

## Daniel 7:13-14: The Everlasting King

The prophecy of Daniel has received great attention from the moment it was penned. Its message of steadfastness while living in a hostile society became the prototype for an entire class of literature as later Jewish authors attempted to capture its style and employ its theme. Daniel opened chapter seven with a vision similar to Nebuchadnezzar's dream recorded in Daniel 2. However, the focus of this vision was a great throne scene, illustrating that God still reigns in heaven (Dan. 7:9-10) regardless of the power men aspire to upon the earth. Daniel then closed the vision with these words,

“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then 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 the one Which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13–14).

Whereas Daniel previously identified the various kingdoms of men as beasts and horns on the beasts, here he intentionally deviated from that pattern to call attention (“behold”) to “One like the Son of Man.” He thus identified the figure as One greater in character than those other kings and One representative of what man can be, made in the image of God. While this description alone implied Jesus Christ, the following phrase— “Coming with the clouds of heaven”—heightened the imagery. Throughout the Old Testament, clouds designated the LORD's guidance (Ex. 13:21), will (Ex. 19:9; 33:9), and judgment (Eze. 38:9), including Jesus' warning of the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:30) and the promise of final judgment (Rev. 1:7). Thus, Daniel's identifying a Son of Man pointed to the divine authority Jesus received again following His resurrection (Mt. 28:18). According to Daniel, this One “came to the Ancient of Days And they brought Him near before Him.” This is no small event to consider. Here Daniel prophesies that One representing all mankind and simultaneously possessing divine authority would enter the very presence of God in all His holiness. Therefore, Daniel anticipated by inspiration Peter's argument at Pentecost in which, according to Psalm 16, Jesus rose from the grave to enter the presence of the Father (Acts 2:25-28). However, to enter God's presence requires perfect holiness, thus further establishing both the Messiah's identity and mission: a perfect Man with divine authority entering heaven to become the judge of all mankind (Acts 17:30-31; Jn. 12:48). The Son of Man, based upon His entrance into heaven, would thus be granted authority over all, having received glory in His resurrection and a kingdom over which He would rule through His defeat of the adversary of God and man (Rev. 12:10; Heb. 2:14-15). This kingdom, the church (Matt. 16:18-19), would be comprised not of Jews only but of people of all nations (Acts 10:34-35). It would not exist as a political entity like those previous kingdoms but as a spiritual entity transcending political borders, the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 4:17; Jn. 18:36). Jesus, the Son of Man, will reign over this spiritual kingdom until He hands it over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Thus, the church is the eternal kingdom prophesied in Daniel 2:44 which was established during the time of the fourth kingdom (Rome), and which will continue until it blends into eternity. While all of this was not clear in the minds of first century Jewish leaders, the power of Daniel's prophecy and many of its implications would not have been lost on them when, in response to the question, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” (Mark 14:61b), Jesus replied by quoting the first portion of this very prophecy: “Jesus said, ‘I am. And you will see the Son of

Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven”” (Mark 14:62). The high priest counted this as blasphemy, and this statement alone served as the basis for condemning Jesus to death (Mark 14:63-64). How interesting that in responding to a question of His Messiahship, Jesus answered with a passage that implied far more: (1) the humanity of Christ, (2) the deity of Christ, (3) the resurrection of Christ, (4) the authority of Christ, and (5) the kingdom of Christ. How sad that the very people who should have known Daniel 7 the best rejected the One it promised. How sad it is today that due to their preconceived ideas about Jesus’ mission, some people fail to see the beauty of how Christ fulfilled every point. When our Savior appeared before the high priest and quoted this passage, He was not lamenting His failure to accomplish the promise of this prophecy; He was anticipating its complete fulfillment following His crucifixion and resurrection!