

Daniel 7 (TAC)

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

10:40



Introduction: A Word Before We Begin

Tonight we will dive deep into some of the topics that make up the every-day speech of believers, yet are often misunderstood. The subject matter of this chapter is humbling because it is Divine and it is exhilarating because it concerns the greatest mysteries man has ever contemplated.

As we get into tonight, We wanted to encourage you with a prophecy from Daniel 12:

- **Daniel 12:4 (ESV)**

4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

The chapter we will study tonight—and those we will study in the coming weeks—belong to the portion of Daniel that was said to be "shut up" and "sealed." Yet Daniel 12 promises that as we "run to and fro"—reading back and forth over its words, like a person scanning the lines of a Torah scroll again and again—knowledge will increase.

Many people interpret this verse as a prophecy of modern travel or technological advancement. However, we see this imagery as describing diligent study: a reader moving back and forth over the text repeatedly, searching its meaning. The promise attached to that discipline is that **knowledge will increase**.

This verse should cause us to study and interpret the text tonight in a spirit of humility. The scroll of Daniel was sealed, thus there are aspects we may not completely understand until the events have transpired, at which point they will become as obvious as any other fulfilled prophecy — like "the virgin shall be with child." Until then, we can only diligently study and ask the Lord to increase our understanding as we trust in the promise that knowledge will increase as we draw closer to the end. That's not a bad position to be in.

Daniel 2 was given to a Gentile king, Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted by the four Hebrew youths. Daniel 7, which we will read tonight, was given to an Israelite, and it *still* had to be interpreted by a Divine messenger. There are real relationships between the revelations of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, and that's fitting, since the Gentile Empires and Israel are the major players in the unveiling of God's plan for the nations.

CHRONOLOGY OF DANIEL



CHAPTER 1	Babylonian Captivity and Training in Babylon
CHAPTER 2	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Interpretation
CHAPTER 3	Nebuchadnezzar's Image and the Fiery Furnace
CHAPTER 4	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree, Interpretation, and Pride
CHAPTER 7	The Dream of the Four Beasts and Interpretation
CHAPTER 8	The Vision of the Ram and the Goat and Interpretation
CHAPTER 5	The Writing on the Wall: Babylon Falls to Persians
CHAPTER 9	Daniel's Prayer and Vision of Seventy Weeks
CHAPTER 6	The Lions' Den
CHAPTERS 10-12	Closing Visions

Before we begin, remember that the extraordinary visions of Daniel 7 occurred in the first year of Belshazzar, Daniel 5 occurred in the last reign of Belshazzar (more than ten years later). Daniel 8 also occurs before Daniel 5. This may help to explain why Daniel's tone was so pointed in chapter 5 when discussing Belshazzar's fall. As Daniel was saying this, he had already been given detail concerning the rise and fall of the gentile kings until the time of the end.

One more thing to note before we dive into the text tonight. In Chapter 5, we pointed out that Belshazzar's name means, "**Bel has protected the king.**" While that is true, it is only part of the story. In Daniel 7 the consonants are spelled slightly differently, allowing the name to be understood with an entirely different meaning:

(Read Highlights)

Belshazzar Word-Play

Good Hebrew MSS.[manuscripts] have Beleshazzar [בִּלְאֲשַׁצַּר], meaning 'Bel is to be burnt with hostile fire' (Jer. 1:2, "Bel is confounded;" 51:44, "I will punish Bel in Babylon")

A. R. Fausset, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Jeremiah–Malachi*, vol. IV (London; Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, n.d.), 417.

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This subtle wordplay is deeply prophetic, especially since the chapter concludes with the final beast being destroyed by fire. The altered spelling hints that the judgment extends beyond the beasts themselves to the spiritual powers behind them. Not only will the beasts be consumed, but the gods and powers they represent will ultimately be burned with fire.

Pray and Read

1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

This verse plays out a bit like the movie *Inception*. Daniel is having a dream, and he has visions within the dream. Nonetheless, these interactions with this dream and the visions in the dream seem to be genuine interactions and a very real experience.

You are all familiar with the fact that God speaks to people through dreams and this is clearly stated in Job 33:14-15. We also have recently gone over the way God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar through dreams. The point of emphasis we want to hit on in this passage, is that in this real, genuine experience, Daniel wrote the **substance** of his dream, not necessarily every vivid detail, which would likely have been impossible. By the end of the chapter, it's clear he was overwhelmed... So much so his face turned pale! And something for your own study, there are numerous comparisons that could be drawn between Daniel and John the Revelator, both in the substance of their visions and the circumstances under which they occurred.

Before moving into verse 2, the effect this particular vision has on Daniel is astounding given his track record and what he has gone through up to this point:

(DO NOT READ SLIDE)

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFESPAN OF DANIEL



Daniel was born around **620 B.C.**



Daniel is about **14 years old** when he arrives to Babylon after the first siege and exile of Jerusalem and begins his training



Daniel is in his **mid-teens** when he dictates and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue in Daniel 2



Daniel is about **81 years old** when he confronts Belshazzar before Babylon falls to the Persians in Daniel 5, having already received the dream of the four beasts in chapter 7 and the vision of the ram and goat in chapter 8



Daniel is about **81 years old** when he receives the vision of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9



Daniel is about **83 years old** when he is thrown in the lions' den in Daniel 6



Daniel is probably in his **mid-80s** when he has the closing visions of Daniel 10–12

- Daniel was born around 620 B.C.
- Daniel is about 14 years old when he arrives to Babylon after the first siege and exile of Jerusalem and begins his training
- Daniel is in his mid-teens when he dictates and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue in Daniel 2
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That is quite a full life. Daniel is a seasoned prophet, an old man, and the survivor of many life-and-death situations... yet he turns pale and is deeply disturbed by what is revealed to him in this dream.

Verse 2 — The Four Winds of Heaven and the Great Sea

"Daniel said: 'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea.'"

There are two phrases that deserve our attention in this verse: "winds of heaven" and "great sea." The phrase "*winds of heaven*" can also be translated "spirits of heaven," and it appears several times in Daniel.

Winds of Heaven in Daniel

Daniel 8:8 (NIV)

The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four **winds of heaven**.

Daniel 11:3–4 (NIV)

Then a mighty king will arise, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. After he has arisen, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four **winds of heaven**. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

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In both cases, this may simply be an expression indicating geographical designators, much like when Isaiah writes "*the four corners of the earth*". But it may be something more. Zechariah helps clarify why we draw attention to this:

- **Zechariah 6:1–8 (NIV)**

6 I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. ² The first chariot had red horses, the second black, ³ the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. ⁴ I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?"

⁵ The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. ⁶ The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south."

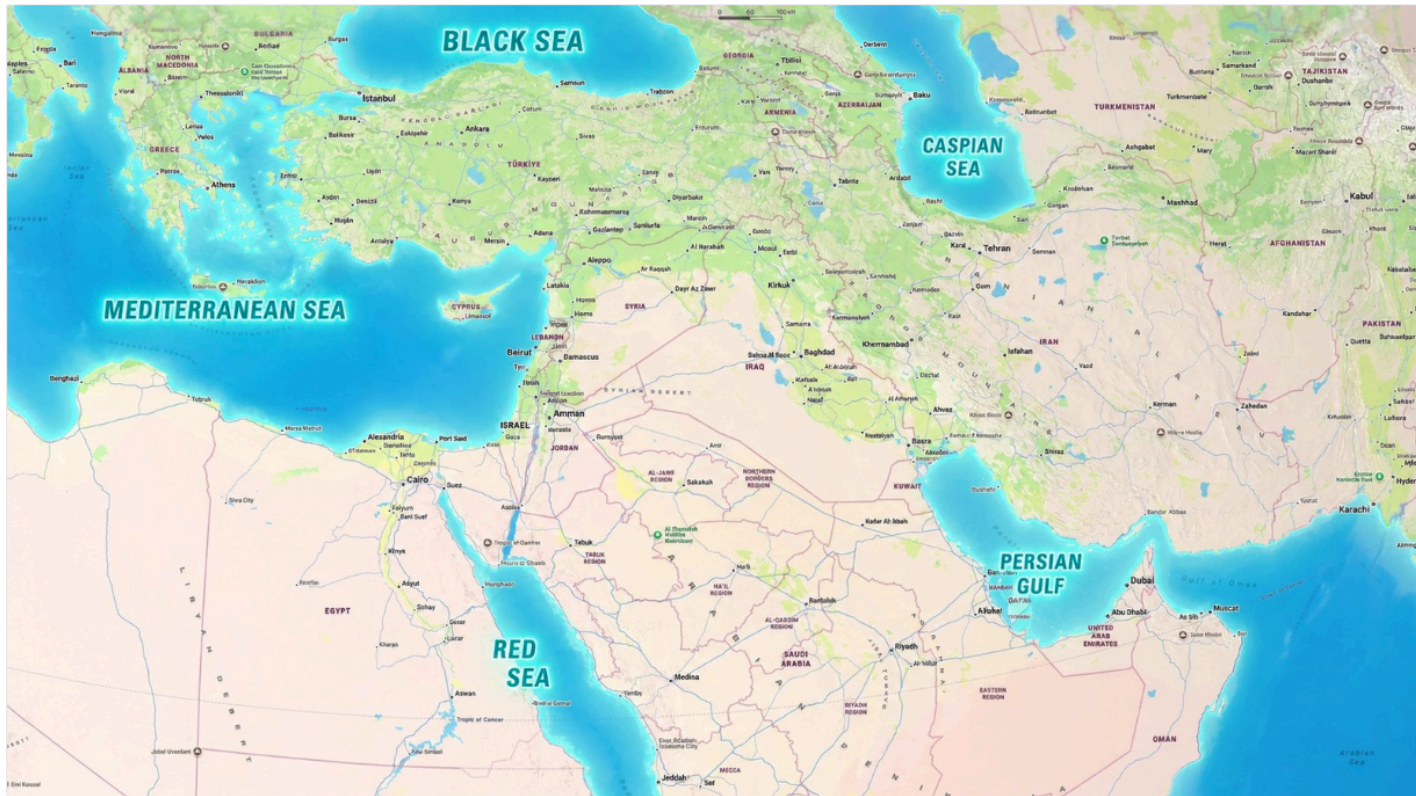
⁷ When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.

