

Daniel 4:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

Analysis

Daniel identifies the dream's source and interpretation: 'This is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king.' The Aramaic גְּזֵרַת עֲלֵיָּהּ (gezerat illaya, decree of the Most High) emphasizes divine sovereignty—this isn't fate, natural consequence, or human judgment, but God's authoritative decision. The title 'Most High' (עֲלֵי/illay) appears repeatedly in Daniel 4, stressing God's supreme authority over all earthly powers. Daniel's phrase 'come upon my lord the king' indicates inevitability: the decree is issued; judgment will execute. Yet the passive construction ('is come upon') rather than active ('God will send upon') shows Daniel's tact in announcing difficult truth. This verse establishes that what follows isn't Daniel's opinion or astrological prediction but divine revelation—the God who revealed the dream now reveals its meaning and guarantees its fulfillment.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings claimed divine authority—Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions invoke Marduk's favor, presenting his reign as divinely ordained. Daniel doesn't dispute the principle of divine ordination but identifies the true source: not Marduk but the Most High God, Yahweh. This confronts Babylonian theology with monotheistic reality: one sovereign God rules all nations, deposing and establishing kings according to His purposes. For Jewish exiles, this message was crucial: despite appearances suggesting Babylonian gods' superiority (Babylon conquered Judah, destroyed the Temple), Yahweh remained sovereign, even over

the conqueror. The decree coming 'upon the king' demonstrates that no earthly power escapes divine jurisdiction.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does identifying God as 'Most High' challenge human pretensions to ultimate authority?
2. What is the difference between natural consequences of actions and divine decrees of judgment?
3. Why does Daniel emphasize this is God's decree rather than his personal opinion or astrological prediction?

Interlinear Text

הַ דָּן הַ	פֶּשֶׁר אֵל	מֶלֶךְ אֵל:	וְגִזַּר תֵּ	עֲלִיָּא	הַ יֵּא
This	is the interpretation	O king	is the decree	of the most High	and this
H1836	H6591	H4430	H1510	H5943	H1932
יֵּ	מֵטָ תֵּ	עַל	מֶלֶךְ אֵל:		
which is come	upon	my lord	O king		
H1768	H4291	H5922	H4756	H4430	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 107:40 (Parallel theme): He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

