

Daniel 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

Analysis

Chapter 7 shifts from historical narrative to apocalyptic vision: 'In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.' The chronology returns to earlier period (Belshazzar's first year, circa 553 BC), before chapter 5's events. The phrase 'visions of his head upon his bed' indicates divinely sent revelation during sleep. 'Wrote the dream' shows prophetic responsibility to preserve revelation for future generations. This chapter provides heavenly perspective on earthly kingdoms, complementing chapter 2's vision from pagan king's viewpoint.

Historical Context

Belshazzar ruled as co-regent with his father Nabonidus from approximately 553 BC. Daniel's vision came during relatively peaceful period before Babylon's fall. The apocalyptic genre—symbolic visions requiring interpretation—became prominent in this period and influenced later biblical literature (Ezekiel, Zechariah, Revelation). The vision's preservation in writing ensured transmission to later generations. Ancient Near Eastern culture valued dreams as divine communication but typically sought interpretation through divination; biblical prophecy emphasized divine initiative in sending and interpreting visions.

Jeremiah 23:28 (Parallel theme): The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

Amos 3:7 (Parallel theme): Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Daniel 1:17 (Parallel theme): As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel 5:1 (Kingdom): Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Revelation 1:19 (Parallel theme): Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Genesis 46:2 (Parallel theme): And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

Habakkuk 2:2 (Parallel theme): And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Numbers 12:6 (Parallel theme): And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.