

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE TEN HORNS AND THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL 7

(AND THE TEN TOES OF DANIEL 2)

BY

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This is essentially an appendage or update to my article *The Visions of Daniel: The Great Image and The Four Beasts*.

While I was writing the article on *The Prophecies of Jesus' Olivet Discourse* (available in this section) during the first half of 2008, I suddenly came to a greater understanding of the words of Jesus in Luke 21:22. In relation to the then-future events of the Jewish war, and the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (which occurred in 70 AD), Jesus stated clearly that those days were to be the "...days of vengeance, **to fulfill all that is written.**"

"Now whenever you may be perceiving Jerusalem surrounded by encampments, then know that her desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains, and let those in her midst be coming out into the country, and let not those in the country be entering into her, **for days of vengeance are these, to fulfill all that is written.** Yet woe to those who are pregnant, and to those suckling in those days; for there will be great necessity in the land **and indignation on this people.**"

And they shall be falling by the edge of the sword and shall be led into captivity into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden by the nations, until the eras of the nations (*or times of the nations*) may be fulfilled."

(Luke 21:20-24 CV)

It is very evident from the context that Jesus was talking about the events of 'the great affliction or tribulation' of the Jewish/Roman War in the land of Judea and the whole of Palestine, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, heralding the official end of the Old Covenant system. It also began the era of 'the Times of the Nations' during which time the final exile and captivity of the Jews would continue till the end of this age.

Jesus was confirming that Daniel's prophecies were to be fulfilled by 70 AD. He said that those events in the 1st century, within that generation, would fulfil ALL that is written concerning Israel and the coming Messianic kingdom, including the days of vengeance and judgment upon the people and the land and the city and the temple.

In fact, Jesus was alluding to Daniel 12:7.

"It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, **all these things will be completed.**"

The time period of 'time, times and half a time' is understood as three and a half years, which can also be found in Daniel 7 in relation to the Little Horn. It is a well-established historical fact that the Jewish War lasted three and a half years! And by the end of this period, "**all these things will be completed!**" It's that simple! This time period can also be found in Revelation - where it is evidently referring to the same event, although its symbolic significance can be interpreted on a number of levels.

Anyhow, let us repeat this point. Jesus was saying that ALL the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures concerning Israel, Jerusalem, the temple, the land, the covenants, as well as that that prophesied the coming of the Messiah and the establishing of His spiritual kingdom were all fulfilled by 70 AD! The New Testament writings are the inspired record of these fulfillments, much of which was witnessed by thousands in Judea and Palestine - and throughout the Roman world.

The key to understanding the prophecies of Daniel in particular is to be aware that the purpose and goal of the whole book was to foretell specific events in the 'history' of Israel, which included the rise of various kingdoms and Empires that would affect the land of Palestine and the restored nation, until the coming of the Messiah and the establishing of His spiritual kingdom. It also spoke of the final judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple that would effectively end the Old Covenant (cf. Daniel 9).

The book of Daniel was to be sealed until the time of the end, i.e. nearer the era of the coming of the Messiah, and it was the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Jesus and the Apostles (and subsequently the writings of the New Testament) that unsealed the book of Daniel to reveal its full meaning (Daniel 12:4; Mark 1:14-15). The vision of Revelation, on the other hand, that closes the NT, was to remain unsealed for the era was at hand (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:10).

In fact, I am convinced that primarily the book of Daniel doesn't specifically reveal much else beyond 70 AD, apart from a few verses here and there that may refer ultimately to the Second Coming of Christ and the Resurrection. Of course, like the rest of the OT, there may be types and shadows of other people and events that can be found in some places in Daniel, but these are secondary interpretations only. Types and shadows and allegories, etc, have to be based on the original primary interpretation to be applied correctly. Having said that, I'm not ruling out the probable secondary interpretation of the Historicist view that sees the end of Pagan Rome and the rise of Papal Rome being alluded to in Daniel 7:23-27, as laid out in my previous article *The Visions of Daniel: The Great Image and The Four Beasts*.

At the same time that I was meditating on these things and searching them out, I was led to do some further research on the book of Revelation in light of this fresh insight. Was the Vision of Revelation written before 70 AD, I wondered? Until this time, I had accepted the more popular late date for the composition of Revelation, in about 95 AD. The answer to my query came after I purchased the excellent book *Before Jerusalem Fell* by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr.

With the help of this scholarly book, I have come to see with great conviction that the weight of evidence for the writing of Revelation, both externally and internally, actually leans heavily toward the early date of c. 65 AD, during the reign of Emperor Nero. The evidence also indicates that the whole New Testament canon was completed before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.¹ Now in light of what I've said above about the purpose of the book of Daniel and OT prophecy, this information makes a whole lot of sense!

This realisation has been the key to unlocking the door to a greater understanding of biblical prophecy. And it has also helped me to find the few missing pieces to some of the more perplexing prophetic texts that needed a more satisfactory interpretation.

Partial Preterist or Historicist?

When it came to my understanding of certain prophecies in Daniel, until recently I had taken the Historicist view on passages such as the ten toes of Daniel 2, and the ten horns and the little horn of Daniel 7. The Historicist and Preterist views generally agree that the rest of Daniel's prophecies were fulfilled by 70 AD, but with Daniel chapter 7 the Historicist interpretation views the 10 horns of Rome and the Little Horn as being fulfilled much later.

This view interprets the 10 toes and the 10 horns as the later divisions of the Roman Empire at the time of its fall in the 5th century, and the little horn as the rise of the Papacy. There are merits to this view, and on a secondary level it can still apply. This Historicist view (to a large degree) is covered in my earlier article *The Visions of Daniel: The Great Image and The Four Beasts*, available in this section.

Nevertheless, it now becomes clear to me that these things in Daniel had to have been primarily fulfilled in the 1st century before 70 AD. **That is, these prophecies, in their primary interpretation, were essentially fulfilled in relation to the First Coming of Christ.** Of course, there are a few small portions of Daniel, particularly in chapters 7 & 12, as well as some elements from the other prophets, which, typologically speaking, have their ultimate fulfilment or manifestation at the Second Coming of Christ, which is the ultimate Resurrection and Judgment Day. This will herald the 'restoration of all things' in a New Creation.

Be that as it may, these things are only clearly and fully revealed in the NT prophetic writings of the Apostles. The Book of Revelation essentially continues the book of Daniel by unsealing it and confirming its prophecies, while at the same time prophesying further details in relation to the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. On another level of truth, in spirit, the NT teaches that Christ's kingdom and the spiritual New Creation has already begun! Again, this is what was spoken of in the prophecies of Daniel, as we shall see.

So, to describe my position theologically, I have become strongly convinced that the Partial-Preterist view is the correct one - generally speaking, that is. This also applies to my view of the book of Revelation, which is evidently, and primarily (but not solely), a prophecy of the Jewish War and the judgment upon Judah, Jerusalem and the Temple, and the other events of the 1st century AD. Essentially, it is revealing the divine divorce of Israel and the marriage of Christ to a new bride,

which could also be described as the ending of the Old Covenant age and the official beginning of the New Covenant age. Nevertheless, I believe that the Historicist interpretation can also apply to Revelation on a secondary level, and it can also have a correlation to the rest of the prophets.

