

In the previous two weeks in Daniel 7, we looked at the first of four beasts that Daniel saw in a vision. This first was like a lion and the second was like a bear. There were unusual features about each and we were led to view them as representing Babylon and the Medo-Persian empires. Let us continue in Daniel 7 ...

### Daniel 7:6

7<sup>6</sup> After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, 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.

Recall that Daniel is seeing a vision while he is sleeping. He saw, so far, two beasts; a lion and a bear. The next beast Daniel sees is like a leopard. Like the first two beasts, this leopard had some unusual features. This leopard had four wings on its back. Typically, the leopard is known for its swiftness in chasing down its prey. It is interesting to note that the leopard's speed is the standard by which the speed of foreign armies is compared to.

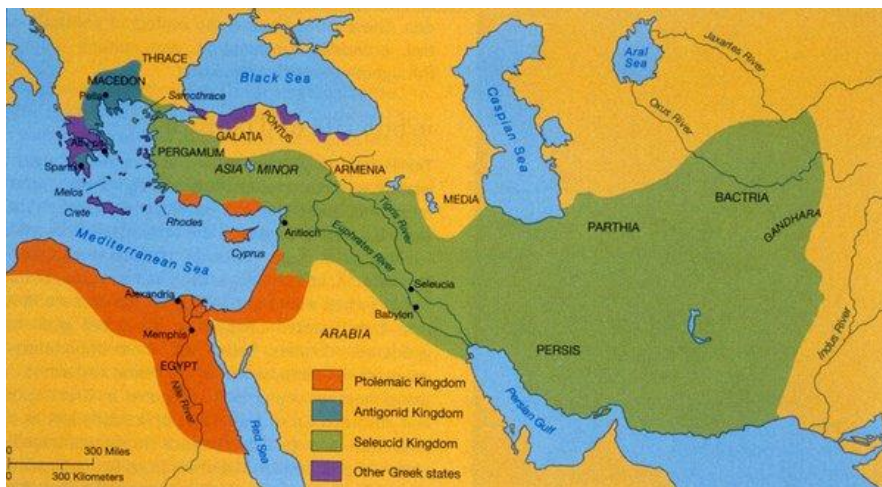
“Their horses are swifter than leopards and keener than wolves in the evening. Their horsemen come galloping; their horsemen come from afar; They fly like an eagle swooping *down* to devour.” Here in Habakkuk, the speed of the leopard is compared to the armies of the Chaldeans. Habakkuk 1:8

The imagery of a leopard's speed is further enhanced by the four wings on its back. Unlike the first two beasts, this third beast had four heads instead of one. Conservative scholars see this third beast as representing the Greek empire. Why? The history of the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and his four succeeding generals is the perfect correspondence for this third beast.

With the swiftness of a leopard, Alexander conquered most of the civilized world all the way from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India. The lightning character of his conquests is without precedent in the ancient world, and this is fully in keeping with the image of speed embodied in the leopard and the four wings on its back.<sup>1</sup>

Though Alexander the Great subdued such a vast area in a short time, he died on June 13, 323 BC at the young age of 32. After his death his kingdom was divided into four parts and four of his leading generals took charge of each of the four areas. These four kings were Lysimachus, who held Thrace and Bithynia; Cassander, who held Macedonia and Greece; Seleucus, who controlled Syria, Babylon, and territories as far east as India; and Ptolemy, who controlled Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia Petria.

Given the history of the Greek empire under Alexander and his generals, the view that the third beast, with its swiftness and four heads, is best represented by Greece and not Persia (in a separate Medo and Persian empire's view). It is interesting that ancient interpreters saw the fourfold division of the Greek empire as pertaining to this third beast. All the way back to Jerome (4<sup>th</sup> century AD) this view has been recognized by scholars of all persuasions.



