

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, August 18, 2019

In my last two sermons, I examined the vision of Daniel chapter nine – regarding the 70 weeks (of years) decreed by God to encompass the relevant events respecting the people of the Jews. This period is to culminate in the final, eschatological, “week” when the promise of God to Abraham will be confirmed **“with many”** of the Jews – i.e., 144,000 redeemed of Israel. I want to pick up the thread in considering what Scripture instructs us regarding Jews in eschatology – with the intent that the better we understand this component of the Day of the Lord, the better able we are to have **“an understanding of the times, to know what Israel [both spiritual and literal] ought to do”**. (1 Chronicles 12:32).

*“When Jesus uttered His ‘Olivet Discourse’ the ‘69 Weeks’ were already **BEHIND** Him, and He stood within two days of the **‘AFTER’** when He was to be **‘CUT-OFF’** (Crucified). Dan. 9:26. And as in that ‘Discourse’ He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and how it was to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles **until the ‘Times of the Gentiles’ be fulfilled** (and they are still running), **After Which** He would return, we see that the ‘70th Week’ could not appear until the **END of this Dispensation**, and therefore there is a **‘GAP’** of 1900 or more years between the ‘69th’ and ‘70th Week.’”*

This quoted language from Clarence Larkin – who died in 1924 AD – is where we need now to pick up our analysis of the vision in Daniel chapter nine, and further our examination of Jews in eschatology. I want to be sure to clarify for you all that it is the Scripture here (and elsewhere) that teaches of this gap in time ... not Clarence Larkin. I quote him because he articulates well how it is expressed in the vision of Daniel chapter nine, verses 24-27 about the 70 weeks of years. As I examined in April of this year, it is also evident in the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar between the **“legs of iron” (Daniel 2:33)** [Roman Empire] and the **“feet and toes, part of potters’ clay” (Daniel 2:42)** [Kingdom of Antichrist].

The value in seeing and understanding this time gap is in at least two particulars. First, it helps us to better dissect not just the visions of Daniel – which are all related to the Jews in history and eschatology – but also the writings of other prophets to have our mind thus exercised. Second, by seeing that the *now-historical* parts of (at least) Daniel’s visions have been fulfilled, it increases our confidence and faith that those *eschatological* parts of his visions are just as certain of fulfilment. If Daniel’s visions were perfect prophecy with regard to the kingdoms – and some behaviors of those kingdoms vis-à-vis the Jews – in now-bygone centuries, we can trust that they are likewise perfect prophecy with respect to the Day of the Lord and the Kingdom of Antichrist!

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar reflected generically the gap between the Roman empire (ending just shy of 500 AD) and the Kingdom of Antichrist (arising in the wake of Christ’s second advent, at the mid-point of the seven-year dispensation). The vision in Daniel chapter nine more distinctly starts the gap of time at the declaration of Christ as Prince (King) of the Jews (in 32 AD) and ends it more distinctly at the event of the calling forth of the 144,000 redeemed Jews (near the beginning

of the seven-year dispensation), as articulated in Revelation chapter seven under the removal of the sixth seal. Understanding where these gaps in Daniel's visions open and close will allow us to make use of those visions to see more clearly, from coming events on the world stage, when that last great enemy of God and Christ will emerge to take his nefarious throne. With this framing, we will now open up other visions of Daniel to see what more we can learn about relevant Jewish history and eschatology.

“¶ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.” (Daniel 7:1)

Gill: “Daniel having finished the historical part of his book, and committed to writing what was necessary concerning himself and his three companions, and concerning Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede, proceeds to the prophetic part, and goes back to the first year of Belshazzar’s reign, seventeen years before his death, and the fall of the Babylonish monarchy last mentioned; for so long Belshazzar reigned”.

So, 53 years into the Babylonian captivity Daniel is sitting in the king's court with the grievously impudent son of Nebuchadnezzar in the most powerful seat in the earth at the time. It's instructive to consider this reality. We traffic among the humanity of our generation. We know, from much of our own vexing experience, what it means to deal closely with grievously impudent humans who possess great human power for a season. This is a season in Daniel's life that has none of the hopeful energy he possesses in his prayers and supplications of chapter nine. There is still – as we know from prophecy, confirmed by history – 17 years left of the Babylonian captivity; and from human eyes it is great darkness for the righteous among the Jews in Babylon.

“Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. (Daniel 7:2)

In this vision, we will see a great many metaphorical references. It is evidently a vision that is designed to inform the intellect through the use of visual cues where beastly creatures and tumultuous conditions tell the story of kingdoms and eras. And without waste, Daniel begins the instructive metaphor with these ***“four winds of the heaven”***, and this ***“great sea”***. Some energy of expositors is wasted attempting to make this a literal sea being chastened by striving winds, but most eventually land on the obvious import of this opening language; that nations and kingdoms are stirring about the people in chaotic ebbs and flows ... conquering and being conquered ... cultural and political fault lines shifting allegiances.

If one could position himself a distance away from this planet, and take in the whole of human history in some physical manifestation – watching the sin-infected inhabitants of every generation fret themselves in the pursuit of personal interests – it would doubtless appear as a great sea heaving and convulsing with uproars of petty conflict. Humanity, we must see, is always at war with

God and therefore with each other; the exclusive exception being those whose spirits are quieted with the sweet influences of free grace upon their hearts and minds. Daniel, a peace-loving and grace-filled soul, was **“grieved in [his] spirit in the midst of [his] body” (Daniel 7:15)**, by all this; just as every righteous soul grieves at the violence mankind’s sins has brought upon the creation.

The use of **“the [] sea”** or accumulated waters in Scripture has frequently intimidated the nations of peoples in their chaotic dispensations. Here are a couple of examples:

“Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!” (Isaiah 17:12)

&

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” (Revelation 17:15)

But when the word **“great”** is added – **“great sea”** – we get another piece of our analytical puzzle cleared up for us. Including the verse starting this vision, there are 13 distinct times in the Old Testament where this term is used ... and it always references the Mediterranean Sea. Daniel is dwelling among the captivity in Babylon, over 500 miles from the Mediterranean, but in this vision, it is as though he looks upon that place. This is instructive because it helps us to see what is at issue in this vision: Israel.

We know from history that the original land of Israel – Palestine – the **“pleasant land”** – passed from one Gentile power to another and is still predominantly in Gentile hands. Of course today’s nation of Israel occupies large chunks of that land, but it is in conflict because of it. That land of original possession – and of the promise from God to Abraham – has its western border at the **“great sea”**.

“¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:) ... And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.” (Numbers 34:1-2, 6)

So this language opening the vision lets us see that Daniel is being given an understanding that the spiritual focal point of the movements between the kingdoms referenced is the original land of promise for his people. That is, although the majority of human beings involved in the chaotic rising and falling of kingdoms covered in the vision are absolutely clueless regarding the purpose of God in it all, the truth is that these things are being done in execution of God’s promise that He **“is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked” (Nahum 1:3)**. The rebellious Jews will be scattered, and every one of them die, in the apostacy they craved; the righteous Jews

will each be delivered and take possession of the original land of promise and dwell with their Redeemer.

Clarence Larkin speculates, in his examination of these passages, that Daniel was living in relative peace and calm at this point in his life. He says that Daniel had much time to read out of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, to the extent that these writings were available to him. His authority is from a passage in chapter nine:

“... I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet....” (Daniel 9:2)

Assuming merit to Larkin’s analysis – which in relevant part does no violence to the examination of any of Daniel’s visions – Daniel is perpetually lifting up prayers and supplications on the matter of how all of these shifting events among world kingdoms will bring to accomplishment the promises God made to Abraham. The pattern expressed in the writings of Daniel show him pleading and God sending an answer via a ministering angel. Daniel’s inquiries were always about what would be the outcome of the captivity and the fate of his people. The answers were always about the end of all these things; i.e., eschatology.

The final thing we must discuss at the introductory portion of this vision is what we can learn from the language ***“four winds of the heaven [that] strove”***. We know that the descriptive use of ***“the [] sea”*** is to visualize commotion among men, but with the reference to the winds striving, we are to see the source of that trouble ... we are to understand what drives mankind to be in conflict and be perpetually consumed with the pursuit of covetousness and pride – from which we know ***“cometh contention” (Proverbs 13:10)***.

