

Daniel 7

- We've finally reached the conclusion of the chiastic structure
 - The final step is literally back to the future
 - We return to the prophecy about the Age of the Gentiles
 - The Age of the Gentiles is a period of history that God has planned for Israel and the world
 - The age is marked by three things, according to what we learned back in Chapter 2
 - First, it is a time for Israel to be scattered outside their land
 - Secondly, their city, Jerusalem, will be under Gentile domination
 - Thirdly, this age must continue until the Messiah's Second Coming
 - At Christ's return, the Jewish nation will be returned to her place as the supreme nation on earth
 - If this background is unfamiliar to you, then I encourage you to revisit our teaching from Chapter 2 of this study
 - That review will be helpful for you, since Daniel 7 takes the teaching of Chapter 2 and expands it greatly
 - But by that token, understanding Chapter 7 depends on a firm grasp of Chapter 2
 - Just as the chiasm that runs from Chapters 2-7 would suggest

A - The prophecy concerning four Gentile empires that dominate Israel and the world
B - God delivers Daniel's friends from Gentile persecution
C - God humbles the Gentile king (Nebuchadnezzar) to demonstrate His sovereignty
C' - God deposes the Gentile king (Belshazzar) to demonstrate His sovereignty
B' - God delivers Daniel from Gentile persecution
A' - The prophecy concerning four Gentile empires that dominate Israel and the world

- So let's set the scene for the events of Chapter 7 by reading the opening passage

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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.

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

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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!'

Dan. 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.

- We're going back in time
 - Daniel dates this chapter to the first year of Belshazzar's reign as king of Babylon
 - Remember, Chapter 5 described how Belshazzar's reign came to an end
 - And then, Chapter 6 moved forward in time to the reign of the Medo-Persian king, Darius
 - But now we've moved backward to the beginning of Belshazzar's reign
 - History records that he reigned 14 years, so we've gone back about 15 years in times
 - That timeline places Daniel in his mid-sixties and still serving the king of Babylon
 - And at that time, he receives a troubling dream
 - And with it, he also receives a personal interpretation from an angel sent from the Lord
 - This dream and its interpretation parallels the dream God gave to Nebuchadnezzar in Chapter 2, but it adds important new details
 - In fact, taken as a whole, this chapter reveals more detail about future events than any other chapter in the Old Testament

- The only other place in the Bible comparable to this chapter is the Book of Revelation
- So, the Lord is speaking to the final king of Babylon through Daniel in the same way He spoke to the first king of Babylon concerning the same subject
- In v.2, Daniel begins to describe his strange dream
 - Four winds were stirring up the great sea
 - When we attempt to interpret symbols in prophetic passages, we must be constrained by proper rules of interpretation
 - The meaning of symbols will always be given somewhere in the Bible
 - First, we consult the immediate context for an answer
 - If none is found, then we look elsewhere in the same book of Scripture for an explanation of the symbol
 - If still no answer is found, we look elsewhere in the Bible
 - But in all cases, we will find an answer given
 - In this case, the great sea is consistently a reference to the Mediterranean Sea, which was the greatest body of water in Israel's experience
 - In Scripture, the Mediterranean Sea is used symbolically to represent the population of the earth
 - It means the masses of humanity, but particularly the Gentile nations of the earth
 - This symbol is used in this way in Isaiah and Jeremiah
 - And Jesus uses the sea symbolically in the same way in Matthew 13, Luke 21, and multiple times in Revelation
 - And the four winds is a reference to God's power over His creation
 - The Hebrew word for "winds" is a synonym for "spirits"
 - So, we could translate v.2 to say the four "spirits" were stirring up the sea

