

GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

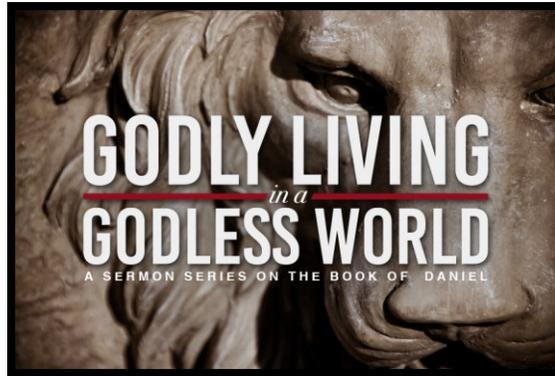
Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 7:9

Written By

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An old hymn we sang in the church I grew up in puts the Second Coming of Christ in perspective. Here are some of the, hopefully, familiar lyrics:

Marvelous message we bring; Glorious carol we sing!
Wonderful word of the King: Jesus is coming again!
Coming again, coming again!
May be morning, may be noon, may be evening and may be soon!
Coming again, coming again! O what a wonderful day it will be—
Jesus is coming again!¹

I couldn't agree more. What a day that will be when Jesus returns to earth just as He promised us (Matthew 24:31). I'd say, as saints, we are ready for His appearance, are we not? Are you prepared? Is He your Lord and Savior because you've placed your faith in Him? If not, then today is the day to settle this spiritual question once and for all.

Tension is what we see now, tension between light and darkness, truth and error, outright evil and holiness, and from how it appears it looks like light, truth, and holiness are on the retreat. But such is not the case, as Daniel shows us from his prophetic dream of chapter 7. In this inspired text, God shows His followers what to expect as He prepares the world for His glorious arrival. The instructive motif is carefully woven throughout these verses:

¹John W. Peterson, *Jesus is Coming Again* (John W. Peterson Musci Company, 1957).

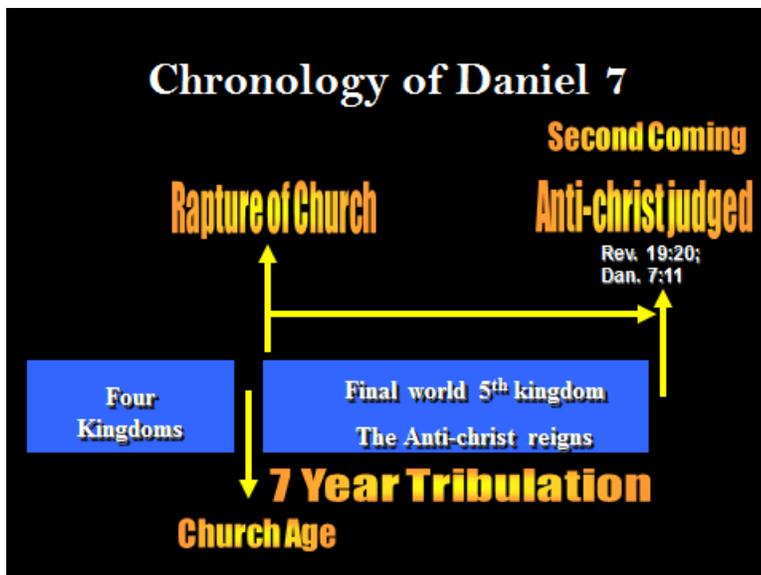
Political Degeneration Is Headed For Supernatural Elevation (Daniel 7:1-28)

As God's kingdom fights against Satan's kingdom, world governments will become increasingly beastlike (Daniel 7:1-7), and saints will live hard lives within the political, a-spiritual, godless tension, especially when the Anti-christ exerts his Satanic power over the revived Roman Empire. But the tension is not forever. No. Just when it appears the Devil's kingdom, under the earthly leadership of the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet (Daniel 7:8, 15-17, 19-25; Revelation 13), is literally unstoppable during the seven year Tribulation, the Lord appears, subdues the forces of evil, judges the Beast and the False Prophet and summarily casts them into the eternal Lake of Fire (Daniel 7:9-12, 26; Revelation 19:19-21).

