

“BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS”

DANIEL 7:1-12

Theme: God’s people can take heart in the ultimate triumph of God over the wickedness of men.

I. The Plight of Human Civilization – 7:1-3

A. The Picture of Restlessness – vv. 1-2

1. This chapter provides a transition from an historical justification for the people of Israel to continue to trust God to a prophetic justification – God will remain true and will ultimately win.
2. *“In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon ...”* – indicates this dream occurred between chapters 4 & 5 and was provided during some very dark hours of Jewish captivity.
3. *“Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it.”* – an indication that he realized the significance and encouragement this would provide God’s people.
4. *“Daniel said, ‘I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.’”*
 - a) *“the great sea”* – refers to those within humanity that are hostile to God and Israel – cp. **Revelation 13:1-2; 17:15**.
 - b) This *“great sea”* was being *“stirred up”* – that is, they were in a state of restlessness and tumult.
 - c) It is *“the four winds of heaven”* that were acting upon the sea – a reference to the various forces which play upon the nations, serving to bring strife and trouble.
 - (1) The four directions signify the severity of the confusion of this strife and turmoil.
 - (2) The thought is to picture the nations of the world at any time, as God views them, a raging, confused, wandering mass – cp. **Psalm 2**.

B. The Product of Restlessness – v. 3

1. What is produced during such a confused and angry condition? – *“four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another.”*
2. Hence the disturbed state of the world gives origin to the successive world powers that appear on the scene of history.

II. The Progress of Heathen Authority – 7:4-8

A. Babylon – v. 4

1. *“The first was like a lion”* – the most noble and regal of the beasts and bird refers to the Babylonian Empire.
2. *“... and had the wings of an eagle”* – an appropriate reference to Nebuchadnezzar – a ruler described as possessing speed and capacity for effective action.
3. *“... its wings were plucked”* – a clear reference to the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar when he became insane when his ability for effective action was taken from him.
4. However, the consequence of his experience of humiliation was that he *“was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it.”*

B. Persia – v. 5

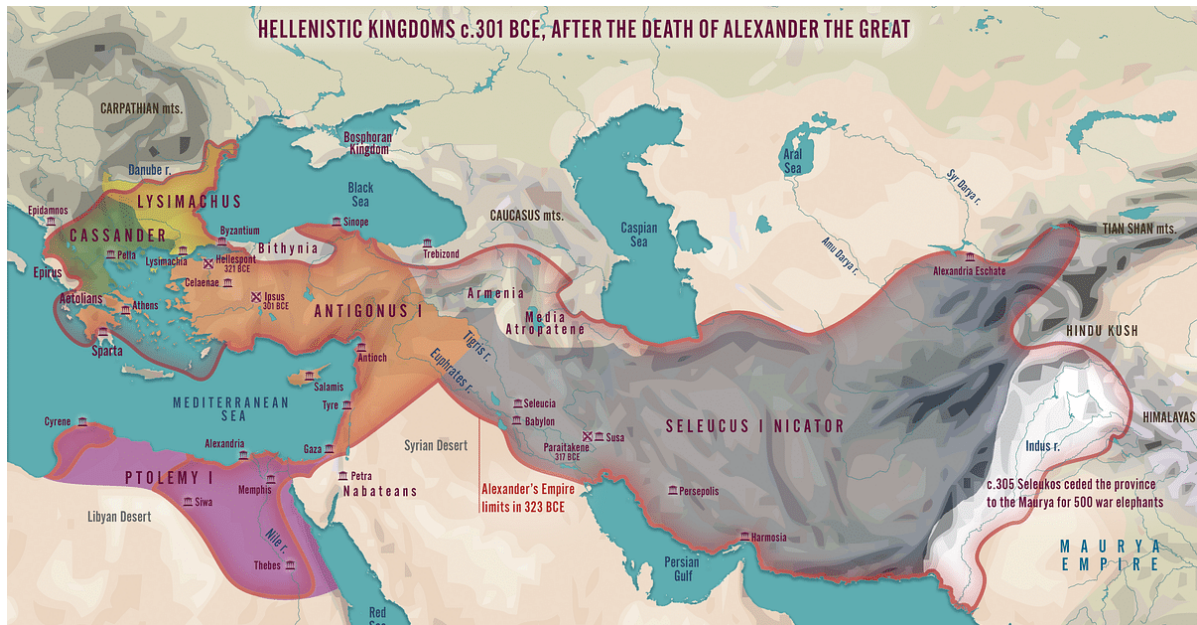
1. *“Another beast, a second one, resembling a bear”* – a reference to the Medo-Persian Empire, far more slow and heavy-going than the lion (Babylon).
2. *“... and it was raised up on one side”* – a reference to the fact that the Persian element of this dual kingdom outstripped the Medo element and dominated the policy and activity of the Empire.
3. *“... and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, ‘Arise, devour much meat!’”* – a reference to the voracious appetite of the Empire for additional conquest – even further than the kingdoms it had already vanquished = Medes, Persians, and Babylonians (the three ribs).

