

Daniel
The King Of Beasts (Part 3)
Daniel 7
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Well it is my joy tonight for us to return to our study of the book of Daniel. Such a profound book that takes us to the very heart of human history and God's sovereignty over all of the events that unfold, over all of the kings of history over all of the nations, all of the empires and every individual life. It's fair to say that the chapter we come to tonight we've actually have already begun to study before we began the summer. This chapter, Daniel 7, is the very heart of Daniels prophecy and it's fair to say that it is the most important chapter in the entire book of Daniel. In fact it's one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. And that's true because it provides one of the clearest overviews of human history. As Daniel unfolds the theme of his book, God's sovereignty over history, he included two chapters that are parallel, essentially identical in the truth that they communicate chapters 2 and 7. Both of them describe a series of four successive kingdoms that will dominate the history of the Mediterranean world of the history of God's people and therefore in the mind of God the history of the world as a whole. Daniel 2 gives us a glimpse of that human history from man's perspective with all of its glitter and all of its precious metals the image of Daniel in Daniel 2 shows us how man thinks about the great empires of human history. Daniel chapter 7 with its horrific destructive beasts shows us how God thinks of the empires of human history and the product of their reigns over the lives of its people.

Now since we've studied Daniel 7, the first half of Daniel 7 over three months ago, I want to review a little more in detail than I usually would what we have already learned in Daniel 7 just so we can get up to the speed, for those of you who were here and for those of you who weren't you have some context for where we start in the middle of the chapter tonight. So, let's just retrace a little bit of the steps that we've seen so far. This chapter begins with the vision of four beasts, in verse's 1 to 14. Verse 1 gives you the vision setting, notice Daniel 7 verse 1, "in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon." You remember that Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, the wicked king of Daniel 5 who saw the kingdom of Babylon come to an end with his reign. So it's that kind of time. It's during the first year of Belshazzar;

you can only imagine how unsettling that time was in the history of Babylon and in the history of God's people in Babylon. These were tumultuous, difficult times as Nebuchadnezzar's reign had come to an end. The man that I believe God had saved and that we will see in heaven, he dies and passes from the scene. His son Nabonidus takes over but Nabonidus is largely an absent king, an archeologist who spends his time largely away from the kingdom and he puts on the throne Belshazzar, a wicked godless man who we've seen his life unfold before us in chapter 5, you can only imagine what it was like to live in such times. I think they were times very much like ours. You know I have been alive long enough, I grew up in the sixties. And those were tumultuous times; those of you who lived in those times understand that. And I feel like today we are in a similar kind of time in world history. One of the most tumultuous times since those days. It was a time like that when Daniel had this vision. Verse 1 says, "Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed;" he was asleep, had a dream. And in the dream he had visions, verse 1 goes on to say, "then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it." This vision consisted of four beasts in verse's 2 through 8, we see those four beasts unfolded. Each of the four represent a great empire or kingdom. I'm not going to take you back through all the details of what we learned, this is a summary. The first beast represented Babylon. Notice verse 4, "the first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until his wings were plucked," this is Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation, "and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man;" this is his being raised again back to sanity. "a human mind also was given to it." So there's Babylon.

The second beast is in verse 5, it's Medo-Persia. "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side," showing the strength of the Persians over the Medians, "and three ribs were in its mouth" probably three nations that it had conquered, "between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'" In verse 6 we meet the third beast which is Greece. "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard," picturing the speed with which Alexander the Great conquered. And if a leopard isn't fast enough this leopard "had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads," symbolizing the four leaders who took over after the death of Alexander the Great, "and dominion was given to it." God gave Alexander the capacity and the power to take all that he

took, for God's own purposes, ultimately for the spread of the gospel and for the language in which the New Testament would be written.

The fourth beast is Rome in verse's 7 and 8. Since this fourth kingdom follows Greece, it's clear that Daniel was describing the Roman Empire. Notice verse 7, "it's dreadful, terrifying, and extremely strong. With its large iron teeth it consumed everything in its path." It devoured, completely consumed other nations, it crushed, it shattered it broke in pieces and whatever was left, verse 7 says "it trampled down with its feet." This kingdom was unlike all that went before it because it was more powerful, more terrifying, more destructive, more widespread and verse 7 says it had ten horns. We'll see tonight the ten horns here in verse 7 are identified in verse 24 as ten kings. So ten kings will arise out of this fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, and will have some connection to it.

