

## Survey of the Bible Daniel 7:1-25

As we come to chapter 7 we notice a technique utilized in this book that we also see used in other apocalyptic writings, like Revelation, where a similar event is revisited and different details are given that help the reader to better understand the intention of God's will concerning His Kingdom.

This technique is described as progressive parallelism or recapitulation. In other words, God is either adding information or giving the same information from a different perspective.

And so, when the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel opens it revisits the man who died in chapter 5 and that is Belshazzar.

What I have attempted to do in most of my studies through the O.T. Scriptures is to paint with broader strokes covering more ground as we try and make this a Survey of the Old Testament.

However, as has been the case with some of these books, we have parked ourselves in a particular area where more explanation is required to get the full sense of what the Lord is conveying to His people and this part of Daniel is one of those places.

When it comes to this type of revelation from God much of the imagery seems bizarre and hard to follow. And as we'll see it was also difficult for Daniel as he continually asks the Lord for some sense of clarity on what is being revealed to him.

Sometimes he'll get the answer and sometimes he doesn't, but simply because he is still in the dark concerning certain matters does not mean that there isn't an explanation for what is being revealed to him.

Remember that the revelation concerning the redemption of God's people and the Kingdom promised to them is progressive throughout history.

And so, what was revealed to Adam and Eve was less clear to them but was a sufficient foundation that was later added upon by other prophets.

And so, for example, whereas Adam and Eve were promised a Messiah who was identified as the seed of the woman, this seed would be further identified as one who would be born of a virgin many years later.

**Isaiah 7:14** <sup>14</sup> "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

This revelation would be further expounded upon as the fullness of times would finally reveal what had been hidden for many years.

**Hebrews 1:1-2** <sup>NAU</sup> God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

And so, the basic principle concerning the revelation given to any of God's prophets is first and foremost a revelation of Jesus Christ and only the N.T. Scriptures can ultimately identify what those prophets looked forward to.

And so, we cannot take the O.T. prophets and define what is future with them, but rather we must take the N.T. Scriptures to be the defining revelation as we utilize both Old and New testament writings to discover what it is that God is telling us of His future Kingdom and His people in that Kingdom.

This is what Daniel has revealed to him by God in this vision we will look at next.

**Daniel 7:1** <sup>NAU</sup> In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind *as he lay* on his bed; then he wrote the dream down *and* related the *following* summary of it.

What's interesting about this first verse is that Daniel was given a dream and visions by God and we are told that we wrote the dream down in summary form, or as the NIV puts it, he wrote down the substance of the dream. The NKJV version gives a pretty good sense of it when it says this.

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Daniel 7:1** In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head *while* on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, *telling the main facts*.

Evidently, Daniel is recapping the main points as the Holy Spirit guides him through this dream/vision.

And so, it is possible that Daniel saw a lot more than what he has written down but what he has written down is what God wanted him to record.

This revelation comes to him in the first year of Belshazzar. Chapter 5 obviously happened in the last year of Belshazzar's rule and so Daniel goes back to the very beginning and tells us that this vision happened some time ago.

**Daniel 7:2-14** <sup>2</sup> Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. <sup>3</sup> "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. <sup>4</sup> "The first *was* like a lion and had *the* wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. <sup>5</sup> "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs *were* in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' <sup>6</sup> "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. <sup>7</sup> "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts*. <sup>9</sup> "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His *vesture was* like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, Its wheels *were* a burning fire. <sup>10</sup> "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. <sup>11</sup> "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. <sup>12</sup> "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. <sup>13</sup> "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. <sup>14</sup> "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

There's a lot going on here and Daniel is as perplexed as we might be as we look at all the imagery, but the overall message is one that takes us on a journey through history from Daniel's time to our present time and into the future Kingdom that will not pass away and will not be destroyed.

Like Daniel I am simply starting with the main facts.

Now, let's look at some of the details as Daniel seeks an explanation and gets one.

**Daniel 7:15-18** <sup>15</sup> "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. <sup>16</sup> "I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: <sup>17</sup> "These great beasts, which are four *in number*, are four kings *who* will arise from the earth. <sup>18</sup> 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

Essentially, the one standing by Daniel explains to him the overall message which is the one I just gave. There will be kings, described as beasts, who will arise from the earth which is another way of describing different kingdoms in history, but the one Kingdom that will remain is not one of those four but an everlasting kingdom whose King is the Highest and the saints will possess this Kingdom.

If you get nothing else from all of the imagery we see in Daniel you must get this because it is the foundation for everything else to follow.

Daniel seems to be satisfied with this explanation but he has a special interest in the exact meaning of the fourth kingdom.

**Why do you suppose he would have an interest in this particular kingdom?**

Because as we will see this particular kingdom is different from the rest because it is a kingdom that is more horrible than the other three and it finds its expression toward the end of time. But the end of time as Daniel sees it is not necessarily the end of time as we see it.

