



The Landing

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“The Son of Man Reigns Part II”
Daniel 7:15-28

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“As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ‘These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.’

“Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet, and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.

“Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.

He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’

“Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”

Introduction: Be Strengthened by God’s Sovereignty

When we say “the Son of Man Reigns Over All” we mean that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, our Savior, reigns over all his enemies, natural and supernatural, and he reigns over time, eternity, over life and over death.

What is called dominion here in Daniel 7 is called the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God in the Gospels. And this same reality is

called the sovereignty of God in the Epistles. It is the very nature of Christ that he is God and therefore reigns over all. He withholds his reign for nothing. He averts or curtails his reign for nothing. You see if he knows all things; and he does. And if he is perfectly good, and he is. And if he has all power; and he does. Then to know what is best and to desire what is best and to have the power to do what is best, yet not to do it is impossible to conceive. If you love Jesus Christ, you love the sovereign Jesus Christ. Anything less is a lesser god which is no god at all.

Daniel's dream in Daniel 7 has more influence on the whole Bible than we can conceive. But one massive effect I am praying it has on me and on us is this: that seeing the sovereign dominion of Christ here in this chapter, we would be filled with sober hope; and launched into bold love. May we be filled with sober hope and launched into bold love.

A Dream and a Statue

Daniel's dream in chapter 7 mirrors Nebuchadnezzar's dream back in chapter 2. There a tall statue made of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay declared God's absolute reign over all the kingdoms of history. At the fullness of time God sends a rock that destroys all the kingdoms and replaces them with an eternal kingdom that grows to cover the whole earth.

Now in chapter 7 Daniel has the same dream but this time it's a jungle full of beasts. A lion with wings like a man is Babylon. A bear with ribs in its mouth is the Medo-Persian kingdom. A leopard with wings represents Greece and finally a beast so terrifying it defies description; probably represents Rome (v.2-8).

Then in Daniel's dream he saw a judgment seat where God the Ancient of Days judged the evil kingdoms of the world (v. 9-12). God judged and destroyed the final beast burning it with fire. And he defanged but let live the three previous beasts. Daniel couldn't have known this on his own. Yet, by this dream, he predicts kingdoms that did in fact arise, and act as they were foretold. They were also destroyed by God just as this passage predicts. He didn't know it. But we know it. Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome are nothing but dusty ruins today.

Then in his dream Daniel sees, one called the Son of Man coming forward, riding on the clouds, as a man rides a horse, into the presence of God to receive from God, all the dominion, all the sovereignty, all the kingdom and all authority to rule over every nation on earth. This Son of Man is humanity fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the only one worthy to receive this authority who again must be Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ himself claims with all authority that title for himself. And then he lives in full identification with human beings like you and me,

even to the point of owning our sin to himself on the cross. Then he is raised from the dead fulfilling the promises that God's Son would be bruised for our iniquities (Isa. 53). And as the Son of Man, he will reign over all the nations, not just the Israelite nation, forever and ever (v.14).

We said that one way to summarize Daniel 7 is this: God means to expose, judge and replace all evil in the world with the holy, righteous, global reign of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Daniel's Alarm

All this scares Daniel. Notice the uneasy response Daniel has to his own dream. Verse 15, *"As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me."* And verse 28, *"Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart."*

Daniel saw three great truths from his dream and these alarmed him. One, the kingdoms of the world have been empowered by God, and yet they have freedom to cause great harm. Two, another far greater kingdom of God will arrive, but Daniel doesn't know when. Three, Daniel knows he has heard from God, but it fills him with confusing questions.

So what does he do? Daniel treasures this word by faith. You'll see that before were done. That leads to a holy fear and sturdy hope within Daniel's heart. I am going to ask you to follow Daniel in his response to God's plan for history. Before our time in Daniel 7 is complete, my desire is that God create in us what he created in Daniel: Sober hope in Christ that leads to bold love like Christ.

I. God's Son Reigns Over the Nations of the Earth

First God's Son reigns over the nations of the earth.

Daniel 7:13-14, *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."*

This is exactly what David prophesied of his son in the most quoted chapter in all the Bible: Psalm 110. Listen to verses 1-2, *"The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!*

From Zion, David's son, Jesus Christ his Lord rules with a mighty scepter over his enemies.

