

The Parallel Visions of Revelation: Part 1

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • May 1, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2022

Scripture Reader and Reading: Dominic Meyer – Revelation 1.17–19

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Anything on the Second Coming of Christ

Prelude:

I. Understanding how the Holy Spirit presents material in the Scriptures

A. can make a difference between

1. whether you are a date-setting premillennialist
2. who gets the date wrong all the time, or

B. one who speaks as the Bible speaks and

1. does not make predictions
2. that never come to pass.

II. I say this because

A. when people put biblical parallel visions end to end,

B. they miss entirely the point of the prophecy.

III. Therefore, before I show the parallel visions in the Book of Revelation,

A. I want to show you

B. that the Lord has used parallel visions and messages before.

1. Some of you have already seen this material, but

2. I want to show it again and

a) more expanded than what I have done in the past,

b) that we might fully understand how the Lord communicates to us.

Persuasion:

I. Genesis 41 shows Pharaoh having two dreams:

1 Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. 2 Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. 3 Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and

stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. 4 And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. 5 He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. 6 Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. 7 And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream.

– Genesis 41.1–7

A. If we lined up these dreams end to end

B. rather than as parallel,

1. we would get 28 years total instead of 14, and
2. we would have
 - a) 7 years of feasting,
 - b) 7 years of famine,
 - c) 7 years of feasting, and
 - d) 7 years of famine.

C. However, if you know the story,

1. you know that Joseph did not interpret the dreams as end to end, but
2. as parallel dreams totaling 14 years:

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: 26 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. 27 And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. 28 This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. 29 Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30 but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31 So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe.

– **Genesis 41.25–31**

D. Why would God give Pharaoh two dreams?

32 And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

– **Genesis 41.32**

1. God assured Pharaoh
 - a) that 7 years of feasting and
 - b) that 7 years of famine
 - (1) were truly on the way, and
 - (2) that they were about to happen.
2. After one dream,
 - a) Pharaoh could have concluded
 - b) it was just a normal dream, but
 - (1) with two that presented a similar message,
 - (2) that told him these were not typical dreams,
 - (a) which then made him urgent to find out the interpretation,
 - (b) the very thing that God wanted to do
 - i) that ultimately Joseph
 - ii) might get his family into the land of Egypt.
 - c) The same dream twice,
 - (1) could have just been attributed to Pharaoh's imagination, but
 - (2) two with different images and
 - (a) the same message,
 - (b) showed it was supernatural.

II. The Book of Daniel presents more than two parallel dreams or visions.

- A. Some were his, but
- B. at least one was not his, yet,
 - 1. a dream of the king of Babylon,
 - 2. still paralleled dreams of Daniel.
- C. The dreams in Daniel do not parallel as easily as those of Pharaoh and
 - 1. you will even notice
 - 2. that some of the dreams do not cover the same amount of history
- D. In Daniel 2,
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a statue made of four metals and clay:
 - a) Gold,
 - b) Silver
 - c) Bronze,
 - d) Iron, and
 - e) Iron mixed with clay.
 - 2. Here is Daniel's interpretation:

36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the

days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

– Daniel 2.36–45

3. Those represented:

- a) Head of Gold: Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon
- b) Chest and Belly of Silver: Medes and Persians
- c) Legs or Thighs of Bronze: Greeks
- d) Legs of Iron, and feet mixed with iron and clay: Rome

E. Daniel 4–5 has two visions, but

1. they are only of Babylon,
2. although in particular
 - a) chapter 4 is about Nebuchadnezzar and
 - b) chapter 5 is about Belshazzar.

F. Daniel 7 shows four beasts

1. again representing the same four world empires as chapter 2.
2. However, this time the vision covers details of the reign of each,
 - a) whereas, chapter 2 merely mentioned four kingdoms,
 - b) with a little detail about the fourth, but
 - (1) it was about the God of heaven setting up
 - (2) a kingdom in the days of the Roman Empire.
3. Here is what Daniel saw:

2 Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four

winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' 6 After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."

