

GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

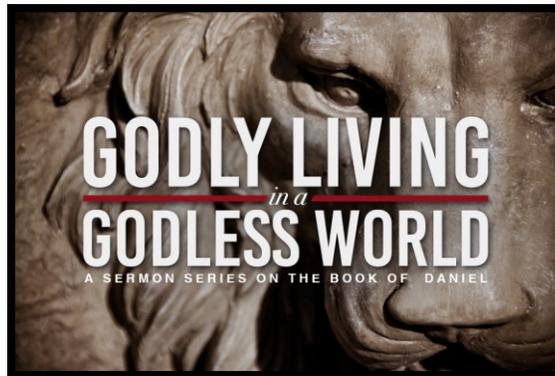
Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 7:9

Written By

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August 28, 2016



Moral and spiritual darkness is sweeping across the world like an uncontrollable tsunami, destroying everything holy and sacred in its path, from the institution of marriage to the outright codification of evil. And with each passing day it seems we encounter yet another wicked wave bent on leveling even more of what has typically held nations together.

Just this week, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco established a new ruling making it a criminal offense for pastors and Christian counselors to counsel people committed to non-traditional gender relationships to leave those relationships for healthier ones. We can connect the dots. When you can control private free speech of Christians, it is a short, logical step to control what they say, teach, and preach publically. This tsunami hit the State of California at full speed, leaving Christians stunned, while the godless are high fiving each other regarding their societal progress.

What's next? More darkness from what Daniel has prophesied. As we encountered in our last study, the world is being prepped for the appearance of the Anti-christ, whom they will follow and eventually worship without question. He will take the world to its lowest point in history as he, a member of the false Satanic trinity (Revelation 13), seeks to establish himself as god of this world. Jews and Christians of all ethnic backgrounds will be hunted down and eliminated as never before (which is certainly the current goal of ISIS), all while the world relishes in their newfound sinister, but false, Messiah. His power will seem to be unlimited. His miraculous ability will mesmerize people from all nations. He will, for all intents and purposes, seem to be utterly unstoppable in his bid to draw all worship unto himself as the most Satanically inspired man to ever walk the planet.

Darkness, however, is going to have a major problem when it comes face to face with the brilliant light of the glory of the true Messiah, Jesus (Revelation 19). The world is, indeed, building up to its complete embrace of everything and everyone evil; however, their love affair with darkness will not go on indefinitely. No, as we see in the remaining components of Daniel's high definition vision of the end of world history in chapter 7, history will build to a sudden Christological crescendo, a Hallelujah Chorus, as it were. From the menacing minor keys will come the revelation of the major keys as Jesus will appear and move the world from spiritual and moral degeneration to spiritual and moral elevation. This is the motif of this powerful passage and we restate it one more time before we dig into it one last time:

Political Degeneration Is Headed For Supernatural Elevation (Daniel 7:1-28)

Let's review before we study the musical score of this amazing libretto.

Kings Will Go From Bad To Worse (Daniel 7:1-7)

Daniel's prophetic point here is well-taken: Prior to the coming of the Messiah, world governments will be in a state of constant decline in all areas, resembling, in many respects, wild, hungry, ravenous beasts who live for themselves and not for God.

A second supportive point to the over-arching motif is equally apparent:

A King Will Go From Worse To Wicked (Daniel 7:8, 15-17, 19-25)

The Anti-christ will arise quietly and unnoticeably from the rebuilt ruins of the once glorious Roman Empire (the ten toes of Daniel two, which also mirror the ten horns and the little horn of chapter seven). Once he establishes himself as a man of peace and a statesman to end all statesmen, he will utterly defeat three nations of a ten nation protective confederacy he will be a member of. After this decimation, he will seize control of the western empire and begin to assert his totalitarian control over it so he can not just be the world's sole leader, but so he can be the world's god.

During the middle of the tribulation, according to Christ (Matthew 24), he will break his peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27) and enter the land of Israel by force, defeating the Egyptians, Libyians, and Ethiopians who will oppose him (Daniel 11:42-43). The Islamic structure of these countries easily preps them for this militaristic countermove. The king of the north, probably Russia and her allies, will move to oppose him, but they will be summarily defeated (Ezekiel 38:17-23). Obviously, Russia is positioned today in Syria to do this very thing. After the defeat of the red forces, the Anti-Christ will desecrate the Jewish Temple in some manner and will erect a massive idol of his rule here. Persecution of Jews and Christians of all ethnic groups will ensue (Revelation 12:15-17; Matthew 24:16-20), unbelieving Israel will be duped by the Anti-christ (Matthew 24:11; Revelation 13:11-18), while believing Israel will preach the gospel (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7). Toward the end of his bloodthirsty 3 ½ year effort to expunge the world of Christ-followers, the kings of the North (probably Russia again who has rebuilt their forces) and the East (China and her confederates) will attack Israel and the Western Confederacy (Daniel 11:44; Revelation 16:12; Ezekiel 39) to secure world domination for themselves. While they are all fighting it out in the land of Israel, especially in the Valley of

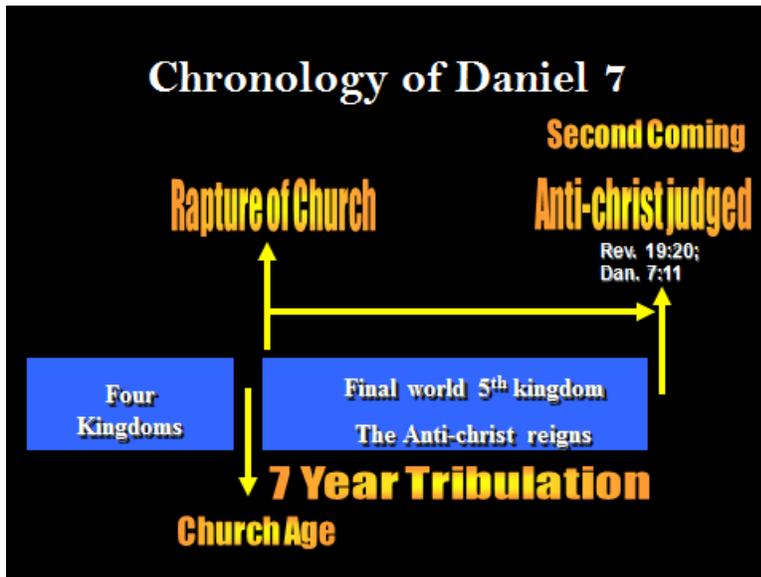
Armageddon, the true Messiah, Jesus, will appear. Instantly, they will turn their godless guns and crazed hatred on Him in a bid to kill Him so they can be the rulers of the world (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 19:19). Christ summarily defeats them with the sword of His mouth, which is a figure of speech for his mere spoken word (Revelation 19:15, 21). How powerful He is!

What happens next? That's what Daniel discloses in great detail. Here the Spirit of God who inspired this ancient prophetic parchment informs us how . . .

A King Will Go From Domination To Ruination (Daniel 7:9-12, 26)

Yes. We learn here that evil, godless, ruthless rulers and their compromised, carnal regimes will not be a perpetual issue on planet earth. All those false religions, too, which seek to erect their version of world dominance will not be the final form of world government either. We also learn that the final world ruler, the Anti-christ, will not be the final ruler over this old, tired, tattered, twisted earth. Here's how Daniel recorded with his pen these words of hope:

⁹ I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened.



Jaw dropping words, wouldn't you agree? Join me as we sink our interpretive spades into this rich, red soil. Three sub-points help us understand this amazing prophecy:

His Judge Is Portrayed (Daniel 7:9-10a). Obviously, the setting of this post-Armageddon and Second Coming event is in God's dimension and domain. The presence of thrones suggests it is God's throne room (Job 1), and the fact thrones are set up at this time suggests it is currently an empty

hall awaiting this ominous Day of Judgment. Thrones appear in the plural to denote the presence of others who will judge alongside of God. Who are these judges? Since this heavenly throne room scene mirrors that of Revelation 4 and 5, we need to go here for analysis:

² Immediately I [John] was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. ³ And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. ⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones;

and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 4).

Prior to the commencement of the seven year tribulation, we are given a peek into the throne room of God Almighty. Twenty-four thrones surround His glorious throne and twenty-four elders sit on these magnificent and ornately decorated chairs.¹ Who are these men? Probably twelve leaders from Old and New Testament ages.

Why do I make this conclusion?