Now this fourth beast, with its ten horns or ten kings fascinated Daniel. Verse 8 says, "While I was contemplating the horns, behold another horn, a little one came up among them," This is a ruler and as we learned last time and I'm not going to go through all of the arguments that I laid out for you, but this man will arise in the future, this man this little horn will arise at some point in the future. We know that because the federation of nations, or kingdoms that he oversees, the empire he controls will be destroyed only by the return of Jesus Christ, when He established His kingdom. So this little horn then is none other than the antichrist, a powerful political world ruler that will arise during the great tribulation. Daniel's vision then having given us these four great world empires gives us one of the most famous and important passages in the Old Testament because after these four great kingdoms represented by four beasts, we meet the Ancient of Days in verse's 9 through 12. With verse 9, the scene switches to heaven, "I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat;" This pictures God exercising His divine prerogative to sit on His throne as the judge of the universe. When this little horn, the antichrist is in power, God holds session in the court of heaven. In verse's 9 and 10, Daniel provides us with a vivid description of image of God that was in his vision, notice he says, "His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool." Representing His wisdom and His

purity. “His throne was ablaze with flames,” representing fire is commonly representing judgment when it’s connected to God. And God had a throne that moved, that was on wheels. That was often true in the ancient near east and it was to picture a king whose empire was so vast his throne had to move. God’s throne must be in perpetual motion because it rules over all things. Verse 10 says, “A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him;” again picturing the judgment that’s about to unfold from the throne of God onto the antichrist and all of the enemies of God.

As the scene continues to unfold in the middle of verse 9 the lens widens, I’m sorry the middle of verse 10 the lens widens to take in the full sweep of the majesty of the Ancient of Days and we’re told that He is surrounded by notice what it says, “thousands upon thousands, and myriads upon myriads.” I made the point that the words that are used here are the highest number available in Aramaic, ten thousand time ten thousand and then there were more, that means there were a hundred million of these angels and still more. Then having taken His throne, the Ancient of Days does they opened the books, the books of human records, they examine the record of the fourth beast, the fourth empire and of its wicked ruler, the little horn the antichrist, and discover that he deserves death. And the sentence is passed, notice verse 11, “Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. And as for the rest of the beasts,” the rest of the human empires, “their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.” In other words as these successive kingdoms disappeared they still continued to exist in the next one, absorbed by the following kingdom until they come to an end, crashing end with the fourth one. God’s judgment comes suddenly, it comes decisively, the beast was slain and the entire empire and its blasphemous king are destroyed together.

That’s the vision of the Ancient of Days, that’s followed by a vision of the Son of Man. The vision of the Son of Man in verses 13 and 14. As Daniel watched in awe another person suddenly arrives on the scene in the throne room of the Ancient of Days, just as the Ancient of

Days declares that the antichrist should be destroyed and he is slain, another person arrives. Verse 13, “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.” He’s called One like a Son of Man. Last time we studied Daniel 7 together I gave you five reasons this can only be the divine Messiah and our Lord Himself claimed even at His trial in front of the Jewish Sanhedrin to be this divine figure in Daniel 7 and it was because of that the Sanhedrin condemned Him to death. They knew He was claiming to be this divine Messiah, the Son of the living God. In fact Jesus told the Sanhedrin this passage would be fulfilled in Him, in Mark 14 He tells them that, ‘And he told them there was a time coming when they would see Him again not as a prisoner in their court but as a judge in His court.’ That’s what He said. The Son of Man the divine Messiah will receive His Fathers gift; universal sovereignty and an eternal kingdom, notice verse 14, “And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” Now that’s the vision of the four beasts. But more importantly notice that that vision introduces us to the One I have affectionately referred to as the King of the beasts, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. At the epicenter of human history is this One like a Son of Man, the divine Messiah who is none other than Jesus Christ our Lord by His own claim. And He receives an eternal kingdom.

Now that brings us having seen the vision of the four beasts that brings us tonight to the interpretation of the vision. Beginning in verse 15 and down through verse 28 we have the interpretation. This is new territory that we haven’t covered together, so now I’ll slow down a little bit and we’ll work our way through and some of the details that are in the first half of the chapter in the vision will be unpacked and unfolded even in the second half as we see its interpretation. If you missed the first half you can go and catch up with us after the fact tonight, or sometime this week. But let’s look at the interpretation of the vision.

