

# Daniel And The Kingdom

**Introduction.** Is the kingdom the church? If the kingdom is the church, then all of the “end time” prophecies of Jesus establishing a kingdom on the earth made by the vast majority of denominations are false. There are two prominent prophecies about the kingdom in Daniel 2:31-45 and 7:1-28.

## **I. Daniel 2:31-45**

- A. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed he saw an enormous, dazzling statue (604 B.C.). The statue was in human form with various metals comprising its different sections. To bring about its destruction, a rock appeared. The rock struck the statue on its feet, felling it. The fall resulted in the destruction of the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold of the statue. A wind swept away the pieces of the statue without leaving a trace. The rock, however, became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.
- B. According to the interpretation in vss. 31-45, the different sections represent world empires. While Nebuchadnezzar was represented by the most precious of metals -- gold -- Daniel informs the king that his authority to rule is derived from God.
- C. The fourth kingdom is described in greater detail than either the second or third. The fourth kingdom has greater strength than the previous kingdoms and it therefore crushes and breaks all the others. Iron connotes toughness and ruthlessness. The greater strength of this fourth kingdom may be seen in a comparison of the longevity of these respective historical kingdoms: Babylonia (605-539 B.C.); Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.); Greece (331-146 B.C.); Rome (27 B.C.-A.D. 476).
- D. None of these four world empires would endure forever. Each in turn collapses to its successor. By contrast God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed (Psalm 2:6; 48:1-2; Isaiah 2:2-3; Ezekiel 17:23; Micah 4:1-2).
- E. The question that must be settled is whether the church is the kingdom, because lots of “end time” prophecies depend on its answer. Because there are so many people who believe in “end time” prophecies, most believe the church is not the kingdom.
  1. “The kingdom is to be set up after the return of the King in glory” (C. I. Scofield, Scofield Bible, 1909).
  2. “The church is not the kingdom” (Charles Ryrie, Ryrie Study Bible, 1994).
  3. “Christ will return to earth to establish His promised kingdom” (Warren Wiersbe, New Testament Outlines, 1992).
- F. In the New Testament, all the references to the church and kingdom before Pentecost are anticipatory; after Pentecost they are in the present tense (Acts 2:47; 8:1; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9). Also, the terms “church” and “kingdom” are used interchangeably (Matthew 16:18-19; Hebrews 12:23, 28). Further analysis shows the fact that the church and the kingdom are the same.
  1. The church is “a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5). “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36); hence, it is a spiritual kingdom (John 3:3-8; Romans 14:17).

2. One is called out of the world and into the church by the gospel (1 Peter 1:22-25; 2:5-9). One is called unto His kingdom by the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:12-13).
3. The Lord's supper is in the church (1 Corinthians 10-11). The Lord's supper is in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29).
4. By one Spirit, we are baptized "into one body," the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). We are "born of water and of the Spirit" to "enter" the kingdom (John 3:3, 5).
5. The temple, tabernacle, house, or church is not made with hands (1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6; 8:2; 9:11). The kingdom was made "without hands" (Daniel 2:44-45).
6. Christ is the savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Christ will "deliver up the kingdom unto God" (1 Corinthians 15:24).
7. God set Christ to be head over everything to the church (Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18). God set His king on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:6). Since kings are set over kingdoms, Christ has rule over His kingdom (Luke 1:32-33; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Acts 2:30-31; Hebrews 1:3, 8).
8. We are heirs and possess an inheritance in Christ, the church, and the kingdom (Romans 8:17; Ephesians 1:11; 3:6; 5:5).
9. The "saved," "us," and the "righteous" are "the house (church) of God" (1 Peter 4:17-18; Hebrews 3:6; 1 Timothy 3:15). "Righteousness" is the scepter of Christ's kingdom (Hebrews 1:8-9; Romans 14:17).
10. We are saved by the blood in Christ, the church, and the kingdom (Ephesians 1:7; 2:16; Colossians 1:13-14).
11. The "mountain," government, or house (church) of the Lord go forth "from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6). God set His king upon His holy hill of Zion; His government, throne, dominion, and kingdom began "at Jerusalem" (Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:32-33; 24:47-49; Acts 1:6; 2:5, 30-31; 11:15).
12. After His death, Christ was made head over all things (Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11). "In thy kingdom" equals "into thy glory" (Matthew 20:21; Mark 10:37). Christ entered into His glory after His death (Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:11).
13. We are members of Christ, the church, and the kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:15; Ephesians 5:30, 32; Matthew 11:11; Revelation 1:9).

