



THE DOMINANT KINGDOM (WEEK 4)

Your Spiritual Heritage

*Creator and Redeemer God,
Author of existence, source of all blessedness, we
adore You for making us capable of knowing You, for
giving us reason and conscience, for leading us to
desire You; we praise You for the revelation of
Yourself in the gospel, for Your thoughts of peace
toward us, for Your patience and graciousness, for
the vastness of Your mercy. May we always be
among those who not only hear but know You, who
walk with You and rejoice in You, who take You at
Your word and find life there. O God, make us worthy
of this calling, that the name of Jesus may be
glorified in us and us in Him.*

- Walking through a minefield

Today we continue with this chapter of apocalyptic proportions, literally. Daniel chapter 7 has been described this way: “The reader is confronted by mysterious symbols, allusions, enigmatic phrases and numbers, which have baffled interpreters through the ages and have given rise to many different schemes of interpretation.”

The good news is that I figured it all out this weekend. No worries.

Last week I gave you the address of the antichrist. This week I’m going to give you the Google earth view of that address. We’ll be able to see if he has a pool or not.

Though the antichrist will play a prominent role in the Scriptures we’ll be looking at this morning, he has no place in today’s main point.

Today’s main point is that if Christ reigns now, that means you reign now with Him, because you, as a Christian, are in Christ.

This morning we’re going to cover Daniel 7 from verse 15 through the rest of the chapter.

But let’s go back a couple of verses so we jump in with a baton change.

Daniel 7:13-14

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

Clouds are a sign of divinity in Scripture, as the many verses concerning God and clouds show us.

- Exodus - led them by a pillar of cloud by day.
- 2 Chronicles - “the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.”

Daniel writes this one is a “like a son of man,” the phrase Jesus used of Himself most often (over 80 times in the NT). So, this “one” described by Daniel is both divine and human, which describes Jesus perfectly.

I believe Daniel is prophesying about the first advent of Christ, specifically he is referring here to the ascension of Jesus.

After Jesus rose from the dead, later He ascended into heaven “and a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9), then the Father “seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places” where He now reigns.

14 And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.

Ephesians 1:20

20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead
and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

Jesus is given all authority in heaven and on earth after He ascends. Now, there is a difference between the inauguration (the beginning or introduction) of His kingdom and the consummation (the action of making it complete) of His kingdom. The consummation will occur at the Second Coming of Christ.

The 4th kingdom (Rome) has its dominion taken away because there is now a new kingdom and a new king. That’s why the Christians in the first century underwent such heavy persecution, because they were declaring that Christ is Lord, not Caesar.

Again, today’s big idea is that if Christ reigns now, that means you reign now with Him, because you are in Christ.

And Christ not only reigns, but He will reign. He reigns now invisibly, but He will one day reign physically and that will be the end of the world as we know it as the Scriptures will declare plainly today. We won’t have to make any arguments from necessity, because that much will be clear.

When it comes to apocalyptic biblical literature, we should accept the clear and plain parts of Scripture as a basis for getting the true meaning of the more difficult parts of Scripture, such as the book of Revelation.

Daniel 7:15-18

15 “As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. **16** I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So

he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. 17 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth.

Now, the kings and the kingdoms we looked at last Sunday aren't comprehensive, meaning Daniel isn't giving us a point by point detailed breakdown of history. He is giving us key kingdoms at points throughout history. These four kingdoms played the most substantial roles in world history.

18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'

There is no reason to place a gap before the 4th and 5th kingdom. The only reason we should ever place a gap between something is if Scripture tells us to and it does not. So, during the 4th empire, the Roman empire, the kingdom of Christ is inaugurated.

So, here's the promise that encouraged the children of God in Daniel's day, the nation of Israel as they were awaiting their release from captivity — God's people will receive the kingdom. But it's also the promise of God's future people, the church, who will also receive the kingdom.

