

SESSION TEN

DANIEL 7:9-28

Preludes to the "Son of Man's" Kingdom

REVIEW

In the previous session, we observed that chapter seven is divided into two primary parts. Verses 1-14 present the basic vision that Daniel received, and verses 15-28 the interpretation. Furthermore, the basic vision of verses 1-14 can be divided into two parts. The first part (vv 1-8) depicts the successive Gentile powers to which Israel would be subjected, namely, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The second part (vv 9-14) depicts the judgment before the "Ancient of Days" including the reception of the kingdom by the "son of man."

A. THE INITIAL VISIONS (7:1-14) [continued]

(note: part one for verses 1-8 is treated in Session Nine)

2. The Vision of Judgment Before the Ancient of Days (7:9-14)

Just as the image in Dan 2 culminated with God's kingdom, so the vision of the four beasts is followed by the establishment of an eternal kingdom. Chapter 7, however, provides more detail than had chapter 2.

a. The Seating of the Ancient of Days in the Heavenly Courtroom (9-10)

(1) The "Ancient of Days" refers to God the Father, with the vesture and hair referring to either His holiness or His eternality (cf. Isa 43:13; 57:15a). See Rev 1:14 where Jesus Christ shares the same attribute.

(2) Context of Judgment in the End Times

(a) The "*river of fire*" is used in Dan 7:11 for the destruction of the little horn, and is interpreted in Rev 19:10 and 20:10 as the "lake of fire and brimstone," i.e., hell.

(b) "*The books were opened*" (10)

In light of Rev 20:12-15, this is a record of the works of men, including their ungodly acts. This will be used in sentencing unbelievers at the Great White Throne judgment to hell.

b. Judgment Rendered the Beasts and Little Horn (11-12)

(1) The Slaying of the "little horn" (11)

(a) This will be fulfilled in conjunction with the 2nd Coming of Christ (Rev 19:19-20).

(b) Notice the words "*the beast was slain*". The life of the 4th beast is not finished until the "*little horn*" is destroyed with the burning fire. The

Supposedly, after Antiochus Epiphanes, Judas is given a rule (he is not a king, but *like*). ["like a son of man" = like a king]

- (c) The expression means "faithful Jews" of the 2nd Cent. BC

[so Hartman, Anchor Bible Commentary, 87]

Hartman's view is similar to "a" above, but with a more specific application. He understands the phrase *bar 'ēnāš* to mean "one like a human being." However, he also understands this to be a symbol of a specific group of human beings. In light of his dating of the book (2nd cent. BC), he sees the recipients of the kingdom promise as those faithful Jews during the period of the Maccabees. He states,

. . . the 'one in human likeness' is not a real individual, celestial or terrestrial, but is only a symbol of 'the holy ones of the Most High,' a title given, as we shall see, to the faithful Jews--men, women, and children--who courageously withstood the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.³

Support:

- i) See reasons under "a" above for his defense of *bar 'ēnāš*.
- ii) For his symbolic understanding of the "son of man," Hartman points out that a symbolic understanding is justified in light of the fact that the animal figures were not real animals but symbols.
- iii) In defense of his understanding that the "son of man" stands for a "group" (of Jews), he points out that later in the chapter the *saints* of the Highest One are given the kingdom (v 27).
- iv) The collective sense is also supported by the fact that the Hebrew equivalent (*ben 'ādām*) is used in Ps 8 in a collective sense.

- (d) The promise is made to "angels"

J. Coppens has attempted to argue that the "one in human likeness" and "the holy ones of the Most High" refer to *angels*. Some have even claimed that a *specific angel* is in view, such as Gabriel or Michael.⁴

Support:

In Dan 7:18, the "saints of the Most High" (*qadîšê 'elyônîn*) are said to receive the kingdom. The equivalent Hebrew term (*q^ldôšîm*) are

³Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1978), 87. Hartman regards these faithful Jews as "the Israel of faith" which will replace the pagan empires (89). He also speaks of them as "faithful Israelites to be rewarded for their steadfastness in the face of persecution and martyrdom" (97-98).