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:” (Ephesians 2:2)

Gill: *“according to the prince of the power of the air: which is not to be understood of any supposed power the devil has over the air, by divine permission, to raise winds, but of a posse, or body of devils, who have their residence in the air; for it was not only the notion of the Jews {m}, that there are noxious and accusing spirits, who fly about [] "in the air," and that there is no space between the earth and the firmament free, and that the whole is full of a multitude of them; [] now there is a prince who is at the head of these, called Beelzebub, the prince of devils, or the lord of a fly, for the devils under him are as so many flies in the air,”*

Until that day when the angels of God cast Satan ***“out into the earth, and his angels [are] cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9)***, they have moved and do move in the air like countless spirits infecting the hearts of mankind to accomplish every mischief. The word in this passage ***“strove”*** is the Aramaic *“guwach”* (“goo’-akh”), and means *“to break forth”*. These are the forces that break forth

or blow upon the sea of mankind to churn up these changes about which Daniel's vision is concerned. But keep in mind, my friends – lest you find your heart fearing their influences – that neither Satan nor his demons can go a whit farther in directing wars among men or assaults upon the righteous than that appointed by our loving God.

“And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. ... These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” (Daniel 7:3, 17)

This vision, Daniel is plainly told by his angelic tutor, is about four distinct kings whose kingdoms have particular relevance to the future existence of Daniel's people, the Jews. They each will be established as a great kingdom, as the root of the word translated ***“arise”*** in verse 17 connotes. They will each have a distinctive character in their bearing and reputation, and each will have distinct transitions that dramatically alter their character.

The beast that holds Daniel's attention the most is the fourth, which is the one about which we should have the greatest understanding to increase our knowledge of how things will look for Jews in eschatology – since that is the subject line we've been pursuing now, for more than a year. It will also give us, I believe, a better understanding of the character of the generation that will cause that beast to ***“arise”*** into his kingdom. So, let us begin by making short work of the first three beasts.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. (Daniel 7:4)

Without exception, and I believe without question, the exposition of this portion of the vision must focus on the kingdom of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar moved like the king of beasts across the lands he conquered, with the swiftness of the eagle as dreadfully prophesied by Jeremiah against rebellious Jewry:

“Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.” (Jeremiah 4:13)

But what is this change in character that we see come upon this great kingdom of Babylon? Its wings plucked; its lion's heart changed to that of a man? Once, as Nebuchadnezzar declares, he was ***“established in [his] kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto [him]” (Daniel 4:36)***, the lion was tamed. The great Nebuchadnezzar was replaced with his brother Evilmerodach for a few short years, and then the childish and untested Belshazzar took the throne and the lion-like force of the Babylonian kingdom waned such that at the sight of God's wrath ***“the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.” (Daniel 5:6)***

And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. (Daniel 7:5)

This again is low-hanging expository fruit. This large, voracious, but clumsier beast represents the Medo-Persian Empire. It conquered through sheer size, overwhelming opposing nations with such volumes of troops that the very ground shook like an earthquake as they approached. History remarks that when the Grecians resisted the tactics of intimidation and treason-sowing, an insulted Xerxes advanced with 2.5 million troops to subdue them. I'm not talking about those who worked in logistics and command staff positions throughout the ranks. I'm talking about boots on the flippin' ground, pouring forth out of countless vessels along the rocky western beachhead of the Aegean Sea. By comparison, today's vaunted U.S. military has approximately 1.3 million active troops – that include all logistics and command staff – serving at home and on bases spread across the whole world. This Persian, Xerxes – who interestingly is that husband of Esther and that king who issued the ***“commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:25)***; Artaxerxes Longimanus – conquered kingdoms through brutish, overwhelming force.

Yet, there are some hidden jewels in the presentation of that kingdom through this bear that raises itself up on ***“one side”***. This shows us that as the creature consumed and grew, the Persian part of the kingdom became dominant. By the close of the Medo-Persian rule the kingdom had changed from the ***“kings of the Medes” (Jeremiah 51:28)*** that was prophesied to come against the Babylonians, to when they took Babylon and were called ***“the Medes and Persians” (Daniel 5:28)***, until by the time of Xerxes (also called Ahasuerus) it was called ***“the power of Persia and Media” (Esther 1:3)***. When this same kingdom is represented as a ram with two horns, in Daniel chapter eight, ***“one [horn] was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.” (Daniel 8:3)***. And the bear in this vision does not finish the meal. Three kingdoms – Europa, India, and Egypt – were pursued and nearly consumed, but never fully before this bear was by God's providence taken from the world stage while it yet had ***“three [unconsumed] ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it.”***