- Four winds are used symbolically in this way in multiple places in both the Old and New Testament (e.g., Jer., Zech., Rev.)
- Next, Daniel says four beasts emerged from the sea
 - Each beast was different from the other, and Daniel describes each beast's appearance
 - Before we look at each beast in turn, let's first note the similarity to our matching chapter in the chiasm, Chapter 2
 - In Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a statue with four sections
 - Those sections described a timeline of kingdoms, each one replacing the prior one
 - But that chapter told us virtually nothing about the nature of each kingdom
 - Now in this dream, we have four beasts, and as we're going to see, these four animals correspond to the same four kingdoms
 - But beasts do not imply a timeline, as did the parts of the statue
 - Instead, the beasts emphasize the nature of each kingdom
 - So this dream confirms the earlier interpretation and adds important information about what to expect in each kingdom period
 - Most importantly, this chapter focuses our attention on the final stage of the fourth kingdom
 - Remember, Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue was actually a dream of five kingdoms, not four
 - At the conclusion of the fourth stage of the statue, a new Kingdom was established from Heaven
 - As we learned in Chapter 2, that final kingdom is the Kingdom of Christ that He establishes at His Second Coming
- Now in Chapter 7, we're going to learn important details about how the last kingdom comes to its end in preparation for the Lord's return
 - Naturally, this is our primary interest in the prophecy

- The four kingdoms have already appeared in history
- Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome have all come and gone
- So as the world moves to the final period of the fourth kingdom, our interest naturally moves to how the Age of the Gentiles ends
- Therefore, the prophecy in this chapter fills in many of those blanks
- So at this point, we arrive at our interpretation of the sea, wind and beasts
 - The Lord tells Daniel He will move among the Gentile nations of the world supernaturally to raise up four kingdoms
 - The first of these kingdoms is Babylon (which we know from Chapter 2)
 - That kingdom is pictured by a lion with the wings of an eagle
 - At a point, the wings are plucked
 - Later, the beast is made to stand up like a man and a man's mind is given to the beast
 - As we would expect, all the details of this beast match the history of Babylon perfectly
 - First, the nation of Babylon used both a lion and an eagle as national symbols
 - In fact, statues have been found in Babylon of lions with wings
 - Furthermore, the beast's description matches Nebuchadnezzar's seven-year episode of exile
 - He had his authority and honor removed by God (*i.e.*, wings plucked)
 - But later, Nebuchadnezzar was restored from living like a beast
 - He was returned to his position as king and his right mind was returned to him, as we saw in Chapter 4
- Next, Daniel describes the second beast as a bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth
 - Here again, the symbol matched the history of the Medo-Persian empire that replaced the Babylonian Empire

- In ancient Palestine, the bear was considered the second most fearsome predator, after the Lion
- And the bear is a creature known for overpowering prey by its weight and strength
- The bear crushes and rips apart its prey
- Such was the military strategy of the Medo-Persian empire
 - They amassed huge armies that defeated enemies by sheer strength in numbers
 - And as they conquered, they utterly destroyed their enemies with a vengeance
- Furthermore, their empire arose out of two peoples, the Medes and the Persians, yet it was not a union of equals
 - The Persians were by far the more powerful people, having a much larger empire and superior army to the Medes
 - This is reflected in the bear leaning to one side
 - Heavenly voices told the bear to devour much meat, meaning to conquer many nations
- And the kingdom defeated three major adversaries in its rise to world domination
 - First, it defeated the Babylon
 - Later, it conquered Lydian
 - Finally, it conquered Egypt
 - These three conquests are represented by the three ribs in the bear's mouth
 - This empire ruled for 208 years, having conquered an area greater than even Babylon possessed
- Next, Daniel describes a beast resembling a leopard with four heads and four wings
 - This beast corresponds to the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, which conquered the Medo-Persians

- In fact, history reports that Alexander pointed to the Book of Daniel in his day as proof he was destined to conquer the world
- So, taking confidence in Daniel's prediction, Alexander's armies moved swiftly from West to East, completing a victory in record time
- In three years, Alexander conquered territory stretching from Greece to Africa to India, which reflects the swiftness of a leopard
- During Alexander's life, he delegated governmental control over this vast territory to four divisions with a single governor in charge of each
 - This division is represented by the four heads of the leopard
 - At Alexander's death, he had no heirs, so his empire was divided among four generals in four geographical regions
 - There was an East, West, North and South division, which is represented by the four wings
- All these details track with history and with the earlier dream in Chapter 2
 - They are also of little interest to us, beyond simply confirming the accuracy of Daniel's prophecy
 - The real interest has always been with the fourth kingdom
 - Not only does the fourth kingdom receive the most attention both in Chapter 2 and here in Chapter 7, but it's the most important historically
 - This kingdom will be the one that ushers in the Kingdom of Christ one day
 - Therefore, we are most interested in knowing how this kingdom will proceed over time and in particular, how it ends
 - Since we know we are currently living in the fourth kingdom period, then these details will naturally be very important to us
 - In fact, they speak of our own future, looking ahead to the end of this age
- So then, Daniel describes the next visions he sees in his dream

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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.