The only time that I disagree with the Historicist view in general is when its adherents begin to speculate about the future fulfilment of certain texts in Revelation (and some of the OT prophecies) claiming that Christ will not return for centuries yet until these 'alleged' events take place! Not only does this view minimise the warnings of Jesus to be watchful, for no man knows the day or hour of His return, it also makes the same mistake as the Futurist interpretation of prophecy that speculates about current events by using scripture as some kind of arbitrary fortune telling device.

The simple fact of the matter, I believe, is that virtually all prophecy has been fulfilled, and any secondary interpretation needs to be based on these fulfilments in accordance with sound biblical exegetical principles of spiritual allegory as revealed by the Holy Spirit within Scripture, for contrary to what many believe, the Bible is not always to be interpreted in a literalistic manner.

I still firmly hold to the view expressed in *The Visions of Daniel: The Great Image and The Four Beasts* (and some other of my writings) that 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, that talks about the Apostasy and the Man of Lawlessness, along with the second Beast of Revelation 13, the False Prophet (that looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon), was prophesying the rise of Papal Rome within apostate Christendom.

This 'Beast' ultimately served Rome (the first Beast before it), and it erected an image to Imperial Rome (the image of the Beast) within the Christian Church (the Temple of God), and it proceeded to speak and act with Rome's authority as God (Papal Rome), causing all to worship the Roman pontiff in thought and action (the mark of the Beast), or face excommunication or death by the sword (see Revelation 13:11-18).

On a *secondary* level of interpretation, the little horn of Daniel 7 was also *foreshadowing* the rise of Papal Rome as an antichrist kingdom. Nevertheless, this cannot be the primary interpretation of the Little Horn that was originally intended in Daniel 7, because the purpose of Daniel, and all the prophets for that matter, was to prophesy those things of consequence that would occur leading up to, and including, the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom, and the establishing of the New Covenant - which all occurred before 70 AD. This must be borne in mind when seeking to understand the book of Daniel.

So I may have been a little presumptuous in some of my earlier writings when I previously stated that Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2, was basing his understanding of the 'Restrainer' on Daniel 7. He may not have been, and there's no way of knowing for certain if he was. Nevertheless, I am still convinced that the view that sees the pagan Roman Empire as the Restrainer is the most consistent and satisfactory interpretation that fits all of the biblical and historical facts.

I hope to cover these things further in future articles on Revelation, God willing.

The 10 Toes and the 10 Horns in the 1st Century AD

So I'm now going to present the results of my further study on Daniel chapters 2 and 7 in particular, in relation to the 10 horns/toes, etc, as an appendage or update to the previous articles on this subject, particularly *The Visions of Daniel: The Great Image and The Four Beasts*. We will also consider the relevant portions of Revelation 13 & 17 to show their connection with Daniel 7. I will assume that those who are reading this will be fairly familiar with this subject, and I will let 'the one who has wisdom' decide as to whether my interpretation is correct after weighing all of the evidence.

One of the most plausible interpretations of the 10 toes/horns that I'd discovered (primarily through Jay Rogers and Ken Gentry) was this: that they were representing the 10 Roman Caesars from Julius to Vespasian. The 'little horn' was Nero, and 'the 3 horns which were uprooted before it' were the 3 emperors who lived and died while Nero was living, before he became Caesar - that is, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Much was also made of Nero's persecution of Christians, which was said to have lasted about three and a half years.

Nevertheless, I believe there are some difficulties with this view, and this ultimately led me to look for a more satisfactory explanation. I believe we can be sure of one thing - that the Little Horn is either Nero or Vespasian. For reasons I shall give shortly, I am persuaded that Vespasian fits the facts of the prophecy better than Nero does, but let's not jump ahead too soon.²

Firstly, let us consider the relevant texts in question.

The Dream of the Great Statue or Image in Daniel 2 doesn't give us much information on the 10 toes, but it is evident that these toes are representing a dividing of the Roman Empire into at least 10 parts. Yet they are also representing the whole kingdom, as the toes also belong to the feet and the legs - all representing Rome as the fourth kingdom. This is confirmed in the following verses (2:41-43).

Just as you saw that **the feet and toes** were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As **the toes** were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

Verses 44-45 then reveal the following.

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

Simply stated, this is saying that the heavenly Messianic kingdom will arrive and be set up **in the days of those kings**. It will ultimately defeat the Roman Empire and all the kingdoms of men, and will itself endure indefinitely, without being

destroyed or passed on to another people. Notice also that the spiritual kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Heavens, after its establishment at this time, will progressively grow or spread out until it fills the whole earth. It would not be like the Old Covenant kingdom of Israel that was essentially confined to a portion of the Middle East, *but it would encompass the whole world like a huge mountain range.*

The New Testament apostles confirm this interpretation that we are to understand the fulfilment of these things as having occurred in the 1st century AD - and onwards.

So here it is intimated that the 10 toes are representing 10 kings within the Roman Empire - and they appear to be ruling at the same time, and *not* successively. (This fact becomes clearer in the vision of the Beasts in Daniel 7). It is during the rule of these kings, existing at the same time, that God through His Messiah establishes the kingdom of the heavens.

So I did some research and found at least three different sources on Roman History that stated that **Augustus Caesar, in addition to the Imperial Provinces, covering the whole Empire, set up 10 Senatorial Provinces.** I also discovered that a number of other biblical commentators and teachers had discovered this fact down through Church history.³

So here we have 10 divisions or provinces in the Roman Empire of the 1st century AD that were ruled by Governors or Proconsuls - that is, kings or rulers. These were also connected to the Imperial Provinces - and together they encompassed the whole Empire. Therefore, not only were there 10 literal distinct divisions in the Empire, but they were also representative or symbolic of ALL the provinces of the Roman Empire. And Augustus brought about these divisions during the early years of Jesus' life (or possibly just before Jesus was born).

So here are the 10 kings representing the Roman Empire of the 1st Century AD. And it was '**during the days of those kings**' that Jesus the Messiah came and the kingdom of the heavens was established at Pentecost 33 AD. The 'Living Stone' kingdom crushed the feet and toes of the Statue, and Christianity proceeded to fill the whole world. Ancient Rome has since been destroyed, but the spiritual heavenly Kingdom of Christ still continues through His people - and He will ultimately defeat all the kingdoms of men until He returns and fully manifests the kingdom in a New Creation.

The vision (or should I say, dream) of the Statue was basically revealing that four world empires would arise on the world stage (beginning at the time of Daniel in the 6th century BC through to the 1st century AD), and they would all figure prominently in the activities of the Jews. In the days of the fourth kingdom of Rome, after it had been divided into 10 provinces, the Messianic kingdom would be established and it would ultimately conquer all of these kingdoms. This is the basic truth revealed in this dream.

