

SERMON NOTES
Daniel 7:1-28
“The Kingdom of the Son of Man”

Intro:

- 2008 Pew Forum Survey: *52% of American Christians say that at least some non-Christian faiths can lead to salvation and eternal life*
- Among all Americans who claim a religious affiliation, only 29% believe that their religion is the one, true faith leading to eternal life – while 65% believe that many religions can lead to eternal life
- *In fact, 42% believe that atheism can lead to eternal life*
- Even among born-again evangelical Protestant Christians who attend weekly worship services – only 60% believe that Christianity is the one true faith
- To believe that any religion has a corner on truth or that any religion is the only way to God is regarded as the height of arrogance and intolerance in today’s culture
- **Your faith may be true for you – but someone else’s completely different faith is just as true for them**
- Your belief in One Creator God may be true for you – but someone else’s belief in many gods or in a nature God is just as true for them
- *Your belief in salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ may be true for you – but someone else’s belief in achieving eternal life through living a good life and following the teachings of Buddha or the Koran is just as true for them*
- In an article in Christianity Today, John Franke relates experiences of asking Christians how they understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ
- *“Of course, Jesus is unique. So are the leaders of the other world religions. The uniqueness of Jesus is no different from that of any other religious figure, since all are made in the image of God.”*
- 1977 movie “Oh, God” with George Burns: When asked if Jesus was his son, God says: *Yes, Jesus was his son, and Buddha was his son, and Mohammed was his son, and in fact, all human beings are his sons and daughters.*
- **Hollywood’s theology has now infiltrated much of the Christian church**
- ***Many professing Christians have a defective view of who Jesus Christ is – and their defective view of Christ leads them to believe that all religions are equal paths to God***
- When Jesus called himself *The Son of Man* – who was he claiming to be?

I. JESUS' FAVORITE SELF-DESIGNATION: THE SON OF MAN

- Jesus rarely referred to himself as the Messiah or the Son of God – far more often he referred to himself as *the Son of Man*
- Was Jesus just being modest? Was he saying that he believed himself to be nothing more than an ordinary man?
- *Or was he saying something more about himself?*

Sometimes the Son of Man is a term for Jesus' humble humanity

Matthew 8:20 (NIV) ²⁰Jesus replied, **“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”**

- But sometimes “Son of Man” conveys something of Jesus' understanding of his ministry and mission:

Mark 10:45 (NIV) ⁴⁵**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

Luke 19:10 (NIV) ¹⁰**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”**

- *Sometimes “Son of Man” infers a measure of divine authority*

Mark 2:9 - 11 (NIV) ⁹**Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”** He said to the paralytic, ¹¹**“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”**

Mark 2:27 - 28 (NIV) ²⁷Then he said to them, **“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”**

- *Jesus also used the term “Son of Man” when predicting his suffering, death and resurrection*

Mark 8:31 (NIV) ³¹He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

- *And then there are passages where Jesus is clearly referring to the Son of Man of Daniel 7 when speaking of His Second Coming*

Matthew 24:30 - 31 (NIV) ³⁰**“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”**

- *The common misunderstanding is that “Son of God” implies his deity – which it does – and that “Son of Man” refers only to his humanity*
- *“Son of Man” does in fact refer to his humanity – but the term also refers to the exalted heavenly ruler of Daniel 7 and is a claim to Deity*
- *Nowhere is this more evident than when Jesus’ life is on trial before the religious rulers, and Jesus was asked directly by the high priest if he was the Messiah, the Son of God*

Mark 14:61 - 64 (NIV) ⁶¹ Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” ⁶²**“I am,”** said Jesus. **“And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”** ⁶³The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. ⁶⁴“You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned him as worthy of death.

- *It was this claim to be the Son of Man of Daniel 7 that led directly to Jesus’ being condemned to crucifixion on the charge of blasphemy*
- *Jesus was not crucified for teaching the Golden Rule and love for neighbor*
- *Jesus was not crucified for being just another Rabbi or prophet*
- *The high priest understood exactly what Jesus was claiming – that he was claiming Divine Authority for himself – and thus Jesus was condemned to be executed for his blasphemy – a man claiming to be God*
- *So who is this Son of Man—this exalted heavenly King in Daniel 7 – and why did this claim get Jesus crucified for blasphemy?*

II. DANIEL’S VISION OF EARTHLY KINGDOMS

- *In chapters 2 and 7-12, God gave Daniel visions of the coming world kingdoms – using different images*
- *In chapter 7, the vision consists of four great beasts coming out of the sea*
- *The sea is often used in the Bible as a symbol of chaos and disorder and a world system that is hostile to God and His authority*

