

# Daniel's Vision of Future World History

by John F. Walvoord

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*John F. Walvoord's sermon explores Daniel's vision of future world history, emphasizing its prophetic significance and the interpretation of the four great empires leading to Christ's kingdom.*

**Topics:** "Biblical Prophecy", "Eschatology"

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## Description

John F. Walvoord preaches on the interpretation of biblical prophecy in the seventh chapter of Daniel, highlighting the comprehensive prophecy of future events tracing the course of four great world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, culminating in the second coming of Jesus Christ and the eternal kingdom of God. Conservative scholars agree that Daniel's vision provides a major outline of future events, crucial for understanding all other prophetic events. The chapter also addresses the historical world-kingdoms represented by Nebuchadnezzar's image and Daniel's vision of four beasts rising from the sea, commonly identified as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The vision of the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man from heaven signifies the final judgment, the destruction of the beast, and the establishment of an everlasting kingdom under the reign of Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

In the interpretation of biblical prophecy, the seventh chapter of Daniel occupies a unique place. As interpreted by conservative expositors, the vision of Daniel provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. Although its interpretation has varied widely, conservative scholars generally are agreed, with few exceptions, that Daniel traces the course of four great world empires, namely, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, concluding in the climax of world history in the second coming of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of the eternal kingdom of God, represented as a fifth and final kingdom which is from heaven.<sup>314</sup>

Interpreted in this way, the chapter forms a major outline of future events to which additional details are given later in the book of Daniel and in the New Testament, especially in the Revelation. Such a panorama of future events is of great importance to the student of prophecy, as it provides a broad outline to which all other prophetic events may be related. Conservative interpreters are agreed that this is genuine prophecy, that it is futuristic, that is, related to future events from Daniel's point of view, and that its culmination is in the kingdom which Christ brings.

In the introduction to his discussion of "The Four World-kingdoms," Keil has well summarized the issues involved in chapter 7. He writes,

There yet remains for our consideration the question, What are the historical world-kingdoms which are represented by Nebuchadnezzar's image (ch. 2), and by Daniel's vision of four beasts rising up out of the sea? Almost all interpreters understand that these two visions are to be interpreted in the same way. "The four kingdoms or dynasties, which are symbolized (ch. 2) by the different parts of the human image, from the head to the feet, are the same as those which were symbolized by the four great beasts rising up out of the sea."<sup>315</sup>

Keil continues, "These four kingdoms, according to the interpretation commonly received in the church, are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedo-Grecian, and the Roman. In this interpretation and opinion,' Luther observes, 'all the world are agreed, and history and fact abundantly establish it.' This opinion prevailed till about the end of the last century, for the contrary opinion of individual earlier interpreters had found no favour. But from that time, when faith in the supernatural origin and character of biblical prophecy was shaken by Deism and Rationalism, then as a consequence, with the rejection of the genuineness of the book of Daniel the reference of the fourth kingdom to the Roman world-monarchy was also denied."<sup>316</sup>

Conservative scholarship has solid reasons for interpreting the fourth kingdom as Roman as well as considering the second and third kingdoms as Medo-Persian and Grecian. As Keil has pointed out, supported by Luther, the prevailing opinion of orthodoxy has always held this position since the early church. Porphyry, the third century a.d. pagan antagonist of Christianity who invented the idea of a pseudo-Daniel writing the book of Daniel in the second century B.C., did not find Christian support until the rise of modern higher criticism. The whole attempt, therefore, to make the book of Daniel history instead of prophecy, written in the second century and fulfilled by that date, has been considered untenable by orthodoxy. With it, the view that the fourth kingdom is Greece and not Rome has been also rejected by conservative scholars as unsupported by the book of Daniel and contradicted by the New Testament as well as historic fulfillment.

Christ Himself in Matthew 24:15 predicted the abomination of desolation of Daniel 12:11 as future, not past. Prophecies of the book of Revelation written late in the first century also anticipate as future the fulfillment of parallel prophecies in Daniel. For example, Revelation 13 parallels the final stage of Daniel's fourth empire. This could not, therefore, refer to events fulfilled in the second century B.C. Daniel 9:26 prophesies that the Messiah will be cut off and the city of Jerusalem destroyed, events which occurred in the Roman period. The author of 2 Esdras, who lived near the close of the first century a.d., clearly identifies the fourth kingdom of Daniel's vision as the Roman Empire (2 Esd 12:11-12). To these arguments may be added the details of the second, third and fourth empires throughout the book of Daniel, which harmonize precisely with the Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires. The alternate views of the critics can be held only if Daniel's prophecy be considered in factual error in several places as the details of the prophecies do not really coincide with the critics' theories. For these reasons, conservative scholars have held firmly to the traditional identification of the four empires in chapter 7 of Daniel as in chapter 2.

The conservative interpretation, however, has been confronted with a broadside of critical objection to the plausibility of such detailed prophecy of future events. In general, critical objections are based on the premise that the book of Daniel is a pious second-century forgery. Critics hold that the real author of Daniel lived in the time of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), and that from the viewpoint of the second century B.C. he looked backward over the preceding four centuries, organized history in a manner which was significant for him, and made this the basis for anticipating a climax to the

Maccabean persecution then under way. Accordingly, the pseudo-Daniel considered Antiochus as symbolic of the wickedness of the powers of this world which the author believed were soon to be judged by God, who was to intervene and replace the rule of tyranny under Antiochus by that of the saints of the Most High. This interpretation, of course, requires interpretation of many statements in Daniel as less than factual and actually not scriptural prophecy at all. Their point of view as a whole is an expansion of the unbelief of Porphyry rather than a product of a reverent, believing study of the Scriptures.

Critics approach Daniel somewhat a priori, assuming that prediction of particular events in the future is incredible and, therefore, requiring a late date for the book of Daniel so that it is history rather than prophecy. This is often denied, however, by such scholarly writers as H. H. Rowley who states, "The conclusions we have reached have not been born of a priori disbelief in accurate prophecy, but of a posteriori demonstration that we have not accurate prophecy."<sup>317</sup> Nevertheless, it is quite plain, as the critical view is unfolded, that the content of Daniel itself is quite offensive to the critical mind and that broad statements are made that this or that fact in the book of Daniel is untrue either because of its nature or because there is no outside confirming evidence.

Although the multiplicity of variations in interpretation of the entire book of Daniel, and in particular chapter 7, is all too evident to any reader of the literature in the field, the critical view as defined by H. H. Rowley may be taken as representative.

