

God's Incredible Plan for the Nations

by Denis Lyle

Denis Lyle's sermon explores God's prophetic plan for the nations as revealed in Daniel chapter 7, emphasizing His sovereignty and the ultimate triumph of Christ.

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:19

Topics: "End Time Prophecy", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

Denis Lyle preaches on God's incredible plan for the nations as revealed in Daniel 7. The chapter delves into future prophecies with absolute perfection, showcasing the transition from historical to prophetic sections in the book. It parallels the Gentile world powers from man's perspective in chapter 2 to God's perspective in chapter 7, highlighting the rise and fall of kingdoms and the emergence of a wicked end-time ruler. The chapter provides a detailed prophecy of future events, emphasizing God's unchanging plan for the nations and the ultimate reign of the Son of Man.

Transcript

Daniel 7:1-28 GOD'S INCREDIBLE PLAN FOR THE NATIONS When one of the great highway tunnels was built in Colorado, the work began at both ends simultaneously. When the crews met they were only one-half inch off centre... and that was regarded as a remarkable engineering feat. The prophecies in the Bible, however are more accurate than this, for theirs is not a relative but an absolute perfection. They will never miss the mark. Peter wrote, "we have also a more sure word of prophecy". (2 Pet 1:19) Now when we come to the seventh chapter of Daniel we are entering the second main division of the book.

The first six chapters of the book of Daniel are concerned with Daniel and His Personal Friends, the last six chapters are concerned with Daniel and His People's Future. The first six chapters are historical, the second six chapters are prophetic. Daniel the Sage is prominent in the first section, Daniel the Seer is prominent in the second section. Now there is a remarkable similarity between the prophecy of chapter 2 and this prophecy in chapter 7. Do you recall chapter two Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about a great metallic image, he saw a panoramic view of Gentile world power from the days of the Babylonian Empire until the final days of Gentile power and to the time when the Lord Jesus will establish His kingdom on earth.

The Lord Jesus referred to this period as "the times of the Gentiles", (Lk 21:24) and chapter seven is also dealing with this period of time. So there are similarities between the second and the seventh chapter of Daniel, but there are also differences and we don't want to miss them. In chapter two these four great

world empires are seen from mans point of view, and when man looks at them they are dominant, impressive and awe inspiring, but in chapter seven they are seen from Gods point of view and when God looks at them they are wild, ferocious beasts continually fighting and devouring one another.

Now there is another difference between the two chapters and that is, chapter seven provides us with some information about a wicked end time ruler, the man that is everyone is looking for already, Mr. Europe himself. Dr. John Walvoord says that Daniel chapter seven "provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament". I am told that among the scribes who copied the Old Testament, the seventh chapter of Daniel was considered the greatest chapter in the Bible.

This is about pure future prophecy, the record of God's incredible and unchanging plan for the nations. Clearly, this is a chapter that merits our attention. Now I have divided this chapter into three. (1) THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DREAM Now this introductory statement provides us with certain data about the dream. Notice for e.g.; (a) THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING: Did you notice (7:1) Now when we looked at chapter 5, and God writing on the wall, we saw that was the last year of Belshazzar, the date was 539 BC.

So chapter 5 brings before us the last year of Belshazzar, and chapter 7 is bringing before us the first year of Belshazzar, a flashback to 553 BC, 14 years before the feast in chapter 5. So chronologically this dream belongs between chapter 4 which deals with the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar, and chapter 5 which deals with the overthrow of Belshazzar. So you can see that the chapters are not put in chronological sequence, and for this reason the first six chapters are mainly historical, while the last six chapters are mainly prophetic.

So the reason the seventh chapter does not appear in chronological order is because it belongs to the prophetic section. (a) (b) THE INDIVIDUAL SETTING: For we are told not only WHEN Daniel received the dream, but WHERE Daniel received the dream. He received the dream when he was resting on his bed. (7:1 Job 33:15-16) Now this is the first dream actually given to Daniel directly. The dreams of chapter 2 & 4 were given to Nebuchadnezzar and the handwriting of chapter 5 was provided for Belshazzar.

