

CONCERNING THE WAY

January 27, 2009

LESSON 45: PROPHECY SERIES — THE BOOK OF DANIEL



Apocalyptic literature is basically three books in the Bible: Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation. They are books that most people are intrigued about, they're very difficult to interpret but the reason they are difficult is that they are full of symbols, much more so than any other books of the Bible. And if you're going to define what the symbols means, you have to interpret them according to how they are used in Zechariah, Daniel, and Revelation.

Symbols are used consistently. So you don't have to worry about somebody coming up to you and saying, well that's just his interpretation, or that's just so and so's interpretation, as though the Bible is a mirror and whoever looks at it comes away seeing himself in the pages of Scripture. That's the mirror theory of literature. True, a lot of modern authors are no better than a mirror, but the Scriptural authors had a great Author behind them, and so the Bible is not a mirror and cannot be treated by the mirror theory of interpretation of literature. You don't interpret it by reading into it, you read out of it. If someone talks to you they don't expect you to take it 8,000 different ways. If you write a letter to somebody you don't expect whoever receives your letter to sit there and dream up 45 different ways to interpret what you've written. The act of writing something down means that you are interested in communicating something definite; not two things but one thing, that words are not ambiguous, and even symbols are not meant to be ambiguous.

So Apocalyptic literature, though symbolic, is not ambiguous. But here is why apocalyptic literature seems so difficult and hidden; apocalyptic literature is deliberately difficult, it is literature to be read only by believers. It is private literature of the Christian. It is deliberately written to frustrate the foreigner, the unbeliever, the skeptic who would peek into the Scripture, hoping that in those portions he would find something that he could criticize. And so it is difficult, it requires that you have personally trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ; it also requires that you personally have a background in the divine viewpoint framework. Apocalyptic literature came last in the progress of the Bible. God gave Genesis, God gave the Law, God gave the Psalms, God gave Proverbs, God gave prophets, and then God gave apocalyptic literature which tells you that you must become proficient first in the other books of the Bible before you can understand, at least these three, Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation.

And it's even difficult for the novice believer. I'm not trying to discourage you, I'm trying to encourage you if you have a difficult time with this just stay with it, you'll get it, but the longer you've been in the Word the easier this becomes. There's no magic pill that you can take for instant spirituality. You just have to take more time of exposure to the Word of God.

50 years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue, Daniel is given a dream that parallels that dream in many ways, but adds more details. Again God reveals to Daniel and to us that he will establish Gentile kingdoms and then remove them, and finally set up His own kingdom, which will never end.

Daniel 7:1 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.

This occurs during the first year of Belshazzar's reign – 553 BC, Daniel is in his mid-60's. Chronologically the chapter takes place between chapters 4 and 5. Daniel didn't write down all the details of the vision, it says that this is a summary of it.

The reason these chapters are out of chronological sequence is that the first half of Daniel is all written about his political career and his dealings with the outsiders. Now chapter 7 is dealing with information given only to the mature believer. Now we're dealing with God's secrets, secrets that are not to be shared openly with the world, secrets that are to be known only by those who are interested in God's secrets.

The kingdom of man is depicted in chapter 2 with emphasis on God's sovereignty. The kingdom of man is depicted in chapter 7 with God's justice. There's a shift; I'll list some of these characteristics. In the early part of the book the emphasis is on God's sovereignty; now the emphasis shifts to God's righteousness - is He just? Is evil going to be eradicated? Now why do you suppose there's a shift? It's simple; the first part of the book is written to the world and the thing that characterizes the Biblical God to the world is that He's a big God and sovereign and you have to meet Him there.

But for the believer, they already know God is sovereign, that's not their problem, the problem isn't that God isn't in control of history. The problem the believer has in times of suffering is wondering is God just? Is He merciful to maintain this tremendous pressure upon us as we suffer and suffer, and His kingdom never seems to come, it's all the way into the future.

Another shift is in the recipients of the dreams and the visions. In the first dreams and visions in the first part of Daniel the Gentiles receive the vision. In this part of the book only the Jews receive the vision, and one Jew in particular—Daniel. And then there's a shift in who does the interpreting. The first part of it was that Daniel would always seek the Lord and the Lord would give Daniel the interpretation of the vision and dream. The last part of the book Daniel looks in his vision and he's sleeping but in the vision he's awake, and he sees this as a three dimensional movie type thing, a hologram or something.

And as Daniel is watching this thing there's an angel standing by him. Daniel turns to what is called "the interpreting angel." That's his name. Zechariah does the same thing and so does John, typical of apocalyptic literature, wherever these visions come there are angels that tell what the vision means. They are teaching angels and they are to teach men what these symbols mean, the implication is that you can't guess the symbols apart from revelation. That's why the keys to this book are wrapped up and locked and only mature believers can understand. The unbeliever cannot understand because they cannot find the key to the symbols; it requires the teaching angels that communicate this.

