

The Book Of Daniel (Part Five)

Daniel 7:1-28

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Chapters 7 and 8 of the book of Daniel contain prophesies which came to Daniel as visions. God inspired him with their interpretation and each has to do with the same events. This doubling of the prophesy is a sign of its certainty. Chapter 7 was originally written in Aramaic and chapter 8 was originally written in Hebrew.

It is clear that the focus on governments—on four world empires—is there, and the first is Nebuchadnezzar's Chaldean-Babylonian Empire. The second is Cyrus' Medo-Persian Empire. The third is Alexander the Great's Greco-Macedonian Empire, which was divided among four of his generals on his death. The fourth empire is not identified, but in sequence of history it is clear that this must be of Roman origin, beginning with the Roman Empire, morphing down to the last 2,000 years of history, to the New World Order today.

It is also clear that the visions of Daniel 7 and 8 correspond with a vision of a great statue recorded in Daniel 2. Each of these three prophetic teachings focus on Gentile world powers that were to rule as history moved toward its culmination. In each teaching, the fourth empire is to be replaced by a kingdom set up by the Lord of heaven.

In Daniel 2, we have a picture of a stone, that is Jesus Christ, cut without tools from a mountain—a divine Kingdom, which thrashes the previous kingdoms into pieces and grows to fill the whole earth.

In Daniel 7, we have the picture of the Ancient of Days, seated in judgment, destroying the final enemy. Then with the clouds of heaven the Son of Man comes to receive dominion and glory and the Kingdom, and He rules forever. Daniel 7:18 reveals once again that the saints of the Most High shall receive the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom forever.

Today we will analyze chapter 7 of the book of Daniel. Daniel's preview of Gentile history is presented in the seventh chapter of his prophecy in such a way that it captures far more of the spirit of the period than can be done by mere listing of facts. He does not use long list of dates that most of us find quite dull. But especially in the first six chapters, he packs his writing with effective anecdotes. Daniel writes the history of his time in increments, a little here and a little there.

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The time frame here is extensive, from the sixth century B.C. until the second coming of Jesus Christ and beyond. Daniel packs it all in through a series of vivid visions that convey far more than any mere listing of names, battles, or dates could do for us.

The material in this section is parallel to the vision of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in chapter 2, but it is important to see that an entirely new section of the book begins with chapter 7. For one thing, the first six chapters have presented the career of Daniel in chronological order: A series of three kings under whom Daniel served, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius.

The accounts skip backward to something that happened in the reign of the second of these kings. Furthermore, the nature of the material changes. The first six chapters contain historical events from Daniel's years of service. True, there is record of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, but even this is set in the context of the threat it posed to Daniel and his three friends, and the story involves the success of interpreting it.

The second half of the book, chapters 7-12, is trans-historical. It is a record of visions that could have been received and recorded at any time period in history, either before or after Daniel's time. God chose Daniel to reveal it.

Please turn to Daniel 7. These visions vary in important details but they are overlapping and make roughly the same points. They tell us that God is in control of history; that human kingdoms will succeed until the coming of the Lord's anointed, the Messiah, but that in the end, it is His Kingdom that will fill the whole earth.

Daniel 7:1-3 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other."

The Great Sea represents the whole world of turbulent nations; the element out of which the world's kingdoms came into existence is the sea. Four beasts came up from the sea. The sea, when looked at in some of its aspects, is the perfect symbol of these human kingdoms without godliness. They have made progress in the world by acting like the sea.

Notice some of the sea's characteristics. First, there is the element of treachery. The sea is at one moment calm and apparently harmless, and the very next sending a nation

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into mourning by overwhelming her vessels and casting her crews into the depths of the ocean.

Second, there is the element of restless change. From its creation to the present moment, the waters have not been at rest for a single hour.

A third element is destructiveness. The sea is a terrible, destroying power. The Chaldean-Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and the Roman Empires were destructive rather than constructive forces in the world.

