



TRUTH THAT NEVER CHANGES



George Ross

The Four Beasts of Daniel

Based on Daniel Chapter 7 - A natural sequel to Tract 1

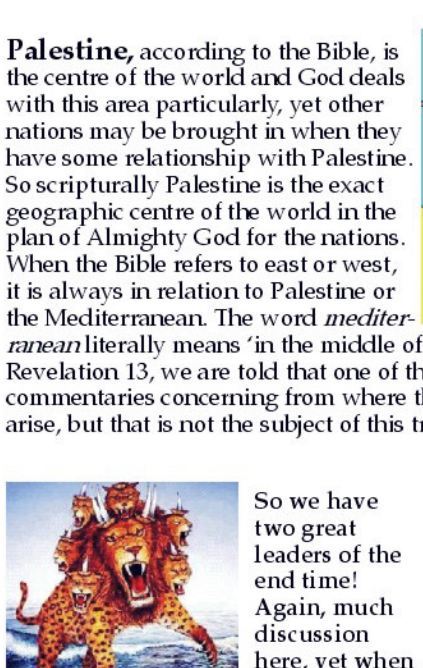
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In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven, churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea." DANIEL 7:1-3

This quotation from the first three verses of Daniel chapter 7 sums up what we'll be discussing in this tract.



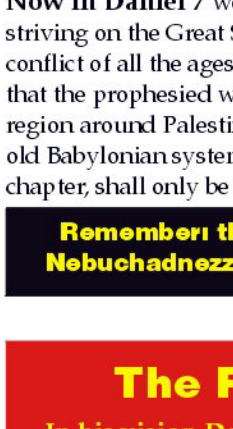
Tract #1 described Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a statue that prophesied the coming world empires, much of which has already been fulfilled. Now, beginning with chapter 7, we have a very graphic picture of history foreseen by Daniel up to the setting up of the eternal kingdom when the Lord Jesus returns. The above quote gives us the setting for this vision. We are told that an angel commanded the four winds to be held back from destroying the earth until the faithful remnant of God had been sealed in their foreheads. We believe God is going to preserve His faithful people by sealing them, and keeping them even through the storm of tribulation.



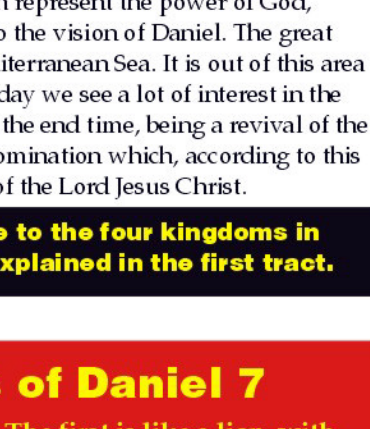
We are told that these four winds strove upon the great sea, which in Scripture refers to the Mediterranean Sea. In general there are only three seas in the Bible, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee and the Great Sea. So the setting for the four kingdoms in this 7th chapter revolves around the Mediterranean Sea. At the eastern end of this sea lies Palestine - the centre of human history and the place of God's government when Jesus returns.

Palestine, according to the Bible, is the centre of the world and God deals with this area particularly, yet other nations may be brought in when they have some relationship with Palestine. So scripturally Palestine is the exact geographic centre of the world in the plan of Almighty God for the nations. When the Bible refers to east or west, it is always in relation to Palestine or the Mediterranean. The word *mediterranean* literally means 'in the middle of the earth'. When we see the two beasts in Revelation 13, we are told that one of them comes out of the sea. (There are good commentaries concerning from where the political leaders of the end time will arise, but that is not the subject of this tract.)





So we have two great leaders of the end time! Again, much discussion here, yet when we consider the events of the times we are living in, they are surely about to appear!



Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. DANIEL 7:3

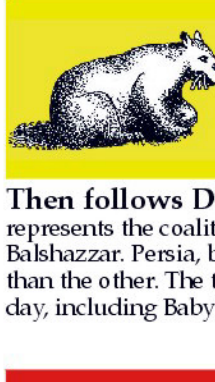
Now in Daniel 7 we have four winds, which represent the power of God, striving on the Great Sea. This introduces us to the vision of Daniel. The great conflict of all the ages centres around the Mediterranean Sea. It is out of this area that the prophesied world kingdoms arise. Today we see a lot of interest in the region around Palestine. This will continue to the end time, being a revival of the old Babylonian system of world power and domination which, according to this chapter, shall only be destroyed at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember! the four beasts relate to the four kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as we explained in the first tract.

The Four Beasts of Daniel 7

In his vision Daniel sees four beasts. The first is like a lion, with wings like an eagle. The second is like a bear and the third like a leopard, while the fourth is dreadful and unspecified. These beasts symbolise four world empires. The lion is the nation of Babylon, the bear is Medo-Persia, the leopard is Greece, and the last beast is Rome, both in its historic and prophetic form, which it will assume at the end of this age. The parallels with the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream we discussed in the first tract are obvious. The vision refers to the same period, the final form of gentile Babylonian world dominion.