Now in those chapters Daniel appears as the interpreter of the dreams, and the handwriting but in chapter 7 her appears as the recipient of the dream. At a time when Daniel was far-advanced in years, God gave him this dream. "Then he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters". That is, he told the essential content of the dream. (a) (b) (c) THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: Look at (7:2) Which in ancient times referred to the Mediterranean. In his dream, Daniel saw himself standing by the Mediterranean, but he wasn't there to admire the sunset.

We often use the expression "a sea of humanity", (Rev 13:1 7:17) Now remember when Daniel is resting he is in Babylon, a 1000 miles away from Jerusalem, but God takes him in his mind to this new area and region, and Daniel see's a great storm on a mighty ocean with four winds blowing from every direction (Rev 7:2 Eph 2:2 6:12) and these winds may indicate Satanic forces who rule over the nations that are about to seize world power! Daniel sees the nations in unrest, which is the everlasting human condition. (1) (2) THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE DREAM For in (7:3-14) we've got the basic information about the dream of Daniel, and if you look at this section closely you'll discover that Daniel saw action in his dream on two levels, the earthly level and the heavenly level.

Do you see: (a) THE EARTHLY LEVEL: In (7:3-8) You see, out of these turbulent waters emerge four of the ugliest zoo animals you could ever imagine. And these animals are used to represent kingdoms. (7:17) Even today the lion represents Great Britain and the eagle represents the United States! Many nations have their own animal symbols. Now the four beasts outlined here in (Ch 7) correspond to the four metals of the statue in (Ch 2) and Christ the king, the Son of man from Heaven, in (Ch 7) corresponds to the stone in (Ch 2) So here are 4 different, distinct, diverse beasts coming up out of this geographical region, the Mediterranean and these 4 beasts are 4 kings, (7:17) and these kings are described as kingdoms. (7:23) Now in: 1.

The 1st Beast we see the Greatness of Babylon: Look at (7:4) Here we have Babylon corresponding to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's image. The national symbol of Babylon was a winged lion. In fact we have discovered that the Ishtar gates of the city of Babylon, the replicas of which are supposed to be in the Berlin Museum, show two winged lions guarding the gates. (Jer 4:7) When the winged lion had its wings plucked off, it was just like old Nebuchadnezzar, when God humbled him and brought him to surrender to Him. 2.

The 2nd Beast we see the Fierceness of Medo-Persia: (7:5) This is the breast and arms of silver in the metallic image of (Ch 2) Historians tell us that the Medo-Persians conquered Lydia, Babylon and Egypt which are the three ribs Daniel saw in the bears mouth. The beast was lifted up on one side like a circus bear doing tricks, and historians tells us that one half of the Medo-Persia Empire was dominant. That was the Persians. 3. The 3rd Beast we see the Swiftiness of Greece: Look at (7:6) This is the belly and thighs of brass in the image of (Ch 2) How swift, cunning and cruel the leopard is!

Away back in 1983 I was preaching in South Africa for almost two months! My host for 2 days took me to a game reserve away to the north of Durban. I can recall vividly going out one morning before dawn to a waterhole, to watch the animals from a vantage platform coming to drink. There were all sorts of animals there drinking away. Suddenly, and unexpectedly the animals scattered in all sorts of directions. We wondered what was going on, and then out of the bush there appeared a Cheetah, the fastest animal on four feet.

Alexander the Great was like a leopard for he travelled faster and conquered more land than any other man in recorded history. (8:21-22) Poor Alexander, could conquer anything but himself, like a lot of world leaders. When he died at 32, his kingdom was divided among his four leading generals. (7:6) 4. The 4th Beast we see the Awfulness of Rome: For there is no other animal in all the animal kingdom that we can compare to the fourth beast. Of course this corresponds to the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and part of clay!