Here is what Luke recorded in his gospel in relation to the birth of Jesus.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

(Luke 2:1-2 NIV)

Truly these things were fulfilled "**in the days of those kings.**" It is also worth noting here that there isn't any direct reference to the Second Coming of Christ in this Dream - only in the indirect sense of Christ's kingdom ultimately conquering the kingdoms of men. Nevertheless, as far as these four ancient kingdoms are concerned, the Kingdom of Heaven has conquered them and has ultimately destroyed them. In fact, the pagan Roman Empire eventually became Christianised, even if it did form an apostate Empire! And Christ's kingdom is still here, and always will be!

The Vision of the Four Beasts in Daniel 7 is revealing the same thing as 'the Statue Dream.' But what about the 10 horns on the head of the fourth beast? They are obviously representing the same thing - the 10 Roman Provinces, or more precisely, the governors or rulers of the provinces. But this vision gives us much more detail - including another Little Horn. Let's take a look.

The Little Horn

"So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.'

(Daniel 7:16-18 NIV)

Firstly we have the simple overview of the vision, where Daniel is told the basic meaning and purpose of the vision. It was prophesying the same things as the Statue Dream, i.e. that four kingdoms or empires would arise that would have dealings with the restored remnant of Israel, with the focus being on the land of Judea, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. Ultimately, the saints (or holy ones) of the remnant of Israel will receive the kingdom indefinitely.

The Concordant Version of verse 18 reads '*...and they (*the saints*) will safeguard the kingdom unto the age, even the age of the ages.'* This is emphasising the fact that the remnant of grace of restored Israel (which went on to include Gentiles as well) will actually possess and protect the kingdom on behalf of Christ for this present age and beyond, even unto the glorious age of the New Creation. This is why Paul, as one of those chosen saints, proclaimed the following, which is the ultimate glorious fulfilment of these things recorded in Daniel.

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, **not only in the present age but also in the one to come.** And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

(Ephesians 1:18-23 NIV)

Then we are told about the 10 horns on the Beast of the Roman Empire and another Little Horn that comes up after them yet is also among them.

"While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, **which came up among them**; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it...

I also wanted to know about **the ten horns** on its head and about **the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell**—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully...

The 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.

(Daniel 7:8, 20, 24 NIV)

It is clear from these texts that the 10 horns/kings are in existence *before* the Little Horn, the other horn, rises up among them. He comes up after them, yet he is among them.

This fits well with the historical facts of the Roman Empire of the 1st century AD. The 10 governors/rulers of the senatorial provinces (which were also representative of all the imperial provinces) existed from the time of Augustus onwards. Therefore, if the proposed little horn, that grew to be greater and more imposing than the rest of these rulers, is seen to be either Nero or Vespasian, then he came up *after* the ten horns and yet was *among them*.

This fits particularly well with Vespasian, for he was a military general and governor that grew in power to become the head of a new dynasty of Caesars. This is why it could be said that '...he was different from the earlier ones.' Many of the provincial governors or proconsuls were generals of the Roman armies, but none of them went on to establish a new Imperial dynasty as Vespasian did. Before I move on to give my reasons for believing that Vespasian is the Little Horn, there is one more piece of information that will help us in interpreting the 10 horns.

I believe that these 10 kings/rulers are to be understood as simultaneous rulers throughout the empire, and not successive Caesars, as others believe. Daniel 8 tells us the following.

The 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.

Out 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...

...The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. **The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation** but will not have the same power.

"In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise.

(Daniel 8:8-9, 21-23 NIV)

Most Bible commentators and teachers would agree that the four horns here are symbolising the four Greek kingdoms that arose after Alexander the Great's death. These kingdoms were ruled by military generals who went on to establish dynasties of kings (e.g. the Ptolemies and the Seleucids). It was out of one of these (the Seleucid empire) that Antiochus IV Epiphanes arose to persecute the Jews and desecrate the temple.

Yet take note that these kingdoms were viewed as four horns on the head of the Goat. They all existed simultaneously, at the same time, as four divisions of the Greek Empire. Then later in time, another horn grew up out of one of these kingdoms. These things will be considered in detail in the next study *The Vision of the Ram and the He-goat*.

This is very similar to the 10 horns of the Roman Beast, and the other Little Horn that grew up later. This is confirmed by the fact that 3 of the previous horns (i.e. three of the ten) are uprooted or rooted out (literally 'felled to stumps') before the Little Horn.

Now one of the problems with accepting Nero as the Little Horn is finding the 3 horns that were uprooted. The words of the vision are implying that the Little Horn is ruling or coming to power during the uprooting of the 3 horns. This proves a little difficult if we accept Nero as the Little Horn. I once thought that the revolt of three provincial governors (Vindex, Galba, and Macer) towards the end of Nero's reign was the answer to this, but even this interpretation is far from satisfactory, for only Vindex was truly subdued. In fact, due to Nero's suicide, Galba went on to become the new Emperor for a short time.

There are also problems with the view that Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius were the uprooted horns, as Nero was not directly responsible for their removal. The text of Daniel 7:24 states that the little horn 'will subdue three kings.' This indicates that during his rise to power, his own strength and ability will cause the subduing of these three kings, i.e. they are rivals that need to be beaten.

Nevertheless, history does not leave us without a good testimony as to who these 3 horns were. God has made sure that the Jewish historian, Josephus, as well as a number of Roman historians, gave us plenty of evidence as to the fulfilment of these things.

Vespasian and Titus

During the Jewish Revolt, which broke out in September of 66 AD, Vespasian, who was a provincial governor as well as a military general under Nero, was officially sent to crush the rebellion in Palestine and Judea. This is the key to accepting Vespasian as the Little Horn, as we shall see - he was directly involved in the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. It is also of no small consequence that Josephus believed that Vespasian was to fulfil a certain prophecy (probably found in Daniel), so much so that he 'prophesied' this to Vespasian – and it came to pass with

Vespasian becoming emperor. Something similar occurred with the renowned rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai.⁴

After Nero's death in 68 AD, which officially ended the Julio-Claudian line of the Caesars, Galba became Emperor, followed by Otho, and then Vitellius in quick succession. Within a year, these three were all dead and Vespasian became the new Emperor towards the end of 69 AD. This period of the civil wars became known as the Year of The Four Emperors. Vespasian brought Rome back from the brink of death and established a new dynasty of Caesars, the Flavian dynasty.

Now take note. Galba, Otho and Vitellius were provincial governors, hence they were three of the ten horns. Galba was governor of Hispania Terraconensis in Spain, Otho was governor of Lusitania in Portugal, and Vitellius was governor of Lower Germania. Vespasian was rising to power also as a Little Horn during this time, and eventually he subdued (or put down or humbled) these three horns to eventually become the new Caesar. Hence the three horns were uprooted from before it and 'he subdued three kings.'

Now let us take a closer look at the details of this Little Horn.

"This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully...

...the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. **As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them**, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom...

...He 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...

" 'But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then 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.'