So we have the command in Daniel 12:4 and you see the angel telling him. "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase." So the angel is telling Daniel that there are some things about this apocalyptic vision that are intended for believers in the latter days.

Now in the 21st century we can understand more of Daniel's apocalyptic literature than any other generation of believers and here's why. First of all in the 21st century we have a global mentality which we have never had; a global mentality forced upon us by the news media, by deprivation of energy resources, by world wars, by the threat of a nuclear holocaust and so on.

Another factor we can understand in our generation that the Jews particularly could not understand before is the rise of the state of Israel since 1948. So we've had events in our own generation that allow us to benefit from these writings. So the angel had us in mind when he said this to Daniel.

Daniel 7:2 Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea."

This dream concerns the "Times of the Gentiles", the time when Judah would be trampled by Gentile

powers, and there is no reigning Davidic king. It began in 605 BC, and will end with the 2nd coming of Christ. This chapter really goes together with chapter 2.

The sea is believed to represent the mass of Gentile humanity; this is well supported in many places in the Bible. What do the four winds represent? Well, it has to do with the sovereignty and providence of God, but there's more than that. Let's dig deeper.

Obviously four is the picture of completeness, four winds means that the wind is coming from every direction. But does this just mean wind or does the word "wind" in verse 2 have a double meaning? Is it just the picture of a placid sea being whipped up by the wind? Let's look at this a moment. If we have the sea and that equals people, what can the wind be? Not the literal wind, we don't have the wind blowing the people around; the wind too must be a symbol of something. What is the wind a symbol of? In the Hebrew the word "wind" is ruach, hard "ch." Ruach is also the word for spirit.

I'm going to take you to three passages that gives us insight as to what these four winds are because we are again studying a symbol and we must understand the symbol to understand the principle. The first passage is Ezekiel 37; remember this is an apocalyptic vision too, and he's observing the visions when God is telling him about the regathering of the nation Israel and he observes the bones.

Ezekiel 37:7-8 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. (8) And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them.

So they're just like some Frankenstein monsters standing there in a field and they're just standing, there's no breath in them, they're dead, but the bones have assembled themselves, and the flesh has come around them.

Ezekiel 37:9-12 Then He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'" (10) So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. (11) Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' (12) "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.

This does not refer to resurrection, he is using resurrection imagery but this is referring to restoration of the people to their land as seen in Ezekiel 37:21-22,

Ezekiel 37:21-22 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; (22) and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms.

We have, then, the regathering of the nation Israel. But there's something to observe. How does this regathering proceed? God says in verses 21-22 that He does it; it is a miraculous regathering of the state of Israel. But in verse 9, in apocalyptic imagery it is "the four winds" that accomplish this. Now if this is all

we had we could guess that the four winds has something to do with carrying out God's program, but fortunately the Bible doesn't leave us here; fortunately Jesus elaborated on the passage in Matthew 24:31. Here you see a passage where Jesus speaks of the same thing, that is, the regathering of the nation Israel. And as Jesus speaks of this regathering, as He has in His mind exactly what Ezekiel had in his mind, in what terms does Jesus refer to this?

Matthew 24:31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other."

He's talking about Himself, He's looking forward in time to the Son of man. The elect are those who are regenerate Jews. Now we haven't seen that restoration yet. The nation of Israel is undergoing two restorations, one began in 1948 and is a restoration in unbelief, but this restoration is not that one, this is a yet future restoration in faith. It is the resurrection to be accomplished by Jesus personally when He returns. He will gather together every Jew out of the tribulation. Prior to Christ's return there has been seven years of tribulation and during those seven years thousands and thousands of Jews have trusted in Christ. They're scattered all over the world. And Jesus, when He comes back, is going to return these, but He says here He's going to do it by sending His angels to gather them. Now what form are these angels going to take, we don't know, but the angels are going to be performing a function and the point is that where Ezekiel says the four winds do the gathering, Jesus says the angels do the gathering. So the Ezekiel passage at least tells us that the four winds has something miraculous about them, referring to a special work of God in history. There's another passage in the Old Testament that talks about these four winds.

Zechariah 6:1-8 Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. (2) With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, (3) with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. (4) Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord?" (5) The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth, (6) with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country. (7) "When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth." And He said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. (8) Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, "See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north."

In other words, these four angels or these four spirits are commanding officers of a global force of angels that operate in the geopolitical environment. This is why sociology and schemes of political science in their analysis of various actions in history will never arrive at truth; they arrive only at partial truth. You cannot go back and analyze, let's say the American Revolution, and analyze it just from the standpoint of economics. You can also look at it from a military standpoint, for example.

