the Gentiles. That same theme that is repeated in Daniel 7 but with a slightly different emphasis. In Daniel 2, those four Gentile nations were represented by four precious metals because that is the way they were seen from a human perspective: majestic, with the grandeur and glory of worldly kingdoms. But in Daniel 7, those same four Gentile nations are represented not by precious metals as seen from the human perspective, but vicious beasts as seen from God’s perspective. That is the way God sees earthly kingdoms who rule with no consideration of Him: self-seeking, cruel, violent, destructive, arrogant, and animal-like in their power. God does not see things the same way man sees them.

“Men’s achievements apart from and in opposition to Him are not spectacular from heaven’s perspective. In fact, they are far worse than the activities of wild, carnivorous animals, for no animal ever sins... There is no hell for the animal kingdom. But men are wicked and cruel in the sight of God and are under His judgment.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Davis 2013: 22.

¹⁵⁸ Whitcomb 1985: 93.

Also, while both chapters 2 and 7 describe a ten-fold division in the fourth kingdom (10 toes in chapter 2, 10 horns in chapter 7), chapter 7 introduces the presence of an 11th horn. “And the focus of the seventh chapter is not on the ten but rather upon this eleventh horn.”¹⁵⁹

Not only is Daniel 7 one of the most important chapters in this book, it is one of the most important chapters in the whole Old Testament because it provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events and the future kingdom of Christ. With its focus on Jesus Christ as ruler of His future kingdom, this chapter functions as a centerpiece of Old Testament revelation concerning the Messiah’s final kingdom. It is a tremendous chapter that shows how, after the final judgment in which God will destroy the last defiant Gentile nation and ruler, God will give his everlasting kingdom to Christ and to His people.

B. Expository Notes

1. The Content of Daniel’s Dream (vs. 1-14)

Daniel 7:1 ~ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.

- That this dream occurred in the “first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon” indicates that this is a flashback to a time prior to the events of chapter 6 with Daniel in the lion’s den under Darius the Mede.
- It is also a flashback to a time prior to the events of Daniel 5 when Belshazzar’s kingdom was destroyed and his life was taken from him.
- This dream occurred between chapters 4 and 5, in the “first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon,” which was 553 BC, 14 years before the feast of Belshazzar which came in his final year (539 BC).
- Daniel would have been about 68 years old when he received this vision.

Daniel 7:2 ~ Daniel said, “I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.

- The “four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea” likely refers to the Mediterranean Sea (cf. Num 34:6-7; Josh 1:4; 9:1; Ezek 47:10-15).
- Daniel would have known about this sea, having been raised in his early years in Israel.
- He saw the sea being stirred up, violently heaving up and down, being tossed to and fro by the winds.
- In the Bible, the sea is often a symbol for chaos, disorder, and hostility toward God.
- It represents the sea of sinful humanity that is in a constant state of unrest, chaos, and turmoil due to their own wickedness and rebellion.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 93.

- It serves as a picture of the world in its godlessness and instability since the “four great beasts” arise from this sea in Daniel’s vision (cf. Is 8:6-8; 17:12-13; Rev 13:1; 17:1, 15).
- The fact that these beasts came up out of the sea is the first clue that these beasts are evil and likely stand for hostility against God.
- He saw humanity shaken and agitated by all of the conflict in the world, the consequences of their sinfulness.

Daniel 7:3 ~ And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another.

- Emerging from the sea, Daniel saw 4 beasts which he attempted to describe with terms he was familiar with.
- Some have called this the “Jungle Book” chapter but perhaps a better name is the “Jurassic Park” chapter.
- Later in the chapter, these 4 beast are identified as “four kings who will arise from the earth” (vs. 17).
- It is clear that these 4 beasts represent the same 4 empires which the statue in Daniel 2 represented.
- The main point of Daniel 2 was that, starting with Babylon, there would be four major Gentile powers that would rule over the world and Israel.
- Rather than being represented by shining, brilliant, precious metals, they are represented here as ugly monstrosities which were violent and destructive.



Daniel 7:4 ~ The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it.

First Beast

- This beast represents Babylon, symbolizing the same kingdom as the golden head in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
- It looked like a lion (probably referring to its strength) but had wings like an eagle (probably referring to its swiftness).
- The lion is the king of the land animals and the eagle is the king of the birds.
- Both the lion and the eagle were symbols of Babylon with the Old Testament prophets comparing Babylon to a lion (cf. Jer 4:6-7; 49:19; 50:17) and an eagle (cf. Jer 4:13; 48:40; 49:22; Ezek 17:3; Hab 1:8).
- The national symbol of ancient Babylon was a winged lion, such that winged lions lined the major street in Babylon and guarded the gates to the royal palaces.
- That “its wings were plucked” refers either to Nebuchadnezzar’s insanity in chapter 4 or his empire’s deterioration after his death.
- That it stood “on two feet like a man” and had a “human mind” likely refers to the fact that his rule was a human dominion.



