

Daniel 7:9–14 (ESV)

9 “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. 10 A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. 11 “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. 14 And 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 one that shall not be destroyed.

The importance of the Son of man

I thought we were done with our study of Daniel 7. Then I attended a meeting arranged by Wally Weeks, the pastor of Pleasant View. It was with Scott Callahan. He is a professor of Hebrew at the Institute of Public Theology. He was representing the Founders group who are a group of like minded people trying to bring churches back to taking the word of God accurately and seriously. Anyway he pointed out something about chapter 7 that I had missed in my study. Then Daniel Sisler pointed me to a book I had not known about. It is titled “With the clouds of Heaven” by James Hamilton. As a result, it challenged some of my views on Daniel. I would like to say it changed my views, but it is hard to change a position I have not arrived at yet.

I have determined that even retirement does not provide me with enough time to understand the book of Daniel. It has been a very frustrating process for me.

So let’s trudge forward and focus on the things that are most clear.

First, you can see on the slide this morning a Chiasm in the book of Daniel. This is not something that maybe you or I would spot. But a Hebrew scholar would. As you can see, a Chiasm builds to a point and then has a matching path back to the original point.

Let’s look at ours.

Daniel 1, exile

Daniel 2, statue: four kingdoms, everlasting dominion

Daniel 3, delivered from the fiery furnace

Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar humbled

Daniel 5, Belshazzar humbled

Daniel 6, delivered from the lions' den

Daniel 7–9, visions: four kingdoms, everlasting dominion

Daniel 10–12, return from exile

If this Chiasm was the intended meaning, we allow the Chiasm to direct our study. It actually **helps** our interpretation. It allows a mechanism in scripture to help us understand scripture, much like parallelism does for us. In parallelism the same thing is said two different ways. So we can know that the first is saying very much the same thing as the second. We cannot always tell that in English, but when we know parallelism is being employed, we then are given greater insight into the text. A Chiasm is like that.

The most important point we get is that we can expect **Daniel 2** and **Daniel 7-9** to be very similar. This helps us immensely. If we can assume that the 4 kingdoms in Daniel 2 are the same kingdoms as Daniel 7, we can now build on that and learn more about them from both passages. Plus we do not need to be as confused about what **they are**.

James Hamilton presents the prophecies in Daniel like this. They are all about the same 4 kingdoms. Some focus on all 4. Daniel **2, 7** and **11 through 12** deal with all 4 kingdoms. Chapter 8 only deals with 2. Mr. Hamilton takes great effort to show that there are a whole lot of similarities between the results of the third and fourth kingdoms.

Babylon is the first kingdom.

The Medes and Persians are the second

Greece is the third

And Rome is the fourth.

And depending upon how you see it, a revived Roman kingdom may be the 4th kingdom part 2.

Mr. Hamilton's point is that Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem, sacked the city, and sacrificed a pig on the temple alter. It was considered the **abomination of desolation**.

Then again in 70 AD Titus in the Roman Government sacked the city and destroyed the temple.

Mr. Hamilton says a pattern emerges-

The pattern of activity of the arch-enemy of God's people includes **vicious persecution, self-exaltation**, an attempt to **stamp out the worship of God**, and the **unexpected demise of the wicked king**, through which God's people are saved.

That happened with Nebuchadnezzar, and all the kings afterward. That is what we can expect.

Then there is also a pattern of the part the little horn plays in 2 kingdoms, 3 and 4. He says,

"The elements of this pattern are straightforward: (1) at the time of the end (2) a king of exaggerated wickedness arises (3) who attacks God's people and (4) tries to keep them from worshipping him, (5) setting up instead an abomination of desolation, (6) thereupon a horrible time of tribulation will continue for three-and-a-half years (7) before the wicked king meets sudden, irreversible destruction, (8) resulting in deliverance for the righteous. This is admittedly a composite of what Daniel describes, and more detail could no doubt be added to the pattern. "

I had some trouble figuring it out, but I think Mr. Hamilton is a Futurist, believing that the little horn in Daniel 7 will arise and carry out this pattern again at the last battle.

