

CHAPTER 7

The six former chapters of this book were historical; we now enter with fear and trembling upon the six latter, which are prophetic, wherein are many things dark and hard to be understood, which we dare not positively determine the sense of, and yet many things plain and profitable, which I trust God will enable us to make a good use of. In this chapter we have,

- I.** Daniel's vision of the four beasts (v. 1-8).
- II.** His vision of God's throne of government and judgment (v. 9-14).
- III.** The interpretation of these visions, given him by an angel that stood by (v. 15-28). Whether those visions look as far forward as the end of time, or whether they were to have a speedy accomplishment, is hard to say, nor are the most judicious interpreters agreed concerning it.

~~2006~~ DANIEL 7:1-8

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

The date of this chapter places it before Daniel 5, which was in the last year of Belshazzar, and Daniel 6, which was in the first of Darius; for Daniel had those visions in the first year of Belshazzar, when the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was drawing near a period. Belshazzar's name here is, in the original, spelt differently from what it used to be; before it was *Bel-she-azar* — *Bel is he that treasures up riches*. But this is *Bel-eshe-zar* — *Bel is on fire by the enemy*. Bel was the god of the Chaldeans; he had prospered, but is now to be consumed.

We have, in these verses, Daniel's vision of the four monarchies that were oppressive to the Jews. Observe,

- I.** The circumstances of this vision. Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and now he is himself honoured with similar divine discoveries (v. 1): *He had visions of his head upon his bed*, when he was asleep; so God sometimes revealed himself and his mind to the

children of men, when deep sleep fell upon them (~~835~~ Job 33:15); for when we are most retired from the world, and taken off from the things of sense, we are most fit for communion with God. But when he was awake he *wrote the dream* for his own use, lest he should forget it as a dream which passes away; and he *told the sum of the matters* to his brethren the Jews for their use, and gave it to them in writing, that it might be communicated to those at a distance and preserved for their children after them, who shall see these things accomplished. The Jews, misunderstanding some of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, flattered themselves with hopes that, after their return to their own land, they should enjoy a complete and uninterrupted tranquility; but that they might not so deceive themselves, and their calamities be made doubly grievous by the disappointment, God by this prophet lets them know that they shall have tribulation: those promises of their prosperity were to be accomplished in the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of grace; as Christ has told his disciples they must expect persecution, and the promises they depend upon will be accomplished in the eternal blessings of the kingdom of glory. Daniel both wrote these things and spoke them, to intimate that the church should be taught both by the scriptures and by ministers' preaching, both by the written word and by word of mouth; and ministers in their preaching are to *tell the sum of the matters* that are written.

II. The vision itself, which foretels the revolutions of government in those nations which the church of the Jews, for the following ages, was to be under the influence of.

1. He observed the *four winds to strive upon the great sea*, v. 2. They strove which should blow strongest, and, at length, blow alone. This represents the contests among princes for empire, and the shakings of the nations by these contests, to which those mighty monarchies, which he was now to have a prospect of, owed their rise. One wind from any point of the compass, if it blow hard, will cause a great commotion in the sea; but what a tumult must needs be raised when the four winds strive for mastery! This is it which the kings of the nations are contending for in their wars, which are as noisy and violent as the battle of the winds; but how is the poor sea tossed and torn, how terrible are its concussions, and how violent its convulsions, while the winds are at strife which shall have the sole power of troubling it! Note, This world is like a stormy tempestuous sea; thanks to the proud ambitious winds that vex it.

2. He saw *four great beasts come up from the sea*, from the *troubled waters*, in which aspiring minds love to fish. The monarchs and monarchies are represented by *beasts*, because too often it is by brutish rage and tyranny that they are raised and supported. These beasts were *diverse one from another* (v. 3), of different shapes, to denote the different genius and complexion of the nations in whose hands they were lodged.