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. (Daniel 7:6)

Returning to the character of a swift, stealthy beast, the vision gives us our third and final easy pickings in this analysis. The kingdom of ancient Greece moved mightily ***“from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground”.*** (Daniel 8:5) The wings on the back of this leopard is to designate the swiftness, as it did with the Babylonian monarch Nebuchadnezzar's armies. The fact that this beast ***“had also four heads”*** refers to the four divisions of the empire that were ruled by regional generals at the death of Alexander the Great; Macedonia, Egypt, Syria, and Asia. There

is much more made of the Grecian Empire in the visions of Daniel in chapters eight and 11, which will be examined more fully in my coming sermons covering those visions.

The remaining subject to discuss regarding these first three kingdoms is to consider what is meant by the intriguing language in the twelfth verse of the passage:

“As concerning the rest of the beasts [Babylonian, Medo-Persian & Grecian], they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” (Daniel 7:12)

This disposition is put in juxtaposition to what happens to the fourth beast that is evidently the subject of Daniel’s most intense emotional response. Daniel has just beheld in the vision that ***“the [fourth] beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.” (Daniel 7:11)***. So, to know what exactly is intended with regard to the first three beasts that remain alive, we absolutely have to gain an understanding of what this fourth beast represents and what is intended by this terminal declaration imposed upon it. It is time to move to the eschatological beef of this vision.

Three separate sections of this chapter expressly address the characteristics of this fourth beast:

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. (Daniel 7:7-8)

&

“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;” (Daniel 7:19-21)

&

“Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in

pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” (Daniel 7:23-25)

Before I can begin the work of what this portion of Daniel’s vision imports, I have to address what the vast majority of expositors say about this beast. Some more fully, others more elliptically, advocate that this fourth beast is the Roman Empire. A thing took place among Christian expositors – I’m not sure when or exactly why – that caused a synergy of fixation on the Roman Empire vis-à-vis the multiple visions in the book of Daniel. Some, like Gill, draw out the Roman Empire – together with the Roman Catholic church – as the base for nearly every eschatological analysis. It is puzzling to me, but that doesn’t mean that I can avoid treating the question.

Those who provide more in-depth analyses in their working with this vision appear to be basing their compulsion on a cross-referencing with Nebuchadnezzar’s image of Daniel chapter two – head of gold (Babylon), shoulders and arms of silver (Medo-Persian), belly and thighs of brass (Grecian), legs of iron (Roman), feet/toes of iron and clay (Antichrist). They appear to conclude that since the vision involves four beasts, and the first three track the first three kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision (Babylon, Medo-Persian, and Grecian), then logically the fourth should be Roman. They strengthen their position because of the reference to the fourth beast’s ***“teeth of iron” (v. 7 & 19)***. This is a weak justification, however, for two reasons. First, because in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream the final kingdom (feet and toes of ***“iron”*** mixed with miry clay) is distinct from the Roman Empire, so the similarity in metal (Iron) can apply just as well to that kingdom. Second, in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream it was the Grecian Empire that was described with belly and thighs of brass – and in this vision of Daniel seven the fourth beast is described in the 19th verse as also having ***“nails of brass”***. So, may we use the same logic to declare this beast an extension of the Grecian Empire? This is a very thin thread to support such a structural analysis by wise and intelligent men.

The other big nail upon which these expositors hang the position that the fourth beast here – and the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision – must be the Roman Empire, is the presence of these ten horns that answer to the ten toes. The horns, they say, are representative of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided in its waning centuries. I should think that sober expositors would shrink from such careless analyses when *even among them* there cannot be agreement as to which ten kingdoms are intended in historical application! By Gill’s count, there are four distinct opinions as to which they *were* (for us, looking historically) or *would be* (for Daniel, looking prophetically). Further, by the time these expositors were making their various cases (1,500 to 1,900 AD), history had proven the Roman Empire to be a dissipated kingdom shrunk to a shadow of its former glory. This leaves them to sheer speculation that Rome will rise again to prominence and, I suppose, reestablish the same ten kingdoms? It hurts to chase such cobbled thoughts.

