

Homily based on the readings from November 25, 2025 (Daniel 2.31-45;
Luke 21.5-11)

Today's first reading, from the Book of Daniel, presents one of the most astounding examples of prophecy ever recorded in Scripture. Daniel, a young Israelite who had been abducted from his native land and forced into service to the King of Babylon, came forward to interpret the king's dream – which had perplexed the king himself and confounded his most learned advisors. Based on this dream, Daniel correctly predicted the fall of the Kingdom of Babylon, followed by the rise and fall of three other kingdoms: the Medes, the Persians, and the Greeks. What is most interesting, though, is that Daniel also foretells the coming of another kingdom – but not one that is recorded in any history books:

In the lifetime of those kings
the God of heaven will set up a kingdom
that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people;

rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms
and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever.

To the dispirited Children of Israel, whose kingdom had been destroyed and whose temple defiled, these words must have sounded like a promise of restoration. The Jewish people imagined that God was going to send them another champion, similar to King David of old, who would deliver them from captivity and reestablish their ancestral homeland. While it *is* true that King Cyrus the Great eventually allowed them to return from exile and supported the rebuilding of their temple, there never was – as a matter of historical fact – another Jewish kingdom like the one that had existed previously.

From this perspective, it might seem as if Daniel's prophecy – although accurate up to a point – was wishful thinking, at best, and deliberate deception, at worst. If this “kingdom that shall never be destroyed” sounded too good to be true, that is because – at least in a certain sense – it *was*. We know the history of that part of the world, and the Medes,

the Persians, and the Greeks, were eventually succeeded by the Romans, the Byzantines, and ultimately a host of different Muslim caliphates. No kingdom lasts forever – at least not one that is established and governed by mortal men.

As Christians, of course, we recognize that Daniel was not referring to a kingdom that the Babylonians – or any of their worldly successors – could possibly hope to understand. He was not foretelling a realm supported by weapons and wealth – or a leader who would come to power by forcibly overthrowing his predecessors. Through the words of his prophet, God was promising something completely and totally *new* – a kingdom ruled by love, whose king would not hesitate to sacrifice his own life on behalf of his people. That kingdom, and that king, were what we celebrated this past Sunday. That kingdom, and that king, are the focus of our joyful anticipation throughout the season of Advent – this year and every year, until we are *finally* called to dwell in peace and happiness in our one true homeland.