Will Israel Lose Its Sovereignty Before the Antichrist Rises?

The Ten Kings, the Seventh Head, and the Recognition of the Antichrist

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Abstract

I expect Israel to lose its sovereignty before the Antichrist rises. This paper brings together three earlier studies that I wrote in preparation for it. The first argues from Daniel 7:24 that the ten kings are governing before the little horn comes to power. The second argues that the heads of the beast in Revelation 17 are kingdoms that held sovereignty over Israel, so that the seventh must hold it as well. The third argues that Ezekiel 36–37 describes Israel under the Davidic king and gives no assurance that the state founded in 1948 will remain independent until he comes. Revelation 17:10–11 distinguishes the seventh head from the eighth. I identify the seventh with the government of the ten and the eighth with the same kingdom under the Antichrist. The seventh must therefore hold sovereignty over Israel while the ten still rule by their own authority. Christians could live under that government for decades. If they take it for the Antichrist's kingdom, they may welcome the man who defeats three of its kings, restores Israel's sacrifices, and appears to free Israel from foreign rule.

Keywords: Israel; sovereignty; Antichrist; ten kings; seventh head; Daniel 7; Revelation 17; Ezekiel 37; premillennialism

1. Introduction

I expect Israel to lose its sovereignty before the Antichrist rises. A government of ten kings will hold the final say over Israel's affairs, and the Antichrist will come to power afterward as the enemy of some of those kings.

I wrote three earlier papers in preparation for this one. "World Government Before the Antichrist" argues from Daniel 7:24 that the ten kings are already governing when the little horn rises. "The Seven Heads of the Beast and Israel's Sovereignty" argues that the six historical heads in Revelation 17 are counted because each held sovereignty over Israel, and that the seventh must hold it as well. "Did Israel Fulfill Ezekiel's Dry Bones Prophecy in 1948?" argues that Ezekiel 36–37 describes Israel under the Davidic king and gives no assurance that the state founded in 1948 will keep its independence until he comes.[1]

Each paper gives the detailed case for its own claim. Here I summarize the three and explain what follows when they are read together.

1 Chris White, "World Government Before the Antichrist: The Ten Kings and the Little Horn in Daniel 7," working paper, 2026, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24594492; "The Seven Heads of the Beast and Israel's Sovereignty: Why These Kingdoms Appear in Revelation 17," working paper, 2026, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24594511; and "Did Israel Fulfill Ezekiel's Dry Bones Prophecy in 1948? Ezekiel 36–37 and the Regathering of Israel," working paper, 2026, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24594500.

My chief reason for writing is the risk that Christians will fail to recognize the Antichrist. Daniel gives no length for the rule of the ten before he rises. Churches could live under that government for decades, and some believers for most of their lives. If it persecutes them and governs Israel, they will pray for its fall, and many will conclude that it is the Antichrist's own kingdom.

The man Daniel describes then rises and defeats three of its kings. On my reading of Daniel 9:27 and 11:40–45, he also restores Israel's sacrifices and defeats Israel's enemies in the region. Christians who expected the Antichrist to build the world government will see a man at war with it. Christians who love Israel will see its foreign rulers defeated. Both groups would have strong reasons to welcome him. Daniel's order of events identifies him.

2. The three arguments in brief

2.1 The ten kings come before the Antichrist

Daniel sees a fourth beast with ten horns, and then another horn comes up among them (Dan. 7:7–8). The interpreting angel explains the horns.

> And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. (Dan. 7:24)[2]

I understand the later king to be the Antichrist. The words "after them" stand in the clause about his rise. They date his coming to power in relation to the coming to power of the ten. His defeat of three is a separate and later act, and it assumes that the ten are still ruling when he attacks.

Many premillennial teachers expect the Antichrist to assemble the ten himself. On the angel's order of events, the ten form their government first. He rises afterward, makes war on three of them, and takes control of a government that others built.

Daniel gives no length for the rule of the ten before he rises. They could govern for a few months or for decades.

The strongest objection comes from Revelation 17:12, where the ten kings "receive power as kings one hour with the beast." In the first paper I argue that this hour is the period of their shared rule after the midpoint of Daniel's seventieth week, when they give the beast "their power and strength" (Rev. 17:13). They have power to give because they held it before he came.[3]

2 Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

3 White, "World Government Before the Antichrist," sections on the order of accession in Daniel 7:24 and the transfer of authority in Revelation 17. For early Christian support, see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.30.2, and Hippolytus, *On Christ and Antichrist* §§25–28.