First of all before Daniel gives us the interpretation itself he first identifies the heavenly source in verses 15 and 16. Notice verse 15, “As for me Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and

the visions in my mind kept alarming me.” Having shared the vision in the first half of the chapter Daniel now comes back to himself and to his own response to it. Although clearly he doesn’t yet grasp the entirety of its meaning that’s why he has to ask for it to be interpreted for him. He did I think understand what seems to be clear that it represents the rise and fall of empires and the accompanying chaos for the people of the world and that included chaos for the people of God. And as a result of seeing that and thinking about that and seeing these characters that would rise, these empires that would rise and individuals who would persecute the people of God, it says as a result, ‘his spirit was distressed.’ The Aramaic expression here is a very interesting one, literally it says this, ‘my spirit was contracted within its sheath.’ Like the sheath of a sword. It’s a very picturesque expression. He describes his body as a scabbard that contains his spirit and his spirit is contracted within his body, withdrawn within his body because of his distress. The visions that he saw, especially the blasphemous words and the persecution of the little horn greatly alarmed Daniel because he realized these prophecies had to do with desperate days for the people of God.

Can I just stop here and say that we have to admire Daniel’s passion and concern for people outside of his time, outside of his experience. Do we feel this kind of passion and distress for the people of God in our day who are enduring the persecution of God’s great enemy Satan? Have you ever thought about, do you pray for those in other places who don’t enjoy the freedoms that we enjoy who are you brothers and sisters in Christ, who live constantly under the threat, either the threat of or the actual display of persecution? This is what distressed Daniel. This is what moved him.

And he desperately wanted to understand what all of this means, verse 16, “I approached one of those who were standing by” so Daniel here summons his courage and he approaches one who is standing there by the Ancient of Days. If you notice back in verse 10, one of those who’s standing by, standing there in God’s presence is these are the angels. And so he comes up to one of the angels to ask for interpretation for one of the visions he’s had. Still within the vision itself, he approaches one of these angels. Now that’s not uncommon, in fact angels often in

Scripture end up interpreting human visions. We'll see it again in chapter 9, we'll see it in chapter 10, you can see it in Zechariah 1, Zechariah 2, and even in Revelation 17, it's an angel who explains the things that John the Apostle is seeing. So this was an angel whom Daniel approaches, possibly the angel Gabriel who appears twice more in this book, in chapter 8 verse 16, and chapter 9 verse 21 but we can't be sure. We just know for sure that it's an angel. Verse 16 says, "I approached one of those who was standing by and I began asking him the exact." It's interesting again the Aramaic uses a specific word here, 'I asked him the certainty of' or we could say it this way, 'I asked him the authoritative meaning of all of this.' I want to know what's really true about these things. Give me the scoop. What is the meaning of all of this? So verse 16 says, "he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things." So the angel in the vision provides Daniel with an authoritative interpretation beginning with the four beasts in verse's 17 to 27.

Now the angel begins in explaining the meaning of these four beasts with a summary. A summary statement of what are really five kingdoms, the four beasts plus the kingdom of God. So he gives a summary of these in verse's 17 and 18. So here's the bottom line, you may not understand every detail in Daniel's vision, but you certainly can't say that you don't understand the big picture. Because the angel makes that very clear to Daniel and through Daniel very clear to us. You can get the big picture, if you're not a prophecy person, if you don't understand all the details and you get lost in the details, then get this. Verse 17, "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth." The four great beasts that Daniel saw in his vision are four kings. Now notice that each of these beasts is a king but if you look at verse 23, the fourth beast is a kingdom, so Daniel and his prophecy goes back and forth between the kings and the kingdoms, between the rulers of these empires and the empires itself. Between the key leaders of each of these four empires and the actual empire itself.