Dan. 7:9 “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.

Dan. 7:10 “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.

Dan. 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.

Dan. 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.

Dan. 7:13 “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.

Dan. 7:14 “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 first thing we notice about Daniel’s description of the fourth beast is his inability to compare it to any living creature today

- In the case of the earlier beasts, Daniel drew comparisons to real-life animals: a lion, eagle, bear, leopard
 - But in this case, there simply was no comparison possible
 - This beast was unlike anything else, dreadful and terrifying
 - And this detail alone piques our interest, as God intended
- This creature was very strong, with iron teeth, and it trampled and crushed all the prior kingdoms
 - This beast corresponds to the fourth kingdom in the statue and, as with the earlier beasts, several details confirm our interpretation
 - First, this kingdom devours the prior kingdoms, confirming this kingdom is the one that follows the Greek Empire
 - Second, this beast has iron teeth, which reminds us of the iron legs of the fourth kingdom of the statue
- Third, it has ten horns
 - We're going to look at these horns more closely in a minute, but already, we see a confirmation that this matches the fourth kingdom of the statue
 - In the statue, the fourth age ended with "ten toes"
 - In Chapter 2, the meaning of the ten toes wasn't explained, but now, the ten horns in this dream will give opportunity for the Lord to explain
- Speaking of the horns, we learn that among the ten horns, an eleventh horn suddenly appears on the beast
 - This horn was unique, in that it had facial features of a man and was able to speak
 - It uttered great boasts, meaning it made audacious claims about itself
 - And it did violence to three of the other horns, resulting in only seven remaining
- Next, in v.9, we see the end of all the beasts and the arrival of an entirely new Kingdom

- Once again, this detail matches the ending of the statue prophecy
 - In Chapter 2, the statue was destroyed by the arrival of the rock not cut by human hands
 - That rock represented Christ's Second Coming
 - And of course, the statue itself represents the Age of the Gentiles
 - So, we learned that the Age of the Gentiles will end when the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom on earth
- Now, we find a similar pattern in Daniel's dream
 - The 4 beasts here represent the same 4 kingdoms of the Age of the Gentiles
 - And now in v.9, we see a description of Jesus' return and the Kingdom
- First, we're told that thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days took His seat
 - This is a reference to the Father God
 - He has taken a seat, in the sense of a judge preparing to pass judgment
 - His description is similar to the description that John gives us of the glorified Lord in Revelation 1

[Rev. 1:13](#) and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

[Rev. 1:14](#) His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

- Though one describes the Father and the other the Son, nevertheless, the similar appearance of both is purposeful
 - Jesus appeared to John in Revelation to explain what events would bring the age to an end
 - And Daniel is receiving a dream describing very much the same thing
 - Therefore, these two moments are intended to be linked in our minds

- Hence, the similar description of both members of the Godhead
- Around the Father was the court of Heaven
 - His throne was ablaze and a river of fire flowed around Him
 - He was attended to by thousands and myriads, whether angels or others
 - And with books being opened, it's clear that a judgment according to Law is about to take place
- After the Father has sat down to judge, our attention is turned to events on earth, where the Father's judgment is directed
 - First, the beast (and his boasting horn) is slain and destroyed, given over to a judgment of fire
 - This is a direct result of the Father's judgment in Heaven
 - This pattern of heavenly judgment followed by earthly consequences mirrors the events of Revelation
 - We're seeing that Daniel's vision is a preview of the events described in Revelation
 - In effect, Daniel 7 is a "little Revelation", describing the way the Heavenly judgments of Tribulation result in earthly destruction
 - Furthermore, not only is the fourth beast destroyed, but so are the remnants of the earlier beasts, so that all they represented was also taken away
 - Interestingly, before this judgment is concluded, this age is permitted to continue for a time
 - We will learn more about this time period later
- Finally, as judgment comes against the Gentile kingdoms that rule during the Age of the Gentiles, a new Kingdom arises
 - This new Kingdom begins with the Son of Man coming from the clouds of Heaven
 - This reminds us of the rock coming out of Heaven and it confirms that the rock is Jesus

