

God Reigns over Realms

Daniel 7:1 – 28

The Laurel Center

February 6, 2015

Main Idea: God reigns over human history and all kingdoms.

Introduction

I think almost all of us are interested in the future and what will come. Because of this, many find prophecy an interesting topic to discuss. We all want to know what's going to happen and many of us may even have a fear of the future because it is so uncertain. Prophecy gives us a way of beginning to understand what may happen and how it may happen and how it will affect us individually.

Because we approach the book of Daniel in its first-half through narratives, I was unable to give a background on the book itself. The book is split into two sections. Chapters 1-6 tell us about Daniel and his life in Babylon. Chapters 7-12 contain written prophecies about the future through dreams and visions that Daniel has at night. It is rare for us to get both the written prophecies and the life situation of a prophet in the Bible. Either we get one or the other. But Daniel gives us both. It helps us to understand this situation and how his prophecies fit into that situation.

As we enter into the prophecy section of the book, we're going to find the same theme that we had already seen through the narratives. God reigns over all things. He is King over the whole universe and over human history. He reigns the matter what can sit on the Empire throne. This never changes and it encourages all of us to know that no matter what happens in the future, God is always in control. Let's take a look at the prophecies in Daniel's vision that closely resembles the dream King Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter 2.

Text – Daniel 7:9–14

9 “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. **10** 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. **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. **12** As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. **13** “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. **14** 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.

I. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall (vv. 1 – 8).

A God foretells of four kingdoms.

- 1 This passage chronologically happens on the first year of King Belshazzar's reign around 537 BC. It happens before chapters 5 and 6. Daniel lived through the reigns of three Kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius.
- 2 He has a dream, a vision in the night, of four beasts that were present for kingdoms that are about to come upon the earth. The first one is not prophetic because he is living in the midst of its time.
- 3 The first animal that he sees represents Babylon. It is the image of a lion with Eagles wings. This is actually a common image in the kingdom of Babylon.
- 4 The second kingdom mentioned is Medo-Persia, represented by a that is lopsided. This probably represents the fact that the Persians were stronger than the means.
- 5 Next, a leopard with four wings and four heads represents Alexander the great and the kingdom of Greece. We know this because the four wings and four heads represent the four kings who were generals and Alexander's army.
- 6 After Alexander's death these four general split his giant empire into four sections so that each of them could rule. The leopard is known for its swiftness and Alexander the great took over much of his empire very quickly before he died very young.
- 7 The final kingdom is represented by a beast with 10 horns. Daniel describes it as terrifying. He does not tell us what kind of animal it is. Many people link this animal with the beast in Revelation.
- 8 Most accept that this kingdom is the Roman Empire. The 10 horns become 10 kingdoms that branched out from the Roman Empire. The 10 nations most likely come out of the split of the Roman Empire.
- 9 This vision is similar to the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter 2. It is most likely the same empires are described to him as he wonders about his legacy. Most scholars suggest that they are from two different perspectives. King Nebuchadnezzar's dream is from the experience of humans.
- 10 We are fascinated by empires and power and the ingenuity of human ability. We are impressed by the ability of others to take control and

power. But the second vision for Daniel seems to be more God's perspective. The empires are not a statue rising to the heavens but wild beasts.

B No kingdom lasts forever.

- 1 One of the important principles to take away from this vision is its prophetic insight into the future while maintaining the principle that only God's kingdom will endure.
- 2 No matter how big an impressive and Empire gets or how long it stands like the Roman Empire that lasted for almost 1000 years, only God's kingdom will last forever.
- 3 All of the striving of humanity to make a legacy or to make history is for not. Only the things that we do for Christ will matter. Even seeing the future shows us that God's kingdom stands longer than all of the others.
- 4 These four kingdoms rise and fall. From the perspective of Daniel and the 500 BC, only the first was revealed in his present. But we can look back at all four of these kingdoms and see that they all never lasted.
- 5 The prophetic part is not just for Daniel but also for us. The final kingdom with 10 horns is believed by most to still be in existence. These 10 kingdoms still holds sway and the Roman Empire with its ideas and characteristics is still basic to nations today.
- 6 Most believe the little horn that took over three other horns refers to the Antichrist who has yet to appear on this earth. This horn seems to have a power over the others which the Antichrist will demonstrate in the end times.
- 7 The best part about this vision is that God makes it clear that he reins despite the empires and nations we create. The matter what we do to prove ourselves and to make something that lasts, God is not surprised.
- 8 No matter what these empires want to do to his people, God protects us from all harm. We will go through trials but God is greater than those trials and those kings and those leaders.