The First Beast: Winged Lion



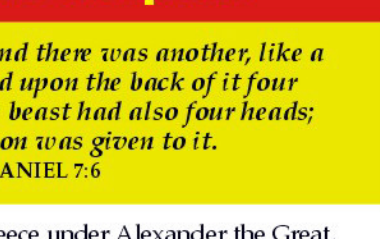
The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. DANIEL 7:4

We are told the lion had eagle's wings, indicating the speed with which Babylon carried out its conquest. But then Daniel notices that the wings are plucked, its power is taken away, and it is lifted from the earth and ultimately destroyed. This is a clear reference to the reign of Belshazzar.

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN

Balshazzar's reign ends with the miraculous writing on the wall. Daniel interprets this as foretelling the death of King Belshazzar, who is actually slain the same night. The words are *mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*, which is Aramaic for *numbered, numbered, weighed, divided*. (Daniel 5:25-31)

The 'writing on the wall' had such an impact that even today many cultures over the world use the phrase as a metaphor for impending doom.



Detail from Rembrandt's famous painting of the writing on the wall.

12 : 10 : 539 BC

12 October 539 BC: On this night King Belshazzar threw a huge party. In the midst of the festivities a hand appeared and wrote MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN on the wall. Daniel was called to interpret this, and he foretold Belshazzar's death at the hand of the Persian king, Cyrus II.

That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two. DANIEL 5:30-31



Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Shah of Iran (Persia)

12 : 10 : 1971 AD

12 October 1971 AD: On this same date 25 centuries later the Shah of Iran (Persia) held history's most extravagant party at the tomb of Cyrus the Great to celebrate Iran's 2500th anniversary and his own glory. He flew in eighteen tons of festive fare and royalty and rulers from all over the world were regaled for three days amidst the ancient ruins of Persepolis.

Once more we can only marvel at the accuracy of the Bible!

The Second Beast: Bear



And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, "Get up and eat your fill of flesh!" DANIEL 7:5

Then follows Daniel's vision of the second beast, the bear. This beast represents the coalition between the Medes and Persians, formed after the fall of Balshazzar. Persia, being more powerful, is represented by one side being higher than the other. The three ribs indicate it had overcome three world powers of its day, including Babylon.

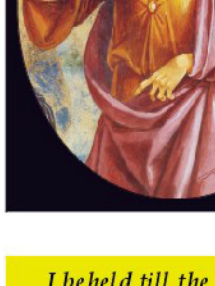
The Third Beast: Leopard



After this I beheld, and there was 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. DANIEL 7:6

The leopard is a graphic picture of Greece under Alexander the Great, symbolising the speed with which Alexander's armies overran the world three hundred years before Christ. Daniel tells us the leopard had four heads and we know after his death Alexander's huge empire was divided among four of his generals. All of this is historically confirmed.

The Fourth Beast: Dreadful Monster



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. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. DANIEL 7:7-8

The fourth beast symbolises the last era of gentile world dominion. Construing the 1,260 days as years means the prophesies in both Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 commence in 538 AD, a watershed year in European history. The (pagan) Roman Empire fell in 476 AD, but in effect re-established itself in AD 538 as the (Christian) Holy Roman Empire.

The new empire, however, gradually broke up into a number of kingdoms; yet since the Bible often uses the number 10 to denote completeness, the 'ten horns' of the fourth beast represent all the kingdoms that resulted from this dissolution. These horns refer to a time when ten great kingdoms will unite in a confederacy with papal involvement to guarantee peace and security for the world.

This interpretation is solidly supported by archaeology and original historical sources that coincide with the rest of the Books of Daniel and Revelation.

The Little Horn: Antichrist

The fourth beast had ten horns, signifying the kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire, the last form of Babylonianism. Yet the vision shows that these kingdoms will be divided in two alliances of five nations each, experiencing great difficulty to co-operate. Then finally a solution seems to be found, as Daniel notices a little horn appearing and plucking up three of the original horns. This horn he describes as having eyes like a man and a mouth speaking great things.

This little horn is the *man of sin*, the Antichrist, who will arise in the confusion of the nations in their futile efforts to bring peace and confederacy.



For a short period the 'pompous' Antichrist will succeed in unifying the ten nations, particularly in rehabilitating the people of Israel and Palestine. He will bring order out of disorder and even defuse the threat of war, bringing the promise of a long hoped-for millennial rest.

But he will be extremely powerful, dominating the world, and he "will speak against the Most High and oppress His holy people". His reign, however, will be short-lived, as we read in Daniel 7:9-11 and 13-14.

The Deeds of Antichrist by Luca Signorelli, c 1505, showing the Antichrist directed by Satan

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. DANIEL 7:9-11



I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

And there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. DANIEL 7: 13-14

But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap. MALACHI 3:2

The picture is now clear: Kingdom after kingdom arising only to fall, all man's efforts failing to bring about the desired peace and prosperity man has longed for since time began.

Then finally the Antichrist, the enemy of God, Satan incarnate, will make one final attempt to bring together all of the disorganised factions of the world, only to be destroyed by the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear friend!

As we look at the world today, with its wars and troubles, we cannot ignore the fact that all these things have been prophesied by Daniel, and that many have already come to pass. The next event, we believe, will be the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to put down His enemies and set up His Everlasting Kingdom.

May the Lord help us to be ready for His appearing!

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