

Daniel 7:13-14

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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.

¹⁴ 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.

I mentioned last week that I was certain it would not be our last week in Daniel 7. The reason for that is because I was struggling with an issue. Hopefully I can deal with that issue in today's message.

The way Daniel 7 is laid out is Daniel has a dream. The first 15 verses of the chapter deal with the dream and what the contents of the dream are. The dream is fantastic and has some amazing imagery in it. We have the four beasts, the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the fourth terrible beast which is not described as any specific animal, but it is described as terrible, with iron teeth, and it has ten horns. We spent a little bit of time talking about what this means and the reason we did so was because when Daniel asked for the interpretation of the dream he was deeply concerned because of the fourth beast. Much of the interpretation of the dream deals with the identity of and some of the issues of the fourth beast.

In summary, the fourth beast is the Roman Empire. We identified the 10 horns as ten kings. I mentioned the first 10 Caesar's. Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, Caligula, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian.

Hear again this passage in Daniel 7 verses 7 and 8:

⁷ “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. 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.

The little horn that comes up from among the ten we identified as the unbelieving Jews and what I want us to notice is that this horn speaks pompous words against the most high, and of note is that three of the ten horns are plucked out by the roots.

I want to explain what I believe this is talking about.

Last week I mentioned Revelation 17 in verse 9 and 10 says the following:

⁹ “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰ There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. ¹¹ The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

The five kings that have fallen refers to the first five Caesar's. The king that is refers to Nero, and then there are other Kings after Nero. The internal evidence of the dating of the authorship of the Book of Revelation indicates that it was written prior to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. When these 7 kings are spoken of in this passage and five have fallen, and one is... The one that is, is the 6th king or Nero.

Prior to Nero coming to the throne. The Roman empire had served as a protector of the Church. From Acts 7 when Stephen was stoned by the Jews the Jews began to persecute the Church. In Acts 8, Saul is sent by the leader of the Jews to hunt down and arrest and bring Christians to trial. Saul is converted by Christ on the Damascus road and becomes the Apostle to the Gentiles. But something we have to remember is the whole scale persecution of the Christians by the Jews is continuing.

The Roman Empire during this time of persecution served as the protector for the infant church. Rome was protecting the church from their Jewish persecutors. We see this in the life of Paul and we also see this in the lives of others of the Apostles. The Emperor at the time of the crucifixion of Christ was Tiberius, and after him was Claudius and then Caligula. During the reign of these men the church was protected from the Jews by the Roman Empire. Nero became the Emperor in the year AD 54. And during the first 10 years of his reign the Church continued to be protected by Rome but in AD 64 there was a marked change in the role of Rome toward the Church.

The official policy of Rome toward the Christians changed in AD 64. From AD 64 rather than being the protector of the Church Nero became it's chief persecutor.

The historian Tacitus describes Nero extensively torturing and executing Christians after the fire of 64. There are those who believe that Nero chose the Christians to target to take attention off of himself because of the fire, but the historian Suetonius mentions Nero punishing Christians, though he does so because they are "given to a new and mischievous superstition" and does not connect it with the fire.

But another interesting thing happened around this time. In AD 66 a revolt broke out from the Jews against Rome. The revolt happened in large part because of a disagreement over taxation. The Roman province of Judea had come short on their payment of taxes. The Roman governor, Gessius Flora, responded by plundering the temple claiming the money was for the Emperor, and the next day launching a raid on the city, arresting numerous senior Jewish figures. This prompted a wider, large-scale rebellion and the Roman military garrison of Judaea was quickly overrun by the rebels, while the pro-Roman king Herod Agrippa II together with Roman officials, fled Jerusalem. As it became clear the rebellion was getting out of control, Cestius Gallus of Syria brought in the Syrian army, to restore order and quell the revolt. Despite initial advances and the conquest of Jaffa, the Syrian Legion was ambushed and defeated by Jewish rebels at the Battle of Beth Horn with 6,000 Romans massacred.

There are many details about this conflict but the part that is particularly interesting is that this revolt ended up bringing the weight of the Roman Empire against the Jews. This period ultimately culminates with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the year AD 70. But the point I want to mention is after Nero's suicide in AD 68 3 ½ years after the beginning of the official persecution by Rome there are three successive emperors who rise and are replaced

almost instantly. And then while Vespasian is the emperor, his son Titus, who would become the 11th Caesar takes the City of Jerusalem and the temple is destroyed.

