

What Are We to Make of This?

Series: The Book of Daniel

Daniel 7-12

July 25, 2021

Today is our final message in our “Book of Daniel” series. We have found that the events of Daniel’s life 2,500 years ago instruct us on how to handle a society that is increasingly evil and pagan.

You have heard me talked about the Lectionary, the resource that many pastors use to select Sunday sermon texts. It is a 3 year program that reportedly uses Scripture to tell the story of Jesus. Unfortunately, if you only read or preach from the Lectionary, you miss significant passages of Scripture, including nearly all of Daniel. Only 6 verses¹ in Daniel are touched on in 3 years is. That’s it: no dreams, no fiery furnace, no writing on the wall, no lion’s den.

Today, we are going to cover Daniel 7-12. Now, this will not be an in-depth look lasting 6 hours. Chapters 7-12 are not like chapters 1-6. In fact, they are different genres (biography and apocalyptic) and different languages (Hebrew and Aramaic²). Instead of stories, chapters 7-12 are a series of visions, dealing mostly with the same events of the Daniel 2 vision and the historical progression of empires from the Babylonian to the Medo-Persian to the Greek and finally to the Roman.

Instead, we are going to look at these last 6 chapters as we have looked at the first 6 and their relevance to our world today. And as we do that, we will see 10 truths from these visions.

First, (and this has been a recurring truth in Daniel), God is Sovereign over the Nations.

Daniel 7:15-16:

I, Daniel, was troubled by all I had seen, and my visions terrified me. So I approached one of those standing beside the throne and asked him what it all meant.³

Daniel 7 has been called “the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament.” Chapters 7–12 give us insight concerning the future as God graciously reveals to us, through Daniel, His plans for world history and the end of time. It’s the message that God is sovereign. Daniel 7 makes this truth abundantly clear as it provides something of a panoramic preview of coming attractions from the time of Daniel until that day when time is no more.

Second, The promise of the Son of Man.

Daniel 7:13-14:

As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.⁴

¹ Daniel 7:1-3,15-18

² Daniel 2:4 - 7:28

³ Daniel 7:15-16 (NLT2)

⁴ Daniel 7:13-14 (NLT2)

Notice the term “son of man.” Recognize it? It was a favorite label Jesus used of Himself. All throughout His ministry, He used the term. The most poignant was during His trial. Then the high priest asked Jesus, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” Here’s what Jesus said:

*Jesus said, “I AM. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”*⁵

So Daniel was prophesying that the Son of Man, Jesus would be given “authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.”

Third, There will be frightening times ahead.

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When you read the visions of Daniel 7-12, it reminds you of the Book of Revelation. In fact, it is very similar, and we know how scary Revelation is.

Even Daniel, who faced the lion’s den and other dangerous things in his life, was scared by what he saw. Daniel 7:15

*I, Daniel, was troubled by all I had seen, and my visions terrified me.*⁶

We see the same thing in verse 28 and 8:27. As a result, we can be assured there will be frightening times ahead.

Fourth, The saints will reign with God

Despite a scary future, despite persecution, despite all manner of evil around us, three times⁷ we are told that the saints will reign with God. Daniel 7:18 reads:

*But in the end, the holy people of the Most High will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever.*⁸

We have the same thing in the Book of Revelation. In fact, it gives us a time period: 1,000 years, or what’s called the Millennium.

Fifth, There will be an Armageddon.

Listen to Daniel 7:23-25:

*Then he said to me, “This fourth beast is the fourth world power that will rule the earth. It will be different from all the others. It will devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in its path. Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will subdue three of them. He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time.”*⁹

One little detail here. When it says, “a time, times, and a half a time,” that is typically interpreted “a year, two years, then a half a year.” One year + two years + a half a year = 3 ½ years, half of the 7 year tribulation.

As far as the changing of worship, Daniel talks about the abomination of desolation, referring to an unholy sacrifice. The original prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) who betrayed the Jews by taking over the temple and

⁵ Mark 14:61-62 (NLT2)

⁶ Daniel 7:15 (NLT2)

⁷ Daniel 7:18, 22, 27

⁸ Daniel 7:18 (NLT2)

⁹ Daniel 7:23-25 (NLT2)

offering a pig upon its altar. He forbade Jews to sacrifice and to keep the Sabbath day and other Jewish traditions. He even forbid any Jews from having copies of their scriptures in their possession on pain of death.

This Armageddon is going to devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in its path.

Sixth, There will be an anti-Christ.

Even in Daniel, we learn about the anti-Christ. Listen to this prophecy from Daniel 8:23-25:

“At the end of their rule, when their sin is at its height, a fierce king, a master of intrigue, will rise to power. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause a shocking amount of destruction and succeed in everything he does. He will destroy powerful leaders and devastate the holy people. He will be a master of deception and will become arrogant; he will destroy many without warning. He will even take on the Prince of princes in battle, but he will be broken, though not by human power.”¹⁰

The greatest and darkest power ever on earth will rule at the end. He will even go against the Prince of Princes (aka Jesus), but, Daniel tells us he will be broken, “though not by human power.” Jesus will defeat him with just a word.

Seven, Prayer and repentance leads to a heavenly response.

There is a wonderful passage in Daniel 9:21-23:

I went on praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people, pleading with the LORD my God for Jerusalem, his holy mountain. As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. He explained to me, “Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding. The moment you began praying, a command was given. And now I am here to tell you what it was...”¹¹

“The moment you began praying.” Wow. Just as God answered Daniel's prayer, so we can have confidence that God hears and answers our prayers.

But you may say, “I've been praying about something for a long time. That brings us to #8.

Eight, Angels intervene on behalf of God's people.

Daniel 10:12-14 says:

Then he said, “Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come.”¹²

Angels intervened on Daniel's behalf. But notice how long it took?

A demon, called “the prince of the kingdom of Persia,” got in the way and delayed the answer's arrival for 21 days. Only when “Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help” could the angel break free. This angel, possibly Gabriel, had been ganged up on by a number of demons. He therefore needed the aid of the archangel, the chief angel,

¹⁰ Daniel 8:23-25 (NLT2)

¹¹ Daniel 9:20-23a (NLT2)

¹² Daniel 10:12-14 (NLT2)

Michael, Israel's protector and prince, to continue on his way with an answer to Daniel's prayer.

Nine, We are precious to God.

Multiple times¹³, angels tell Daniel he is precious to God. Daniel 10:18-19a:

*Then the one who looked like a man touched me again, and I felt my strength returning. "Don't be afraid," he said, "for you are very precious to God...."*¹⁴

COMMENT

Finally, Live as God's person with Peace, encouragement, and strength.

Daniel 10:19b says:

*"...Peace! Be encouraged! Be strong!"*¹⁵

Daniel would have remembered that these were words to Joshua as he was about to lead the people into the Promised Land:

*This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*¹⁶

And that's what we need when we are facing an evil and pagan society: have peace, be encouraged, be strong.

¹³ 10:18 and others

¹⁴ Daniel 10:18-19a (NLT2)

¹⁵ Daniel 10:19b (NLT2)

¹⁶ Joshua 1:9 (NLT2)