Now notice that these four kings or we could say four kingdoms verse 17 says, "will arise from the earth." In other words the angel explicitly says that the sea that these came out of back in verse 3, in the vision, that sea is symbolic of the sea of humanity because they came up from

they arise from the earth. So verse 17 then describes four successive human kingdoms. But after those four empires have exited the stage of human history, a fifth kingdom will be established. Verse 18, “But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.” So you have four human kingdoms, four empires ruled by four primary kings in the first of this vision, and then you have this eternal kingdom. Now what is this kingdom? It’s the kingdom of God. Go back to the parallel passage, go back to Daniel chapter 2, remember this same prophecy is made in a different way in Daniel chapter 2 and look at verse 44. After describing the four kingdoms in chapter 2 in terms of the four precious metals, instead of beasts, but notice what he says happens after those four successive kingdoms, verse 44. Daniel 2:44, “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed,” This is the kingdom of God. “and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it will itself endure forever.” So go back to chapter 7, what is this kingdom in verse 18? It’s the kingdom of God. Who is the King of this kingdom that is the kingdom of God? Well it’s the Son of Man; go back to verse 14, notice He was given a kingdom, it’s His kingdom verse 14 says. But who receives this kingdom? In other words who is permitted to enter the kingdom of God ruled by the Son of Man, who’s able to enjoy its perfection, notice verse 18, “the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom.” It’s those who know God and the New Testament makes it clear even as Daniel will that we know Him through the Son of Man, we know Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, we know Him because of the work of Jesus Christ accomplished on our behalf. Daniel will get into that even in chapter 9.

This name for God by the way in verse 19, the Highest One, the Most High or the Highest One, in Aramaic is plural. It’s a plural of majesty or excellent, literally the Holy Ones of the Highest Ones. Perhaps a hint of the trinity but more likely it’s simply a reference to a plural in Hebrew of majesty or excellence. He is exalted in greatness. He is the Highest of the Highest.

Now who are these holy ones? Scripture tells us they consist of two groups. They are first of all the Jews who survive the tribulation and who are redeemed at the return of Jesus Christ. They’re

described in Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10, look there with me. Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10, “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will” notice the change in pronouns, “mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem.” Verse 1 of chapter 13, “In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.” Look at verse 8, “It will come about in all the land,” declares the Lord, “That two parts in it will be cut off and perish;” So two thirds of the Jewish people will die at the end of the great tribulation. “But the third will be left in it, and I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, “They are My people,” and they will say, “The Lord is my God.” So the first group that are part of this the holy ones who inherit the kingdom are the Jews who survive the tribulation, are redeemed at the return of Christ and enter into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, His earthly rule in the Millennium.

The second group are the Gentiles who have believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. That’s described for us in Revelation in several places. So in other words, folks, this kingdom is for us. Who are the holy ones who possess the kingdom? If you’re in Christ, that’s you, that’s you. This kingdom is for us, how long will it last? Verse 18 says, “the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess” This Aramaic word, literally means to be an owner. They will own it. They will own the kingdom forever for all ages to come. Literally for an age even for an age of ages. There’s no more profound way to say forever. For an age, even for an age of ages. Or we could say for the forever and to the forever of the forevers. In the Old Testament, these two ideas of the thousand year reign of Christ, the Millennium and the eternal rule of Christ in a new heaven and a new earth are often mingled together in ways that and in passages where one sort of bleeds into the next. And you see that here, obviously in context as we saw last time this is a reference to the literal thousand year reign of Christ on this earth. But how can a thousand years last forever? That’s because that thousand year reign quickly becomes the eternal reign of Jesus Christ as He puts down His enemies and creates a new heaven and a new earth on

which He reigns forever. The physical expression of the kingdom of God begins after the second coming with a thousand year millennium recording in Revelation 22 verses 1 to 26 and then it continues into the ages in a new heaven and a new earth recorded in Revelation 21 and 22.

Now after Daniel hears this summary by the angel, he continues to question the angel about the details of the fourth beast. He just can't get away from that. There's several questions he has regarding this fourth beast. You have his questions unfolding in verse's 19 to 22, here are Daniels questions about this fourth beast, verse 19, "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others," This one was so different from the other three that it intrigued Daniel. This kingdom obviously was going to be unlike those that went before it because it was more powerful, it was more terrifying, it was more destructive, it was more widespread. Again look at verse 19, "It was exceedingly dreadful" it produced terror and dread in all of those who encountered it. "It had teeth of iron" large iron teeth implied that this beast killed and consumed everything in its path. That's not surprising because notice verse 19 adds, "it has claws of bronze" such metal claws could completely shred its enemies. You put the whole picture together and you have a potent image of the incredibly destructive power of this empire. Verse 19 says, "and which devoured" that is completely consumed other nations. "Crushed" that is it shattered or it broke them in pieces either with its iron teeth by chewing them or with its body by pouncing on them, and whatever was left notice, "it trampled down the remainder with its feet." There was nothing left when this empire came to town. And of course nothing could more powerfully describe the Romans if you've read any of history, than this description.

