

“WALKING IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANTICHRIST”

The Coronation of the True King” (Daniel 7:9-28)

Daniel’s vision will take a very different trajectory. Instead of the beasts of man’s empires, his eyes are elevated to the glory of God’s throne. The great theme of Daniel 7 is not the reign of Antichrist but the coronation and reign of the True Christ.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (v9-10)

The vision sees the “Ancient of days” sitting on a throne surrounded by an innumerable company of angels. This term simply means “old in age” or “the old one” and is one that reflects the eternity of God. Most commentators believe this describes God the Father. He transcends time because He created time. As the Psalmist put it, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God” (Psa. 90:2) and “the LORD sitteth King for ever.” (Psa. 29:10)

The vivid images used to represent the Ancient of Days here - “garment was white as snow” and “the hair of His head like the pure wool” - are symbols of His purity and eternity. The “fiery flame” and “burning fire” are intended to reflect the fierce heat of His judgment, “For our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29; cf. Isa. 66:15) John Calvin rightly observed, “We ought not to imagine God in his essence to be like any appearance to his own Prophet and other holy fathers, but He put on various appearances, according to man’s comprehension, to whom He wished to give some signs of his presence.”

The term “the books were opened” in Daniel 7:10 likely refers to the judgment of the Antichrist and the False Prophet only. Hence this is a different moment to that described in Revelation 20 after the end of the Millennium a thousand years later, which is known as the Great White Throne Judgment (cf. Rev. 20:12). God keeps books on everybody!

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. (v11-12)

The vision then deals with the destruction of the little horn Antichrist. The little horn with the big mouth will finally be shut up forever, “I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.” We get a further insight into this in the Book of Revelation. It reveals that the Antichrist and the False Prophet are destroyed together at the time of the Battle of Armageddon, “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” (Rev. 19:20) Paul speaks of it to the Thessalonians, “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thess. 2:8) The destruction of the Antichrist and his kingdom is the end of the kingdoms of man. This corresponds directly to the smashing of the image in Daniel 2 by means of the great Stone from heaven.

This expression, “*As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time*” is somewhat enigmatic. We do know that the characteristics of these first three beasts are found in the final Antichrist kingdom that emerges from the fourth beast. Additionally we are told that there will be a rebellion at the end of the Millennium when the devil is released, “*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*” (Rev. 20:7-9) So this prolonging may simply mean that the spirit or attributes of these Gentile empires remains on the earth until this final destruction of all of man’s rebellion at the end of the Millennium. Christ has to rule with a rod of iron because there are clearly imperfect people still on the planet.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (v13-14)

The destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist by the coming of Jesus Christ, leads to the coronation of the true King called here “*the Son of man*” by the Father who is described as “*the Ancient of days*.” It is no coincidence that the Lord Jesus Christ described Himself more often as “*the Son of man*” (almost 90 times) than any other title in the Four Gospel accounts. In doing so He directly linked His person on earth at that time to this Daniel 7 prophecy of His future coronation in the Second Coming in judgment, “*Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*” (Matt 26:64b) So the title “*the Son of man*” speaks of His humanity as the Incarnated Son of Man was fully man but also speaks of His divinity that He was the Messiah for we read, “*all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion.*”

This is the greatest moment in world history. The Perfect Man is reigning in truth and righteousness on the earth, “*Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.*” (Isaiah 9:7a) The parallel with the vision in Revelation should not be missed as John sees the same future coronation,

