

The Four Beasts (Daniel 7)

"Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth." (Daniel 7:17)



"Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea." (v. 2, 3)



This vision was given to Daniel during the first year of reign of Belshazzar King of Babylon. This dream corresponds to King Nebuchadnezzar's statue. For those of you who are interested, Daniel 5 records the end of Babylon during Belshazzar's reign.

Bible Prophecy Symbols:

Winds: Strife/commotion/"winds of war" (Jeremiah 25:31-33; 49:36, 37; 4:11-13; Zechariah 7:14)

Sea/Water: Inhabited area/people, nations (Isaiah 57:20; Revelation 17:15)

Beast: Kingdom/government/political power (Daniel 7:17, 23)

Lion: Jesus/Powerful King i.e. Babylon Rev. 5:4-9, Jer. 50:43-44, Dan. 7:4,17,23

Bear: Destructive Power / Medo Persia (Proverbs 28:15, 2 Kings 2:23-24, Daniel 7:5)

Leopard: Greece (Daniel 7:6)

Wings: Speed / Protection / Deliverance (Deuteronomy 28:49, Habakuk 1: 6-8, Matthew 23:37)



"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it." (v. 4)

Babylon (605-539 B.C.) is represented here--a kingdom of great strength. The plucked wings represent the time it no longer rushed upon its prey like an eagle. The boldness and spirit of the lion was replaced with a man's heart (weak, timorous and faint) as was the case toward the end of the nation.

"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: Arise, devour much flesh!" (v. 5)

Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.) is represented by the bear. And their power is well represented by a bear--they were cruel, rapacious, robbers and spoilers of the people. As silver is inferior to gold, so also is the bear inferior to the lion. Medo-Persia was inferior to Babylon in wealth and splendor. The bear raised up on one side represents the fact that Persia gained more prominence and became the dominant influence of this kingdom. The three ribs represent Babylon, Lydia and Egypt.



"After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it." (v. 6)

Greece (331-168 B.C.) is represented by the leopard. The wings signify the rapidity of conquest, an unprecedented accelerity which is a historical fact of Grecian kingdom under **Alexander the Great**. The unity of this kingdom lasted until Alexander's death. Thereafter, it was divided between his four leading generals as denoted by the four heads: **Cassander** (Macedonia and Greece in the west), **Lysimachus** (Thrace and parts of Asia on the Hellespont and Bosphorus in the North), **Ptolemy** (Egypt, Lydia, Arabia, Palestine, Syria in the south), and **Seleucus** (Syria and all of Alexander's dominions in the east).

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It has huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breating in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns." (v. 7) "...the fourth beast...with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze..." (v. 19) "...The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom..." (v. 23, 24)

Rome (168 B.C.-476 A.D.) is represented here. In the dread and terror it inspired, and its great strength, the world had never seen its equal. It devoured with iron teeth and broke in pieces all that stood in its way. It ground the nations into the dust beneath its brazen feet. As also noticed in Daniel 2, this kingdom is divided into 10 kingdoms: Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Alemanni, Sueves, Anglo-Saxons, Heruls, Lombards, and Burgundians.



Any copyrighted images not bearing a statement of permission, are used for the purpose of non-commercial scholarly commentary or criticism in accordance with section 107 of U.S. Copyright Law, which by law can be without the consent or endorsement of the copyright holder. Images lacking attribution are either known or assumed to be in the public domain, or have an as yet undetermined status. Anyone having knowledge of proper attribution for an image is requested to contact us via email so that it can be correctly noted. It is our intent to comply fully with applicable laws regarding intellectual property rights. Title 17, section 107 of US code for Limitations and Exclusive Rights: Fair Use