The first vision of Daniel is the foundation for what follows, so it is important to have in mind as we proceed.

Daniel saw four wild animals that later (in verse 17) we are told represent four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. We will continue to read here in Daniel 7:3

Daniel 7:3-7 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' "After this I looked, and there was another, 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. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

These kingdoms of the vision symbolized by fierce beasts of prey that tear flesh apart. They are noted for their strength and cruelty and treachery. No animal of a gentle, peaceful nature is found among them, indicating the entire absence of these characteristics in kingdoms without godliness. The obvious thing to be said about this vision is that it is parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great statue made up of various metals, although this vision adds significant new details.

The first beast, like a lion corresponds to the golden portion of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, the head. This was a representation of the Babylonian Empire itself as Daniel

explained to the Emperor.

Second vision details are added that seem particularly apt, and it is the description of Nebuchadnezzar himself. In view of what we have already been told about Nebuchadnezzar, the tearing off of the animal wings seems to symbolize Nebuchadnezzar's humbling and reducing his glory during the years of his insanity. When it is said that the lion-like animal was raised up on two feet and given the heart of a man, it is not hard to connect the restoration of the proud king's reason. These details help set out early interpretation of the first vision and establishes a pattern for understanding a part of the vision that follows.

The second beast, like a bear, corresponds to the silver portion of the statue, the arms, shoulders, and upper parts of the body. This represents the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. It also shows that these two kingdoms are to be taken together, not divided. Nothing in the history of the empire of the Medes corresponds to the detail of the three ribs held between the second beast's teeth, but if the kingdom is that of the Medes and Persians considered together, then the history fits quite well.

Cyrus, the Medo-Persian king, and his son Cambyses I conquered the Lydian kingdom of Asia Minor, which fell to Cyrus in 546 BBC. The second, the Chaldean Empire, he overthrew in 539 BBC. And the third, the kingdom of Egypt, fell to Cambyses in 525 BBC.

The third beast, which was like a leopard, corresponds to the middle portion of Nebuchadnezzar's statue. The part made of bronze and represents the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. Two things particularly characterize this Empire: The speed with which it was achieved and the speed in which it divided into four separate kingdoms after its founder's death.

Like a swiftly running leopard, Alexander won his vast Empire in one extended campaign. But within a few years of his death in 323 B.C, the kingdom fractured into four parts: (1) The region of Greece and Macedonia under Antipater; (2) Asia Minor under Lysimachus; (3) Asia Minor under Seleucus; (4) Egypt and Palestine under Ptolemy.

The fourth and final beast was the most terrifying of all. It is so unique that it is not even compared to a known animal. It corresponds to the legs, feet, and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, and represents a Roman-like power, one that would have influence in history from that period on. Several details of the visions tie the statue and the beast together. The legs of the statue are iron, so are the teeth of the animal. Daniel says only that it had large iron teeth and ten horns. It crushed and devoured its victims

and trampled everything under foot.

The animal has ten horns, and these find a parallel with the ten toes of the statue, presumably representing ten confederated kingdoms. However, a new feature is introduced in the vision of the four beasts here that was not present in the vision of the statue, the appearance of another horn, a little horn.

Daniel 7:8 “I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.”

While Daniel was thinking about this terrible last beast, particularly about the significance of the ten horns, another horn appeared that uprooted three of the beast's ten horns, and this last horn is said to have had eyes like the eyes of man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

The horns and toes would seem to be kingdoms, but this little horn has characteristics of an individual ruler. This seems to be the first biblical reference to the individual later described in the bible as the man of sin, the false prophet. He appears in II Thessalonians 2, as the man of sin, son of damnation, and is seen again in Revelation 13 and 19.

In II Thessalonians 2, the apostle Paul believed it necessary to correct the false idea that the brethren had regarding the gathering together of the saints with Christ, of those dead in Christ and those remaining alive when Christ returns. Paul explains that Christ's return will be preceded by a period of apostasy that could include anything from a falling away, a departure from doctrine or teaching, all the way to and including an outright political rebellion.