(Daniel 7:8, 20-22, 25-27 NIV)

Now one of the keys to understanding how these things were fulfilled in Vespasian (as well as his son Titus) is to bear in mind that the context of these prophecies in Daniel **has to do with the remnant of Israel (the saints of the Most High) in the land of Judea and the city of Jerusalem**. That is, the focus is on God's holy people, His holy land, His holy city and His holy temple. Even in NT terms, in relation to the Messianic remnant of Israel in the land who had accepted Jesus (i.e. those who were the true saints of God), these things were still very much the focus in the book of Acts. The Early Church was essentially viewed as a Jewish sect, with its headquarters in Jerusalem, but all of this changed after 70 AD.

And Vespasian and his son Titus were the ones who destroyed God's Old Covenant people, and laid waste His land, and desolated Jerusalem and the temple. Even

though these things were prophesied to occur as divine judgment against the Jews of that generation, it was the Beast of Rome with Vespasian at the head that brought about this awesome destruction - which has become one of the most hugely significant and important events in Biblical, Jewish and Roman history.

The famous Arch of Titus in Rome, which was built about a decade later to commemorate this Roman victory, still stands today. One of its relief's pictures some of the holy golden items from the Temple in Jerusalem being carried into Rome in triumphal procession - not unlike Nebuchadnezzar of old carrying the temple vessels to Babylon.

So, does the description of the Little Horn in the above text match Vespasian? I would say, yes, it does!

The Little Horn Wages War

Firstly, the eyes speak of human intelligence and insight, as well as great visionary sight. He will speak out great & boastful things, some of which will be against God, the Most High.

Due to the prophetic insight of Josephus and others, who had foretold of Vespasian's rise to power, his boasting and arrogance was manifested in his victorious campaign against the Jews, and in his belief that the gods of Rome and 'righteous fate' had made him emperor of a new dynasty.

Although it was common for any of the Caesars to be boastful and blasphemous, due to the cult of Emperor worship and the rituals of ancient idolatry, nevertheless, Vespasian was the only one who could boast that he had brought down the God of Israel's people, land, holy city and temple - and he believed it was all his own doing! Boastful things against the Most High indeed!

In Book VII of The Jewish War, Josephus describes the Roman celebrations of victory over Jerusalem, attended in a triumphal procession by Vespasian, and his sons Titus and Domitian. He states that the most prominent of the spoils being paraded in the procession were the vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem, which included the golden table, and the golden lampstand, as well as the scrolls of the Jewish Law. Behind these sacred items followed idolatrous images of Victory (or Goddess Victoria) as the symbol of pagan Rome's power and might having conquered the 'God of Israel.'

Josephus also records that Vespasian so prided himself in having gained these sacred treasures that he placed them in the new magnificent Temple of Peace, which contained all sorts of worldly treasures. He also deposited the holy scrolls of the Law, along with the crimson curtain from the Inner Sanctuary, in his palace for safekeeping. What else could so clearly fulfil the words of the prophecy concerning Vespasian's boastful words and actions against the Most High than this? And it all relates to such a key event in biblical prophetic history!

In connection with this 'speaking against the Most High' we are told that he will wage war against the saints, oppressing them and defeating them. They will be

handed over to him for three and half years (the common understanding of *time, times and half a time*).

This had its perfect fulfilment in the Jewish War - **which lasted three and a half years**. In February of 67 AD, the Jewish War officially began with Nero's command to send Vespasian to subdue the rebellion in Palestine and Judea. Three and a half years later, in August of 70 AD, Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, under the command of Vespasian as the new emperor of Rome.

Now you may be asking, "OK, but he didn't come against the true saints of God, the Christian Church, did he?" Well, yes he did! The messianic remnant in the land, which originally had its base in Jerusalem and Judea, were also caught up in this war. Many of them heeded Jesus' words of warning to flee the city of Jerusalem and the land of Judea, which subsequently made them refugees. So, yes - he did wage war against the saints, either killing them or taking them captive or causing them to become refugees. They were oppressed under his hand, and on the face of it, they were defeated, until the temple and the city were no more.

Therefore, in light of what was occurring in Judea, and in fact throughout the land of Palestine, the saints of God were in great tribulation and war, and the Romans won by devastating the whole land, flattening Jerusalem and the temple - just as Jesus had predicted, and the prophet Daniel had foretold. And this had taken place within the specified period of three and a half years.

It is interesting to note that the text of Daniel 7:20-27 doesn't specifically mention religious persecution, though it does speak of the 'horn' waging war against the saints and oppressing them. Of course, persecution could be included in this description because war and oppression are often accompanied by persecution.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says that there is mention in the writings of Sulpicius Severus (based on a fragment from Tacitus) that Titus, under his father's command, not only sought to destroy Judaism by bringing down the temple and razing Jerusalem to the ground, but he also had the Christian Nazarene sect in mind as well, the Christians being the branch of a Jewish root.⁵ These thoughts may have been spurred on by Nero's earlier horrific persecution of the Christians in Rome. In fact, Vespasian's other son, Domitian, is alleged to have later persecuted the Christians during his reign as emperor in 81-96 AD, although it is true to say that the historical evidence for this persecution is severely lacking.⁶

So, on the one hand, this 'little horn' had waged war against the saints and oppressed them; and the saints had been given over to him for three and a half years; and outwardly he had defeated them. He had also tried to change the set times and laws by destroying the temple in Jerusalem and taking the holy vessels away as spoil - all in fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy.

On the other hand, the Ancient of Days, Yahweh himself, pronounced judgment in favour of the true saints (the Jewish Christians) and they came to possess the true kingdom of heaven previously established by Jesus Christ. It is *this* kingdom that ultimately conquered Rome and the world, and will itself endure forever!

Ultimately, the court of heaven gave the kingdom of God into the hands of the saints, that is, the Christian Church, the Israel of God, made up of Jew *and* Gentile. This officially occurred after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 AD. Christ Jesus has been ruling from heaven with a rod of iron ever since, as figuratively portrayed in Revelation 19:11-21, and all mankind ultimately obey His decisions.

All these things fulfilled the details of the prophecy, including the fact that 'all rulers will worship and obey Him,' meaning that Christ's rule from the heavens would one day affect all rulers from all nations, not just Israel - although the ultimate manifestation awaits the age of the New Creation.

Much has been made of these texts about the Little Horn being fulfilled in Nero and his horrific and sadistic persecution of Christians in Rome. There is great merit to this view, and in some respects the description of the Little Horn fits Nero exceptionally well. I have great respect for many of those who hold to this view. I certainly agree with those who view the first Beast of Revelation 13 as the Roman Empire being personified in Nero.⁷ Nevertheless, in my opinion, when it comes to Daniel 7 in particular, there are some difficulties that I think weakens the case for a 'Nero Little Horn.'

Firstly, there isn't any hard evidence that Nero's persecution lasted three and a half years. It may have done, but we just don't know for certain.⁸ The dates for the Jewish War, on the other hand, are clearly recorded in history. Even in relation to the Jewish War, Nero may have been Caesar when the war began, but he was dead long before the end of it. And it wasn't Nero who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. In contrast to this, Vespasian was directly at the head of the Roman army throughout the war, even though his son Titus had to take over the campaign in the later stages. And it was Vespasian who was Caesar when Jerusalem fell.