Then what happens? Thinking minds want to know. God does not disappoint. From verse 13 of Daniel 7, God waxes eloquent about how saints will replace sinners, how the first shall be last, and about how His Son's long-awaited messianic kingdom will forever replace those inferior, godless ones devised by the Devil. Yes, God promises that the terrible tension we see and sense now will not end badly for His people. On the contrary, when the tension is finally broken it will lead to the kingdom to end all kingdoms. This encouraging, uplifting eschatological concept is well-defined by our fourth and last point from this powerful passage:

Saints Will Go From Consternation To Exaltation (Daniel 7:13-14, 17, 27-28).

Ostensibly, how will this occur? I can't wait to tell you.



THE King Will Be Revealed (Daniel 7:13). Watch how this facet of the vision unfolds. It will take your breath away as you witness the false earthly king being replaced by the true heavenly King:

¹³ I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.

From these revelatory words, two questions naturally arise.

Question #1: When will this event occur? Since this contextually and chronologically follows the judgment of the Anti-Christ by God the Father, who is identified as the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9), at the end of the seven year tribulation, we must surmise that Christ's coming

into the throne room of the Father occurs in proximity to this momentous and much needed event. Other Scriptures are clear that Jesus' Second Coming will be enshrouded with massive clouds, probably pulsating with His brilliant, eye-blinding, shekinah glory (Matthew 24:20-21; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27). Innumerable amounts of angels will also accompany Him (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Jude 14), along with saints from the Church Age (Revelation 19:14). Seeing Christ approach the Father's glorious throne with clouds, then, coincides with how He travels when He is going to make a grand entrance, especially for significant occasions. Imagine how breath-taking this moment will be as we, His saints, watch His arrival into the magnificent throne room of His Father. I'm sure the air will be filled with excitement, as we all await a major prophetic fulfillment of the Trinity's plan to reclaim the earth lost in the Garden of Eden.

Question #2: Who is this king? Daniel identifies him as "One like a Son of Man." We know this is not a man or an angel because of several lines of evidence. One, as stated, clouds accompany the appearance of deity (Exodus 13:21; 19:9; 24:16; 34:5; Leviticus 16:2; 1 Kings 8:10; Psalm 18:11-12; 78:14; 97:2-4; Isaiah 19:1; Jeremiah 4:13; Ezekiel 10:4; Nahum 1:3). Two, Jesus used this term to describe himself more than any other term. It is used to refer to Him over thirty times in Matthew, fifteen times in Mark, twenty-five times in Luke, and twelve times in John. He purposefully borrowed the term, which was originally used by/of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:1, 3, 6, 8; 3:1, 3, 4, 10, 17, 25, etc.) probably to underscore His association with the prophetic line. He also purposefully borrowed it from Daniel in order to underscore how He was, in fact, the long-awaited Son of Man, or Davidic king (Matthew 24:30 and 26:64 are drawn right from Daniel 7). Pragmatically, the term also served to somewhat shroud His identity from the masses as He walked the earth. On the one hand, the term depicts Him as the quintessential lowly messianic man prophesied in passages like Isaiah 42:1-4, and on the other it underscored His messianic kingship as prophesied in Daniel 7. All of this fits perfectly together to clearly identify the perfect God-man who approaches the throne of the Father after the final battle at Armageddon.

Please, don't miss the pragmatic point either. HE WILL BE REVEALED in all of His glory! As John Lennox astutely observes:

"The imagery conveys a powerful message. The beasts of power politics, however invincible they may sometimes think they are, will not reign forever. A perfect human, the Son of Man, will come with all authority finally to take over from the beasts and rule in perfect justice. The law of the jungle will cease for good. This is really good news. It holds out real and glorious hope to a despairing society."²

The question is: Are you spiritually ready for His revelation? Apart from His crucifixion and resurrection, it will be the next major pivot in history as we know it.

When Jesus steps into the throne-room/ courtroom of the Father, it leads thinking minds to posit the logical question? Why will He be here? Friend, it is coronation day of the Messiah. Read on and you'll readily see the point.

THE King's Kingdom Will Be Realized (Daniel 7:14, 18, 27-28). First, I invite you to read these texts with me, then we will come back and formulate five hermeneutical questions.

²John Lennox, *Against The Flow* (Oxford, UK: Monarch Books, 2015), 232.

¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and His is one which will not be destroyed.