II Thessalonians 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God of that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

II Thessalonians 2:7-12 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And

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then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. For this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

That last statement—"who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness"—is what we want to avoid. The man of sin has four different names or titles, but all of them are described similarly: the man of sin in II Thessalonians 2:3-10, the little horn in Daniel 7:8, the two-horned beast who spoke like a dragon in Revelation 13:11-18, and the false prophet in Revelation 19:20.

The description in each location is not the same but similar, and each adds something to the others' description. They describe a person who appears at the time of the end, and this is the one piece of information that every one of them has in common.

We will briefly compare these descriptions. I will give you three scriptures in a row and then what they describe. Daniel 7:8-9; II Thessalonians 2:3; Revelation 19:20 indicate that his end, his destruction or annihilation, comes at the return of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 7:8-9; II Thessalonians 2:4; and Revelation 13:11-14 indicate that the person speaks with great pompous words.

The last one has three scriptures with it. II Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13-15; and Revelation 19:20 indicate that the person does miraculous supernatural signs.

The next five I will give you are just two scriptures on each.

Revelation 13:13-15 and Revelation 19:20 indicate that the signs are done in the presence of the beast, showing they are not the same figure.

II Thessalonians 2:4, 9-10 and Revelation 13:12-14 indicate that he deceives and leads people into idolatry.

Daniel 7:21 and Revelation 13:15 indicate that he either makes war against the saints or causes those who would not worship the beast to be put to death.

Daniel 7:25 and II Thessalonians 2:4 indicate that he either thinks to change times and law, suggesting the law of God, or he sets himself in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God, and the implication is that he has the earthly authority to do these things.

Revelation 13:5 indicates that his period of greatest influence is three and a half years, coinciding with the Great Tribulation.

All of these scriptures are describing the same person. The Bible shows that the man of sin, the false prophet, has a direct connection into a large political power and has a strong religious influence and global prophetic significance. This little horn of Daniel 7 will be struck down with the beast power and both will be burned, as stated in Revelation 19:20.

At this point, we are reminded of a stone, cut without human hands, that came and struck the great statue of Nebuchadnezzar, so that it fell and was broken into pieces and then scattered by the wind. The stone Jesus Christ then grew to become a great mountain or kingdom that filled the earth.

In the second vision in Daniel 7, the judgment of God is passed upon the world's kingdoms, and all authority, glory and sovereign power are given to the Son of Man, whom we recognize as Jesus Christ. We will consider the last part of the vision a little later in the sermon.

The most obvious point to be made about the vision of the four beasts is that it parallels the vision of the statue, as I mentioned earlier. But it is also obvious that although the two accounts are parallel, they are nevertheless not presented from the same perspective.

The perspectives are radically different. In the first, the outlook is quite human, the way men or women might look at these great empires. In the second, the perspective is God's. It tells us how God views the world's kingdoms.

How does mankind view the world's kingdoms? He is impressed, for the most part. He thinks of them as glorious, differing in splendor certainly, but nevertheless all worthy of some degree of honor, and he is enamored of them. On occasion, he is seduced by the secular political power, and he sees the state as a greatest of all good and as an end in itself.

How does God view our kingdoms? The answer is two sides of the same coin. On the

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one side, God has created and authorized the secular authorities, as Romans 13:1-2 indicates.

Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

On the other side, from God's perspective, the state is generally corrupt, and therefore aptly described as beast-like, which is what the vision of the beast in Daniel 7 does. From God's point of view, the state is not so much a noble, glorious thing as it is an animal that conquers, devours and tears its subjects.

What is more characteristic of the kingdoms of this world's history, the properly functioning state of Romans 13, or the corrupt devouring state of Revelation 13? We are compelled by the evidence to admit that the kingdoms of this world are most often terrible and ferocious, and richly deserving judgment. Therefore we are to submit to the governing authorities as long as they do not try to force us to disobey and dishonor God. Their authority is limited and conditional.