Secondly, Nero's persecution was largely based in Rome. It had nothing to do with the land of Judea, the city of Jerusalem or the Temple. We need to remember that these prophecies of Daniel were focusing on Judea, Jerusalem and the Temple, and the believing remnant of Israel in the land. Yes, the Christians in Rome were a part of God's New Covenant people, but I don't believe that that is the meaning and overall focal point of these particular texts in Daniel.

Revelation 12 - A Prophetic Storyboard

Revelation 12 primarily gives us a picture of the prophetic events of the 1st century AD in signs and symbols. It speaks of the pregnant Woman who gave birth to the Male Child, Christ, and the Dragon, Satan, who tried to destroy the Child and the Woman through the 10-horned, 7-headed Beast of the Roman Empire.

A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: **a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.** She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: **an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns** and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. **She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was**

snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of **for 1,260 days**...

...When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, **he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.** The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, **where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.** Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. **Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**

(Revelation 12:1-6, 13-17 NIV)

The Woman was the faithful believing remnant of Israel in the land, primarily the Jewish Christians, who, through Mary, gave birth to the Messiah. Satan, the Dragon, and his angels, were defeated in a spiritual angelic battle, when Jesus triumphed over them through the death of the cross, and His resurrection and ascension.

The Woman subsequently had to flee into the desert where she was divinely protected from the events of the Jewish War (the 1260 days, which equals 3½ lunar years; time, times and half a time). After his defeat, Satan the Dragon sought to destroy the Woman through the Beast of Rome and the 'torrential rivers' of Rome's armies, but God provided a way of escape (an Exodus) for His people in the land, and He kept them safe for the period of the Jewish War.

The Jewish messianic remnant, along with the Gentile Christian remnant from throughout the world, was then given the kingdom of God corporately as the Christian Church. Just as Jesus had foretold, the kingdom had been taken away from Israel after the flesh (i.e. the Jews) and had been given to the new nation of the spiritual Israel of God who had accepted Jesus as Messiah and Lord under the bonds of the New Covenant - and this remnant would bear the fruit of the kingdom (see Matthew 21:43-44).

But then Satan the Dragon became enraged at the Woman because she had escaped his onslaught, so he proceeded to make war on the rest of her offspring - the rest of the Christians worldwide. This symbolised the ongoing persecution against the early Christians, particularly by the Beast of the Roman Empire for many centuries afterward, (and this then becomes the subject of Revelation 13).

A Brief Look at the Beast of Revelation 13 and 17

It would be most helpful for us at this point if we briefly consider the connection of the Beast and the Little Horn of Daniel 7 to Revelation chapters 13 and 17. In my article *The Visions of Daniel: The Great Image and The Four Beasts* (and also *Who is Secret Babylon the Great?*), I approached these chapters in Revelation more from an Historicist and Idealist perspective, nevertheless, I taught the basic, foundational truth that the first Beast of Revelation 13 was the ancient Roman Empire, and the

Great Harlot of Revelation 17-18 was Jerusalem/Judaism (which on another level could also be applied to Christendom).

Although there are definitely a number of secondary interpretations that can be applied to Revelation, and there are various levels of understanding in regard to the prophetic truths and spiritual principles which are revealed in Revelation (some of these 'levels' are considered in my articles mentioned above), nevertheless, there is evidently a primary interpretation which becomes the basis from which to view all other interpretations (see my *Introduction to Prophetic Studies* for further details on this).

Here is a brief overview of what I believe is the primary interpretation of Revelation 13 and 17, being understood in light of the prophecies of Daniel and the New Testament writings.

And **the dragon** stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw **a beast** coming out of the sea. **He had ten horns and seven heads**, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. **The beast** I saw resembled a **leopard**, but had feet like those of a **bear** and a mouth like that of a **lion**. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.

(Revelation 13:1-2 NIV)

This is describing the very same Beast kingdom, the fourth kingdom, of Daniel 7, which incorporated all the previous empires into itself - it is the ancient Roman Empire, specifically as it was in the 1st century AD. Satan, the Dragon, was the direct power behind this Empire (and all world empires) giving it the power to rule the world with great authority (under the sovereign hand of God, of course).

The 10 horns represent the 10-fold division of the Empire into provinces, which were ruled by kings/governors (the ten crowns), as we've seen above. Yet here we are introduced to the 7 heads, which are not mentioned at all in Daniel. As we shall soon see from Revelation 17, these 7 heads represent the first 7 kings or Emperors of the ancient Roman Empire. The blasphemous name on each of the heads speaks of the different attributes of the Caesars in claiming to be divine, which developed into the cult of Emperor worship.

One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

(Revelation 13:3-4 NIV)

This appears to be speaking of the near fall of Rome during the Year of the Four Emperors, following the death of Nero Caesar, in which there were a number of civil wars and utter chaos in Rome. Nero was officially the last of the Julio-Claudian line, the head that was seemingly wounded to death. Yet, by what appeared to be a miraculous turn around, the Empire was revived under Vespasian and Titus, who established the Flavian dynasty of Caesars. Verse 4 refers again to Emperor worship, and the power and might of the Pax Romana, the Roman Peace.

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies **and to exercise his authority for forty-two months**. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. **He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them**. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

He who has an ear, let him hear.

If anyone is to go into captivity,
into captivity he will go.

If anyone is to be killed with the sword,
with the sword he will be killed. **This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.**

(Revelation 13:5-10 NIV)

This continues to describe the actions of the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD, particularly in relation to the period of the Jewish War, which lasted three and a half years. This is the time period mentioned in Daniel chapters 7 and 12 as 'time, times and half a time.' Three and a half years, in accordance with the lunar/solar year of 360 days, is equal to 42 months and 1260 days. These time periods in Revelation are one and the same, and it is based on the 'time, times and half a time' of Daniel 7. Although there is obviously a symbolic element to these numbers, as there is with all the numbers in Revelation, in its primary interpretation, it has a direct, historical correlation with the events of the Jewish War, which was the judgment of Jerusalem and Judea, in accordance with the prophesied 'days of vengeance,' 'the great and terrible Day of the Lord.'

The Roman Empire, essentially under the military oversight of Vespasian, was given authority to stamp upon the precious Land of Yahweh, the God of Israel, and to destroy His Holy City and Temple, while at the same time making war with the saints of God in the land, the Jewish Christians, who were either killed, taken captive or forced to flee as refugees. The whole world worshipped the pagan Roman Empire and bowed to the divine Caesars, and the only ones who wouldn't do so were the true followers of Christ, who were often persecuted, killed or banished for their faith. This truly called for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints. They would suffer many of the same things that their Lord and Master suffered at the hands of Rome, as well as by the hands of the Jews.