We have the duty to compare Scripture to Scripture, without giving answers when answers are not presently available. So, if we keep ourselves to Scripture what can we say about this fourth beast? At least these things:

- It will be a great kingdom that has a character unlike any kingdom ever before known to mankind – ***“shall be diverse from all kingdoms” (v. 23).***
- It ***“shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.” (v. 23)***
- It is a kingdom that is ***“dreadful and terrible”***, causing (as the Aramaic word intimates) those over whom it rules to ***“shrink back, crawl away”*** in fear.
- It is made up of ten kings initially, after which three are subdued under one that is exalted to preeminence in the kingdom.
- The crowning achievement of the preeminent ruler is his blasphemy against God and perpetual harassment of His saints in the earth at the time of his dominion.
- The dominion of this ruler is limited strictly to three- and one-half years; ***“a time and times and the dividing of time.” (v. 25)***
- The preeminent ruler is destroyed and delivered to the ***“burning flame” (v. 11)***
- A concomitant event to the ruler’s and kingdom’s destruction is the vision of ***“one like the Son of man [coming] with the clouds of heaven” (v. 13)*** who is then given ***“dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him”. (v. 14).***

We will not get through all of these today. If we’re going to do a proper job of this analysis – particularly in a way that will help us to understand what is in store for Jews as the time approaches for a remnant of their seed to be restored to their God and Redeemer – we have to be deliberate and disciplined. Those of you who are “bottom line” thinkers, I’ll hope you’ll join me in plowing through the details that get us there. Those who more enjoy the nuanced journey; I welcome your participation and assistance.

I believe that if we exercise ourselves from the compulsion to add an historic or even present kingdom to the analysis – and stick strictly to what these amazing words instruct us – we can get a clear understanding of this kingdom. Then – and friends of my soul, please hear me on this – ***THEN*** we may be in a proper position to understand what we’re seeing ***IF*** our gracious God has decreed in eternity and in accordance with His good will and pleasure to bring this kingdom into being while we are yet alive. If not, we may rather give proper understanding to that blessed little body of saints who will be in the earth when this kingdom rises. But if we will not separate what we know for certain from what we do not know, we will be enslaved to confusion and from there, to the employment of human machinations to justify an irresponsible position. So, let us please begin this work with patience and sobriety, praying to our God for wisdom and understanding.

This first characteristic of the fourth beast – that it is ***“diverse from all the beasts that were before it”*** – is critical for the saints of God to understand. There are three ways that this could be viewed. First, it could be understood as nothing more than a statement that it is ***“diverse”*** from the first three beasts *in Daniel’s vision*. Second, it could be understood as saying that this fourth kingdom is ***“diverse”*** from all ***“beasts”*** (i.e., great human kingdoms) that existed in the earth before ***“it”*** – which would include those that *preceded* the others in the vision as well as those that have existed since the Grecian Empire, throughout the earth, up to and including those from which this final kingdom takes power and dominion. While both are perfectly rational, I do not believe that either is correct.

Just over four years ago, I prepared and delivered a pair of sermons on the Antichrist.ⁱ One critical point of understanding upon which I focused in those sermons comes from this language in discussing the beast of Revelation 17:

“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five [Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian] are fallen, and one [Roman] is [In John’s day], and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven[th], and goeth into perdition.” (Revelation 17:9-11)

Here, we have reference to seven kingdomsⁱⁱ – or ***“mountains”*** – but *eight* kings. The eighth king is ***“of the seven”***, which may be properly translated ***“of the seventh”***, suggesting that the final Antichrist of Revelation is the same king as the seventh, but because of the ***“wound by a sword”*** (Revelation 11:14) sustained by the seventh, this eighth king is called ***“the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth”***. Considering the reaction to the risen beast (Revelation 13), it is a compelling point that those in the earth would have to have known that man, and knew he had been slain – otherwise, how would they know for certain that he was risen from the dead?

When you consider two additional factors, this picture comes into sharper focus. First, the word ***“diverse”*** is the Aramaic word ***“sh^ena”*** (***“shen-aw”***), which means ***“to be transformed or changed”***. Second, as we will copiously draw out later in this analysis, multiple other descriptors of this fourth beast point to this very same beast of Revelation 13 and 17 – so applying this characteristic to that same Antichrist is all but compelled. This fourth beast is a kingdom that is known in relevant part for how the king was transformed – from life to death to life again.