One final comment is made by Daniel concerning this third beast. Daniel says “dominion was given to it.” Why did Daniel feel the need to mention that this third kingdom was given dominion? It seems clear from verse 12 that each of the four kingdoms would be given dominion over other kingdoms at some time. Not sure, but it is curious why, in chapter 2, Daniel makes another “trivial” comment concerning the third part of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Recall 2:39 ... “another kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.” Each of them ruled over the known world. It's a question that may not have an answer, but then we must remember that it seems to be the fourth beast and the vision of heaven that points to the main idea in the vision.

<sup>1</sup> Walvoord, John F., *Daniel* ... pp. 194.

Before we look at the details of the fourth beast, let us recall what we know about the fourth Gentile kingdom, the Roman empire from Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. Remember that we had the following summary of the dream's interpretation from Daniel.

1. The vision pertains to the 'latter days,' i.e., the dream is about the future (2:28–29)
2. The statue portrays the passage of time as we go down from the head to the toes, "You are the head of gold. After you there will arise another kingdom." (2:38–39)
3. The metals and parts of the statue each represent a Gentile kingdom; those kingdoms are best seen as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
4. The fourth kingdom, Rome, will have at least two distinct phases, the legs of iron phase and the clay feet/toes phase. "a fourth kingdom as strong as iron (vs. 40) ... in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom ..."
5. If the parts of the statue represent the sequence of kingdoms following one another in historical progression, the stone cannot strike the image until the last stage of the fourth kingdom, represented by the feet of iron and clay, exists in history.
6. In the later phase of that fourth kingdom (2:34), God will destroy all four of these Gentile kingdoms completely (2:35)
7. Then God will set up a kingdom that will exist in perpetuity from there (2:44)

We actually know quite a bit from Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. What we will find here in chapters 7–12 is that we are going to be given much more detailed information concerning both this fourth kingdom and the kingdom of God that is to come. First, how long is the coming kingdom to last? Forever (2:44). Since there can eventually only be one kingdom that lasts forever, if a forever kingdom is mentioned again in chapter 7, it must be the kingdom of God depicted in chapter 2.

### Daniel 7:7

7<sup>7</sup> After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

Daniel first describes the fourth beast with strong adjectives without really providing a frame of reference; such as, "like a lion," "resembling a bear," "like a leopard," etc. The Greek Septuagint is helpful in the translation of these adjectives ... for all the adjectives used here (and the one adverb) were in common usage during the Hellenistic period, including the time of the NT.

θηρίον	τέταρτον	φοβερόν	καὶ	ἐκθαμβόν	καὶ	ἰσχυρόν	περισσῶς
a wild beast	fourth	fearful/terrible	and	utterly astonishing	and	strong	abundantly/exceedingly/beyond measure

Now notice the next blurb in the text, it had large **iron** teeth. This is another clue that this fourth beast corresponds to the legs of iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image. The fourth kingdom in chapter 2 was Rome and here we have both the numerical order (fourth) and the teeth being iron as markers to associate this kingdom as Rome. The text goes on to say "it devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet." Now we take pause and consider how Rome is aptly described by its devouring, crushing, and trampling down of the remainder with its feet. First, what is the "remainder?" What could that refer to? Well, since Daniel has seen three beasts so far, it seems to naturally mean that this fourth beast devoured and crushed and trampled down the other three beasts. In our imagery, it would suggest that the Roman empire would do this to the other Gentile kingdoms that preceded it. There is an interesting part of Daniel's vision that many expositors overlook. However, Walvoord brings total clarity to the table for us here ...

The description of the fourth beast to this point more obviously corresponds to the Roman Empire than to the empire of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered by rapid troop movements and seldom crushed the people whom he conquered. By contrast, the Romans were ruthless in their destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands ... Rome had no interest in raising the conquered nations to any high level of development. All her designs were imperial; "let the nations be crushed and stamped underfoot." The description of Daniel 7:7 clearly is more appropriate for the empire of Rome than for the Macedonian (Greek) kingdom or any of its derived divisions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Walvoord, John F., Daniel ... pp. 199.