By comparing the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 and the vision of Daniel in Daniel 7, we must also admit that the latter is the way God seems most often to view the world's kingdoms.

Not only does the vision of the four beasts indicate how God regards the supposedly glorious kingdoms of this world, it also reveals a glimpse of that Kingdom which truly is glorious, in whose light all the imagined achievements of men and movements of history are to be evaluated. In this area, the visions convey several important truths, and here are three of those truths:

First, God rules in history. This is an obvious point and one that has already been seen several times in Daniel. Truly, it is the primary message of the book: God is sovereign. When Nebuchadnezzar set up the great golden statue in the plain of Dura, he did so in defiance of God, who had said that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would pass away and be succeeded by another, even though it was glorious enough in human terms to be described as a head of gold.

Nebuchadnezzar said, in effect, "My kingdom is an everlasting dominion that will never be destroyed." But his kingdom was destroyed by Cyrus the Persian, because it is the

decree of God and not the desire of man that rules history.

In Daniel 5, when Belshazzar at his great feast defiled the vessels of God taken from the temple in Jerusalem, he too was saying, "I determine my own history." He was wrong. God numbered his days and brought them to an end. God weighed him and declared that he was found wanting. God divided his kingdom, giving it to the Medes and Persians.

This is the point made in Daniel's vision. The ruthless empires of world history may roar and frighten for a time—they may crush kingdoms weaker than they are—but in the end, all will be brought to judgment, and the kingdom of God's anointed one will be established. This is because God, and not mere human beings, is in charge. Although Satan may be the ruler this world, it is God who ultimately rules in the affairs of mankind.

How does this apply to us personally? Everything we accomplish in our lives ultimately is God's gift to us. He can both give them and take them away, depending on how we think of them and use them. He can raise a person up and he can bring one down. The truth that God rules history may also be applied in a comforting way. It can be seen in Jesus Christ's sermon on the Mount of Olives, shortly before His arrest and crucifixion, in which He gave His disciples a forecast of things to come.

There will be many false Christs who will deceive many, He said. There will be wars and rumors of wars. There will be widespread apostasy as many turn from the faith. People will hate and betray one another; wickedness will increase. Toward the end of this age, the abomination of desolation—a clear reference to Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11—will appear. It will usher in a time of great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now, and never to be equaled again.

Matthew 24:15-16 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand). "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Matthew 24:21-22 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

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Still, in spite of this great turmoil that will cause the hearts of many to be shaken with fear, Christ's words to His disciples are words of comfort. How is it that Jesus can tell His own not to be alarmed in such circumstances? False Christs, wars, apostasy, hatred, betrayal, and wickedness—how can we not be troubled so long as we have hearts to feel and minds to grieve with those who are suffering?

The only possible answer is that in spite of these things, God is in control of history, and He is in control of our lives. He will work all things out in accordance with His just and all-wise plan for humanity.

Psalm 66:7-10 He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Oh, bless our God you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, Who keeps our soul among the living, and does not allow our feet to be moved. For You, O God, have proved us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

As Daniel 7 shows, in the end the wicked will be judged and the saints will reign with Jesus Christ.

The second truth that we see here in Daniel 7 is that the kingdom of Jesus Christ will triumph over the nations of this world and will endure forever. This idea was presented in the vision of the statue given to Nebuchadnezzar, because in that vision a rock not made with human hands struck the statue and destroyed it, after which it grew to be a large mountain—that is, a kingdom—that filled the earth.

There is a new element in Daniel 7:13; that is, the personal rule of God's Anointed described as being like the Son of Man.

Daniel 7:13 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.”

It is important to note that Son of Man is the very phrase picked up by Jesus and used over and over as a title of Himself. He used it in the eloquent discourse just a few verses after His reference to Daniel.

Matthew 24:27 “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashed to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

There are other references to the coming of the Son of Man in Daniel's prophesy. I will go into this a little later in the sermon.