You could look at the American Revolution from many, many different angles but there's one that you'd probably never look at in an average classroom, and that is angelic interaction. The Bible insists that when all is said and done, whatever aspect you're using to analyze the historic event will always be incomplete unless you take into account angelic forces that operate on all of these factors. History is open, not closed. Reality does not stop at the ceiling, but the modern scholar always arrogantly says I will not study what I cannot assume under my own authority; he arbitrarily cuts everything off at the ceiling. So all we have are material factors. And so everyone wonders why we can't get a hold of real historic events. It's simple,

because history is God's story; you have to go to Him to find out the keys to these events.

Now here Zechariah is giving the key to 5th and 4th century history, just like Ezekiel is giving the key to future history, Daniel 7, to 6th century history Zechariah is the 4th and 5th century, and he says that the key to history in that period is the activity of these four spirits that operate in the north country which in the area of what is now Iraq, Syria and the south country which is now Egypt, and he says because of angelic factors operating on the political scene, we have certain things happen in the 4th and 5th century of our history.

So Zechariah 6, in addition to Ezekiel 37, substantiate the position these are not just four innocent winds. They are four angelic forces. Now for a third passage; if we've dealt with Daniel, with Zechariah, with Ezekiel, where do you suppose the other one would be? Revelation 7:1-3 all four books of the apocalyptic literature, the symbology is the same from book to book. These four books have to be studied together; when they are you have a consistent picture emerge.

Revelation 7:1-3 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. (2) And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, (3) saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads."

The picture there is of this mighty angelic force, invisible to the man who rejects the Word of God; absolutely inconceivable to the humanist and naturalist, but to those whose eyes who by God's grace have been opened to these factors in history, there we have these four angelic forces, poised for action. And there's one angel that holds up his hand and says stop until we finish securing the believers. Now the believers don't know this is going on. That's the most magnificent part of it all. The believers who live in that future day and age will have no idea that there's an angel coming up and somehow marking him. But there will be angelic forces throughout the world and these angels are holding back, ready to launch a tremendous assault on the physical environment of man, holding it back in time while these angelic beings go in and take care of the believers to protect them.

So these three passages, Ezekiel, Zechariah and Revelation show the role of these four angels in many different situations. We can summarize the four winds of heaven as a set of geopolitical angelic forces; normally they cannot be seen. So Daniel saw in the vision; now we can interpret verse 2.

So the interpretation of verse 2 is that sometime around 600 BC God had these angelic forces, most likely fallen angels, operate on fallen Gentile humanity.

Daniel 7:3 "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another."

It's interesting that the chapter 2 dream of Nebuchadnezzar is a very attractive dream, a beautiful picture of a great empire. But this dream is from the perspective of Daniel, and to him it seems disgusting, we see four disgusting beasts here, they represent a terrible time ahead for the Jewish people.

Observe that from out of the sea come the animals. If the sea is fallen humanity, and it was the wind or the fallen angelic forces allowed by God's sovereignty to operate on fallen humanity, we get an equation. Fallen humanity plus satanic influence equals animal behavior. And that's a principle of history. Wherever

you have large masses of people who lack doctrine, who lack a heritage and a culture that is built upon Godly principles, they become vulnerable to satanic assault, and when that culture becomes subject to satanic assault, you will have animal like behavior in every area. You will have mobs of people who act like animals. And we have to ask ourselves, what is the difference between animals and men?

Well, an animal responds to a situation by instinctive behavior patterns and some learned behavior patterns, mostly instinct. He has a set of instincts that tell him what to do, and he may be trained. But animals do not have the image of God, and they do not have conscience. So, when you take a man and a man responds to a situation, he has his learned behavior patterns but he has understanding, he understands right and wrong, because he has a conscience and an animal doesn't. If that's the case, then what's the significance of these kings that come out of the seething sea of fallen humanity, whipped up by demons?

What is it that is produced? A conscience-less society, so when God goes to condemn these four kingdoms he says these they are animals, they lack conscience, they have rejected the Word over and over, and the result is that socially you have an animal; the whole thing is one monster.

Daniel 7:4 "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."

Notice that it doesn't say it was a lion, but it was like a lion. So we don't really know what these beasts looked like. The lion was the symbol of Babylon, and even today if you go to the rebuilt Babylon you will see pictures of lions with wings.

We can correlate these four beasts with the four kingdoms in chapter 2. The first beast represents Babylon, and the wings may refer to how quickly it conquered the chosen people. Verse 4 must be referring to what happened to Nebuchadnezzar personally in chapter 4, becoming like an animal for 7 years and then being restored to his sane human mind again when he acknowledged the God of heaven.

