

The Coming of the Son of Man Announced Daniel Chapter Seven

The focus of biblical prophecy is not *general information* about the world, but always about *God's redemptive purpose through Jesus Christ*. Everything in this world (and Scripture) is about the Christ. The vision of Daniel in Daniel 7 parallels Daniel chapter 2 by depicting *four kingdoms that would precede the establishment of God's eternal kingdom*, bringing a *spiritual kingdom* with "in this world" consequences.

I. God's Kingdom that was *coming* (from Daniel's perspective) would be a kingdom for all peoples.

This vision of Daniel's occurs during Belshazzar's reign, prior to the fall of Babylon to Persia (539 BC). The Jews deemed themselves "God's chosen people" and could not have envisioned God's purpose. Remember, the kingdom of Israel had been conquered. This vision is of the eternal kingdom of God! It is sad that so many look for a kingdom to come and miss the fact that Jesus Christ is enthroned now.

A. The "stirring up" of "the great sea" (Dan. 7:2) describes the kingdom *coming upon the nations*.

1. Israel is "land" (*eretz*) (Rev. 13:11); **nations are "sea"** (Rev. 13:1).
2. Jesus chooses *fishermen* as some of His apostles (Matt. 4:18).
3. Jesus calms the sea (Matt. 8:23–27).
4. "The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind" (Matt. 13:47). The kingdom of God and the eternal kingdom are synonyms.
5. After the resurrection, the first miracle of Jesus is the large catch of fish (see John 21:1-11). The number of fish caught is 153, a triangulation of 17 (17+16+15+14 ... +1 = 153). 17 stands out very prominently as *God's kingdom number*. 17 is the *seventh* in the list of the prime numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17). 17 is the combination or sum of two perfect numbers - *seven* and *ten*; seven being the number of spiritual perfection, and ten of governmental perfection. The Day of Atonement (the shed blood of the Lamb) was on the 7th day of the 10th month. In Rom. 8:35 there are **7** things that seek to come between the believer and God's love. In Rom. 8:38-39 another **10** things are listed that cannot come between us and God's love. In Heb. 12:18-24 the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are contrasted. Verse 18 begins with "For you have **not** come" (**7 things** listed about the Old Covenant), then in verse 22 "*but you have come*" (then the writer of Hebrews lists **10 things** about the New Covenant).
6. In the Bible the number 17 signifies "vanquishing the enemy" and "complete victory in Christ." During the days of Noah, God vanquished rebellious mankind by the flood which He began on the **17th** day of 2nd month. The ark came to rest on the **17th day** of the 7th month. God raised Jesus from the dead on the **17th day** of the first month of the Hebrews. The 17th time love is mentioned in 1Corinthians 13, it says, "[The] greatest of [all] is LOVE" (verse 13). Hence, the love of God (John 3:16) is victorious in all things.
7. "None of the priests, prophets, and kings of the Old Testament were fishermen. They were all farmers or animal husbandmen. By way of contrast, none of Jesus' disciples was either a farmer or a husbandman. The most prominent of the disciples were fishermen. Nobody is shown eating fish in the Old Testament, but Jesus feeds the 5,000 with fish, not with beef jerky. After His resurrection He eats a fish, not a piece of lamb. The disciples are almost never spoken of as shepherds; they are fishers of men. **This shift in imagery indicates that Jesus' new kingdom is going to go to the whole world** (Neh. 13:16 and the fish symbolism).

B. This entire vision in Daniel 7 predicts the timing of the coming of the King (the son of Man).

"I kept looking ... and the Ancient of Days took His seat" (v. 9). "I kept looking... one like a Son of Man was coming" (v. 13). "And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages might serve Him" (v. 14) – an everlasting Kingdom!

II. The four great beasts of Daniel 7 represent the four earthly empires until the Messiah comes.

A. A Lion with the wings of an eagle: Babylon (609 BC to 539 BC).

The Babylonian goddess Ishtar is always seen as protected by lions (the ancient gates of Babylon). And of course, we have Daniel in the lions' den (6:12). Then, we have an account of the king of Babylon who "had grown hair like eagles' feathers" (5:33). Then, when Nebuchadnezzar was converted he was "lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human heart also was given to it" (7:4; 4:34–37). This first kingdom is Babylon.

B. A Bear: The Medo-Persian Empire (539 BC to 331 BC).

The bear had three ribs in its mouth, and "they" (angels) say to it, "Stand up! Devour much flesh." This is usually taken to mean that the Persians conquered much of the world. Some believe this description of the bear portends Cyrus and the decree to allow the Jews to return to their land. Those who favor the Jews will be on the "standing side," while those who attack the Jews will be on the falling side like Daniel's accusers (Dan. 6) and like Haman in Esther, who seemed to stand for a while but then fell and was hanged along with his ten sons (Esther 3:1; 7:7–10; 9:24–25).

C. Leopard: The Grecian Empire (331 BC to 168 BC).

It has four heads, which we shall see later on are four headwaters or beginnings. Then, the four divisions of the Grecian kingdom combine into two: Egypt is "the king of the South" in Daniel 11, and Syria is "the king of the North" in Daniel 11. Then, after the fall of the Greeks we have Rome.

D. Beast: The Roman Empire (168 BC to the Coming of the Son of Man) - the fall of Rome in AD 476.

During this time the then-known world is saturated with Greek culture. The NT is written in Greek and the OT is translated into Greek, the Septuagint [LXX]. Rome is "Dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong." Looking in the night visions (7:7):

1. This fourth beast is undefined: All Daniel sees are feet, teeth, and horns.
2. The nations that are eaten and crushed are the former empires, which are taken over by this fourth one, which is why the book of Revelation pictures the Roman beast as incorporating all seven heads of these beasts of Daniel 7.
3. The trampling indicates just how total the rule of Rome was. You resist, you die.

III. The Little Horn arises in the time of the Fourth Beast (Rome).

Many Christians say this is a "future Anti-Christ." But the Little Horn is an agent of the fourth beast (Rome) (Dan. 7:20, 24). He utters great boasts (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25). Others "fell before the Little Horn," that is the Little Horn actually ruled in Israel. The Little Horn was an "offshoot" of the Fourth Beast (Dan. 4:15, 23). The Little Horn is none other than the line of Herods that ruled Israel for Rome.

A. The Herods were Edomites and circumcised Jews - "kings of the Jews." They picked High Priests.

B. The Herodians are linked with the Pharisees against Jesus (Matt. 22:15–16; Mark 3:6; 12:13).

C. The Herods are the face of Imperial Rome in the Holy Land. Under Augustus, Herod the Great tries to kill Jesus (Matt. 2:1–16). Under Tiberius, Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great) has John the Baptist put to death (Matt. 14:1–12). Herod Agrippa (grandson of Herod the Great) is involved in the sham trial of Jesus (Luke 23:11). Pilate and Herod, once enemies, became friends (Luke 23:12; Acts 4:27). Under Claudius, Herod Agrippa I killed James and persecuted the church (Acts 12:1–3), uttered "boastful things" (Acts 12:20–23), and was struck down by God. Herod Agrippa II is described in Acts as "King Agrippa" before whom Paul of Tarsus defended himself.

III. The Coming of the Ancient of Days is During the Time of the Beast and Little Horn

Jesus is the Son of Man who "comes up to the Ancient of Days" and takes His throne. The earthly high priest never sat in the temple. The work of Jesus is done. Jesus is the Son of Man in the NT.

This is not the Second Coming (Matt. 24:30; 26:64). "*Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation*" (Luke 11:30). **Daniel 7 depicts Jesus' enthronement.**