The third truth seen in Daniel's vision is that the saints of the most High will reign with Christ. Those saints, obviously, are us—members of God's church, baptized, who have received God's Holy Spirit. In what we are about to read, it talks a great deal about us, both good and bad, but in the end it is all good.

In the interpretation of this vision in the later half of Daniel 7, it is said that the saints will be persecuted by the king who is the little horn, but he will be destroyed. The sovereignty, power, and greatness of the kingdom's under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. This part of Daniel's prophetic vision is tremendously exciting because it reveals something about our future, so it is very personal to us.

Daniel 7:15-27 “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’ “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows. “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. ‘But the court shall be seated, and they shall take

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away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

So we will be right in there personally with Jesus Christ, ruling all the nations eventually. To my knowledge, this is the first clear occurrence of this idea in the Bible—that the saints will rule with Jesus Christ, so that Christ will Himself reign. It is an extraordinary truth and a very practical one. One practical application is made by Paul in I Corinthians 6:1-11. In those verses Paul is concerned with the practice of the Corinthian Christians of going to law against one another.

I Corinthians 6:2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

If we are to rule with Jesus Christ one day, we should be able to show something of the wisdom and justice of His rule now, and not have to appeal to unbelievers to settle our internal disputes. More than that, we should be models of integrity and compassion, love, honesty, and wisdom in our dealings with one another and other men and women throughout the world. There is this application also in II Timothy 2:12.

II Timothy 2:12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. [Enduring takes a lot of work, a lot of effort, a lot of faith, a lot of prayer, a lot of perseverance.]

The context has to do with our remaining faithful to Jesus Christ in difficult times, so it is in the nature of a warning as well as an encouragement. We can be encouraged to endure now because we know that one day we will rule with Him. That can lift our spirits and give us a renewed determination to fight on, and it should. It is also a warning since our reigning with Christ later seems to depend on our endurance now. It is the same thing Jesus meant when He said in Matthew 24:12-13,

Matthew 24:12-13 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

This is telling us, "Do not give up." Are you enduring? Will you be standing firm when Christ returns? Some may argue that this is a tough age in which to be faithful, and that is true, but it was tough for Daniel. The empires were in political and moral decline in his day, and it was tough for Paul, who makes these applications for us.

The Roman Empire in the time of Jesus and the apostles was particularly decadent. Do a little research into what the saints have gone through and are going through, and you will find that it has always been tough for God's people. There have only been short periods where there has been peace and rest. Those who truly are His people persevere as they look forward to Christ's reign and to reigning with Him.

At this point I want to shift our focus back to God the Father for a moment, and then to Jesus Christ once again. Beginning in Daniel 7:9, a judgment unfolds. Thrones were set up in heaven, and God—the Ancient of Days—took His seat. "Ancient of Days" is an expression applied to Yahweh three times in this vision of Daniel, in the sense of eternal. The unique term is found in Daniel 7:9, 13, 22.

In contrast with all earthly kings, His days—that is, the Ancient of Days—are past reckoning. His days are infinite. He existed before time was established.

Daniel 7:9-10 "I watched till throne were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."

That is, millions and millions of beings standing or sitting here before the throne of God. According to the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition*, in Daniel 7:7-22, "Ancient of Days" refers to the venerable Judge who presided as the books were opened. He is of ancient tradition, the Father of years. The title "Ancient of Days" alternates with the title, "Most High", found in Daniel 7:18-22.

In the original Aramaic, the term from which we get "ancient" also means "venerable," as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* stated, and by extension, "respected, majestic, dignified, esteemed, honored, and revered." It is because He is with no beginning and no end, and is the Author of creation, that He is not only the Most High Sovereign, but He is supremely wise and just.

Daniel watched for what would happen next:

Daniel 7:11-12 “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.”

