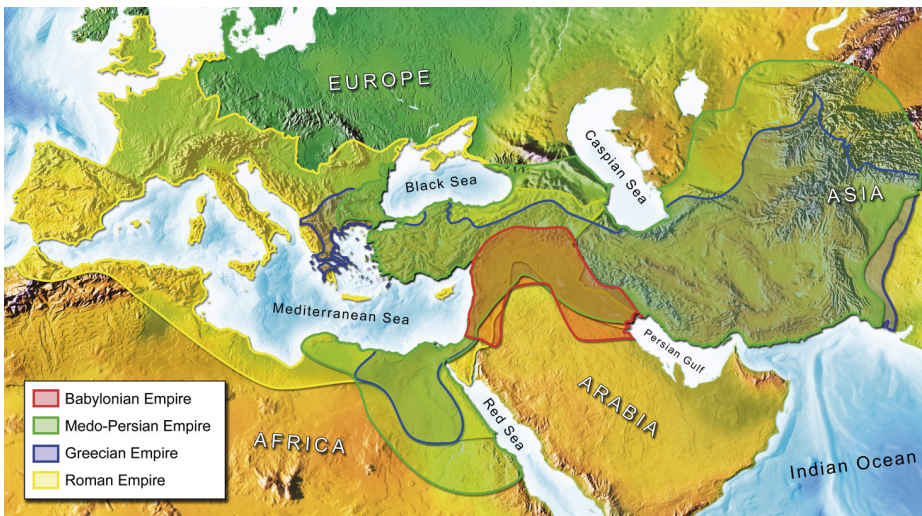




Session 15 ■ Special Interest Topic 1

The Little Horn of the Fourth Sea Beast in Daniel's Prophecies



Four great empires in Daniel Chapter 2

Daniel 2 talks about four great empires that would arise within the region of the world around the Middle East and Mediterranean. The prophecy states that after the fourth, the empire will remain divided.

As such, Daniel 2 is the first and simplest version of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. We use this as a measuring rod to make sure we are on track as we look at the others, which are for the most part the same story being unfolded.

Daniel 2 describes the empires of:

- Babylon
- Medo/Persia
- Greece
- Rome
- A divided empire.

Four beast powers in Daniel 7

In Daniel 7, we see the same four powers, this time represented by beasts from the sea, but this overview of history is taken a step further. Verses 24-25 describe a little horn on the fourth beast that:

- Destroys three other powers of the 10
- Speaks great words against God

- Tries to change the set times and laws
- Has power over God's people for three-and-a-half "times."

Rise of the medieval church

What happened over the early centuries of the Christian era is well known and acknowledged by historians and religious people of all persuasions today. Much of what took place, as recorded in the following material, was done by sincere people who meant well. Of course there were also times when some used religion as a means to their own end in controlling and exploiting others. History bears a painful testimony to the fact that those of many different persuasions who profess to follow Christ have not always followed the example of Jesus in humility, compassion and tolerance.

There are many lessons for us to learn today so that we do not fall into the same antichristian practices. It becomes very evident that the professing church lost the good news of the gospel and as a result also lost its way regarding its main purpose for existence. The prophecies of the Bible pointed to what became a union of church and state which would lead to an era of intolerance often referred to as "The Dark Ages"

History shows this was fulfilled with the rise of the medieval church, which met every specification:

- It arose out of the Roman Empire and its divisions.** Its seat was in Rome itself. As it rose to power, it overpowered other smaller powers.
- It spoke great words against God by claiming powers that belong only to God.** One such claim was the authority to be able to forgive sin; only God can forgive sin. The gospel was lost during this time as forgiveness and religious practices were bought and sold.
- It claimed to change the set times and the laws of God.** The church during this time underwent some significant changes. Sun worship crept in. Mithraism was strong in the empire, particularly among the soldiers and Emperor Constantine. Mithraism had a holiday on the day of the sun. Today we call it Sunday.
- It ruled over God's people for the three-and-a-half "times"—1260 days or 42 months.** History shows us that this power dominated God's people off and on for more than 1000 years until she gradually lost her control.

Changes to God's laws

A change took place over many centuries in the church as often well-meaning people tried to make Christianity attractive to the pagans of the early centuries.

One change was in the day of worship from the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) to Sunday, the first day of the week. There were four main influences responsible for this happening:

A desire to win pagans to Christianity.

They tried to dress up Christianity to make it appear not so different and attractive. They took many pagan concepts and gave them a Christian meaning.

For example, each spring the pagans had a festival to Ishtar the Babylonian moon goddess. When they made cakes they placed the sign of the cross on them in honour of her son Tammuz.

Pagans also celebrated a festival on December 25, dedicated to the birthday of the sun. Christians took over the date and made it the birthday of Jesus, the Son of God.

Part of what happened included the change of the Sabbath as God's day of worship from the seventh-day (Saturday) to the first day (Sunday, day of sun worship).

A desire to avoid being connected with the Jews.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, there was a desire from many Christians not to be identified with the Jews. It was well-known that the Jews kept the seventh-day as the Sabbath.

The influence of Emperor Constantine.

Although a sun worshiper at heart, he saw the advantage to the empire of converting to Christianity. This would provide a means of keeping the empire united. Constantine reached out to Mithraism on one hand and united it with Christianity. He struck coins with a picture of Christ on one side and a picture of Mithra on the other. Constantine made the first law in favour of Sunday worship for Christians.

The rise of the medieval church centred in Rome.

To cap off the other influences, we have the rise of the great medieval church centred in Rome. She threw her influence behind the changes to worship and, without any biblical authority, claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday.