

Daniel's Visions of Future Kingdoms

God gives Daniel prophetic visions of beasts representing kingdoms, the Ancient of Days, and the Son of Man receiving an everlasting kingdom. These visions reveal God's sovereignty over history and His ultimate triumph.

Daniel 7:1-28 • Daniel 8:1-27 • Daniel 9:1-27 • Daniel 10:1-12:13

CHARACTERS: Daniel, Gabriel, Michael the Archangel, The Ancient of Days, The Son of Man

THEMES: Prophecy, God's sovereignty over history, The Messiah, End times, Prayer and fasting

IN THE LATER years of his life, God gave Daniel profound visions that pulled back the curtain on spiritual warfare and the sweep of human history leading to God's eternal kingdom.

In the first year of Belshazzar, Daniel had a dream of four great beasts coming up from the sea—a lion with eagle's wings, a bear raised up on one side, a leopard with four wings and four heads, and a terrifying fourth beast with iron teeth and ten horns. These represented successive kingdoms that would rule the earth.

But then Daniel's vision shifted to heaven: 'Thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. Thousands upon thousands attended Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.'

The fourth beast was slain, and then Daniel saw 'one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.'

This Son of Man—Jesus would later use this title for Himself—would receive an eternal kingdom, in fulfillment of the rock that shattered the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

In another vision, Daniel saw a ram and a goat representing the Medo-Persian and Greek empires. The angel Gabriel appeared to interpret: 'The vision concerns the time of the end.' Gabriel explained the rise of Alexander the Great and the division of his kingdom—prophecies fulfilled with stunning precision in history.

Daniel's greatest revelation came through prayer. While studying Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of captivity, Daniel confessed the sins of his people and pleaded for Jerusalem's restoration. Gabriel came to him: 'Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city—to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.'

This prophecy of seventy 'weeks' (or sevens) of years pointed precisely to the coming of the Messiah, His cutting off, and the final consummation of all things.

In Daniel's final vision, he saw a man dressed in linen—likely a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ—whose appearance was glorious and terrifying. Daniel fell into a deep sleep, but the figure touched him and gave him strength. He revealed the spiritual warfare between the angelic princes of nations, with Michael the archangel fighting for Israel.

The vision concluded with prophecies of persecution, tribulation, and ultimate deliverance: 'At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be

delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.'

Daniel was told to seal up the vision, for it concerned the distant future. He was promised, 'You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.'

Daniel's visions revealed that history is not random—it is the stage for the unfolding of God's eternal purposes, culminating in the triumph of the Son of Man and the resurrection of the righteous.

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