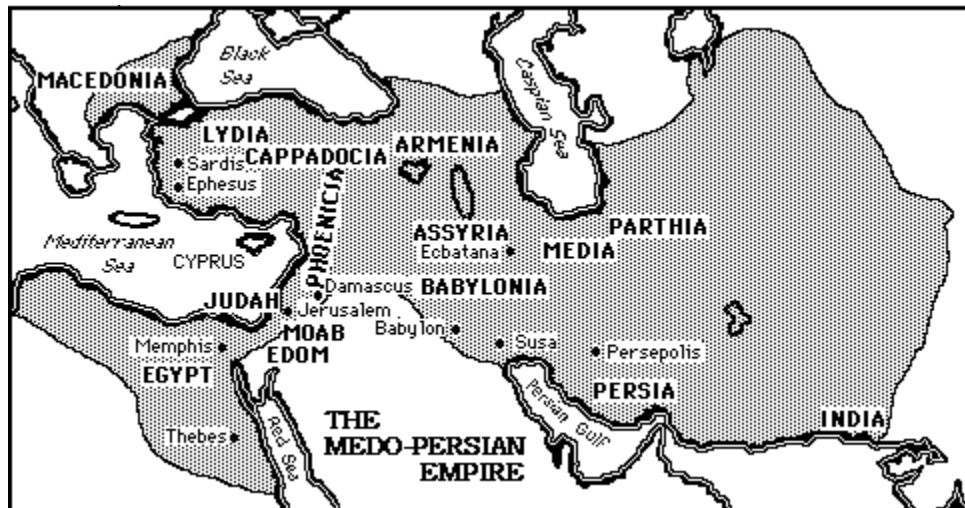
Daniel 7:5 ~ And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, ‘Arise, devour much meat!’

Second Beast

- This beast represents Medo-Persia, the nation that conquered Babylon, symbolizing the same kingdom as the silver chest/arms in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
- It looked like a bear, a powerful, frightening animal with considerable strength (cf. Is 13:15-18).

¹⁶⁰ These maps taken from “Daniel” by J. Dwight Pentecost in The Bible Knowledge Commentary 1985: 1352.

- That it was “raised up on one side” shows it was a lopsided bear, indicating that, of the two countries, Persia was by far the greater and more powerful one.
- That it had “three ribs in its mouth” likely refers to the nations Medo-Persia conquered and vanquished (Babylon, Egypt, Lydia).
- The bear was told to “devour much meat” referring to the fact that it would conquer other kingdoms and extend its territory into a vast empire.
- This shows that the kingdoms of men operate only by divine appointment, not by their own authority.



Daniel 7:6 ~ After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, 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.

Third Beast

- This beast represents Greece, the nation that conquered Medo-Persia, symbolizing the same kingdom as the bronze abdomen/thighs in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
- It looked like a leopard with four wings, referring to the swiftness and agility of the Grecian empire under the command of Alexander the Great.
- Greece conquered Medo-Persia with great speed between 334 BC and 330 BC.
- The “four heads” represent four generals who divided the kingdom after Alexander’s death in 323 BC at age 33 (cf. Dan 8:8, 21-22).
- Those four generals were: 1) Ptolemy (ruled over Egypt, Palestine, Arabia); 2) Seleucus (controlled Syria, Babylonia); 3) Cassander (ruled over Macedonia and Greece); 4) Lysimachus (ruled over Thrace and Asia Minor).



NOTE: the first 3 beasts mentioned in Daniel’s vision are also mentioned in the description of the beast which John saw rising out of the sea in his vision on the island of Patmos (cf. Rev 13:1-2).