The obvious question is, "When do we receive the kingdom?" Sometime in the future? At the Second Coming of Christ? Do we possess the kingdom now?

Well, Jesus tells us:

Luke 22:29

29 and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom,

We know the Father is pleased to give us the kingdom and if the Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies as the Apostle Paul tells us and if we are joint heirs with Christ this means we receive everything Christ has received, therefore we possess the kingdom now.

Many of you are probably familiar with this Bible story.

Mark 10:13-14

13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Jesus is telling us in these verses that those who have childlike faith in His finished work possess the kingdom now. So, this is both present and future.

Now, Daniel is intrigued by this fourth beast because it is unlike all the rest.

Daniel 7:19-20

19 “Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet,
20 and about the ten horns that were on its head,

When it comes to Daniel 7:20 this is where the symbolism vs. literalism debate begins. There are at least five (that I know of) Bible-believing views of Daniel chapter 7 itself. Four out of the five understand it symbolically, but that doesn't mean they're correct.

However, the argument often goes that in symbolism you can make the Bible say whatever you want, therefore literalism is superior.

First of all, you can't make the Bible say whatever you want with symbolism, as we will see. Second, there is a difference

between taking the Bible literally and hyper-literalism. The only way to make the Bible say whatever you want it to say is by twisting Scripture.

Even in symbolism there is an interpretive pattern. Take the number 7 for instance. God created the universe in 7 days. The Sabbath is the 7th day of creation. The Lamb in Revelation has 7 horns coming out of his head. Clearly, 7 isn't arbitrary. It is universally understood, by all stripes of biblical scholars, that 7 is the biblical number for perfection. Horns represent power, so the Lamb in Revelation is someone who has perfect power.

That's taking the symbolism of the Bible literally. Besides, when we become hyper-literalists we end up with more problems in the long run. It's because this viewpoint is completely futuristic, meaning that nothing in past has been fulfilled and nothing in the present is being fulfilled.

This is apocalyptic literature. It's full of symbols. It is highly debatable that these numbers should be taken literally.

Now, I have stated this several times that taking the Bible literally means trying to understand what the text originally meant to those it was written.

Would you say that you take the Bible more literally than Jesus? The problem is — some people do.

Example:

Malachi 4:5

5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.

Matthew 11:13-14

13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.

Matthew 17:10-13

10 And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” 11 He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. 12 But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” 13 Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

John was a type of Elijah. He came in the spirit of Elijah. He wasn't literally Elijah, but the result is the same.

So, let me take a moment to make a case for the symbolism of numbers with the most famous apocalyptic number — 666. I have seen movies where people literally have this number carved into their heads. That's how we know the antichrist — in movies anyway.

Consider this, six falls one short of 7 (the number of perfection). The beast mimics Christ but always falls short. Six represents fallen humanity, always laboring but never entering the Sabbath rest (the seventh day of creation typifying the eternal Sabbath rest). The triple 6s indicate the beast, who along with the dragon (Satan) and the second beast (or false prophet) mimics the Holy Trinity but is condemned to fall short of completeness. The beast can never rise above humanity to attain the deity it so desires.

Isn't that not only richer, but doesn't it make more sense that just looking for a literal 666 under someone's hairline?

That being said, back to Daniel 7:20.

Ten is a number that is often used in Scripture to represent a repeated number of times. It means that several different kingdoms will arise after Rome. In other words, it's a number that represents a multiplicity of rulers or kingdoms. In this sense, they are historically connected to the Roman empire and rule with that same spirit of the antichrist. They will arise from the ashes of the Roman empire.

Historically, you can connect over 30 countries today that were onetime part of the Roman empire — England, Wales, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Gibraltar, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine.

We have already noted, biblically, horns represent power, so these 10 horns and what they represent can be understood by Paul's description:

Ephesians 6:12

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

This is the underlying reality of all human ruling power.

Daniel 7:20

and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions.