II. God is King over all nations and His Kingdom (vv. 9 – 14).

A God rules human history.

- 1 There are two sections in the midst of the visions and their interpretation. The first section describes how God sits on his throne and the unstoppable kingdom that he rules.
- 2 It reminds me of Psalm 2 where God sits on the throne and the kings of the earth gather against him and all he could do was laugh. He has prepared his servant, his son, who will reign over these kings no matter what they do.

- 3 We get a serious sense of God's sovereignty in this whole matter of the kingdoms that humans will make to stand against him. Especially this last kingdom with the antics based will be very boastful and try to lead people astray.
- 4 The problem is that no matter what Satan does to try to win, he is already lost. One of the major emphases and themes of the book of Daniel and most of the prophets, as well as all of Scripture, is that dualism does not work.
- 5 Satan is not God's equal. He doesn't even come close. He was beaten before the creation of the world and while he will try to ruin all of God's plans every bit of it will fail.
- 6 This is also comforting and encourage them to the Saints because God is the winner and his victorious over the devil. The devil will give it is best shot, but if we remain faithful to the Lord, it will have little effect on the Saints.
- 7 This is the prophetic message that we must take away from this section. God is still on the throne no matter what human tries to seize the throne. No matter how much we go through in the last days despite God's plans and how we believe things are going to go, we can trust that God will be with us in those trials.
- 8 No King or empire will keep us from experiencing the victory that God has for us. We may suffer but it will be for God's glory and he will be glorified in us before those kings.

B God's Son rules the nations.

- 1 Not only is God on the throne and in complete control of the universe, but Jesus shows his strength as he sits on the throne as well. He is in the business of doing his father's will on our behalf.
- 2 This section is amazing because it shows Jesus as the Son of Man. The Son of Man is specific and important in this section. There is a reason that Jesus calls himself the Son of Man in the Gospels.
- 3 The Son of Man here is seen as taking his kingdom and rolling over it. Indeed, the book of Revelation describes a time of what we call the millennial reign of Christ.
- 4 This is a time in which Jesus will reign here on this planet for 1000 years. He will do all that is needed and his empire. It will be the greatest empire both in size and in character the world has ever seen.
- 5 Jesus will show the whole world how God's reign is greater than any rain that a human can have. Way back in the Old Testament, Israel decided that

they wanted a human king rather than God as King. But everyone will see Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- 6 Jesus is seen as coming in the clouds to rescue his people from the evil kings of this world. This image of him coming in the clouds to take his throne is the encouraging image he wishes to show in the Gospels as well.
- 7 As Christians we must never forget that God is on the throne and Jesus is interceding for us in every situation. We must always pledge allegiance to him alone and stand up under the pressure of trials because we are already victors.

III. God proves His sovereignty through prophecy (vv. 15 – 28).

A God explains the fate of the nations.

- 1 God outlines the major characteristics of each empire that succeeds the other. He tells the fortunes of each empire in that it will not survive and another will replace it.
- 2 This happens to be the story of our history. Each empire became larger and managed itself better than the previous empire. Each empire had some characteristic that made it better in this way or that than the previous empire.
- 3 But none of these empires would be as good as the words empire. The Lords kingdom would rain for 1000 years and then throughout eternity. It would have all of the characteristics that desert survival.
- 4 Not only would it survive but the Lord's kingdom will thrive. Jesus himself will be king of the kingdom. And the kingdom is built first in the hearts of people, growing from the inside and out. It's basis is love and morality, obedience and sacrifice. And Jesus leads by example.

5

B No kingdom survives except the Lord's.

1

Conclusion

Comparing the World's Prophesied Empires

	Babylon	Medo-Persia	Greece	Rome	Holy Roman Empire
Daniel 2	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Iron	Clay mixed with fire
Daniel 7,	lion with Eagles wings	there raised on one side with three ribs between its teeth	leopard with four wings and four heads	exceedingly great piece, great iron teeth, 10 horns	Little Horn rose up, three horns bow down, human eyes and boastful about
				Teeth of iron and bronze claws	Little Horn made war with the saints and prevailed