- Daniel says in v.13 that the Son of Man is “presented” before the Father before coming to earth to begin His rule
 - This scene is described in detail in Revelation 4 & 5

Rev. 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

Rev. 4:2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

Rev. 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

Rev. 5:1 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

Rev. 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”

Rev. 5:3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

Rev. 5:4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

Rev. 5:5 and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

Rev. 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Rev. 5:10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Rev. 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

Rev. 5:12 saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

- Notice the description of the scene
 - Myriads of angels attending to the Father on the throne
 - And the Son of God being presented before the Father and receiving the right to judge the world

- Finally, the Son being granted a Kingdom on earth, having purchased the earth with His blood
- Compare that description to the one we have in Daniel v.14
 - All the same features are present
 - People from every tribe, tongue and nation serving Christ
 - The Son of Man presented before the Father
 - The Son granted a dominion
 - And Christ's dominion will last forever
 - There will never be another Gentile nation or any kingdom to take power away from Christ
- By the way, when Jesus referred to Himself as Messiah in the Gospels, the title He used most often was Son of Man, found here in Daniel
 - He uses the title 31 times in Matthew alone
 - It seems Jesus was emphasizing He was the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy
 - Jesus is the One coming to end the fourth kingdom
 - He is the One granted authority to rule over the world
- So to this point in Daniel's dream, we see a consistent parallel with Daniel 2
 - The four beasts represent the four kingdoms of the Age of the Gentiles
 - The final kingdom is different than the rest
 - It possesses an unique final stage, involving the symbol "ten"
 - And it leads the world into the Second Coming of Christ
 - We also learned some new details
 - The symbol "ten" is more complex than we saw in Chapter 2
 - It involves an eleventh that makes great claims about itself and contends with the other ten
 - And these things accompany a brief period of intense judgment poured out from God in Heaven against the fourth kingdom

- Obviously, there is still a lot of questions we want answered, and Daniel feels the same way, so we see what he does next

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

[Dan. 7:16](#) "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:

[Dan. 7:17](#) 'These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth.

[Dan. 7:18](#) 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

- Daniel says his spirit was distressed at these visions, for obvious reasons
 - Just as Nebuchadnezzar had been disturbed by his dream, Daniel was preoccupied in seeking answers for his visions
 - It seems when God sends messages by dreams, the receiver will always sense that the dream has unique importance
 - This may be a good rule of thumb for us to know if a dream is truly spiritually meaningful
 - Does the dream stick in your mind in an unique way? Do you feel compelled to understand it?
 - If not, it's probably just too much pizza the night before
 - But Daniel knows this dream is important
 - In fact, even while he is still in his dream state, Daniel addresses a fellow observer in the dream visions, asking for answers
 - Wouldn't it be nice to have someone in your dreams with you to explain why you went to school in only your underwear?
 - In this case, the one who could interpret dreams needed an interpreter
 - This little detail reminds us why the Lord works through interpreters
 - The kings of Babylon received visions, but they lacked answers
 - So when they received their answer supernaturally, they understood the dream had been a divine message

- Similarly, even the prophet needed divine intervention to understand the message, which validated it was from God
- In this case, we don't know the identity of the divine interpreter, but given what we see happening later in the Book of Daniel, it was likely an angel
 - In the interpretation, we find confirmation of all the interpretations I proposed in the earlier passage
 - First, the four beasts are four kingdoms, the same kingdoms as in Chapter 2
 - And the final kingdom is the Kingdom of God that comes to rule the earth after the end of these four Gentile kingdoms
 - Again, no surprises here
 - But Daniel had other things he wanted to know, just like us