⁴Z. Zerit views the "one in human likeness" as Gabriel who represents "the holy ones of the Most High," i.e., the Jewish people in the Kingdom. U. B. Müller sees him as Michael, the guardian angel of Israel. But since the guardian angel represents the nation, it comes to symbolize further eschatological Israel.

commonly *angels* in the MT and deuterocanonical books of the OT, but in some places are "men."

- (e) A Messianic reference: the "Son of Man" = the Lord Jesus Christ

Support:

- i) Views "b" and "c" are dependent on a late dating of the book, which is very unlikely (see *Appendix E*).
- ii) View "d" (angels) is unlikely, because this would have the "little horn" (the Antichrist) fighting and defeating the angels. Furthermore, the term "saints" or "holy ones" (Heb *q^edôšîm*) is not an exclusive term for "angels," and there is nothing in the context of Daniel 7 to suggest that angels are in view.
- iii) Although "son of man" *can* refer to mankind in the OT, view "a" (humanity) is not sufficient for Dan 7:13 in light of the *worship* that the "Son of Man" is given. The word used for "serving" Him (NIV = worshiped) in v 14 is the word *p^elah* (ܩܠܗ), which in biblical Aramaic is always used with the idea of service or worship of a deity. It means more than "honor," because *p^elah* clearly implied idolatry (when not used of the true God).⁵
- iv) Jesus clearly understood this as a Messianic title, and this was one of His favorite self-designations during His earthly ministry.⁶

Conclusion:

⁵Note the use of *p^elah* in Dan 3:12 and especially 3:17-18. The three Jews serve the true God but refuse to serve the king's gods. The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* provides the following insight about the Aramaic term *p^elah*:

"The original meaning of the root was 'to cleave [open]' or 'divide in two.' From this meaning was derived the idea of cultivating a field and ultimately of cultivating (i.e. working hard at) the worship of a deity, hence the idea of service or worship of a deity. In Biblical Hebrew, the root is used only in the sense of cleave or split, and apparently did not develop into a term for religious service, as is the case in Aramaic" (R. Laird Harris *et al*, *TWOT*, [Chicago: Moody Press, 1980], II:1059).

⁶The phrase "Son of Man" occurs about 84x in the gospels (cf. Acts 7:56). Of particular interest is Luke 21:27-31 where Jesus seems to be making clear allusion to Dan 7:13ff. Grassmick explains the appropriateness of the phrase for the Lord Jesus:

"This title especially suited Jesus' total mission. It was free of political connotations, thus preventing false expectations. Yet it was sufficiently ambiguous (like a parable) to preserve the balance between concealment and disclosure in Jesus' life and mission (cf. [Mark] 4:11-12). It combined the elements of suffering and glory in a way no other designation could. It served to define His unique role as Messiah" (John Grassmick, *Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament*, 140).

The "Son of Man" who receives the kingdom and dominion is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, He will also have His "saints" who will receive this kingdom with Him (Dan 7:18,27).⁷

(2) The Fulfillment of the Kingdom Grant

a) The Father's promise in Psalm 2:6-9

Notice how the promise in Ps 2:9 is used in the Second Coming scene in Rev 19:15.

b) New Testament associates the kingdom with the Second Coming (Mt 24:30; 25:31; Lk 21:31; 22:18; Rev 11:15).

B. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISIONS OF THE FOUR BEASTS (7:15-28)

Vv 15-28 provide an interpretation of the visions, but most of the details focus upon the 4th beast/kingdom and the kings that emerge from it.