The second characteristic is that this kingdom ***“shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.”*** (v. 23). It otherwise is said to have ***“devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet”*** (v. 19), and ***“it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet”***. (v. 7). The three terms used consistently in this description are ***“devour[ed]”***, ***“break in pieces”***, and ***“stamped”/“tread it down”***. Therefore, we should examine what these words mean – both independently and in context – if we want to understand this characteristic that is so unique that there is no member of the animal kingdom from which it gets a name. The other

three beasts in this vision are a lion, a bear, and a leopard. In chapter eight, where great kingdoms get an animal reference of a “he goat” and “ram”, again this entity (same as **“the fourth beast”**) does not. It may seem innocuous, but when you deal with a beast that is so extraordinary, perhaps it should not be reduced in descriptions to just the character of a known creature.

The Aramaic words used in these descriptors are interesting, and probably instructive when we work at putting our intellects around this beast. **“devour[ed]”** is the word **“akal”** (“ak-al”) which means both **“to eat”** or **“to devour”** (no surprise there), but also to **“slander”** or **“accuse”**. **“break in pieces”** is the word **“d^eqaq”** (“dek-ak”) which means **“to break into pieces”**, but comes from a root that is more generally the notion that you will pulverize or make dust out of a thing. Finally, the **“stamped”** / **“tread it down”** notion comes from two different Aramaic words. **“Stamped”** is **“r^ephac”** (“ref-as”) which means **“to tread, trample”**, but comes from a root that suggests the notion of humbling oneself. Whereas **“tread it down”** comes from the word **“duwsh”** (“doosh”) which means **“to tread down”** and comes from a root that means to trample or thresh.

At least cursorily, one point I think bears making with respect to this second characteristic is that these descriptors can hardly be used for the Roman Empire. Look at the picture below reflecting what portion of the earth was conquered by that kingdom. Large? Yes. The whole earth? Hardly.



The Roman Empire at the Height of Dominion

The nature of this beast is to **“devour the whole earth”**, and then tread it down and break it in pieces. The whole earth – when you search out the words used – means all of the ground that

makes up the world. This beast is a kingdom that literally occupies and governs the whole earth. Even as we search out what these interesting behaviors – stamping, devouring, treading – make reference to, we cannot avoid the necessary conclusion that there is no part of the earth that is not impacted by these behaviors. I make this point, because in all of Scripture only two kingdoms are ever described to have governmental dominion over all of the earth and all her inhabitants: Antichrist and Christ ... in that order.

“[A]nd power was given him [Antichrist] over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him....” (Revelation 13:7-8)

&

“Yet have I set my king [Christ] upon my holy hill of Zion. ¶ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” (Psalm 2:6-8)

I readily acknowledge that language in describing various kings in history have utilized terminology that suggests they rule the whole world – but in the context it is clearly referencing a portion of the world that was considered “civilized”, and since that kingdom was the most powerful all the other peoples and tongues were “influenced” by that kingdom (e.g., the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar in the vision of the tree in chapter four). The language in this passage is absolute in the scope of dominion – of both the beast and the King of kings that takes dominion to Himself – so we should treat it so.

As I take this matter up again, Lord willing in October, I will continue the analysis of this fourth beast, and we will see what God has shown Daniel about how the Jews in eschatology will be threshed and stamped and devoured; but finally rule with their Christ in His everlasting kingdom. Next week I will detour for a look at what are called colloquially “The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”, as I take up consideration of the seven seals that are torn from Christ’s Book of Redemption. Until then, please continue to search out these things in your time, and ask me any questions you wish.

I love you all. Amen.

ⁱ See two sermons: *Revelation 13’s Beast : Antichrist, aka Satan’s Superman – Part 1* – 6/28/15; <http://tinyurl.com/Antichrist1Srn> and *Revelation 13’s Beast: Antichrist, aka Satan’s Superman – Part 2* – 7/5/15 <http://tinyurl.com/Antichrist2Srn>.

ⁱⁱ As extensively analyzed in the two sermons on Antichrist, these seven mountains are referencing seven world-dominating kingdoms that were renowned for their iniquity and their hatred and persecution of the saints. At least six are known: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman, and that last kingdom (American?) that will meet that description and will have a king who hates the saints and persecutes them, including the two witnesses of Revelation 11.