It represents the imperialistic, cruel empire of Rome. It was Rome that crucified our Lord. It was Rome that crucified Peter and beheaded Paul. It was Rome that banished John to the isle of Patmos. It was Rome that burned Christians and butchered men, women and children. Now did you notice that Daniel describes this beast in more detail than he does the first three beasts Look for e.g.; at * Its Dreadful Appearance: "dreadful and terrible." (7:7) It struck fear into the beholder! * Its Destructive Capacity: "strong... iron teeth".

This 4th beast was armed with teeth that made it more dangerous than Jaws. * Its Violent Activity: "it devoured..." (7:7) This beast turns on other beasts and destroys them ruthlessly. * Its Distinctive Character: "was diverse". So different that Daniel could not classify it as being any known species of animal. * Its Multiple Horns: "and it had ten horns". (7:7) In the case of a wild animal a horn is an

instrument of aggression and destruction. This beast is able to crush and conquer its opponents overwhelmingly.

Now do you notice that just as the feet of the image in (Ch 2) had ten toes so this 4th beast has ten horns and these ten toes and ten horns symbolise ten kings (7:24) Now there has never been a ten-part Roman Empire in the history of the world, so this has to be future. Never in the past has Rome survived under ten kings and never in the past has Rome survived under ten kings at one given time. Tell me, is there any place in the past where the Roman Empire was ruled by ten kings simultaneously The answer is no.

You see, this whole vision is stretching out into the future to a revived Roman Empire. Look again at (7:7) Now down to the word "it", that was the Roman Empire in its FIRST PHASE "And it had ten horns... great things". (7:7-8) That is the Roman Empire in its FINAL PHASE. Now John saw this empire in its final phase. (Rev 13:1) John is describing the same beasts that we have in (Dan Ch 7) but their order is reversed. This is because Daniel was looking forward, John is looking backward.

John sees this Roman Beast in its FINAL PHASE, and he sees that he will absorb the chief features of all the previous prophetic empires. In other words, in a Revived Roman Empire we're going to see something of the Greatness of Babylon: Fierceness of Medo-Persia, the Swiftness of Greece and the Awfulness of Rome. Now lets go back to (Daniel Ch 7) and have another look at this beast. * Its Remarkable Development: (7:8) I think you can see here: The ADVENT of the Little Horn: "there came up."

The ACTIVITY of the Little Horn: "before whom..." The APPEARANCE of the Little Horn: "behold..." So Daniel in his dream is being taken to the Mediterranean region, and in this area in the last days ten kings will stand up. This will be the revival of the last beast, and out of these ten shall another "little horn," arise and this king will destroy three of the ten in his rise to power and he will blaspheme God. (7:25) Now that is the Earthly Scene, but did you notice a change in (7:9) we are taken now to: (b) THE HEAVENLY SCENE: From earth to heaven.

From Satan's prodigy, the little horn to the Ancient of days. From the blasphemies of the Antichrist to the worship of angels before the throne of God. My, we are not just given a little glimpse into glory to assure us that God is in control. God will not permit the beast to control the world for long. He will send His Son to judge the beast, destroy His kingdom and set up His own glorious kingdom. You see, Daniel is fixing his eyes on God. Is there not a great lesson for us to grasp here No matter what sort of diabolical beastly business is going on down here, we need to keep our eyes up there.

My, Daniel saw this beast devouring, this little horn blaspheming, strutting about speaking words of blasphemy against God. Then he catches a vision of God sitting in the heavens, with ten thousand times, ten thousand angels worshipping Him. Do you know what the psalmist says "God laughs." (Ps 2:4) Sometimes God sits in the heavens and laughs at wee men strutting about full of their own importance. John McNeill preached on one occasion on that text, "the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers".

Is 40:22 Do you know what he said He said the Judge on the bench was just a grasshopper with a wig on his head. The King on the throne was just a grasshopper with a crown on his head. The Pope in the Vatican was just a grasshopper with a Babylonish mitre on his head. My, we don't need to swank about before God. Are we not just grasshoppers in his sight Yes, Daniel turns his eyes heavenwards. What did Daniel see He saw: 1. THE RULE OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS: God on the Throne! Look at what he saw.