¹⁸ 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

²⁷ 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

Incredible verses, wouldn't you agree? As I said, they easily generate questions. Please bear in mind as we pose and answer these questions there are entire, lengthy books written on these answers. Ostensibly, this means our answers will be introductory, at best, and will, I'm sure, leave you with more questions. That is fine and expected. If this occurs in your mind, I will direct you to read several significant books which will help you think more deeply through the question and the answer. Now, let's dig into those questions.

Question #1: Which kingdom is this? First, it is important to realize that God's kingdom has three dimensions: the universal, the messianic, and the spiritual.

- The universal kingdom denotes the ongoing, uninterrupted, overarching rule of God over the cosmos He created. Psalm 103:19 speaks of this facet of God's rule, "¹⁹ *The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.*" God reigns from His throne at all times and over all things, whether they are good and evil angels, or good and evil people.
- The messianic rule/kingdom denotes the tangible, literal, earthly, political kingdom *unconditionally* promised to the nation of Israel by God through the Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-17), Palestinian (Deuteronomy 30:1-10), Davidic (2 Samuel 7), and New Covenants (Jeremiah 30-31). The *Abrahamic Covenant* promises Israel they will be the chosen seed of God, through which would come the Seed (Genesis 3:15), and that they will possess definite land parameters (Genesis 12:7; 15:7, 18-21). The *Palestinian Covenant* solidifies the reality and dimension of the land of messianic promise (Deuteronomy 30:1-10), and it, too, is called eternal (Ezekiel 16:60). It also contains seven unique prophetic features: (1) Israel would temporarily lose the land because of their sin (Deuteronomy 30:1-3), (2) Israel would repent in the future (Deuteronomy 30:1-3), (3) The Messiah would come to them (Deuteronomy 30:3-6), (4) The Israelite people would eventually be restored to the land of promise (Deuteronomy 30:5), (5) The nation would be converted (Deuteronomy 30:4-8; Romans 11:26-27), (6) The enemies of Israel would be summarily judged (Deuteronomy 30:7), and (7) the Lord would then give the people their complete promised blessing (Deuteronomy 30:9). One cannot read this covenant and not see how God weds Himself to the people and to the concept of

giving them the land He promised Abraham. Further, since these seven components have never been realized in world history, we look forward to their realization when Christ returns. The *Davidic Covenant* divinely promises Israel an everlasting and earthly Davidic King to rule and reign over a perfect and powerful empire to end all empires (2 Samuel 7:12-16). This covenant, too, is called eternal (2 Samuel 7:13, 16, 23:5; Isaiah 55:3), and is wedded to God's precise promise to Israel. To read through the psalmists and the prophets is to read about the coming Messiah who will rule and reign over this literal and earthly Edenic kingdom of all kingdoms. In Psalm 2, the Messiah will rule with a rod of iron as He establishes peace, Psalm 45 speaks of the Messiah's perfect and godly character, Psalm 89 underscores how David's sin will not abrogate the covenant, Isaiah 2 pictures the Messiah ruling and reigning from His literal throne in Jerusalem, Jeremiah speaks of a Branch who will come from the stump of the destroyed Davidic empire in order to lovingly rule, like a great shepherd, over God's people (Jeremiah 23:1-8). He even identifies him as THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jeremiah 23:6). Zechariah chapters 12-14 speak of the Messiah who will defeat the forces of evil as He will establish His long-awaited kingdom. The New Covenant, as found explicitly in Jeremiah 31, promised Israel, God's chosen people, He would regenerate them (Jeremiah 31:33; Isaiah 59:21), He would forgive their sin and remove their iniquity (Jeremiah 31:34), He would give them the Holy Spirit individually (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:27), He would assist them in being obedient people (Jeremiah 31:34). Again, history readily demonstrates this has never occurred, so we await its total and literal fulfillment at the revelation of Jesus, the Messiah. When Christ walks away from the throne of the Father, He will, then, be positioned to fulfill everything God promised to Israel and the world through these four everlasting covenants.

- The spiritual kingdom is represents the current form of God's kingdom in our day. When Israel rejected the offer of the kingdom from the Messiah as He walked the earth (Matthew 1-12), He turned and began to teach it would assume a mysterious form where His people would be like wheat mixed with tares until His appearance (Matthew 13). Entrance is gained into this spiritual kingdom by being born again through a profession of faith (John 3:3-7), and this birth immediately places one in the Church, the mystical body of Christ, which was a mystery in Old Testament times, but was founded at Pentecost (Acts).