Daniel wanted to know what all of this meant. Verse 20, I also want to know he said, "the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates." He says I want to understand about this animal. Verse 21 says, "I kept looking," so Daniel here looks back. In his vision, he looks back into the vision when the little horn still ruled before it was ultimately judged and destroyed. And

he adds a detail that he hadn't previously shared with us, verse 21 said, "I kept looking, and while that horn was in power" notice "it was waging war with the saints and overpowering them." This ruler will wage war against the saints. In other words he will set out to conquer and destroy them and he will be successful in his persecution. Notice "overpowering them." Miller one of the good commentators on the book of Daniel says this, "the saints are no match for Satan and his evil representative the antichrist." And notice the little horn will continue his persecution in verse 22, "until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One." So his successful persecution of believers will continue until the Ancient of Days takes His throne of judgment and reaches a decision about his guilt and executes the death sentence, that's the scene we already saw described back in verses 10 and 11. When did that happen? Verse 22, it's "when the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom." It's at the same time that the antichrist is judged and destroyed, at the second coming of Christ; the saints will take possession of the kingdom.

Now remember that's just Daniels questions, verse's 19 to 22. All we've seen so far are the questions, so let's look at the angel's answers in verse 23 to 27 I should say. First of all, regarding the fourth beast, he first answers Daniels questions regarding this fourth beast. Verse 23, "Thus he said: "the fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it." Now we already saw that this fourth beast will arise out of the sea of humanity. It represents a fourth world kingdom that will arise, but it's going to be different from the other three that came before it. How? It will be different in scope, notice verse 23, "it will devour the whole earth." It will be different in power, "it will tread down and crush it." But the primary difference between this kingdom, this empire and the ones before it is that it has two periods of existence. It has two unique periods of existence. First of all, it existed in Ancient Rome. It, the fourth beast is Ancient Rome. How do we know that? Well, in both chapters 2 and 7 this fourth kingdom immediately followed the third kingdom of Greece and it was Rome that replaced Greece as the dominant world power by the second century B.C. So this has to be describing what we know in history as the Roman Empire. At the same time there must be a future manifestation of this fourth kingdom. There must be a future restored Roman Empire. Why do we know that? Why

would I say that? Is that just because I read some book on prophecy somewhere? No. Notice the Lord will destroy this fourth kingdom, when, at the establishment of His earthly kingdom. Again listen to chapter 2 verse 44, “in the days of those kings, the God of Heaven will set up a heaven which will never be destroyed.” So this fourth kingdom then must exist at the end of the age just before the return Jesus Christ. John actually states this explicitly in Revelation 17 verses 12 and 13. So a new manifestation of the old Roman Empire will arise near the end of the age consisting of ten kings or kingdoms. So this fourth beast is unique. It’s unique in a number of ways, but this is the key distinction in that there are clearly two manifestations of this kingdom; one that followed Greece that we know as the Roman Empire, and one that must come at the end because the return of Jesus Christ is when it’s destroyed.

So having dealt with this question, the question regarding the fourth beast the angel then goes on to answer Daniels question regarding the ten horns on this fourth beast. Verse 24, “As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise” Now we’ve already learned that in Scripture and particularly here in Daniel a horn speaks of power. That’s what it of course it also represents in the animal kingdom, right? A horn speaks of power. In Daniel a horn is often a ruler or a king because of the power he possesses. In the case of this fourth kingdom, the ten horns the angel tells Daniel are ten kings and ten kingdoms that will arise from what was the Roman Empire. And by the way they arise together, they must appear simultaneously, because Revelation 17:12 says that they rule at the same time. So they’re not successive, they’re existing simultaneously. So there’re ten kings over ten kingdoms. What about the little horn, the angel goes on to answer Daniels question regarding the little horn. Notice in verse 24 he goes on to say, “and another will arise after these ten kings and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.” So again notice that these are all at the same time. You have ten kings ruling over ten kingdoms, somehow connected to the old Roman Empire. And you have now another king, who comes along at the same time. Another horn suddenly appears after the other ten horns or ten kings have come to power after the empire or the federation of those ten kingdoms has been established. This horn starts out small but it quickly grows to power. Notice it becomes large we were told in Daniels recitation of his questions just a few verses before. This new ruler surpasses the others in power, verse 20 says it will become larger in appearance than its