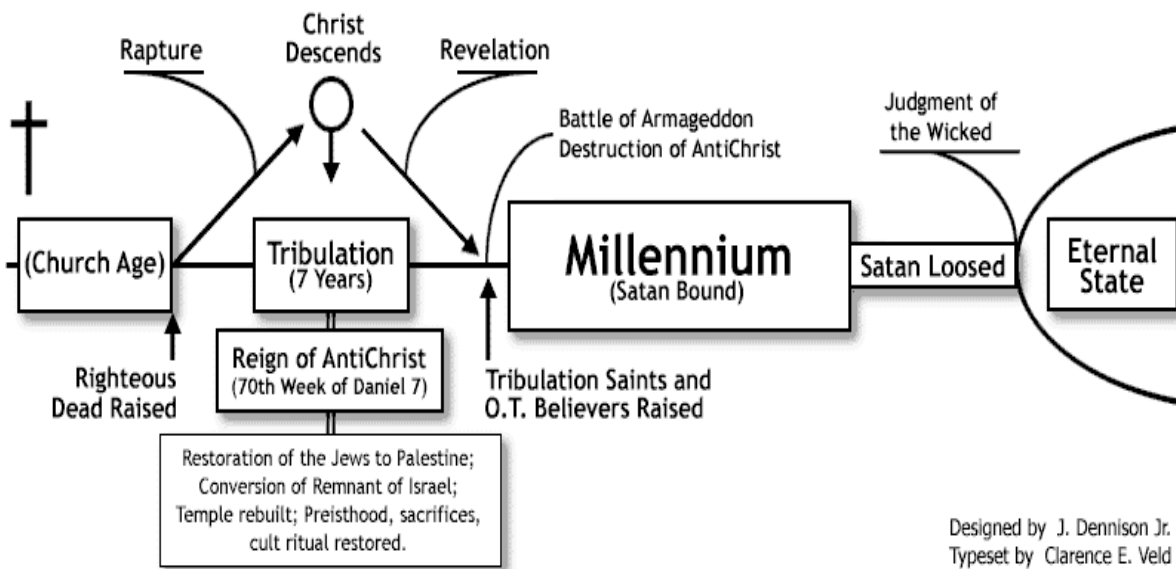
And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Rev. 5:11-13)

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. 11:15)

This will not be a democracy but an absolute monarchy. He will right every wrong. All the voices of opposition will be silenced as He rules with a rod of iron. Christ reigns supreme for the next 1,000 years as Satan is bound. The curse will be partially lifted from of the earth during the millennium, as even the barren deserts will bloom again. Eventually the millennium gives way to the eternal golden age when Christ’s kingdom is established forever in the new heaven and the new earth. The curse that was partially lifted in the millennium will be completely and forever removed then. So although Christ’s kingdom is an eternal Kingdom, it has a millennial phase. Michael Barrett notes the link between Adam and Christ in this,

The perfect Man regains everything that the first man lost. Daniel...sees dominion returned to man, an arrangement that fulfills God’s purpose. As the Curse-Reverser, Christ reverses every part of the curse; He regains all that was lost because of sin. This restoration is another reason I believe that an earthly kingdom must occur.

So Daniel 7 is a panoramic sweep of all human history from the days of Daniel, through the Great Tribulation Period, to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ receives and establishes His own eternal and indestructible Kingdom.



I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.
(v15-18)

This vision disturbed Daniel. He was living on the brink of the Medo-Persian Empire taking over but this vision had some amazing and frightening details about the next 2,500 years. It raised more questions than it answered. So Daniel sought help, “I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this.” He was told that these four beasts represent four kings with kingdoms. This was a frightening prospect to anticipate these empires arising. However, Daniel was quickly counseled that he must not despair as the last chapter of history is one in which God and His people are victorious, “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and

possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” It’s the bad news first and then the good news! The worst kingdom will eventually give way to the best one.

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (v19-25)

The final Antichrist kingdom was the one that clearly perturbed Daniel the most. He sought further clarification on it in v19-22 from presumably an angel. This clarification was forthcoming in v23-26. A number of new details are revealed about the Antichrist:

(1) **Human Personality** – *“that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.”* The beast and the little horn are symbols of a human personality. The Antichrist is clearly a man with tremendous intelligence and persuasive with words. He is a man of significant power and influence who will eventually persuade the world to worship him. The little horn will now become a big one! One of the things he will speak on is to attack God, *“And he shall speak great words against the most High.”* This involves blasphemy in his words, *“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”* (Rev. 13:5-6) and in his deeds, *“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”* (2 Thess. 2:4)

(2) **Reign of Terror** – *“and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.... and shall wear out the saints of the most High.”* The Antichrist will eventually launch a full frontal attack on the saints of God. This will be very evident in the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation Period (42 months), which is expressed here as *“and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time”* (“a time” = 1, “and times” = 2, “and the dividing of time” = 0.5 totaling 3.5 years). Revelation 13 puts it in an easier form to understand, *“and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”* (Rev. 13:5b) The Antichrist’s kingdom will be a very short-lived and unstable one – this corresponds to the symbol of the mixture of iron and clay in the Great image on Daniel 2, which indicates strength and fragility combined. This relatively short period is necessary to limit the destructive power of the Antichrist or none would survive, *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”* (Matt. 24:21-22)

The Antichrist will not only *“wear out the saints”* but also, *“and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”* (Rev. 13:7b) Many will be physically persecuted to the point of despair by protracted persecution, and some will even die in his reign of terror,