Virtually all of these details are reiterating what was prophesied in Daniel 7 concerning the fourth Beast kingdom and the Little Horn, and any additional information in Revelation is to be understood as building upon this foundation. This helps to prevent us from forming outlandish theories and fantasies from our own imaginations. The Sovereign Lord has made sure that the fulfillments of these things have been recorded for us in history and within His own written Word.

The Prostitute Riding the Roman Empire

Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. **There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.** The woman was dressed in

purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY

BABYLON THE GREAT

THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES

AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

(Revelation 17:3-6 NIV)

In Revelation 17, we are introduced to the Woman who is called the Great Prostitute who was riding on the scarlet Beast. This Woman is the complete opposite of the Woman in Revelation 12 - one is the faithful Wife of Yahweh, while the other is a murderous harlot. One belongs to the true heavenly Jerusalem, while the other belongs to *Mystery* Babylon, or more accurately *Secret* Babylon.

In a previous article *Who Is Secret Babylon The Great?* I focused more generally on the intimate connection between the Beast and the Woman as an historical allegory that can also have a contemporary application. That is, Babylon represents the world system and its idolatrous religions, particularly in the form of the idolatrous Mother and Child cult of the Babylonian mystery religions, some aspects of which entered Christianity a few centuries after its birth. And this 'Babylon' could be said to include the apostate religions of Christendom and Judaism, with Rome and Jerusalem respectively as their 'holy' centres, along with Islam and other eastern religions with 'paganised' roots. I interpreted the 7 heads of the Beast as applying to the 7 world empires from throughout ancient history that are mentioned in Scripture, which have been controlled by the Woman throughout the ages.

Be that as it may, once I came to the knowledge that the vision of Revelation was evidently given to John at an earlier date of around 65 AD, it became clear that the majority of Revelation was first and foremost a prophecy of primarily 1st century events, particularly that of the Jewish War, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, in fulfilment of all prophecy concerning the judgment upon Israel, the land, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. Yet it also prophesied the apostasy of Christianity, as well as the persecution of the saints, which would only increase as the centuries rolled by, as well as revealing the ultimate victory and triumph of Christ Jesus and His Bride in this age and the one to come. After all, this vision is all about **'The Revelation (or Manifestation or Unveiling) of Jesus Christ and His kingdom!'**

The prophecies of Revelation, though, like the OT prophecies about Israel, can also be applied allegorically to the Church. For example, the Woman riding the Beast in the chapter we're considering is firstly Jerusalem and apostate Judaism, who in the 1st century, showed more allegiance to the Beast of Rome than God himself with the cry "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:12-16). Yet this figure can equally be applied to the Christian Church as well, particularly in its form of Roman Catholicism and the empire of Christendom. Yet to a greater extent it can apply to *all* false religion and idolatry.

So, let us consider what I believe to be the initial interpretation of these things in Revelation 17, which are in accord with the rest of Scripture, and can be confirmed from history. (I am indebted to the work of Kenneth Gentry for enlightening me to some of the 1st century applications of Revelation, and the strong case for an early date composition of the vision).

Simply put, this scarlet Beast is one and the same as the first Beast of Revelation 13, the imperial Roman Empire, with its 10 horns and 7 heads. And the Woman riding it, (that is, she is using the beast for her own gains) is Jerusalem and Judaism, particularly as it was in the 1st century AD.

Numerous times in the Hebrew prophets, Jerusalem and Israel are condemned as prostitutes and adulteresses, bringing down the vengeance of God upon them (e.g. Ezekiel 16 & 23). And it was Jerusalem and the Jews as God's old covenant people who were held responsible for persecuting and murdering the prophets and the apostles and all the saints of God - and ultimately the Messiah Himself. These things are clearly recorded in Scripture and history. Of course, it goes without saying that this is not an excuse for Anti-Semitism, by the way, even though Christendom has used this rhetoric against the Jewish people in horrendous ways in the past. This I repudiate! Also, this vengeance came directly from God in accord with the covenant curses, and it occurred to *that* generation who had witnessed the coming of Jesus the Messiah.

The testimony of the Jewish leaders before Pilate, when Jesus was being condemned to death, was "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Added to this was the fact that the Herodian dynasty had originally been established by Rome, and Herod served Rome and his own interests before all else while calling himself king of the Jews. There is no doubt that 1st century Judaism and its capital Jerusalem are personified in the Woman '...who is drunk with the blood of the saints.' Jesus himself had charged Jerusalem with the blood of all the prophets, and they were about to fill up the measure of the sin of their forefathers, hence the judgment would fall upon that generation (cf. Matthew 23:29-39).

When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? **I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides**, which has the seven heads and ten horns. **The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction.** The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

(Revelation 17:7-8 NIV)

John is then told that this Beast is the one that he saw earlier, which seemed to die by the sword yet lived. That is, it once was, now is not, and will come up from the Abyss (the sea), and ultimately it will be destroyed. This is the Roman Empire of the 1st century AD, that figures so prominently in the New Testament and in history.

Primarily, this Beast is symbolic of the Empire as a whole, but it can also be personified in any one of its emperors, particularly Nero, for it was Nero who truly

manifested the character of a Beast, and he was also the last of the Julio-Claudian line of Caesars, and he also received the blow of the sword, which caused his death. Amazingly, there was even a myth that developed soon after Nero's death that he would be revived again, even in another form, known as *Nero Redivivus*! And again, some give evidence that Nero's name adds up to the cryptogram of 666!⁹

The world was truly astonished when Rome was saved from the chaos of civil war after Nero's death, and revived under Vespasian and Titus, thereby establishing the new Flavian dynasty. (There were also other revivals of Rome in later centuries that can also have an application.)

"This calls for a mind with wisdom. **The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king.** He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

(Revelation 17:9-11 NIV)

This is one of the most difficult passages in Revelation that has given rise to many different kinds of interpretations, yet if it is understood that this vision was given during the reign of Nero, all becomes clear (well, almost! I am largely indebted to Kenneth Gentry for helping me to understand the 7 kings).

Firstly, John is told that wisdom is needed here because the 7 heads are representing two things.

1. They are symbolising 7 hills. Rome is the most famous seven-hilled city in the world, yet as I showed in *Who Is Secret Babylon The Great?, Constantinople*, which later became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, is also a seven-hilled city. On top of that, even Jerusalem can be said to be a seven-hilled city, so the connection here between the Woman, Mystery Babylon, and the Beast is pretty amazing!

Therefore, the identity of the Beast in Revelation couldn't be clearer - it is most definitely the Roman Empire.

2. They are also 7 kings. John was told that five had fallen, one is (the sixth), and the other (the seventh) was still to come. The seventh king would remain for only a brief while.

Many commentators and scholars, including Gentry, have shown that these are representing the initial line of Caesars from Julius Caesar to the brief reign of Galba who succeeded Nero. The numbers are also very significant here, as they are throughout Revelation, for the number 7 speaks of completion or fullness, while number 8 symbolises new beginnings.

