

Daniel 8:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

Analysis

Gabriel's approach causes Daniel to become terrified ("I was afraid, and fell upon my face"), illustrating the overwhelming power of angelic glory. Though angels are created beings, their holiness and power inspire fear. The verb "I fell" (Hebrew: va'eppal, וְאָפַל) suggests involuntary collapse—Daniel couldn't remain standing in Gabriel's presence. This response appears throughout Scripture when humans encounter holy beings (Ezekiel 1:28, Matthew 17:6, Revelation 1:17).

Gabriel's words "Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end shall be the vision" contain crucial eschatological significance. "Son of man" (Hebrew: ben-adam, בֶן-אָדָם) emphasizes Daniel's humanity—mortal, limited, needing divine aid. The phrase "time of the end" (Hebrew: et-qets, עֵת-קֶץ) can mean "appointed end" or "latter time," referring to the fulfillment period, not necessarily earth's final end. For Antiochus, the "end" was his judgment; for ultimate fulfillment, it's Christ's return.

This dual-fulfillment pattern appears frequently in prophecy. Antiochus fulfilled the vision historically, yet he typifies the future Antichrist. Similarly, Christ fulfills it ultimately—His first coming defeated Satan's earthly representatives, His return will complete the victory. The "time of the end" has inaugurated fulfillment (Hebrews 1:2) but awaits consummation. We live between "already" and "not yet," as did Daniel who saw distant events without knowing their timing.

Historical Context

The phrase "time of the end" appears seven times in Daniel (8:17, 19; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9, 13), always referring to the period when God's purposes reach appointed fulfillment. For Daniel's immediate audience, this included the Maccabean period when temple worship was restored. For Christian interpretation, it includes Christ's first advent establishing His kingdom and awaits His second advent completing it. This interpretive flexibility doesn't indicate error but demonstrates prophecy's layered fulfillment—near and far, typical and ultimate, historical and eschatological.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Daniel's overwhelming fear in Gabriel's presence teach us about proper reverence before God's messengers—and infinitely more before God Himself?
2. How does the phrase 'son of man' emphasizing Daniel's humanity encourage us that God reveals His purposes to ordinary humans dependent on His grace?
3. In what ways does dual-fulfillment prophecy (historical in Antiochus, ultimate in Antichrist) demonstrate Scripture's depth and God's sovereignty over all history?

Interlinear Text

עַל תִּאָפֶל הַנְּבָע תִּי וְבָא וְעַמְּדֵי אֲצַל וְבָא וְ

So he came near where I stood So he came I was afraid and fell H5921

H935 H681 H5977 H935 H1204 H5307

כִּי אַצְּמָמָה בְּנִי אָמַר אֶלְיָהוּ בְּבָבָרְגָּדְנִי

upon my face but he said unto me Understand O son of man H3588

H6440 H559 H413 H995 H1121 H120

לְעֵת כִּי תִּשְׁאַל

for at the time of the end shall be the vision

H6256 H7093 H2377

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 8:19 (Parallel theme): And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

Daniel 12:4 (Parallel theme): But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Revelation 1:17 (Parallel theme): And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Habakkuk 2:3 (Parallel theme): For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Daniel 12:13 (Parallel theme): But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Daniel 11:40 (Parallel theme): And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

Revelation 22:8 (Parallel theme): And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

Daniel 9:27 (Parallel theme): 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, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

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