Of these three divinely ordained kingdom, Daniel, by divine inspiration, speaks specifically about the second kingdom dimension, viz., the messianic. This Davidic kingdom will be perfectly political, religious, moral, earthly, and highly visible, and, as Jesus teaches in the Olivet Discourse, He will return to establish this kingdom after He separates the wheat/believers from the chaff/unbelievers (Matthew 25). His kingdom will come, just as we are counseled to pray in the Lord's Prayer.

Question #2: How long will it last? Good question. It is foretold all through the Old Testament. What is not disclosed via progressive revelation is its duration. That is not disclosed until you arrive at Revelation chapter 20. Chronologically, this chapter follows the Second Coming of Christ and His decimation of the forces of the Devil, so it bears paying attention to the literal terminology employed concerning the kingdom's duration.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years (Revelation 20).

Six times the Spirit of God emphatically states the messianic kingdom will last 1,000 literal years (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). True, it will stretch into eternity because Christ will always be the Davidic King of Kings; however, it will have a definite time parameter according to God. Some have argued that this concept is not warranted because only one passage talks about it. One must respond, however, and ask, "How many verses are needed before a doctrine can be established with certainty? One? Ten? Seventy?" What are we to think of the fact that the Battle of Armageddon is only detailed with precision in Revelation 16:12-16? Does this one time fact mean we should call it into question too? Logical would suggest otherwise. Multiple verses which speak of this battle buttress the actual naming of the battle.

Further, some would argue the term is merely allegorical and not literal. To this I would add the following observations. One, many of the patriarchs lived almost this long (Genesis 5), so life of this nature is not unreasonable. Two, Revelation chapters 4 through 20 contain twenty-five references to time. Regarding this Alva McClain observes:

First, there are seven references to the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy and its two main divisions (Dan. 9:27); stated variously as 1260 days (11:3; 12:6), 42 months (11:2; 13:5), and 3 ½ years (12:14). The 'short time' of 12:12 clearly refers to the 42 months of 3:5, while the 'little season' of 6:11 seems to cover both halves of the entire seven-year period. Now the literally of these stated figures is grounded in history, for the first 69 weeks of years in Daniel's prophecy have been fulfilled exactly by the first coming of Christ . . . [in Revelation] the other ten references to time [outside of Revelation 20] may be classed as miscellaneous: the 'half an hour' of 8:1, the 'five months' of 9:5; the 'days' of the voice of the seventh angel of 10:7; the 'three days and an half' of 11:9, 11 . . . In fact, great precision in chronology is strongly suggested by the reference in 9:15 where we learn that the four angels were loosed that had been prepared for the 'hour' and 'day' and 'month' and 'year.'³

³Alva McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Winona Lake: BHM Books, 1987), 493-494.

The point should be well-taken. If these literal usage of numbers don't mean what they say then language doesn't have any meaning. But they do have meaning, real literal meaning throughout Daniel and Revelation; therefore, we are safe to conclude that a literal thousand year reign of Christ over a literal kingdom is not just reasonable, it is highly warranted (Isaiah 11:9; 42:2; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 14:9).

What is God's purpose during this period when the Devil is chained and restricted, when the curse is pushed back, when saints are the majority not the minority, when the government is perfect and not polluted and so forth? This final dispensation will emphatically demonstrate, as Ryrie notes, that "the very best environment in the world will not change the corruptness of the unregenerated heart."⁴ This will be evidenced from the children born to the saints who will walk into the kingdom age after Christ separates the sheep from the goats. In due time they will rebel against Christ's rule once the Devil is temporarily released from his supernatural prison (Revelation 20:1-3). At the final judgment of the godless, then, God's justice will be perfect. No one, from any age, be it the age of the Mosaic Law or the Kingdom age will be able to say they didn't receive a fair shake at being true kingdom members. No, in the final analysis, sin and sinners will be seen for who they are as rebels, leaving them with no grounds for entrance into eternal glory.

