

November 8, 2020

Daniel's Vision of Four Kingdoms and the Kingdom of God

A Pivotal Chapter

Daniel 1 – 6: Stories of God working for His people amid the pagans

Daniel 7 – 12: Visions given to Daniel as God's direct revelation for His holy people.

- A very close, personal look at the coming Messiah
- God governs human history for their sake
- The Son of Man's kingdom will be given to them
- God will preserve them to the End of Time

Read Daniel 7:1-8

- v. 1 "first year of Belshazzar" – 550 B.C. – the year Darius (Cyrus) would conquer Media
- v.1-2 These are the first direct reference to the authorship of the entire book
"four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea" – a symbol for the whole earth in turmoil
- v. 4 1st Beast – "like a lion and had eagles' wings" – represents Babylon
- v. 5 2nd Beast – "like a bear...three ribs" – Media-Persia, not just Media for that throws off the scheme
"raised up on one side"- the Aramaic implies the bear was higher/larger on one side, Persia > Media
"three ribs"- not specific kings/kingdoms but likely showing a firm but limited power
"it was told..." by whom?
- v. 6 3rd Beast – "like a leopard" – it is one beast, the Greek Kingdom
four wings and four heads – probably corresponding to the four winds (v. 2)
"dominion was given to it" – by whom?
- v. 7 4th Beast – The Roman Empire
"great iron teeth" – reminding us of the iron shins and iron/clay feet of Daniel 2
"different from all the beasts" – in its effect, almost a chaotic smashing of everything
"it had ten horns" – an unnatural number, exceedingly powerful
- v. 8 "a little one...speaking great things"- his size and ability to fulfill his boasting is miniscule
"three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots"- the passive points to God's authority
"eyes like the eyes of a man" – clarifying that this symbol does represent a human

Read Daniel 7:9-12

- v. 9 "thrones were placed" – see the fulfillment of this in Revelation 4–5, the coronation of the Lamb
Why are there multiple thrones? (See Matthew 25:31)
"the Ancient of Days" – The Father? The Son? The One Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: "the glory equal, the majesty coeternal" – The Athanasian Creed
white hair and clothes – a symbol of God's complete, total purity and holiness
throne/wheels of fire – a symbol of holiness as well as judgment upon sinners (see v. 11)
- v. 10 "A stream of fire" – His holy judgment flows outward
thousands...ten thousand times ten thousand – a finite multitude, created and not eternal
"the court sat in judgment"- the saints too inherit thrones! (see Matthew 19:28!!)
- v. 11 "the sound of the great words" – the subject of the court's judgment in verse 10
"was killed...was destroyed...was burned" – more passive grammar pointing to God's judgment
This scene is expanded in Revelation 19, the beast and his false prophet being thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20)- the judgment of Satan's agents at the end of the world, after the return of Jesus Christ.
- v. 12 "as for the rest" – we had not heard what happened to them when they were described
"dominion was taken away...lives were prolonged" – passive phrases implying God's judgment

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **Son of Man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.

¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should *worship* him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

v. 13 “like a Son of Man” – Jesus adopts this title/image (Mt. 24:30; 25:31; 26:64; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Lk 21:27)

v. 14 “should WORSHIP him”- the word used here (“serve”) is toward God and gods

Here the Kingdom of Grace is described in beautiful detail!

This “one like a Son of Man” is described as both human and divine, Two Natures, One Person = Jesus

The Main Point: “The sequence of events in Dan 7:9-14 is relatively simple and smooth. However, as one can see...the parallels in Revelation do not follow the same simple sequence of events as in Dan 7:9-14. The most likely explanation is that Daniel, from his perspective as a prophet in the sixth century BC, is shown from afar a brief glimpse of all that God would accomplish through the first advent of Christ; his ascension, session, and reign over the church throughout the present church age; and his eventual second coming in power and glory to bring this world to its close, vanquish all of God’s foes, and inaugurate the eternal salvation of the saints in the new heavens and new earth. Daniel sees all these events from a great distance, which makes it appear as if the events follow one another smoothly, much as mountain peaks appear close together when one views the range of mountains from a distance out on the plains. Revelation gives much more detail about those events, but its cyclical or spiral structure does not present those events in a simple, linear chronological order.” (A. Steinmann, pages 349-350)

Read Daniel 7:15-28 for an angelic interpretation of the events already seen