(1.) *The first beast was like a lion*, v. 4. This was the Chaldean monarchy, that was fierce and strong, and made the kings absolute. This lion had *eagle's wings*, with which to fly upon the prey, denoting the wonderful speed that Nebuchadnezzar made in his conquest of kingdoms. But Daniel soon sees the *wings plucked*, a full stop put to the career of their victorious arms. Divers countries that had been tributaries to them revolt from them, and make head against them; so that this monstrous animal, this winged lion, is made to *stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart is given to it*. It has lost the heart of a lion, which it had been famous for (one of our English kings was called *Caer de Lion — Lion-heart*), has lost its courage and become feeble and faint, dreading every thing and daring nothing; they are put in fear, and made to know themselves to be but men. Sometimes the valour of a nation strangely sinks, and it becomes cowardly and effeminate, so that what was the head of the nations in an age or two becomes the tail.

(2.) *The second beast was like a bear*, v. 5. This was the Persian monarchy, less strong and generous than the former, but no less ravenous. This bear *raised up itself on one side* against the lion, and soon mastered it. It *raised up one dominion*; so some read it. Persia and Media, which in Nebuchadnezzar's image were the *two arms* in one breast, now set up a joint government. This bear had *three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth*, the remains of those nations it had devoured, which were the marks of its voraciousness, and yet an indication that though it had devoured much it could not devour all; some ribs still stuck in the teeth of it, which it could not conquer. Whereupon it was said to it, "*Arise, devour much flesh*; let alone the bones, the ribs, that cannot be conquered, and set upon that which will be an easier prey." The princes will stir up both the kings and the people to push on their conquests, and let nothing stand before them. Note, Conquests, unjustly made, are but like those of the beasts of prey, and in *this* much worse, that the beasts prey not upon those of their own kind, as wicked and unreasonable men do.

(3.) The third beast was *like a leopard*, v. 6. This was the Grecian monarchy, founded by *Alexander the Great*, active, crafty, and cruel, like a *leopard*. He had *four wings of a fowl*; the lion seems to have had but two wings; but the leopard had four, for though Nebuchadnezzar made great despatch in his conquests Alexander made much greater. In six years' time he gained the whole empire of Persia, a great part besides of Asia, made himself master of Syria, Egypt, India, and other nations. This beast had *four heads*; upon Alexander's death his conquests were divided among his four chief captains; Seleucus Nicanor had Asia the Great; Perdiccas, and after him Antigonus, had Asia the Less; Cassander had Macedonia; and Ptolemeus had Egypt. *Dominion was given to this beast*; it was given of God, from whom alone promotion comes.

(4.) The fourth beast was more fierce, and formidable, and mischievous, than any of them, unlike any of the other, nor is there any among the beasts of prey to which it might be compared, v. 7. The learned are not agreed concerning this anonymous beast; some make it to be the Roman empire, which, when it was in its glory, comprehended ten kingdoms, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Britain, Sarmatia, Pannonia, Asia, Greece, and Egypt; and then the little horn which rose by the fall of three of the other horns (v. 8) they make to be the Turkish empire, which rose in the room of Asia, Greece, and Egypt. Others make this fourth beast to be the kingdom of Syria, the family of the Seleucidae, which was very cruel and oppressive to the people of the Jews, as we find in Josephus and the history of the Maccabees. And herein that empire was diverse from those which went before, that none of the preceding powers compelled the Jews to renounce their religion, but the kings of Syria did, and used them barbarously. Their armies and commanders were the *great iron teeth* with which they *devoured and broke in pieces* the people of God, and they *trampled upon the residue* of them. The *ten horns* are then supposed to be ten kings that reigned successively in Syria; and then the *little horn* is Antiochus Epiphanes, the last of the ten, who by one means or other undermined three of the kings, and got the government. He was a man of great ingenuity, and therefore is said to have eyes *like the eyes of a man*; and he was very bold and daring, had a *mouth speaking great things*. We shall meet with him again in these prophecies.

