

Week 5

Daniel, Israel and the kingdoms of this world.

Daniel and Revelation

When we began our study of Revelation we embraced a book filled with metaphor and shaded meaning. Just as the teachers of the law in the days of Jesus knew the broad meanings of the prophecy of the birth of Jesus so we know the broad meanings of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. We establish those broad meanings by comparing them to other, and sometimes more clear, prophecies that give depth to our understanding. Therefore, if we are to understand the judgments of Revelation 4 – 21 we must first review three prophecies of Daniel. These prophecies are:

1. Daniel 2 – The Vision of the Image – The times of the Gentiles
2. Daniel 7 – The vision of the Beasts – The times of the Gentiles
3. Daniel 9 – The 70 “weeks” – The Significance of Israel in these times

What these passages do for our study of Revelation

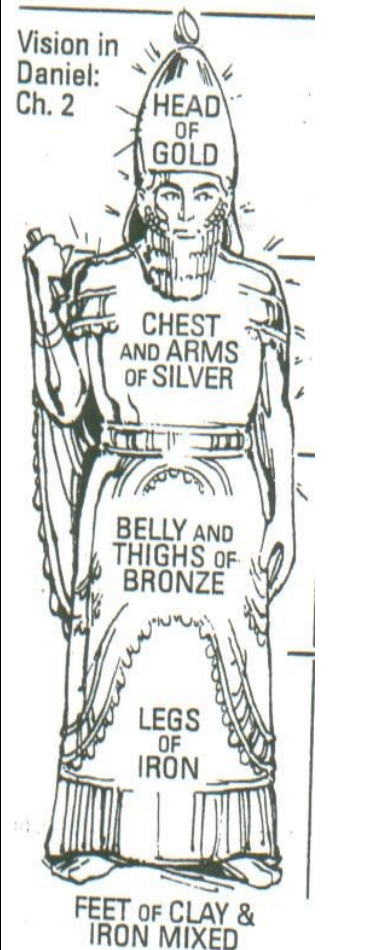
1. They provide a framework for us to understand the prophecies.
2. They provide a binding thread of activity in the nation of Israel.

As we study these visions it is important to distinguish what is important.

Visionary details are important if:

1. They are mentioned.
2. They are unusual.
3. They are detailed in the explanation.

The First two Visions - Compared

Daniel 2 – The Image		Daniel 7,8 – The Beasts
Head of Gold Babylon		Lion Babylon
Torso of Silver Medo-Persia		Bear Medo-Persia
Belly and Thighs of Bronze Greece		Leopard Greece
Legs of Iron/Feet of clay and iron Rome		Terrifying Beast Rome

1. The kingdoms degenerate.
 2. The metals become less precious (2:39)
 3. The metals become more durable
 4. The beasts become more fierce.
1. Israel is missing.

From this we draw a new vocabulary term: **“The Time of the Gentiles”**

The period in question will be marked by four different gentile kingdoms followed by a Kingdom of God which will destroy these kingdoms. During this time Israel will not be the focus of God’s work, but see chapter 9, God will tie all things together through Israel. Each of these kingdoms has its own characteristics which defines it in history.

Babylon – defined as the head of gold in chapter 2 the winged lion of chapter 7 is un-winged from an unknown source and given the heart of a man. Daniel’s interpretation establishes that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom is the “purest” and his conversion in chapter 4 makes him the man whose heart is from God.

Medo-Persia - The chest of silver identifies the next world kingdom as inferior, yet still precious. The Bear of Chapter 7 has two characteristics

- The bear is raised up on one side but eventually evens out. Historically, the united kingdom of the Medes and the Persians first relied upon the greater strength of the Medes. Over time, the Median influence disappeared and the Persians controlled the Kingdom.
- The bear is ravenous – The Medo-Persian Empire is the first world dominating empire stretching from India to Greece. Even after its losses in Thermopylae and Marathon the Kingdom’s control was unrivaled.

Greece – The kingdom of Bronze. Again a more inferior metal and most clearly defined in the leopard of chapter 7 and the goat of chapter 8. Three definitions of the Hellenists are in the text

- Their conquest is swift. The leopard has four wings, the goat of chapter 8 does not touch the ground. Alexander’s conquest of the world was swift and complete taking less than 20 years to control the world from the Caucasuses to the Great Wall of China.
- Their leadership fragments. The leopard’s four heads and the goat’s single horn that becomes four horns points to the fragmentation of the Greek kingdom. Alexander suddenly dies (the unknown cause of death is significant) at the age of 36. Since no plan of succession is established the four Generals of his army divide the kingdom into zones of Control
 - Greece and Macedonia – Antipater
 - Asia Minor and Thrace – Lysimachus
 - Syria – Seleucus
 - Egypt and N. Africa – Ptolemy
- Their authority lasts. The rule of Greece is evident in that the language of Greece, the philosophy of Greece, and the legal system of Greece influence the entire world even to this day!

Rome – The final kingdom probably has the most definition.

Iron – By far the least precious, but also the strongest. The kingdom will be common but overwhelming.

