"FOUR KINGDOMS AND THE KINGDOM TO COME"

(Daniel's Night Vision)
Daniel 7:1-28
5-23-2021



INTRODUCTION:
***The kingdoms of this world will one day be replaced by the kingdom of our Lord!** Two Evidences:

I. The <u>MESSAGE</u> of Daniel's Night Vision (v. 1-15)
(Daniel's Dream Described)

A. The Four Beasts From the Sea (v. 1-7)
1. Lion = Babylon
2. Bear = Medo-Persia
3. Leopard = Greece
4. Beast with Iron Teeth = Rome

B. The Little Horn With the Big Mouth (v. 8-11)
1. Ten Horns = ten end-time kings that will reign simultaneously (v. 24; Rev. 13:1; 17:12-17)
2. Little Horn = the Antichrist (v. 24b-25; Rev. 13:6-7)

C. The Son of Man and His Kingdom (v. 12-15)
1. Son of Man = Jesus Christ
2. Ancient of Days = God the Father

II. The <u>MEANING</u> of Daniel's Night Vision (v. 16-28)
(Daniel's Dream Interpreted)
The Antichrist will be a man noted for his:
1) <u>Blasphemy</u> (he will talk about God with contempt and set himself up as God - II Th. 2:4).
2) <u>Persecution</u> (oppression of Jew and Christian - Rev. 12-13).
3) <u>Power</u> He will attempt to change that which only God has the right to change:
--"Times" = set times (the calendar; holidays, etc.)
--"Laws" = moral laws of right and wrong - Is. 24:5;
natural laws - lying wonders are ahead! (II Th. 2:9-12)

How long will Antichrist dominate with such a free reign? For 3-1/2 years (the final half of the Tribulation - cp. Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14). "A time (singular) and times (dual) and the dividing of time" - the Aramaic grammar points to 3-1/2 years. Compare Dan. 9:26, 27 - "in the midst of the week (seven)"; Rev. 13:5 - "42 months"; Rev. 12:14 - "times, time, and half a time"; Rev. 12:6 - "1,260 days."

Three practical lessons can be learned from Daniel 7 -
1) God's <u>sovereignty</u> - God <u>controls</u> kings and kingdoms
2) The Bible's <u>authority</u> - God <u>predicts</u> the future
3) The Believer's <u>confidence</u> - God <u>promises</u> to reward His saints.

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INTRODUCTION:

Daniel 7 begins the prophetic section (chapters 1-6 were historic).

It is estimated that over one-third of the Bible is prophecy, yet prophecy is perhaps the most neglected and misunderstood theme in Scripture.

"Just over 100 years ago, Archbishop Trench said while preaching in Westminster Abbey, 'The most important chapter in the Bible is Daniel seven. It is the only chapter that, left out of the Bible, would leave the rest of Holy Scripture unintelligible'." (Foster, p. 31).

"The last six chapters of Daniel are not just to instruct or satisfy our curiosity; they are intended to warn, to alert, to urge us to be ready for the tremendous events ahead" (Foster, p. 31).

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Two Evidences:

I. The MESSAGE of Daniel's Night Vision (v. 1-15)
(Daniel's Dream Described)

A. The Four Beasts From the Sea (v. 1-7)

V. 1

God gave Daniel this vision during Babylon's reign, evidently because Babylon was involved in the prophetic revelation that Daniel received (v. 4).

"Dream and visions" - Daniel's dream and vision was a direct message from God. God does not directly speak through dreams and visions today.

This method of revealing divine truth was restricted to His selected prophets, etc., for the purpose of being put into written form - Scripture (Num. 12:6).

V. 2

"The four winds of the heaven" = symbolic of God's sovereign control over the "great sea" (of humanity - "the earth" - v. 17).

V. 3

The four beasts (wild animals) that Daniel saw represent kings (v. 17) or kingdoms (v. 23).

V. 4

These four beasts "represent the rulers of the four world empires previously described in Nebucchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2."

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (ch. 2)	Daniel's Vision (ch. 7)	Interpretation
Head of Gold=	Lion=	Babylon
Chest & Arms of Silver=	Bear=	Medo-Persia
Belly & Thighs of Brass=	Leopard=	Greece
Legs of Iron=	Beast w/iron teeth=	Rome
--10 toes of iron/clay=	--10 horns =	Eschatological league of 10 nations

Using animal figures to symbolize nations is common. Even today you have heard of the Scottish lion, the Chinese dragon, the russian bear, and the American eagle.