His arguments were compelling. As I studied what he said, I was thinking, "that's all I need. More compelling conflicting points of view."

But anyway, this may be helpful in our understanding of the kingdoms in Daniel. It takes away the need to make every kingdom that **SEEMS** the same need to **BE** the same. If the third kingdom desecrates the temple, that does not mean that the fourth kingdom cannot do the same thing. And if the fourth does it, maybe the revived fourth kingdom can do it again.

Anyway, I felt that I needed to bring this to your attention. Maybe I was also thinking that **misery loves company**.

Alright, now for the part of the study I really want to emphasize.

The son of man. This phrase is used 193 times. And most often it is used to describe mankind, humans.

[Num 23:19 ESV] 19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

We are to understand that God is not like men. Parallelism is used to say that God is not a man or a son of man. Clearly son of man is intended to mean a man. And God is not like a man.

Here again:

[Psa 8:3-6 ESV] 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

Notice here that David is amazed that God cares for mankind. He cares for the son of man, humans. And it is to **humans** that God gave dominion to man over the living creatures. He gave that to the son of man.

I found only one reference to a son of man in the Old Testament that was clearly anything different than a man. It is in our text this morning.

13 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

Now look at this closely. It is one **LIKE** a son of man. He is like a **man** in ways and He is like **God** in ways.

What a mystery that would have been. We see this Son of man elevated by the Ancient of Days. It is remarkable.

Now we jump to the New Testament.

The phrase Son of Man is used 115 times and **every time** it is Jesus referring to Himself.

Here are some examples.

"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the **Son of Man** has nowhere to lay his head."

The **Son of Man** came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

"For the **Son of Man** is lord of the Sabbath"

"For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the **Son of Man** be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

As time went on it was clearer and clearer that Jesus is talking about the **Daniel Son of Man**.

Matt 13:41 The **Son of Man** will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, 42 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

[Mat 16:28 ESV] 28 Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the **Son of Man** coming in his kingdom."

Every time Jesus refers to Himself as the **Son of Man**, he is referring to our text in Daniel 7. So that makes Daniel 7 a very very important text.

I never fully grasped the significance of that until the day I studied this. When Jesus spoke to Jews, they would have all had their minds drawn to **this mysterious figure** who had His **own thrown** with the Ancient of Days. He was granted authority and dominion. Every time Jesus said that phrase, Son of man, He was letting those around Him know that **He was that** God man.

Look at Matt 16

[Mat 16:13-19 ESV] 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

Now that looks like a theology question doesn't it. When you look at Daniel and see the Son of Man, who do people think that is?

14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Ok, so that is what they think about theology. That is how they understand Daniel's reference to the Son of Man. But Jesus goes on. I call **myself** the Son of Man. I am that guy. So he said this.

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

That is a different question I think. He is taking it out of the objective theology mode and putting it into a place of commitment, a place where they can't rest on someone else's opinion. Who do **you** think that **I**, the son of man really am?

16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter may not have understood the Daniel reference, but he could answer this question.

Wow. Peter did good this time. Jesus, while you may somehow be a man, you are not like every other Son of Man. Peter would have agreed that Jesus was like a Son of man in that He had a human body and dwelled in it with most of the

limitations. But His source was not man. His source was God. He was God in flesh. That is the mystery in Daniel solved.

Now what does Jesus think of that answer?

17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Knowing what we know of Peter it may have been a bit of **surprise** that **he got that right**. But he sure did. But he could not take credit for being **so smart**. He cheated. God gave Peter the answer. He could not have figured that one out. But there it is. The Son of Man in Daniel is God in the flesh. That is something I am sure Daniel would have loved to know.

Actually the best clue for that was in a Psalm.

[Psa 110:1-2 ESV] 1 A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." 2 The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!

I have read that this is the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament. I didn't check to make sure it was true. It was used in Matt 22:43-45, Acts 2:34-35, 1 Cor 15:25, Heb 1:13, and Heb 10:13.

These all describe the verse as an Old Testament passage proving that God is in at least two persons. Because both were greater than David. It also describes the reign of Christ.