According to the critics, the four empires of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are the empires of Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. Although their arguments embody many details, their theory has two major supports. First, they find evidence that the kingdom of Media is represented as being in existence in the book of Daniel by the mention of Darius the Mede (5:31; 6:1, 6, 9, 25, 28). Actually, there was no Median Empire in power at the time of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., as it had already been swallowed up by Persia by 550 b.c. Moreover, recent discoveries support the idea that Cyrus the Persian ruler himself entered Babylon eighteen days after the fall of Babylon on the night of Belshazzar's feast.<sup>318</sup>

The alleged error in relation to Darius the Mede, however, puts a teaching in the book of Daniel which actually is not there. The fact that Darius was a Median indicated his race, but it does not mean that the empire was Median. Chapter 6 of Daniel is very plain that the kingdom at that time over which Darius the Mede was reigning in Babylon was the kingdom of the "Medes and Persians" (vv. 8, 12, 15). In other words, the book of Daniel itself states clearly that this was a Medo-Persian empire, not a Median empire at this point. The error is in the critics' interpretation, not in what Daniel actually teaches.

The second critical argument is that the fourth empire is Greece--hence already history at the time the pseudo-Daniel wrote the book in the second century. This would require the second and third empires to be Media and Persia. The fact that Daniel's "prophecies" of these empires does not fit the facts of history is taken as error on the part of the pseudo-Daniel. The weakness of the critical approach here is unconsciously recognized in H. H. Rowley's discussion in which he puts most of his weight on the attempt to identify the fourth kingdom as Greece.<sup>319</sup> While few works can claim more scholarship and research than that of Rowley, the conservative interpreter of the book of Daniel finds that Rowley's interpretation tends to emphasize extrascriptural sources, magnify minor points of obscurity and often ignores the plain statements of the book of Daniel itself.

Montgomery adopts an interpretation even more extreme than Rowley. Montgomery not only attributes the book of Daniel to a second-century author but takes the position that the first six chapters of Daniel were

written by a different author and at a different time from chapters 7 to 12. Montgomery states, "The criticism of the unity of the bk. began in the 17th cent, with the observation of the distinction of languages, the Aram, and Heb.; Spinoza discovered two documents, cc. 1-7 and 8-12, referring the latter to the undoubted authorship of Dan., and confessing ignorance as to the origin of the former."<sup>320</sup> In order to support this, Montgomery holds that chapter 7 was originally written in Hebrew instead of Aramaic as we now have it.<sup>321</sup> Montgomery confesses, however, "But a critical distinction on the basis of diversity of language is now generally denied. The extreme positions taken respectively by the defenders and the impugners of the historicity of Dan. have induced the great majority of critics to assign the bk. as a whole to either the 6th or the 2d cent., with as a rule little or no discussion on the part of the comm. of the possibility of composite origin; indeed most ignore the problem."<sup>322</sup> Montgomery goes beyond the normal critical view of one pseudo-Daniel to the hypothesis that there were at least two pseudo-Daniels, both of whom were second century writers who may have used some earlier sources.

Montgomery credits his view as being first advanced by Sir Isaac Newton. Montgomery states, "The distinction between the Stories and the Visions was first made by Sir Isaac Newton: 'The bk. of Dan. is a collection of papers written at several times. The six last chapters contain Prophecies written at several times by Dan. himself; the six first are a collection of historical papers written by other authors'; and cc. 1. 5. 6 were written after his death."<sup>323</sup>

The final decision can only be made on which view offers the most plausible explanation of the text of Daniel. The inherent congruity of the conservative interpretation of Daniel 7 as opposed to the critical theories will be considered under the interpretation relating to each kingdom. If Daniel is genuine Scripture, of course, it tends to support the conservative interpretation. If Daniel is a forgery, as the critics assert, and its prophecy is actually history, the book of Daniel becomes quite meaningless for most Bible expositors. Rowley presents the hollow claim that the critical view "which has been adopted does not destroy faith but strengthens it, in that it provides a reasonable ground for it."<sup>324</sup> Actually Rowley is saying that the choice is between faith in error and faith in the "true view," that is, the critical interpretation.

#### Daniel's First Vision: The Four Great Beasts

7:1-3 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

In the opening verses of chapter 7, Daniel introduces his remarkable experience of having "a dream and visions of his head upon his bed" which occurred in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. The year was probably 553 B.C., fourteen years before the fall of Babylon. Nabonidus, the actual king of Babylon beginning in 556 B.C., had appointed Belshazzar as his coregent in control of Babylonia itself while Nabonidus conducted military maneuvers in Arabia.<sup>325</sup> As Nebuchadnezzar himself had died in 562 B.C., nine years before Belshazzar began to reign, it is clear that the event of chapter 7 occurred chronologically between chapters 4 and 5 of Daniel.

In the mention of the specific time of the vision, Daniel is consciously and deliberately rooting the visions which he received as occurring in the historical background of the sixth century b.c. The vision of chapter 8 is dated in Belshazzar's third year. According to Daniel 9:1-2, Daniel discovered the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the seventy years of captivity in the first year of Darius the Mede and, later in the

same chapter, had a third vision. The fourth vision of Daniel in chapters 10-12 occurred in the third year of Cyrus (10:1). In chapter 11, there is mention of an earlier activity of the angel in strengthening Darius the Mede in his first year, another historical event related to the prophetic portion of Daniel. All of these are introduced so naturally and are so integral to the narrative that they support the sixth century date for the book of Daniel.

In the opening verse of chapter 7, Daniel speaks of his experience as a dream and a vision, apparently indicating that he had a vision in a dream. Here, for the first time in the book of Daniel, a vision is given directly to Daniel, and in verse 2, Daniel is quoted in the first person, reciting his experience of the dream and its interpretation.

A great deal of discussion has been devoted to the significance of the seventh chapter in relationship to the book as a whole. One point of view, held by conservative as well as liberal interpreters, is that the book of Daniel divides into two halves with the first six chapters providing a unit and the second six chapters providing a second unit. From the standpoint of world history, this has much to commend itself; for the vision of Daniel in chapter 7 is at once a summary of what has been revealed before, especially in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2, and the outline of world history with which the last half of Daniel is primarily concerned. In the first six chapters, generalities are revealed. In the last six chapters, specifics are given, such as the detailed end of the times of the Gentiles and the relationship of Israel to world history, with special reference to the time of great tribulation.

