

Daniel 7 — "While Beasts Rule, the Ancient of Days Reigns"

INTRODUCTION:

During the Coronation of Elizabeth II, millions watched kings, queens, prime ministers, generals, and dignitaries process into the abbey. The ceremony radiated permanence and power. Yet almost every political leader present has died, many nations represented have changed dramatically, and the world map has been redrawn more than once. What seemed permanent lasted only a generation.

Daniel 7 invites us to step behind the curtain of history. Earth sees impressive empires marching across the stage. Heaven sees beasts that rise for a moment, roar loudly, and then disappear. Above them all sits the Ancient of Days, unchanged, unhurried, and never threatened. The chapter reminds us that history is not ultimately driven by the ambitions of rulers but by the sovereign purpose of God, who will give an everlasting kingdom to the Son of Man and to His saints.

The central lesson is simple: Earth may appear to belong to the beasts, but history actually belongs to the Ancient of Days.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Daniel received this vision in the first year of Belshazzar (Dan. 7:1), approximately 553 BC, nearly fourteen years before Babylon fell.

That means:

- Babylon still looked invincible.
- Persia had not yet conquered Babylon.
- Greece was still centuries away.
- Rome was unimaginable.



Daniel therefore is not looking backward through history but forward through prophecy. This chapter also shifts the book from narrative (chs. 1–6) to apocalyptic prophecy (chs. 7–12). The message is especially comforting because God's people are still exiles.

I. THE SEA PRODUCES BEASTS (7:1-8)

Human empires arise from chaos.

Figures of Speech

The "great sea" - Represents the restless nations of mankind.

Compare:

Isaiah 17:12-13

Jeremiah 46:7-8

Ezekiel 32:2

Revelation 17:15

The four winds - God is directing history. The winds are not random.

Four beasts - Kingdoms viewed from heaven.

Notice:

Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar sees glorious metals.

Chapter 7: God sees savage animals. Man celebrates empire. God evaluates empire.

The Four Beasts

Lion with eagle's wings

Babylon - Bear raised on one side

Medo-Persia - Leopard with four wings and four heads

Greece - Terrifying beast

Rome - The ten horns; Kings or rulers arising from Rome.



Little horn - A later arrogant persecuting ruler arising from Roman power.

Law of Moses Background

Genesis 1 - God separates chaos into order. Daniel shows fallen humanity returning toward chaos.

Leviticus 26 - Wild beasts symbolize covenant judgment.

Deuteronomy 28 - Foreign nations become instruments of discipline.

Discussion Question

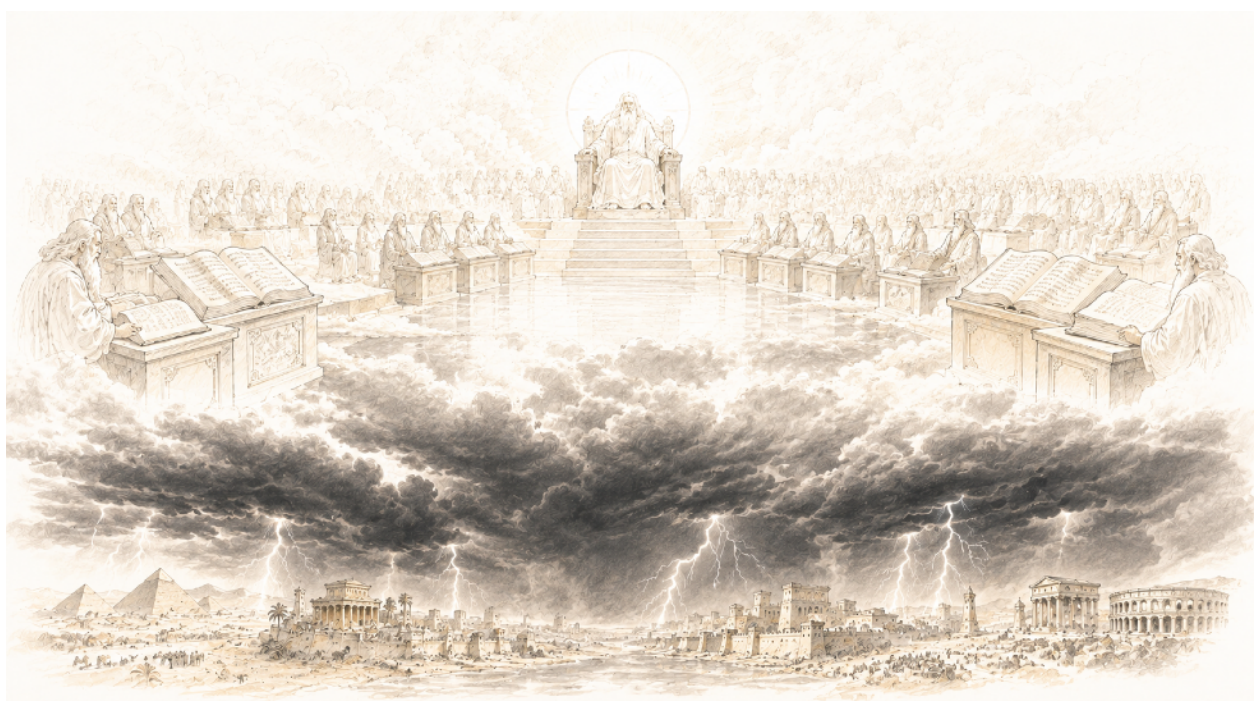
Why does God portray human governments as beasts instead of civilized kingdoms?