- *In Revelation 13 for example, the Antichrist is pictured as a beast coming out of the sea*
- *That is probably why Revelation 21 says that in the new heaven and new earth there will no longer be any sea*
- *There is a river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God – but there is no longer any sea – no longer any organized opposition to the rule of God*
- *The beasts – in Daniel and in Revelation – refer to evil world powers and their rulers*
- *They illustrate the truth that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely*
- *These are human rulers at the head of worldly kingdoms – yet they act subhuman – they act like beasts of prey*
- *These beastly rulers and kingdoms demonstrate man’s inhumanity to man*
- *The first beast in Daniel’s vision– a lion with the wings of an eagle – represented the world power of that time – the sixth century BC –namely Babylon (modern day Iraq) – the kingdom that conquered and destroyed Judah and Jerusalem and took the Jews captive for 70 years*
- *The second beast – a vicious and voracious bear – represented the world power that conquered and followed Babylon – the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians – (modern day Iran)*
- *The three ribs in the bear’s mouth likely represent its three main conquests of Libya, Babylon and Egypt*
- *The third beast – a fleet leopard with four wings and four heads – represented Alexander the Great of Greece and his speedy conquests of more land than any other ruler*
- *But notice the phrase in verse 6: **it was given authority to rule***
- *Given by whom? **By the Sovereign Lord who sits on the throne of heaven – all earthly kingdoms are under the dominion of the Sovereign King of the Universe***
- *When Alexander died at the young age of 33, his kingdom was divided among four lesser rulers (four heads of the leopard)*
- *Further information about one of these heads is given in Daniel 8 where in this vision Alexander’s Kingdom is pictured as a goat with four horns*

Daniel 8:8 - 12 (NIV) ⁸The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. ⁹Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. ¹⁰It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. ¹¹It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. ¹²Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

- ***This prophetic vision was fulfilled about 500 years after Daniel when Antiochus Euphianes – the small horn that grew in power – ruled over Israel – the Beautiful Land – setting himself up to be the equal of God – and ordering the daily Temple sacrifices to cease***
- ***In fact, Antiochus Euphianes – the Greek King of Syria – not only ordered the cessation of temple sacrifices in 168 BC, but he also profaned the Temple by introducing a holy object sacred to the god Zeus and sacrificing a pig to Zeus on his own altar in the Temple***
- ***This was the original “abomination that causes desolation” that Jesus referred to in Matthew 24 – an abomination that was repeated in a similar way in 70 AD by the Romans – and will ultimately be fulfilled by the Antichrist at the end of time***

- ***The Jewish holiday Hanukkah has its origins in the rededication of the Temple to the Lord in 165 BC after Judas Maccabeus and his army recaptured Jerusalem from the Greeks***
- ***When the Jews rededicated the Jerusalem Temple to the Lord, they looked for oil to light the menorah – but only found one small flask with enough oil for one day***
- ***But miraculously, the oil lasted for 8 days – which is why Jews celebrate Hanukkah for 8 days by lighting candles in a menorah every night***

- ***The fourth beast was a terrifying and frightening beast unlike any other – this powerful beast had large iron teeth and crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever remained***
- ***This terrible beast represented the Roman Empire – which in turn is a prototype or foreshadowing of the Antichrist and his kingdom at the end of the age***
- ***Further information on this fourth beast is given in verses 23-25***

Daniel 7:23 - 25 (NIV) ²³“He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

- *The fourth beast is the Roman Empire – but also more than the Roman Empire – it is also all future kingdoms that will oppress and persecute God’s People – culminating in the Antichrist of the end of the age as depicted in Revelation 13 and in II Thessalonians 2*

2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NIV) ⁴He (the man of lawlessness / Antichrist) will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

- ***This beast of the end times – the Antichrist and his kingdom – will be a composite of all its predecessors in terms of his power, cruelty and hostility against God and His People***
- **Daniel’s vision of the four beasts was fulfilled historically by the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires**
- ***Yet the final fulfillment of the fourth beast still awaits the coming of the Antichrist and his kingdom***
- **But just as Daniel was thinking about the terrifying beast with the horns – he saw another vision:**

III. DANIEL’S VISION OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

- ***Please close your eyes as I read this – and just try to get a feel for what it would be like to see a vision of Almighty God and to approach His throne***

