

• LESSON 7 (February 18) •

# Four Great Empires in Old Testament History

## BACKGROUND:

- “Now that we have gotten used to the rather straightforward plots of Daniel 1-6 we suddenly find ourselves in a strange world, a world of hybrid beasts and riders on the clouds. Furthermore, we encounter what look like timetables, but timetables that are impossible to penetrate... What are we to make of these images and dreamlike numbers?” (Longman, *Daniel*, 177-178).
- There are two significant dangers in studying Daniel 7-12.
  - The first is to be so intimidated by them that you pretend they don’t exist. **Why is this not a healthy or faithful way to handle Scripture?**
  
  - The second is to be so obsessed with making sense of every detail that you ignore the whole. **Why is this not a healthy or faithful way to handle Scripture?**
- It’s best to acknowledge these six chapters as a *part* of God’s Word (not the sum of it), and consistently remind ourselves that they can offer us hope (Rom 15:4), make us wise for salvation, teach us about righteousness, and equip us for every good work (2 Tim 3:15-17).
- To fortify our study of Daniel 7-12—one of the most enigmatic sections of the Old Testament—we’re going to spend significant time in this session talking about the four great empires in Old Testament history that almost certainly are the “great beasts” of Daniel 7.
- Despite its difficulties, what Daniel 7-12 *can* do is give us an exalted view of God, cause us to bow in worship before his throne, to glory in being a member of his eternal kingdom, and to joyfully anticipate the return of his all-conquering Christ. That’s what all Scripture should do: compel worship, realign our priorities, and fill our hearts with joyful expectation.

## FOUR GREAT EMPIRES IN OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY:

1. The Babylonian Empire – 625-539 B.C. – Daniel 7:4
  
2. The Medo-Persian Empire – 539-331 B.C. – Daniel 7:5
  
3. The Grecian Empire – 331-63 B.C. – Daniel 7:6
  
4. The Roman Empire – 63 B.C.-A.D. 476 – Daniel 7:7-8