Application

Every empire promises salvation.

None can deliver.

Christians must never confuse patriotism with ultimate allegiance.



II. HEAVEN HOLDS COURT (7:9-12):

Everything changes. Daniel suddenly looks upward. The beasts roar. God sits.

Ancient of Days - One of Scripture's greatest titles. God is not aging. He is eternal.
White garments: Purity. White hair: Perfect wisdom. Fiery throne: Judgment. Books opened: God misses nothing.

Mosaic Background

Exodus 19 - Fire on Sinai.

Deuteronomy 33 - God comes in fiery judgment.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah repeatedly declared - The nations think they rule. Actually God appoints and removes kings. (Jer. 18; 25; 27)



Ezekiel
Ezekiel 1 - God's throne is mobile. Even in exile God reigns. Daniel develops the same truth.

Discussion Question

Why is it comforting that God's answer to the beasts is not panic but a courtroom?

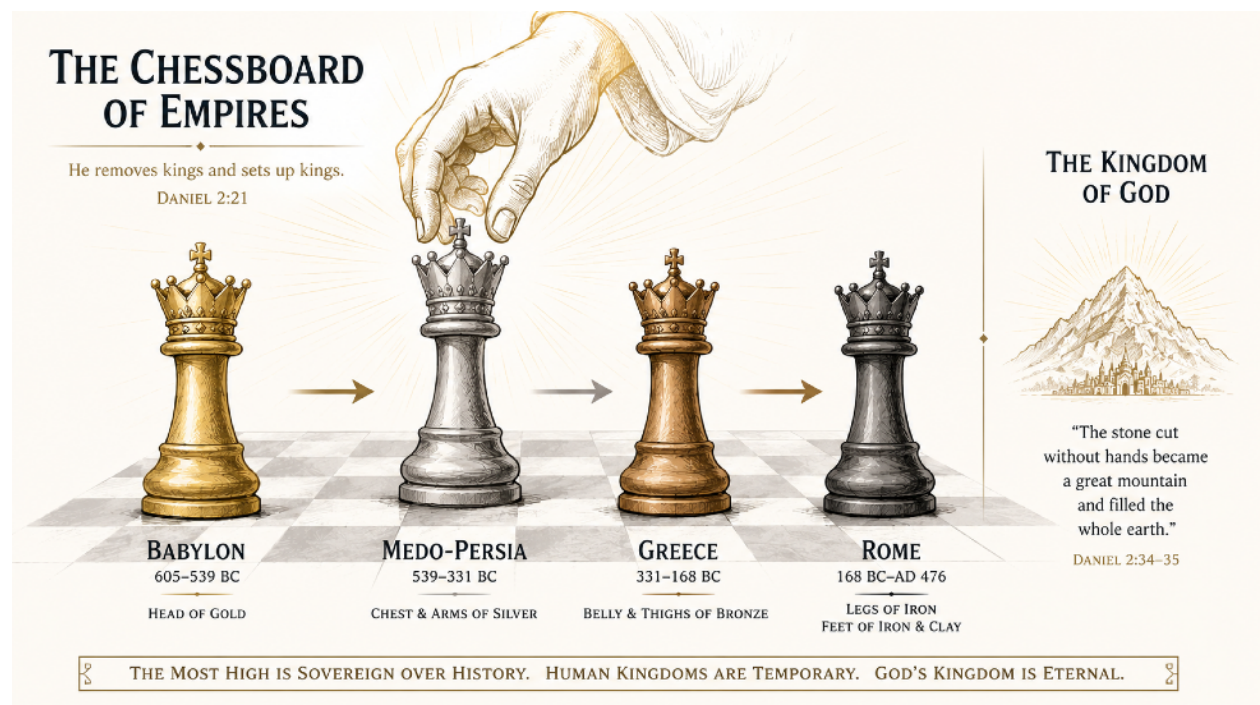


Christian Application
Politics is never ultimate.
God has never surrendered His throne.

III. THE SON OF MAN RECEIVES THE KINGDOM (7:13-14):
The greatest prophecy in Daniel.



The Son of Man



Not merely human. Not merely divine. A heavenly figure receiving eternal dominion.
Jesus' favorite title for Himself. Ezekiel uses it 93 times.

NT Fulfillment

The title "Son of Man" Used over 80 times by Jesus. Most significant: Matthew 26:64.
Jesus directly quotes Daniel 7 before the Sanhedrin. Acts 2 - Christ ascends.

Acts 7 - Stephen sees the Son of Man standing at God's right hand.

Ephesians 1 - Christ enthroned.

Philippians 2 - Every knee bows.

Hebrews 1 - Christ superior to angels.

Revelation 1 - The Son of Man among the churches.

Revelation 5 - The Lamb receives universal worship.

Mosaic Background

Genesis 49 - The scepter belongs to Judah.

Numbers 24 - The coming king.

Deuteronomy 18 - God raises His chosen ruler.

Discussion

Why does heaven entrust the kingdom to the Son of Man instead of another beast?