Daniel 7:9 - 10 (NIV) ⁹“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

- Open your eyes
- *How would you like to approach the throne of the Ancient of Days without an Advocate – clothed only in your own righteousness?*
- How confident will you be of your own goodness when you stand in the Presence of Absolute Holiness and Purity and Righteousness?
- *This is not just a white-haired grandfatherly old man – this is the Eternal God – The Great I AM – who always has existed and always will exist*
- The dazzling whiteness of his clothes and hair suggests absolute purity – an absolute purity that cannot coexist with any impurity
- **God in His Holiness is a consuming fire – His throne is flaming with fire – and the wheels – as in Ezekiel’s vision of God – are all ablaze – and a river of fire is flowing from his throne**
- ***God’s holiness consumes sin and wickedness as a fire consumes wood, hay and stubble***

- **When you are brought before God’s throne for Judgment – will you be able to stand?**
- *What will you do when the Judge is seated on his fiery throne and the books are opened to disclose all the thoughts and intents and motives of your heart and all your careless words and selfish choices and sinful deeds of your life?*

- **This is why we need a Savior – to take away all our sins and cleanse us of all our impurity and clothe us in his own righteousness**

- *Yet this vision of God’s Holiness and Justice is actually a comfort for God’s People*
- When the whole world seems to be disintegrating into chaos, and the godly are being persecuted for standing for truth and righteousness, and ungodly powers seem to be ruling and oppressing with impunity
- ***Then the Scriptures remind us: There is a God in heaven who sits on a throne above every other throne and who rules over every other ruler and who will bring Judgment and Destruction upon all evil powers***

Daniel 7:11 (NIV) ¹¹“Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.

IV. DANIEL’S VISION OF “ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN”

Daniel 7:13 - 14 (NIV) ¹³“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

- **Theodoret (400 AD):** “Daniel openly teaches what our Lord says in the Gospels: *“You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with his angels”*; and the Apostle Paul: *“For the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead shall rise immortal. And we who remain alive will be snatched in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”* Daniel foretells the second coming of the Savior. He openly calls him “Son of Man” because of that nature that he has assumed. He says that he is “coming on the clouds,” as He himself promised, so that he can show his power. He says that he “receives honor, dominion and the kingdom” from the Ancient of Days, although he is a human being. In Psalm 2, David says this about the Lord: *“The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you. Ask me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession.”* Daniel states the very same thing: *“All peoples, tribes and languages will serve him.”* And he shows that his reign will be without end: *“His power will be an eternal power, which will not pass away, and his kingdom will not be destroyed.”*
- **This supreme authority has already been given to the Lord Jesus Christ when he was seated at God’s right hand after his resurrection and ascension:**

Ephesians 1:19-22 This is the same mighty power ²⁰that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come. ²²And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church.

- *But this supreme authority will not be manifest upon the earth until Christ’s Second Coming*

II Thessalonians 1:7-10 He will come with his mighty angels, ⁸in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction,

forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power ¹⁰when he comes to receive glory and praise from his holy people.

- *Thus will occur the fulfillment of Daniel's vision of "one like a son of man"*
- **Truly man? Yes? But more than that – this is the eternal Son who took on human flesh**
- *He is the One to whom God the Father has given all judgment*

John 5:27 (NIV) ²⁷ And he (God) has given him (Christ) authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

- *The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins because the Son of Man has authority to Judge all mankind*
- **The Son of Man in Daniel's vision was given by God divine authority and honor and royal power**
- *This is why Jesus was condemned to death by the Jewish leaders when Jesus applied to himself the prophecy of Daniel: **You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Almighty and coming on the clouds of heaven***
- These are not the words of a mere Rabbi or prophet
- **These are the words of someone claiming universal and everlasting dominion over the whole world**

Daniel 7:14 (NIV) ¹⁴He (the Son of Man) was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

- **Jesus Christ is not just Lord of Americans born into Christian families – He is Lord of the Chinese and Lord of the Filipinos and Lord of the Brazilians and Lord of the Ethiopians and Lord of the Moldovans and Lord of the Egyptians and Lord of the Iranians and Lord of the Pakistanis and Lord of the Koreans and Lord of the Vietnamese and Lord of the Saudis and Lord of the Libyans**
- **Jesus Christ – the Son of Man – who sits and reigns at God's right hand -- is Savior and Lord – and Judge and Sovereign Ruler – over all peoples of all nations and all languages and all religious backgrounds**
- Not because I say so – not because conservative Christians say so – *but because Almighty God -- the Ancient of Days -- gave to the Son of Man – Jesus Christ -- and to no one else -- His own divine authority, glory and sovereign power*

- This divine glory – that will be revealed to the whole world at Christ’s Second Coming – has already been seen by the Apostle John:
- *Notice the similarity of John’s vision of the Son of Man with Daniel’s vision of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9-10:*

Revelation 1:12-16 When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. ¹³And standing in the middle of the lampstands was the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. ¹⁴His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were bright like flames of fire. ¹⁵His feet were as bright as bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. ¹⁶He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was as bright as the sun in all its brilliance.