From a literary standpoint, there is good support for the obvious division of the book into the stories (1-6) and the visions (7-12). Chapter 7, moreover, contains in semipoetic form a more explicit version of the expectations disclosed in chapter 2. With the elucidation and prosaic details given in concluding chapters, the division of Daniel into two halves is the conclusion of the majority of conservative scholars.

Another point of view argued strongly by Robert Culver is that the book of Daniel divides into three major divisions: (1) introduction, Daniel 1; (2) the times of the Gentiles, presented in Aramaic, the common language of the Gentiles at that time, Daniel 2-7; and (3) Israel in relation to the Gentiles, written in Hebrew, Daniel 8-12.<sup>326</sup> Culver's point of view, which he credits to Auberlen,<sup>327</sup> has much to commend itself and is especially theologically discerning because it distinguishes the two major programs of God in the Old Testament, namely, the program for the Gentiles and the program for Israel. In either point of view, however, chapter 7 is a high point in revelation in the book of Daniel; and, in some sense, the material before as well as the material which follows pivots upon the detailed revelation of this chapter.

Also to be noted in the introduction of chapter 7 is the sharp contrast between the vision given to Daniel and the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2. On the one hand, in chapter 2, a wicked and heathen king is used as a vehicle of divine revelation which pictures world history as an imposing image in the form of a man. In chapter 7, the vision is given through the godly prophet, Daniel, and world history is depicted as four horrible beasts, the last of which almost defies description. In chapter 2, Daniel is the interpreter. In chapter 7, an angel is the interpreter. Chapter 2 considers world history from man's viewpoint as a glorious and imposing spectacle. Chapter 7 views world history from God's standpoint in its immorality, brutality, and depravity. In detail of prophecy, chapter 7 far exceeds chapter 2 and is in some sense the commentary on the earlier revelation.

Critics have massed their severest criticism against the credibility of Daniel 7 and treated it almost contemptuously, but by so doing they only reveal the artificial criteria by which they judge divine revelation.

Conservative scholars, on the other hand, have hailed chapter 7 as one of the great prophecies of the Bible and the key to the entire program of God from Babylon to the second coming of Christ. Critics have suggested that the original form of this chapter was Hebrew and later it was translated into Aramaic,<sup>328</sup> but there is really no justification or documentary support for this apart from a premise that Daniel itself is a forgery. From a literary standpoint, it is only natural that the Aramaic section of Daniel, dealing as it does with the Gentile world, should be in Aramaic, commonly used as the lingua franca of that time.

Beginning in verse 2, Daniel records what he calls "the sum of the matter" in verse 1, that is, the details of his vision which he declares he "saw" (see 7:7, 13; cf. "beheld," 7:4, 6, 9, 11, 21). The words I saw and I beheld are the same verb in the Aramaic ( *hʿa,ze,h haʿwe,th*) and can be translated, "as I was looking." The verb consider in 7:8 is a different word. In the vision, four winds are seen striving on a great sea. Symbolically, the sea may represent the mass of humanity, or the nations of the world, as in Matthew 13:47 and Revelation 13:1 (cf. Is 8:6-8; Jer 46:7-8; 47:2; Rev 17:1, 15). The sea is identified with the earth in 7:17 and is clearly symbolic. The turbulence of the sea may well represent the strife of Gentile history (Is 17:12-13; 57:20; Jer 6:23).<sup>329</sup>

As Keil states, "The great sea is not the Mediterranean, ... for such a geographical reference is foreign to the context. It is the ocean; and the storm on it represents the 'tumults of the people,' commotions among the nations of the world,... corresponding to the prophetic comparison found in Jer. 17:12, 46:7 f. 'Since the beasts represent the forms of the world-power, the sea must represent that out of which they arise, the whole heathen world' (Hofmann)."<sup>330</sup>

Keil continues, "The winds of the heavens represent the heavenly powers and forces by which God sets the nations of the world in motion."<sup>331</sup> Keil also finds that the number four has the symbolic meaning of representing people from all four corners of the earth, that is, all peoples and all regions.<sup>332</sup> The sea, however, is only a background to the vision which will follow; and Daniel records that out of the sea came four great beasts, each differing from the other.

Commentators such as Leupold<sup>333</sup> agree with Keil that the major elements of the introduction to the vision, namely, the four winds of heaven, the great sea, and the four great beasts indicate universality. It seems clear that the sea represents the nations and the four great beasts represent the four great world empires which are given subsequent revelation. If this is the case, what is the meaning of the four winds?

Although the Scriptures do not tell us, inasmuch as the wind striving with the world is a symbol of the sovereign power of God striving with men (Gen 6:3; Jn 3:8), the prophetic meaning may be the sovereign power of God in conflict with sinful man. God often used the wind as a means to attain His ends (Gen 8:1; Ex 10:13-19; 14:21; 15:10; Num 11:31; 1 Ki 18:45; 19:11). Compare Satan's use of wind in Job 1:19. Of more than 120 references in the Bible to wind (more than 90 in the O.T. and about 30 in the N.T.), well over half are related to events and ideas which reflect the sovereignty and power of God. In Daniel, wind is uniformly used to represent the sovereign power of God, which is the viewpoint of the book. The history of the Gentiles is the record of God striving with the nations and ultimately bringing them into subjection when Christ returns to reign (Ps 2).

#### The First Beast: Babylon

7:4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

Daniel describes the first beast as being like a lion but having the wings of an eagle.<sup>334</sup> As Daniel beheld, or as Leupold puts it, "kept looking" that is, looking intently,<sup>335</sup> he saw the wings plucked from the beast, the beast lifted from the earth, made to stand upon his feet as a man, and given a man's heart, that is, a man's mind or nature. Interpreters of the book of Daniel, whether liberal or conservative, generally have agreed that chapter 7 is in some sense a recapitulation of chapter 2 and covers the same four empires. Likewise, there is agreement that the first empire represents the reign of Nebuchadnezzar or the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Concerning this identification, Rowley comments, "Of this there is little dispute. In Dn 2:38 we read that Daniel specifically informed Nebuchadnezzar: 'Thou art the head of gold.' There is, therefore, no uncertainty that in this chapter, the first kingdom is either the reign of Nebuchadnezzar or the Neo-Babylonian empire which he represents. A few have adopted the former view, but most the latter."<sup>336</sup>