Dan. 7:19 “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, **Dan. 7:20** 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. **Dan. 7:21** “I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them **Dan. 7:22** 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's attention was focused on the fourth beast because it was so unique
- Of course, God made it unique to draw Daniel's attention and to draw our attention as well
- In particular, Daniel wanted to know about those horns and the eleventh one
- Notice, Daniel gives us a little more detail about the boastful horn's behavior
 - He adds that this eleventh horn is waging war against the saints
 - A saint is not a special person above other believers
 - The term “saint” in Scripture is always a reference to any and all who belong to God, His children by faith, those who believe

- We would say today those who are “saved” or “born-again”
- So at the end of the Age of the Gentiles, an eleventh “horn” is trying to kill believers
 - And Daniel says the horn was overpowering them
 - That is, the horn was succeeding in killing believers
 - But the horn’s power only lasted until the Ancient of Days passed judgment in favor of the saints
- Interestingly, Daniel then says that the saints, including those who have been overpowered, were now taking possession of the earthly kingdom
 - In other words, those who were killed by the eleventh horn lived again
 - And in their living, they took back the kingdom that the fourth beast and his eleventh horn had fought to obtain
 - So the eleventh horn may have won a battle here or there, but he lost the war
 - The saints and their King, Christ, win in the end
- This now brings us to the heart of the chapter, when the angel interprets the meaning of these new symbols for Daniel

Dan. 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.’

Dan. 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.’

Dan. 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.’

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

Dan. 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.’

Dan. 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 angel's interpretation fleshes out the last days of the fourth kingdom in remarkable detail
 - And as you're going to see, these details map perfectly to later prophecy given to the Apostle John in Revelation
 - First, the angel says in v.23 that the fourth kingdom is a different type of kingdom
 - It's different in comparison to the three that came before it
 - This reminds us of the statue description from Chapter 2
 - In Chapter 2, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar this:

Dan. 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.

Dan. 2:41 "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.

Dan. 2:42 "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.

Dan. 2:43 "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.

- Notice in this description, the fourth kingdom will consist of alliances being broken apart only to join back together in new ways
 - When we studied this chapter, we concluded that the fourth kingdom was different than the prior three
 - It wasn't a monolithic government or empire
 - It began as the Roman Empire, which itself went through numerous phases over its existence
- But eventually, it broke up into pieces, which later recombined in various alliances
 - Even today, we see that pattern continuing
 - Just as the alliances have changed, so have the names it calls itself

- But in all cases, the fourth kingdom continues to exist and to exert its controlling authority over Jerusalem and the Jewish people
- Now in Daniel 7, we see the angel confirming this pattern in v.23
 - This kingdom is different than the rest
 - Don't try to find a single nation or government to represent the whole of this kingdom
 - Because God has designed it to be different than the pattern He established in the earlier three kingdoms
 - This is one of the primary mistakes interpreters make in trying to label the fourth kingdom in historical terms
 - The amillennialist (those who don't believe in a literal 1,000-year Kingdom of Christ on earth) commonly makes this mistake
 - They hold that the fourth kingdom was nothing more than Rome, so that once the Roman Empire disappeared, the Age of the Gentiles ended
 - Therefore, this leads them to conclude we must now be living in the promised Kingdom
 - This view is wrong for many reasons, according to Scripture, but one reason is found here in Daniel
 - If we assign the fourth kingdom to the Roman Empire alone, then this kingdom can't be said to be truly different from the rest
 - In fact, it would be very much like the rest
 - No, the meaning of the angel's words in v.23 (and Daniel's in Chapter 2) tells us to look for something unlike what has come before
 - Specifically, the fourth kingdom period may start with a monolithic power in Rome, but it doesn't end that way
 - After Rome, the fourth kingdom lives on, dividing and recombining into new alliances
 - These alliances being formed from among the crushed "pieces" of the earlier kingdoms