Then Daniel tells us two last things about this fourth beast. The first ... it was “different from all the beasts that were before it.” What could this possibly mean? Well, Daniel could be merely making a comment about the beast in the vision, not it’s interpretation. How was it different? It was different in its looks in that Daniel was unable to come up with a zoologically similar species like he was able to for the first three beasts. This beast did not have wings like two of the others and Daniel specifically mentions the teeth of iron. It possible that that Daniel was just making a reference to the appearance of the beast in his vision, but we might get more information later during the interpretation section. Second, Daniel mentions that this fourth beast had ten horns. Now this is another important indication that the image of chapter 2 and the beasts of chapter 7 are parallel visions. Back in the second chapter, since a human being has ten toes and those toes were the nearest antecedent to “in the days of those kings,” we speculated that the toes represented ten kings that would rule in the latter days of the fourth kingdom. Here in Daniel 7, we are explicitly told in the interpretation by the angel (we will get to that part later) that these ten horns are “ten kings” that will arise “out of this kingdom.” Since these visions are parallel, we are fairly sure that the ten toes ARE the kings mentioned back in Daniel 2 as “in the days of those kings.”

Before we move on, we need to comment on the ten horns (kings). It is a fact of history, actually a non-fact, that there has never been a time, either in the Greek Empire (for the critical view) OR in the Roman Empire (for the orthodox view) when ten kings ruled over this fourth kingdom (either Greek or Rome) simultaneously. The critical view attempts to find ten kings that ruled sequentially during the Grecian rule; and some of the more reformed expositors try to find ten kings that ruled sequentially during the Roman rule, but neither of these camps have been successful, nor convincing in doing so. Our amillennial brothers merely make the number ten symbolic so they don’t even have to find ten kings in history.

Why are the ten horns important? Because they point to a future stage of this fourth kingdom! Back in chapter 2, were all ten toes on the statue all at once? Presumably, yes! We didn’t hear Daniel say ten toes grew on the feet of iron/clay one at a time. Similarly, the ten horns of the fourth beast are there simultaneously; they didn’t grow one at a time, one after the other. Daniel’s depiction of the ten horns is one of *concurrent* existence or rule, not *sequential* rule. This is an important aspect that is very strong evidence that this ten horn stage of the fourth beast has not occurred in history as of yet.

One final comment ... WHEN is this latter stage of the Roman kingdom required to happen? Before the rapture? After the rapture but before the tribulation period? During the tribulation period? If so, the first half or the second half? It turns out that the question of when this ten-king stage will happen is irrelevant. Could it happen before the rapture? Yes. Could it happen after the rapture, in all the presumed confusion that will grip the world when millions simply disappear? Sure. But think about where we are and what’s coming; the third beast has come and gone, the iron legs stage of the fourth empire has come and gone, though we could argue we are still in that stage. The only thing that is required is that this ten-king stage will happen before the coming kingdom of God.

## Daniel 7:8

While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts*.

What was it about the horns that Daniel found intriguing enough that he was deep in thought about them? He doesn’t give us any more of a description of them except that there were ten of them. As he was contemplating, another horn (an 11<sup>th</sup> one) came up among them, literally, “between them.” He mentions that three of the horns were “pulled out by the roots” before it, namely, the little horn. The imagery is that the little horn appears sometime after the ten horns are already there. Because of its sudden appearance, three of the original 10 are “uprooted.” Notice that all translations make reference to roots being plucked up, indicating that the three horns (kings) are somehow displaced by the little horn.

Notice that this little horn detail is something that was not hinted at in the vision of chapter 2. The ten-toe stage comes on the scene and the stone crushes the image completely. Here in Daniel 7, we have a little more insight into the events that will occur before the stone strikes the image. We were speculating that there were at least two stages of the fourth kingdom that were represented by the legs of iron and the feet of iron/clay. Here in Daniel 7, we now know a little more detail about the feet of iron/clay stage, namely, that it is broken up into two stages as well; the ten-horn stage and the little horn stage. From Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we can conclude that the Roman empire will experience three stages in Gentile-rule history – first, the beast stage (legs of iron); second, the ten horn stage or ten king/kingdom stage (feet of iron/clay); and third, the little horn stage (not depicted in Daniel 2).