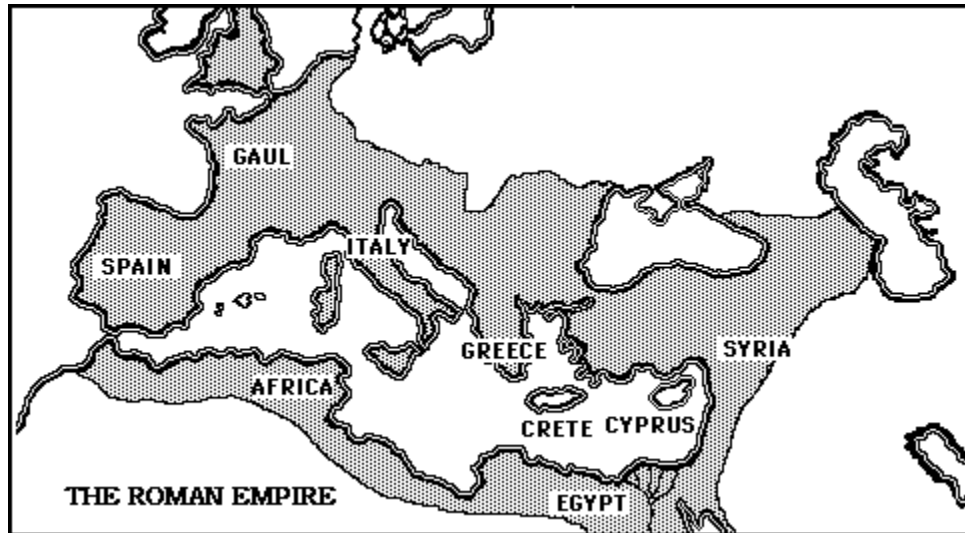
Daniel 7:7-8 ~ After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

Fourth Beast

- The fourth beast is not likened to any known animal since it was/is not like any animal.
- “The lion, bear, and leopard certainly were not like any real-life versions of those animals, but overall they did exhibit many of their characteristics. Yet the fourth beast did not look like any animal Daniel had ever seen.”¹⁶¹
- This beast represents the Roman Empire, which conquered Greece in 146 BC, symbolizing the same kingdom as the iron legs/feet in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
- The “iron teeth” of this beast convey the strength and power of the Roman Empire.
- The focus in Daniel 7 is on this fourth beast.
- This fourth beast was more “dreadful and terrifying” than the three preceding beasts, which were all ferocious and destructive.
- It “devoured and crushed and trampled down” the previous empires in that it assimilated them into itself.

¹⁶¹ Miller 1994: 201.

- This speaks to the power and total domination of the Roman empire which ruled for nearly 600 years in the West (until 476 AD) and about 1500 years in the East (until 1453 AD).



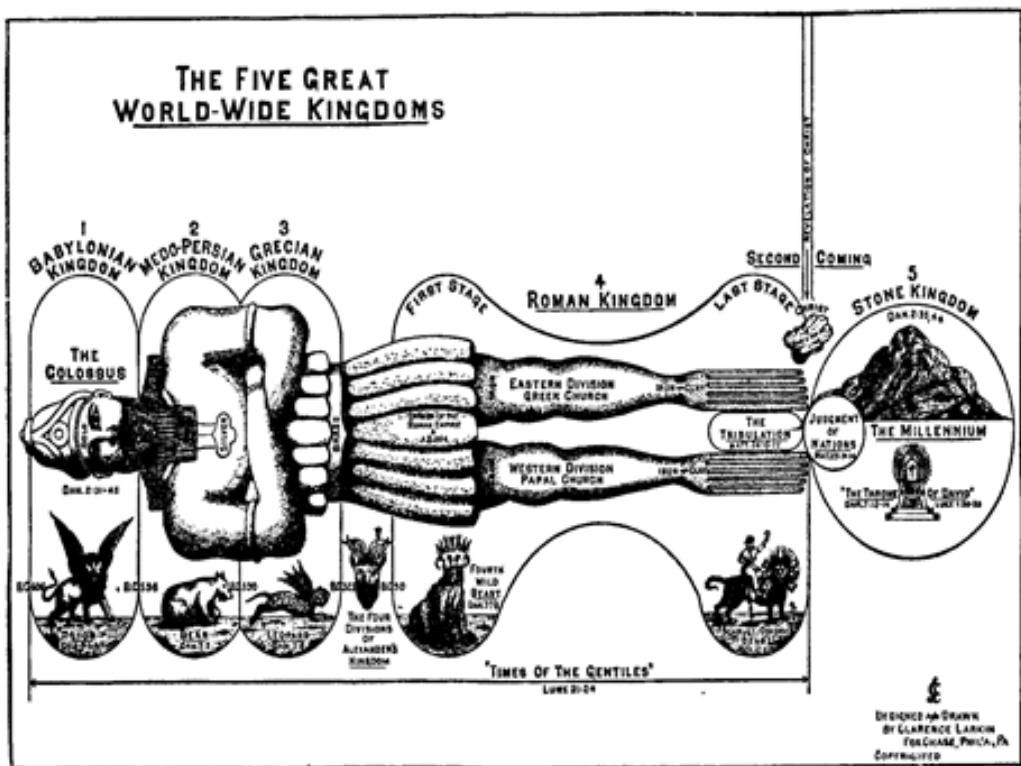
- As noted in chapter 2, this fourth kingdom has two phases: 1) Phase 1 which occurred from 146 BC to 476 BC; 2) Phase 2 which is still future.
- As noted in chapter 2, the legs of the statue referred to the past Roman empire (phase 1) and the feet/toes referred to a future revived Roman Empire (phase 2).
- A large gap of time (unknown to Daniel) exists between the two phases of the Roman empire.
- That Daniel didn't foresee the period in between the two phases of the Roman empire is not surprising since the Old Testament never anticipated the mystery form of the kingdom, the church age.
- Not until the time of Christ is it understood that there would be two comings of the Messiah.
- The existence of two phases of the fourth kingdom is corroborated by the unique feature of this fourth beast, namely that "it had ten horns" (vs. 7).
- "Frequently in the Old Testament the term *horn* is used to describe power, and thus, appropriately, powerful rulers (1 Kings 22:11; Ps. 75:10; 132:17; Zech. 1:18)."¹⁶²
- Daniel 7:24 indicates that these 10 horns represent 10 kings who rule over 10 kingdoms.
- Since the past phase of the Roman empire (Rome 1) had no 10-nation confederacy, this must be a future phase.
- Daniel saw this Gentile world power finalizing itself in a 10-king confederacy.