"Lion . . . eagle's wings" = symbolic of royalty, strength, and speed. The lion represents Babylon (Jer. 4:7, 13). "Winged lions" were often used to represent Babylon in ancient Babylon.

"Wings were plucked" = could refer to Nebuchadnezzar's madness when he was judged for his pride (Daniel 4:32-33).

"Lifted up . . . stand . . . a man's heart was given to it" - Evidently a reference to Nebuchadnezzar's restoration (Dan. 4:34-37). Nebuchadnezzar's heart was changed into that of an animal (Dan. 4:16), then back to a man.

V. 5

"A bear" = symbolic of fierceness.

The bear represents the Medo-Persian Empire known for its fierceness in battle (cp. Is. 13:17-18).

"Raised up itself on one side" - Possibly symbolic of Persia's military might over the Median Empire.

The three ribs in the mouth of the Bear evidently represent Medo-Persia's conquest over Libya, Egypt, and then Babylon.

V. 6

"A leopard" - symbolic of speed.

The leopard represents the Grecian Empire, which under Alexander the Great conquered the known world with tremendous speed.

"Four wings . . . four heads" - After Alexander's death, the Greek Empire was divided into four heads (cp. Dan. 8:8)

1) Asia Minor - under Lysimachus;
2) Syria - under Seleucus
3) Egypt - under Ptolemy
And 4) Macedonia - under Casander

V. 7

"A fourth Beast with great iron teeth" - symbolic of terror, slaughter, cruelty, ferociousness.

"It was diverse" = different than the previous 3 beasts. This beast is indescribable. It could not be compared to any known animal like the previous beasts were.

This beast has 10 horns, which represent a confederacy of 10 kings (v. 24).

Some have wrongly interpreted these 10 kings as 10 Roman Caesars. But these will be contemporary kings who reign at the same time, and will be destroyed supernaturally by Christ and be replaced by Christ's kingdom.

B. The Little Horn With the Big Mouth (v. 8-11)

V. 8

"Another little horn" = the Antichrist

"Eyes" ... "Mouth" - This description identifies this "little horn" as a person, a human being.

Note the paradoxical nature of this individual - He is a "little horn" yet his mouth boasts of "great things."

"Little" speaks only of his beginnings; he starts off small but through diplomacy he will during the first 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation exalt himself (with Satan's power) globally.

V. 9

"I beheld till" - Daniel saw an arresting panoramic view of history that ends when thrones are "cast down" and the Ancient of Days sits to judge and reign.

"The thrones were cast down" = Two views:

1) The Gentile thrones (kings and kingdoms) are destroyed ("cast down")

2) The Lord's thrones (the rule of Christ and His saints 0 v. 18; Rev. 20:4, 6) are "Placed into position" ("cast down")

"The Ancient of Days" = God the Father (NOTE: He is distinguished from the Son, v. 13).

--the whiteness of His garment - points to His purity (c. Mk. 9:3)

--the white hair - points to His wisdom (cp. Rev. 1:14)

--the fiery nature of His throne and its wheels - points to His holiness and awesome power to judge (Heb. 12:29).

V. 10

"Thousand thousands ministered" = the saints (believers of all ages)

"Ten thousand times ten thousands" = the sinners to be judged? (unbelievers to appear before the Great White Throne - Rev. 20:10-15).

"The books were opened" - the omniscient God has every work of man recorded.

V. 11

"The voice of the great words" - sparked a particular interest in Daniel (v. 20). Daniel is amazed because the loud, boasting Antichrist still kept blaspheming God even up until the end (SEE: Revelation 13:5, 6).

"The beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" - the Antichrist (who personifies and represents the revived Roman Empire) will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire when Christ returns for Armageddon (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

C. The Son of Man and His Kingdom (v. 12-15)

V. 12

"The rest of the beasts" - the previously described three beasts (v. 4-6) had their kingdoms and power taken away successively, yet their philosophies and systems were absorbed by the kingdoms that took them over and in this sense "their lives were prolonged."

During the fourth kingdom (Beast), Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece no longer rule, but their system remains as a conglomeration or a blending into an eschatological beast which is described as both a leopard, bear, and lion (Rev. 13:1).

"They had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged..." (Dan. 7:12). "The first three kingdoms were overthrown (dominion removed), yet instead of being completely destroyed, they were actually assimilated into the next kingdom.

"However, when Christ established His kingdom, He will not assimilate the ungodly Gentile kingdoms into it. Those kingdoms, then combined in the revived Roman Empire, will be completely destroyed. He will then establish a kingdom made up entirely of saints" (Walton, p. 58).