The other beasts had been stripped of their authority at this time in the vision. They were allowed to continue their influence on society for a period of time. Daniel was attracted by these words, by their arrogance, conceit, and pride. I do not mean attracted in an enticed way; I mean attracted in a curious way. He saw that because of these pompous words, the solemn judgment proceeded against the beast.

Daniel's attitude here is this: he heard arrogant and proud words uttered by the horn, and he waited in deep attention and with an earnest expectation to learn what judgment would be pronounced. The result is stated in the last part of the verse. It implies that it was not done at once, but at some time God intervened.

As the vision comes to a close, Jesus Christ, one like the Son of Man, approached the Ancient of Days, and was given authority, glory and Sovereign power. In the midst of the seventh chapter of Daniel, which records Daniel's vision of the four beasts, representing four successive human governments, there are two fascinating verses.

There is a record of a vision Daniel had of Jesus Christ, and it is fascinating because it is unique in the Old Testament. The verses before these show how the kingdoms of the world would be judged, but at the peak of the vision, the very point in which we might expect the rule of God the Father Himself to be exclusively affirmed, we read again in verse 13 and 14,

Daniel 7:13-14 “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.”

Daniel 7:13 is an unusual and fascinating passage because it presents a vision of Jesus

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Christ as the Son of Man with His Father, the Ancient of Days, who was giving Him authority, glory and dominion. What a clear picture we have here. Nowhere but in Daniel 7:13-14, except vaguely in Psalm 110:1, does the distinct person and glory of Jesus Christ emerge so clearly. Here are two awesome personages, the Ancient of Days and one like the Son of Man, and it is to this latter figure, which is Jesus Christ, that dominion over the peoples and nations of the earth is given forever.

It is interesting the way Jesus is referred to in Daniel 7:13-14. In His teachings, He applied the title "Son of Man" to Himself. There are many titles for Jesus in the New Testament: He is Lord, Christ, or Messiah, the Good Shepherd, the Bride Groom, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the End, He is the First and the Last.

Please turn to the book of II John. Jesus did not use the term Messiah, except on one occasion when He was speaking to the Samaritan women in John 4:26. The primary biblical title that Jesus used was the title "Son of Man," which He repeated from Daniel, and is used 69 times in the synoptic gospels, and twelve times in the book of John.

We will look at two reasons that Jesus primarily used the title "Son of Man." First, it was an ideal title for combining the two primary things that needed to be said about His person, namely, that He was fully man and at the same time He was God.

II John 7-11 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares In his evil deeds.

By extension, this can carry over into hanging out with worldly people who are drinking, cavorting, or what ever else they do in the world. Why a Christian would hang around those type of people in world, I have no idea. Some people in God's church have in the past.

The truth that He was fully man as Jesus Christ is conveyed by the term itself, because the words "Son of Man" in Aramaic or Hebrew idiom simply means "man" or "a human being." For example, if an Aramaic- or Hebrew-speaking person wanted to refer to a person as a sinner, it would be natural for him to speak of that one as "a son of sin." Or,

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if he wanted to call a person wealthy, he would refer to him as a "son of wealth." When Jesus referred to Himself as a Son of Man, He was merely calling Himself a Man, so far as the literal meaning of the term goes.

This is significant because it reveals the life Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, had in identifying with us. He could have used terms that stressed His deity, but instead He stressed His humanity, and it is if He were saying, "As one of you, I can identify with you; I can feel what you feel."

There is more to it than this, because Jesus did not merely refer to Himself as a Son of Man, which would have expressed only His humanity. He referred to Himself as *the* Son of Man, which means He is the Son of Man referred to in Daniel, who came on a cloud of heaven and to whom the Ancient of Days gave authority, glory, and sovereign power. He did this at His trial, when asked by Caiaphas whether He was Christ the Son of God. Jesus replied as recorded in Matthew 26:64:

Matthew 26:64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

This is a clear reference to Daniel 7:13-14. It is a way of saying, "I am the divine King prophesied by Daniel," and, of course, this is precisely how the Jewish rulers understood it, because after He had said this, Caiaphas cried out, "He has spoken blasphemy," and they condemned Him to death. He understood exactly what Jesus was referring to. If Jesus had used another term, he would not of gotten the point.