⁸ Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north."

In Zechariah, the phrase "*arba ruchoth ha shamayim*" is translated "four spirits of heaven" (some translations again say wind). This is the Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic "winds of heaven". Together, it seems as though the implication is not merely geographical but also spiritual.

They are real spiritual entities that strain to accomplish something in God's design on the earth. They even need to be encouraged in the accomplishment of their task. The context indicates they are real spiritual powers, directed by God, to accomplish something within the Gentile world outside of Israel. Let's combine this with our other phrase—The great sea.

From the perspective of Israel, the borders of the Gentile world were often defined by bodies of water.



As you can see on this modern map—in every direction that there is Gentile nations, there is also a large body of water: Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. You are going to see there is a significant prophetic connection between Gentile powers and seas. This begins in the Law.

- **Exodus 23:31 (NIV)**

³¹ “I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the desert to the Euphrates River. I will give into your hands the people who live in the land, and you will drive them out before you.

This makes seas a useful metaphor for the Gentile world. Watch the metaphor build in Isaiah:

- **Isaiah 60:1–3 (NIV)**

60 “Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

² See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,

but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
³ Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Seas are not mentioned yet, but the context here is Gentile nations coming to the light of Israel. Then it says this in the next verses:

- **Isaiah 60:4–5 (NIV)**

⁴ “Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the hip.
⁵ Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,
to you the riches of the nations will come.

Verse 5 is a textbook example of Hebrew word play: the wealth of the seas is equivalent to the riches of the Gentile nations. In this context, the sea is a metaphor for all the Gentile nations of the earth — and the remaining verses (6–7) make it explicit, describing camels, gold, incense, and flocks arriving from Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, and Nebaioth.

This relates directly to Daniel 7, because real spiritual entities may have been directed by God to stir up the Gentile world so that Adonai's plan would unfold according to His own sovereignty. The equivalence between Gentiles and seas repeats throughout Scripture:

- **Psalms 65:7 (NIV)**

⁷ who stilled the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
and the turmoil of the nations.

Clearly, in Hebrew thought, the sea often refers to Gentile nations, and it is Adonai who churns them up or causes them to become still. This makes reading

Revelation fairly definitive when determining the origination point of the beastly nations and their antichrist-like leader:

- **Revelation 17:1 (NIV)**

17 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters.

Revelation interprets its own imagery:

- **Revelation 17:15 (NIV)**

¹⁵ Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.

And:

- **Revelation 13:1 (NIV)**

13 The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.

It is implausible that a Jew reading Isaiah, or later reading Revelation, would take these verses to mean anything other than the Gentile nations. In conclusion, Daniel seems to be seeing the Gentile world churned up by the power of Heaven to reveal beastly Gentile nations in the precise order God has determined they should come forth. The ultimate beastly nation, and its little horn of a leader, will arise from the sea of Gentile nations — and no other place. It may surprise many of you but many scholars over the last couple centuries have argued for a non-Gentile anti-Christ. This is ridiculous and these scripture's make that clear.

Before we move on, this theme connecting Gentile nations to seas should remind you of our studies in Exodus.



Adonai led Israel to the Red sea at a place we know as Nuweiba Beach as seen on this image. This location was significant to Egypt but also the other Gentile powers of the area and was seen as Baal Zephon or "Ba'al's Palace" and the council of the gods, but it is also the mouth of freedom. As you can see, Gentile Nations and their gods are associated with the sea—specifically here—Yam Suf or the Red Sea.

What deepens this connection even more is the Cognate behind Baal.

Bel and Baal

Bel is the East Semitic cognate (*bēlu* in Akkadian) to the West Semitic (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ugaritic) title *Ba'al*. In the Old Testament, as is the case in many Akkadian texts (especially in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods), Bel specifically refers to the Babylonian deity **Marduk**.

Wesley Crouser, "Bel," in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

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The cognate link between Ba'al and Bel isn't a side note — it's the thread tying Nuweiba Beach to Daniel's vision. At Baal Zephon, "Ba'al's Palace," Egypt and the surrounding Gentile powers understood the Red Sea as the throne room of that god's council — the place where the sea itself answered to him. When Adonai split Yam Suf, He wasn't just delivering Israel from Pharaoh's army; He was dismantling a Gentile sea-god's claim to mastery over the waters, on that god's own doorstep. Centuries later, the same divine title resurfaces in its East Semitic form attached to Marduk of Babylon. In Babylon's own creation account, Bel-Marduk earns his rank among the gods by defeating Tiamat, the sea and chaos itself, and building the ordered world from her remains. (Wayne Horowitz, "Enuma Elish: Babylonia's Creation Myth and the Enthronement of Marduk," TheTorah.com, September 11, 2023,

<https://www.thetorah.com/article/enuma-elish-babylonias-creation-myth-and-the-enthronement-of-marduk>)

Whether it be Egyptian, Canaanite, or Babylonian — the pattern repeats: the Gentile world keeps claiming its chief god as the one who subdues the sea. Scripture answers that claim repeatedly. It is not Ba'al, and it is not Bel, who stills the roaring of the seas and the turmoil of the nations — Psalm 65:7 already told us who does, Adonai.

So when Daniel watches the four winds of heaven churn up the great sea, he's standing inside a polemic as old as the Exodus. The very civilizations that named their gods "Lord of the Sea" are themselves the sea Adonai is churning — and the beast that rises from it will answer to Him, not to Bel, Baal or anyone else.

Verses 3–8 —The Four Beasts/Empires

The themes of the sea are not the only relevant topics from previous teachings. Exodus provides many prophetic details pertaining to the End of Days. In our Exodus studies we extensively discussed Egypt as a prototype for future Gentile Empires that would rule over the nation of Israel and ultimately come under the wrath of Adonai. Egypt was a part of a broader prophetic picture we taught from the book of Revelation concerning a seven headed dragon/beast. Below is an updated version of that image.



As you can tell, some of the nations listed here are ones we are discussing in Daniel. But why are there differences? We have taught this before but it is worth refreshing for the upcoming verses.



Both the seven-headed beast in Revelation and the statue in Daniel represent Gentile Empires. But, the seven-headed beast is comprised of nations that have ruled over Israel and its people specifically. The statue in Daniel 2 is given from a Babylonian perspective—thus the statue is comprised of Empires that have ruled over Babylon.

That being said, being that these regions are close and share much history between them, some Empires controlled both, that is why there is *some* overlap but also some distinctions.

In Daniel 7 we are getting the same empires represented in the statue portrayed in a new way—as beasts. Here is all three of the prophetic images together on a slide.



The statue and four beasts are describing the same Empires in different ways, and both from the perspective of Babylon. The seven-headed Beast while containing similarities is describing nations that controlled Israel.

That being said, despite the already existing similarities (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece), there is also strong support that the 4th Kingdom of the statue, the 4th indescribable beast, and the 7th head are all the same Gentile Empire. That is an important connection we are going to utilize in the coming exposition and chapters. (For example, when the 7th head of the beast in Revelation 17 is described as *was, is not and is to come*. We could connect that descriptor to the legs of iron.)

With that in mind, we are going to begin verse three.

Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

The four beastly nations emerge from the Gentile world and are each unique from one another. Daniel 7:17 will simply say these beasts came "from the earth,"

confirming that we were never really talking about a literal sea — it's the Gentile world.

The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it."



The first beast Daniel observed had the characteristics of both a lion and an eagle. A restoration of a panel from the throne room of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, housed at the British Museum, depicts a winged lion — likely the very room where Daniel stood to give the Daniel 2 interpretation, and possibly the same palace where Belshazzar later saw the handwriting on the wall. The art reflects God's own stated view of Babylon. Look at how Jeremiah and Ezekiel put it:

- **Jeremiah 4:7 (NIV)**

⁷ A lion has come out of his lair;
a destroyer of nations has set out.
He has left his place
to lay waste your land.
Your towns will lie in ruins

without inhabitant.

Babylon is portrayed as a lion by the prophet Jeremiah. And through Ezekiel:

- **Ezekiel 17:3–4 (ESV)**

³ say, Thus says the Lord God: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar. ⁴ He broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade and set it in a city of merchants.

