

Daniel Saw It All

Daniel 7:1-14 (NIV)

⁷ In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

² Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. ³ Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

⁴ “The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.

⁵ “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat your fill of flesh!’

⁶ “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back, it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

⁷ “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

⁸ “While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

⁹ “As I looked,

“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.

¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.

Thousands upon thousands attended him;

ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court was seated, and the books were opened.

¹¹ “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. ¹² (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all nations and peoples 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.

Daniel Saw It All: Daniel 7:1-14 (NIV)

A. Overview of Daniel's Prophecies:

1. Daniel is often called the Old Testament's "Book of Revelation" because of its prophetic visions.
2. Prophets like Daniel are seen as God's mouthpieces, tasked with delivering His Word accurately without alteration.
3. Daniel's book is divided into two parts: chapters 1-6, which detail his life and times, and chapters 7-12, which describe his visions.
4. The vision in Daniel 7 is the first of four, providing a comprehensive overview, with the others offering more detailed insights.
5. These visions, including the one in Daniel 7, reveal that the Messiah will establish a spiritual kingdom, eventually overshadowing all earthly kingdoms.
6. History should be interpreted in the light of God's Eternal Kingdom.

B. Daniel's Dream and Its Interpretation:

1. Daniel's dream relates to Nebuchadnezzar's earlier dreams, but while Nebuchadnezzar's dreams view empires from a human perspective, Daniel's view them from God's perspective, highlighting their moral characteristics.
2. The dream predicts that all these empires, cruel and evil, would eventually be conquered by God's eternal kingdom.

C. The Four Empires (vv. 1-7):

1. Daniel's dream features four beasts representing four successive world empires:
 - The **Babylonian Empire** (a lion with eagle's wings) symbolizes majesty, swift conquests, and Nebuchadnezzar's reign.
 - The **Medo-Persian Empire** (a bear) is depicted as powerful but less majestic, raised on one side to signify the dominance of the Persians over the Medes, and known for its cruelty and bloodthirstiness.
 - The **Grecian Empire** (a leopard with four wings and four heads) represents the swiftness and cleverness of Alexander the Great's conquests, which divided into four parts after his death.
 - The **Roman Empire** (fearsome beast with ten horns) is considered the fourth beast, symbolizing both Rome and a future evil empire during the end times.

D. The End Times (vv. 7-8):

1. The ten horns of the fourth beast correspond to ten future kings who will rise before God's eternal kingdom is established.
2. The "little horn" is interpreted as a future antichrist figure, a powerful and eloquent leader who will oppose and persecute God's people.

E. The Eternal Kingdom (vv. 9-14):

1. Despite fear surrounding the end times, the prophecy assures that all earthly kingdoms will be overthrown, and Christ, referred to as the Ancient of Days, will establish an eternal kingdom.
2. This kingdom will be given to the saints and will last forever.

F. Conclusion:

1. These visions provide a preview of the final conflict between good & evil.
2. The ultimate message is one of comfort: though evil will rise, it will not prevail.
3. Christ will return in glory and victory, and the faithful are called to be on the Lord's side.