2.2 The heads of the beast held sovereignty over Israel

The angel tells John that the seven heads of the beast are seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and one has yet to come (Rev. 17:9–10). A familiar premillennial reading identifies the first six as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.[4]

In the third paper I ask why these six are the ones counted. My answer is that each held sovereignty over Israel or Judah in its own land. By sovereignty I mean the final authority to make and enforce decisions of government. Judah often kept its own rulers, laws, and worship under these empires. The foreign king held the final say.

Two examples show what this meant. When the people of Judah made Jehoahaz king, Pharaoh Necho removed him, installed his brother, and imposed tribute (2 Kings 23:30–35). Judah still had a king, and Egypt decided who he was.

Persia is the more instructive case because the Jews had good reason to welcome its rule. Cyrus sent them home and authorized the temple. Darius paid for the work. Yet the Judeans who lived under Persian rule described their position in a prayer.

> Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. (Neh. 9:36–37)

A kind ruler was still their sovereign. This is why Persia belongs in the list beside empires that treated the Jews far worse.

John counts the future kingdom as the seventh member of the same series. If sovereignty over Israel is what the six have in common, the seventh must hold it as well. John gives no rule for the selection of the heads, so this is an inference from the list. I argue in the third paper that it explains the list better than any alternative, including the presence of Persia.[5]

2.3 Ezekiel's promise and 1948

Many Christians believe that the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 fulfilled the first part of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. On that reading the bones covered with flesh are the Jewish people restored as a nation, and the breath that enters them later is Israel's future conversion. Christians who hold this view usually expect Israel to remain independent until Christ returns, since God has begun the restoration and will finish it.

In the second paper I argue that Ezekiel describes more than a return to the land. God cleanses the people he gathers and puts his Spirit within them (Ezek. 36:25–27). Judah and Joseph become one nation under one king (37:22). That king is David's heir (37:24). The people

4 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Moody Press, 1966), on Revelation 17:8–11, quoting Joseph A. Seiss. Mark L. Hitchcock, "A Critique of the Preterist View of Revelation 17:9–11 and Nero," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164, no. 656 (2007): 480–84.

5 White, "The Seven Heads of the Beast and Israel's Sovereignty," sections on the six kingdoms and on why sovereignty accounts for the choice.

and their children live in the land in lasting peace, and God sets his sanctuary among them forever (37:25–28).

Israel gained its independence in 1948. None of these promises was fulfilled that year. Interpreters who see 1948 in the vision therefore divide the restoration into stages and assign the modern state to the first. I grant that Ezekiel saw the bodies formed before they received breath. Ezekiel gives no reason to identify the bodies awaiting breath with the founding of a state.[6]

The consequence for this paper is that Ezekiel's promise of permanence belongs to Israel under the Davidic king. The state founded in 1948 has no promise in these chapters that its independence will last until he comes. A loss of sovereignty would interrupt what began in 1948. Ezekiel's promise would stand as it did before, awaiting the king.

3. Why the loss of sovereignty comes before the Antichrist

The first paper establishes that the ten govern before the Antichrist rises. The third establishes that the seventh head holds sovereignty over Israel. The prediction follows once the seventh head is identified.

John's angel continues after counting the seven.

> And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (Rev. 17:10–11)

The seven heads account for seven kingdoms. The angel then speaks of an eighth, and says that the eighth is "of the seven."

I understand the last kingdom to pass through two periods. In the first, the ten kings rule by their own authority. This is the seventh head. In the second, the Antichrist rules, and the ten govern under him. The angel says that the ten "give their kingdom unto the beast" (Rev. 17:17). The kingdom is the same one, with the same ten kings, and for that reason the eighth is "of the seven." The ruler has changed, and for that reason it is counted as an eighth.[7]

A kingdom is counted as a head because it holds sovereignty over Israel. The seventh is counted separately from the eighth. The seventh must therefore hold sovereignty over Israel during its own period, while the ten rule by their own authority. Anything the Antichrist wins after he takes their kingdom belongs to the eighth.

The ten rule by their own authority only until he subdues three of them and the others give him their kingdom. Israel must come under the ten before that happens.

That conclusion rests on Daniel 7 and Revelation 17. I also place the loss of sovereignty before the Antichrist rises, and for this I rely on my readings of Daniel 9:27 and Daniel 11:40–45, which I defend in *A Bible Prophecy Timeline*.[8]

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6 White, "Did Israel Fulfill Ezekiel's Dry Bones Prophecy in 1948?"

7 White, *A Bible Prophecy Timeline* (CWM Publishing, 2026), chap. 1, "Two Phases of the Same Empire."

Daniel 9:27 describes an early act of his reign.