associates. Verse 8 says this ruler will uproot three kings. In other words he will violently overthrow three other kings. Verse 24 says he will subdue three kings or three kings and their nations. So apparently, we can't be absolutely sure here but it appears that when you come to the end of time, three of the ten kings or kingdoms that arise will resist this little horn's rise to power. But he will conquer them by force. This ruler is connected to the Roman Empire; he's part of the fourth beast. He will start small but grow to subdue three of the ten nations and then lead the other seven. He will gain control, in other words, over the entire empire. And he will be extremely intelligent, notice he has eyes. The eyes are often a symbol of intelligence, it's with the eyes we see, we process, we understand. He has great understanding, he is a very intelligent man. And he has a mouth. A mouth that's filled with boasts and those boasts are blasphemous. But again this man must be in the future. This cannot be a man in the past, how do we know that? Because the federation he oversees, the empire he controls will only be destroyed by the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. We've seen this throughout chapter 7, I won't take you back through all the verses that make this point but I have a string of them in my notes through chapter 7, you can go back and read it.

So then, this little horn must be, this little horn in Daniel 7 must be the most famous person in history apart from our Lord Jesus Christ, it is none other than the antichrist; a political powerful world ruler during the coming great Tribulation. He's described in other places by different names. In Second Thessalonians 2:3, he's called the man of lawlessness. In First John 2:18, he's called antichrist. In Revelation 13 and Revelation 17 he's called the beast. So understand then that the little horn of Daniel 7 who comes out of a revived expression or manifestation of the old Roman Empire is the beast of Revelation 13 and of Revelation 17, he is none other than the antichrist. When you compare what's said about him in Daniel 7 with what's said about the beast who leads a ten nation confederacy in Revelation 13 and Revelation 17, you will find so many similarities that you will come to the conclusion these three chapters are all describing the same evil leader, antichrist himself.

His mouth, he's got a big mouth and it utters according to verse 8, great boasts, specifically it's against the God of Heaven. Notice verse 25, "He will speak out against the Most High." It's a very interesting Aramaic expression; literally he will speak out at the side of the Most High. You just picture him elevating himself or attempting to equal with God. He will try to elevate himself to that level and then speak words of blasphemy against the God of Heaven. Here's how John the Apostle describes it in Revelation 13 verse's 5 and 6. "There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months (or three and a half years) was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven." He blasphemes God. He blasphemes God's name. He blasphemes everything connected to God. Now Daniel doesn't tell us exactly the shape antichrist's blasphemies will take nor does Revelation, but Scripture does tell us how this will unfold. If you look at Second Thessalonians chapter 2, if you look at Revelation 13 you will discover that the beast or the antichrist, or the little horn, whichever one of these labels you want to give him, he will perform remarkable signs to convince people of his alleged deity. And then he will demand the worship of himself. We'll see that in more detail in coming chapters in Daniel. He will do remarkable signs, claim to be god and demand worship of himself.

In addition notice verse 25 says, "he will wear down the saints of the Highest One." This word and its Hebrew equivalent wear down are used of wearing out a piece of clothing or wearing out sandals. Leon Wood in his commentary on Daniel says this, "To wear out the saints means to harass them continually so that life becomes a wretched existence. Injustice, seizure of property, and outright physical persecution could well be some of the specific measures." We do learn that he will even further in Daniel and we'll see it in Revelation as well in coming months, he will completely abolish all religious freedom. He will bring economic pressure to bear in order to force people to reject all other religions and to worship only him. Antichrist will be violently opposed to all believers, why? I think two reasons, one because they will clearly speak against his wicked plans and activities as believers always do. They're always the burr under the saddle of the evil rulers of our world. And he will also be opposed to them because he will be energized by Satan himself and Satan hates God's people, and so he will hate God's people and martial of

his forces against them. Verse 25 goes on to say, “and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law.” There’re two different ways to interpret that expression, or those expressions. He may mean, Daniel may mean that he will try to eliminate all set times for religious holidays and all laws regarding religious celebrations. So in other words he may try to obliterate everything religious connected to the worship of God. Or, it may mean in some general sense he will seek to overturn the basic laws with which God has established the universe. One commentator for example, Leon Wood, points to the attempt during the French Revolution to change to a ten day week, in direct opposition to the seven day week that God established at creation. Archer argues that antichrist will seek to revise the world’s calendar. That wouldn’t be surprising at all. Verse 25 goes on to say, “and they (that is the holy ones) will be given into his hands for a time, times and half a time.” God will allow their persecution; He will give them into the antichrist’s hand for a set period of time.

