

Daniel 7:15-28 (Part III)

Introduction

On this Easter Sunday morning, I'll start with a question: What does Daniel chapter seven have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ? And can you already guess what the answer is? The truth is that this particular message on this particular chapter in Daniel couldn't possibly have fallen on a better day than this one.

I. Is something out of order in Daniel 7?

We've seen a lot so far in Daniel seven: A raging cosmic sea; *then* four great beasts coming up from out of that sea; *then* the Ancient of Days and the final judgment; and *then* one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven and receiving an *everlasting* kingdom. Do you notice anything out of order in these verses? **In verses 9-12** it seems that we have the final judgment when the Ancient of days takes His seat and the books are opened and the beast is killed (or the beasts are killed; cf. v. 12) and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. **And then** *after* that we see one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven and being presented before the Ancient of Days and receiving everlasting dominion and glory and a kingdom. So does this mean that the Ancient of Days judges the beast all "alone"—*all by Himself—after which* He gives the kingdom to the Son of Man who until then was just waiting somewhere in the wings? That's not the picture we see in the New Testament, is it? In the New Testament, God judges the world only in and through and by His Son, Jesus Christ – who is also the Son of Man. Jesus said:

- John 5:22, 27 — The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son... he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

The Apostle Paul proclaims:

- Acts 17:31 (cf. Mat. 16:27; Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:1) — [God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

And then what do we see in the book of Revelation? We first see Jesus coming on a white horse as the "King of kings and Lord of lords" and only then is the beast captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur (Rev. 19:11-21). In the New Testament, it's very clear that the Ancient of Days judges and destroys the beast through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the final Judge of all.

So looking back on Daniel seven from our vantage point we find ourselves asking a question: Where was the Son of Man when the Ancient of Days took His seat and judged the beast? And what *right* would He have, anyway, to execute judgment if he has not yet come to the Ancient of Days and been presented before him, and received dominion and glory and a kingdom? That's not just an academic question. This is a question upon which hangs our very hope of salvation. So let's go ahead and read, now, in Daniel 7, verses 13 & 14:

II. Daniel 7:13–14 — 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. 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.

What is it that Daniel sees – and that we’re seeing with him? What is it that’s really happening here? Notice the formal sounding language: The one like a son of man is “presented” before the Ancient of Days; and then see how upon this presentation He is “given”—or He receives— dominion and glory and a kingdom. Can you see what this is? Here’s a scene of royal investiture – of formally investing this one like a son of man with all the rights and all the power and all the authority of kingship. Merriam-Webster tells us that “in its original meaning, an *investiture* was the clothing of a new officeholder in garments that symbolized power.” That’s certainly an appropriate picture of what’s happening here.

We can have the tendency to read quickly through these verses, but we need to slow down for a moment and really take the time to witness and see what Daniel’s seeing. This is a royal coronation scene – it’s the enthronement and the installation of a new king. And this isn’t just any king, is it? This *king* is one who comes to the Ancient of Days with the clouds of heaven. This *king* is one whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. This is a king *not like* any other we’ve ever known—the King of kings and Lord of lords; and yet at the same time this is a King who’s still like us – like a son of man. And already, do we feel the necessity—and also the need and the desire—to bow down before Him?

III. The Coronation of David’s Son

We can’t really understand this coronation scene without remembering God’s covenant with David.

- 1 Chronicles 17:11–14 — When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, **and I will establish his throne forever**. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but **I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.**”

We know that these promises were partly fulfilled in David’s son, Solomon, who ruled on the throne after David and who did build God a “house” in Jerusalem. But it was obvious even to David that these promises could be fully fulfilled only in a son far greater than Solomon. Solomon would grow old and die and his body return to the dust, but this ultimate son of David would be established on his throne forever. What kind of man—what “son of David”— could this be who would build God an indestructible house and even possess an indestructible life so that he would live and reign forever?

IV. A Psalm for the Coronation of David's Son (Psalm 2)

Psalm 2 is a coronation psalm; so it could have been used at the coronation of any one of David's sons who sat on the throne after him. And yet as we're about to see, it was always obvious that the words of Psalm 2 could only be *fully* fulfilled in the coronation and enthronement of a greater son of David still to come. Now, if this "one like a son of man" here in Daniel 7 *is* this future Son of David who lives and reigns forever, can you see that Psalm 2 is really the inspired "commentary" on this heavenly coronation scene in Daniel's vision? With that in mind, then, let's read Psalm chapter two.

- Psalm 2:1-3 — Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD [the Ancient of Days] and against his Anointed [the one like a son of man], saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."