This little horn is given personal characteristics, so we can certainly say this little horn could represent the antichrist, meaning a particular individual who will be given power by the dragon (the devil) before the Second Coming of Christ.

This little horn may be identified as the person Paul calls “the Man of Lawlessness.”

2 Thessalonians 2:1

2 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

2 Thessalonians 2:3-8

3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. **5** Do you not remember that

when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

John writes that “the spirit of the antichrist . . . is already in the world” (1 John 4:3) because “it is the last hour!” (1 John 2:18).

Paul agrees that:

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. **8** And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

This final tribulation will be followed by “the Lord Jesus . . . annihilating this antichrist by the manifestation of his coming” (2 Thess 2:8) and establishing his perfect kingdom on earth (cf. Matt 24:29-31; 25:31-34; Rev. 7:14-17).

We’ll look at the tribulation in a couple weeks.

Daniel 7:21

21 As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them,

Now, this type of persecution ebbs and flows throughout church history, but will culminate in this person of the antichrist.

The antichrists that function in our world today point to an ultimate Antichrist who comes before the end. However, the focus is never left with him. The antichrist is left behind by the good news, which even Daniel proclaims.

22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

God will destroy this last defiant ruler, this antichrist and He will give His everlasting kingdom to the divine son of man and to God’s people. This will be the culmination of the kingdom for which we are waiting, but possess even now.

Christ reigns now, which means you as a Christian reign now.

Daniel 7:23-25

23 “Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

24 As for the ten horns,
out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise,

This verse speaks of the demise of the Roman Empire in several phases. As the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great at its fall had split into four “heads”/kingdoms, so the fall of the Roman Empire will result in ten kings or kingdoms arising from the ashes of Rome. Since ten is the number of fullness, it is probably best to interpret it symbolically: a full number of kings or kingdoms shall arise from the fallen Roman Empire.

and another shall arise after them;
he shall be different from the former ones,
and shall put down three kings.

25 He shall speak words against the Most High,
and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,
and shall think to change the times and the law;
and they shall be given into his hand
for a time, times, and half a time.

This antichrist will determine not only when and where people can worship, but who. He will be given this authority for a limited duration “for a time, times and half a time.”

Since three and a half is one half of the perfect number “seven,” it probably means a

short period of persecution. I would call this the climax of the tribulation.

Again, we have already seen this occur throughout history. There have been leaders who have been predecessors of this type of behavior — the salute to Caesar as divine copied by the “heil Hitler” of the Nazis. The examples could go on regarding oppressive leadership that is distinctly anti-Christian.

We don’t have to wait until the rise of a specific antichrist to experience this, because Christians today are experiencing it under the leadership of Kim Jong Un in North Korea. It will just culminate with the antichrist.

This has been happening since Jesus walked the earth in sinless perfection. It has been happening since He was publicly crucified and rose from the dead. It has been happening since He ascended into heaven to sit at God’s right hand. It has been happening throughout the entire church age and will continue to happen.

For a time.

Then:

26 But the court shall sit in judgment,
and his dominion shall be taken away,
to be consumed and destroyed to the end.

According to John's vision in the book of Revelation, an angel from heaven "seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. . . . After that he must be let out for a little while" (Rev. 20:2-3).

Revelation 20:2-3

2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

The thousand years (10 x 10 x 10) is a symbolic number for a full period of time that began with Jesus' defeat of Satan by rising from the dead and ascending to his throne in heaven.

Right now the dragon is bound. He cannot do his worst. He is like a chained lion, limited in the damage he can cause. But at the end of this full period of time he will be set loose for a little while (Rev. 20:3, 7).

Now, I believe this much about the end times is biblically clear. At the first advent of Jesus Christ, Satan was bound by Christ's victory over him at Calvary and the empty tomb. The effects of this victory continued because of the presence of the kingdom of God through the preaching of the gospel. Because of the spread of the gospel, Satan is no longer free to deceive the nations. Christ is presently reigning in heaven and will reign during the entire period between his first and second coming. At the end of the millennial age, Satan is released, a great apostasy breaks out, the general resurrection occurs, Jesus Christ returns in final judgment for all people, and He establishes a new heaven and earth.