Rowley also finds that, apart from a few exceptions, scholars are agreed on the identification of the first kingdom of chapter 2 and chapter 7. One of the exceptions, according to Rowley, is Hitzig, who considered the first two empires of chapter 2 that of Nebuchadnezzar first, and Belshazzar second, but in chapter 7 identifies the first beast with Belshazzar.<sup>337</sup> Rowley also cites Eerdmans' view that the first beast of chapter 7 represents Egypt, and the viewpoint of Conring and Merx that the first beast represents the Median Empire. He goes on to say, "But apart from a few such rare exceptions, there is complete agreement that the Neo-Babylonian empire is again intended."<sup>338</sup> There is more unanimity on the identification of the first beast of chapter 7 than on any other point in this chapter.<sup>339</sup>

The elements of the revelation are most significant. The beast is compared to a lion with eagle's wings. The lion is a common representation of royal power. Solomon, for instance, had twelve lions on either side of the steps leading up to his throne (1 Ki 10:20; 2 Ch 9:19). Winged lions guarded the gates of the royal palaces of the Babylonians. The lion was indeed the king of the beasts. In like manner, the eagle was the king of the birds of the air. In Ezekiel 17:3, 7, a great eagle is used as a picture first of Babylon and then of Egypt.

In spite of the power indicated in the symbolism of the lion with eagle's wings, Daniel in his vision sees the wings plucked and the lion made to stand upon his feet as a man, with a man's heart given to it. This is most commonly interpreted as the symbolic representation of Nebuchadnezzar's experience in chapter 4 when he was humbled before God and made to realize that, even though he was a great ruler, he was only a man. His lion-like character, or royal power, was his only at God's pleasure. The symbolism is accurate and corresponds to the historical facts. As Leupold states, "This is undoubtedly an allusion to the experience of Nebuchadnezzar which is related in detail in chapter four. The incident signifies that, as nearly as it is possible for a beast to become like a man, so nearly did Babylon lose its beastlike nature."<sup>340</sup>

Although Daniel in this vision does not dwell on the fall of Babylon, described in detail in chapter 5, the decline of Babylon and the rise of The Medo-Persian Empire is implied. Other prophets spoke at length on the fall of Babylon. From the reference to the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, there is no biblical mention of Babylon until the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel discuss Babylon's future. Isaiah describes the fall of Babylon as similar to that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Is 13:1-22), with particular mention of the Medes in Isaiah 13:17-19. A future destruction of Babylon at the second coming of Christ seems to be indicated in Isaiah 13:20-22 (cf. Rev 17). Another extended prophecy about Babylon is found in Isaiah 47.

Jeremiah who witnessed the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians refers to Babylon throughout his prophecy, of which the most important sections are Jeremiah 25:11-14; 29:10; 50:1-51:62. The last three

long chapters of Jeremiah are devoted entirely to Babylon. Ezekiel, himself a captive, is occupied with Babylon (Eze 17:12-24), and predicts like Jeremiah Babylon's conquest of Egypt (Eze 29:18-20; 30:10-25; 32:1-32). Daniel, writing later, ties together these prophecies about Babylon.

#### The Second Beast: Medo-Persia

7:5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

The second beast of Daniel's vision is described as corresponding to a bear.<sup>341</sup> As Daniel observes, the bear raises itself on one side and Daniel notices three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. Daniel hears the instruction given to the bear to "Arise, devour much flesh."

In contrast to the unanimity of identifying the first beast with Babylon is the diversity of interpretation of the second beast. Critics such as Montgomery,<sup>342</sup> Rowley,<sup>343</sup> and R. H. Charles,<sup>344</sup> and practically all liberal higher critics, identify the second beast as the Median Empire. Rowley cites almost overwhelming support for this identification which, according to him, "is found in the Peshitta version of the book of Daniel, in Ephraem Syrus and in Cosmas Indicopleustes. It also stands in the anonymous commentator whose work is published in Mai's *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio*."<sup>345</sup> Rowley notes that this long-forgotten theory was revived in the eighteenth century. Among its modern adherents he lists an imposing group of scholars, as follows: Eichhorn, deWette, Dereser, von Lengerke, Maurer, Bade, Hilgenfeld, Bleek, Westcott, Davidson, Kamphausen, Kranichfeld, Graf, Delitzsch, Kuenen, Reuss and Vatke, whom Rowley designates as the older scholars, and the more recent scholars, Schurer, Meinhold, Bevan, Behrmann, von Gall, Curtis, Buhl, Prince, Driver, Marti, Bertholet, Steuernagel, Andrews, Haller, Baumgartner, Montgomery, Charles, Willet, Obbink, and Eissfeldt.<sup>346</sup>

Although conservative scholars are outnumbered, it is significant that most scholars attributing accuracy to the book of Daniel regard the second kingdom as that of the Medo-Persians. Even Rowley admits that his view hangs upon the identification of the fourth empire as that of Greece which, as already has been stated, depends first on the conclusion that Daniel is a forgery, and second on the assumption that prophecy cannot be accurately given in detail concerning future events.

The identification of the second kingdom as the Medo-Persian Empire, which even Rowley recognizes as "the traditional identification," is ably supported by one of the greatest Old Testament scholars of modern times, Robert Dick Wilson. His entire work on *Studies in the Book of Daniel* methodically devastates the liberal point of view; and even though this work is brushed aside impatiently by Rowley, no one has actually answered Wilson's arguments.

Recent discoveries have proved beyond question that the second empire was in fact the Medo-Persian Empire. The Persian ruler Cyrus himself came to conquer Babylon in less than a month, and the myth of a separate Median empire at this time is not supported by the facts. The liberal position has to hold that the vision of the second beast is a false prophecy which does not correspond to the facts of history. If Daniel's revelation is truly from God, it must correspond precisely to what history itself records. In chapter 6 of Daniel, a combined kingdom of the Medes and Persians is mentioned repeatedly as in verses 8, 12, and 15. These references alone should shut the mouth of the critic who wants to attribute to Daniel a fallacious and unhistorical kingdom of the Medes. Daniel's record corresponds to history, whereas the critics' view does not.

If Daniel's revelation is true prophecy, what is the symbolism of the bear? Normally, this animal is not related to symbolism in the Old Testament. The meaning seems to be that the second empire will be powerful like a bear, ferocious (Is 13:17-18), but less majestic, less swift, and less glorious. The beast of Revelation 13 which gathers into its power the characteristics of all previous beasts is said to have feet as a bear (Rev 13:2).