At first glance this might seem to describe someone else, since Babylon has already been called a lion — but the passage interprets itself further down:

- **Ezekiel 17:11–12 (ESV)**

¹¹ Then the word of the Lord came to me: ¹² “Say now to the rebellious house, Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them, behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took her king and her princes and brought them to him to Babylon.

Babylon is portrayed as an eagle through the mouth of Ezekiel. We won't take the time to do this exercise with every beastly kingdom tonight, but once you can clearly identify the first of the four kingdoms, it becomes obvious that Daniel 7 is reiterating what was already given to us in Daniel 2.

The Four Empires, Reviewed

(LEAVE IMAGE UP DURING SCRIPTURES)

STATUE OF DANIEL 2

1 ST		1 st Kingdom: Babylon Head of Gold <i>Dan. 2:38</i>
2 ND		2 nd Kingdom: Medo-Persia Chest and Arms of Silver <i>Dan. 5:28; 8:20</i>
3 RD		3 rd Kingdom: Greece Belly and Thighs of Bronze <i>Dan. 8:21</i>
4 TH		4 th Kingdom: Not Named Legs of Iron; Feet of Iron and Clay <i>Daniel 2:40–43</i>



DECREASING
IN VALUE



INCREASING
IN STRENGTH



This chart, familiar from our earlier sessions, shows four successive kingdoms that decrease in value while increasing in strength. Let's work through the references that establish the order

- **Daniel 2:38 (NIV)**

³⁸ in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

Nebuchadnezzar — Babylon — is the first beast/empire, the head of gold, and this imagery and testimony are borne out in Daniel 7:4. Nebuchadnezzar's strength in leading Babylon was biblically identified with the characteristics of a lion (Jeremiah 4:7) and then an eagle (Ezekiel 17:3), and it's worth noting that the image of a winged lion adorned his palace. Lastly, Nebuchadnezzar was stripped of his strength during the events of Daniel 4, where he lost his mind for seven years, and just as Daniel 7:3 summarizes, he was "given the heart of a man" after being "lifted from the ground" — likely a reference to the salvation experience taught during our session on Daniel 4.

Moving to the second Empire:

- **Daniel 5:28 (NIV)**

²⁸ *Peres*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

- **Daniel 5:30–31 (NIV)**

³⁰ That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, ³¹ and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

Darius the Mede is the regional ruler who took over the city of Babylon.

- **Daniel 6:28 (NIV)**

²⁸ So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

As covered in our last session, the alliance between the Medes and Persians was lopsided — "raised up on one side" — meaning Darius was subservient to Cyrus the Persian, within what the Bible identifies as the second empire/beast.

(KEEP UP DURING NEXT THREE PASSAGES)

The Kingdom Passes to Medo-Persia



DANIEL 5:28

“

*Peres: Your kingdom is **divided and given to the Medes and Persians.***



DANIEL 5:30–31

“

*That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and **Darius the Mede took over the kingdom,** at the age of sixty-two.*



DANIEL 6:28

“

*So Daniel prospered during the reign of **Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.***

- **Daniel 8:20 (NIV)**

²⁰ The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.

When we reach Daniel 8, the vision will also involve the Medo-Persian Empire and foretell the empire that follows it — the third empire:

- **Daniel 8:21–22 (NIV)**

²¹ The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king.

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DECREASING
IN VALUE



INCREASING
IN STRENGTH



This third Gentile empire is clearly named in Scripture as Greece. It's remarkable how clear this becomes when Scripture interprets Scripture. To visualize the ordering: the head of gold is Babylon; the chest and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; the belly and thighs of bronze, Greece; and the legs of iron, feet of iron and clay is the fourth empire— not named in Scripture, but is described as indescribable: iron teeth, ten horns.

Each of these first three beastly Gentile empires has some intrinsic value. Babylon was used as an instrument of Divine punishment in God's service, and it published a letter to the entire world in Daniel 4 detailing the salvation of its king, Nebuchadnezzar. Medo-Persia also published a letter to the entire world, in Daniel 6, and Cyrus assisted in the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. And during the Greek empire, the Tanakh was translated into the *lingua franca* — Koine Greek — so that every literate person could read the Word of God. It is the fourth kingdom that is conspicuous, in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, precisely because it lacks this kind of redemptive value.

And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

We won't cover these events in full detail tonight, since we'll encounter them again in coming chapters. But as already noted, the Medo-Persian Empire was lopsided — "raised up on one side" — in that the Persians were the dominant partner in the alliance between the Medes and the Persians.

After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule."

To be clear: these empires are not literally the animals used to describe them. The descriptions come in the form of "like a..." — meaning some characteristic of the animal is a pertinent descriptor of the kingdom's attributes. This empire is Greece, and it's widely understood that Alexander moved with incredible speed in conquering the biblical world, including Babylon, where the vision of Daniel 2 took place. It's also widely understood that Cassander, Ptolemy, Antigonos, and Seleucus — the *Diadochi* — succeeded him, dividing his empire into four quadrants after his death, just as Scripture predicted. We'll venture into those events in future chapters.

"After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast — terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns."

For the first time in the vision, Daniel literally cannot find anything in heaven or on earth to compare to this Gentile beastly empire. The predominant identifiers are that it was terrifying, frightening, very powerful, and had large iron teeth — a detail absent in the animal kingdom. That alone ought to cause us to approach the identification of this kingdom with caution and humility. Nothing in all of Daniel's experience gave him a comparable animal, or combination of animals, to describe what he saw.

This empire/beast is expressly said to be "different from all the former" beasts. It crushed and devoured its victims, but even more conspicuous is that it "trampled underfoot whatever was left." By comparison: the Medo-Persians kept many things from Babylon, including Daniel himself. The Greeks kept many things from the Medo-Persians. And the Romans kept almost everything from the Greeks — their language, their art, their gods, simply renamed. The *lingua franca* of the first century under Roman dominance in the Middle East was Greek; the soldiers and officials recorded in the Newer Testament were all speaking Greek, because it was the international trade language of the era. That does not sound like "trampling underfoot" whatever came before.

In every way, these Gentile beastly Empires decrease in value and increase in strength, until the vision arrives at an Empire that has no value and only possesses strength.

We would like to take a moment and walk you through our thoughts on why we believe this 4th Empire is best understood to be the Islamic Caliphate.

Daniel's prophecies present the final enemy of God's kingdom not merely as one individual ruler, but as the head of an imperial system. The Antichrist arises from a Empire with a long history, a recognizable geographical territory, and a spiritual identity that existed before him. That Empire appears first in one historical form, disappears from the world stage, and then returns in a final, short-lived manifestation immediately before the coming of Christ (Revelation 17:8)

This provides a framework for understanding the fourth Empire in two stages:

The Two Phases of the Fourth Empire



FOURTH EMPIRE A *The Iron Legs*

The **historical Islamic empire** (caliphates, including the Ottoman Empire) that conquered and ruled the lands of the earlier empires, represented by the **iron legs**.



FOURTH EMPIRE B *The Iron-and-Clay Feet*

The **final revived form** of that same empire, represented by the **iron-and-clay feet** and the **restored beast**.

- **Fourth Empire A:** the historical Islamic empire (caliphates, including the Ottoman Empire) that conquered and ruled the lands of the earlier empires, represented by the iron legs.
- **Fourth Empire B:** the final revived form of that same empire, represented by the iron-and-clay feet and the restored beast.

The central prophetic pattern is therefore:

It **was**, it **is not**, and it **will come again**—but only briefly before being destroyed by God.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar sees four successive Empires represented by gold, silver, bronze, and iron. The fourth Empire is described as strong as iron because it breaks, crushes, and shatters everything before it.

Yet the fourth Empire does not remain in one uniform condition. Its iron continues from the legs into the feet and toes, where it becomes mixed with clay. This is not a fifth Empire. It is the fourth Empire in a later, divided form.

DO NOT READ



Daniel 2:40-43 NET

40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom, one strong like iron. Just like iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything, and as iron breaks in pieces all these metals, so it will break in pieces and crush the others. 41 In that you were seeing feet and toes partly of wet clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom. Some of the strength of iron will be in it, for you saw iron mixed with wet clay. 42 In that the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, the latter stages of this kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 And in that you saw iron mixed with wet clay, so people will be mixed with one another without adhering to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Without reading again through Daniel 2:40-43 let us summarize it by reminding you:

- An iron kingdom that crushes other kingdoms.
- A later divided stage that remains partly strong.
- Iron mixed with brittle clay.
- Peoples or ruling elements that mingle but never truly adhere.
- A final form existing when God establishes His everlasting kingdom.

The iron legs may therefore represent **Fourth Empire "A" (The historic Ottoman Empire)**, while the iron-and-clay feet represent **Fourth Empire "B" (A Revived Caliphate)**. They are chronologically distinct but belong to the same prophetic kingdom. The iron continues from one stage into the other.

They are chronologically distinct but belong to the same prophetic Empire. The iron continues from one stage into the other.

This same continuity appears in Revelation 17.

- **Revelation 17:8 (NET)**

The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because ***it once was, now is not, and yet will come.***

The final beast is described as one that existed, ceased to exist, and afterward rises again. In verses 10-11, It appears as an eighth king, yet it belongs to the seven.