This ruling from Zion is what we celebrate every Christmas and all year long when we think of the incarnation of God's Son.

Isaiah 9:6-7, *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”*

The whole witness of Scripture declares the truth that the Son of Man has dominion over the whole earth. As the Dutch theologian, Abraham Kuyper proclaims, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!”

As you have heard often: “Christ is Lord over all; or he is not Lord at all.”

If you find yourself bristling in the slightest over the sheer bracing mass of this truth; ask yourself, “Who can you think of better qualified than Christ to run even the tiniest sliver of reality?” Don't just submit to it; savor it!

II. God's Reign Does Not Remove All Rebellion - Yet

When the second beast, the bear is told to devour much flesh, we have no guarantee he will be discriminating and only devour unbelieving flesh. He will likely devour Christians (7:5). There is evidence he did.

And down in verse 16 Daniel asks one of the citizens of heaven, about this fourth and final beast and the little horn that arises from it. In verse 21 we are told the little horn will harm believers, *“As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them,”*

This fourth earthly kingdom is probably symbolized by Rome with its ten districts. Ancient Rome persecuted Christians frequently and viciously. But I do not think Rome is the final expression of this terrible kingdom with iron teeth and stamping out the world with its feet. I think this beast is symbolic of the kingdom of darkness. I take it to be the domain of darkness that has gripped the world since the curse and covers the earth now.

One reason is because out of this 10-horned beast comes one horn with eyes and a mouth which boasts. Look at verse 25, *“He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High,*

and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”

And I take that to mean the blaspheming son of lawlessness we are yet to look for.

This little horn is a reference to the anti-christ coming near the end of the age who will have a shortened time to blaspheme against Christ and oppress believers.

Though Christ is sovereign, still he permits the works of darkness to harm believers for a time. We ask God for blessing and rightly so. He gives what he deems best to reveal his glory.

I stood a mendicant of God before His royal throne
And begged him for one priceless gift, which I could call my
own.

I took the gift from out His hand, but as I would depart
I cried, “But Lord this is a thorn and it has pierced my heart.
This is a strange, a hurtful gift, which Thou hast given me.”
He said, “My child, I give good gifts and gave My best to thee.”
I took it home and though at first the cruel thorn hurt sore,
As long years passed I learned at last to love it more and more.
I learned He never gives a thorn without this added grace,
He takes the thorn to pin aside the veil which hides His face.¹

So the grace-speaking New Testament authors prepare us for life under the little horn of the anti-christ, till Christ himself returns.

Listen to I John 2:18–25, “*Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.*”

¹ Martha Snell Nicholson, “The Thorn”

And Paul writes similarly in 2 Thessalonians 2:3–12,

“Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Truth Encounter

In both passages the issue is truth and falsehood. In both, the way the anti-christ, the son of lawlessness functions is by lying. The way the anti-christ hurts God’s people is to lie about them, lie about Christ and lie about the gospel. He lies to them, he lies against them and he tries to get them to lie along with him.

What does that mean for us? It means we must be a people who give ourselves no rest till we have seen, savored and lived the truth of the gospel. Do you know what marks those who will love Christ’s second coming? They are truth-lovers. Listen: *“The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved”* (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10).

Or again Paul teaches that to be saved is to cherish truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:13, *“But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first-fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”*

Isn’t it ironic and diabolical that in our day and culture people think you arrogant if you say you know the truth? Because it is knowing the truth that sets you free! We must know God for who he is, through Christ for who he is, and ourselves in Christ, or we are not saved!

This doesn’t mean we first get all truth in our heads and then God tests us and if we pass we get saved, no. It means we love what he has shown

us of himself. It's not a mental skill test; it's a heart test. Do you love the truth?

Love truth; hate lies. Rest in your salvation.

III. God's Final Judgment Restores the Kingdom to His People

Daniel saw the Son's absolute reign over the nations of the world; he saw the permission of rebellion for a limited time, even to the death of the saints. And then he saw, how God judges and finally restores the kingdom to his people.