1. Daniel's Reaction (7:15-16)

2. Summary Explanation (7:17-18)

Notice that there is only one verse summarizing the four beasts, and only one verse commenting upon the kingdom that the Ancient of Days bestowed. One added detail is given about the kingdom. In the vision (vv 13-14), the kingdom was given to the "Son of Man," but in v 18 we are told that the "saints of the Highest One" receive and possess the kingdom forever. Both are true as the New Testament verifies. The kingdom has both a king (the Lord Jesus) and subjects.

a. Who are "the saints of the Highest One"?

The expression seems to be purposely ambiguous. In this context, the focus is certainly on the faithful believers among Israel. Since the "church" was not revealed in the OT, the original readers might not have thought of Gentiles being included. However, the New Testament reveals that Gentiles, too, will make up the citizens of the kingdom (Matt 22:1-13; Eph 2:18-22; 1 Cor 6:1-3; Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10). Although "saints" can also be used for *angels* (and they could be included), the focus here seems to be on humans (note v 21).

b. How does one become a citizen of the kingdom?

(1) Only by having perfect righteousness (Matt 5:20).

(2) There must be an "exchanged righteousness" (Phil 3:8-9)

⁷Though the text does promise that the saints will receive the kingdom, care should be taken to maintain a distinction between the "Son of Man" and the "saints." Archer observes,

"It is plain that this vision makes a clear difference between the Son of Man and his people. Verse 21 states that these same 'saints' are locked in combat with the world dictator and are defeated by him on the earthly scene of battle; whereas the Son comes from heaven in a chariot of clouds before the presence of God himself, and there without any prior warfare he is crowned sovereign over all the earth (v.14)" (Gleason Archer, "Daniel," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:90).

3. Further Elaboration Regarding the 4th Beast (7:19-27)

a. Daniel's Request for Further Insight on the 4th Beast (19-20)

Notice that although the final king is called the "little horn," he is said in v 20 to be "*larger in appearance than its associates.*" This indicates that his power will be stronger than any of the ten.

b. Additional Vision of the "little horn" (21-22)

(1) A Persecutor

In the earlier vision of the "little horn," only information about his character and domination over the ten horns was given. To that is now added the factor that he wages war with the saints and overpowers them (cf. v 25 - "he *wears down*" the saints). This refers to his determination to persecute God's people.

(2) Persecution during the Great Tribulation

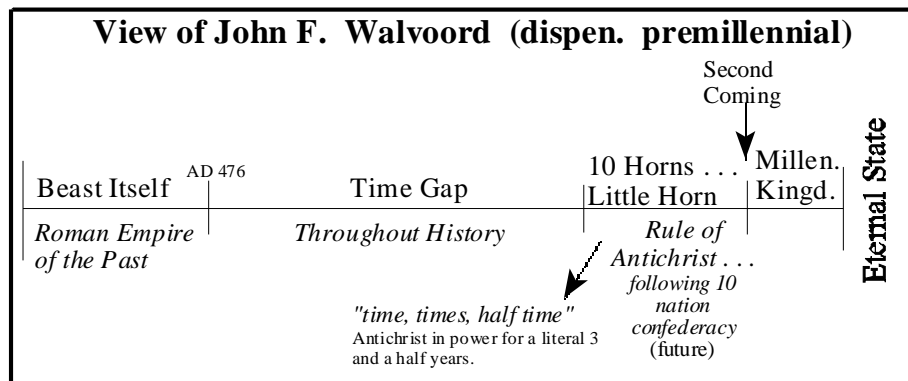
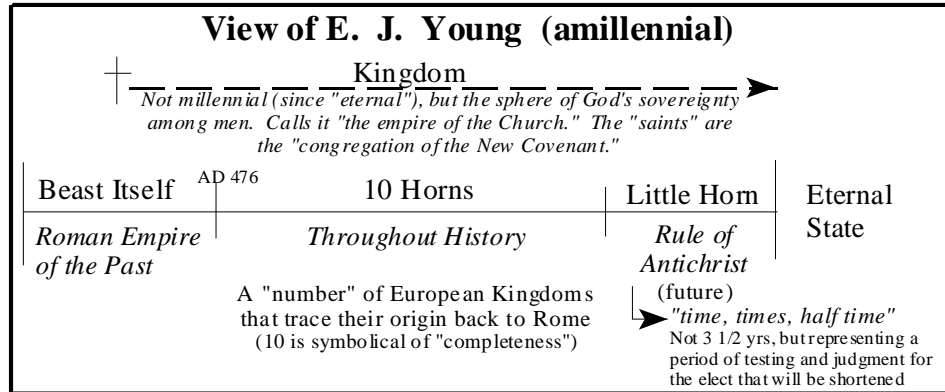
(a) Satan's persecution of Jews and Jewish believers (Rev 12:1-3,9,13,17).