¹⁶² Whitcomb 1985: 96.

- Thus, it must refer to an actual, historical, political, earthly kingdom ruled over by 10 kings in a confederacy.
- It requires a future 10-nation confederacy as a key to the political and international situation in the days just preceding the second coming of Christ and His kingdom.
- This future Roman phase is further explained in vs. 8.
- Daniel saw in his vision the rise of a single horn, an 11th horn, a little horn, that uprooted 3 horns.
- If the 10 horns are kings, it makes sense that the little horn is also a king.
- This king is a king distinct from the 10 kings but closely affiliated with them.
- The fact that it is “little” indicates that initially it is not well known but will later become dominant.
- It will pluck up by the roots “three of the first horns.”
- Verse 24 indicates this means that it will “subdue three kings,” pointing to the fact that three future, yet-unidentified nations, will come under the power and authority of this little horn.
- “The uprooting of three horns symbolizes that three kings or kingdoms (nations) will be conquered by the new ruler...By force this king (the little horn) will subjugate other kings (and their kingdoms) who resist his quest to rule over them (or to incorporate them into his empire).”¹⁶³
- That this “little horn” has “eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts” indicates that this is not just a kingdom, but an actual human, a real man.
- “Eyes” refer to insight, knowledge, with the mental ability to solve great problems (Zech 3:9; Rev 4:6; 5:6). He will be extremely intelligent and crafty.
- He is proud and arrogant and blasphemous such that his speech is filled with great boasts, likely able to attract and deceive great numbers of people.
- This description fits the traits of the Antichrist, a future ruler who will bring 3 of the 10 nations under his authority in his initial rise to power and who will eventually become ruler over the 4th empire.
- The book of Revelation corroborates this description of Antichrist.
- Rev 13:1-2 adds weight to what Daniel saw in that it describes the beast having 10 horns (representing the 10 nations he rules over) and 7 heads (possibly representing successive world empires (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the final kingdom of Antichrist).
- John envisions a final world government headed up by a revived Roman empire under the domination of a single ruler, the Antichrist.
- Rev 13:5-6 supports the fact that he will possess a “mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies” and will be given great “authority.”

¹⁶³ Miller 1994: 202.

- Rev 13:7-8 indicates that he will be granted “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.”
- Thus, that kingdom, under the control of Antichrist, will trample and crush those who oppose it, giving way to a one-world government under a worldwide dictator.
- Rev 17:3, 7, 12 provide similar details.
- The 10 horns are sub-rulers under Antichrist who will be the leader of a revived Roman empire that will be the final earthly empire in place prior to Christ returning to establish his eternal kingdom.
- Thus, John affirms the very thing Daniel anticipates.
- Daniel’s vision provides a great panorama of human history, all leading up to the time when Christ comes and establishes His eternal kingdom.



Daniel 7:9-10 ~ I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 10 A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.

- After describing the times of the Gentiles when the wicked nations of the earth oppress God’s people, Daniel takes his readers into the courts of heaven itself and shows where the beasts will finally be tamed and destroyed.