Now what is this time, times and half a time? I’m not going to take time (pardon the pun) to walk through these arguments because we’re going to come back to this in more detail later in chapter 9, but let me just give you a basic overview. How do we know that’s three and a half years? I mean that’s pretty cryptic, a time, times, and half a time. Well here are the reasons, here are the arguments for three and a half years. They’re one or two others but these are the ones that jump out at me. In chapter 4 verse 16, the seven times that passes over Nebuchadnezzar means seven years, and so this expression easily then could refer to a year, years and half a year, which would be one year, two years, and half a year or three and a half years. The Hebrew equivalent is in chapter 12 verse 7 and it’s approximately equal we’re told there to 1290 days and 1335 days or just over three and a half years. And again we’ll deal with those texts when we get there. Thirdly the beasts of Revelation 13:1-7, the same person as the little horn of Daniel 7 will be in power we’re told in Revelation 13:5 for 42 months or for three and a half years. That is in the unlimited power with which he persecutes the people of God. Number four the same expression in Revelation 12:14 is explained as 1260 days or three and a half years. And then a fifth reason I would say it has to mean three and a half years is in Daniel 9:27 and this is when we’ll deal with this in more detail, the antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel at the middle of a seven year week of years or in other words after three and a half years.

So either you can really work through those arguments with me or you can see that that's a valid argument and you can take my word for it, it's three and a half years, but either way that is what he's saying here.

So for three and a half years, exactly half of antichrist's seven year reign God will allow his unlimited persecution of the saints and especially of the Jews to be unleashed. This time is called in Revelation 7:14 the great tribulation. During this time period the last three and a half years of the tribulation period, the great tribulation, the judgments of Revelation's 14 to 19 will come on the earth. What happens? Well at the end of that time verse 26 happens. "But the court will sit for judgment." At the end of that three and a half years, the court, God's court as we saw described in verse's 9 and 10, the Ancient of Days will take His throne of judgment and He will announce the guilt of antichrist and his kingdom, pronounce a sentence of complete destruction and then verse 26 it says, "his dominion will be taken away." His sovereignty and realm will be taken away and Revelation 19:20 says that he will be cast alive into the lake of fire. And notice verse 26 adds, not only is his dominion taken away but it will be annihilated and destroyed forever. His dominion itself will be permanently destroyed. Literally you could translate it like this, to destroy and to destroy to the forever. In other words the revived Roman Empire and ultimately all human kingdoms will be completely and permanently obliterated as the kingdom of God comes to this planet.

The angel answers another question of Daniels and that's regarding the final kingdom. Verse 27, "Then", after that happens, "the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One;" This sentence with those three expressions that began that shows us the vast and comprehensive rule that will be established by Jesus Christ. His kingdom, notice will consist of kingdoms, plural. In other words His kingdom will be so vast that it will have to be divided into kingdoms. And it will be worldwide. Notice all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be His. And it will be as we saw in Daniel 2, a literal earthly kingdom just like the four that went before it. And notice this kingdom will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One. These are the people

described in verses 13 and 14 as those who follow and obey the Son of Man, in other words, to us. God says there's coming a day when I will give to My saints to those who follow My Son this kingdom. Think about it. Our Lord promised in Matthew 5:5 that we would inherit the earth, and we really will. This earth will belong to us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice "His kingdom" verse 27 "will be an everlasting kingdom." It will be eternal. A thousand years on this renewed planet followed by eternity on a new heaven and a new earth. "And all the dominions will serve and obey Him." His kingdom will be universal and this kingdom of God will be ruled and mediated by the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ as we saw back in verse's 13 and 14, One like the Son of Man is given this authority. Or in the words of Paul in Philippians 2, because He was willing to humble Himself, He receives a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. At the name Lord, is the name He's given, our Lord Jesus Christ will see that every knee bows and every tongue confesses that He is Lord to the glory of God His Father. The Ancient of Days will coronate Him as the ruler of earth's final kingdom. It's eternal kingdom. And He will be worshiped by every person on this planet. He will reign on this earth having renewed and restored it for a thousand years and then He will destroy the current universe, and create a new heavens and a new earth where He will literally reign forever and we will be with Him into the age of the ages.