The first thing is the animal is a lion and an eagle, the beast of prey. An interesting historical sub note, of course, that should be familiar to those of us in the west, the lion is the symbol of Great Britain (not in this prophecy, I'm just saying that later in history Great Britain used the lion), and we have used the eagle. When this country was formed they had a conference as to what the national mascot was to be. And there's a story that Benjamin Franklin nominated the turkey; that would be interesting to have the turkey as our mascot, but the reason Benjamin Franklin did that was apparently he knew history enough to know that there was something to this business of always selecting an aggressive preying animal. The turkey represented plentifulness and did not represent this kind of aggression, but our country went ahead and all the western powers are basically together in this preying concept, the nations just gravitate to these concepts. The Russians depict the bear. So these animal-like symbols shouldn't be a problem to most of us, we use them today. The change in your pocket may have at least one of these animals on it.

This picture of a lion with an eagle's wings is something that would have been known to the Babylonians. The Babylonians used this symbol, they've found these in archeology all through the ancient world. So it is a symbol that would have been understood by the people of the time. If you walked into Nebuchadnezzar's palace, all over that blue gray brick were animals, and many of them were the lions with the eagle wings.

The significance of wings is power, Isaiah 8:8 is an illustration of that, the idea of spreading out the wings means to conquer many lands. You stretch out the wings and they encompass territory, so it's expansive, the lion that stretches out his wings. But something happens to lions and the rest of verse 4 has to do with

a historic event we have already studied in Daniel 3, the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. It's significant that after he died, the Babylonians never expanded beyond his domain. The wings had been clipped, there was no further imperialism, the Babylonians flourished in many, many ways but they had done something that the previous powers had never done and they paid a price for it.

Daniel 7:5 "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!'"

The 2nd animal represents the Medo-Persian empire, portrayed as resembling a bear. The picture of it being raised up on one side is seen as representative of how the Persians dominated the Medes. The three ribs could refer to the three conquered provinces of Lydia, Babylonia, and Egypt, but it could be other areas. "Much meat" could refer to the other areas Persia conquered.

Now the word bear is identical to a lion in the sense that in many cases in the Bible both the animals are picked out very prominently for their ferocity. For example, in 1 Samuel 17:34 David talks about how he killed the lion and a bear and so on. In Hosea 13:8 the bear is used; in Amos 5:9 the bear is used; he also occurs in Proverbs 28:15. In all these usages in the Bible the bear is a ferocious man-killing animal and pictures what happens to people in these kingdoms.

The bear is a picture of the second kingdom, the kingdom of Medo-Persia. Who said "Arise, devour much meat." It was the four winds that worked upon the sea, or in other words the angels.

Daniel 7:6 "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."

The 3rd beast represents the Hellenistic empire, what we know of as Greece. The leopard is a very fast animal, which relates to the rapid conquests of Alexander the Great. The four wings and four heads may refer to the division of the empire after Alexander's death. Alexander had no heirs, so when he died his empire was divided among his four generals. Chapter 8 will have more to say about these four generals. The Greeks trampled down the chosen people from 331 to 63 BC.

What is the difference between the leopard and the preceding animals? We know the lion and the bear, they're picked out for their strength, their ferocity, the fact they can deal devastating blows quickly. Why is the leopard picked out? The leopard is picked out not only because he can kill but because of his speed. And the fact that he has four wings emphasizes speed again, it emphasizes, like the wings of the lion the spreading of power and sovereignty over vast geographical expanse, but it means primarily speed, and it refers to Alexander the Great. Cyrus is the bear and Alexander the Great is the leopard.

Keep in mind that Alexander the Great conquered the world in five years. And it took the Persians 35 years, so we have a fact of history corresponding very well to these symbols. Alexander shocked the ancient world, that he was able in five years to conquer it. His empire grew fast and it fell apart fast, but the story of Alexander is one of the more thrilling stories of history which probably is omitted in most history courses.

Now the liberal higher critics, in order to avoid the problem of supernatural prophecy, have tried to rearrange these beasts so that the lion becomes the Babylonian kingdom; the bear becomes the Medes, the leopard becomes the Persians, and the fourth monster becomes the Greeks. And they have to do that because the liberal holds to a Maccabean date for Daniel, that Daniel was written late, that Daniel doesn't have real prophecy, that it was written after the fact. So he must carefully insulate his theology from any

hints that God supernaturally reveals Himself, and in order to do so He has to play games with the text here on these four monsters.