C. Greece – v. 6

1. *“Behold, another one, like a leopard”* – a reference to the Greek Empire under the rule of Alexander the Great.
2. *“... which had on its back four wings of a bird”* – describes the incredible speed with which Alexander conquered the world – assuming power at the age of 21 when his father was murdered, he took eleven years to conquer the world, dying at the age of 32.
3. *“... the beast also had four heads”* – a reference to the break-up of the Empire among the four generals of Alexander upon his death:
 - a) Cassander – Greece & Macedonia
 - b) Lysimachus – Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor
 - c) Seleucus – Syria and much of the Middle East

d) Ptolemy – Egypt

4. *“... and dominion was given to it.”* – Alexander’s incredible feat was something God had providentially determined to prepare for the



provision of the Messiah.

D. Rome – vv. 7-8

1. *“Behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth”* – a reference to the fierceness of the Roman Empire.
2. *“It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet and it was different from all the beasts that were before it,”* – Rome, through its Legions, were absolutely dominant with very little interest in raising conquered nations to any high level of development – unlike the previous Empires which usually assimilated conquered people.
3. *“... and it had ten horns”* – “horns” usually signifying kings in Scripture, suggests this form of the Roman Empire would have ten contemporaneous kings, presumably ruling over various portions of the Empire.
4. *“while I was contemplating the horns, behold another horn, a little one, came up among them”* – referring to the rise of the Antichrist who begins fairly insignificantly, but soon rises to absolute power.
5. *“... and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it”* –

the Man of Sin (Antichrist) overwhelms three of the kings and destroys them – replacing the three horns with one great horn that receives the allegiances of the other seven horns.

6. *“... and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.”* – a reference to the unusual abilities of the Antichrist’s perception and persuasiveness in his boastings against God – cp. **Revelation 13:1-10**.

III. **The Preview of Heavenly Judgment – 7:9-12**

A. **The Scene in Heaven – vv. 9-10**

1. There is a glorious description of the end judgment when the Antichrist is condemned.
2. He uses a very dramatic style in setting the stage for the judgment.
3. *“I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat”* – we will see later this particular mentioning of the *“Ancient of Days”* refers to God, the Father since He bestows the kingdom to His Son the next verses.
4. The purity and truth of the Judge is provided through the description *“His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool.”*
5. *“His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire”* – the consuming nature of the judgment and evaluation of God – nothing can withstand the penetration of His judgment.
6. *“A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him”* – a reference to the way the judgment of God seeks out and overwhelms those in the path of judgment – just like lava which consumes all in its path.
7. His attendants were innumerable and awaited His verdicts in the fashion of a gallery.
8. *“The court sat, and the books were opened”* – court was called to order and *“the books”* referring to those which included the deeds of men were opened for accusation of the Antichrist – cp. **Revelation 20:11-15**.

B. **The Severity of Judgment – vv. 11-12**

1. All the way up to the end, the Antichrist will be belching forth boasts and blasphemies, but God will deal with him swiftly and fiercely.
2. Daniel clearly sees the end – *“Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking*

until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire” – cp. [Revelation 19:19-20](#).

3. This is distinct from the way the other beasts had been dealt with – they had been absorbed into the kingdoms of their predecessors.
4. However, since the Kingdom of Christ’s glory is to succeed the futile reign of Antichrist, he could not be absorbed and is slain.
5. The Millennial Kingdom which succeeds the Antichrist’s rule will eliminate all competing dominions, but people in those dominions who submit to Christ will be allowed to live – *“As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.”*

God’s people can take heart in the ultimate triumph of God over the wickedness of men.