> And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. (Dan. 9:27)

Sacrifice ceases in the middle of the week, so it has been offered during the first half. I take the covenant to be the act that restores Israel's sacrifices in Jerusalem.[9]

In Israel's history under the six heads, the sovereign decided what worship was permitted in Jerusalem. Cyrus authorized the temple, and Darius ordered its sacrifices paid for from the royal revenue (Ezra 1:1–4; 6:6–12). Antiochus forbade sacrifice by decree (1 Macc. 1:41–50). When the Antichrist restores the sacrifices, he makes a decision that belongs to whoever governs Israel. I believe this act provokes his war with the ten. It would provoke them if Israel were theirs to govern.

Daniel 11:40–45 describes that war. The king of the south and the king of the north attack him, and in the course of the fighting he enters "the glorious land" (11:41). I connect this campaign with the subduing of the three kings.[10] Israel lies inside the territory over which he and the kings of the existing government are fighting.

From his first recorded acts, then, the Antichrist is the rival of rulers among the ten. Nothing he gains in those years is gained for them. The ten can acquire sovereignty over Israel only by their own action, and they must have done so before he begins to act in Israel.

The order of events is therefore as follows. The ten come to power. Israel comes under their authority. The Antichrist rises, restores the sacrifices, and makes war on three of the ten. The ten give him their kingdom, and the seventh head becomes the eighth.

4. Could the Antichrist bring Israel under the kingdom himself?

Most premillennial interpreters already expect the final kingdom to rule Israel. Kelly Sensenig states the inference from the six heads directly.

> Six previous kingdoms have controlled Israel and a final seventh kingdom will yet control Israel.[11]

Sensenig identifies the seventh with a revived Roman Empire under the Antichrist. On that view the Antichrist himself brings Israel under the kingdom's control. I agree that the Antichrist will rule Israel. He seats himself in the temple (2 Thess. 2:4), and the holy city is trodden under foot for forty-two months (Rev. 11:2). My claim is that Israel is already subject to the kingdom when he takes it over.

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8 The ten could in principle take control of Israel after the Antichrist has come to power elsewhere and before he acts in Israel. On my chronology the covenant of Daniel 9:27 is an early act of his reign, and I regard that interval as too short to affect the expectation.

9 White, *A Bible Prophecy Timeline*, chap. 2, "The Covenant and the Sacrifices."

10 White, *A Bible Prophecy Timeline*, chap. 3, "The Three Subdued Kings of Daniel 7." Daniel 7 leaves the three kings unnamed.

11 Kelly Sensenig, "Heads, Hills, Horns, and Harlots (Revelation 17:9–14)," 13.

Suppose that he conquers Israel after he rules the ten. Israel would then come under the eighth. The seventh would be the only head of the seven that never held sovereignty over Israel, and the feature that explains the first six would fail to explain the one head John places in the future.

Suppose instead that he subdues Israel on behalf of the ten in the first half of the week, before he rules them. Daniel shows him in those years at war with three of the ten. Daniel 9:27 shows him as the one who gives Israel its sacrifices. He acts in Israel as a benefactor and as the enemy of its rulers.

The remaining possibility is that he founded the government of the ten and brought Israel into it from the start. Daniel 7:24 excludes this, since he rises after them.

Some readers take Daniel 9:27 to describe a treaty between the Antichrist and an independent State of Israel. The verse speaks of a covenant "with many" and names no government as a party to it. A people under foreign rule can receive such a grant. The Judeans who received the decree of Cyrus had no king and no independence, and the decree restored their worship (Ezra 1:1–4).

The succession of the six heads supports the same conclusion. Each head held Israel by its own power. Persia acquired Judah by conquering Babylon, and Greece acquired it by conquering Persia. Rome ended a period of Jewish independence when Pompey took Jerusalem in 63 BC.[12] No head received Israel as a gift from its successor.

On my reading the Antichrist takes Israel from the ten as Persia took Judah from Babylon. The Jews welcomed Cyrus, and they had reason to. They were still servants in their own land.

5. The danger of welcoming the Antichrist

Persecuted Christians have often identified their persecutor as the Antichrist. Protestants in the sixteenth century identified the papacy. Russians identified Napoleon after the invasion of 1812.[13] These identifications were made where the persecution or the invasion was felt, and they faded when the regime fell.

A government of the ten would change this. Churches in many countries would suffer under the same rulers at the same time, and they would reach the same conclusion together.

They would have reasons for it. The government would have ten rulers. It would persecute Christians. It might control who can buy and sell. Christians would be right to see it as part of the final kingdom. Their error would concern who governs it.

The events that Scripture connects with the Antichrist himself would all be missing. No covenant would have restored the sacrifices. No man would have sat in the temple and claimed to be God. No false prophet would have made an image of the beast or required a mark as a sign of worship (Rev. 13:12–17).

12 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.73–77, trans. Ralph Marcus, especially 14.77.