The bear pictured apparently lying down is described as raising itself up on one side. Such an action, of course, is typical of an awkward animal like the bear. As Driver expresses it, "In the O. T. it is spoken of as being, next to the lion, the most formidable beast of prey known in Palestine (1 Sam. 17:34; Am. 5:19; cf. 2 Ki. 2:24; Hos. 13:8); at the same time, it is inferior to the lion in strength and appearance, and is heavy and ungainly in its movements."<sup>347</sup> Why, however, does the bear raise itself on one side? Although the Scriptures do not answer directly, probably the best explanation is that it represented the one-sided union of the Persian and Median Empires. Persia at this time, although coming up last, was by far the greater and more powerful and had absorbed the Medes. This is represented also in chapter 8 by the two horns of the ram with the horn that comes up last being higher and greater. The ram with its unequal horns is identified as "The kings of Media and Persia" (Dan 8:20). This interpretation also helps to support the Medo-Persian character of the second empire and is true to the facts of history.

The bear is described as having three ribs in its mouth. Normally a bear lives mostly on fruits, vegetables, and roots, but will eat flesh when hungry and attack other animals and men. Scripture does not tell us the meaning of the three ribs, and many suggestions have been offered. Probably the best is that it refers to Media, Persia, and Babylon as representing the three major components of the Medo-Babylonian Empire. Jerome offered this suggestion.<sup>348</sup> An alternative view offered by Young is that it represents Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.<sup>349</sup> Young's objection to Jerome's viewpoint is that it would make the bear devour itself.

The bear, however, is the symbol of government and military conquest and the ribs are the people subdued. The bear is instructed to continue its conquest and to "devour much flesh." This apparently refers to the additional conquests of the Medes and Persians in the years which followed the fall of Babylon. Young errs in making this command simply to devour the three ribs already in the mouth of the bear. It would seem clear that the flesh is not the same as the ribs but refers to further conquests. As Leupold expresses it, "The question arises whether the command, 'Arise, devour much flesh,' implies that the flesh on the ribs is to be eaten, or whether, after substantial conquests have been made, further conquests are to be attempted. The latter seems to be the more reasonable interpretation."<sup>350</sup> Among the nations yet to be conquered were Lydia and Egypt. Taken as a whole, the prophecy of the second beast accurately portrays the characteristics and history of the Medo-Persian Empire which, although beginning in Daniel's day, continued for over 200 years until the time of Alexander the Great, 336 B.C.

#### The Third Beast: Greece

7:6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

Daniel in describing the vision next depicts a third beast differing from either of the two preceding animals. The third is like a leopard, has four wings on its back, and has four heads. The third beast is commonly identified as the empire of Greece.<sup>351</sup> The only thing said about this beast is that dominion was given to it.

The expression "After this I beheld" has in it the implication of intense scrutiny. The leopard in contrast to the lion, the first beast, is less grand and majestic, but it is swifter and was much feared as an animal of prey in Old Testament times. The swiftness of the leopard made it the standard of comparison in Habakkuk 1:8 where the horses of the Chaldeans are described as swifter than leopards. Leopards characteristically would lie in wait for their prey (Jer 5:6; Ho 13:7) and then pounce upon their victims with great speed and agility. Young prefers the translation "panther" instead of leopard, to indicate a leopard of unusual size and power.<sup>352</sup>

The impression of great speed inherent in a leopard is further enhanced by the presence of four wings on its back. Although these wings are not declared to be the wings of an eagle as in the case of the first beast, their presence emphasizes the concept of speed. Of significance is the mention that there were precisely four wings in keeping with the four heads of the beast, whereas in the first beast the number of wings is implied to be only two, like an eagle.

The four heads obviously refer to intelligent direction of the beast and indicate, in contrast to the earlier beasts which had only one head, that the third empire would have four governmental divisions with corresponding heads.

In their zeal to promote the idea that the third empire is Persia, liberal critics bring up many petty objections to equating the third beast with Greece. On the face of it, however, the history of Greece under Alexander the Great corresponds precisely to what is here described.

With the swiftness of a leopard, Alexander the Great conquered most of the civilized world all the way from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India. The lightning character of his conquests is without precedent in the ancient world, and this is fully in keeping with the image of speed embodied in the leopard itself and the four wings on its back.

It is a well established fact of history that Alexander had four principal successors. Calvin, after Jerome, considered these Ptolemy, Seleucus, Philip, and Antigonus.<sup>353</sup> Keil and most modern commentaries prefer to recognize the four kings who emerge about twenty-two years after the death of Alexander after the overthrow of Antigonus at the battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.). These four kings and their reigns were, according to Keil, Lysimachus, who held Thrace and Bithynia; Cassander, who held Macedonia and Greece; Seleucus, who controlled Syria, Babylonia, and territories as far east as India; and Ptolemy, who controlled Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia Petrea.<sup>354</sup>

In spite of the aptness of the interpretation of verse 6 which would identify the leopard as the kingdom of Alexander and the four wings and four heads as its fourfold component parts which became evident after Alexander's death, other views have been offered. The conservative scholar, Young, although agreeing that the third empire is Greece, takes the four heads as representing the four corners of the earth; and, therefore, he denies that it refers to four Persian rulers (after Charles and Bevan) or to the four successors of Alexander (after Jerome and Calvin) or to the geographical divisions of Alexander's conquests, namely, Greece, Western Asia, Egypt and Persia. Young states, "Here the four heads, representing the four corners of the earth, symbolize ecumenicity of the kingdom."<sup>355</sup> In view of the transparent fact that Alexander did have four generals who succeeded him and divided his empire into four divisions, neither more nor less, it would seem that the interpretation of the four wings and the four heads as referring to the divisions of the Grecian Empire with their rulers is the best interpretation. This would confirm the identification of the third beast as the Grecian Empire. As Leupold states, in regard to the critics'

identification of the second and third kingdoms as Media and Persia, "We are more firmly convinced than ever that they [the four beasts] are Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The arguments advanced in support of Media as being the second in both series are not convincing."<sup>356</sup>

The interpretation which takes the four horns as reference to the four subdivisions of Alexander's kingdom is quite superior to the interpretation of those who want to relate this to Persia in order to eliminate the prophetic element. The issue here, as so often in the book of Daniel, is whether Daniel can accurately foreshadow future events--in this instance, the fourfold division of the Grecian Empire several hundreds years before it occurred. The difficulty of the liberal critics in interpreting these prophecies is further evidence that they are operating on the wrong premises. The interpretation disputes of the first three empires, however, are relatively insignificant in comparison to the interpretative problems of the fourth world empire which was to extend to the end of human history as Daniel saw it and contains so many elements that by any stretch of the imagination cannot be conformed to history of the second century B.C. or earlier.