The 3 kings that are plucked up by the roots in Daniel 7 and 8 with the appearance of the little horn seem to fit this description very well. But and I want to emphasize this, Daniel spends almost no time talking about the 3 kings that are plucked up by the root, but when he does ask for the interpretation of the dream from the angels or the watchers as they are called earlier in the Book his focus seems to be on the fourth beast. Last week we mentioned that he was grieved by the dream and its interpretation, but the primary reason for him being grieved or concerned by the dream had to do with the fact that the people who were rising up against God and his purposes were Daniel's own people. We are going to see more of this in Chapter 9,

But the part that is so frustrating, at least to me in this text, is that Daniel wants to know about the dream in particular the 4th beast, and almost no time is spent talking about verse 13 and 14.

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And they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

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The Coming of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven is one of those topics that people often talk about and I think it is a topic that is very often misunderstood. And to show that I want to point to a verse in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:7

⁷ Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

The common assumption about this passage is that this coming is the second coming of the Lord Jesus. But I want so suggest that if we follow the meaning of the text and pay attention to the way the phrase is used throughout Bible it is speaking of something all together different.

This cloud coming of the Lord is the Lord coming, not to the earth, but coming to the Days and this is what is being talked about in Daniel 7 and I would also submit it is what is being talked about in Revelation 1.

In Psalms 104 we read in part:

O LORD my God, You are very great:

You are clothed with honor and majesty,

² Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment,

Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

³ He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,

Who makes the clouds His chariot,

Who walks on the wings of the wind,

*⁴ Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire*

In Nahum Chapter 1 verses 2-8 we read this description of God's wrath on His enemies.

*² God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;
The LORD avenges and is furious.
The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves wrath for His enemies;*

*³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,
And will not at all acquit the wicked.*

*The LORD has His way
In the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds are the dust of His feet.*

*⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,
And dries up all the rivers.*

*Bashan and Carmel wither,
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.*

*⁵ The mountains quake before Him,
The hills melt,
And the earth heaves^[a] at His presence,
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.*

*⁶ Who can stand before His indignation?
And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?*

*His fury is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.
⁷ The LORD is good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And He knows those who trust in Him.
⁸ But with an overflowing flood
He will make an utter end of its place,
And darkness will pursue His enemies.*

The clouds are specifically mentioned in this passage as the dust of His feet. The Scripture is full of these illustrations of bringing wrath upon all those who oppose Him, and what is being pointed out here is that the God who has so long opposed the enemies of Israel is now coming and bringing judgment on these Israelites. Note the specific mention that every eye would see him, even those who had pierced Him.

In Matthew 26 when Jesus is on trial before the Sanhedrin He is put to the question by the High Priest who has the following dialogue with our Lord.

“I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

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.”

The events that are following in the Book of Revelation are the fulfillment of these words by Jesus. Christ identifies Himself clearly as the promised Messiah and informs the High Priest that because of their rejection of the Messiah, they would soon see the judgment promised to all who refuse to Kiss the Son. The High Priest responds to Jesus claim by tearing his clothing and accusing Jesus of Blasphemy. When John speaks of the ones who pierced Him seeing the coming judgment this is what he was speaking of.

what I want us to see is that during this Kingdom, One like the Son of man is coming on clouds. And he is coming to the Ancient of Days.

When Jesus Came to the ancient of Days at His ascension. And in that coming He is given dominion, glory and a kingdom. And that Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and it will never be destroyed.

In referring to Jesus as the Alpha and Omega the Beginning and the End, the one who Was and Is and Is to Come, John is identifying Him as the Head of this Kingdom. He is the Almighty. He has all the power and rule. He has it now, and the acts that are to follow are the beginning acts of his reign. His dominion has begun.

Well there will be much more about this in later messages, but the context of these events is important. They give us a better understanding of everything that is soon to come. What Daniel see's as a dream of the future, John see's being ready to be fulfilled.

In John 1:9 he writes

*⁹ I, John, both your brother and companion **in the tribulation** and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

John, writing to the Churches identifies himself as their brother and companion in tribulation. He also tells them from where He is writing this letter. Patmos was a small, barren and volcanic Greek Island located in the Aegean Sea. According to Church tradition the reason the Apostle Paul was exiled here is because He would not stop preaching the Gospel. Tradition tells us that he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil to silence Him and when that did not harm him, he was instead banished to Patmos. There were no people of any significance on Patmos so He could not preach to anyone there so they figured they had handled this problem.