– Daniel 7.2–8

- a) The eagle-winged lion represented Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar) and
 - (1) the great heights to which it ascended, but
 - (2) it was humble to be shown nothing more than a man.
- b) The bear represented the Medes and Persians, and
 - (1) the raised side showed that the Persians were stronger, and
 - (2) it could conquer much.
- c) The four-winged leopard represented Greece,
 - (1) in particular Alexander the Great and
 - (2) the four wings and four heads symbolized his four generals.
- d) The fourth beast (Revelation pictures as a dinosaur-like dragon),
 - (1) was stronger and more dreadful,
 - (2) as it trampled everything.
 - (a) This beast was different than the previous ones.

(b) They were all different from one another, but

i) this one was even more unique.

ii) It had ten horns and then a prominent one.

(3) This represents Rome.

G. Daniel 8 shows a vision that only included the Persians and the Greeks:

3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. 5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

– Daniel 8.3–7

1. The Ram represented the Medes and the Persians,

a) shown by the two horns, but

b) one of them was higher, meaning the Persians.

(1) The Persians expanded

(2) westward, northward, and southward.

2. Then Daniel saw a male goat running full speed,

a) shown by his running, but also

b) that he did not touch the ground.

(1) It had a notable horn representing Alexander the Great, and

(2) it ran with furious power right into the ram.

3. The rest of the vision showed the male goat
 - a) falling when it was strong,
 - b) referring to Alexander's early death, and
 - (1) the kingdom divided into four parts,
 - (2) each according to one of the generals.
4. One of the four horns grew strong and
 - a) headed for the Glorious land,
 - b) the Land of Israel.

H. Then there is chapter 11,

1. which shows how two of the generals and
2. the empires that descended from them
 - a) fought one another and
 - b) how the Jews got caught in the middle of it, and
 - (1) that hard times were coming,
 - (2) which broke Daniel's heart.

III. Not all the visions in Daniel

A. have the same information and

B. the Lord used different images to symbolize the same things.

1. With each vision he gave Daniel more details.
2. Why did God use different symbols?
 - a) He wanted to convey something different each time, and
 - b) that is what he does in the Book of Revelation.
 - (1) For example, consider the images he used to picture the church:
 - (a) Church: Called out from the world
 - (b) Body: Connection to Christ who controls us as the head does
 - (c) Kingdom: Its government

(d) Bride: The depth of our commitment to him

(2) He does the same thing

(a) with the nations in the Old Testament,

(b) especially the Book of Daniel

i) as he shows the world

ii) as it led up to the establishing of the kingdom of God.

C. Revelation does the same thing with multiple visions about the same things.

1. He uses different images to give us different pictures of the subject.

2. We cannot see the visions as end-to-end,

a) which is what almost everyone does,

b) leading to wild speculations about news events.

IV. Think about the Gospel Accounts of Christ.

A. They are parallel, but

1. not in a strict sense.

2. They all show Jesus at some point in the beginning, and

a) they all take the reader through his ministry,

b) ending with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

B. They all start at a different point in time:

1. Matthew: Genealogy and the events previous to his birth

2. Mark: The ministry of John the Baptist

3. Luke: Events prior to the birth of John the Baptist

4. John: The beginning of creation

C. Then they cover similar material, or

1. at least the synoptics do,

2. meaning the first three are similar,

a) whereas, John is quite different from the first three.

b) Nevertheless, he takes to the resurrection appearances.

D. Again, the Book of Revelation with its different visions does the same.

V. The parallels do not have to be perfect in every detail, and

A. in truth they will not match on every detail, but

B. new details might be added.

VI. What I think we see in the visions of Revelation is a progression.

A. They start somewhere around the beginning of the church, but then

B. each vision carries it further into the future,

1. especially as it relates to the end and the Second Coming and

2. what is coming after those things.

VII. This was an introduction.

A. Next week we will begin looking at the visions and

B. I will show you how they parallel.