- He flashes forward to the throne of God from which judgment will come on the fourth kingdom.
- The very structure of verses 9-14 proves that point:
 - Vs. 9-10 describe the Ancient of Days seated on His throne as the sovereign judge of the universe.
 - Vs. 11-12 describe the judgment of God upon the nations of the world.
 - Vs. 13-14 describe the Son of Man being given an everlasting kingdom.
- The kingdoms of the world are squeezed between the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man indicating that their doom is certain and their destruction is coming.
- Starting in verse 9, there is an abrupt and startling transition from the scene by the sea to a courtroom where the Ancient of Days holds court.
- The blasphemy of the Antichrist in verse 8 is immediately contrasted with the sovereign Lord “shown sitting upon his throne, calmly preparing for the day of judgment”¹⁶⁴ in verses 9-10.
- The “Ancient of Days” (cf. vs. 13, 22) can only be the sovereign God, specifically the Father, who exercises control over men and nations.
- The point is surely not that God is old in the sense of feebleness; rather, it conveys the sense that He is venerable, dignified, wise, and capable of good judgment.
- He is ancient in that He has always existed (cf. Ps 90:1-2; 93:2; 102:24-25; Jer 10:10).
- As the Ancient of Days, God has existed long before the rise of the nations and will exist long after their fall.
- If the One like the Son of Man (vs. 13-14) is Messiah, then the One who gives Messiah the kingdom is the Father. They are distinct. This provides an Old Testament glimpse into the plurality within the Godhead.
- Daniel describes His appearance as “white snow...pure wool,” speaking of His holiness, purity, and righteousness.
- His throne and its surroundings are described with fiery depictions.
- Usually in Scripture fire signals God’s presence in judgment and justice.
- Such a fiery description fits Ezekiel’s vision of the throne of God (Ezek 1:4, 13, 27).
- God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29) and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31).
- “Thousands upon thousands were attending Him” (vs. 10), likely a reference to His servants, possibly the angels surrounding His throne ready to execute His will.
- And “myriads upon myriads were standing before Him” (vs. 10; cf. Rev 5:11-12).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 204.

- Their very presence around the throne of God adds to the atmosphere of majesty and authority for the judgment about to be meted out.
- The books in this courtroom were open (vs. 10) indicating that the same God who assigns power to kingdoms will also judge those kingdoms.
- Their deeds are recorded and they will be judged accordingly (cf. Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12; Rev 20:11-15).
- “In this context ‘the books’ specifically contain the account of the wicked deeds of the Antichrist and his evil empire, for when the books are opened, the beast is judged. When the records were consulted, it was found that the beast deserved judgment.”¹⁶⁵

Daniel 7:11-12 ~ Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

- Verse 11 records the annihilation and destruction of the fourth kingdom, including the beast.
- There is coming a day when the fourth beast, the revived Roman empire, headed by Antichrist, will be relieved of its power, not by being conquered militarily, but by divine judgment.
- He will be utterly destroyed at Christ’s second coming (cf. Dan 2:34-35, 45; 9:27; Rev 11:15; 19:15, 19-20; 20:10).
- This event will terminate “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24, 27).
- “If it were not so sad, the scene would be humorous. This little horn with a big mouth is spewing out venom toward the Almighty when suddenly the first of God’s judgment falls, and the little horn is silenced forever.”¹⁶⁶
- Not only will Antichrist and His kingdom be destroyed, so also will the influence of all the Gentile nations (vs. 12).
- The Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek empires to some extent continued in their successors.
- The Gentile nations and kings changed but still continued more or less in the same pattern.
- For example, when Medo-Persia followed Babylon, the dominion of Babylon was taken away but in some sense the kingdom persisted in its successor, etc.
- But the end of the fourth beast will be dramatic, cataclysmic, and final such that the rulers and the people will be completely destroyed.
- When God pours out his judgment at the return of Christ, the last remnant of the Gentile kingdoms will be annihilated.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 205.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 206.

- “Nothing of it will be left to contaminate Christ’s millennial kingdom.”¹⁶⁷
- The fact that “an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time” (vs. 12) means that, although the first three empires were conquered, they continued on because they were absorbed into the next empire.
- Such will not be the case for the fourth empire however.