But instead of doing this we hold to the traditional view, the view espoused century after century, that it was the Medo-Persian Empire, there were not two Empires, that the bear is the Medo-Persian Empire and the leopard is the Grecian Empire. And the key is in the last part of verse 6 with the four heads because after Alexander died he had his kingdom split up among his generals. Alexander died of a fever in 323 BC in Babylon; the wine, women and song got to him, and finally he just gave up and died at a very young age. And he distributed his kingdom among several generals. Eventually the kingdom coalesced into four basic divisions corresponding to the four heads of verse 6.

In Egypt we have a famous general, General Ptolemy, who started a new line in Egyptian history, the Ptolemy's, very famous, very well-known. Then the second area of Alexander's kingdom was Babylon and Syria, settled and ruled by another very famous general, General Seleucus. Seleucus started a heredity line and it was this line from which the monster of Daniel 8 comes, the horn of the goat, Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the most vicious people in history. The third area of the kingdom was Macedon and Greece itself, ruled first by Antigonus and later by Cassander. Then the fourth area was Thrace, that's the area north of Macedonia and east of Macedonia, along the north part of the Aegean, just by the Dardanelles, and that was ruled by a General Lysimachus. So you have four generals take over from Alexander, Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus. Those are the four heads of the leopard in verse 6.

Daniel 7:7 "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.

As I mentioned before, some liberal theologians try to interpret this beast as Greece. If you do that, then you must interpret the 2nd beast as the Median empire, and the 3rd beast as the Persian. This doesn't fit at all what we know of history now. It used to be that you could speculate this, because we didn't know that much about the conquering of Babylon, but now we know much about that period. We know that the kingdom that conquered Babylon was the combined empire of Medo-Persia. The individual kingdom of Media did not exist at that time. The other problem with making Greece the 4th kingdom is that the other symbols don't make sense. It's pretty hilarious watching these scholars trying to fit known history with things like the ten horns, for example.

The fourth beast has to be the Roman Empire. This interpretation deals much more forthrightly with the text, and fits known history much better. Notice that Daniel couldn't relate it to any known animal. Most of the material in this chapter is speaking of a Roman empire yet to come, not the one we know from history. Why? Because the things this chapter speaks of have not happened yet in history.

This empire is crueler than the other empires. The Roman Empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples. They usually either killed their captives or sold them into slavery. Alexander's empire was generally not cruel to the peoples it conquered, except for the Persians.

Notice the description of the devouring and crushing. How is it that the Romans crushed where the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks didn't? The Roman crushed by amalgamating every one into one engineered melting pot. You see, you lost your identity. The Romans could have, in fact at one place they did, there was one famous Roman aristocrat who in his living room had all the idols of the gods and then he added one for Caesar. The Romans were synthetic; you could add Jesus to the religion, as long as you paid homage to Caesar. But if you dared to bring in a god who forbade you to give homage to Caesar and the

state, woe to you, you were crushed. That was the nature of the Roman Empire.

The beast has ten horns (remember the ten toes from Chapter 2?). Horns on an animal represent its strength and power to conquer, and they are used in the Old Testament to refer to powerful rulers and their kingdoms. It should be noticed that the ten horns are there all at the same time, they do not come up one after another.

Revelation 17:3,7, 12-16 gives more information about these horns. These ten kings had not yet come into existence as of the writing of the book of the Revelation, which completely destroys the 4th kingdom being Greece theory. John also confirms that the ten horns are ten rulers and all ten will exist at the same time and are part of the 4th kingdom.

So that fourth beast was Rome, we know that, but according to prophecy Rome is supposed to finally emerge into a ten nation confederacy which it hasn't done yet. And it's that ten nation confederacy that will be in existence when the beast finally arises and Jesus Christ returns. Now if prophecy is true we have to argue that that hasn't yet occurred, there's no time when you have ten kings in this kind of a confederation. So we have to say that the Roman Empire has phased down in history; it's down but not out. The same kind of man-made structure will again emerge from the cultural heirs of Rome, which would be Western Europe. And eventually in the future will become a ferocious monster controlled by the beast. This is why the Christian ought always to have his wits about him in the area of politics and citizenship responsibility. The Christian who knows his doctrine looks suspiciously at man-made solutions to political problems, particularly when such solutions begin to call for centralization of power on a massive scale. This could be the resurrection of the fourth beast of Daniel.

Daniel 7:8 "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.

Then an eleventh horn does come up after the others. This little horn that came up is believed to speaking of the coming anti-christ. The Bible refers to the anti-christ's mouth over and over in the Bible, so the "mouth uttering great boasts" is significant. This guy will have a big mouth. It probably means he will have great oratorical skills, and brings to mind others who have had the power to sway masses of people with their speeches, like Hitler.