He saw * The ETERNITY of God: This is the only place in the Bible where the "Ancient of days", is mentioned. He sees God as "the One who has been around forever." * The PURITY of God: "His garment as white as snow", the picture of absolute purity! * The BEAUTY of God: "And the hair of His head was like pure wool." * The GLORY of God: "His throne was like the fiery flame". (7:9) My, do you ever occupy yourself with the Lord Like the psalmist can you say, "I have set the Lord before me" (Ps 16:8) If we set the Lord before us then we'll not be annoyed by some of the grasshoppers around us who seek to disturb and disrupt. * The ACTIVITY of God: "and His wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him". (7:10) God is active in judgement and this judgement is seen here proceeding from the throne of God. * The COMPANY of God: "Thousand thousands... " Billions of angels bow down, and worship before the throne of the Ancient of Days, for He alone is worthy to be worshipped. The "little horn", was about to be judged and heaven desires "to look into", these things. * The SOVEREIGNTY of God: "the judgement was set and the books were opened".

Now the court is about to convene, the judge is seated, justice will be done. Yes, Daniel saw the Rule of the Ancient of Days! My, don't miss where the Lord put this in Daniel was just getting his eyes on a wee miserable grasshopper, the Antichrist, but when he got his eyes on the Lord this man just paled into insignificance. My, is this what you need to do Are you looking upward or outward " Turn your eyes on Jesus... grace". (a) (b) THE RUIN OF THE MAN OF SIN: Look at (7:11-12) Now the beast here, is the fourth beast and its destroyed by the sentence of this heavenly court.

Of course not only is the beast destroyed, but its head the Antichrist is destroyed also. The Lord Jesus will come, the stone of Nebuchadnezzars dream (Ch 2) and will deal a pulverising blow to this Final phase of Gentile World Power! Do you remember the ten toes of the beast and the stone cut out of the mountain that came and crushed those toes This simply means that when Christ comes again the ten-part empire has to be in place! Is it forming today Is there anything around today that could foreshadow this coalition that Daniel sees Well, I did say when we were dealing with (Ch 2) that by the Treaty of Rome on March 25th 1957 half a dozen nations began a new chapter in history.

Thus was born the European Economic Community, sometimes called the Common Market, and perhaps the first stirrings toward a revival of the Roman Empire. Did you ever think you would live to see the day when the Queens head may not be on our money Well, we now have the Euro. The EEC is already the world's largest trading cartel, accounting for nearly a quarter of the worlds trade. Sure, we can expect to see a continuing ebb and flow in the affairs of the EEC Its ultimate goal is full political union.

More members may join, some may amalgamate, some may drop out. But by the time Daniel's end time prophecies come into focus, there will be a ten-part European union. The "little horn", will rise to power and steer the empire toward world domination. (7:23) But bless God, our Returning Redeemer will shut Him up once for all. For Daniel not only saw (a) (b) but he saw: (c) THE REIGN OF THE SON OF MAN: Look at (7:13-14) Who is this, who comes with the clouds of heaven in a manner we associate with Deity Who is this, who is led, by attendant ministers of the supreme court and presented to the "Ancient of Days" Who, but Jesus!

A similar scene is set before us in (Rev ch 5) where Jesus, as Lord of creation and the Lamb of Calvary, steps into the spotlight of eternity to receive from Him who sits on the throne the title deeds of planet earth. This one, arrayed in the clouds of heaven is Jesus, as He was, is, and ever will be God the Son, uncreated, self-existing, over all, blessed for ever! It is recorded that the Father said to the Son, "Ask of

Me and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for Thy possession". (Ps 2:8) Now as the Son anticipates His return to earth, He says, "Father give me my inheritance".