I want you to see in verse 28 the final part of this vision, the saint's response. As Daniel responded, and it's unusual, verse 28, "At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself." As Daniel reflected on this vision he was alarmed and his face grew pale as with shock, the same expression is used of Belshazzar after the handwriting on the wall back in chapter 5. Not because of how the story ends with the kingdom of Christ. That's not why he's alarmed, no he's alarmed because Daniel is a realist. He sees that before that date comes God is describing to him that great difficulties await for the people of God. Belshazzar was bad, this happened in the first year of his reign, but it was going to get a whole lot worse before it got better. The fact that Daniel by the way, kept this to himself, may mean that by this time his three friends have died

and there was no one with whom he could trust himself to share this vision. What a remarkable vision of human history?

What are the lessons for us here? Let me just point out four of them very briefly, number one. You see the certainty of God's plan for human history. Daniel 2 and 7 are the same prophecy about the same human kingdoms and the same final kingdom of God, so why in one book would you repeat this twice? Well obviously they're told from different vantage points as I noted for you. From man's vantage point from the image of great metals and then God's vantage point – beasts. But it's really repeated primarily to emphasize its certainty. How do I know that? Well in Genesis 41, God gave Pharaoh two dreams, you remember about the years of plenty followed by the years of famine. He gave him two separate dreams. Listen to Genesis 41:32. "Now as for the repeating of the dream to pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about." God repeated the vision twice to demonstrate its inviolable certainty. Folks this is going to happen. This is what will happen as time marches on in our world. Count on it. You know how the story ends, God has told you and He told you twice in Daniels prophecy to make it clear that it's going to happen exactly this way.

A second lesson is the reality and durability of evil. Listen understand this, until the stone cut out without hands comes out from the mountain in chapter 2 and crushes the kingdoms of this world or in the image of chapter 7, until the Son of Man is given the kingdoms and He destroys, the Ancient of Days destroys the kingdoms of this world evil will prevail. Don't be surprised by it. And be as concerned as Daniel was, about our brothers and sisters both in our own day and the days to come who will face the onslaught of evil from Satan and all of those who serve him.

There's a third lesson and that is the growing opposition to God and His people. Listen folks don't be surprised. Belshazzar was bad, but in the first year of Belshazzar Daniel learns there're are going to be a whole bunch of bad guys coming and the worst one comes at the end. So don't be surprised, the world is going to get worse and the opposition to God will increase. Now I'm

not being Johnny Raincloud here, I want you to understand this is how we prepare. I don't want you to be surprised; it's going to happen because God's told us it's going to unfold like this.

Number four; this is more encouraging, the security and comfort of the people of God in God's sovereignty. You see whatever the political circumstances of the world, regardless of how evil the ruler-whether it's Belshazzar or the antichrist that's in power, God is still sovereign. He is still on His throne. He has a plan for human history and some day He will convene His court, He will coronate His king, Jesus Christ will reign and we will reign with Him forever and folks you have to keep your mind on this reality. Sinclair Ferguson writes, "Our gaze must always penetrate beyond the terrible events of history to throne of God. Only in the assurance that He reigns will we be able to live triumphantly when we cannot trace or understand His plan of victory." May God help us to live looking through the scene around us to the throne of God where everything is final and settled and the kingdom of God is coming. Let's pray together.

Father, thank You for giving us these great truths, for revealing them to Daniel. Help us o God to live in the light of them. Help us to live in confidence even as we live in tumultuous times. Lord You've told us it's going to get worse on this planet before it gets better. Help us not to be surprised. Help us not to live in fear and dread. Help us to live in great hope looking through the troubles of our times to Your throne and reminding ourselves that You see all of the turmoil and You're in control. You hear all of the animosity directed toward You and You who sits in the heavens laughs. You hold them in derision because You will establish Your king, our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to live in light of that we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.