Since each of the ten horns represent rulers over kingdoms or areas, we can assume that the antichrist will also be a ruler over a kingdom, although an insignificant one at first. This would seem to suggest that he will be a single ruler over a single nation or region, not an official in one of these ten kingdoms or something else, like the head of the U.N., for example. The eyes speak of great intelligence.

Notice 3 of the ten horns are uprooted by the little horn. This seems to mean the anti-Christ will come to power over this empire, and over this ten nation confederacy. Three of the nations will not submit to him, but 7 will, and he will have to subdue these 3 nations or kings, which apparently catapult him into power on the world stage. Revelation 13:2 shows some interesting similarities:

Revelation 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

Notice we have the same three beasts that are mentioned in Daniel 7, but all combined in one animal. And

the order of the animals is backwards from Daniel. Why? The two authors are looking at it from different perspectives. Daniel was looking at it from a 6th century BC perspective, looking forward, and John was looking at it from a 1st century perspective, looking backward.

Some amillennials spiritualize this prophecy of the ten horns and don't look for a historical fulfillment. Others try to fit them into literal fulfillment in the past. Both these approaches have major problems, beginning with the fact that you can't possibly fit them into any time in history. And if the prophecies of the first three kingdoms have been fulfilled literally so well, why would we assume that the 4th kingdom prophecies would not be fulfilled literally? Those who hold to the premillennial position hold to the belief that these prophecies will be fulfilled literally at some point in the future.

Daniel 7:9-10 "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. (10) "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.

The view of the vision now switches from earth to heaven. Thrones are set up, not one throne. The court is assumed to be a court of testimony, that is confirming what God is doing. It may be composed of the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4 and 5, which may be Old Testament saints.

The Ancient of Days is obviously God the Father as Judge. This reference is identical to Rev. 5:11. The books being opened is a reference to Revelation 20:12, the great White Throne judgment. The books are most likely catalogues of sin, or their works in life, and these people will be judged by their works and given various degrees of punishments based on what they did in life. They will all go to hell, but there seems to be different degrees of punishment in hell, just like there are different degrees of reward in heaven. Whether it is punishment or reward, we can be sure that God's judgment is fair.

Daniel 7:11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

Back to the earth. Notice the emphasis on the boastful words, this is also spoken of in Revelation 13:5-6. God the Father at the end of the Times of the Gentiles will see to it that the antichrist is judged. This is the fall of the antichrist, which is also mentioned in Revelation 19:20. This event is connected with the 'striking stone' that strikes the statue, the toes in Daniel 2, causing the entire statue to collapse. That's what's happening here.

Notice that this is not a gradual triumph of good over evil or a gradual conversion of the world by the Church. This is the sudden end of the antichrist and the kingdoms of men and immediate beginning of the reign of Christ in earth.

Daniel 7:12 "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.

This can be a difficult verse to interpret, we really don't know for sure what it means. It could mean that the nations will be allowed to continue for a time even into the Millennium under the rule of Christ. This could also be interpreted as meaning that the cultures of each of these empires continued to live on. Babylonian culture continued on under the Persian empire, Persian culture continued to live under the Greek empire,

Grecian culture continued to live on under Roman rule. All of these cultures are still alive in some ways today. This is why John in Revelation saw the one beast that had aspects of all of these empires.

So those beasts are in existence today, partly, their contributions are part of our culture, and we have to be careful how we think, how we read, and so on. We have to be very alert as believers.

Daniel 7:13-14 "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. (14) "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

The phrase "clouds of heaven" is used throughout the Bible of the glory and the presence of deity. The Son of Man here is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is given the 5th kingdom by the Father. The term "Son of Man" was Jesus' favorite title when referring to himself in His earthly ministry.

Pre-Christian Jewish commentaries said that the Son of man, remember this is written before Jesus, before the Christians came along, so this is not some Christian fouling up the text for his own interest, it is Jewish tradition in and of itself, that the Son of man is not just the kingdom of the saints, but He is the preexistent representative of the kingdom. That's as far as they went, he was preexistent, and the reason they did was these clouds of heaven speak of deity, they speak of glory and the Son of man came with the clouds to the Ancient of days, indicating that this person has divine attributes, whatever it is. Yet because the Jews are monotheist they couldn't exactly say He was God, so the best thing they came up was a preexistent representative of the kingdom; very close, by the way, to what the New Testament says.

Now another observation, and that is that the Son of man, the title, "Son of man," was picked up and used by Jesus, but not by any apostle. You will never find any apostle using this title; you will not find this title out of the four Gospels; Acts, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, all the epistles of the New Testament, not once is the "Son of man" ever mentioned. It is used only by Jesus during the time of His earthly ministry. Now we have to say why is this? Here's a place where Jesus uses the title, "Son of man."