It seems natural to conclude that, since the horns are kings, that this little horn is also a king and that his rise to power will involve the overthrow of three of the ten kings. Daniel will tell us this explicitly in the interpretation of the vision later. After this little horn displaces three horns, by presumption, the other seven horns will yield to the little horn's overthrow of the three. When this happens, the kingdom represented by the beast with ten horns will come under the little horns control. This, I believe, is confirmed in Dan. 7:20 where the interpreter tells us this little horn had become larger than the rest.

It is clear that the little horn is a king, and therefore we assume he is a man. Ordinarily, the possession of eyes and a mouth would merely indicate human characteristics. But since we already know the little horn is a king, we may suspect that the eyes and mouth are indicative of something a little more than just being human. Miller conjectures that "the eyes are expressive of human personality; but in Scripture they also function as instruments of observation and learning and are therefore appropriately symbolic of intelligence, insight, and wisdom. This individual will be extremely intelligent and clever."<sup>3</sup>

The final insight that Daniel gives us about the little horn is that it (he) has a mouth uttering great things. The Hebrew here suggests not merely great things but insolent things, rude and disrespectful things. Later, during the interpretation, he will add some details about the content of the "great things" that the little horn is uttering. It is not "were going to Make America Great Again," but the boasting is blasphemy directed at the Most High God.

As we peruse the rest of scripture, we will find other descriptions of presumably the same individual and we will give him the ultimate name "antichrist," after settling on "the willful king," "the prince," "the man of lawlessness," etc.

Miller concludes this section with a lengthy discussion of the impossibility of the critical view here ...

Contrary to those who identify the little horn as the Seleucid Greek king Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the ten horns as ten kings who preceded him (view of Montgomery, Goldingay, Porphyry, Lacocque), there were not ten but seven Seleucid Greek rulers before Antiochus IV, and the text is quite clear that these ten kings did not *precede* the little horn but were *contemporaneous* with him, as Hartman recognizes (Hartman and Di Lella, *Daniel*, 217). Neither did Antiochus violently conquer three previous kings but by political intrigue assumed the throne after his brother's death. Displacing rivals is not a proper interpretation of the expression "uprooted" three horns, and at any rate, three rival kings were never displaced by Antiochus. None of the proposed identifications of these three kings, such as Seleucus IV and his two sons, Demetrius I and Antiochus (not Antiochus IV) (so Goldingay, *Daniel*, 180; Collins, *Daniel*, FOTL, 81) is plausible.<sup>4</sup>

Before we get to the heavenly scene in the next section of Daniel 7, let us look at the overview again:

Daniel 7:1–8 Daniel's vision of the four beasts

Daniel 7:9–12 The Heavenly Scene (7:9–10 heaven preparing, 7:11–12 earthly results)

Daniel 7:13–14 Coming of the Son of Man

Daniel 7:15–28 Angelic Interpretation of the Vision

We have just completed the vision section of verses 1–8. Now the vision switches to a heavenly scene that would be unknowable to human observers on the earth. This will describe the "behind the scenes" activity of God during the time of the little horn stage of the fourth kingdom.

One last comment. It is often suggested by non-dispensationalists that the concept of the premillennial return of Christ and a physical kingdom on earth is only taught in the first half of Revelation 20 and nowhere else in scripture. And because it is only in Revelation 20, and Revelation is to be interpreted allegorically because of its many symbols, the entire concept of a physical earthly reign of the Messiah is a faulty Biblical view. In the coming weeks, Daniel 7 will put all that nonsense to bed once and for all. The simple fact is that premillennialism is taught all through the OT scriptures. We saw that it is a necessary result of the promise made to Abraham, it is a conclusion of the Davidic covenant, it is taught all through the prophets of the OT, and it will be clearly seen here in Daniel 7 ... Ten kings, the little horn, the coming of the Son of Man in conjunction with the destruction of the little horn, the kingdom.

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<sup>3</sup> Miller, Steven, R., *Daniel*, pp. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, Steven, R., *Daniel*, pp. 203.