~~2019~~ DANIEL 7:9-14

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

Whether we understand the fourth beast to signify the Syrian empire, or the Roman, or the former as the figure of the latter, it is plain that these verses are intended for the comfort and support of the people of God in reference to the persecutions they were likely to sustain both from the one and from the other, and from all their proud enemies in every age; for it is written for their learning on whom the ends of the world have come, that they also, through patience and comfort of this scripture, might have hope. Three things are here discovered that are very encouraging: —

I. That there is a judgment to come, and God is the Judge. Now men have their day, and every pretender thinks he should have his day, and struggles for it. But *he that sits in heaven laughs at them*, for he sees that *his day is coming*, ~~15713~~ Psalm 37:13. *I beheld (v. 9) till the thrones were cast down*, not only the thrones of these beasts, but *all rule, authority, power*, that are set up in opposition to the kingdom of God among men (~~4152~~ 1 Corinthians 15:24): such are the thrones of the kingdoms of the world, in comparison with God's kingdom; those that see them set up need but wait awhile, and they will see them cast down. *I beheld till thrones were set up* (so it may as well be read), Christ's throne and the throne of his Father. One of the rabbin confesses that these thrones are *set up*, one for *God*, another for the *Son of David*. It is the *judgment* that is here *set*, v. 10. Now,

1. This is intended to proclaim God's wise and righteous government of the world by his providence; and an unspeakable satisfaction it gives to all good men, in the midst of the convulsions and revolutions of states and kingdoms, that *the Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all* (~~1939~~ Psalm 103:19), *that verily there is a God that judges in the earth*, ~~15811~~ Psalm 58:11.

2. Perhaps it points at the destruction brought by the providence of God upon the empire of Syria, or that of Rome, for their tyrannizing over the people of God. But,

3. It seems principally designed to describe the last judgment, for though it follow not immediately upon the dominion of the fourth beast, nay, though it be yet to come, perhaps many ages to come, yet it was intended that in

every age the people of God should encourage themselves, under their troubles, with the belief and prospect of it. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it, ^{<6114>}Jude 1:14. Does the mouth of the enemy *speak great things*, v. 8. Here are far greater things which the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Many of the New-Testament predictions of the judgment to come have a plain allusion to this vision, especially St John's vision of it, ^{<6111>}Revelation 20:11, 12.

(1.) The Judge is *the Ancient of days* himself, *God the Father*, the glory of whose presence is here described. He is called *the Ancient of days*, because he is God *from everlasting to everlasting*. Among men we reckon that *with the ancient is wisdom, and days shall speak*; shall not all flesh then be silent before him who is *the Ancient of days*? The glory of the Judge is here set forth by his garment, which was *white as snow*, denoting his splendour and purity in all the administrations of his justice; and the *hair of his head clean and white, as the pure wool*, that, as the white and hoary head, he may appear venerable.

(2.) The throne is very formidable. It is *like the fiery flame*, dreadful to the wicked that shall be summoned before it. And the throne being movable upon wheels, or at least the chariot in which he rode the circuit, the *wheels* thereof are *as burning fire*, to devour the adversaries; for *our God is a consuming fire*, and with him are *everlasting burnings*, ^{<2314>}Isaiah 33:14. This is enlarged upon, v. 10. As to all his faithful friends there *proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb a pure river of water of life* (^{<6211>}Revelation 22:1), so to all his implacable enemies there *issues and comes forth from his throne a fiery stream, a stream of brimstone* (^{<2313>}Isaiah 30:33), a *fire that shall devour before him*. He is a swift witness, and his word a word upon the wheels.

(3.) The attendants are numerous and very splendid. The Shechinah is always attended with angels; it is so here (v. 10): *Thousand thousands minister to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him*. It is his glory that he has such attendants, but much more his glory that he neither needs them nor can be benefited by them. See how numerous the heavenly hosts are (there are *thousands of angels*), and how obsequious they are — they *stand before God*, ready to go on his errands and to take the first intimation of his will and pleasure. They will particularly be employed as ministers of his justice in the last judgment day, when the

Son of man shall come, and all the holy angels with him. Enoch prophesied that the Lord should come with his holy myriads.

(4.) The process is fair and unexceptionable: *The judgment is set*, publicly and openly, that all may have recourse to it; and *the books are opened*. As in courts of judgment among men the proceedings are in writing and upon record, which is laid open when the cause comes to a hearing, the examination of witnesses is produced, and affidavits are read, to clear the matter of fact, and the statute and common-law books are consulted to find out what is the law, so, in the judgment of the great day, the equity of the sentence will be as incontestably evident as if there were books opened to justify it.