(b) The persecution by the Antichrist (Rev 13:7)

(c) The persecution by the "false prophet" (Rev 13:14-15,17)

c. Explanation of the 4th Beast (23-27)

(1) A Contrast of the Views of E. J. Young and John F. Walvoord



Note: Critical scholars generally view the "little horn" as Antiochus IV Epiphanes who persecuted the Jews during the 2nd century BC (so Hartman, 91).

- (2) Verse 23 looks at the Roman Empire Phase I (historical past).
- (3) Verse 24 - The Rise to Power of the "Little Horn"
 - (a) The ten kings and the "little horn" are not fulfilled in the past, since the book of Revelation views them as future (existing during the Great Tribulation).
 Young has two significant problems:
 - i) He takes the "ten" as a symbol (arbitrarily).
 - ii) He relegates the "ten kingdoms" to history past, despite the fact that Rev 17:12-13 places them in the future (near to the time of the 2nd Coming).
 - (b) Since the ten kings arise "out of this kingdom" (i.e., Rome), there must be some connection between them and the Roman Empire of the past.

This suggests that the nations of Europe and/or the Mediterranean world will give rise to the "Roman Empire Phase II."

- (c) Since the "little horn" subdues three of the ten, this suggests that the ten horns are not successive kings/kingdoms but contemporaneous. The ten horns are a confederacy of nations that hold power in the Tribulation.

[Note: this is also a problem for Young, since he views the "ten" as successive rather than contemporaneous. Furthermore, even Young admits that the "little horn" is the Antichrist, but how does the Antichrist "subdue" three kingdoms of church history?]

Jerome, an early church father (ca. AD 400), wrote, "We should therefore concur with the traditional interpretation of all the commentators of the Christian Church, that at the end of the world, when the Roman Empire is to be destroyed, there shall be ten kings who will partition the Roman world amongst themselves."⁸

- (d) By subduing three of the ten, the final king (the "little horn") will gain power over the whole confederacy.
- (4) Details of the "little horn" from Daniel 7 (= the Antichrist)

Note: The features of "eyes" and a "mouth" suggest that an individual is in view (not merely an institution).

- (a) "*possessed eyes like the eyes of a man*" (v 8)

During the Tribulation, the Antichrist will seek to have the world worship him, but he is only a man and a mere counterfeit of Christ. The true Christ is said to have eyes "*like a flame of fire*" (Rev 1:14; 2:18). Despite all his efforts, the Antichrist can never have the purity of divine spiritual sight that the Lord Jesus Christ does.

- (b) "*a mouth uttering great boasts*" (vv 8, 11, 25)

He will be a great orator, but he will be both an arrogant boaster as well as a blasphemer of the God of Heaven (cf. Rev 13:5-6).

- (c) "*will intend to make alterations in times and in law*" (v 25)

Like Hitler, he will attempt to radically restructure society and the laws governing nations (could possibly look at religious observances and religious traditions, especially pertaining to Israel). [Cf. 1 Macc 1:41ff].