You will recall our study in Exodus where from Israel's view, the 7 headed beast consisting of:



The eighth is therefore not an entirely new civilization. It is the return of a previous Empire in its final form.

Daniel's first three Empires were centered in the Middle East:

- Babylon ruled Mesopotamia.
- Medo-Persia ruled Mesopotamia, Persia, and the surrounding eastern lands.
- Greece ruled Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, and much of the biblical world.

This 4th beast is marked by crushing what belonged to the previous empires before it.

This is highly significant.

The early Islamic caliphates did what no western European empire accomplished: they brought the central territories of Babylon, Persia, and the Greek East under one expanding religious-political order.

Islamic armies conquered Mesopotamia, overthrew the Sasanian or Iranian/Persian Empire, absorbed Persia, seized Syria and Egypt from the Eastern Roman Empire, and eventually ruled most of the territories that had constituted the heartlands of Daniel's earlier empires.

The Islamic Empire therefore did not merely succeed the earlier Kingdoms in time. It **consumed their lands**, incorporated their peoples, inherited their cities, and ruled their former imperial centers. This was the crushing.

Babylon became part of the Islamic world. Persia was conquered and Islamized. The Greek and Byzantine East—Syria, Egypt, Anatolia, and eventually Constantinople—came under Islamic government. Jerusalem was ruled for centuries by Islamic dynasties and later by the Ottoman Empire.

This provides a compelling historical fulfillment of Daniel's iron kingdom devouring and crushing the territory represented by the previous metals and beasts.

The Ottoman Empire became the last great expression of the historic Islamic imperial order. It was Turkish and it inherited the identity of the caliph, meaning the role of being the political and religious leader of the Muslim world, and ruled much of the biblical world-including Babylon.

The Ottoman sultans joined political sovereignty, military power, Islamic law, and the title of caliph. The empire represented an international Islamic order that ruled numerous ethnic groups under one imperial-religious structure.

Then the institution suffered what appeared to be a fatal historical wound. The Ottoman empire was abolished in 1922, the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, and the caliphate itself was formally abolished on **March 3, 1924**. Turkey's own official historical chronology records the abolition on that date.

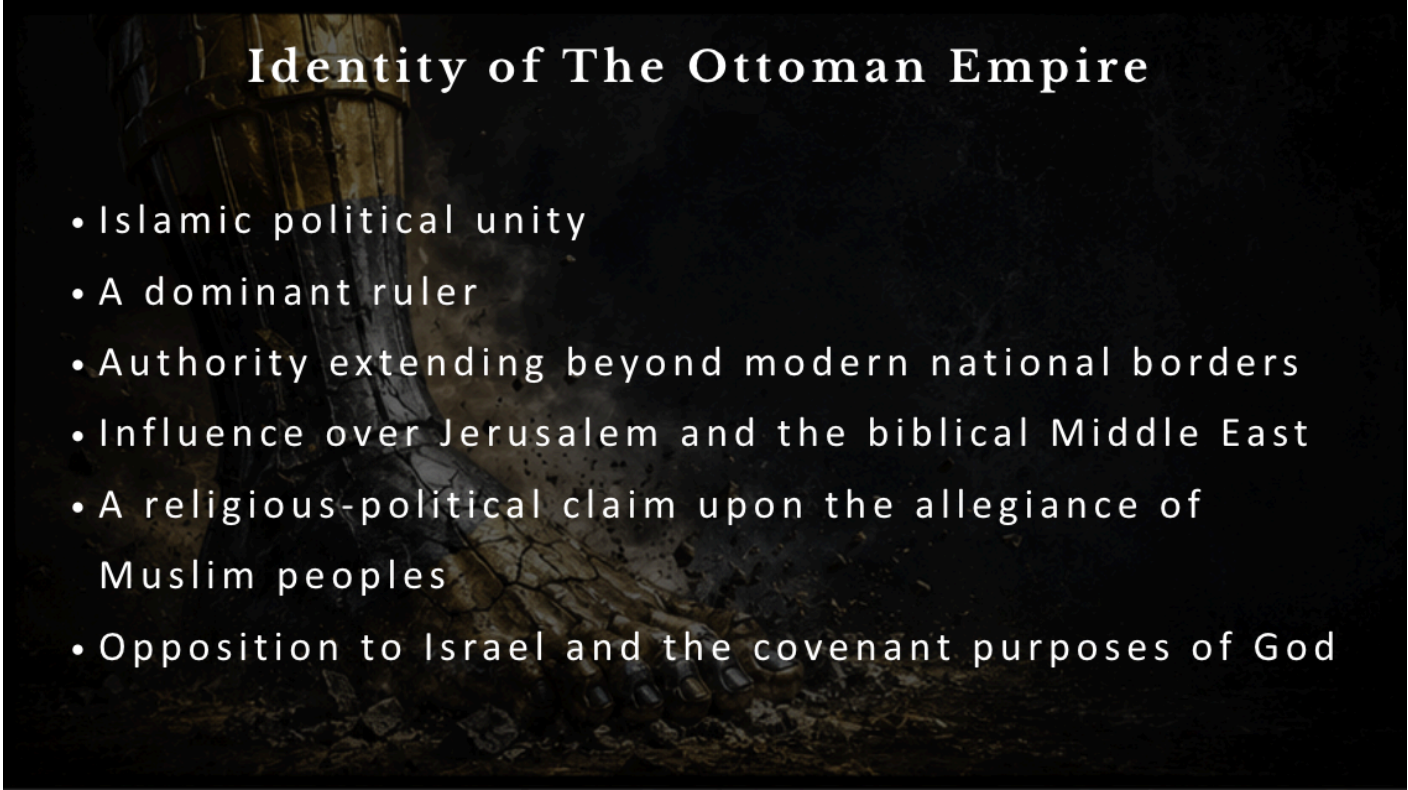
The caliphate **was**—after 1924, it **was not**.

No widely recognized caliph governed the historic Islamic world. The empire had disappeared, its territories were divided into modern nation-states, and Turkey adopted an aggressively secular republican identity. Yet Revelation says the wounded beast does not remain dead.

Revelation 13 describes one of the beast's heads appearing to receive a mortal wound, but the wound is healed. Revelation 17 explains that the beast existed, ceased to exist, and would rise again before going to destruction. The restored beast becomes an eighth king, but the text emphasizes that he "belongs to the seven." This perfectly describes the relationship between a historic empire and its final revival.

The final Empire does not need to reproduce every border or administrative feature of the Ottoman Empire. It belongs to the seventh because it restores the same essential imperial identity:

(READ SLIDE)



Identity of The Ottoman Empire

- Islamic political unity
- A dominant ruler
- Authority extending beyond modern national borders
- Influence over Jerusalem and the biblical Middle East
- A religious-political claim upon the allegiance of Muslim peoples
- Opposition to Israel and the covenant purposes of God

Modern Turkey does not yet constitute a restored Ottoman Empire or caliphate. Nevertheless, under their current president, Erdoğan, it has deliberately recovered Ottoman language, imagery, memory, and regional ambition.

In official speeches and state communications, Erdoğan describes the Turkish Republic as the heir of a thousand years Ottoman heritage. Under his leadership, Turkey has also moved away from the aggressively secular identity established after the fall of the Ottoman order and toward a more openly Islamic and Ottoman-conscious national identity.

This does not prove that Erdoğan is the final ruler. It may instead mean that he is preparing the political imagination, religious identity, military infrastructure, and regional conditions from which the final ruler can emerge. The connection becomes more striking when Turkey's growing influence is considered geographically.

Ancient Assyria occupied territory corresponding principally to northern Iraq, northeastern Syria, and southeastern Turkey. Modern Turkey already controls territory within the ancient Assyrian sphere and increasingly exercises military,

economic, and political influence across northern Syria and northern Iraq. Following the overthrow of the Assad government, Turkey became one of the most influential external powers in Syria. It maintains close ties with Syria's new leadership, has conducted repeated military operations across the border, and has discussed military training, defense cooperation, and even the possible establishment of Turkish military facilities inside Syria.

From a prophetic perspective, this matters because Scripture repeatedly identifies Israel's final northern enemy with **"the Assyrian."**

The little horn and "the Assyrian"

Daniel 7 describes a little horn arising from the fourth kingdom. This ruler:

READ SLIDE



Little Horn Rising

- Emerges from the territory and political order of the fourth beast
(Daniel 7:8, 7:24)•
- Subdues other rulers (Daniel 7:8, 7:20, 7:24)•
- Possesses extraordinary intelligence and persuasive power (Daniel 7:8, 7:20)•
- Speaks arrogantly against God (Daniel 7:8, 7:11, 7:25)•
- Persecutes the saints (Daniel 7:21, 7:25)•
- Attempts to alter established times and laws (Daniel 7:25)•
- Rules for a limited prophetic period (Daniel 7:25)•
- Is destroyed when the heavenly court renders judgment (Daniel 7:9–10, 7:11, 7:26)•

Elsewhere, Scripture describes a final enemy under the title **"the Assyrian."** Micah 5 places the Assyrian in a future time when Messiah will come.