II. That the proud and cruel enemies of the church of God will certainly be reckoned with and brought down in due time, v. 11, 12. This is here represented to us,

1. In the destroying of the fourth beast. God's quarrel with this beast is *because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke*, bidding defiance to Heaven, and triumphing over all that is sacred; this provokes God more than any thing, for the *enemy to behave himself proudly*, ^{<6527>}Deuteronomy 32:27. *Therefore Pharaoh must be humbled, because he has said, Who is the Lord? and has said, I will pursue, I will overtake.* Enoch foretold that *therefore* the Lord would come to *judge the world*, that he might *convince all that are ungodly of their hard speeches*, ^{<6115>}Jude 1:15. Note, Great words are but idle words, for which men must give account in the great day. And see what becomes of this beast that talks so big: *He is slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame.* The Syrian empire, after Antiochus, was destroyed. He himself died of a miserable disease, his family was rooted out, the kingdom wasted by the Parthians and Armenians, and at length made a province of the Roman empire by Pompey. And the Roman empire itself (if we take that for the fourth beast), after it began to persecute Christianity, declined and wasted away, and the body of it was destroyed. *So shall all thy enemies perish, O Lord! and be slain before thee.*

2. In the diminishing and weakening of the other three beasts (v. 12): They had *their dominion taken away*, and so were disabled from doing the mischiefs they had done to the church and people of God; but *a prolonging in life was given them, for a time and a season*, a set time, the

bounds of which they could not pass. The power of the foregoing kingdoms was quite broken, but the people of them still remained in a mean, weak, and low condition. We may allude to this in describing the remainders of sin in the hearts of good people; they have corruptions in them, the lives of which are prolonged, so that they are not perfectly free from sin, but the dominion of them is taken away, so that sin does not *reign in their mortal bodies*. And thus God deals with his church's enemies; sometimes he breaks the teeth of them (~~397~~ Psalm 3:7), when he does not break the neck of them, crushes the persecution, but relieves the persecutors, that they may have space to repent. And it is fit that God, in doing his own work, should take his own time and way.

III. That the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up, and kept up, in the world, in spite of all the opposition of the powers of darkness. Let the heathen rage and fret as long as they please, God will *set his King upon his holy hill of Zion*. Daniel sees this in vision, and comforts himself and his friends with the prospect of it. This is the same with Nebuchadnezzar's foresight of the *stone cut out of the mountain without hands*, which broke in pieces the image; but in this vision there is much more of pure gospel than in that.

1. The Messiah is here called the Son of man — *one like unto the Son of man*; for he was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh, was found in fashion as a man. I saw one like unto the Son of man*, one exactly agreeing with the idea formed in the divine counsels of him that in the fulness of time was to be the Mediator between God and man. He is *like unto the son of man*, but is indeed the Son of God. Our Savior seems plainly to refer to this vision when he says (~~402~~ John 5:27) that the *Father* has therefore *given him authority to execute judgment* because he is *the Son of man*, and because he is the person whom Daniel saw in vision, to whom a kingdom and dominion were to be given.

2. He is said to *come with the clouds of heaven*. Some refer this to his incarnation; he descended *in the clouds of heaven*, came into the world unseen, as the glory of the Lord took possession of the temple in a cloud. The empires of the world were beasts that *rose out of the sea*; but Christ's kingdom is from above: he is the *Lord from heaven*. I think it is rather to be referred to his ascension; when he returned to the Father the eye of his disciples followed him, till *a cloud received him out of their sight*, ~~403~~ Acts 1:9. He made that cloud his chariot, wherein he rode triumphantly to the

upper world. He comes swiftly, irresistibly, and comes in state, for he *comes with the clouds of heaven.*