Question #3: Who are the participants? Daniel calls them "the saints" (Daniel 7:22, 27). Who is this? One, they are people from all the nations of the world who have claimed Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Two, they will be believers who lived through the Satanic rampages of the Tribulation. Three, they will be unbelievers born to believing parents who came through the Tribulation (intimated by Isaiah 65:20; Zechariah 14:16-18; Revelation 20:7-8). Four, they will be resurrected saints who were martyred during the Tribulation (Revelation 20:4). Five they will be Old Testament resurrected believers, Six, they will be the resurrected Church which will descend with Christ (Revelation 19:14). How were they made saints? The moment they professed faith in God's redemptive program, as it was known to them in their period of progressive revelation, God moved them from sinner to saint status. Will you be among this throng? Will you be in this kingdom to end all kingdoms?

It is an exclusive kingdom, but the decision is freely yours whether you'll be part of it or not. So, I must ask, What will you do with Jesus, the Christ? Will you make Him your Savior today? Will bow before Him in faith, seeking His forgiveness, which He will give you, or will you continue in your stiff-necked mode until you die? The choice is yours. The King and Kingdom will be revealed. I pray you make the right choice.

Question #4: What will it be like? Since our time is limited, permit me to give you a small taste of what lies ahead:

- Jerusalem will be the seat of Christ's government (Isaiah 2:1-3).
- A glorious temple will be rebuilt on the new temple mount (Isaiah 33:2).
- Sin will be punished quickly and thoroughly (Psalm 2:9).
- Animals will be at peace with each other (Isaiah 11:6). You won't need zoos anymore because the animals won't be dangerous.

⁴ Charles Ryrie, *The Basis of Premillennial Faith* (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1981), 153.

- The wilderness will bloom and be prosperous and beautiful (Isaiah 35:1, 6, 7; 41:17-20; 55:12-13).
- The topography of the Holy Land will be changed radically (Zechariah 14:4-5; Isaiah 29:6).
- There will be a perfect balance between governing severity and tenderness (Isaiah 40:10-11).
- Holiness will characterize the entire kingdom (Zechariah 14:20-21).
- Truth will be the order of the day (Zechariah 8:3).
- The Holy Spirit's fullness will be evident (Joel 2:28-29).
- The Messiah will minister personally to the needs of His subjects (Isaiah 12:1-2; 29:22-23; 30:26; 40:1-2).
- The Messiah will personally teach His subjects from His wealth of perfect knowledge (Isaiah 2:2-3; 12:3-6; Jeremiah 3:14-15; Micah 4:2).
- The curse will be removed (Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:9).
- Sickness will be removed (Isaiah 33:24; Jeremiah 30:17).
- Labor will be productive and perfect (Isaiah 62:8-9; 65:21-23; Ezekiel 48:18-19).
- Language will be unified (Zephaniah 3:9). Won't that be exciting? I think it will be Hebrew. Just sayin'.

I'll stop there because there is more than we can possibly cover in this one study. I give you these few concepts to just whet your appetite for what lies ahead. And you are worried now? The King is coming and He will establish His kingdom after He rids the world of all of its evil kings and kingdoms. Who, I ask you, would not want to be part of this Edenic state? Let this all encourage you if you are downcast in our current cultural downward spiral. We, as saints, have every reason to be positive. We know what's happening, we know what's going to happen, and we know who is coming.

This last point leads, naturally, to my last question:

Question #5: What bearing does this have on us now? Sometimes people who are not pre-millennialists state that the position tends to pull God's saints away from making an impact now. After all, since we know what's coming down the prophetic pike, we should just kick back and just let God do what God is going to do. I agree with this critique, to a point.

There is a sense in which the kingdom "is not yet," but "is." It is here insofar as it is spiritually represented in us, His Church. And our Lord has given us strict instructions, especially in Matthew chapters 5-7, how kingdom members are to behave in the here and now prior to His return. We are to be careful that we live and look like kingdom members. Are you? Will you? Put differently, we are to be salt and light to the decay and darkness about us. Until the messianic King arrives, we are to make His mark on this ol', sinful world. We should push back against evil. We should build marriages which reflect His character. We should vote for political leaders who are best suited to represent His high ideals. We should love as He loved. We should work hard as He did. We should raise children to know and love Him. We should, well, you fill in the blank.

The King is coming with His Kingdom. Be excited! And be engaged!