It is interesting that he identifies himself as their companion in tribulation. The Church at this time as very familiar with tribulation. And John was letting them know that He was in that tribulation as well. Matthew 24:9 Jesus tells His disciples that they would be delivered up to tribulation and they would be killed for His name sake. John is identifying the events that are going on as the fulfillment of these words of Our Lord.

Many of the big arguments that come up today among Christians is over the issue of will we go through the "future" great tribulation. Well, there are several problems with these arguments and I would like to list a couple of them. First off, the In Matthew 24:21 Jesus speaking about the coming judgment on first century Israel says:

...then there will be great tribulation, such as not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

We know this prophecy was fulfilled in the first century because Jesus very clearly said that all of those things mentioned in Matthew 24 would take place within that generation. He was not speaking of some future period known as "The Great Tribulation." He was speaking of the tribulation that was coming on the land of Israel and on Jerusalem because of their rejection of the Messiah.

Secondly, the idea that Christians are spared from tribulation because the Kingdom has come is not backed up by Scripture. In Acts 14:21-21 it says

²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

The Kingdom had come which was a big reason for the tribulation that the Christians were going through. In Revelation 12:10-11 we read

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they

overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

The Kingdom has come, and because of this the entire created order is in upheaval. The Kingdoms of this world are becoming the Kingdom of our Christ. This of necessity, according to the Word means that we will experience persecution and tribulation.

John tells us that He was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. This expression "In the Spirit" is used at other times in the Scripture, and it indicates that John was transcending normal human understanding. He was in the Spirit, in the same way as the prophet Ezekiel was in Ezekiel 2. Peter was in the Spirit in Acts 10 when he received His heavenly vision. The Apostle Paul spoke of a man in the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 12. But further than that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

The Lord's day is a phrase that speaks of the Christian Sabbath. It is a phrase that we even often use today, but there is also to be understood in this expression, the phrase "The Day of the Lord." The Day of the Lord is a term spoken of throughout Scripture as a time of God's judgment. This Day of the Lord also encompasses with it everything we do in our Covenant Renewal Service. We will see John called into the Lord's presence. In the presence of the risen Lord, he sees himself not worthy and falls at his feet as dead. But the Lord raises him, and then gives him His mighty and transforming word, and lifts him into heavenly places.

While in the Spirit John hears a voice as of a trumpet from behind Him. The voice announces Himself with the words:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and,^[1] “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia:^[2] to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

It is interesting that John identifies the true author of this Book before he draws attention to Himself. He identifies of course Jesus as the true author by giving Jesus's introductory words before announcing His part in the writing of this letter. He then goes on to describe what he see's when he turns around.

And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands. One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Here of course we actually see the risen Lord. He is standing among the seven golden lamp stands. And the description of the Lord as He stands there is nothing short of awesome. It is interesting, however, that He stands in the middle of seven separate and distinct golden lamp stands. In Exodus 25 when the decor of the tabernacle is being discussed, a central piece of furniture is the lamp stand. Beginning in verse 31 we read:

³¹ “You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers

shall be *of one piece*.³² And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.

The passage goes on, but what is being described here, is what we typically know of as a Menorah, in the holy place there was no window or place to allow light in. All of the light inside of the holy place came from the lamp stand. It is interesting that Jesus, who describes Himself as the light of the world, now is standing in the midst of these seven lamp stands. I think we should also take notice of the fact that rather than one lamp stand here, we see seven separate and distinct stands, and yet they are all over shadowed by the one standing in their midst.

He stands in the middle and the awesome description of Him is very similar language to the description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9-10

“I watched till thrones 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,
¹⁰ 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^[b] was seated,
And the books were opened.

When John hears and see's the risen Lord, He is left "as though dead." But what happens next is the Lord tells him

“Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

There is much discussion about the keys and what it means, but let me suggest, when Daniel 7:14 speaks

*¹⁴ 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.*

This theme which has been repeated no less than 5 times prior to this in the Book of Daniel this is what is being talked about. This coming of one like the Son of Man to the Ancient of Days is the Lord coming to His Father and this kingdom which is given to him, is that kingdom. And I want us to note carefully who the Kingdom is given to at the end of Daniel 7 in verse 27:

*²⁷ 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.’*

Our Lord has won a Kingdom, and he has won it for the Saints. Let us ever learn to live not only as subjects of our king, but as co-heirs of that Kingdom.