- Israel had twelve tribes and twelve tribal leaders, and the Church had twelve Apostles who serves as its foundation.
- Elders are nowhere designated as angelic beings.
- Elders are men who govern (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Chron. 24:).
- In Revelation 5:11 and 7:11 the angels are clearly distinct from the twenty-four elders.
- White clothing in Revelation always refers to the redeemed (Rev. 3:4, 5, 18).
- In Revelation 5:9-10 the elders state in a song devoted to God that He redeemed them and made them a kingdom of priests. Surely, this applies only to believers. No angel has ever been, nor will they ever be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
- Angels never occupy thrones. On the other hand, they stand in God's presence and are prepared to do His bidding (1 Ki. 22:19; 2 Chron. 18:18; Luke 11:19; Rev. 8:2).
- The crowns the elders wear are called in Greek, "*stephanos*," which denotes the crown of a victor. "*Stephanos*," is used in the NT regarding believers (2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11). Believers must then be in view here for believers are certainly victors over the world, death, and sin because of the redeeming work of Christ.
- The priesthood in the OT was a representative group of twenty-four priests. When these priests met they represented the entire priesthood, as well as the nation of Israel. Similarly, God uses twenty-four elders to represent the Church.
- Paul said that believers will, in fact, judge the angels: "Do you now know that we will judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3). Interesting. Those who tormented and tempted us, along with the godless, will stand before us as we, through our representatives on those twelve thrones, participate in their individual judgment.

¹The Hebrew for thrones, korse' (כִּסְאֵי), which is equivalent lexically to the Hebrew kisse', according to Leupold (*Daniel*, 300), speak of something extremely beautiful, a seat reserved for special people for a special occasion.

The judgment hall is empty now, but after the Second Coming of Christ, thrones will be set up just like Daniel and John said they would be. It is the day of the final reckoning for the godless, starting with the Anti-christ.

Daniel identifies the one on the main throne as “the Ancient of Days.” No doubt, this is the title of God, and it is only used in this unusual passage (vv. 9, 12, 22). By definition, the term speaks of His aged nature, and ultimately it underscores His timelessness for this is His very essence. He is the God who exists outside of time and space, and who has always been in a state of being as a purely Actualized and Necessary one. Pictured as the Eternal One (“*Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God,*” Genesis 21:33; “*Your throne was established long ago: you are from all eternity,*” Psalm 93:2), we are left knowing that He has been around forever and has seen anything and everything that has transpired, both good and bad, in the celestial and terrestrial worlds, thereby making Him the perfect Judge of all judges.

Using anthropomorphic language to attempt to describe the greatness of God as Judge, Daniel tells us that God’s garment and hair are white, denoting His aged wisdom, coupled with His utter holiness and purity which stand diametrically opposed to that of the Beast. Just these two descriptions inform us that His judgment will be pure and precise, and that He, unlike the Beast, will judge correctly and righteously (Genesis 18:25) . . . as He, himself, said prior to the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

His throne must have taken Daniel’s breath away for it burned with fire but was not consumed, much like the burning bush that Moses knelt before when he encountered God (Exodus 3). This data point tells us several things: (1) God can control fire to do His bidding, (2) Fire in His dimension can burn but not consume something, which is pragmatically a theological sign of what happens to people in hell (Luke 16), viz., they burn but are not burned up, (3) Fire denotes God’s wrath against sin and sinners, as Moses states in Deuteronomy 4:24, “*For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God,*” and (4) Fire is tied to the final judgments of God against the wicked, “*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thessalonian 1:8). Isaiah reminds us of this truth, too, in chapter 66 of his prophecy, “¹⁵ *Lo, the LORD shall come in fire, his chariots like the whirlwind, to wreak his wrath with burning heat and his punishment with fiery flames.* ¹⁶ *For the LORD shall judge all mankind by fire and sword.* The fire, therefore, engulfing God’s throne arrests our attention and tells us that He has had enough of the wickedness of fallen angels and mankind, and He is especially righteously put out by the godless actions of the Beast. Those who rest in the false notion that God is all about toleration and non-discrimination should reconsider, quickly. He does not tolerate sin (never has and never will), and He does discriminate against those who reject Him and persecute His people.