In the Greek quoting of this verse it uses the same word for LORD. I think it is Kyrios. But in the Old Testament two words were used.

Jehovah is the first word for God. This is the Ancient of Days, God the father. The second is Adon which is similar to Adonai.

It is clearer in the Hebrew that we are speaking of two persons of God.

The picture is of God handing over the dominion of the nations and telling Christ to rule in it.

Then Jesus goes on.

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

It is on the **truth of the revelation that the Son of Man in Daniel is truly God in the flesh**, on **that** truth Christ will build His church. That is how important this revelation in Daniel 7 is. Jesus used it as a constant point to affirm **who He was to His people**.

Then think about the reference to Christ building His church. Who is that church? Where do they come from?

Daniel spills the beans. . **14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;**

Jesus is telling the disciples that the church is made of all peoples. He is letting his disciples know that Daniel was talking about the church.

Then Daniel says this

his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

So the Son of Man's Kingdom is an eternal kingdom that stretches across the globe. People are going to be coming to Christ from lands that these 12 disciples didn't even know existed. I seriously doubt that they knew about North America. They never heard of Maryland. But this kingdom is great. The Disciples would have known this prophecy. It would have been a puzzler growing up. Everyone had a theory. So they knew it.

I don't think we can grasp the significance of what Jesus says next to them. When we read it we don't read it with their eyes. They knew of this amazing King and amazing kingdom. But Jesus says this to them.

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

You guys are going to be in charge of the **Kingdom business**. You are going to be doing **important things** in this eternal dominion. It was given from the Ancient of Days to the Son of man, but these **mere humans** are going to play a significant part in it. Wow. I wonder if any of them got dizzy at this point.

Now next is the part that the Hebrew Scholar brought to my attention. I told him I was very embarrassed for missing it.

Let's look at Matt 28:18-20

[Mat 28:18-20 ESV] 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

I usually skip over verse 18, but now, after studying Daniel, it explodes with additional meaning. And again, the disciples would have not missed the reference. The Son of Man has been handed His authority in heaven and earth, just like Daniel said.

I assume this all happened once Jesus rose from the dead. This is prior to Jesus's ascension and He is speaking past tense. So I assume what we see in Daniel has just happened.

14 And 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 one that shall not be destroyed.

[Eph 1:20-23 ESV] gives more insight

20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

This is similar to what Daniel describes. And Ephesians tells us that it happened when God raised Christ from the dead. But there might be a little clue here. Where it says, not only in this age but also in the one to come. One is prior to the final judgment. The other is past the final judgment.

So is Daniel describing something **prior** to the final judgment when he speaks of the Son of Man taking His seat on the throne? Or is the Ancient of Days judging the nations **prior** to the final judgment in vs 9 and 10? And then the Son of Man scene comes after it. The more I look at it, I do not think that the Ancient of days is performing the final judgment in vs 9 and 10, but that opinion could change tomorrow.

Well, you didn't think we would solve **all** the mysteries this morning did you?

But the big point here is just how significant **our text is** to the **New Testament**.

Every time Jesus referred to Himself as the **Son of Man**, He was referring to Daniel 7. When Jesus used that name, He was referring to His dual status. Fully God and Fully Man. And He was claiming his **right** to be given His Father's kingdom forever and ever. Even when Jesus passed on the great commission to us, He was referring **back** to the heavenly scene that **Daniel** passed on to us. Now Jesus **HAS** all that authority over the kingdom of His church, as prophesied in Daniel 7.

Before Jesus was crucified He said this to His disciples.

[Jhn 16:31-33 ESV] 31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Isn't that really our hope? The beasts are still beasting. The chaotic world winds are still blowing. Stuff keeps coming out of the sea of rebellion against God. But Christ has overcome the world, and **it is only a matter of time. It is only a matter of time.** Our **victory** is as certain as our **existence** if we are **in Christ**.

in Christ we may have peace. In the world we will have tribulation. But we must take heart; Christ has overcome the world. It just doesn't look that way yet. He ain't done yet.