

Live to Win in the End
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Daniel Chapter Seven

“Bible prophecy” — “End Times” — “Eschatology” These are terms that bring definite reactions from followers of Christ. Some love to study them. Others, though they love the Lord and His word, are put off by the topic. Let me ask some questions: **Why do some people love to study Bible prophecy on the end times? Why do some shy away from this kind of study? Even if it's not your favorite kind of Bible study, why is it important to be familiar and not ignore study of the end times?**

- That ten dollar word ESCHATOLOGY gives us a clue to why this subject is important to Christians. Eschatology comes from two Greek words: “eschatos,” meaning “last,” and “logos,” meaning “word” or “significance.” Remember that term: LAST WORD.
- No matter how much evil exists in the nations of the world. God will have the LAST WORD.
- As the old saying goes: *“I’ve read the back of the book and WE WIN!”* That’s encouraging!
- It motivates us to LIVE with the end in mind as time is running out for those who don’t believe.
- Even if you don’t want to debate “pre,” or “post,” or speculate on specifics of the rapture, tribulation, and millennial reign, we need to be aware of what God’s word tells us about the end times.

Let’s take a poll. Not asking you to share specifics. **How many had a weird dream this week?** Daniel had a problem with nightmares! Chapter seven of this book is a prime example of that. One night Daniel had a vision from God in the form of a very weird dream. He saw four BEASTS coming up out of the CHURNING SEA. Each different than the others.

Daniel 7:4–8 (ESV)

4 The first was like a lion and had eagles’ wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.

5 And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, ‘Arise, devour much flesh.’

6 After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

8 I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

- **What are these beasts about? What does verse 17 say? Anyone know which kingdoms each beast represents?** Most scholars believe:
 - The LION = Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar)
 - The BEAR = Medes & Persians
 - The LEOPARD with wings = Greece (Alexander the Great)
 - The FOURTH STRANGE CREATURE = The Roman Empire

- These beasts were prophecy of what would/did happen in history as each empire conquered the next. But more than that, the last terrible beast has a meaning for our future.
- **What does the fourth beast predict?**
- There is much debate and speculation on specifics. But scripture is clear there WILL be an “Antichrist.” **Do any of you have any strong theories on Antichrist based on Bible study?**
- *The OT described the antichrist in various ways. Especially in Daniel, there arose the expectation of one who would oppose the Lord and His people Israel. This evil leader was referred to as the king of the north (11:40) who would come with a mighty army to crush the nations, to persecute the righteous (7:25), to bring death (8:10), and to set up his throne in the temple (8:13). This latter event the Jews term the “abomination of desolation.” (HIBD)*
- *Contemporary Concerns Christians today have differing views of the antichrist figure. Dispensationalists look for a future Roman ruler who will appear during the tribulation and will rule over the earth. Those in the amillennialist school interpret the term symbolically. - James L. Blevins - Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*
- The fact is, we don’t know any specifics about Antichrist beyond what the Bible tells us.
- Just to provide an overview, of what MAY happen, I’ve chosen Warren Wiersbe’s commentary:

The scenario seems to look like this. Antichrist will be leading one of ten confederated nations in Europe. He will overcome three other nations and, with the help of Satan, move into becoming a world dictator. At first he will appear to be friendly to the Jews and will sign a seven-year covenant to protect them (Dan.9:27). The signing of that covenant is the signal for the start of the last seven years of Daniel’s seventy weeks out- lined in 9:24–27. This period is generally known as “the tribulation” and is described in Matt 24:1–14; Mark 13:1–13; and Rev 6–19. After three and a half years, the Antichrist will break the covenant and set up his own image in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, forcing the world to worship him and the devil, who is energizing him. Using the language of Daniel, Jesus called this “the abomination of desolation” (Dan. 11:31; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:1–4). This signals the last half of the tribulation, a period that is known as “the wrath of God” (Rev. 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; and see Matt. 24:15–28; Mark 13:14–23). It will climax with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth and the defeat of Antichrist and his army (Matt. 24:29–44; Mark 13:24–27; Rev. 19:11–21). Jesus Christ will then establish His kingdom on earth (Dan. 7:13–14, 26–27; Rev. 20:1–6).

- We could spend days debating. But this is a brief Sunday School lesson. Let’s move on with Daniel’s dream. Here’s the GOOD NEWS!

The Ancient of Days Reigns (Verses 9-12)

9 “As I looked,
 thrones were placed,
 and the Ancient of Days took his seat;
 his clothing was white as snow,
 and the hair of his head like pure wool;
 his throne was fiery flames;
 its wheels were burning fire.
 10 A stream of fire issued
 and came out from before him;
 a thousand thousands served him,
 and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
 the court sat in judgment,
 and the books were opened.

11 “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

• **Who is the ANCIENT OF DAYS? What reality do verses 10 and 11 tell us?**

The Son of Man Is Given Dominion (Verses 13-14)

13 “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.

14 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.

- Jesus used Daniel’s term “Son of Man” to describe himself.
- One day He will rule and all will serve him forever! **How does that encourage us?**

Any other thoughts?

Bonus Material (at the end of this lesson): What do Southern Baptists believe and debate?

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- When some think of END TIMES PROPHECY they may feel like Daniel did in verse 15:
15 “As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me.
- But Daniel also wanted to know THE TAKEAWAY...verses 16 and 17:
16 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. 17 ‘These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth.
- Then verse 18 gives us the real point:
18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.’
- Why is that important to me this week?
- If you only remember one thing: ESCHATOLOGY just means “LAST WORD,” and God will have the LAST WORD and the Son of Man (Jesus) will be “given dominion and glory and a kingdom” that is “everlasting” and “all nations” will serve Him. We don’t need to fear.
- You may or may not be excited about studying END TIMES. But, it’s an important part of God’s word, and we need to at least be familiar with the basics of what scripture says.
- The application for us? Time is running out for those who don’t yet believe and we should live in such a way as to draw them toward a relationship with Christ while there’s time.

BONUS MATERIAL

What do Southern Baptists believe about END TIMES and ESCHATOLOGY? I don't recommend you limit your study of this topic just to Southern Baptist scholars. However, since we are in a Southern Baptist church and many are members, here's what the Baptist Faith and Message says in Article X:

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

<http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>

The Basics We Know For Sure Based on Scripture:

- God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end.
- Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth;
- The dead will be raised.
- Christ will judge all men in righteousness.
- The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.
- The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

What differences exist even within the Southern Baptist Convention about the end times? Here's an article with some insights to that:

<http://www.bpnews.net/31963/end-times-scholars-differ-on-what-bible-says-about-subject>

Four Present Benefits of Studying Prophecy. By Bob Russell

First, it reaffirms our faith in the Bible as God's Word. Only God can accurately predict the future and as we see predicted events unfold we gain renewed confidence in the Bible as the inspired word of God. Simon Peter wrote, "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns..." (2 Peter 1:19).

Secondly, it reminds us of our ultimate hope in an age of despair. The world's problems seem to be unsolvable and our system of government seems to be unraveling. But Christians have a

reason for optimism. "...we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Thirdly, a study of prophecy motivates us to holiness. Simon Peter wrote, "...since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and Godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (2 Peter 3:11-12).

Lastly, when we understand the time may be short it intensifies our focus on evangelism. "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. I tell you now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

A study of Bible prophecy reminds us there is a heaven, there is a hell and there is a hurry.

<http://www.bobrussell.org/2014/01/05/why-study-bible-prophecy/>

Woodrow Kroll (Back to the Bible) on Studying Bible Prophecy:

http://www.backtothebible.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Revelation_2012_09_03.pdf