Daniel 7:13-14 ~ I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

- The identity of the “Son of Man” has resulted in a number of different views: 1) The Son of Man was Judas Maccabee (a view held by Porphyry who died in 304 AD); 2) He is the angel Michael since a similar term is used to refer to angels in Daniel (cf. Dan 8:15; 9:21; 10:18); 3) Many modern Jewish scholars claim he is a corporate symbol speaking of the saints of Israel, a personification of ideal Israel.
- But it is best to take the “Son of Man” as a clear reference to Christ, the Messiah.
- Arguments for this view include:
 - a. The Old Testament often speaks of an individual who will rule as king and head up all government for Israel and the nations (cf. Gen 49:10; 2 Sam 7:16; Ps 2:6-9; Is 2:2-4; 9:7; Zech 9:9-10; 14:9). Daniel’s statement is in harmony with this anticipation.
 - b. The fourth empire in vs. 7-8 is corporate but has an individual leader, the little horn, in its final expression. Similarly, the final kingdom of God can have a corporate group of saints and yet have one great leader, the Messiah.
 - c. Reference to coming on the clouds of heaven points to a heavenly Messiah since clouds are often associated with the Lord (cf. Ex 34:5; Num 10:34; 2 Sam 22:12; Job 22:14; Ps 68:34; 104:3; Matt 24:30; 26:64).
 - d. Jesus frequently used this term (more than 80 times) to refer to Himself (Matt 16:27; 19:28; 26:64; Mark 8:31; John 1:51). Christ identified Himself as the One whom Daniel saw in this vision. It is a title that speaks of His humanity, suffering, and work as the ideal Man.
- Thus, verses 13-14 emphasize the major thrust of this passage, namely the coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal king and sovereign ruler of the world.
- It describes that crucial moment in human history when Christ is crowned king of Kings and Lord of lords.

¹⁶⁷ Whitcomb 1985: 98.

- Daniel provides a glimpse into the future and describes a scene when Christ is crowned as the one True king, the apex of history!
- Daniel, 550 years before Christ was born, described the time when Christ is crowned king of Kings, when the Son is presented a universal kingdom by the Father.
- In fact, Daniel looks as it were all the way past Christ's birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, past the church age, to when Christ returns again a second time to establish His kingdom.
- Daniel anticipates the moment when the Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days in preparation for His coronation (vs. 13).
- This scene is also described in Revelation 5, when the title deed to the earth is given from the Father to the Son.
- Revelation 5:6-7 describes the moment when the Son takes the book out of the hand of the Ancient of Days.
- This is the very same scene that Daniel saw, that moment Christ is coronated as King and given dominion and a kingdom which will never be destroyed (Rev 5:13).
- In verse 14, Daniel described the glory of the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ and lists a number of characteristics of it.

a. An Authoritative Kingdom

- “dominion” refers to ruling authority.
- When Christ takes His kingdom, He will have absolute authority and will preside as the supreme, absolute ruler on earth.
- When Christ reigns on the earth, it will not be a democracy but rather a total dictatorship by a loving, perfect, gracious, supreme, sovereign and good King.
- He will not be some weak, inept ruler clamoring to shore up His empire because it is crumbling.
- He will not be a king who tries some power-grab to stay in office.
- He will not resort to bribery or extortion or corruption or shady political practices to maintain his power.
- Rather, He will rule and reign because He is given dominion from the Ancient of Days Himself.
- His throne will be established with the very power and authority of heaven itself and no one will thwart it.
- There will be no coups, no usurpations of His power, no hostile takeovers, no revolution or rebellion, and no overthrow of His government.

b. A Glorious Kingdom

- “glory” refers to the honor that accompanies the authority.

- His kingdom will be dignified, glorious, and one to be revered.
- In the kingdom, Christ will be honored by those over whom he rules.
- The redeemed of Christ will bow the knee in reverential awe and His kingdom will be filled with praise from the saints who willingly offer themselves in humble worship to the King of Kings.
- His kingdom will possess glory, an intrinsic glory related to the glory He alone possesses.
- And His kingdom will elicit ascribed glory in that it will cause all those who are in it to recognize and acclaim the glory Christ has.

c. A Universal Kingdom

- “all the peoples, nations, and men of every language” will serve Him.
- He will reign as king over Israel (cf. Ezek 37:16-17, 22).
- He will reign as king over the Gentiles (cf. Dan 2:35).
- He will reign as king over the entire earth (cf. Zech 14:9).

d. An Everlasting Kingdom

- His kingdom will be “an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”
- In contrast to the previous kingdoms which were temporary, Christ’s kingdom will last forever (cf. Dan 2:44; 4:34; 6:26).
- His kingdom will never be conquered by another kingdom.
- His reign will be established on earth for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1–6).
- After the Lord’s millennial reign, He will surrender the kingdom to God the Father, after which Christ will be appointed as Ruler over God’s eternal kingdom forever (1 Cor. 15:24–28).
- “By virtue of His authority as Creator of heaven and earth (John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb 1:2), our Lord Jesus Christ deserves to receive the kingdom from the Father. But in addition to this, He paid the full price of our redemption upon the cross, and, in the process, defeated the enemy, Satan (Heb 2:14). Thus, by double right, creation and redemption, Christ receives an eternal kingdom that no one else deserves to rule.”¹⁶⁸

2. The Interpretation of Daniel’s Dream (vs. 15-28)

The preceding discussion has already given some of the explanation of this vision, but additional details are given in these verses.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 99.