#### The Fourth Beast: Rome

7:7-8 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

The crucial issue in the interpretation of the entire book of Daniel, and especially of chapter 7, is the identification of the fourth beast. On this point, liberal critics generally insist that the fourth beast is Greece or the kingdom of Alexander the Great. Conservative scholars with few exceptions generally identify the fourth beast as Rome.

The dominion of Rome, beginning with the occupation of Sicily in 241 B.C. as a result of victory in the first Punic conflict, rapidly made the Mediterranean Sea a Roman lake by the beginning of the second century B.C. Spain was conquered first, and then Carthage at the battle of Zama in North Africa in 202 B.C. Beginning by subjugating the area north of Italy, Rome then moved east, conquering Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. The Roman general Pompey swept into Jerusalem in 63 B.C. after destroying remnants of the Seleucid Empire (Syria). During following decades, Rome extended control to southern Britain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany west of the Rhine River. The Roman Empire continued to grow gradually for four centuries or more (reaching its height in a.d. 117), in contrast to the sudden rise of the other empires which preceded it. It likewise declined slowly, beginning in the third century. The decline became obvious in the fifth century a.d., with the Romans leaving Britain in a.d. 407 and suffering a sack of Rome in 410 by the Visigoths. It was not until a.d. 1453 that the last Roman or Byzantine ruler was killed in battle and Mohammed II conquered Constantinople. The question facing the exposition is whether Daniel is here describing the Roman empire, clearly the greatest of all empires of history. The interpreter of the book of Daniel is forced to make a decision as the evaluation of the supporting evidence, the theological implications, and the resulting prophetic program depend almost entirely on this question.<sup>357</sup>

On this issue the question of whether the book of Daniel is a genuine sixth-century writing or a second-century forgery is determinative. Rowley objects strenuously to the accusation that the liberal

view--that the fourth kingdom is Greece--stems from prejudice, and he attempts to turn the argument against the conservative as unfairly accusing the liberal. Rowley quotes Charles H. H. Wright as follows, "Wright imports prejudice into the question by saying: 'the real objections of the modern school to the old "Roman" interpretation arise from a determination to get rid at all costs of the predictive element in prophecy, and to reduce the prophecies of the Scripture, Old and New, to the position of being only guesses of ancient seers, or vaticinia post eventa.' That the Greek view commanded so long and respectable an array of names among its supporters, prior to the establishment of the modern school, is a sufficient refutation of this unworthy remark. That since the establishment of the critical school, the Greek view has continued to be held by scholars of unimpeachable orthodoxy, is ample proof that the case for that view rests on a far more substantial basis than prejudice."<sup>358</sup>

It is probably fair to say that liberals are not conscious of their prejudice in this matter, but Rowley himself gives the matter away in his later discussion. After describing the bewildering variety of views, both in support of the Roman and of the Greek empire interpretations, Rowley states,

Within the circle of those who hold the Greek view, therefore, there is wide divergence on this point, and while up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, their reading of history and of the visions run concurrently, and they may be considered together, the only form of the Greek view which is here claimed to fit the prophecies is that which locates the composition of these chapters, at any rate in the form in which they now stand before us, in the Maccabean Age. On this view, the author was a man who was moved of the spirit of God to encourage his fellows to resist the attack of Antiochus Epiphanes upon the religion and culture of his race, and who rightly perceives that the victory must lie with them, if they were to be loyal unto their God, but whose message was coloured with the Messianic hopes that were not to be fulfilled.<sup>359</sup>

In other words, Rowley himself says that the only sensible support for the Greek interpretation is that the book of Daniel is a second-century production.

In addition to making this major admission that identification of the fourth empire as Grecian depends on the thesis that the book of Daniel is a forgery of the second century, Rowley completely fails to support the Grecian empire interpretation by any consensus among its followers, and his discussion is a hopeless maze of alternating views which he either rejects or accepts often as mere matters of opinion.

While the diversity of interpretation is indeed confusing to any expositor of this portion of Scripture, if the book of Daniel is a sixth-century writing, and therefore genuine Scripture, it follows, even as Rowley indirectly admits, that the Roman view is more consistent than the Greek empire interpretation. This is especially true among those following pre-millennial interpretation. The Roman view is supported in the exegesis of the passage which follows, which endeavors to demonstrate that the prophecies of Daniel are best explained by identifying the fourth kingdom as the Roman Empire.

Daniel describes the fourth beast in verse 7 as a fascinating spectacle upon which he fixed his eyes. The fourth beast is described as "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly." This description is supported by its great iron teeth which distinguished it from any known animal. As Daniel watched, the beast was observed to devour and break in pieces and stamp the residue of the preceding kingdoms. Daniel is explicit that the beast is quite different from any of the beasts which were before it.

The description of the beast to this point more obviously corresponds to the Roman Empire than that of the empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered by the rapidity of his troop movements and

seldom crushed the people whom he conquered. By contrast, the Roman empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands. This hardly is descriptive of either Alexander or the four divisions of his empire which followed. As Leupold states, referring to the iron teeth, "That must surely signify a singularly voracious, cruel, and even vindictive world power. Rome could never get enough of conquest. Rivals like Carthage just had to be broken: Carthago delenda est. Rome had no interest in raising the conquered nations to any high level of development. All her designs were imperial; let the nations be crushed and stamped underfoot."<sup>360</sup> The description of Daniel 7:7 clearly is more appropriate for the empire of Rome than for the Macedonian kingdom or any of its derived divisions.

Probably the most decisive argument in favor of interpreting the fourth empire as Roman is the fact, mentioned in earlier discussion, that the New Testament seems to follow this interpretation. Christ, in His reference to the "abomination of desolation" (Mt 24:15) clearly pictures the desecration of the temple, here prophesied as a future event. Even if Young is wrong in identifying this with the destruction of the temple in a.d. 70<sup>361</sup> and the view is followed that it represents a still future event signalling the start of the great tribulation, in either case, it is Roman not Grecian, as the Grecian view would require fulfillment in the second century B.C. The New Testament also seems to employ the symbolism of Daniel in the book of Revelation, presented as future even after the destruction of the temple.<sup>362</sup> These New Testament allusions to Daniel which require the fourth empire to be Roman (cf. also Dan 9:26) make unnecessary the tangled explanation of Rowley and others attempting to find an explanation of the ten horns or at least seven of them in the Seleucid kings.<sup>363</sup>

The interpretation identifying this as Rome immediately has a major problem in that there is no real correspondence to the Roman Empire historically in the phrase, "and it had ten horns." This and the succeeding matter has no correspondence either to the history of Greece or to the history of Rome. The interpretation of the vision later in the chapter only serves to emphasize this problem.