The inheritance is granted. Look at (7:14) My, the "Son of Man", (Matt 24:30 26:64) will come to judge His foes: to claim His inheritance, and to reign forever. Rev 11:15 Do you know something The world this... has little use for Jesus. He has been voted out of the counsels of the United Nations, though a statue of Zeus, the pagan thunderer of Olympus, adorns its vestibule. But the day is coming, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So there you have (1) (2) (3) THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM Poor old Daniel. He's feeling under the weather. Its been all too much for him. You see, he could not settle until he heard the interpretation. Now notice that the dream is explained to Daniel: (a) GENERALLY: Look at (7:17-18) So four beasts represent four kings. If you look at (7:23) you'll discover that a beast includes both the king and the kingdom. So these four beasts are four kingdoms on earth, but you will note that these four kingdoms are not eternal for they are superseded by the kingdom of the Most High! (a) (b) SPECIFICALLY: Daniel was always after the truth and he wanted to know about three things. (1) He wanted to know about the fourth beast. (7:19) (2) He wanted to know about the ten horns. (7:20) (3) He wanted to know about the little horn. (7:20) So this angelic being took him by the hand, as it were and guided him through the maze.

Let's try and analyse what was said. Notice: * The Fourth Beast is IDENTIFIED: (7:23) The fourth beast, represents the fourth kingdom, namely the Roman Empire. * The Ten Horns are SPECIFIED: (7:24) So ten horns equals ten kings that will arise out of a revived Roman Empire! This is something that never happened in ancient Rome. Its for the future but its shadow lies across Europe this ...! Did you notice that these "ten", are still "kings". They are hanging on to a measure of sovereignty.

My, is this not the whole problem this... Some nations like our own cannot bring themselves to take the final step and surrender sovereignty and accept total federation. But the day is coming when they will. So * * * The Little Horn is PERSONIFIED: (7:24) What a picture we have here of the Antichrist! (1 Jn 2:18) Have a look at him. Do you see: His DEVELOPMENT: "another shall rise after them." He will be the eleventh king, the antichrist himself! His DISTINCTIVENESS: "diverse from the first."

His DEFEAT: of three kings. "he shall subdue... " His DEFIANCE: "he shall great words... "Do you how you recognise the Antichrist He's got a big mouth. (7:8 20, 25) His DESTRUCTION: "shall wear out the saints". Persecution will be rife when Mr. Europe come to power. (Rev 7:9) Do you see: His DESIGN: "and think to change times... "(7:25) Will he attempt to change the moral and natural laws of the universe! His DURATION: "until a time... "(7:25) This refers to the three and a half years which are the last half of the seven year period of Antichrists power (9:27) Then the Heavenly Court will convene and intervene. (7:26 7:9-10) My, have you grasped this amazing picture that Daniel is painting for us Here is a union that is going to be appear in the world, a revived Roman Empire and out of this Empire will come a man who will have all the power of Satan, and will make the world wonder and worship him.

He will have a big mouth and for 42 months he will continue until the Returning Christ blots him out. (Rev 19:9) Yes: * The Fourth Kingdom is IDENTIFIED: * The Ten Horns are SPECIFIED: * The Little Horn is PERSONIFIED: * The Most High is GLORIFIED: Look at (7:27) Oh, what a day that will be when the true king and kingdom will be established. (Is 2:4) " Jesus shall reign... " Maybe you are saying, "Well all of this is interesting. The ten horns. The three horns. The little horn.

The beasts and so on. But I got sacked last week. I discovered my kids are on drink and drugs. All of this stuff is interesting but what about my life" Well, let me leave you with this thought. If God can be trusted with the affairs of this universe, and He can, then He can be trusted with the affairs of my life. My, if God can be trusted in the sweep of history and prophecy, can you not trust Him in the events of your life Its a staggering thought that the God of the universe, the God of human history, the God of world empires is actually interested in your life and mine. But He is! For He made us: He knows us: He is with us! (Ps 139) Will you not therefore TRUST HIM

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