



## “A Beastly Prophetic Dream” (Daniel 7)

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v.1 Daniel has been known to interpret others' dreams, but here he has his own dream that needs some interpretation!

vv.17-18 That is about as succinct (concise, brief) an interpretation as you can get! But Daniel does not want such a brief interpretation. He has some questions. He wants to know more detail. But before we get to that, let's go back and try to identify these beasts in Daniel's dream.

v.2 The four winds of heaven refers to heaven's influence over the entire earth. Rev.7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree; Jer.49: 36 I will bring against Elam the four winds from the four quarters of the heavens; I will scatter them to the four winds, and there will not be a nation where Elam's exiles do not go.

The four winds of heaven are churning up “the great sea,” and it is out of this sea that these creatures emerge. Rev.17:1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters...15 Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages; Rev.13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. This great sea is very simply the nations and peoples of the world.

v.3 Each of these beasts are unique, for they each represent kingdoms that will arise on earth (v.17).

v.4 Lion with wings of an eagle. The lion is king of the beasts and the eagle is king of the fowls, signifying this kingdom's superiority over other nations in her day; Jer.50: 17 "Israel is a scattered flock that lions have chased away. The first to devour him was the king of Assyria; the last to crush his bones was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." Winged lions were practically the national symbol of ancient Babylon. Sculptures of huge wooden lions stood at the entrance of their palaces.

Wings represent swift conquest; Hab.1: 6 I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. 7 They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.

Wings torn off, given the heart of a man. Nebuchadnezzar viewed himself as a god (image of gold), but he was humbled (See Daniel 4:30-32, 37).

v.5 The bear = Medo Persia; Raised on one of its sides – signifying Persia's dominance of the Medes; Three ribs in its mouth, three major conquests: Lydian empire in Asia Minor (546 B.C.), The Chaldean Empire (539 B.C.), and the Egyptian Empire (525 B.C.); Just as a bear is more massive but slower moving than a lion, so Medo-Persia became larger than Babylon as a kingdom but slower in conquest; Medo-Persia's army was also huge but slower in movement; It was told, "Get up and eat your fill of flesh," which speaks of Medo-Persia's insatiable desire to conquer MORE!

v.6 The leopard = Greece; Two wings on the lion, but four on the leopard. The leopard is faster, signifying Greece's incredibly swift conquests. Under Alexander the Great, Greece conquered the known world faster than any ancient power! In eight years they conquered more than 11,000 miles of territory, from Greece in the west to India in the east; After the death of Alexander, the kingdom was divided into four parts ruled by four generals.

v.7 Terrifying, frightening, very powerful; Large iron teeth; It was Rome that developed iron weaponry. This fourth beast is Rome of history, but also Rome of the future (Revived Roman Empire). Now before we go on, there's something we must stop and note. We have seen these beasts before in our study of Daniel. Where? See Daniel 2:31-45 (notes on this section)...

God is showing us two completely different perspectives here. In Neb's dream of Daniel 2, the giant image of a man contained these four kingdoms. The message is clear – Man's exaltation of himself. But in time every kingdom of man will fall, and ultimately only one kingdom will remain. Daniel 7 gives us heaven's perspective of man's exaltation of himself - man's inner beastly nature, always striving for power, seeking to conquer & rule his world.

With that said, let's take a closer look now at this fourth beast. Of the four, this one is the most fascinating, and the most terrifying. And it is this beast that Daniel wants to know "the true meaning of."

Read vv.19-28 As we look at the pieces of the puzzle regarding this fourth beast, it is fairly easy to determine some prophetic details. For example, the time of this fourth beast's reign is just prior to the return of Jesus Christ, or during The Great Tribulation. Look at the pieces of this puzzle with me:

- The Revived Roman Empire (map from Joel Rosenberg)
- See Rev.13:1-4; 17:12-14.
- The little horn among the ten horns is antichrist (Rev.13:5-6; Daniel 7:11-12; II Thess.2:3-4; Rev.19:20); He is given power over the saints for 42 months (Rev.13:5-7a; Daniel 7:25b).
- The "son of man" is Jesus Christ (Mark 8:31; John 1:49-50; Matt.26:62-65; Daniel 7:26-27, 13-14).

## CONCLUSION

- V.28 What was it that deeply troubled Daniel and caused his face to turn pale? It couldn't have been the revelation of vv.13-14, or vv.26-27. It no doubt was this terrifying fourth beast, and the revelation that things were going to be very tough for the saints during the days of this beast's reign.
- Heb.2: 8 In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
- I Cor.15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.
- I Cor.15:50-55 I declare to you brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?
- II Cor.4:16-18 Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For your light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.