- This is exactly what we've seen in the centuries after Rome, and it continues today (Brexit, anyone?)
- Then in v.24, the angel begins to explain the horns
 - Each horn represents a king, he says
 - Out of this fourth kingdom, ten kings will arise
 - These are the ten horns Daniel saw initially
 - Notice that these ten horns are contemporaries
 - They exist and rule at the same time
 - All ten are together
 - Just as the statue in Daniel 2 ended with ten toes lined up together
 - Also, remember that the statue was a timeline, so therefore, the toes represented the very end of the Age of the Gentiles
 - Now we know that the ten toes symbolize the ten kings again
 - So this tells us that the ten kings must come at the very end of the age, right before the Lord's return
 - We are living in the fourth kingdom now, and yet we don't see ten rulers controlling the entire earth
 - In fact, we have never seen this come to pass during this kingdom period
 - Therefore, we know this prophecy still lies in our future, too
 - Some (particularly amillennialists) have interpreted the ten kings as ten successive caesars of Rome
 - There are numerous problems with this interpretation
 - But a key problem is that the symbol of ten horns requires these kings rule at the same time
 - And again, the world has yet to see ten world rulers during the time of the fourth kingdom
 - Therefore, this must be an unfulfilled prophecy

- The angel continues in v.24 to explain the meaning of the strange eleventh horn
 - This extra horn is also a ruler, as the symbol suggests
 - But he is not like the rest
 - We wonder in what way he is different, and we get more detail later, in Chapters 9 and 11
 - We also get details in the New Testament, particularly in Revelation
 - For now, the angel says this horn will subdue three of the existing kings
 - This detail confirms that the ten kings must be contemporaries, since three are being deposed by the eleventh
 - The word “subdue” could have been translated “humbled”
 - These kings are brought low, taken out of power
 - Apparently, the eleventh king doesn’t need to humble the other seven, since presumably they don’t oppose him
- Once the eleventh king has consolidated his power, he begins to go to war against God Himself and the saints of God, that is, believers
 - During this time, he will intend or try to make changes to “times” and to “law”
 - These statements are obscure, being by themselves, so we can only propose possibilities
 - A change in times suggests a change to our calendar
 - Remember, our calendar is centered on the First Coming of Christ
 - So it makes sense that someone who opposes God would seek to change a calendar that honors His Son
 - And a change in law could be almost anything, but considering what we know, it seems to relate to opposing the saints
 - Perhaps he outlaws worship of Christ
 - Perhaps he determines that those who are professing Christians are to be executed

- We will see confirmation of this in Revelation
- Then, the angel says this king will have his way on earth for a period of time, specifically a time, times and half a time
 - This phrase is well-known to students of prophecy, especially in the book of Revelation
 - The phrase is a simple arithmetic equation
 - The word “time” represents the number 1
 - The word “times” represents the number 2 (plural of time)
 - And then “half a time” represents .5
 - So the phrase can be written $1 + 2 + .5 = 3.5$
 - Later in the book of Revelation, which describes this same period of time, we come to learn that this phrase describes 3.5 years of time
 - So the eleventh horn reigns over the earth, persecuting the saints and opposing God, for three and a half years
 - This is what Daniel meant earlier, when he said the kingdom was granted an extension of life for a brief time
 - The Ancient of Days has already sat for judgment and the sentence has been decreed
 - But for a short time, this king is allowed to continue, though his fate has already been fixed and his judgment is sure
 - So, the final thing the angel describes is that coming judgment and the kingdom to follow
 - In v.26, the angel says the court sits for judgment and the eleventh king’s dominion is taken away and he is destroyed forever
 - In his place, rule of the whole earth is handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High
 - We will live in this Kingdom with our King
 - We serve Him and obey Him

- Before we leave this chapter, let's compare what we've learned in Daniel 7 to a passage from Revelation 13
 - In Revelation 13, we're told of a coming world ruler, called "the beast", who will conquer the entire earth

Rev. 13:1 And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.

Rev. 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.