Matthew 26:65 "Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look now you have heard His blasphemy!"

The second reason Jesus used the title "Son of Man" rather than one of the other more familiar and more explicit Messianic titles current to Judaism—the primary reason is that it was less explicit and because Jesus could then infuse it with His own meaning instead of picking up on the earnest but nevertheless very wrong expectation of His contemporaries.

You will find that we in God's church have a different explanation of biblical terms than the world does. Our usage of biblical terms does not mean the same thing that the

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Protestants use, the Baptist, the Lutherans, and Presbyterians, and so on. They define the words of Scripture differently than we do. It is a different language. That is why Christ had to be so clear about this.

He referred to Himself as the Son of Man, which means the Son of Man referred to in Daniel. He did this at His trial when asked by Caiaphas whether He was Christ the Son of God.

The second reason Jesus used the title Son of Man was because He wanted to infuse His own meaning. There were tremendous expectations of a Messianic deliverer in Christ's day. The country was under Rome's rule, and all patriotic Jews earnestly waited for the Deliverer who had been prophesied in the Old Testament. Who was He?

Whenever anybody the least bit average came along, there was always hundreds, even thousands, of people who were ready to look to him and follow him in hopes he might be the one expected. They even had a certain checklist of questions that they would ask such charismatic figures. John the Baptist had a dramatic and effective ministry, so the authorities sent a delegation to ask him whether he was the Messiah, and he was asked this list of questions.

John 1:19-21 Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" And he answered "No."

They knew that in Malachi 4:5, Malachi had prophesied that Elijah would come as Christ's forerunner, and there was only one other Messianic-type figure they could think of, and that was the prophet mentioned by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

John 1:22-27 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LOORD,'" as the prophet Isaiah said." Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

That exhausted the questions, and they went back to the authorities in Jerusalem with their report, and they did not give much attention to John's claim to be the voice preparing the way for the Lord, and they certainly did not believe him when he identified Jesus of Nazareth as the one and whose way he had prepared.

This incident shows how intense the Jewish expectations for a political deliverer were at this time. If Jesus had said, "Yes, I am the Messiah," or if He had used any one of the other titles usually identified with this figure, the Jews would have thought of Him in simple political terms and not spiritual terms. They would have followed Him in the belief that He was a mere man, like David, whom God had sent to drive out the Romans and restore the Davidic throne. By rejecting these titles and instead choosing the less explicit but intriguing title "Son of Man," Jesus was able to identify Himself in His own way and avoid misunderstandings.

The important questions are, how did Jesus interpret this title? What meaning did He give to the figure of the Son of Man in Daniel? We will consider four more reasons Jesus used the title Son of Man.

First, He used it to teach His preexistence. In John 3, Jesus explained this about Himself.

John 3:13 "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

The disciples would have recognized the statement as a reference to Daniel. They would have perceived Jesus to be teaching that He was the same figure seen by the prophet so many years before.

John 6:62 "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?"

That is, before He came to earth. Jesus was seated at the right hand of the God the Father in heaven. The existence of Jesus is not determined from the date of His incarnation. Our existence is determined from our conception or the date of our birth. Before that we were not, and now we are. This is not the case with Jesus Christ.

There was a date in which He was physically born of His mother Mary, but this is not the

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point in which the spiritual existence of Jesus started. He existed before that, even before the point at which the prophet Daniel saw Him in vision. He existed from eternity.

Second, He used the title "Son of Man" to teach that He must suffer. Nothing in Daniel 7:13-14 teaches that the Messiah must suffer, though Daniel 9:26 suggested it. Jesus always understood and taught that this was the role He was to fill. I referred to John 3:13, which teaches the Son of Man's pre-existence. The very next verse uses the title again, but this time in reference to His death on the stake.