- The ruler from Bethlehem arises (Micah 5:2)
- Shepherds His people in the strength of the Lord (Micah 5:4)

- Becomes great to the ends of the earth (Micah 5:4)
- When the Assyrian invades the land (Micah 5:5)
- The Messiah becomes Israel's peace and delivers His people (Micah 5:5–6).

The historical Assyrian invasions form the immediate background, but the passage reaches beyond ancient history. The ultimate ruler from Bethlehem is Christ. His worldwide reign is still future in its fullness, and the final deliverance occurs when an Assyrian-like invader enters Israel.

Isaiah develops the same pattern. In Isaiah 10:5–6, the Assyrian is used as the rod of God's anger to execute judgment.

- In Isaiah 10:7–11 he becomes proud, boasting in his own strength and attributing his conquests to his own power.
- In Isaiah 10:12–14 he exalts himself and seeks to destroy nations
- In Isaiah 10:28–32 he advances toward Jerusalem, shaking his fist at the holy city. God then judges the arrogant ruler after using him to accomplish His purpose (Isaiah 10:15–19, 10:24–27).
- Isaiah 14:25 says God will break the Assyrian in His land and trample him on His mountains.
- Isaiah 30 connects the destruction of Assyria's king (Isaiah 30:31–33) with the appearing of the Lord in anger, consuming fire, storm, and judgment (Isaiah 30:27–30).
- Isaiah 31:8–9 says Assyria will fall by a sword **not wielded by man**—a sword not belonging to ordinary mortals, and his rock will pass away in terror, with his princes dismayed by the standard, declares the LORD.

This parallels Daniel's descriptions of the final ruler:

- Daniel 8 says he will be destroyed, but not by human power (Daniel 8:25).
- Daniel 11 says he will come to his end with no one to help him (Daniel 11:45).
- Daniel 7 says the heavenly court will sit in judgment and take away his dominion, ultimately destroying it (Daniel 7:26).
- Daniel 2 says the stone not cut by human hands will strike the final kingdom and bring the entire system to an end (Daniel 2:34–35).

The little horn therefore symbolizes “the Assyrian” because he arises from, rules over, or expands through the historic Assyrian territory encompassing southeastern Turkey, Syria, and northern Iraq.

The final kingdom does not need to be one ethnically unified nation. Daniel says its elements will intermingle but will not adhere to one another, just as iron cannot bond permanently with clay. This accurately describes the kind of coalition that could form around Turkey and the surrounding Islamic world. The potential components include:

READ SLIDE



Potential Components: Iron & Clay

- Different Muslim nations and ethnic groups
- Long-standing regional rivals (like Turks, Arabs, Persians, and Kurds)
- Sunni and Shiite factions
- Monarchies and republics
- Secular governments and Islamist movements
- Competing states and armed groups across the region

These powers possess deep historical, ethnic, political, and sectarian divisions. Under ordinary circumstances, they cannot form one stable body. Yet they could unite temporarily around a common enemy: Israel.

Erdoğan has publicly called upon Islamic countries to form an alliance against what he describes as the threat posed by Israel. Turkey has also strengthened ties with Saudi Arabia and sought collaboration concerning Syria, defense, economic development, and regional influence.

Turkey may provide the iron—the military power, leadership, organization, and imperial vision. Syria, Iraq, and surrounding Arab-majority lands may supply the geographical body of the coalition or the clay. Other regional governments and movements could join because of shared opposition to Israel, even while continuing to distrust and compete with one another.

They mix, but they do not adhere. They become powerful enough to invade, persecute, and dominate, but they remain brittle within. Their unity is not built on genuine peace; it is maintained by a charismatic ruler, a religious-political vision, and hostility toward a common enemy.

The prophetic picture may therefore be unfolding in stages. The Ottoman-Islamic imperial order existed. It ruled the lands of Babylon, Greece, Assyria, Jerusalem, and much of the biblical world.

It received an apparently fatal wound when the Ottoman caliphate was abolished in 1924.

Now Turkey is reviving Ottoman consciousness, recovering Islamic political identity, expanding its influence into the ancient Assyrian sphere, strengthening cooperation with Arab powers, and openly calling for Islamic unity against Israel.

The wound is healing, and the former identity is returning. The final stage will occur when a ruler arising from this revived imperial sphere consolidates the divided coalition. He will be Daniel's little horn, the king of the North, the beast who belongs to the seven, and "the Assyrian" who enters the land. His kingdom will appear terrifyingly strong. It will crush, trample, blaspheme, persecute, and make war against the saints. But its power will be brief.

The Assyrian will fall by a sword not wielded by man. The final ruler will be destroyed, but not by human power. He will come to his end with no one to help him. The stone not cut by human hands will strike the feet of iron and clay, and the entire statue will disintegrate at once.

The fourth kingdom will not gradually reform, peacefully dissolve, or slowly fade from history.

God will bring it to an abrupt end.

The empire **was**—then it **was not**. It will rise again—but only long enough to gather the nations against Jerusalem, reveal the final ruler, and be shattered by the returning King.

Verse 9 — The Ancient of Days

9 “As I looked,

**“thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.**

Daniel was contemplating the little horn — in the midst of a dream, or a vision within a dream — when this scene interrupted him. It is as beautiful as it is problematic, and we need to unpack the difficulty carefully. What does it mean that he looked and saw the Ancient of Days take his seat? Who is this figure? What did he actually see? First we must start with a peshat truth—the Bible unequivocally declares that God cannot be seen. This is a topic we have extensively covered before in Foundations but is worth repeating. We will show you many passages that are peshat and require almost no explanation considering their plain reading.

- **John 1:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

- **John 6:46 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ **not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.**

- **Colossians 1:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Paul expands the language by saying the phrase concerning Jesus "*the image of the invisible God*". The Father is invisible; Jesus is His image. Here is a quick look at seven more instances of this topic.

(READ HIGHLIGHTS)

GOD CANNOT BE SEEN

Seven Witnesses to His Invisibility

1 TIMOTHY 6:15–16

which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who **dwells in unapproachable light**, whom **no one has ever seen or can see**. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

EXODUS 33:20

But," he said, "you **cannot see my face**, for man shall **not see me and live**."

DEUTERONOMY 4:15

Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you **saw no form** on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire,

1 TIMOTHY 1:17

To the King of the ages, immortal, **invisible**, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 JOHN 4:12

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

DEUTERONOMY 4:12

Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but **saw no form**; there was only a voice.

PSALM 77:19–20

Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your **footprints were unseen**. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

As you can see, this theme is consistent and all throughout Scripture—Old and New Testament. Adonai may have used all kinds of things — angels, earthquakes — to represent His presence, but He Himself is declared invisible.

All of this together makes it difficult to assert that Daniel saw the Ancient of Days and that the Ancient of Days is the Father. Let's address a few more difficult passages before we explain more on this enigmatic title.

Genesis 32:30 (ESV)

30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For **I have seen God face to face**, and yet my life has been delivered.”

Hosea 12:3–5 (ESV)

3 In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God.

4 **He strove with the angel** and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us—

5 the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial name

- **Genesis 32:30 (ESV)**

³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

At first glance it seems Jacob saw God, he seems to say so plainly, yet Hosea describes it this way.

- **Hosea 12:3–5 (ESV)**

³ In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God.

⁴ He strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor.

He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us—

⁵ the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial name:

As Hosea explains—although it says he saw God, it was actually a heavenly figure representing God. Hosea reveals that Jacob was dealing with an angel acting on God's behalf. The same phenomenon happens in Exodus 3.

- **Exodus 3:5–6 (ESV)**

⁵Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

- **Exodus 3:2 (ESV)**

²And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Moses writes plainly it was an Angel of the Lord in the flame of fire.

- **Exodus 13:21 (ESV)**

²¹And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

- **Exodus 14:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them,

Here is another great example. Repeatedly when the text says God appeared in some way, it also says the Angel of God—giving clarity to the actual presence whom they saw.

- **Hebrews 11:27 (ESV)**

²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

This verse affirms, first of all, that God *is* invisible. A proper exegesis of Hebrews 11 reveals that Moses perceived the invisible God by faith — specifically not with his senses.

So — if Daniel didn't see the Father, and the "Ancient of Days" cannot simply be an angel either — where does that leave us? Let's take a deeper look into this title "Ancient of Days."

Daniel 7 sits in the middle of the book, and in the middle of a chiastic structure. What Daniel is seeing, and about to see, is intended to be climactic.

- **Micah 5:2 (ESV)**

- ² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.

Was the Father born in Bethlehem? No — it was the Word of God that became flesh and was born in Bethlehem. The descriptor given by Micah is that His origins are "from old, from ancient times." This may be the right place to start when identifying the "Ancient of Days," a phrase that appears only in the book of Daniel.

Now compare Revelation, keeping the descriptors of Daniel 7 in mind, we have a slide we are going to keep up while we read Revelation 1.