Now we need to keep the context in mind here. Daniel is a prophet in exile and he is inquiring of the Lord regarding the nearing of the time when the exile will be over. We see this more clearly as he revisits the time in which Darius is still ruling a little later in this book.

**Daniel 9:1-3** <sup>NAU</sup> In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans-- <sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the *prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.* <sup>3</sup> So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

Daniel knows that the seventy years are about to come to an end, (the end of time), and that the Kingdom of Israel will be reestablished as the sanctuary will be rebuilt and a remnant will return to the land.

But what Daniel will soon learn is that the reestablishment of the Kingdom that he sees in the vision foreshadows a Kingdom that will find its ultimate expression as one that outlives every earthly kingdom and the powers of this world.

The other thing to remember is that this is not the first time that Daniel is introduced to these four kingdoms.

Remember that when he served under Nebuchadnezzar he was also given the interpretation to the King's dream which involved four kingdoms.

**Daniel 2:31-45** "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome.

<sup>32</sup> "The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. <sup>35</sup> "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> "This *was* the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. <sup>37</sup> "You, O king, are

the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory;<sup>38</sup> and wherever the sons of men dwell, *or* the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given *them* into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.<sup>39</sup> "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.<sup>40</sup> "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.<sup>41</sup> "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay.<sup>42</sup> "As the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of pottery, *so* some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.<sup>43</sup> "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.<sup>44</sup> "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.<sup>45</sup> "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

The fourth beast or kingdom that Daniel sees in chapter 7 is the same kingdom that he saw in chapter 2 that overpowers the other three.

**Daniel 2:40** "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.

But someone might argue that the statue in chapter 2 describing four kingdoms cannot be the same because the description of these kingdoms in chapter 7 is entirely different. That's the point. God can and does reveal things about the world and history and the ultimate redemption of His people in different ways. But it's the same story.

There are only four kingdoms being utilized in each chapter, each ending with the ultimate kingdom being set up by God and for God and His people.

**Daniel 2:44-45** <sup>44</sup> *"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.* <sup>45</sup>  
"Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

The same is true of the fourth kingdom or beast of chapter 7 with the same result.

**Daniel 7:19** <sup>19</sup> "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast,

And he is given an explanation and then we are told this.

**Daniel 7:23** <sup>23</sup> "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the *other* kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.

**Daniel 7:27** <sup>27</sup> "Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; ***His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.***'

Daniel is living in a time where the kings of the earth, particularly Babylon, have taken the people of God captive. He is seeking to know the times and epochs, told in the dreams and visions God has given him, so as to understand when God will restore His chosen remnant people Israel.

But what Daniel does not fully understand is that God is showing him a picture of a restored Israel returning to the land after the kingdoms of this world have trampled her down, but that particular Israel is the Kingdom that crushes the fourth kingdom of this world and rises to be an everlasting Kingdom.

The New Testament shows this true Israel of God to be Christ, and His kingdom-people include all the redeemed, Jew and Gentile.

It would be very easy to get so caught up in the imagery of the book of Daniel that we lose sight of the big picture God is showing Daniel as the Lord is the One who is directing the kingdoms of the

world in such a way as to reveal how He will destroy the kingdoms of this world and will establish His everlasting kingdom, as none will stay His hand.

Obviously, there are things here in chapter 7 that are still controversial and have perplexed many regarding the future kingdom of God as they have perplexed Daniel, one of which involves the mysterious time, times and half a time.

**Daniel 7:25** <sup>25</sup> 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

This is closely related to verse 12.

**Daniel 7:12** <sup>12</sup> "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was **granted to them for an appointed period of time.**

As we will see next time this appointed period of time for these kingdoms is allowed until which time the King of kings sets up His eternal kingdom.

I hope you can begin to see that the symbolism is not meant to get in the way of the plain teaching that the kingdoms of this world, no matter how they are displayed with bizarre imagery, represent all kingdoms that have been subject to the seed of Satan and will continue to fight against the people of God to the very end.

But there is One who will judge that kingdom and establish His own for His glory and our good. That Kingdom was established some 2,000 years ago and will find its ultimate expression when the King comes back for His own.

Follow the progression in the following verses and you'll see what Daniel was shown.

**John 12:28-31** <sup>28</sup> "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup> So the crowd *of people* who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, "An angel has spoken to Him." <sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. <sup>31</sup> ***"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.***

**Revelation 1:5-6** <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To



Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood-- <sup>6</sup> and ***He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father-- to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

**Revelation 11:15** <sup>15</sup> Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "***The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ***; and He will reign forever and ever."

**Revelation 19:15-16** <sup>15</sup> From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "***KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.***"

**Revelation 21:1-7** <sup>NAU</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and ***He will dwell among them***, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." <sup>6</sup> Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. <sup>7</sup> "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.