3. He is here represented as having a mighty interest in Heaven. When the cloud received him out of the sight of his disciples, it is worth while to enquire (as the sons of the prophets concerning Elijah in a like case) whither it carried him, where it lodged him; and here we are told, abundantly to our satisfaction, that *he came to the Ancient of days*; for he ascended to *his Father and our Father, to his God and our God* (^{<4317>}John 20:17); from him he came forth, and to him he returns, to be glorified with him, and to sit down at his right hand. It was with a great deal of pleasure that he said, *Now I go to him that sent me.* But was he welcome? Yes, not doubt, he was, for *they brought him near before him*; he was introduced into his Father's presence, with the attendance and adorations of *all the angels of God*, ^{<3016>}Hebrews 1:6. *God caused him to draw near and approach to him*, as an advocate and undertaker for us (^{<2411>}Jeremiah 30:21), that we through him might be *made nigh*. By this solemn near approach which he made to the Ancient of days it appears that the Father accepted the sacrifice he offered, and the satisfaction he made, and was entirely well pleased with all he had done. He was *brought near*, as our high priest, who for us enters within the veil, and as our forerunner, 4. He is here represented as having a mighty influence upon this earth, v. 14. When he went to be glorified with his Father he had a *power given him over all flesh*, ^{<4370>}John 17:2, 5. With the prospect of this Daniel and his friends are here comforted, that not only the dominion of the church's enemies shall be taken away (v. 12), but the church's head and best friend shall have *the dominion given him*; to him *every knee shall bow and every tongue confess*. ^{<3069>}Philippians 2:9, 10. To him are given *glory and a kingdom*, and they are given by him who has an unquestionable right to give them, which, some think with an eye to these words, our Savior teaches us to acknowledge in the close of the Lord's prayer, *For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory*. It is here foretold that the kingdom of the exalted Redeemer shall be,

(1.) A universal kingdom, the only universal monarchy, whatever others have pretended to, or aimed at: *All people, nations, and languages, shall fear him*, and be under his jurisdiction, either as his willing subjects or as his conquered captives, to be either ruled or overruled by him. One way or other, the kingdoms of the world shall all become his kingdoms.

(2.) An everlasting kingdom. His *dominion* shall not *pass away* to any successor, much less to any invader, and his kingdom is *that which shall not be destroyed*. Even the gates of hell, or the infernal powers and policies, shall not prevail against it. The church shall continue militant to the end of time, and triumphant to the endless ages of eternity.

~~2075~~ DANIEL 7:15-28

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

Here we have,

I. The deep impressions which these visions made upon the prophet. God in them put honour upon him, and gave him satisfaction, yet not without a great allay of pain and perplexity (v. 15): *I Daniel was grieved in my spirit, in the midst of my body*. The word here used for the *body* properly signifies a *sheath* or *scabbard*, for the body is no more to the soul; that is the weapon; it is that which we are principally to take care of. The *visions of my head troubled me*, an again (v. 28), *my cogitations much troubled me*. The manner in which these things were discovered to him quite overwhelmed him, and put his thoughts so much to the stretch that his spirits failed him, and the trance he was in tired him and made him faint. The things themselves that were discovered amazed and astonished him, and put him into a confusion, till by degrees he recollected and conquered himself, and set the comforts of the vision over against the terrors of it.

II. His earnest desire to understand the meaning of them (v. 16): *I came near to one of those that stood by*, to one of the angels that appeared attending the *Son of man* in his glory, and *asked him the truth* (the true intent and meaning) *of all this*. Note, It is a very desirable thing to take the right and full sense of what we see and hear from God; and those that would know must ask by faithful and fervent prayer and by *accomplishing a diligent search*.

III. The key that was given him, to let him into the understanding of this vision. The angel *told him*, and told him so plainly that he made him *know the interpretation of the thing*, and so made him somewhat more easy.

1. *The great beasts* are great kings and their kingdoms, great monarchs and their monarchies, *which shall arise out of the earth*, as those beasts did *out of the sea*, v. 17. They are but *terraefilii* — *from beneath*; they savour of the earth, and their foundation is *in the dust*; they are of the earth earthy, and they are written in the dust, and to the dust they shall return.