Rev. 13:3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;

Rev. 13:4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"

Rev. 13:5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

- This beast of a man is described as having ten horns with ten crowns
 - Notice he comes up from the sea again, as did the beasts of Daniel 7
 - And notice this particular beast is constructed of parts of all four beasts from Daniel 7
 - And he had ten horns on which sit ten crowns
 - Clearly, these details are intended to connect Daniel 7 to Revelation 13
- Then at some point, this leader is killed and yet, after a time, his "fatal" wound is healed
 - In other words, he is resurrected
 - As a result of his miraculous resurrection, the world is amazed and begins to follow this man, thinking him all powerful
 - After this event, he begins to boast arrogantly
 - Finally, notice he has his time in the spotlight for 42 months, which happens to be 3.5 years

- All these details confirm that this man is the eleventh horn of Daniel 7
 - He is coming into power in the final three and a half years of the fourth kingdom, which is also the final 3.5 years before Christ's return
 - He goes by many names in the Bible, including "the eleventh horn" and "the beast"
 - Later, in Chapter 9, Daniel will call him the "prince to come"
 - Paul calls him the "son of destruction" and the "man of lawlessness"
 - John labels him the "son of perdition" and most famously of all, "the antichrist"
 - He rules the entire world for the final half of a seven-year period called Tribulation
 - And he is able to gain rule over the world by defeating the ten kings that rule in his day
 - And by his miraculous resurrection, he convinces the world he is the Christ, God Himself
 - This is the boastful thing he claims, the arrogant blasphemy he commits
- How is he able to do these things?
 - In Revelation 13:2, we were told that the dragon gave his power to the beast, enabling him to resurrect and command the world's obedience
 - Revelation 12 tells us that this dragon is Satan himself
 - He brings this man to power, and through a coup, he takes control of the ten kings
 - Daniel says he humbles three of the ten, and Revelation says he is killed and then resurrected at the mid-point of Tribulation
 - It would seem, then, that in his effort to gain control of the world, three of the ten conspire to kill this eleventh man
 - They succeed in killing him, only to see him return to life by the power of Satan

- At that point, the beast uproots those three kings while the other seven fall in line
- Revelation 17 explains it this way

Rev. 17:12 “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

Rev. 17:13 “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

- So the ten toes of Daniel 2 and the ten horns of Daniel 7 both point to a confederacy of ten kings that rule the world
 - Revelation confirms that these men rule at the same time in history at a point in the future, shortly before Christ’s return
 - They exist for the purpose of enabling the antichrist to rise, when they may give their power to him
 - That is the final state of the fourth kingdom
- Therefore, we know that the Second Coming of Christ could not happen tomorrow
 - That event depends on several things happening first, beginning with the emergence of ten world rulers in place of the hundreds we have today
 - Later, an eleventh man must appear, the antichrist
 - Then he must gain full power for 42 months
 - Only then can Christ return, according to Daniel
 - In fact, we can precisely date the return of Christ
 - It will be exactly 42 months (3.5 years) after the antichrist gains control of the entire world
 - Some might wonder about Christ’s words, that no one will know the day and hour of His Coming, not even the angels or the Son Himself?
 - That statement comes from Matthew 24:36 in the Olivet Discourse
 - When Jesus spoke those words, He wasn’t referring to His Second Coming
 - He was referring to His return for His Bride, the Church

- The moment Christ returns to claim the Church and remove us from the earth is a moment that has no warnings, no prerequisites
 - We cannot know that moment, nor does even the Son
 - It's a moment chosen by the Father alone
 - But Christ's second coming to earth to establish His Kingdom is a date dependent on a series of other events, which Daniel and Revelation describe
- So now at the end of our chiasm, we have a clear understanding of the Age of the Gentiles
 - It is a period God brought to pass judgment against his own people
 - It will be many centuries of Gentiles ruling over Israel
 - The period is marked by four major empires
 - Daniel saw the arrival of the first two
 - We are living near the end of the fourth
 - Despite subjecting Israel to this Age of the Gentiles, the Lord hasn't forgotten them
 - He will continue to act to preserve a remnant among Israel
 - When they are persecuted by Gentiles, the Lord will be their strength
 - Daniel and his friends experienced this lesson personally
 - And finally, the fact that Gentile rulers have control over Israel doesn't mean they act with impunity
 - God Himself retains His sovereignty over every ruler on earth
 - So that even as Gentiles will command Israel, God will command them
 - This is a final assurance to Israel that God is not moving to destroy them, but to discipline them
 - And so that He may extend mercy to Gentiles as well