Five had fallen:

1. Julius Caesar (49-44 BC)
2. Augustus (Octavian) (31 BC- 14 AD)

3. Tiberius (14-37 AD)

4. Caligula (37-41 AD)

5. Claudius (41-54 AD)

One is, that is, the sixth king was ruling at that time:

6. Nero (54-68 AD)

The seventh king had not yet come, but when he does, his rule would be brief.

7. Galba (c. seven months 68-69 AD)

John is then told that the corporate Beast of Rome, the one which was dying, yet lived, was an eighth king. It belonged to the seven and was going to be destroyed.

This is evidently intimating that during the brief reign of Nero's successor, the 7th king, the Roman Empire would receive the blow of the sword and would be dying, yet out of this chaos it would arise again with an 8th king, representing a new beginning. Ultimately, though, the Roman Empire would eventually be judged and destroyed.

This actually occurred with the rise of Vespasian and the new Flavian dynasty of Caesars by the end of 69 AD. During the famous Year of the Four Emperors in 69 AD, Rome was dying due to civil war and all sorts of calamities.

Here is a quote from the Roman historian Tacitus from his *Histories* (1:2-3) concerning the era after the death of Nero, which confirms this view about the virtual death of the Empire.

"I am entering on the history of a period rich in disasters, frightful in its wars, torn by civil strife, and even in peace full of horrors. Four emperors perished by the sword. There were three civil wars; there were more with foreign enemies; there were often wars that had both characters at once. There was success in the East, and disaster in the West. There were disturbances in Illyricum; Gaul wavered in its allegiance; Britain was thoroughly subdued and immediately abandoned; the tribes of the Suevi and the Sarmatae rose in concert against us; the Dacians had the glory of inflicting as well as suffering defeat; the armies of Parthia were all but set in motion by the cheat of a counterfeit Nero. Now too Italy was prostrated by disasters either entirely novel, or that recurred only after a long succession of ages; cities in Campania's richest plains were swallowed up and overwhelmed; Rome was wasted by conflagrations, its oldest temples consumed, and the Capitol itself fired by the hands of citizens.

Sacred rites were profaned; there was profligacy in the highest ranks; the sea was crowded with exiles, and its rocks polluted with bloody deeds. In the capital there were yet worse horrors. Nobility, wealth, the refusal or the acceptance of office, were grounds for accusation, and virtue ensured destruction. The rewards of the informers were no less odious than their crimes; for while some seized on consulships and priestly offices, as their share of the spoil, others on procuratorships, and posts of more confidential

authority, they robbed and ruined in every direction amid universal hatred and terror. Slaves were bribed to turn against their masters, and freedmen to betray their patrons; and those who had not an enemy were destroyed by friends.

... Besides the manifold vicissitudes of human affairs, there were prodigies in heaven and earth, the warning voices of the thunder, and other intimations of the future, auspicious or gloomy, doubtful or not to be mistaken. Never surely did more terrible calamities of the Roman People, or evidence more conclusive, prove that the Gods take no thought for our happiness, but only for our punishment."

It is true that there were two other emperors who ruled after Galba - Otho and Vitellius, but their reigns were so brief and surrounded by so much controversy and disorder, that they are virtually bypassed. Yet it was Vespasian who established a new dynasty of Caesars and brought Rome back from the brink of destruction. The issue revolves around the number 7 - and Galba was the seventh king, who remained only a little while (seven months). Then there is mention of 'an eighth' - and not 'the eighth' - highlighting a new king of a new era. As difficult as this text is, this seems to be the most probable explanation of it.

If these things are viewed in the light of the prophecy of Daniel 7, as well as the prophecies of Jesus concerning the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem, all becomes even clearer. If it is accepted, as I strongly believe, that Vespasian is the Little Horn of Daniel 7, as stated above, and that the three horns uprooted were Galba, Otho and Vitellius, and that all this occurred during the era of the Jewish/Roman War, at a time when Rome was also dying and receiving calamities, the above interpretation of the 7 kings in Revelation 17 fits perfectly - and it all makes sense biblically and historically.

"The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. **They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings**—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

(Revelation 17:12-14 NIV)

Here we are told that the 10 horns/kings mentioned earlier, the rulers or governors of the provinces, will eventually be given absolute power under the authority of the Roman Empire to make war with Jesus Christ, but Christ will overcome them for He is the true Ruler and King, and Rome will ultimately be destroyed. With Christ will be His called, chosen and faithful followers, the sons of God, His true Church, as part of the heavenly army fighting the spiritual warfare. This particularly has reference to the then soon-approaching destruction of Jerusalem and Judea, and the persecution that was also unleashed against the saints of God, the Christians, beginning with Nero.

Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. **The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.** For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast

their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled. The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

(Revelation 17:15-18 NIV)

This last section graphically describes the judgment that was brought upon Jerusalem and Judea, and the religion of Judaism, in the Jewish War of 66-70 AD. It was the Beast of Rome and its provincial generals who were used to accomplish the purpose of God during these 'days of vengeance' and 'the great tribulation,' to destroy the great murderous Harlot by fire. Jerusalem is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth as God's Holy City, yet it was destroyed under the mighty hand of God - and His earthly temple is no more. For now He rules from the New Jerusalem in a New Temple not made with hands - the Bride-city of Christ, His true Church.

Revelation 18 continues to describe the various characteristics of Secret Babylon, earthly Jerusalem, and its worldly ways, prophesying its doom. God warns His people to come out of her if they wish to be saved from her judgment, recalling the words of Jesus in His Olivet Discourse (Luke 21:20-24).

Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

**"Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her plagues;
for her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.**

Give back to her as she has given;
pay her back double for what she has done.
Mix her a double portion from her own cup.

Give her as much torture and grief
as the glory and luxury she gave herself.

In her heart she boasts,
'I sit as queen; I am not a widow,
and I will never mourn.'

**Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her:
death, mourning and famine.**

**She will be consumed by fire,
for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.**

(Revelation 18:4-8 NIV)

The chapter ends by declaring solemnly

**"In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints,
and of all who have been killed on the earth."**

(Revelation 18:24 NIV)

As mentioned earlier, this is in line with the judgment pronounced upon Jerusalem by Jesus in Matthew 23:35-36.

**And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed
on earth,** from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of

Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. **I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.**

The words of the prophets have most certainly been fulfilled, and Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah, has certainly established Himself as the Son of God and the Son of Man, the One who is now ruling from the heavens as King of all kings.

As we wrap up this study, let us briefly consider the remainder of Daniel 7 concerning the Kingdom of Heaven and the Son of Man. I plan to take a look at this subject in further detail in an upcoming article.

The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days of Daniel 7

"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.

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..."

... "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.** He 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..."

... " **'But the court will sit,** and his power (*the beast/little horn*) will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then 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.'

(Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14, 26-27 NIV)

In verses 9-10, Daniel was introduced to a heavenly courtroom scene where Yahweh, as the Ancient of Days, was seated on His Chariot-Throne of Judgment, with fire issuing from before Him. It appears as though this scene is ultimately depicting the Judgment of the Great White Throne of Revelation 20, the ultimate Judgment Day for all mankind. Yet in another sense, in accordance with the coming of the Messiah, it is declaring the judgment of God revealed in the momentous events of the 1st century AD. This is confirmed by what follows in verses 13-14.