2. Daniel pretty well understands the first three beasts, but concerning the fourth he desires to be better informed, because it differed so much from the rest, and was *exceedingly dreadful*, and not only so, but very mischievous, or it *devoured and broke in pieces*, v. 19. Perhaps it was this that put Daniel into such a fright, and this part of the visions of his head troubled him more than any of the rest. But especially he desired to know what the *little horn* was, that *had eyes*, and a *mouth that spoke very great things*, and whose countenance was more fearless and formidable than that of *any of his fellows*, v. 20. And this he was most inquisitive about because it was this horn that *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them*, v. 21. While no more is intimated than that the children of men make war with one another, and prevail against one another, the prophet does not show himself so much concerned (*let the potsherders strive with the potsherders of the earth*, and be dashed in pieces one against another); but when they *make war with the saints*, when the *precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold*, are broken as *earthen pitchers*, it is time to ask, “What is the meaning of this? Will the Lord cast off his people? Will he suffer their enemies to trample upon them and triumph over them? What is this same horn that shall prevail so far against the saints?” To this his interpreter answers (v. 23-25) that this *fourth beast* is a *fourth kingdom*, that *shall devour the whole earth*, or (as it may be read) *the whole land*. That the *ten horns are ten kings*, and the *little horn* is another king that shall subdue three kings, and shall be very abusive to God and his people, shall act,

(1.) Very impiously towards God. He shall *speak great words against the Most High*, setting him, and his authority and justice, at defiance.

(2.) Very imperiously towards the people of God. He shall *wear out the saints of the Most High*; he will not cut them off at once, but wear them out by long oppressions and a constant course of hardships put upon them, ruining their estates and weakening their families. The design of Satan has been to *wear out the saints of the Most High*, that they may be no more in remembrance; but the attempt is vain, for while the world stands God will

have a church in it. He shall *think to change times and laws*, to abolish all the ordinances and institutions of religion, and to bring every body to say and do just as he would have them. He shall trample upon laws and customs, human and divine. *Diruit, aedificut, mutat quadrata rotundis* — *He pulls down, he builds, he changes square into round*, as if he meant to alter even the ordinances of heaven themselves. And in these daring attempts he shall for a time prosper and have success; they shall be given into his hand *until time, times, and half a time* (that is, for three years and a half), that famous prophetic measure of time which we meet with in the Revelation, which is sometimes called forty-two months, sometimes 1260 days, which come all to one. But at the end of that time the *judgment shall sit and take away his dominion* (v. 26), which he expounds (v. 11) of the beast being *slain and his body destroyed*. And (as Mr. Mede reads v. 12) *as to the rest of the beast*, the ten horns, especially the little *ruffling horn* (as he calls it), they had their dominion taken away. Now the question is, Who is this enemy, whose rise, reign, and ruin, are foretold? Interpreters are not agreed. Some will have the fourth kingdom to be that of the Seleucidae, and the little horn to be Antiochus, and show the accomplishment of all this in the history of the Maccabees; so Junius, Piscator, Polanus, Broughton, and many others: but others will have the fourth kingdom to be that of the Romans, and the *little horn* to be Julius Caesar, and the succeeding emperors (says Calvin), the antichrist, the papal kingdom (says Mr. Joseph Mede), that *wicked one*, which, as this *little horn*, is to be consumed by the *brightness of Christ's second coming*. The pope assumes a power to *change times and laws, potestas autokratorike* — *an absolute and despotic power*, as he calls it. Others make the *little horn* to be the *Turkish empire*; so Luther, Vatablus, and others. Now I cannot prove either side to be wrong; and therefore, since prophecies sometimes have many fulfillings, and we ought to give scripture its full latitude (in this as in many other controversies), I am willing to allow that they are both in the right, and that this prophecy has primary reference to the Syrian empire, and was intended for the encouragement of the Jews who suffered under Antiochus, that they might see even these melancholy times foretold, but might foresee a glorious issue of them at last, and the final overthrow of their proud oppressors; and, which is best of all, might foresee, not long after, the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah in the world, with the hopes of which it was usual with the former prophets to comfort the people of God in their distresses. But yet it has a further reference, and foretels the like persecuting power

and rage in Rome heathen, and no less in Rome papal, against the Christian religion, that was in Antiochus against the pious Jews and their religion. And St. John, in his visions and prophecies, which point primarily at Rome, has plain reference, in many particulars, to these visions of Daniel.

3. He has a joyful prospect given him of the prevalency of God's kingdom among men, and its victory over all opposition at last. And it is very observable that in the midst of the predictions of the force and fury of the enemies this is brought in abruptly (v. 18 and again v. 22), before it comes, in the course of the vision, to be interpreted, v. 26, 27. And this also refers,

(1.) To the prosperous days of the Jewish church, after it had weathered the storm under Antiochus, and the power which the Maccabees obtained over their enemies.