John 3:14-15 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life".

Jesus had to make this very clear because His contemporaries were thinking of a political Messiah. They wanted a hero who would conquer, not a savior who is to be crucified. If Jesus had described Himself as the Messiah, that is all they would have thought about. Instead, He called Himself the Son of Man, and taught that He must first suffer and die for our salvation.

The third reason He used the title "Son of Man" was to teach that a person must be personally joined to Him to be saved. He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him, he is in a one spirit, united in an intimate spiritual covenant relationship with Christ, similar to a marriage between a husband and wife.

I Corinthians 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Our being joined with Christ is similar to but on a much higher plane than that of a man and his wife being one body. This intimacy is also seen in the faith, humility, and submission involved in keeping Passover in a worthy manner, as we see described in John 6.

John 6:47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life".

The phrase here, "He who believes," in the original Greek is a participle construction in the present tense, meaning that a believer is characterized by his continuing trust. Not one time, not years ago, continuing trust.

John 6:53-54 Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood had eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

So, a person who does not keep Passover worthily does not have that connection. As John 6 proceeds, it is clear that eating and drinking is a metaphor for faith. To be saved, a person must believe in Jesus Christ, and that belief is a thing that makes Christ as much and more a part of a believer as a literal eating and drinking with Him would do. As Jesus does frequently in the gospel of John, He is speaking in terms of physical items in this world to teach about spiritual realities. Here, to eat Jesus' flesh has the spiritual meaning of trusting and believing in Him, especially in His death for the sins of mankind.

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

Similarly, "drinking His blood" means to trust in His atoning death, which is represented by the shedding of His blood. The receiving of eternal life through being united with the Son of Man is represented in the Passover service. This is consummated in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The fourth reason for the title "Son of Man": He used it to teach about the final judgment. The judge is Jesus Christ as Mediator; all judgment is committed to Him. It pertains to Him as Mediator to complete and publicly manifest the salvation of His people and the overthrow of His enemies, together with the glorious righteousness of His work in both respects.

John 5:22-27 “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man.”

Verse 27 is another reference to Daniel, as Jesus' use of the word "authority" and because He is the Son of Man makes clear. In Daniel, the one like the Son of Man participates with the Ancient of Days in His judgment, and it is as a consequence of that judgment that authority, glory and sovereign power are given to Him. Jesus' claims to be judge of all men because He is the Son of Man.

The day is coming when He will return as the glorified and reigning Lord. In that day, He will judge all people on a basis of their relationships to Him and to God the Father. Are they subjects to His Kingdom? Do they bow before Him and welcome His rule, or are they rebels who resisted His rightful sovereignty over them whom He will judge? If you are faced with doing this or that in your life and you feel compelled to do the right thing, and that is the way that you want to do, or you desire to do the wrong thing and follow the desire way what have you rejected? One day, every knee will bow before the rightful authority of Jesus Christ, as Daniel says:

Daniel 7:13-14 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Eventually, that is. Millions and millions of people, all peoples, nations, and men of every language, all will worship and every knee will bow.

Daniel 7:27-28 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. "This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept

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the matter in my heart.”

So the power which those several kingdoms had possessed will all be conferred to God's Kingdom and His people. The phrase, "under the whole heaven," shows it is a Kingdom on earth, not in heaven. God's Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom.

If everlasting, how can His Kingdom here in verse 27 refer to the millennial one? The answer: Daniel saw the whole time of future righteous government as one period. The clear light of the New Testament distinguishes the whole period—the millennial kingdom and the time of a new heaven and new earth. Christ's Kingdom is everlasting; not even the last judgment will end it, but will only give it a more glorious appearance.

The New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, with the throne of God and a Lamb in it, there were loud voices in heaven saying, “The Kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.”

What a wonderful future we, as the saints of the Most High, have to look forward to if we continue faithfully in His way of life. All I can say in the end here is, WOW!