Matthew 24:29-30 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (30) "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

Where did Jesus get the title from? Obviously He got it from Daniel 7, so as you look at these passages, think! What do you suppose is on Jesus' mind by daring to equate Himself with this vision that was so sacred to Jewish tradition—the "Son of man?" Jesus picks up the title and He walks around and He says I am the Son of man. Now what is on Jesus mind by using that title for Himself?

This was a signal, and those who had ears to hear and eyes to see would have picked up the signal. But it was only a signal, it was very cleverly designed so that Jesus could walk through a public assembly and say I am the Son of man and maybe 10% of the people would catch what He had just said, 90% of the people would say oh, that's interesting, and walk on. But Jesus wasn't concerned, He was concerned for the 10% who could read the signal and read it clearly.

Notice He is using it this time with His disciples, He is talking about the end of the world. Where do you suppose Jesus got that? Obviously from Daniel 7, it's the exact words from Daniel 7. Now if you were there and Jesus was talking to you and said the earth will see the Son of Man and all the tribes of men shall mourn when they shall see His sign, what would you have thought of? Remember you don't have your Bible in front of you. If you were a properly read Jew you'd say that's Daniel 7, that is the fifth kingdom coming. You would have caught the signal. Jesus used this several places.

Now, why then does Jesus use this title? The reason Jesus is using the "Son of man" in the gospels is to reveal His true character to those who know their Bible without overtly saying He is God and being stoned to death. If he had come right out and said I am God, He wouldn't have lasted the day.

But then there came a day when He came right out and said it to the religious leaders of Israel.

Mark 14:61-64 But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" (62) And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." (63) Tearing his clothes, the high priest *said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?" (64) "You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Some people will tell you that Jesus never claimed to be God, but He obviously did! Jesus was saying I am the fulfillment of Daniel 7. This is not an ambiguous statement; the high priest knew exactly what He was saying (verse 63-64). They knew He was claiming to be God. The title "Son of Man" speaks of Jesus' genuine humanity, but also of His position as the only one who could solve the problem of man's sin and his separation from God. It also recalls Genesis 3:15, the prophecy of the seed of the woman who would solve these problems.

These verses PROVE that there is no kingdom of God in existence on earth right now. There is a chronological sequence here. The kingdom cannot come until these four kingdoms have passed away, the antichrist has been defeated, and Jesus Christ is given the kingdom. This series of events has to take place before the kingdom can come. People who say that the kingdom is in existence today are NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS. Daniel 7:14 has not happened yet. Jesus is currently at the right hand of the Father functioning as our high priest. His throne is not established until His second coming (Matthew 19:28, 25:31) Those who don't believe in a literal millennial kingdom have to spiritualize all these verses in Daniel and in Matthew.

Daniel 7:15-16 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. (16) "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:

Daniel asks an angel what these things meant. The angel could be Gabriel, who is the angel that reveals God's truth to Israel.

Daniel 7:17-18 'These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. (18) 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

The angel is confirming that which we have already learned, that these four kingdoms must come, but the

Times of the Gentiles will end with the coming of the everlasting kingdom (the “striking stone”).

So know the symbol of the horn is the king. The other thing about horns that’s just a footnote to history is that’s where the concept of crown came from. We draw the crown with points on the top, and kings down through history have always had their crowns, but have you ever asked yourself why does the crown look that way? It looks that way because in ancient history they used to take a leather strap and tie animal horns to it, something like you see the Norsemen wearing. And from that these later crowns are just artistic symbols of the prior horns. So when you see the word “horn” in Scripture, animal horn, or ram’s horn, representing power, it’s just simply part of ancient art and the ancient way of symbolizing power.

This reference to saints doesn’t refer to church saints, it is the remnant of believing Israel. The church is nowhere mentioned in the book of Daniel. We as church saints will be included in the Kingdom, but this book is primarily about the Jews. But now Daniel wants more specific information. He wants to know about this 4th Gentile kingdom.

Daniel 7:19-22 "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, (20) and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates. (21) "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them (22) until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

Daniel wants to know about the same things we’re curious about, the things that will happen in the future, the final events at the very end of the Times of the Gentiles. This is mostly a repeat of what we’ve been told before, but there is additional detail. In verse 20 it says the little horn becomes larger than the other ten horns. Verse 21 tells us that the horn will make war against the people of God and be successful in doing so. Believing Gentiles will also be persecuted by the anti-Christ, but remember that this verse is specifically speaking of the Jews. John also speaks of this persecution in Revelation 13:7-8 during the 2nd half of the tribulation. This persecution will last until Christ comes, in verse 22. Now the angel gives further detail.

