

Daniel's Apocalypse

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 2, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

~Daniel 7:27 (ESV)

- 1) A Quick Refresh - Apocalyptic Literature**
 - A) The book of Daniel is separated into two sections. The first section are stories about four young super-hero Jews: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The first section is about their experiences of exile in Babylon (Daniel 1-6).**
 - B) The second section of the book (Daniel 7-12) are a series of visions and dreams which God gave to Daniel after his service in the royal court of King Nebuchadnezzar. For the most part, the second section of Daniel is written in an Apocalyptic literary style (or genre).**
 - C) Apocalyptic literature characteristically uses picturesque symbolic language to describe visions and dreams which reveal earthly realities from a divine perspective. Historically, apocalyptic literature comes from cultures which are oppressed and facing ruin. The Apocalyptic literature of the Bible (mainly in Ezekiel, Daniel, and especially Revelation) reveals a sovereign and conquering God triumphing over an age of sin and evil in both heaven and earth on behalf of His faithful saints.**

D) Daniel is the first writer in history to use an Apocalyptic literary style. Unlike Revelation, Daniel almost always explains his symbols and imagery. The most critically important rule for reading Apocalyptic literature is to always interpret the text symbolically, unless the text gives you good reason to interpret it literally.

2) The Visions Of Daniel's Later Life

A) The first Apocalyptic vision of Daniel's life comes in the first year of Belshazzar's wicked reign as King of Babylon (Daniel 7:1), and then another comes just two years later (Daniel 8:1). Both are visions, though the first comes in the night, a possible association with trouble for God's people.

B) The imagery of Daniel's visions while King Belshazzar is ruling utilizes some of the same basic symbols from Nebuchadnezzar's dreams in Daniel 2 & 4. In this sense, the meaning of the symbols build atop one another, with Scripture interpreting Scripture for our benefit.

C) Daniel's initial vision of four terrifying beasts (7:1-8) and the following vision of the "Ancient of Days" (God, 7:9-12) and "Son of Man" (Christ, 7:13-14) are all interpreted at the end of the chapter (7:15-27). This is also true of Daniel's second vision of the Ram & Goat (8:1-14), followed by its interpretation through the Angel Gabriel (8:15-27).

D) One of the primary reasons Apocalyptic literature is used in the Bible is to reveal why current circumstances are less significant than what God will eventually do. This is why the important sections on God & Christ (7:9-14) are centrally located in the first vision -- they center our lives on God's power and sovereignty!

E) Another primary reason for Apocalyptic literature is to assure the reader that what they see around them, no matter how difficult, is worth enduring for the eventual victory of God. This is vividly exemplified in both visions (7:27; 8:25), and encouragement to locate ourselves in spiritual victories, not earthly successes.