Look at Daniel 7:26-27, "*But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*"

You can see this in verse 18, "*But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.*"

Again in verse 22, "*until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.*"

What does this great theme mean? It means this world's kingdoms cannot destroy the people of God – no matter how hard they try. They can kill us; but we don't stay dead forever. What happens between their killing and our reigning forever? What happens is the resurrection of the dead to reign with Christ.

It's implied here in Daniel 7. In verse 10 ten thousand times ten thousand believers stand before the throne of God. But the beasts, especially the fourth and its horn destroy believers. How is it then that heaven is filled with believers? Answer: they were resurrected from the dead!

The Son of Man Rises With His Own

Do you remember Jesus conversation with his disciples as he is identified in Matthew 16? "Who do you say that I am?" He asks. "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter answers. "Blessed are you Peter for flesh and blood has not revealed that to you; but my Father who is in heaven."

Was Jesus going to be the rock destroying the Jewish or Roman or secular kingdoms now? Would he ascend to the world's throne and rule in military power? No. Jesus explains in verse 21, "*From that time Jesus*

began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

The Son of Man reigns by dying and rising again defeating the last enemy death.

Verse 27-28 Jesus further explains to his disciples what will happen, *“For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”*

Jesus makes his invitation to us in Matthew 25, *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’”* (Mt. 25:34, see also I Cor. 6:2, Rev. 2:26, 20:4).

My friend Joe Reed, associate pastor of Lewis Lake Covenant Church, along with his wife Michele and 5 other children, buried their 4-year-old daughter Alice this past Thursday. The golden chariot that God used to bring this beautiful little saint to himself was brain cancer. The night Alice died, her dad stayed up all night to build a walnut casket for her, weeping as he worked. But that casket is nothing more than a fitting room, where she tries on the garments of her new body, and one day she and all who die in Christ will rise from the grave at the trumpet sound. Like an adorned princess she will meet her Lord in the air then return to earth to reign with him in beauty, in power, in love and in eternity.

Cancer, death, lies, sin, evil, the beast, the devil and any spirit which opposes Christ, none of these have the last say. They are all under the feet of King Jesus.

IV. Follow Daniel in Sober, Strong Hope in Christ

How then should we respond? We must respond as Daniel has given us his honorable example. Look at verse 28, *“Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”*

Greatly alarmed means there is a sober fear of the Lord that welled up in Daniel. It is not that he turned pale with terror. He turned pale with the fear of the Lord. It is a fear borne of seeing God more clearly than ever before. It is the kind of fear that makes you flee sin; not commit it. It makes you bow before Christ; not ignore Christ. It is the fear of the Lord

which gives rise to wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10). Do you want to know where Daniel got such wisdom all his life? The same place all wisdom comes from: the fear of the Lord.

I call it sober hope in Christ. It is the strong, sturdy kind of faith that looks to Christ's reign and rejoices in it even if it means temporary hardship for long-term glory.

But there's more. Daniel, wasn't only alarmed, he hid, or treasured or kept all these things in his heart. This is what Mary the mother of Jesus did when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she would be the mother of God and then she bore Jesus in Bethlehem's cattle cave. The Shepherds told of the angel appearing to them and came to worship Jesus and Luke writes, "*But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*" (Luke 2:19). This treasuring is what faithful people do when they have seen wonderful, puzzling, glories from God.

And out of this treasuring up of the wonders of God, they act in bold love. Mary presented Jesus at the Temple, then presented him to be crucified as God's greatest love gift to the world. Daniel out of this same keeping or treasuring of these wonders, speaks boldly and truthfully to Belshazzar on the eve of his destruction, and leads his people back to God even while they are in exile.

When you have seen something of God's glory revealed, it awakens in you sober hope and bold love.

What does this sober hope and bold love from Christ do for us?

- A. It helps us hate sin.
- B. It helps us recognize the true nature of things.
- C. It helps us give thanks in all circumstances.
- D. It gives us hope in the final outcome of history.
- E. It gives us boldness in ministry right now.

Our ministry is captured in Psalm 2,

*"Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
"Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."
He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,*

*“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”*
*I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”*
*Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”*

Filled with sober hope and empowered with bold love, just like our brother Daniel was, we are to serve the Lord with fear; and rejoice with trembling, then, call the nations to take refuge in Him!

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