(2.) To the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah in the world by the preaching of his gospel. *For judgment Christ comes into this world*, to rule by his Spirit, and to make all his saints *kings and priests to their God*.

(3.) To the second coming of Jesus Christ, when the saints shall judge the world, shall sit down with him on his throne and triumph in the complete downfall of the devil's kingdom. Let us see what is here foretold.

[1.] *The Ancient of days shall come*, v. 22. God shall judge the world by his Son, to whom he has *committed all judgment*, and, as an earnest of that, he *comes* for the deliverance of his oppressed people, comes for the setting up of his kingdom in the world.

[2.] *The judgment shall sit*, v. 26. God will make it appear that he *judges in the earth*, and will, both in wisdom and in equity, plead his people's righteous cause. At the great day he will *judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained*.

[3.] The *dominion* of the enemy shall be *taken away*, v. 26. All Christ's enemies shall be made his footstool, and shall be *consumed and destroyed* to the end: these were the apostle uses concerning the man of sin, ^{<STR>}2 Thessalonians 2:8. He shall be *consumed with the spirit of Christ's mouth* and *destroyed with the brightness of his coming*.

[4.] *Judgment is given to the saints of the Most High.* The apostles are entrusted with the preaching of a gospel by which the *world shall be judged*. All the saints by their faith and obedience condemn an unbelieving disobedient world; in Christ their head they shall judge the world, shall *judge the twelve tribes of Israel*, ^{408B}Matthew 19:28. See what reason we have to honour those that fear the Lord; how mean and despicable soever the saints now appear in the eye of the world, and how much contempt soever is poured upon them; they are the *saints of the Most High*; they are near and dear to God, and he owns them for his, and *judgment is given to them*.

[5.] That which is most insisted upon is that *the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever*, v. 18. And again (v. 22), *The time came that the saints possessed the kingdom*. And again (v. 27), *The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*. Far be it from us to infer hence that dominion is founded on grace, or that this will warrant any, under pretence of saintship, to usurp kingship. No; *Christ's kingdom is not of this world*; but this intimates the spiritual dominion of the saints over their own lusts and corruptions, their victories over Satan and his temptations, and the triumphs of the martyrs over death and its terrors. It likewise promises that the gospel kingdom shall be set up, a kingdom of grace, the privileges and comforts of which now, *under the heavens*, shall be the earnest and first-fruits of the kingdom of *glory in the heavens*. When the empire became Christian, and princes used their power for the defence and advancement of Christianity, then the *saints possessed the kingdom*. The saints rule by the Spirit's ruling in them (and *this is the victory overcoming the world, even their faith*) and by making the kingdoms of this world to become Christ's kingdom. But the full accomplishment of this will be in the everlasting happiness of the saints, the kingdom that cannot be moved, which we, according to his promise, look for (that is the *greatness of the kingdom*), the crown of glory that fades not away — that is the *everlasting kingdom*. See what an emphasis is laid upon this (v. 18): *The saints shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever*; and the reason is because he whose saints they are is the *Most High* and *his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*, v. 27. He is so, and therefore theirs shall be so. *Because I live, you shall live also*, ^{409B}John 14:19. His kingdom is theirs; they reckon themselves exalted in his exaltation, and desire no greater honour and satisfaction to

themselves than that *all dominions* should *serve and obey him*, as they shall do, v. 27. They shall either be brought into subjection to his golden sceptre or brought to destruction by his iron rod.

Daniel, in the close, when he ends that matter, tells us what impressions this vision made upon him; it overwhelmed his spirits to such a degree that his *countenance was changed*, and it made him look pale; but he *kept the matter in his heart*. Note, The heart must be the treasury and storehouse of divine things; there we must hide God's word, as the Virgin Mary kept the sayings of Christ, ~~and~~ Luke 2:51. Daniel kept *the matter in his heart*, with a design, not to keep it from the church, but to keep it for the church, that what he had received from the Lord he might fully and faithfully deliver to the people. Note, It concerns God's prophets and ministers to treasure up the things of God in their minds, and there to digest them well. If we would have God's word ready in our mouths when we have occasion for it, we must keep it in our hearts at all times.