Daniel 7:15-18 ~ As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. 16 I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 'These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. 18 But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

- Daniel was distressed by this vision and received help from “one who was standing by” (cf. vs. 10), probably an angel (Gabriel?), similar to one who also assisted him later (Dan 8:13-16; 9:21-27).
- Though he had demonstrated the ability to interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams previously, he could not interpret this one or his next one (8:15).
- Verse 17 makes it clear that the great beasts represent a succession of kings, each one representing the prominent leaders of those empires: 1) Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon); 2) Cyrus (Medo-Persia); 3) Alexander the Great (Greece); 4) Antichrist (Rome).
- Verse 18 indicates that the kingdom of Christ will involve a shared rule, one where Messiah and the “saints” rule together (see discussion below on vs. 27).

Daniel 7:19-20 ~ Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, 20 and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates.

- It is the fourth beast about which Daniel wanted further information.
- While he seemed to have no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the first three beasts, it was the fourth beast that required explanation, particularly the “other horn which came up.”

Daniel 7:21-22 ~ I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

- A number of factors have already been learned about the Antichrist from verse 8:
 - He will rise to power after the 10 kings are in existence.
 - He will rule contemporaneously with those 10 kings, not successively.
 - He will subdue 3 of the 10 kings (cf. vs. 24).
 - He will be intelligent (cf. vs 8 ~ eyes like the eyes of a man).
 - He will be arrogant and boastful (cf. vs. 11) but with great oratorical abilities. He will gain the world’s approval through his silver tongue, arriving on the chaotic Tribulation scene with vision and answers and power to unite the world (cf. Rev 13:5).
- Added to these characteristics of Antichrist are a few more from verse 21-22:
 - He will wage “war with the saints,” referring to his persecution of the saints in the Tribulation, especially Israel. These “saints” are not church-age saints

since the existence of the church in the present age was a mystery, unrevealed in the Old Testament. Rather, these “saints” refer to the believing Jews present when Christ returns to earth. It is these “Tribulation saints” whom Antichrist will greatly persecute (cf. 7:25; 9:26-27; Matt 24:15-22; 13:7). This “time of Jacob’s distress” (Jer 30:7) will be so devastating that two-thirds of the nation of Israel will die (Zech 13:9).

- He will overcome the nation Israel and will bring them under his authority (cf. Rev 12:13-17).
- He will exercise his authority over the Jewish people until he is judged by God when Christ returns and executes His judgment (cf. Rev 19:19-20).

Daniel 7:23-26 ~ Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.’

- Further insights into the nature of the Antichrist and his kingdom are given here:
 - He will be a military genius, able to trample and crush all those who oppose him, creating one-world government with himself as dictator (vs. 23).
 - He will rise from a revived Roman empire after the group of 10 nations has developed (vs. 24), rising insignificantly at first, then eventually gaining control over that entire confederacy.
 - He will blaspheme the Lord with his profane and irreverent speech (vs. 25), claiming even to be God (cf. 2 Thess 2:4) and demanding the world worship him (Matt 24:15; Rev 13:11-17).
 - He will be a religious genius making “alterations in times and in law” (vs. 25). This could refer to his ability to change the entire landscape of worship and religious observances in society. In short, he will do everything he can to overturn everything that God has established, particularly the distinctive character of the worship of Israel. Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to discontinue the distinctive customs and holy festivals of the Jewish people.
 - He will succeed in gaining control of the world for a time, but his reign will be limited to 3½ years (vs. 25 ~ time, times, and half a time; cf. 9:27; 12:7; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6, 14). At the end of that period of time, he will be judged, his dominion will end, and his destruction will be final. He will be “annihilated” not in the sense that he will cease to exist but will be killed and cast alive into the lake of fire (cf. 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:20).

NOTE: While some have taken the “little horn” to refer solely to Antiochus Epiphanes (Goldingay, Lucas), most see Antiochus as a prefigurement of Antichrist (Walvoord, Wood, EBC. BKC).