Interpreters of this chapter who agree that it is Roman divide three ways in their explanation of how this relates to the Roman Empire. Amillennial scholars like Young and Leupold tend to spiritualize both the number ten and the number three, and thus escape the necessity of finding any literal fulfillment. Both of them find literal fulfillment impossible because there are no ten kings reigning simultaneously in the Roman period.<sup>364</sup> Young, however, considers fulfillment in the Roman Empire in the past, and no further fulfillment is necessary.<sup>365</sup> Leupold finds ultimate fulfillment at the second coming of Christ, rather than in past history.<sup>366</sup> Pre-millennialists offer a third view, providing literal fulfillment: ten actual kingdoms will exist simultaneously in the future consummation.

In verse 8, as Daniel continued to gaze intently upon the vision, he saw another little horn emerging from the head of the beast, and in the process, uprooting three of the first horns, that is, three of the ten horns previously described. The little horn is described as having eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things.

If there were no commentary upon this passage and the interpreter was left to find its meaning simply on what the text states, it would be a reasonable conclusion that the little horn is a man, and that, therefore, the ten horns which precede were also men who were rulers in relationship to the fourth kingdom. The fact that the horn has eyes and a mouth identifies the human characteristics.

Commentators have been quick to note that in chapter 8 there is also a little horn which conservative expositors have identified with Antiochus Epiphanes. This has been taken as evidence that the little horn of Daniel 7 is also from the Grecian or Maccabean period in its latter stages. Further consideration is given to this in chapter 8. It must be observed, however, that the little horn of chapter 8 comes out of an entirely different context than the little horn of chapter 7. Although both horns are described as "little," the horn of chapter 7 is not said to grow like the horn in chapter 8, although in the end he becomes a greater power than the little horn of chapter 8. To assume that the two horns are one and the same because both are little horns is to decide a matter on assumed similarities without regard for the contradictions. Archer, in an excellent discussion, states,

There can be no question that the little horn in chapter 8 points to a ruler of the Greek empire, that is, Antiochus Epiphanes. The critics, therefore, assume that since the same term is used, the little horn in chapter 7 must refer to the same individual. This, however, can hardly be the case, since the four-winged leopard of chapter 7 clearly corresponds to the four-horned goat of chapter 8; that is, both represent the Greek empire which divided into four after Alexander's death. The only reasonable deduction to draw is that there are two little horns involved in the symbolic visions of Daniel. One of them emerged from the third empire, and the other is to emerge from the fourth.<sup>367</sup>

It is also true that the Aramaic word for horn in chapter 7 is different from the Hebrew word for horn in chapter 8. However, this may be accounted for on the basis of the difference in language and does not in itself determine the interpretation.

#### The Vision of the Ancient of Days

7:9-10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

No system of biblical interpretation can claim to be adequate unless it provides a satisfactory interpretation of the conclusion of the vision. Three major facts stand out in verses 9-14. First, in verses 9 and 10, Daniel has a vision of heaven at the time of final judgment on the nations. Second, in verses 11 and 12, the little horn representing the last ruler of the times of the Gentiles is destroyed and with it his empire. Third, the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of the son of man who comes with the clouds of heaven is brought in, beginning the everlasting dominion of God. It is obvious that all three factors combine to make clear that this is a summary conclusion which is catastrophic in nature and introducing a radical change. The critical explanation of the fourth empire as belonging to Alexander has no reasonable explanation of any one of these three factors, let alone an explanation of all of them. If this is genuine prophecy, it belongs to a future consummation which was not realized by the Greek Empire nor by the Roman Empire as far as recorded history is concerned.

In verse 9, Daniel sees thrones in heaven on which the Ancient of days is seated. The expression in the King James Version that "the thrones were cast down," is better interpreted as "the thrones were placed." This is the establishment not the destruction of a throne in heaven. The scene as a whole corresponds to what John saw and recorded in Revelation 4-5. The Ancient of days seems to correspond to God the Father, as distinct from God the Son who is introduced in Daniel 7:13 as Son of man.

A. C. Gaebelein, basing his argument on John 5:22, declares, "The Ancient of Days is the Lord Jesus Christ," and finds confirmation in Revelation 1:12-14.<sup>368</sup> To support this, he divides chapter 7 into four separate visions instead of one vision as it is generally taken. However, if in the same chapter the Ancient of days is clearly God the Father in Daniel 7:13, it is futile to argue from other passages in the same chapter that the Ancient of days is Jesus Christ. The expression "Ancient of days" is used of God only in this chapter where the title is repeated in verse 13 and 22. His garments are said to be white as snow and His hair as pure wool. The emphasis is on purity rather than on age, although it also may imply that God is eternal.

The Ancient of days is described as sitting upon a throne, one of many, as indicated in the contrast between the plural early in verse 9 and the singular in the latter part of verse 9. Who sits on the thrones first mentioned is not indicated, but this may either refer to angelic authority or the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity may be intended. The major characteristic of the throne is that it is a burning flame (like is not in the original Aramaic), and the wheels of the throne, whatever their meaning, are also burning (cf. Eze 1:13-21). The glory of God, pictured as a fiery flame, is a common representation in Scripture. The fire is a symbol of judgment and is associated with theophanies in the Old Testament. In Psalm 97 it is revealed that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation ["foundation," RSV] of his throne" (v. 2), and "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about" (v. 3). In the glorified revelation of Jesus Christ a similar description of God is given, "His head and his hairs are white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace" (Rev 1:14-15; cf. Ex 3:2; Deu 4:24; 1 Ti 6:16; Heb 12:29). That Christ as the Son of man should have a similar glory to the Ancient of days is no contradiction, as their glory is the same even though their persons are distinguished in Daniel 7.