Descriptions in **Daniel 7** and **Revelation 1**



DANIEL 7:9

"Ancient of Days"

- His clothing was as white as snow
- The hair of his head was white like wool
- His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze



REVELATION 1:12-18

"Like a Son of Man"

- Dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet
- His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow
- His eyes were like blazing fire; his feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace

○ **Revelation 1:12–18 (ESV)**

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, **"Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.**

The parallels are exact: white hair like wool and snow, a fiery/blazing appearance. Why are these images so similar? The writer of Hebrews explains:

○ **Hebrews 1:1–3 (ESV)**

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The only exact representation of Yahweh in all creation is the Son. His arrival in the flesh was announced by Micah as one "whose origins are from old, from ancient times." Thus, Jesus was a man born of a woman—yes, yet also has origins that are from ancient times.

Yahweh has not been seen and cannot be seen — but the Son is the exact representation of His being, and He has been seen.

- **Colossians 1:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Yahweh is invisible, but He has a visible image that can be seen.

- **John 14:9 (ESV)**

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Jesus said plainly that anyone who has seen Him has seen the Father — not because Jesus *is* the Father, but because He is the exact, visible representation of the Father. This is where John 1 becomes essential:

- **John 1:1,14,18 (NIV)**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

There are two figures called God in this passage. The Word is both *with* God and *is* God (v. 1). The Word became flesh and was therefore visible — men saw His glory, radiance, exact representation (v. 14). Only one of the two figures is visible. This One and Only, who is God, makes the Father known — seeable, perceivable, visible (v. 18). The Son is the only way we see God.

As you can see this theme is pervasive and consistently throughout the Biblical canon. Nonetheless we wanted to read a few passages that we ourselves have not fully come to understand how they fit into the broader themes we have been teaching.

Exodus 24:9–11 (ESV)

9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, **10** and **they saw the God of Israel**. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. **11** And **he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people** of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

Exodus 33:20 (ESV)

20 But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, **for man shall not see me and live.**”

- **Exodus 24:9–11 (ESV)**

⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹ And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

This is not the first time that the text says someone "saw God" but it was actually an angel. Yet, unlike the account of Peniel there is no place we have found in the Torah or the rest of Scripture that further interprets this passage as an angel or theophany. Moreover, the phrase "*And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.*" is fascinating in light of Exodus 33:20.

- **Exodus 33:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

Why would it say in Exodus 24 that God "*did not lay his hand*" on the men, unless there was some reason he should have—namely, because they saw something that should have killed them. Moreover, this instance is unique in that there is no vision or dream in which this figure is appearing, all 74 men are physically present.

Yet again, in Exodus 24 it says they "saw God" but only mentions what was under his feet—a pavement of sapphire. Studies like this should not bring confusion into the text, but instead a great appreciation for the deep things of God and the true glory it is to search them out.

Perhaps the best verse to help us within this tension comes from the Apostle Paul.

- **1 Corinthians 13:12 (NIV)**

¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

In studies like this, it is our desire to share concrete revelation that ourselves and brothers from other churches have deeply looked into—and also be honest and transparent with our own Scriptural wrestlings. From our dissertation you can see a peshat truth about the invisible, immortal presence of YHWH: He cannot be seen. And within that, also the deep complexity of that immortal invisible God and His image and the myriad of experiences the Biblical heroes had.

Verse 10 — The Court Is Seated, the Books Are Opened

10 A river of fire was flowing,

coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.
The court was seated,
and the books were opened.

This is the courtroom, or Divine Council setting, familiar from our teaching from the Heavenly Calling series. But who presides over the court? Let's read what John 5:22 says to figure it out:

- **John 5:22–23 (NIV 1984)**

22 Moreover, **the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son**, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

The Father judges no one. He has entrusted *all* judgment to the Son, who is His visible image. More than that, there is a one-to-one equivalence of honor being described — the same honor due the Father is due the Son, in exactly the same proportion. This is because the Son is the exact representation, radiance, and image of God, and is Himself the Judge — the Ancient of Days.

Also, we would like to briefly talk about "the books being opened":

- **Exodus 32:32–33 (NIV)**

32 But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then **blot me out of the book you have written.**"

33 The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me **I will blot out of my book.**

When we're looking at the setting of Daniel seven, scripture speaks of several heavenly books. Daniel doesn't identify which books are opened, but the rest of Scripture gives us a glimpse into what these books contain.

- **Psalms 139:15–16 (NIV)**

15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,

when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the **days ordained for me were written in your book**
before one of them came to be.

Psalms 139 introduces another heavenly book. Rather than recording the names of God's people, it speaks of God's foreknowledge and His record of every day ordained for a person's life. Now, let's look at Revelation 20:12. This is going to link another couple of chains together in this Revelation string.

- **Revelation 20:12 (NIV)**

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and **books were opened**. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

As you can see, scripture describes several heavenly books:

(Do not read)

HEAVENLY BOOKS:

- God's book of life containing the names of His people (*Exodus 32; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8*).
- God's record of the days ordained for every person (*Psalms 139*).
- Books recording the deeds of mankind, from which judgment is rendered (*Revelation 20*).

- God's book of life containing the names of His people (Exodus 32; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 13:8).
- God's record of the days ordained for every person (Psalm 139).
- Books recording the deeds of mankind, from which judgment is rendered (Revelation 20).

Daniel sees the books opened before the Ancient of Days. John sees the same courtroom centuries later. Once again, books are opened, and Humanity is judged according to the perfect record that heaven has kept. And remember: all judgment was entrusted to the Son, the visible image of the invisible God.

With the courtroom established and the books opened, Daniel now watches the first verdict rendered. The beast that seemed so powerful on earth is about to discover that heaven has already reached its decision.

Verses 11–12 — The Beast Slain; the Others Spared for a Time

11 “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. 12 (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

With the courtroom setting in mind, the little horn's boastful words are undoubtedly recorded in the books — and we're told in advance what his ultimate fate will be.

The phrase about the other beasts being "stripped of their authority, but allowed to live for a period of time" draws a contrast between the fall of the first three Gentile kingdoms and the fourth. Elements of Babylon carried into Medo-Persia; elements of Medo-Persia carried into Greece — the first three lingered into one another. But when the fourth kingdom falls, it will be sudden, complete, and total. No element of it will influence Messiah's kingdom.

The 4th kingdom will not live on for a time but instead is completely replaced by the Kingdom of God, and that is a sudden and climactic event. We will try to point that out from Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 as we move forward... For now, let's get back

to the centerpiece of this vision! The relationship between the one like "a Son of Man" and the Ancient of Days.

Verses 13–14 — One Like a Son of Man

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

The relationship between "one like a Son of Man" and the Ancient of Days is as difficult to grasp as any description of the Godhead, the Trinity, or the plural unity of God. To start, this chapter presents a being that looks like a man — yet all peoples and nations worship this figure. That's unmistakably a reference to Deity. Our contention is that the Ancient of Days is the visible image of God. Which leaves the question: who, then, is the "one like a son of man"? We will begin by examining the phrase "coming on the clouds of heaven."

From the beginning of Israel's history, God's manifestation was strongly linked to clouds:

- **Exodus 19:16 (ESV)**

16 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

At Sinai, one of the greatest manifestations of the God in human history, he revealed himself in clouds! This manifestation would begin a motif that carries throughout the scripture.

- **Deuteronomy 33:2 (NIV)**

2 He said:

"The LORD came from Sinai
and dawned over them from Seir;

he shone forth from Mount Paran.
He came with myriads of holy ones
from the south, from his mountain slopes.

Deuteronomy 33, a highly prophetic passage, begins with God coming from the south followed by myriads of his holy ones. As the chapter continues we see the cloud rider motif continue:

- **Deuteronomy 33:26 (NIV)**

26 “There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,
who rides across the heavens to help you
and on the clouds in his majesty.

God is and always has been the cloud rider, accompanied by myriads of holy ones. As we continue you will see that only God is seen as the cloud rider.

- **2 Samuel 22:10–11 (NIV)**

10 He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.
11 He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared on the wings of the wind.

Here it is Adonai riding the clouds, with the cherubim forming His throne. This throne is called God's *Merkavah* or battle chariot by the rabbis.

- **Psalms 18:9 (NIV)**

9 He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.

Now in the writings we see Adonai riding with the clouds as his chariot. Consider the description given in this next verse.

- **Psalms 68:4 (NIV)**

4 Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds ;

rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.

Here we see a command to praise "him who rides on the clouds". This is a distinct phrase, it does not leave room for many cloud riders, but only one cloud rider who is to be praised, whose name is YHWH. The psalm furthers the imagery in verse 17:

- **Psalm 68:17 (NIV)**

17 The chariots of God are tens of thousands
and thousands of thousands;
the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary.

Once again, as God is seen coming on the clouds, thousands of thousands accompany him ready for battle! As you keep reading the psalm, the imagery only gets more powerful!

- **Psalm 68:33–34 (NIV)**

33 to him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens,
who thunders with mighty voice.
34 Proclaim the power of God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the heavens.

This scripture clearly portrays the cloud rider as the God of Israel! Let's read another scripture that describes how the surrounding nations view the God who rides on the clouds:

- **Isaiah 19:1 (ESV)**

19 An oracle concerning Egypt.

Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud
and comes to Egypt;
and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence,
and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.

When Adonai rides the cloud, it terrifies the Gentile nations and their gods — similar examples could be drawn from Joel or Zephaniah. So the entire biblical

motif is: Yahweh is the one who rides the clouds. With this in mind, let's re-read Daniel 7:13:

- **Daniel 7:13 (ESV)**

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.

