

# **AGE OF EMPIRES**

## **Looking at Daniel 7-12 through a Dispensational Lens**

Shepherds 360  
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**Text: *Daniel 7:1-14***

### **Introduction:**

During his earthly ministry, our Lord taught us to pray by giving us a pattern prayer to shape our thinking so that we would come to God and ask Him for things that mattered to Him instead of just asking for things that mattered to us at that moment in our lives.

There are three primary priorities Jesus sets forward in this pattern prayer that should govern our living and shape our praying:

- a. That His Father's name would be exalted above all earthly powers and authorities;
- b. That His Father's kingdom would come on earth;
- c. That His Father's will would be done on earth just as it is being done in Heaven.

Believers around the world have prayed for these things for more than two thousand years! Many of us have prayed for these priorities throughout the entirety of our Christian lives!

***What is it that keeps us praying for these things in the face of so much contradictory evidence that confronts us almost on a daily basis?*** The answer lies in the fact that appearances are often deceiving and the kingdom that so often seems to be in control and that looms so large on earth is not the kingdom that matters most

nor the kingdom that will endure forever. This reality is that there is a higher throne that rules over the kingdoms of men which is why we continue to pray confidently, boldly, and expectantly for the kingdom represented by that throne to come! And the theological foundation for prayers like these is found in the chapter we have come to in our journey through Daniel – chapter 7.

To help us capture the big ideas in this chapter, this morning we are going to look at five descriptive phrases that help us capture the kingdom focus of this section of Daniel's vision.

## I. Kingdom Perspective (vv. 1-8)

*In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. <sup>2</sup> Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. <sup>5</sup> And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' <sup>6</sup> After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. <sup>7</sup> After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. **It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.** <sup>8</sup> I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. **And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.***

- **Panoramic view** of the rest of the empires throughout the ages starting with Babylon.
- **Revealed at a unique time** – first year of Belshazzar toward the end of the Babylonian empire.
- **Revealed to a unique person** – faithful servant who was unusually gifted and enable by God to interpret visions.
- **Revealed in a unique fashion** – Daniel is going to witness things that are going on simultaneously in two realms.

## **II. Sovereign Directive (vv. 2-3, 4, 5, 6,)**

*Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. <sup>3</sup> And **four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.***

***A. Four Gentile kingdoms (7:3)***

***B. Described as Hostile, Ravenous Beasts (7:4-8)***

***C. Governed by 10 powerful rulers (7:7)***

***D. Epitomized in 1 arrogant despot (7:8, 11; 24-26)***

***E. Controlled by the Sovereign God of Heaven in respect to:***

## **III. Arrogant Invective (vv. 7-8)**

*After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. **It was different from all the beasts that were before it,** and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. **And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.***

***A. One kingdom is set apart from the Others***

***B. That appears in two distinct Iterations.***

***C. Governed by Powerful Gentile Rulers***

***D. Dominated by a Satanic Champion***

No wonder Daniel is deeply troubled by what he sees and comes to understand when given the interpretation of this vision.

#### IV. Divine Corrective (vv. 9-12)

*"As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. <sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; **the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.** <sup>11</sup> "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. <sup>12</sup> As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, **but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.***

Daniel's focus is now directed to a different kingdom and a higher throne upon which is seated the Ancient of Days!

- He appears in majestic sovereignty (7:9a)  
*As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat*
  - He exhibits unmarred purity (7:9b)  
*his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. <sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued and came out from before him;*
  - He receives unending worship (7:10)  
*a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;*
  - He sits in unassailable judgment (7:10)  
*the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.*
  - He acts with unavoidable wrath (7:11)  
*"I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.*
  - He extends unmerited mercy (7:12)  
*As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, **but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.***
- But who does this? Who acts on His behalf?
  - An Anointed, Appointed Divine-Human Champion identified as the "Son of Man."
  - Satan may have his champion, but God has appointed and anointed His own Champion!

## **V. Redemptive Identity (v. 13-14)**

*"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

### **A. His Identity – Who He Is**

### **B. His Destiny: What He Receives**

### **C. His Continuity: When He receives It**

### **D. His Ministry: Why He receives It**

## **Conclusion:**

### ***What are the implications of this 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom?***

- It will overcome and subdue all other earthly kingdoms (7:27).
- It will never end (7:14, 27).
- It will never be destroyed (7:14).
- It belongs to us (7:27).

*And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'*

### ***Therefore:***

- **We should pray for its coming fervently**
- **We should live by its values faithfully**
- **We should advance its agenda passionately**
- **We should worship its King thankfully**
- **We should share its invitation boldly**
- **We should bear its affliction joyfully**

***And we should live in the kingdoms of this world realizing that there is a higher throne to whom our lives, love, and loyalty belong!***