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

The final kingdom is a kingdom different than all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth. This seems to go even further than just a revived Roman empire, this kingdom will cover the entire earth. This is a prophecy of a coming one-world government. It seems to arise out of the culture of the Roman empire, but then covers the whole earth. The Roman Empire in history never conquered the whole world, it didn’t even go as far as the Greek empire. So this has to happen some time in the future.

Daniel 7:24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.

This verse confirms that the antichrist’s kingdom will be different and distinct from the other ten. It appears that the earth will be divided into ten regions. Perhaps the European Union will be one region,

North America will be another, etc. This is not a new idea, but plans for this have actually been drawn up by organizations who are pushing for a world government. Now, since the ten division stage has not happened yet, we should not be looking for the antichrist to appear. This verse makes it clear that he will not arise until after the world government comes and the ten divisions have been set up.

Daniel 7:25 '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 describes some of the things the antichrist will do. Again it mentions his big mouth. Verse 25 tells us that he will persecute the saints of God. This will be like the holocaust of Hitler, but amplified on a global scale. He will try to bring in a new world system with new laws and change times of religious observations and traditions. He will most likely try to remove any vestige of God's influence on the culture and government. This is actually happening already in this country.

A "time" is a Jewish year, "times" is two Jewish years, and a half a time is half a Jewish year, adding up to 3 ½ Jewish years. The same expression is used in Revelation 12:14. Revelation 11-14 is about the last half of the tribulation and it uses terms like this, 42 months, and 1260 days, all referring to 3 ½ years. All of these terms for this period can be used interchangeably.

Daniel 7:26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.'

This speaks of the end of the antichrist and his kingdom, also mentioned in Revelation 19:20, 2 Thessalonians 2:8. So the little horn will rise, but he will fall, which would have been a great comfort to the Jews reading this. The words "for judgment" are not in the original texts, and may be in italics in your versions. The Aramaic word for "court" would lead us to think that this court was confirming what God was doing, not involved in the judging.

Daniel 7:27 '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.'

Again we are given a description of the final kingdom, the Millennial reign of Christ. This is the "striking stone" kingdom that will last forever. Again, this was the part of this prophecy that would give the Jewish people the most hope. This final kingdom will be a Jewish kingdom, but the church will be included in it.

The following is a chronological summary of events spoken of in this chapter of what will happen in the future:

1. A world government will be established (v. 23)
2. Ten kings or divisions will come up from this world government (v. 24)
3. After the ten kings come to power, another king, the antichrist, will rise to power (v. 24)
4. As the antichrist rises to power, he will supplant three of the other kings (v. 8).
5. After the Antichrist rises to power he will have complete control over God's people for three and one half years (v. 25).
6. God will judge the antichrist and take his power away (v. 26)
7. The kingdom will be turned over to God's people (v. 27)

Daniel 7:28 "At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were

greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

The vision greatly terrifies him. He is seeing the suffering that Israel would have to go through before the final Kingdom comes again.

I would like to add that the interpretations I have given here of the beasts are the traditional premillennial interpretations. This is held by the majority of conservative scholars, and I believe is the one that fits best with the text of scripture and known history. There is another interpretation of these beasts, though, one which says they do not represent the same kingdoms as chapter two, but all four represent current or future kingdoms. This minority view sees the lion/eagle beast as England and the United States. The 2nd bear-like beast is seen as Russia, and the 3rd leopard-like beast is seen as a four-nation Arab/African coalition. The 4th beast is seen, like the view I've explained, as some sort of a future vestige of the Roman Empire which under the antichrist takes over the whole world. Most of those who espouse this view do concede that the beasts represent partial fulfillment through those chapter two kingdoms of the past, but the final fulfillment is yet future for all of the beast kingdoms.

I did not go into detail about this interpretation because I believe that it requires too much speculation from what the text actually says. It is pretty easy to match up the beasts with past kingdoms, but if you reject that view for the first three beasts, then you're left guessing about which current or future nations they represent. I would rather stick to what the scripture actually says, and not speculate too much about what it doesn't say.

Questions:

1. In what ways does this chapter contribute to a Biblical worldview?
2. How might Daniel 7:13-14 affect the way we worship and approach the Father and the Son?
3. How should the reality that evil and evil men will be brought to an end affect how we view the world we live in with its sin and evil?
4. There is an emphasis in this chapter on God's people ruling with the Son of Man. Will all believers have this opportunity or just some? Read 2 Timothy 2:11-12, Luke 19:15-26, Matthew 19:27-30.
5. What is the kingdom of God? Is it something in the present, or the future, or both? What do chapters 2 and 7 tell us about the kingdom of God?