The scripture is clear that the cloud rider who rules over Israel is YHWH, yet Daniel presents this cloud rider as "one like a son of man." Further, this passage presents the cloud rider, who is God, coming before the Ancient of Days, who is also God!

Considering what we just went through, listen to the words of Jesus.

- **Matthew 24:30 (ESV)**

30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The scripture is clear that the cloud rider is divine, and yet, Jesus, a man, claimed to be this cloud rider! Understanding the TaNaKh makes Jesus' statement in Matthew 24 a clear claim to his own divinity!

Consider further the language used in Daniel 7:

“Like” a Son of Man

the words translated “son of man” appear nearly two hundred times in the original languages of Scripture. There are eighty-four occurrences in the Gospels. And Ezekiel is addressed ninety-three times as “son of man.” In the Book of Daniel the prophet himself is addressed thus in 8:17, and the expression focuses on his humanity. Here in 7:13 the meaning of the term is also “human being,” but the context is quite different. The framework is that of an apocalyptic vision, and the words “son of man” come immediately after the Aramaic particle usually translated by the English adverb “like.” **This shows that the one referred to resembles a human being but in fact is not mortal.**

René Péter-Contesse and John Ellington, A Handbook on the Book of Daniel, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 190.

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Consider the implications of this in the larger scope of our chapter, Daniel sees four beasts that are “like” different animals; like a lion, like a bear, like a leopard, each one of them represents a king and an empire that is given dominion for a time. Now Daniel sees one who is “like” a son of man being given the kingdom forever! This passage is making a clear contrast between the beastly nature of the former rulers and the civil nature of the kingdom of God. Further, with

Nebuchadnezzar's conversion experience, the first beast becomes like a man, as though he is reborn in the likeness of the kingdom of God!

After studying Daniel 7, the reaction of the Jewish leaders to Jesus statement in Matthew 26 makes a lot more sense.

- **Matthew 26:63–65 (ESV)**

63 But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

64 Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy.

If Jesus were only claiming to be a human being, why would the high priest tear his robes and cry blasphemy? It's obvious from the context that Jesus' actual claim was that He is the one "like a son of man" as spoken of in Daniel, one who is in the form of a man, yet also much more, because He is the cloud rider. Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of Man" over 80 times in the Gospels (See Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary). Why does Jesus refer to himself in this way so consistently? Because it is the clearest depiction of someone like a man who is also God himself!

Not only did Jesus refer to himself as the cloud rider, angelic messengers continued the motif even after his resurrection.

- **Acts 1:9–10 (ESV)**

9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,

Jesus ascended in the clouds; He will return on the clouds; and only God is the cloud rider.

- **Revelation 1:7 (ESV)**

7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

Cloud Rider

Exodus 19:16
Deuteronomy 33:2
Deuteronomy 33:26
2 Samuel 22:10–11
Psalm 18:9
Psalm 68:4
Psalm 68:17
Psalm 68:33–34
Isaiah 19:1
Matthew 24:30
Matthew 26:63–65
Acts 1:9–10
Revelation 1:7
(and many more!)



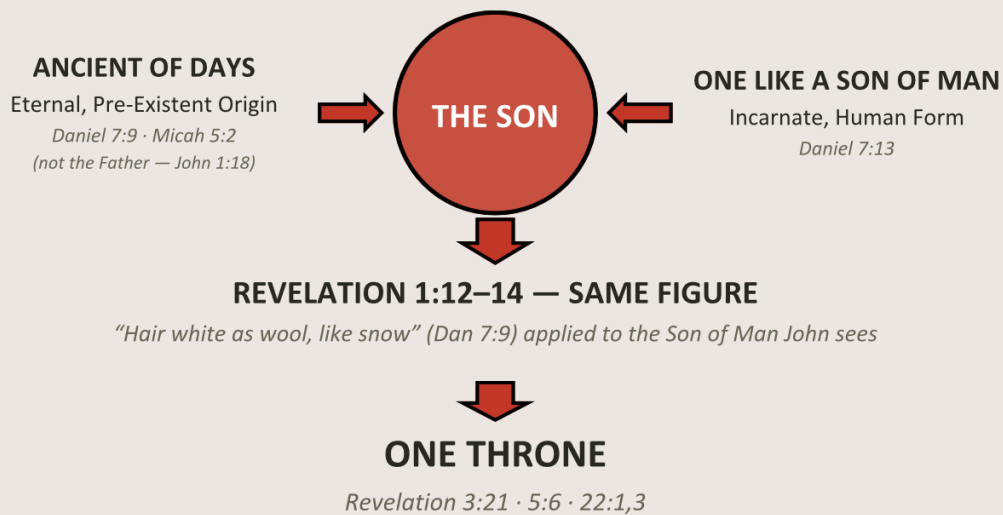
From the beginning to the end, Law, Prophets, Writings, Old and New Testament, God is always seen as the cloud rider, and as the narrative progresses, it becomes clear that Jesus is the specific name of that cloud rider.

One Throne

- **Revelation 3:21 (NIV)**

²¹ To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

The Ancient of Days Is the Son of Man



One singular throne, with more than one figure seated on it. At times Scripture portrays Jesus "at the right hand of the Father" — this is an expression, since the Father cannot be seen. In reality, there is only one literal throne, with Deity seated on it in human form, and that seat is occupied by Jesus.

Look what Jesus said:

- **Matthew 28:18 (NIV)**

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Not "some authority" — *all* authority.

- **John 5:22–23 (NIV)**

²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

No mere human being could ever truthfully claim honor equal to the Father's. It is a clear, one-to-one equivalence between the Son and the Father — even though they are not the same thing.

- **Revelation 5:6 (NIV)**

⁶Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

The throne of the Ancient of Days and the throne of the *Bar Enash* (which means "son of man" in the Aramaic here) are one and the same. It is the *Bar Enash* — the Lamb — standing at the center.

- **Revelation 7:17 (NIV)**

¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;
'he will lead them to springs of living water.'
'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'"

- **Revelation 19:4 (NIV)**

⁴The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:
"Amen, Hallelujah!"

The visible image of God — Jesus — is seated on the throne and worshiped because He is God. All of this language originates in Daniel 7, where the *Bar Enash* approaches the Ancient of Days.

- **Revelation 22:1–3 (NIV)**

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³No longer

will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

There is one throne, occupied by the Deity and by the only visual image of the Deity that can be seen.

- **Colossians 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

Philippians describes the method by which Adonai has revealed this to the powers on earth and in heaven — and reading it in light of Daniel 7, it becomes clear Paul is not merely writing poetry but describing what happened in that vision:

- **Philippians 2:6–11 (ESV)**

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This may change the way you read Psalm 2, Psalm 72, or any passage that features the King of Israel and implies He is more than a mere man. It is also how the biblical themes of a human deliverer and God as the deliverer merge into a single figure. He was born of a woman — that makes Him like a man. He had no earthly father — that makes Him more than a man, because God is His Father. Philippians 2 is, in effect, Daniel 7 explained.

Verses 15–18 — Daniel Seeks the Interpretation

15 “I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. 16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this.

“So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 17 ‘The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. 18 But the holy people

of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’

Daniel, who has calmly interpreted mysteries for Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, now finds himself deeply troubled by what he has seen. He has received the vision but does not immediately understand it. Rather than assuming its meaning, Daniel humbly approaches one of the heavenly attendants and asks for its interpretation.

Notice that although the beasts are represented by individual creatures, the interpretation speaks of kingdoms...or, as we've been calling them, empires. These beasts represent more than individual rulers; they encompass the entire political systems over which those rulers reign. Likewise, Israel and the graft-ins receive everything their King has received, because they are His body.

(Don't Read)