Christian Application

Christians already belong to the winning kingdom.

IV. THE SAINTS SUFFER BEFORE THEY REIGN (7:15-28):

Daniel is troubled. Even prophets need explanations.

The little horn - Speaks proudly. Persecutes saints. Attempts to change times and law.
His success is temporary.

The Saints Receive the Kingdom - Repeated several times. The emphasis is unmistakable. The kingdom belongs to God's people because it belongs to God's King.

Discussion Question

Why does God allow the beasts to persecute His people before judging them?



Application

Faithfulness often precedes vindication. Victory belongs to those who endure.

What Was God Teaching?

The Pagan Kings

Nebuchadnezzar - Empire is temporary. Pride always meets judgment. Power is borrowed. Only God's kingdom lasts forever.

Belshazzar ignored everything Nebuchadnezzar learned.

Faithful Jews

God has not forgotten the covenant.

Exile is temporary.

Empires look permanent. They are not.

The saints inherit the kingdom.



Later Jews

Persia would not be the end.

Neither would Greece.

Neither would Rome.

Hope belongs in God's kingdom rather than political revolution.

Jeremiah's

Jeremiah repeatedly teaches: God appoints Babylon. God judges Babylon. God restores His people. Daniel 7 expands this globally.

Ezekiel's

Ezekiel emphasizes:

God's throne



God's glory

God's sovereignty over nations

Daniel adds:

History moves toward one universal kingdom.

Revelation

Daniel is arguably Revelation's greatest Old Testament source.

Major parallels include:

Four beasts → Revelation 13

Ten horns → Revelation 13; 17

Ancient of Days → Revelation 4

Books opened → Revelation 20

Son of Man → Revelation 1

Kingdom of the saints → Revelation 20–22

Beast making war on saints → Revelation 13

Judgment scene → Revelation 20

Daniel introduces the symbols. Revelation brings them to their climax in Christ's victory over the beastly power of Rome.

Faith Outlasts Empire.