- *The glory of the Son of Man – the risen Christ – and the glory of the Ancient of Days – are one and the same glory*
- **The Son of Man has no human peers – the authority, glory and sovereign power given to him by the Ancient of Days have been given to no other man**
- *The greatness and uniqueness of Jesus Christ are incomparable – He was, is, and always will be the Way, the Truth and the Life*
- **He has opened the Way into the Holy Presence of God for all peoples of all nations and languages and religious backgrounds – by Way of His Sacrifice on the Cross and His shed blood**
- **It is the Only Way for everyone – and there is no other way for anyone**

V. THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN

Daniel 7:26 - 27 (NIV) ²⁶“But the court will sit, and his (little horn’s / eleventh king’s / Antichrist’s) power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”

- ***In the midst of humanity’s darkest hour – with the Antichrist waging war against the saints and temporarily overcoming them – with the Antichrist exalting himself to such a height of arrogance as to attempt to change the very laws of God and to subject all religion to his own authority and to be worshiped himself as God – then finally shall the court of heaven sit in***

Judgment in order to revenge the tribulations and persecutions of the holy and righteous believers

- And then at the appointed time the Son of Man – the King of kings and Lord of lords and Judge of judges – comes down from heaven – and he shall destroy the whole dominion and power of the little horn – the Antichrist – and shall consume all evil powers with the eternal fire of punishment
- *And then the Son of Man – the Lord Jesus Christ – will give to his servants and martyrs – all the followers of the Lamb, including the very saints who were being persecuted by the Antichrist – He will give to them an everlasting kingdom*
- ***The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ – and He will reign for ever and ever – with his saints***
- *Notice the transfer of power and authority in Daniel 7 – all coming from the throne of God the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe:*
 - First, the beasts were given authority to rule
 - *Then the final beast – the Antichrist – was given authority to rule over all the earth*
 - **Then the Son of Man was given authority, glory and sovereign power – and all peoples, nations and men from every language will worship him**
 - *And unlike the authority of the Antichrist, which was limited to a time, times and half a time – most likely meaning 3 ½ years – the dominion of the Son of Man is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom will never be destroyed*
 - **And then, finally, the sovereignty, power and greatness of the Kingdom of the Son of Man will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High**

Daniel 7:17-18 ¹⁷“These four huge beasts represent four kingdoms that will arise from the earth. ¹⁸But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever.”

Daniel 7:21-22 ²¹As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and was defeating them, ²²until the Ancient One came and judged in favor of the holy people of the Most High. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom.

Daniel 7:25-27 ²⁵He (the Antichrist) will defy the Most High and wear down the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶“But then the court will pass judgment, and all his power will be taken away and completely destroyed. ²⁷Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under

heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. They will rule forever, and all rulers will serve and obey them.”

- ***Wow! That is the destiny of all those who give their allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord***
- **We will reign forever with the Lord Jesus Christ in His universal and everlasting Kingdom**
- *The universal and everlasting Kingdom of the Son of Man is open to all peoples who are willing to live under His rule*
- It is open to all peoples of all nations and all languages and all cultures and all races and all religious backgrounds
- *And indeed, at this very moment there are people from nearly every tribe and language and people group and nation who are entering the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ*
- **But the Word of God is clear: In the end there is only One King of kings and Lord of lords who is given authority, glory and sovereign power over all the earth– indeed, over all of creation – visible and invisible – in heaven and on earth – namely, the Son of Man, who is Jesus Christ**
- *There are not many kingdoms headed by many different religious leaders*
- **There is only one universal and everlasting kingdom – and it is ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ – and He shares that reign with those who bow their knee to Him and confess Him as Lord**
- **In the end – all of humanity will be divided into two camps: *followers of the Beast and followers of the Lamb* – those who follow the ways of this world and conform to the beliefs and values of this world – and those who live counter-culturally in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ**
- **How about you?**
- ***Which camp are you in right now?***
- **Day by day are you making choices that fit right in with the rest of the world?**
- ***Or day by day are you making distinctive choices that set you apart as a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ?***
- **Have you pledged your ultimate allegiance to Jesus Christ – or are you more concerned with fitting in with the rest of the world?**

Prayer

Hymn # 97 “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”