- (d) "*given into his hand for time, times, and half a time*" (v 25)

⁸Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason L. Archer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 77. For a survey of the interpretations given to the 4th beast, the little horn, and the ten horns by early Jewish scholars and Jerome of the early Christian church, see J. Paul Tanner, "The Four Beasts Out of the Sea: A Study of Early Jewish Interpretation of the Aramaic Text of Daniel Seven" (paper submitted for course Biblical Aramaic, The University of Texas at Austin, Dec 1987).

This means a period of three and a half years!

- i) The word "time" (Aramaic *'iddān*, ܝܕܢܐ) can mean a definite period of time such as a year (e.g., Dan 4:16,23,25,32). The word "times" (ܝܕܢܐܝܘܢ) should be understood as "two years."⁹

This is confirmed by taking notice that the word "eyes" (ܝܢܝܘܢ) in Dan 7:8 *appears* to be in the plural, though it would naturally be understood as dual. [The word for "hands" can be found in Aramaic as ܝܕܝܢܐ]. The expression "half a time" argues against a symbollic understanding of the whole phrase, as this would disqualify it as a *round number*.

- ii) This expression is used interchangeably in the Book of Revelation (Rev 12:14) with the phrases "1260 days" (12:6), and "42 months" (13:5), i.e., 3 1/2 years.

- iii) Conclusion:

God will allow the Antichrist to have 3 1/2 years of power, this being the 3 1/2 years prior to the 2nd Coming of Christ (the Great Tribulation).¹⁰ But he may still be active prior to this.

⁹The word "times" (ܝܕܢܐܝܘܢ) should be understood as a dual form rather than a plural. Montgomery (312) notes, ". . . the word is pointed as a pl., but the Aram. later having lost the dual, the tendency of is to ignore it in BAram." Rosenthal adds,

"The dual is preserved only in remnants

All other forms of the dual of the masc. noun, including those with pronominal suffixes, are identical with the pl. forms and not distinguishable from them." (Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 5th printing [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983], 24).

¹⁰Some critical scholars (e.g., Montgomery, 313) understand the "little horn" to be a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, and would see the temporal reference being fulfilled from 168 to 165 BC, the former being the devastation of the temple and the latter being Judas' rededication of the temple in the month Chislew during the time of the Maccabees (cf. 1 Macc 4:52ff).

SUPPLEMENT: INSIGHT ON THE ANTICHRIST FROM 2 THESS. 2:1-12

1. Context: The Christians at Thessalonica were suffering persecutions and afflictions, and some mistakenly thought they were then living in the time of the Tribulation. Paul wrote to correct this false understanding.
2. His Proof: Two key closely-related events must take place before the "Day of the Lord" (i.e., the Great Tribulation) can begin.
 - a. The "man of lawlessness" must be revealed (2 Thess 2:3).

This is another name for the Antichrist or "little horn." The clue to what this means is found in the following verse, which suggests that the Antichrist will carry out some very defiant act in conjunction with the Temple of God. By comparing several passages (Dan 8; 12:11; Matt 24; and Rev 13), this seems to refer to what Daniel (12:11) and Jesus Christ (Matt 24:15) called the "abomination of desolation," an atrocious act whereby the Antichrist defiles the Jewish Temple.

 - (1) The Jewish Temple must be rebuilt before Christ returns.
 - (2) The Antichrist will defile the Jewish Temple about 3 1/2 years before the 2nd Coming of Christ.
 - (a) He will enter the Temple and proclaim himself to be God and demand worship for himself (2 Thess 2:4).
 - (b) His image is constructed and set up in the Temple for which people will be responsible to worship (Rev 13:14ff.).
 - b. The "apostasy" (*NIV* "rebellion") must come first (2 Thess 2:3). This refers to the departure or turning away from the true God of Heaven by people professing to be Christians (but who in actuality are not saved) in order to join in the worldwide worship of the Antichrist (Rev 13:8). Possibly due to persecution and financial pressure, there will be a very obvious abandonment of worship of the true God, and only those who truly belong to Jesus Christ will refuse to join in with the worship of the Antichrist.