The burning wheels around God’s throne are a special division within the cherubim class of angels, angels who are always close to the throne and presence of God. They are identified in Ezekiel chapter one. Four magnificent cherubim angels, with four faces and four wings apiece (Ezekiel 1:5-8), reside underneath the throne of God. Next to them are cherubs in the form of wheels within wheels:

¹⁵ As I looked at the living creatures, I saw wheels on the ground, one beside each of the four living creatures. ¹⁶ The wheels had the sparkling appearance of chrysolite, and all four of them looked the same: they were constructed as though

one wheel were within another. ¹⁷ They could move in any of the four directions they faced, without veering as they moved. ¹⁸ The four of them had rims, and I saw that their rims were full of eyes all around. ¹⁹ When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved with them; and when the living creatures were raised from the ground, the wheels also were raised. ²⁰ Wherever the spirit wished to go, there the wheels went, and they were raised together with the living creatures; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²² Over the heads of the living creatures, something like a firmament could be seen, seeming like glittering crystal, stretched straight out above their heads. ²³ Beneath the firmament their wings were stretched out, one toward the other. (Each of them had two covering his body.) ²⁴ Then I heard the sound of their wings, like the roaring of mighty waters, like the voice of the Almighty. When they moved, the sound of the tumult was like the din of an army. (And when they stood still, they lowered their wings.) ²⁵ Above the firmament over their heads something like a throne could be seen, looking like sapphire. Upon it was seated, up above, one who had the appearance of a man.

The whirling, rolling nature of the cherubim wheels with the multiple eyes suggests two things: (1) They can see in all directions, meaning no evil being or person could ever approach God without their knowing about it, and (2) Their wheel structure demonstrates they support God's throne, and that His throne is never static but is highly dynamic. It is, to put it practically, in a state of forward, perfect movement where He desires to be. All of this readily applies to God because 1 Samuel 4:4 and 2 Samuel 6:2 states that God is enthroned between the cherubim. This place where He is enthroned is also called His heavenly chariot (1 Chronicles 28:18). In Daniel's heavenly scene, God must, then, get up from his heavenly chariot and move over toward the specialized throne of judgment which has been set up for this unique occasion (Psalm 9:7). The angels, not doubt, move with Him. And don't you find this all most interesting? I see it as master stroke of complete irony. How so? The very cherub who used to be over them, viz., Satan (Ezekiel 28:11ff), is about to have his false Messiah, the Anti-Christ, judged. Don't you know the Devil will, at this point, begin to connect the prophetic dots concerning his carnal career? Indeed.

The futuristic scene must have been awesome to witness. God was seated on His fiery throne. The fire blazing from His tremendous throne, coupled with the fire flowing from the foundation of His throne readily underscores the fullness of the judgment which is about to be unleashed by God. It is about time, wouldn't you say? I believe we will be among the throngs before His throne who will witness this definitive judgment of the Beast. How amazing will this day be? Off the grid.

With the Judge of the Beast seated, we now encounter another interesting, as well as sobering, truth.

His Judgment Is Proof Texted (Daniel 7:10b-11a). In every court of law the prosecuting attorney submits the cold, hard facts, regarding the guilt of the accused. God's courtroom is no exception:

¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. ¹¹ Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; . . .

Zero your eyes in on that last clause of verse 10, “. . . and the books were opened.” What books are these? Good question. Did you know that God has books where He (or angels) record the inner and outer actions of your life? You might need to read that again. Let it sink in this time. Regarding God’s books, Moses pleaded:

³² But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written! (Exodus 32).

John reminds us of this truth in Revelation 20. The scene is the Great White Throne Judgment after the 1,000 year millennial reign of Christ. As the lost of all time are brought before God for judgment, we read these chilling, spine-straightening words:

¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

If Christ is not your Savior because you have never confessed Him as such (Romans 10:9), if you have never asked Him to forgive you and make you His child, you will stand, like the Beast, before His throne and be judged by “according to your deeds” which will be written in fine detail in God’s books. Jesus has warned us about this:

I tell you, on the day of judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak. By your words you will acquitted, and by your words you will condemned (Matthew 12:36-37).

Jesus also warned:

Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known (Matthew 10:26).

If your sin is not covered by the blood He shed for your sin, your sin will be validated based on your performance, which will be found sadly lacking . . . and evil. In addition, there will be no plea bargaining, no reducing the sentence, no obscuring of the facts and so forth. On that day your own inner and outer life will condemn you for all eternity, making God’s judgment completely accurate and just.