Iron and Clay – The clay does not blend but remains distinct pointing to these characteristics of the final kingdom

The kingdom is a blend of peoples – non of whom are superior

The kingdom is a fragile kingdom – not necessarily able to carry out its rule (democracy?)

The Kingdom is divided – a reference to the division of Rome into east and west or an ideological split? To support the latter, Rome willingly amalgamated itself with all of its cultures.

- Their religious system was Greek,
- Their army is eventually Germans and Angles,
- Their legal system – while their own – vacillated between dictatorship and democracy

Devouring – Rome’s conquest of the world was, and is, ruthless. Cities unwilling to accept their rule were destroyed. Their laws and systems controlled all activities and Roman culture controlled the populous. If we consider the current world to be an extension of the roman kingdom we would see that western culture controls the arts and entertainment world, economic world, language, legislature, and military authority. While these things may be good, they will be a vehicle for the kingdom, under its final ruler, to oppose God and all that is good.

Different – Daniel 7:23 identifies the kingdom as “different.” This may be because of

Its Longevity.

Its lack of consistency

Ten Horned – The horns represent leaders or leadership as identified in the four horns of the goat. These horns may identify:

- Ten leaders of the Roman Kingdom.
- Ten Nations that control the Kingdom.
- Ten prominent leadership styles or structures within the historic kingdom.

- The Final Horn –

Uprooting – The horn takes over the authority of three of the ten systems/kings. His leadership is dominating within a dominating system.

“Eyed” – The final horn (antichrist) presents a picture of omniscience. The only other creatures described as eyed are the beasts before the throne of God and these are often related to symbols of the Holy Spirit.

Boastful – He portrays himself as greater than he is.

Overthrown by God – Daniel 2 pictures the kingdoms of this world destroyed by the rock. Daniel 7 identifies the kingdoms as judged and destroyed.

Daniel 9 – The Seventy “Weeks”

Context – Daniel is reading Jeremiah 25 where the prophet says God will judge Israel and remove her from the land for 70 years.(9:1-3) Daniel prays confessing the sin that brought about Israel’s removal (vv. 4-11), the right that God had to exercise such judgment (vv. 12- 14), requesting God’s forgiveness and restoration (vv. 15-19). In response, God outlines Israel’s future in which the following items will be accomplished in Israel and Jerusalem:

Daniel 9:24 (NIV)

²⁴ “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.¹

Completion of Transgression – restoration from sin

An end of sin – its power and dominion

A satisfactory atonement – propitiation

Sanctification

Completeness of History and God’s plan

Establishing a perfect kingdom

What are the ‘sevens’ or ‘weeks’

The word translate week is the word “heptad” meaning seven or week. The prescription here is that 70 heptads are decreed to accomplish the aforementioned works. The best way to calculate the heptads are as years and the math would work out to 490 years. What is significant here is the number of times Israel’s history has worked in round numbers of 400. For example, the time from Abraham to Moses is 430 years.

Calculating the years

¹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984. Zondervan: Grand Rapids

Daniel 9:25-27 (NIV)

²⁵ “*Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.* ²⁶ *After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.* ²⁷ *He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”*

There are four milestones in the prophecy:

the issuing of the decree – The starting point for calculation is of the greatest importance. Some, attempting to minimize the prophecy have identified the “decree” as the prophecy of Jeremiah mentioned in the first verse of the chapter. Before dismissing this keep in mind:

The belief has contextual support since it is the logically preceding statement.

The word for “decree” is the word used in the prophetic structure, “Thus SAYS the Lord”

Others equate it with the decree of Cyrus – the first of the Medo-Persian Kings who conquered Babylon in 538B.C. This decree opened the door of religious tolerance and encouraged return to native lands and native gods.

More likely, Gabriel is pointing Daniel forward to the decree of Artaxerxes who in 446B.C. who financed the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem under Nehemiah.

- seven ‘sevens,’ – 49 years later Ezra and Nehemiah, through great perseverance and much opposition complete a temple and complete the wall of Jerusalem. The sacrificial system begins again and Jerusalem is again the center of Israel’s religious life.
- sixty-two ‘sevens.’ – Equals a.d. 37 which is roughly approximate to the days of Christ. Significantly the statement is *After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.* What follows is a non-descript period of time marked by the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem followed by periods of war.
- one ‘seven.’ – The last week of Israel’s history. The 7 years are marked by two distinct phases and covenant with a world (Gentile) ruler

- The first 3 ½ years – Israel lives in covenant with the world ruler and he assists in the construction of a temple and the restoration of sacrifice.
- The latter 3 ½ years – the world ruler (AntiChrist) breaks his covenant and establishes himself as god mirroring the disrespect of Israel found in Antiochus Epiphanes who in 168B.C. placed a statue of Zeus in the temple and sacrificed a pig on the altar resulting in the Maccabee revolt. Epiphanes, also found in Danile 11:36ff is the anti-type of the Anti Christ.
- It is this final “week” that the remainder of Revelation details.