“He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” (Rev. 13:10) Those who will not worship him will die, *“and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”* (Rev. 13:15b)

This ordeal will result in a second and greater holocaust for the Jews as two thirds of them will die, *“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will bear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”* (Zech. 13:8-9) This is a period Isaiah referred to as one when God *“washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.”* (Isaiah 4:4) and Jeremiah called it, *“Jacob’s trouble.”* (Jer. 30:7)

What we see today with the persecution of Christians in places like the USA for refusing to support evil like gay marriage and the murderous savagery of groups like ISIS is a foretaste of this coming reign of terror against believers under the Antichrist. This persecution will not be limited to a few corners of the planet but the whole earth as *“power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.”* Like the iron beast of the old Roman Empire the Antichrist will strive to ruthlessly crush all opposition to his rule.

(3) Radical Changes to Society – *“and think to change times and laws.”* It’s not clear what exactly this expression means. We do know that the Antichrist will initially reinstate the Jewish ceremonial laws before breaking them in the midst of the Great Tribulation Period and demanding that the Jews worship him as God. He is also described as *“that man of sin... the son of perdition”* and *“that Wicked”* in 2 Thessalonians 2. So he will clearly seek to overturn God’s moral laws in his reign. The Antichrist will insist that good is evil and that evil is good in the spirit of the old serpent who sought to invert God’s warnings of, *“Thou shalt surely die”* (Gen. 2:17) to *“Ye shall not surely die.”* (Gen 3:4b)

Another area linked to these radical changes will be in the economic sphere, *“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”* (Rev. 13:16-17) We see a foretaste of this today with Multi-National Corporations threatening towns and cities and even nations that they will not trade with them unless they embrace their so-called “equality and diversity” values such as gay rights. The Antichrist will use guile and intimidation to force all people to take this mark in order to survive the famines and droughts during the chaos of the Tribulation period. This is the final phase of persecution of God’s people on earth before Christ returns.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart. (v26-28)

This expression *“shall serve and obey Him”* is a universal promise, which is not limited to the Jews. Michael Barrett notes “Although Daniel certainly applied the benefits of the coming kingdom to His people Israel, it is a serious and tragic mistake to limit the millennial kingdom to Israel, in terms of geography or religion. Israel has a special place, and Jerusalem will indeed be the capital

of the world...the religion of the kingdom is not restored Judaism, but ideal Christianity – the only way men can truly serve and obey Him (7:27).

We must not overlook the important point of this whole chapter. The kingdoms of the Gentiles and especially the kingdom of the Antichrist are permitted and limited by a sovereign God. All are under His control and all will ultimately be destroyed. The only one that remains is the eternal kingdom of Christ. Daniel is troubled as he surveys the dark days ahead and we should not simply dismiss them also. The worst is yet to come. The pre-Flood days of Genesis 6 are coming back again with widespread bloodshed, religious persecution, chaos, and gross immorality.

We are on the brink of an unprecedented time of trouble in the world. Human history will come to a terrible climax in the future reign of the Antichrist. It will seem that the devil and his Antichrist will have won it all and that God has been defeated. This will be especially so during the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation Period. But history doesn't end there. God is not in the least bit intimidated or confused as to what is going on, “

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. (Psa. 2:1-4)

The hope of Christ's coming is the light that brightens the darkness ahead. The true King is coming and He will reign with His saints forever and forever! This is when Psalm 2:8 is fulfilled when the Son asks and receives from the Father His inheritance, “*Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.*” This is the best news of all from Daniel 7. Those who are standing on the stone that smashes into the image are on the winning side, “*Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.* (Psa. 2:12)

The world is in chaos today. Many are looking for a leader that can solve the Middle East crisis between the Jews and the Arabs and for a man who can bring prosperity and stability to the turbulent world economy. The Antichrist will promise to deliver all of these. He will seemingly be able to square the circle! The world will be attracted to his charisma and intelligence, convinced by his amazing signs, seduced by his promises to bring peace and prosperity, to the point that they will worship him. But even when the devil's power on earth is at its greatest, God's power is greater still. Christ will “de-horn” the little horn with the big mouth and all his wicked followers! When the Saviour intervenes the Antichrist's power melts away. As one writer said, “All the threads of history lead to the throne room of God.” This reality of a sovereign God in control of all history and circumstances is something we need to continually remind ourselves even in the midst of our own dark days and the crisis of life. We must sing every moment of every day, “*Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*” (Rev. 19:6)