But before all that happens there will be the time of the little horn. In John's words, "Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations." The nations will then unite to turn upon the church of Christ. They will surround "the camp of the saints [the holy ones] and the beloved city." In those dark days it will look like the church will be annihilated. But then, as in Daniel 7, God intervenes: "Fire came down from heaven and consumed them. And the devil who had

deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:7-10).

Daniel 7:27

27 And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’

Daniel 7 repeats three times that God’s kingdom will be given to “the holy ones”.

Daniel 7:18

18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.’

Daniel 7:22

22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

Daniel 7:27

27 And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’

It is clear in Scripture that Christ reigns now. And if Christ reigns now, so do you, my Christian friend. The principalities and powers of this present evil age can wear you down all they want, but what God has granted to you, neither the devil nor any antichrist can take away.

God declares:

1 John 4:4

4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Then later, John reminds us:

1 John 5:4

4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

But what does that look like in real life? Does that mean we overcome every problem and trouble in life? Does this mean we overcome in every area of our lives? Does this mean we’re all meant to be healthy and wealthy?

I think if the church had a better understanding of what the Bible actually teaches about the end times that the health

and wealth gospel wouldn't have been able to take root in America. We have compartmentalized the tribulation in a way that Scripture does not.

Here's a picture of the victory that overcomes the world in real life:

On the last day of April 1532, James Bainham was led to a stake to be burned alive because he possessed the Bible in English. Because he read the Bible in his own language he denied purgatory and some other teachings that cannot be found in the Bible.

He said, "I come here, good people, accused and condemned as a heretic, Sir Thomas More being my accuser and my judge. First I say it is lawful for every man and woman to have God's book in their mother tongue. Second, that the bishop of Rome is Antichrist... there is no purgatory, but the purgatory of Christ's blood, for our souls immediately go to heaven and rest with Jesus Christ forever."

Upon hearing these words, a Master Pave (who was overseeing the execution) said, "Thou liest, thou heretic! Thou deniest the

blessed sacrament of the altar." Bainham replied to Master Pave saying that he did not deny the sacrament, only "your idolatry to the bread, and that Christ God and man should dwell in a piece of bread."

Pave then gave the order: "Set fire to him and burn him." A trail of gunpowder sped in Bainham's direction and just before the flames ignited, he looked toward heaven, and said, "God forgive thee, and show thee more mercy than thou showest to me. The Lord forgive Sir Thomas More! And pray for me, all good people!"

Foxe wrote that in the "midst of the flaming fire," when Bainham's legs were half consumed, he spoke these words: "O ye papists behold, ye look for miracles, and here now you may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain, than if I were in a bed of my own: but it is to me a bed of roses."

Later, this Master Pave was overcome with grief couldn't get Bainham's image or his words out of his head. He hung himself the next week while his wife was away.

This Master Pave — this poor man's life ended up resembling the life of Judas and he

probably didn't even know it since he couldn't read the Bible in English. He believed the wrong things. He believed the wrong spirit and so was deceived.

You will either overcome or be overcome based on what you believe about Jesus Christ.

If you believe because Jesus reigns now that you reign also now with Him, then you can reign over your circumstances by believing what God says is true of you rather than what your circumstances say about you.

So often our circumstances dictate our faith rather than our faith dictating our circumstances.

Now, maybe you're asking, "How is that story about overcoming? He was arrested for having an English Bible. He was tied to a stake to be burned alive. Where's the deliverance? Where's good overcoming evil? How's that reigning with Christ?"

Romans 8:17

17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

This is what overcoming looks like. His faith in the risen Christ overcame his circumstances. His faith in Christ reigned in those dire circumstances. The Scriptures make this clear — what looks like victory to the world is nothing to God.