Can you hear these words being spoken on the occasion of the enthronement of our Lord, Jesus Christ? And can you recognize in these verses the raging sea and the beasts that come up from out of the sea? And what is God's answer to the beasts and to the raging sea?

- Psalm 2:4-6 — He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

When the Son of Man is presented before the Ancient of Days and invested with royal power and authority, this *is* God's answer to the raging sea and the beasts that rise from out of the sea. And so now we can hear in the words of Psalm 2 the words of the Son of Man Himself at His coronation in Daniel 7:

- Psalm 2:7-9 — I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you [today I have installed you as king]. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

This is what's happening right here in Daniel 7. Daniel is seeing this coronation and enthronement of David's greater son being enacted right before his eyes. And by faith we, too, can see this with him, *today*. In fact, we can see this today far more clearly and in far more vivid colors than Daniel ever could.

What is it that the Son of Man receives authority to do after He's been presented before the Ancient of Days? He receives authority to rule and reign, and to execute the *judgments* of God upon the beast and upon all who rebel against His rule. Remember what this Son of Man says at His coronation: "The LORD said to me, '...**Ask of me**, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. **You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.**'"

V. A Psalm for the Coronation of David's Son (Psalm 110)

Psalm 110 is another psalm of coronation. By faith, David could see—in light of God's covenant promises—that one of his own offspring would one day be his Lord. And so it was by faith that David could write ahead of time this inspired account of the coronation and enthronement of his future, greater son.

- Psalm 110:1 — The LORD [YAHWEH] says to my Lord [my future, greater son]: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

This is what Daniel actually *sees* happening here in Daniel 7. When David envisions his greater son sitting at God's right hand he envisions Him sitting *enthroned* in Zion – ruling and reigning, and executing the judgements of God (cf. Rev. 1:5). So we read in verse 2:

- Psalm 110:2, 5–6 — The LORD [YAHWEH] sends forth from Zion *your mighty scepter. Rule* in the midst of your enemies! ... The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

Do you see how God is executing *His* rule and *His* judgments only *in* and *through* the one like a Son of Man – the one who is David's greater son? And so the Psalm ends with these words:

- Psalm 110:7 — He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

This is a picture of refreshment after a great victory in battle. And so what we see in this image is the ultimate triumph of the one like a son of man, of David's greater son, of Jesus Christ our Lord.

VI. Is something out of order in Daniel 7?

Returning, now, to Daniel chapter seven: In light of the clear teaching of both the Old and New Testaments, when the Son of Man is presented before the Ancient of Days, what does he receive authority to *do*? He receives authority to rule, and wage war, and to execute the righteous judgments of God upon the beast. And now do you see how we're confronted once again with a riddle? In Daniel's vision, he doesn't actually *see* the Son of Man invested with the authority to judge—he doesn't actually *see* the Son of Man *at all*—until after the beast has already been destroyed. So what is the answer to this riddle?

VII. The riddle of Daniel 7 solved in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Listen carefully, now, to this: The order in which Daniel *sees* things, and the order in which the various scenes of the vision pass across the stage before his eyes, is not *necessarily* the precise order in which they historically take place. Daniel never says that the Son of Man will only receive the authority to rule and reign *after* the Ancient of Days has already judged the beast. Daniel only says that *in his vision*, this *scene* of enthronement followed after the *scene* of judgment. So the question we ask, then, is, “What is the *relationship* between these two scenes?”

We know from the clear teaching of both the Old and New Testaments that even though the enthronement *scene* follows *after* the judgment *scene* in Daniel's *vision*, in the actual historical order, it is the Son of Man—*already* sitting on His throne—who executes the judgments of God upon the beast. So why, then, is the enthronement scene separated out from the judgment scene and placed *after*? The answer is simple: Because what's ultimately being pictured here is the *consummation* of Christ's rule and reign, the *conclusion* of the battle that He has waged as the warrior King, and the ultimate fruits of His triumph over the beast (cf. Rev. 11:15-18). And yet we know that all of these things had their beginnings, and were even effectively accomplished *before* the final judgment ever happened – on that day when David's greater Son *came with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days* and was invested with all authority in heaven and on earth and granted the right to sit enthroned, and to rule and reign forever at God's own right hand. And brothers and sisters! When does this happen? Is this coronation and enthronement of the Son of Man still in the future for us even as it was still in the future for Daniel? It's not! Indeed, this is what *this* day—this is what *this* Resurrection Sunday—is all about. The *future* is *here*—“*already*.” Have you tasted it? Are you living in that future that's already here? That future, climactic Day of the Lord for which we're all still waiting (Mat. 24:27, 30; 25:31) has already—in a most powerful and awesome way—already come in the resurrection, and ascension, and enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of God (cf. Acts 7:55-56; Mat. 10:23; 16:27–28; 26:64). So listen to these words of the Apostle Paul as he quotes from Psalm 2, the psalm of coronation:

- Acts 13:32–33 — We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children *by raising Jesus*, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, *today* [on this day of your enthronement and coronation; on this day of resurrection—*today*] I have begotten you.”