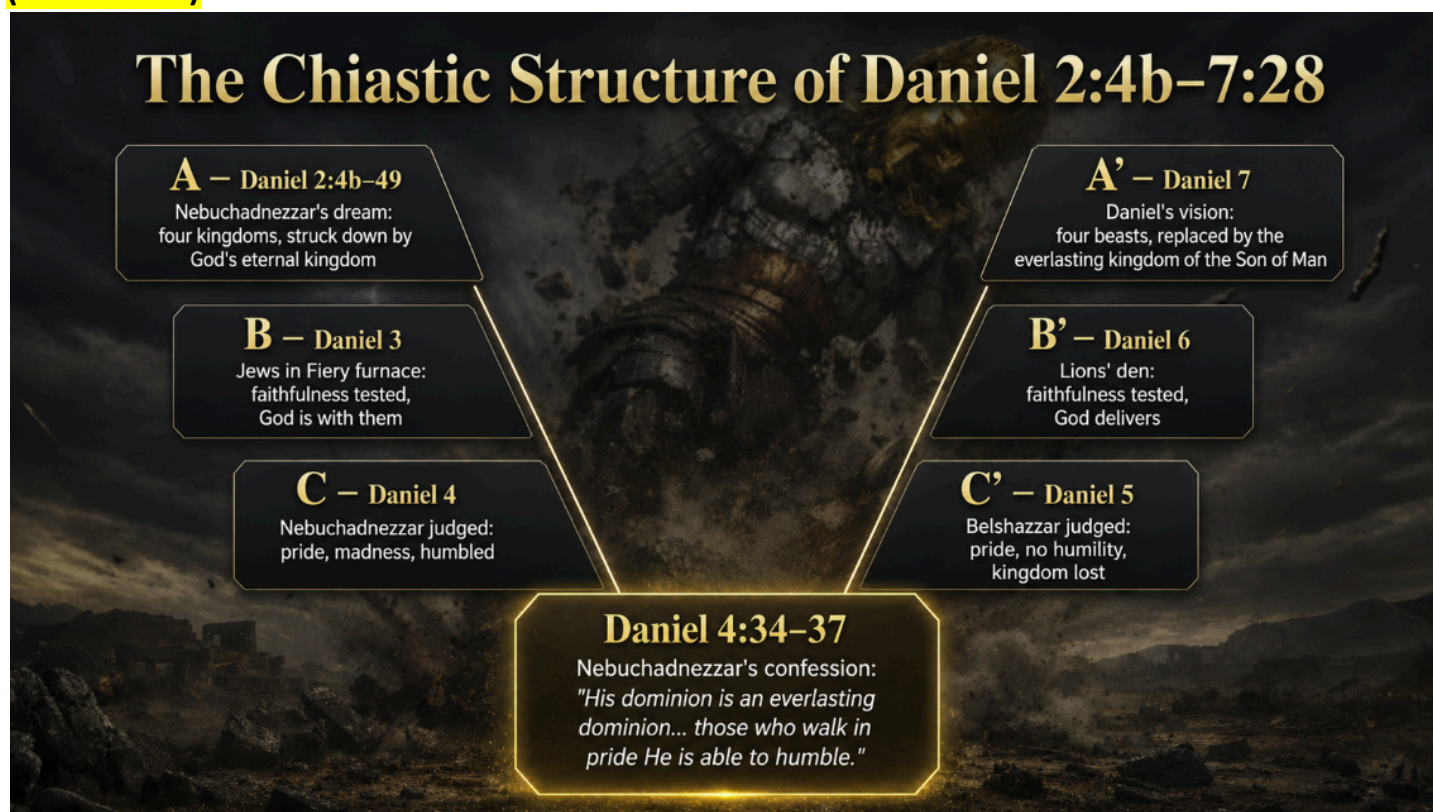
As a reminder, throughout this study we have intentionally referred to Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece as empires rather than kingdoms. We have done this because the biblical word translated as "kingdom" can describe anything from a

small regional realm to a vast multinational dominion. For clarity, we reserve the word *empire* for the great world powers Daniel describes.

The identification of the four beasts as four successive empires should immediately remind us of Daniel 2. What Nebuchadnezzar saw as a magnificent statue, Daniel sees as ravenous beasts. The sequence is the same, but God's perspective is entirely different.

This is why we've repeatedly pointed to the chiastic structure of Daniel.

(Don't Read)



We described the chiastic structure in Daniel as a **book within a book**, framed by two major visions. The first bookend is Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, where the wisest men in the world are exposed as powerless imposters. The second bookend is Daniel's own vision, which, like Nebuchadnezzar's dream, cannot be understood apart from divine revelation.

Verses 19–22 — The Fourth Beast Wars Against the Saints

19 “Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. 20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

After everything Daniel has seen, one detail captures his thoughts more than any other. In his first telling of the dream, he left this detail out — and it's a significant one, which is exactly why he was so troubled:

21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,

This is a big detail which explains why Daniel would have been so troubled by the dream — to the point of his complexion changing. The certainty of a specific period of tribulation for the saints is stated explicitly throughout Scripture:

- **Matthew 24:21–22 (NIV)**

²¹ **For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.**

²² **“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**

Interpreters who assume believers will be removed before this period should be just as disturbed by this detail as Daniel was — and our suggestion is that they ask for heavenly assistance rather than construct pre-tribulation fairy tales.

The saints must endure a great war and distress that is unparalleled in all of history. If there was no intervention, there would be no survivors. Let the seriousness of this event cause you to feel the weight of what Daniel might have been feeling as he is looking at this vision.

Let's look at Revelation 13 to see another instance of this certain tribulation:

- **Revelation 13:1–2 (NIV)**

13 The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

Notice that the beast that is rising from the sea is said to encompass elements of a leopard, a bear, and a lion— and it has ten horns on its head.

The Dragon gave the beast his power, his throne, and great authority.

Can you see that these beastly gentile empires are all from the same satanic root, although varying in manifestations?

Let's pickup in verse 5 to see what this beast does on the earth:

- **Revelation 13:5–10 (NIV)**

⁵ The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶ He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. ⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear.

¹⁰ If anyone is to go into captivity,
into captivity he will go.

If anyone is to be killed with the sword,
with the sword he will be killed.

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

Proud blasphemies, waging war against God's holy people, conquering them, and having authority over all people's on the earth...

To add on top of all this, the immense weight of what Daniel is seeing in this vision in our chapter tonight, look at this slide from the sermon *"Your Bible Is Zionist"*:

(DO NOT READ SLIDE)

The Worst Time

Jeremiah 30:7 (ESV) Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it.

Matthew 24:21 (ESV) For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

Daniel 12:1 (ESV) "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

Mark 13:19 (ESV) For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be.

The little horn will wage war, defeat, and work toward conquering God's people. He will begin this process and be succeeding in defeating the people of God. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness — not escapism, and not faithlessness. With these scriptures in mind, you can start to gain a better grasp of why this vision in Daniel 7 would have disturbed Daniel.

Do you all want to know the best part about Daniel 7:21??

It's verse 22!

22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

This is the whole point of the vision, and the theme of Daniel! In the midst of Gentile kingdoms that degrade in value while increasing in strength, Jesus will pronounce judgment in favor of the saints, and they will possess the kingdom of God on the earth. The last manifestation of beastly Gentile power is a blasphemous little horn who will seem to win for a time — but his destiny will match all the others, only more suddenly and totally. When a Holy One gives an interpretation, we ought to pay careful attention and refrain from reworking his statements.

Verses 23–27 — The Interpretation, in Full

23 "He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

The fourth kingdom found no parallel with the beastly kingdoms that preceded it. It is expressly different, and Daniel could not draw a comparable image from the animal world or from his own experience, and neither could the holy one interpreting for him. Which is really saying something since he lived through the destruction of Jerusalem itself. He couldn't explain the horrors of this fourth beast.

This little horn wages war against "the saints", which is God's covenant people. Daniel later defines them as "the people of the Most High" in verse 27, referring first to Israel, while the Newer Testament reveals that believing Gentiles share in that inheritance through the Messiah. These are the people whom the little horn seeks to oppress.

This is reiteration with additional explanation: the period of oppression will be "a time, times, and half a time." This may be the most documented period in human history, foretold in advance. When we reach Daniel 9, we'll list the cross-references — you'll become familiar with terms like 42 months, 1,260 days, and three and a half years.

The only escape Daniel is told about is when the little horn's power is taken away — that is, when the fourth kingdom is displaced by the Kingdom of God. There's no rapture revealed here. Daniel is not shown an escape from the oppression. The only deliverance revealed in this vision comes when the heavenly court sits, the little horn is judged, and the Kingdom of God replaces the beastly kingdoms.

26 "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

Endless debates rage about the extent to which this fourth kingdom encompasses the world — the known biblical world, or the entire globe?

One thing is certain: the kingdom given to the saints is described as "the kingdoms under the whole heaven." That is universal language and cannot mean anything less than the whole world.

We'll explore the coalition of antichrist nations — the same recurring group of ten — in coming chapters. Popular fiction has trained readers to picture the antichrist's dominion as strictly worldwide, which is where much of the debate centers.

Whatever the exact boundaries of the fourth kingdom, Daniel leaves no uncertainty about the boundaries of the fifth. The dominion given to the saints encompasses "the kingdoms under the whole heaven." Every beastly empire will eventually give way to the universal reign of the Kingdom of God. That is the hope toward which this entire vision has been moving.

28 "This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

Daniel had spent nearly his whole life in Gentile-occupied territory, he was taken from his homeland as a teenager, he was under threat of death through most of the book's first six chapters — and yet the revelation of what the saints must

endure in the last day is what turned his face pale. This is clearly not the reaction of a man who had just received a pre-tribulation rapture revelation.

- **Philippians 3:20–21 (ESV)**

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Our citizenship is in the Kingdom established by heaven, coming from that direction. The son of man will come on the clouds with power and authority to give us an eternal Kingdom. He will bring everything under His control, and He will transform us to be like Him.

- **Hebrews 2:5–8 (ESV)**

5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. 6 It has been testified somewhere,

“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man, that you care for him?

7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,

8 putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.

We live in the time of the Gentiles, in a world of rebellion against the Israeli Messiah — and it shows up everywhere in increasing measure: injustice, suffering, death. We acknowledge this reality, and by faith we possess the title deed to what is coming. That's why the following verses matter so much:

- **Hebrews 2:9–10 (ESV)**

9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

We will be perfected in the same process by which Messiah was shown to be perfect. We will faithfully endure whatever the little horn with the big mouth throws at us, trusting in the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. We can do this precisely because we see Jesus — the "one like a son of man" and the Ancient of Days, one and the same, on the throne. All judgment is His, and we are His.