Daniel 7:27 ~ Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

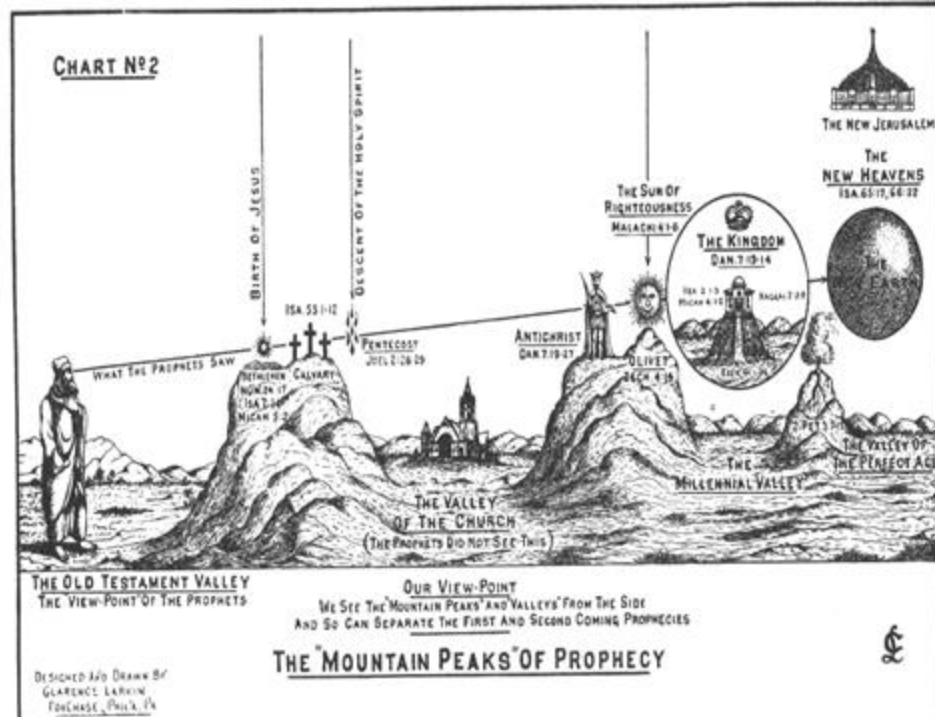
- Upon the destruction of Antichrist and his kingdom, Christ will establish His earthly kingdom, a worldwide kingdom which will be given to God's saints.
- "As God prepared Israel for the brightness of David by the darkness of Saul, so also, on a vastly greater scale, the ultimate hour of darkness of our invisible enemy (John 12:31) will be overwhelmed by the 'sun of righteousness' which 'will rise with healing in its wings' (Mal 4:2)."¹⁶⁹

- Three times in this chapter it is stated that the kingdom of God will be given to the saints (vs. 18, 22, 27).
- These are not angels as some think (see "people" in vs. 27).
- These are God-fearing Jews who will have survived the Tribulation who will enjoy the kingdom in fulfillment of God's promises to Israel in the Old Testament.
- They will also include God-fearing Jews from the Old Testament who have returned with Christ at his Second Coming.
- Additionally, all church-age saints will be there as well.
- Thus, all the saints of all time will possess the kingdom that will be headed by Christ and they will rule and reign with Him (cf. 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).

- This points to dispensational premillennialism (contra amillennialism which holds that the church is the present form of the kingdom) for a number of reasons:
 - The kingdom of Christ follows the final Gentile kingdom in that it is established after the overthrow of all other world kingdoms (i.e. it at no point runs contemporaneously with the kingdoms of the Gentiles).
 - The kingdom of Christ follows the final phase of the final Gentile kingdom (a phase into which that kingdom has not yet developed).
 - The kingdom of Christ follows the final ruler (Antichrist) of the final phase of the final Gentile kingdom. His coming and career are yet future as the New Testament makes clear (Matt 24:5, 15; 2 Thess 2:3-4; 1 John 2:18; Rev 13; 17; 19).
 - The kingdom of Christ takes over the other kingdoms in power and glory, not one of suffering for Him and His saints as is the present age (John 15; Col 1:23-24).
 - The kingdom of Christ is distinctly Jewish in nature (the "saints" in this text are Jewish).
 - The kingdom of Christ will be similar to the ones that preceded it in that it will be visible and earthly.

- For these reasons, the kingdom of God could not be existent today in the sense that Daniel 7 has in view.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 105.



Daniel 7:28 ~ At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.

- Just as the vision itself brought Daniel great distress (vs. 15), the interpretation of it did as well.

C. Theology Notes

1. Why Repeat the Prophecy of the Four Kingdoms in Chapters 2 and 7?

- “First, the two accounts complement each other in that they each provide details not found in the other. Second, there may be truth to the idea that the image with its glittering metals portrays the world’s kingdoms from humanity’s viewpoint – impressive and great, whereas the beasts depict these earthly kingdoms from God’s perspective – vicious and destructive. Third, the message probably was repeated to emphasize its certainty...the revelation of the four kingdoms in Daniel may have been presented in two forms in order to underscore the certainty of this amazing prophecy.”¹⁷⁰

D. Preaching Helps

¹⁷⁰ Miller 1994: 218.

1. Todd's Outline (2 sermons):

- The Great Panorama of History (vs. 1-8)
- The Impending Judgment of God (vs. 9-12)
- The Future Kingdom of Christ (vs. 13-28)