This is what happens to the Anti-christ as the conclusion of the seven year Tribulation. God keeps track of all of his evil thoughts and actions. He sees every saint this Satanically man murders. He writes down every vile, mocking word he pronounces against the living God. He

jots down every vain, shaky philosophical argument he musters to diminish the living God, while seeking to elevate himself as god.

All of the facts will be read from the books, leaving the Anti-christ with no leg to stand on and leaving God with only one option: eternal judgment based on the sinful actions against an eternal God. Is this not the essence of hope? All the godless who are strutting around like arrogant peacocks right now, pushing their sin to new levels almost without any checks and balances, all those who trash that which is holy, all those who murder believers thinking they are doing God a favor, all those who are engaged in criminal activity, all those who abuse people in a variety of ways, and so on and so forth, all will have their moment before God's fiery throne when He moves to establish justice and righteousness.

As a sidelight, I have to stop and ask you a highly personal question: Which book will your name be in on Judgment Day? The Book of Life or the Book of Works? This day is coming. I pray you are prepared for it by asking Jesus to forgive you of your sin and make you His saint for all eternity (John 5:23-24).

In addition to judging the Beast based on solid facts, God does not stop there. With the next two verses we see that God's judgment has eternal punishment attached to it.

His Judgment Is Pinpointed (Daniel 7:11b-12).

¹¹ I watched, then, from the first of the arrogant words which the horn spoke, until the beast was slain and its body thrown into the fire to be burnt up. ¹² The other beasts, which also lost their dominion, were granted a prolongation of life for a time and a season.

It appears that God simply slays the body of the Beast after his judgment and then burns the body up in His fire of judgment. There is, of course, more to the story from what we know from other Scriptures. Revelation 19, which records the Second Coming of Jesus at the close of the Tribulation, gives us the additional insight we need to understand how God ultimately judges sin and sinners.

²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

Hell is the temporal judgment locale of the non-believer. The Lake of Fire is currently empty and is the location where all the lost of all time will be cast, along with Hell (Revelation 20:14). Its first two inhabitants will be the second and third members of the Satanic trinity: the Anti-christ and the False Prophet. We know they are not burned up, nor are their souls annihilated²

²Why can't Hell and the Lake of Fire be all about annihilation of the soul? Accordint to Dr. Norman Geisler, (1) There are no degrees of nothing, and these places have degrees of torment, (2) There is no "torment" in nothing, (3) Annihilation of immediate destruction, not "everlasting destruction," (4) After annihilation the fire would logically go out, but it never goes out in these two places, (5) Annihilation is not darkness forever, (6) there is an eternal sin (Mark 3:29) which demands eternal punishment. Unpublished class notes, *On Evil* (Southern Evangelical Seminary,

because at the end of the 1,000 year kingdom of Jesus on earth (Revelation 20:4-6), and after Satan's final rebellion and insurrection (Revelation 20:7-10), he is cast alive into the same Lake of Fire where the Beast and the False Prophet STILL ARE BEING TORTURED (Revelation 20:10). Did you get that? They had been in there for 1,000 years and were not consumed. Jesus warns us of this rude reality, "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where their worm does not die, and the first is not quenched" (Mark 9:47-48).

With this divine judgment of the Anti-christ, God's justice will have prevailed despite all of the evil exploits of Satan's man and the work of sinners over the years. With this final judgment, God demonstrates that He, and He alone, will bring man's sinful kingdoms to a final end, leaving the way open for the erection of His kingdom of messianic peace. With this judgment we are given hope in the here and now that wickedness shall not always prevail and darkness will not always appear to spread unchecked. No, with this impending judgment we should be encouraged knowing where this current geo-political road is going. We're headed for crescendo of Christ's appearance when I'm sure none of us will have a hard time singing Handel's closing Hallelujah chorus.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

The kingdom of this world
Is become the kingdom of our Lord,
And of His Christ, and of His Christ;
And He shall reign for ever and ever,
For ever and ever, forever and ever,
King of kings, and Lord of lords,
King of kings, and Lord of lords,
And Lord of lords,
And He shall reign,
And He shall reign forever and ever,
King of kings, forever and ever,
And Lord of lords,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!³

2016), 20. Also, God could not annihilate someone because that would be to attack His image. Cf. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4 (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2005), 339.

³Georg Friedrich Handel, "Hallelujah Chorus," *Messiah* (1742).