The vision reveals the coming of a human, a son of man, the Messiah, being surrounded by the clouds of heaven, that is, the glory clouds of God, often called the Shekinah Glory. He is seen to be approaching the Father, the Ancient of Days, and is

led into God's Presence in the heavenly court. He is then granted the authority and power and glory of God to rule over *all* nations, resulting in people from *all* nations worshipping Him. This worship is not just confined to Israel, but it engulfs the whole world. Unlike those kingdoms before Him, His kingdom will never be destroyed nor will it be passed on to another. This is the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the heavens, established by the Messiah as the Son of Man. This event can be described as 'the coming of the Son of Man' - and this 'coming' is not in the direction of earth but of heaven.

Now it is very evident from the writings of the New Testament that these things were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah. He received all authority and power after His resurrection, when He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Jesus Himself, when He was before the Sanhedrin, applied Daniel 7:13 to Himself, and He often spoke of 'the coming of the Son of Man.' Here are some scriptures that testify to this.

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. **There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light...**

...While he was still speaking, **a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"**

When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, **until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.**"

(Matthew 17:1-2, 5-9 NIV)

This event of the Transfiguration of Christ highlights certain aspects of the Son of Man vision in Daniel, particularly in the description of Christ's appearance and the Glory cloud. The voice from the cloud, which was representing God the Father, alluded to at least two messianic texts - Psalm 2:7 and Deuteronomy 18:15. These things were identifying Jesus as the Son of Man.

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. **Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.**"

(Matthew 16:27-28 NIV)

The first sentence here appears to be referring to the Second Advent of Christ and the final Judgment, yet Jesus goes on to emphasise to his disciples that *some* of them would not experience death before they would see the coming of the Son of Man in his kingdom. The parallel passage in Mark 9:1 says that they would see '...the kingdom of God come with power.' Therefore, Jesus was clearly telling them that

some of them, not all of them, would witness the coming of the Son of Man and his kingdom in power and glory in their generation! That is, this 'Coming' was to occur in the 1st century AD within the lifetime of the apostles. This was a clear allusion to the vision of Daniel – and the fulfilment occurred in 70 AD when the Old Covenant officially ended.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. **"But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."**

(Matthew 26:63-64 NIV)

Again, Jesus was declaring the very same thing to the Jewish leaders of his day, that is, that they would see the fulfilment of Daniel's vision of the coming of the Son of Man – and *He* would be the one to fulfil it!

Then Jesus came to them and said, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** Therefore go and make disciples **of all nations...**

(Matthew 28:18-19 NIV)

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, **"I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."**

(Acts 7:55-56 NIV)

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead **and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.** And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

(Ephesians 1:19-23 NIV)

Finally, in Daniel 7:26-27 it is revealed that the Roman Beast kingdom will finally be destroyed as a direct result of the decision in the heavenly court. Then in connection with the demise of the Roman Empire, it is prophesied that the kingdoms of this world will be handed over to the saints of God, and all powers or rulers shall serve and obey Christ and His people.

Although the ultimate manifestation of these things can only occur at the Second Advent of Christ, and throughout the age to come, when Christ and His people will be fully manifested to all creation, nevertheless, the basic truth that was being revealed in these verses was that the Messiah, the Son of Man and the Son of God, was destined to rule the world with His people, and all nations and languages, and all powers and dominions, in heaven and on earth, will serve and obey His decree. In many respects, this has already taken place - and it continues to be so, for Christ is

Sovereign in all things and the power of His kingdom is present within His true Church. The Roman Empire and its rulers have long passed away but the kingdom of Christ remains – and it will continue to endure for the ages to come.

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord...

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, **according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus** throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen (Greek '...for all the generations of the age of the ages').

(Ephesians 3:10-11, 20-21 NIV)

Endnotes

¹ John A. T. Robinson in his notable work *Redating the New Testament* (SCM Press, 1976) makes a strong case for placing *all* of the NT writings as being originally written before 70 AD.

There have been many respected biblical scholars who held to the early date for the writing of Revelation (e.g. F. F. Bruce, Philip Schaff, Adam Clarke, F. W. Farrar, Milton S. Terry, F. J. A. Hort, Alfred Edersheim, etc). In fact, during the late 19th century it was the predominant position held by the majority of biblical scholars (see Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Before Jerusalem Fell*, (American Vision, Revised Edition, 1998) pp. 27-38).

² In my initial research during 2008, I came across only one person who had a similar view to mine in regard to Vespasian being the Little Horn (James Patrick Holding of *Tektonics.org*). He states in one of his articles that this view of the Little Horn has been proposed before, and is not necessarily new. So, of course, there are others out there who have accepted this interpretation, it's just that at the original time of writing I hadn't discovered them as yet. There are mountains of books out there written by good biblical scholars, past and present, and I've only begun to scratch the surface!

³ For example, <http://www.unrv.com/government/senatorial-provinces.php> - accessed 07/09/2008 & 23/01/2012.

⁴ See F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (1969, Doubleday-Galilee Edition 1980), pp. 378-384.

⁵ See also F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (1969, Doubleday-Galilee Edition 1980), p. 383.

⁶ See F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (1969, Doubleday-Galilee Edition 1980), p. 412. John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (SCM Press, 1976), pp. 231-233.

⁷ For example, see Dr. Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *The Beast of Revelation* (second printing 1994, Institute for Christian Economics).

⁸ In his book *The Beast of Revelation*, Gentry states that this Neronian persecution broke out in the latter part of November AD 64 (four months after the fire of Rome in July 64) and

lasted until the death of Nero in June AD 68 (p. 53). The dates of the Great Fire and of Nero's death are well documented in history, but the beginning of Nero's persecution isn't so well documented. It appears to be a matter of speculation or a good educated guess. Gentry goes on to quote the noted church historian John Laurence von Mosheim as saying that the persecution began 'about the middle of November...64.'

On the other hand, John A. T. Robinson in his book *Redating the New Testament* makes the case for an early 65 AD date for the beginning of the persecution, while acknowledging that the 64 date is almost universally held by scholars (pp. 143 -148). He makes the point though that the only piece of early historical documentary evidence for the connection of the Great Fire with Nero's persecution of Christians is in Tacitus' *Annals* (15.44), yet the actual date of the persecution is not specifically stated.

⁹ For a detailed study of these things, see Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Before Jerusalem Fell*, (American Vision, Revised Edition, 1998) and *The Beast of Revelation* (second printing 1994, Institute for Christian Economics). The figure 666 is the cryptic number given to the Beast in Revelation 13:18. I would lean towards the view of those who have shown that 666 is the gematria for **Roman** in both Hebrew and Greek. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, chapter 30, paragraph 3. Accessed 27/01/2012 - <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103530.htm>)

Having said that, I think the case for Nero is pretty strong also. In fact, there isn't any good reason as to why it couldn't refer to both – Nero personified the Roman Beast!