## **II. Daniel 7:1-28**

- A. Chapter 7 is dated during the first year of Belshazzar (553 B.C). Chapter 7 parallels the vision in chapter 2; both set forth four world kingdoms followed by the overthrow of the fourth and a final kingdom established on earth by God. Chapter 2 examines the kingdoms' external, political aspect, while this chapter deals with their moral features.
- B. The "great sea" is a standard title for the Mediterranean Sea. By the time of Daniel, the sea was a symbol of rebellious humanity and the ensuing chaos (Isaiah 17:12; 57:20). The "four winds of heaven" represent the heavenly powers

and forces by which God sets the nations of the world in motion (Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 37:9; Zechariah 6:5).

- C. According to the interpretation in vss. 15-28, like chapter 2, these beasts which arose out of the sea represent “kings which shall arise out of the earth.” In the Old Testament, nations are symbolized by beasts (Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2; Isaiah 27:1; 51:9).
- D. Like the colossus of chapter 2, the vision begins in the present. The lion with the wings of an eagle stands for Babylon. This hybrid animal becomes humanlike -- reminiscent of Nebuchadnezzar’s experience in chapter 4. The lion as the king of the beasts and the eagle as the king of the birds, corresponds well with gold, the most precious of metals.
- E. Both the lion and the eagle are predators, as is the second beast that rises out of the sea (2 Kings 2:24; Hosea 13:8; Amos 5:19). The three ribs probably represent the three victories of the Medo-Persian alliance: Lydia (546 B.C.), Babylon (539 B.C.), and Egypt (525 B.C.). The double-sided nature of the Medo-Persian Empire is symbolized by the beast “raised up itself on one side.” This indicates that one side, Persia, was superior.
- F. The third beast, the leopard with four heads and four wings, is blazingly fast (Jeremiah 5:6; Hosea 13:7). This terrifying beast points to the incredible speed by which Alexander conquered the ancient Near East and extended his own kingdom. The four heads represent the fourfold division of Alexander’s kingdom after his early death.
- G. The fourth beast is nondescript, but extremely powerful. This fourth beast signifies a fourth kingdom (Rome) that would devour and destroy the whole earth. In the Old Testament, the horn symbolizes power (Deuteronomy 33:17; 1 Samuel 2:1, 10; Psalm 18:2). The number “ten” symbolizes the many rulers over the Roman Empire.
  - 1. The “little horn” is Domitian, who the emperor Tertullian described as a “limb of the bloody Nero.” Domitian (A.D. 81-96) was the eleventh ruler of the Roman Empire.
  - 2. Domitian had every characteristic described in vss. 7-8, 20-25.
    - a) He was a braggart and a persecutor.
    - b) He sought to restore the Roman imperial cultus and encouraged worship of himself as lord and god. The concept of emperor worship had a natural evolution in the Gentile world aided by polytheism, ancestor-worship, and the subsequent deification of legendary heroes.
    - c) He started a policy of persecution that did not end until the Edict of Toleration (A.D. 311).
- H. The “time and times and the dividing of time” occurs several times in Revelation (11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5). It refers to a time when the people of God suffer but are sustained. The Old Testament background appears to be 1 Kings 17-18 where Elijah prayed for a famine which lasted for 3 1/2 years (Luke 4:25; James 5:17). In vs. 25, the beast has power, but it is not a “seven,” or a perfect power. It is a “half seven.” In Revelation 13, the same idea is expressed as 666. God limits the power of Domitian.

- I. In the vision the kingdom is given to “one like the Son of man,” but in the interpretation section the kingdom is received by the “saints of the most High.” These saints are God’s elect or Christians. Here the downfall of the saints is brief because God will cut short the persecution (cf. Matthew 24:22; Proverbs 10:27). The destructive rule will in turn be completely destroyed. The people of God, having endured these trials, will triumph (Revelation 20:1-6).

**Conclusion.** Daniel repeatedly declares how troubling it is to receive a vision and an understanding of the future course of history (7:15, 28; 8:27; 10:2, 10-11, 15, 17), but without Daniel’s visions, we would have incomplete prophetic knowledge of the future. These prophecies assure us that the glorious church, which was foreordained by God before the beginning of the world, is indeed the kingdom of God. No future kingdom is yet to be established.