

DANIEL - The Four Great Beasts – Daniel 7 (Part 2)

DN-10

Daniel 7— The Four Great Beasts – Part 2

Last week we began this vitally important chapter, filled with prophetic drama as we look back at history. As you recall, this is the first of four visions Daniel would have comprising the rest of his book.

We saw that there was “four winds” which strove or were striving on the great sea. These we found to be “winds of strife,” which represent “the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power.” {GC 440}.

We then saw the first beast with eagle’s wings, representing Babylon and how with “swiftness it came to power, showing the speed of conquest. The next beast, representing Medo-Persia was pictured as a ferocious bear with three ribs in its mouth, raise up on one side. This indicated it had been devouring other beasts, one of which was Babylon.

Before we turn our attention to the last two beasts, depicted in verses 6-8, let us note the following inspired statement re. these beasts which came up from the sea:

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that it might be seen whether it would fulfill the purpose of “the Watcher and the Holy One.” {Ed 176-177}

Just a quick word on the Medo-Persian Empire. God had personally named Cyrus as “His anointed” more than 150 years before in Isaiah 45:1. The Most High would use Cyrus to “break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut asunder the bars of iron” referring to how Babylon would be overcome, we need to remember that the second world kingdom would come to an end because they trampled God’s law under foot.

The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God’s law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.”
{YI Sept.22, 1903}

The Leopard Beast

Daniel 7:6 “After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.”

After this...another - The next power is now introduced to us. You would notice by now that this chapter is a parallel to chapter 2. You can see a repeat of what we have already looked at but with a more detail. Keep in mind, the prophetic aspect of Daniel (the last half of the book) operates with the ‘_____ and _____’ concept prevalent, as do other prophetic books of Scripture, such as the book of Revelation

A leopard...four wings of a fowl - A leopard is very good at catching its prey off guard especially by ambushing its prey. It has a reasonable amount of speed, but with this beast has four wings to assist it in gaining more speed. This, you will see, is a fitting description of this third beast power.

Greece, under Alexander the Great, was good at catching their prey off guard because of the speed at which they moved. In showing this we only have to look at the time taken to conquer the then known world. It took Alexander and his army 12 years to subdue the world. He marched his army over 8364 km in that space of time, which took them from Macedonia all the way to India and down through to Libya and Egypt in the south. The final death blow to the Medo-Persian kingdom was at the Battle of Arbela in 331 B.C. where Darius the third was defeated. We shall see more of this in chapter 8.

The wings of a fowl were upon this beast. A fowl's flight is one of speed whilst ascending, but expires quickly at its peak. Thus was the case of Greece. Alexander primarily pushed his conquests to the north and to the east. He had taken Maracanda (now Turkistan). Two years later he invaded northwest India, though soon thereafter his troops refused to go farther, and he was forced to yield to them. Returning to Persia and Mesopotamia, Alexander was faced with the stupendous work of organizing the administration of his territories. In 323 B.C. he made his capital in Babylon, a city that still preserved reminders of the glory of Nebuchadnezzar's day, more than 220 years earlier. In the same year, after a round of hard drinking, Alexander fell ill and died of "swamp fever," which is thought to be the ancient name for, or counterpart of, malaria. Thus, Alexander rose very quickly to power but at the peak of his rise his life was cut short.

Four heads - As Alexander was dying, his generals asked who was to take the kingdom and rule. Alexander's reply was "to the strongest." Through much fighting the kingdom was divided amongst the four remaining generals and hence the four heads. The decisive battle was the battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C. where Antigonus was killed and thus the four divisions as follows;

1. Cassander - Macedonia and Greece.
2. Lysimachus - Thrace, parts of Asia, Hellespont and Bosphorus in the north.
3. Ptolemy - Egypt, Libya, Arabia, Palestine, and Coele-Syria in the south.
4. Seleucus - Syria eastward.

The Grecian empire reigned from 331-168 B.C.

[For more on the Grecian Empire, note the addendum – "Like a Leopard"]

Prophecy has traced the rise and fall of the world's great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. With each of these, as with nations of less power, history repeated itself. Each had its period of test, each failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another. {Ed 176.7}

The Fourth Beast

Daniel 7:7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns."

After this...a fourth beast - Daniel saw this power coming to its end, and as he does he sees a fourth kingdom coming to supremacy. There is no animal to describe this power that is rising to supremacy, thus it is called the non-descript beast.

Strong exceedingly - This power was to be very strong.

Iron teeth...devoured and brake in pieces - It had iron teeth that were to brake and devour whatever was before it. In v.23 we find it was to devour the whole _____.

Stamped the residue with the feet of it - Whatever was left over was to put into subject to this power. This gives us a good description of the great iron _____ power that conquered the Grecian empire. Rome conquered many cities and left a trail of carnage behind them, with the residue put into slavery. They stamped their authority upon the then known world and Rome was the strongest and largest of all the preceding kingdoms. We shall see more of them in chapter 11.

It was diverse - This was true of the Roman empire. It was different to all the kingdoms before as they were monarchy's whereas Rome was a republic.

It had ten horns - You will remember that a horn is a symbol of a king or kingdom v24. The 10 horns parallel to the feet of iron and clay of chapter 2. Western Rome eventually split into 10 divisions by 476 A.D., with the last emperor, Romulus Augustus, moving his seat to the east, Constantinople. The ten divisions are as follows;

The Ten Divisions of Rome	
Ostrogoths - Exterminated.	Vandals - Exterminated.
Franks - France.	Suevi - Portugal.
Alemanni - Germany.	Anglo-Saxons - England.
Heruli - Exterminated.	Lombards - Italy.
Burgundians - Switzerland.	Visigoths - Spain.

Rome ruled from 168 B.C.-476 A.D.

Daniel 2



Babylon
605-539 BC

Medo-
Persia
539-331 BC

Grecia
331-168 BC

Rome
168 BC-476 AD

Daniel 7



Next week we will study the Little Horn and the Judgment...