And now listen to what the writer of Hebrews says:

- Hebrews 1:3b–5 (cf. 5:5) — After making purification for sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, *today* [on this day of your ascension into heaven; on this day of your enthronement and coronation at my right hand—*today*] I have begotten you”?
- Cf. Mat. 28:18; Acts 5:30–31; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:22-26, 51-54; Eph. 1: 19–22; 4:7–10; Phil. 2:9–11; Col. 3:1–4; Heb. 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 1:12-18

And now listen to the Apostle Peter as he quotes from that second coronation psalm, Psalm 110.

- Acts 2:29–36 (cf. Heb. 1:13) — Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being *therefore* exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he

himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand [rule and reign], until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

VIII. The future is here already

Last week we saw how in Daniel chapter seven, the present extends into the future (the time, times, and half a time). Now, are you also seeing in Daniel chapter seven how the future has already reached into the present? The writer of Hebrews speaks of those who have “tasted [even *now*]... the powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:5). And according to the Apostle Peter, we have tasted of these powers through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us and who was poured out on the day of Pentecost by the Son of David, sitting enthroned at God’s right hand (Acts 2:29-36; cf. Rom. 14:17).

In the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the beast has already been judged and its body already “given over” to be burned with fire. That future, climactic Day of Judgment for which we’re all still waiting is, very powerfully, already here. So we read in the Bible passages like these:

- John 16:8–11 — When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ...concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.
- Luke 10:17–19 (cf. Mat. 12:26-29; Heb. 2:14) — [Jesus] said to [his disciples]... “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions [not literal serpents and scorpions], and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.”
- John 12:31–32 — *Now* is the judgment of this world; *now* will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth [in the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension], will draw all people to myself.”
- Colossians 2:13–15 — You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Are you seeing all the wonderful ways in which we’ve actually tasted the power of that future, final judgment of the beast already, *today*? In the book of Revelation, we see the judgment of the beast already accomplished in the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Christ described in the pictures of an apocalyptic vision.

- Revelation 12:5, 7–10 — [A woman (Israel)] gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne... Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels

were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “*Now* the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.”

In the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, not only has the beast already been judged, but the saints—that’s you and me—have already received the kingdom. That future, climactic Day of our final inheritance for which we’re all still eagerly waiting (cf. Rom. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:9–10; 22:5) is, very powerfully, already here. So we read in the Bible passages like these:

- Ephesians 2:4–6 (cf. Col. 3:1–4) — But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*
- Revelation 1:6 (cf. 5:9–10; Col. 1:13) — [Christ has] made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father.
- 1 Peter 2:9 — You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Indeed, the Bible also teaches that our brothers and sisters and loved ones who have already died and gone to be with Christ are even now, in some wonderful way, sharing with Him in His present rule over all the kingdoms and nations of this world. The Apostle John says that Jesus is “the firstborn of the dead [resurrection], and the ruler of kings on earth [ascension]” (Rev. 1:5). And then Jesus Himself says to all of us:

- Revelation 3:21 (cf. 2:26–27; 20:4, 6) — The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down [past tense] with my Father on his throne.

Conclusion

So, brothers and sisters, when we read in Daniel chapter seven about the Ancient of Days taking His seat, and the court sitting in judgment, and the beast being killed, and the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven and being presented before the Ancient of Days, and the saints receiving the kingdom and possessing the kingdom forever, what do we see today? We see that for those of us “on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11), all of these climactic, future, end time realities are effectively and powerfully already here. They have already been—and are even now *being*—fulfilled in the death and resurrection and the coronation and enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ. We who have been raised up with Christ and who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit have actually tasted these “powers” of the age to come – *today*.

Last week we saw how in Daniel chapter seven, the present extends into the future (the time, times, and half a time). Today, we see how in the fulfillment of Daniel chapter seven the future is already here in the present. And so I ask again: Have you tasted of this glorious future by faith? Are you living each day in the power of this future that’s already here and that’s already come in

power in the resurrection, and ascension, and enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ? If there's one thing we learn from the resurrection, it's that as Christians we are not defeatists or pessimists. Even in tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword—even in all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ, who loved us (Rom. 8:35-37). The beast is judged, the kingdom is our present possession, and we live, now, in confident expectation and joyful hope.

- Colossians 3:1-4 — If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.