V. 13

"The Son of man came with the clouds of heaven" - a reference to Jesus Christ and the Rapture

> --Mt. 26:64 - "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."
>
> --Mk. 14:62 - "And Jesus said, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."
>
> --Rev. 1:7 - "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Just as Rome was in power at Christ's first coming, sos he will be in power (in a revived sense) prior to Christ's second coming.

V. 14

"There was given him" - God the Father presents to Jesus the Son a kingdom (cp. Ps. 2:6-9).

"There was given Him" :

--"Dominion" - authority to rule
--"Glory" - honor, reverence
--"Kingdom" - organized empire

This kingdom must be understood literally. If the first four kingdoms are literal, so must the fifth kingdom be understood (Bookman notes, ch. 7, p. 6).

Christ will reign!

--His kingdom will be universal ("All people, nations, and languages" will serve Jesus Christ).

--His kingdom will be eternal (the Millennium [1,000 years] is only the first stage of His eternal kingdom - Rev. 20:4-6).

"Thy kingdom come" (Mt. 6:10) - is the heart throb of every Christian.

To live in a state of total justice and peace; the experience of utopia; no more cursed earth, no more crime and corruption, awaits the saints of God.

V. 15

The vision had a devastating effect on Daniel. He had an upset stomach and a distressed mind after experiencing the impact of this extremely significant vision.

II. The MEANING of Daniel's Night Vision (v. 16-28)

(Daniel's Dream Interpreted)

V. 16

"One of them that stood by" - A saint in Heaven (v. 10), or an angel interpreted the vision for Daniel.

V. 18

God's saints will literally rule and reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4, 6) and will enjoy Paradise, Utopia, forever!

V. 19

Daniel was intrigued by the fourth beast. Why? Because this beast has eschatological significance. This beast will have "end time" fulfillment. God wanted us to know the details of this beast.

V. 20

"More stout" - more imposing; more fearsome. The Antichrist will impress the godless world by his clout, power, personality, and boastful mouth.

V. 21

The Antichrist's war against the saints will occur in the second half of the Tribulation. (cp. Rev. 13:7; Rev. 12:11-13).

The Antichrist will oppose God's people who live in the coming Tribulation (Rev. 13:7). Many will be martyred (Rev. 6:9-11), but they die "in the Lord"and are called "blessed." (Rev. 14:13).

V. 22

When Jesus Christ returns (who is also identified as the "Ancient of Days"), the prevailing bloodshed of the Antichrist will end!

V. 23

Ancient Rome conquered with such force.

V. 24

"The ten horns...are ten kings that shall (future) arise (come to power)" - these ten kings will be the final stage of Gentile dominion (SEE: Rev. 17:12-24).

When the Antichrist comes to power, he will subdue three nations!

V. 25

"There lived a French King, Louis XIV, who stated in a famous speech: "I am France!" With similar egotism, the Antichrist will make a speech in the near future: "I am the empire! I am God!" (Foster, p. 33).

The Antichrist will be a man noted for his:

1) Blasphemy (he will talk about God with contempt and set himself up as God - II Th. 2:4).

2) Persecution (oppression of Jew and Christian - Rev. 12-13).

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--"Times" = set times (the calendar; holidays, etc.)
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natural laws - lying wonders are ahead! (II Th. 2:9-12)

"They shall be given into his hand" - It is God who will allow Antichrist to temporarily rule over the world to fulfill His purposes.

How long will Antichrist dominate with such a free reign? For 3-1/2 years (the final half of the Tribulation - cp. Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14).

"A time (singular) and times (dual) and the dividing of time" - the Aramaic grammar points to 3-1/2 years. Compare Dan. 9:26, 27 - "in the midst of the week (seven)"; Rev. 13:5 - "42 months"; Rev. 12:14 - "times, time, and half a time"; Rev. 12:6 - "1,260 days."

V. 26

Payday someday! God's judgment will one day be in session! The Triune Godhead ("They") will strip Antichrist of his worldwide power and melt his kingdom! (Rev. 16:10-11)

V. 28

At the end of this vision, Daniel had an "Excedrin" headache, and a troubled appearance. But he did what all Christians living today should do - he kept the matter in his heart!

Verse 28 concludes the Aramaic section of the book of Daniel.

CONCLUSION:

Three practical lessons can be learned from Daniel 7 -

1) God's sovereignty - God controls kings and kingdoms

2) The Bible's authority - God predicts the future

3) The Believer's confidence - God promises to reward His saints.