13 White, *A Bible Prophecy Timeline*, chap. 1, "A Global Enemy for the First Time in History," with the sources cited there.

Daniel gives no length for this period. Suppose that it lasts for decades. Christians would pray year after year for the fall of the government. Children would grow up in churches that taught them it was the kingdom of the Antichrist. The longer the ten ruled, the more settled that teaching would become.

Israel's condition would add to the expectation. Many Christians believe that God restored Israel in 1948 and that its independence will last until Christ returns. Under the ten they would see that independence end. Many of them would pray for God to restore Israel, and they would expect him to do it.

Their reading of prophecy would also tell them what the restoration should look like. Israel would be freed from foreign rule. Its worship would be restored. Its enemies would be defeated.

The Antichrist then rises and does these things. He makes war on three of the ten and defeats them. He restores the sacrifices in Jerusalem. He conquers Egypt, and the Libyans and Ethiopians follow him (Dan. 11:42–43). Isaiah had said that in the day of the Messiah the adversaries of Judah would be cut off and the LORD would destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea (Isa. 11:13–15).[14]

The relief may be real. Christians who have suffered under the three kings may suffer less when those kings fall. Jewish worship that was forbidden may be permitted. The relief under Cyrus was real as well, and Persia was still a head of the beast.

Christians who know the usual warnings are exposed to this danger along with everyone else. Most students of prophecy know that they must refuse the mark, that they must refuse to worship the image, and that a man will sit in the temple and claim to be God. Every one of these warnings concerns the second half of the week (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:5, 14–17).

The welcome is given in the first half. At that time the Antichrist has made no claim to be God and has required no mark. A Christian who is waiting for those signs will see none of them in him.

Those who know the warnings best will also have applied them already. They will have looked for the mark in the controls of the ten and for the Antichrist among the ten rulers. A man who fights the ten will appear to be the opposite of everything they were taught to fear.

Irenaeus saw a similar danger in the second century. Christians were trying to work out the Antichrist's name from the number, and Irenaeus warned that a man who settled on the wrong name would be easily led away by the one who actually came. He advised his readers to wait until the kingdom was divided among the ten and then, "when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order," to look for the man who comes claiming the kingdom.[15]

14 White, *A Bible Prophecy Timeline*, chap. 3, "Isaiah 11 and the Geography of the Messianic Age."

15 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.30.1–2, trans. Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1885).

Hippolytus expected the same man to win a following by promising to restore Israel's country and kingdom.[16]

A welcome given in the first half has consequences in the second. Pastors who have told their churches that God sent this man will have taught them to trust him. Christians who have thanked God for him will meet his claim to be God after years of gratitude toward him. Jesus warned of that kind of pressure.

> Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matt. 24:23–24)

Daniel gives Christians the means to test him during the first half. He rises after the ten are in power. He subdues three of them. He is connected with a covenant under which sacrifices are offered in Jerusalem.

Daniel adds a detail that distinguishes him from the Messiah. Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon "escape out of his hand" (Dan. 11:41). Isaiah says of the Messiah's people that they will lay their hand on Edom and Moab and that the children of Ammon will obey them (Isa. 11:14). The Antichrist fails where the Messiah succeeds.[17]

A Christian who is still uncertain at the midpoint has the sign Jesus gave.

> When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains. (Matt. 24:15–16)

6. What I expect and what would count against it

The sequence I expect is as follows. A government of ten kings comes to power. Israel comes under its authority and may keep its own institutions while the ten hold the final say. Daniel gives no length for this period, and it could last for decades.

Another king then rises. He confirms the covenant of Daniel 9:27, and sacrifices resume in Jerusalem. He defeats three of the ten, and the other seven submit. At the midpoint of the week he claims to be God, and the ten give him their kingdom.

Events could show this expectation to be wrong. If a ruler confirms such a covenant and subdues three kings of a ten-king government while Israel is still independent, my reading of the seventh head is mistaken. If one man assembles the ten and rules them from the start, my reading of Daniel 7:24 is mistaken.

The argument could also fail on exegetical grounds. It fails if "after them" in Daniel 7:24 leaves the order of accession open. It fails if some other feature explains better why these six

16 Hippolytus, *On Christ and Antichrist* §54, trans. J. H. MacMahon, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1886).

17 White, *A Bible Prophecy Timeline*, chap. 3, "A Surprising Way the Antichrist Will Be Exposed."

empires are the heads in Revelation 17. It fails if the seventh head and the eighth are one period of rule under one man.

If the sequence holds, Christians will see Israel's foreign rulers defeated by a man who restores its worship. Daniel identifies the man who does these things as the little horn. Christians should test him against Daniel's description before they welcome him.

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