In this scene of blazing glory, innumerable saints and angels (cf. Deu 33:2) are pictured as ministering to God, in number ten thousand times ten thousand. In the glorious presence of God, the books are opened and the judgment is set. It is apparent that this is the hour of final decision as far as the nations of the world are concerned. Daniel does not enlarge on the concept of "the books." The implication is, however, from Revelation 20:12, that this is a record of the works of men (cf. Is 65:6 for record of evil deeds, and Mai 3:16 for remembrance of good deeds). As Leupold states it, "In them are written, not names, but deeds of men, a record of their ungodly acts, on the basis of which they will be judged."<sup>369</sup>

In Matthew 25:31-46, there is a corresponding judgment which chronologically may be considered to follow the one here pictured. In Daniel, the judgment is in heaven and relates to the little horn and the beast. In Matthew, the judgment follows the second coming of Christ pictured in Daniel 7:13-14 and extends the original judgment upon the beast to the entire world. Even without any emendation or explanation from other texts of the Bible, it is clear that this is at the end of the interadvent age and the end of the times of the Gentiles. It, therefore, demands a fulfillment which is yet future, and it is futile to attempt to find anything in history that provides a reasonable fulfillment of this passage.

#### The Destruction of the Beast

7:11-12 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

As Daniel kept looking intently upon the vision that was before him, the scene shifted once again to earth. Young, after Montgomery and Keil, holds that because of should be translated "from the time of."<sup>370</sup> Their point is that the vision of heaven immediately followed the arrogant words of the little horn. As the prophet listened to the great words uttered by the little horn of verse 8, he saw the beast destroyed and given to burning flame. This passage is another illustration of how quickly God can dispose of the mightiest of men, and how men in their wickedness are ultimately brought to divine judgment. Critics maintain that the beast here is the Seleucid power in general and the mouth is Antiochus Epiphanes, killed in battle in 164 B.C. But the kingdom of God from heaven did not follow the downfall of Antiochus. Although the Maccabean revolt was followed by the independent Jewish kingdom, and the Roman conquest was not until a century later in 63 B.C., the ultimate beneficiary of Antiochus was Rome. The destruction of the beast, however, does not fit the historic Roman Empire which took centuries to lose all its strength. This is a sudden act of divine judgment in which the major ruler is killed and his government destroyed. This passage is an obvious parallel to Revelation 19:20 where the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone at the time of the second coming of Christ.

Verse 12 has been a stumbling block, especially to the liberal critics such as Rowley, who have great difficulty in understanding how the rest of the beasts have their lives prolonged even though their dominion is taken away. If the earlier beasts are empires which were succeeded by the fourth beast, how can they be prolonged after the fourth beast? As Rowley states it, "Further, we are told that when the fourth beast was destroyed, the other beasts were spared for a time, though denied any dominion. But how can it be maintained that at any time contemplated by the various forms of this interpretation Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece enjoyed a measured existence that was denied to Rome?"<sup>371</sup>

The point is that the destruction of the fourth beast here described refers to a time yet future in connection with the second advent of Christ. Montgomery suggests that the expression a season and a time are semantic equivalents (cf. Dan 2:21; Acts 1:7) and denote "a fixed fate."<sup>372</sup> What verse 12 is saying is that the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian empires were to some extent continued in their successors; that is, Gentile power shifted as to rulership but continued more or less in the same pattern: By contrast, at the second coming of Christ the fourth beast is completely destroyed, and a totally different kingdom which is from heaven succeeds the fourth empire. The destruction of the first three beasts is not stated directly in this chapter. Evidently the first three continue to survive in another form in the kingdom which replaces them. Hence, "They had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." This is borne out by the image of chapter 2, as Driver states, "the entire image remains intact until the stone falls upon the feet (representing the fourth and last kingdom), when the whole of it breaks up together."<sup>373</sup>

When Medo-Persia followed Babylon, the dominion of Babylon was taken away, but in some sense the lives of the participants were prolonged. The same is true when Greece succeeded Medo-Persia and when Rome succeeded Greece. But the end of the fourth beast is to be dramatic, cataclysmic, and final. Both the rulers and the people involved are to be destroyed. This interpretation agrees with Revelation 19:19-20, which records the beast as destroyed and its ruler cast in the lake of fire at the second coming of Christ, and is confirmed by Matthew 25:31-46, the judgment of the nations at the return of Christ.

#### The Fifth Kingdom of the Son of Man from Heaven

7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him

dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The climax of the vision is now seen by Daniel. Again, it is heaven rather than earth that is in view. Verse 13 follows verse 10 chronologically. Verses 11-12 are explanatory and do not advance the narrative. Porteous correctly notes, "The interposition, however, of vv. 11 and 12 is necessary to express the author's meaning."<sup>374</sup> One described as "like the Son of man," in obvious contrast with the beasts and the little horn, comes before the throne of the Ancient of days, attended by the clouds of heaven. The phrase they brought him near before him can be better translated, "he was brought before him." The purpose of this heavenly presentation is indicated in verse 14 where the Son of man is given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom." This kingdom would be a worldwide kingdom involving "all people, nations, and languages." In contrast to the preceding kingdoms, it would be an everlasting kingdom which shall not pass away and be destroyed. This kingdom is obviously the expression of divine sovereignty dealing dramatically with the human situation in a way which introduces the eternal state where God is manifestly supreme in His government of the universe.

Conservative scholars are agreed that the Son of man is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than an angelic agency. The description of Him as being worthy of ruling all nations is obviously in keeping with many passages in the Bible referring to the millennial rule of Jesus Christ, as for instance, Psalm 2:6-9 and Isaiah 11. Like the scene in Revelation 4-5, Christ is portrayed as a separate person from God the Father. The expression that He is attended by "clouds of heaven" implies His deity (1 Th 4:17). A parallel appears in Revelation 1:7, which states, "Behold, he cometh with clouds," in fulfillment of Acts 1 where in His ascension He was received by a cloud (Ac 1:9) and the angels say that he will "come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Ac 1:11). Clouds in Scripture are frequently characteristic of revelation of deity (Ex 13:21-22; 19:9, 16; 1 Ki 8:10-11; Is 19:1; Jer 4:13; Eze 10:4; Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 13:26). The liberal scholar, Driver, interprets the clouds as meaning "superhuman majesty and state."<sup>375</sup>

Driver, however, objects to the phrase the Son of man which probably should be better translated "a son of man."<sup>376</sup> The Aramaic does not have the definite article. Driver does not like the concept that this is a formal title. He claims that it merely implies humanity.<sup>377</sup> Although there is some linguistic support for the concept that this is mer

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