

Daniel 7:1-6 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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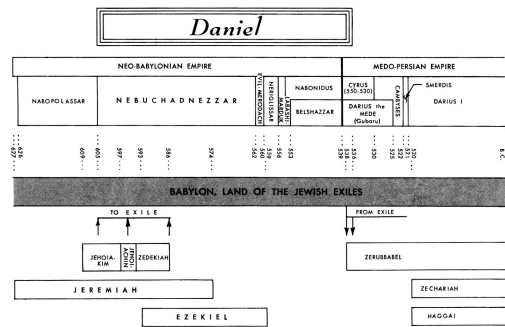
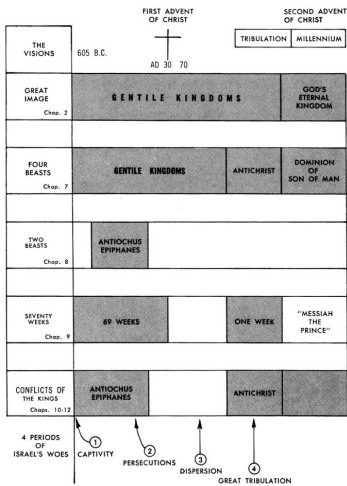
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MAINLY HISTORICAL: 6 HISTORICAL NARRATIVES							MAINLY PREDICTIVE: 4 APOCALYPTIC VISIONS					
Daniel interprets others' dreams							Angel interprets Daniel's dreams					
Nebuchadnezzar				Belshazzar	Darius		Belshazzar	Darius	C y r u s			
NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM —MAN—							DANIEL'S VISION —BEASTS—					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
written in Hebrew	written in Aramaic						written in Hebrew					A KEY VERSE: 4:17 A KEY WORD: dream
INTRODUCTION	GENTILE NATIONS						HEBREW NATION					
Jews in a Gentile Setting	Destinies in God's Hand	IMPOTENT IN OPPOSING GOD				Destinies in God's Hand	—Destiny in God's Plan —Blessed for Obeying God					
						centuries before CHRIST	through all the ages to the end of time					

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF THE IMAGE		FULFILLMENT	DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS	
P R O P H E C Y			P R O P H E C Y	
DREAM 2:31-33	INTERPRETATION 2:34-44		INTERPRETATION 2:12-28	DREAM 7:1-14
① HEAD		NEO-BABYLONIAN 612-539 B.C.		LION ①
② BREASTS AND ARMS		MEDO-PERSIAN 539-333 B.C.		BEAR ②
③ BELLY AND THIGHS		GRECIAN 331-63 B.C.		LEOPARD ③
④ LEGS FEET		ROMAN → FOUR ① Supremacy of Ancient Rome 63 B.C.—A.D. 476 ② Rome-derived governments ③ Antichrist		DIVERSE BEAST ④
C O N S U M M A T I O N				
	GOD'S INDESTRUCTIBLE KINGDOM 2:44	MESSIANIC KINGDOM		ANCIENT OF DAYS (God) at the throne
STONE		CHRIST		SON OF MAN (Christ) 8:13-14, 13:26-35

Daniel 2 and Daniel 7



Click chart to enlarge
Charts from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[Daniel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

Daniel 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon 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.

- **Belshazzar:** Da 5:1,22,30 8:1 Jer 27:3
- **Daniel:** Da 2:1,28,29 4:5 Nu 12:6 Job 33:14-16 Jer 23:28 Joe 2:28 Am 3:7 Ac 2:17,18
- **visions:** Da 7:7,13,15 Ge 15:1 46:2 Job 4:13 Eze 1:1 2Co 12:1
- **wrote:** Isa 8:1 30:8 Hab 2:2 Ro 15:4 Rev 1:19 10:4
- Daniel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Clarence Larkin's Classic Chart on Daniel
[Click to Enlarge](#)

A DIVINE PANORAMA
OF THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

Daniel 7 gives us a "panorama" of the history of the world from God's perspective. Webster says that the word panorama is "a picture exhibited a part at a time, by being unrolled before the spectator. An unobstructed or complete view in every direction; hence a comprehensive presentation of a subject. A mental picture of a series of scenes or events." **Panorama** is derived from **pan** = all + **horama** = that which is seen.

In the first year - This flashback was approximately 14 years before the fatal feast of Belshazzar in 539BC. This vision represents the first of four visions God gives to Daniel...

AFTER DANIEL 4 BUT BEFORE DANIEL 5

- **Vision #1** - Daniel 7:1 - First year of King Belshazzar (~553 BC) - Daniel ~ 67 yo
- **Vision #2** - Daniel 8:1 - Third year of King Belshazzar (~551 BC) - Daniel ~ 69 yo

AFTER THE FALL OF BABYLON 539 BC

- **Vision #3** - Daniel 9:2, 23 - First year of Darius the Mede (~538/539 BC) - Daniel ~ 81 yo
- **Vision #4** - Daniel 10:1 - Third year of Cyrus the Persian (~535/536 BC) - Daniel ~ 86 yo

Note that Daniel 7, like Daniel 2, reveals the prophetic course of Gentile dominion on the earth (cp **the times of the Gentiles**" in Luke 21:24), which explains in part why it is written in **Aramaic**, the international language ("lingua franca") of Daniel's day. Daniel returns to the Hebrew language beginning in Daniel 8:1 and continuing through Daniel 12:13 primarily because these last three visions give very specific details regarding **God's plan for the refining and restoration of the nation of Israel**. It is a serious hermeneutical mistake to replace "Israel" with the "Church", for then the "Israel centric" chapters Daniel 8-12 cannot be accurately interpreted.

J. F. Walvoord rightly remarks that "**Chapter 7 is a high point in revelation in the book of Daniel**; and, in some sense, the material before as well as the material which follows pivots upon the detailed revelation of this chapter." ([Daniel 7 - Daniel's Vision Of Future World History](#))

Someone has well said that

**Only he who knows prophecy
can dwell in the calm of eternity now.**

Determine to diligently, rightly divide Daniel 7 (cp 2Ti 2:15-note) and to live in the light of this truth and His Spirit will bring the "calm of eternity" into your heart now! As summarized above, beginning in Daniel 7 and to the end of the book we come face to face with this great prophet's apocalyptic visions. Remember that the word *apocalypse* is from the Greek verb **apokalupto (word study)** which literally means to **remove the cover from** and thus it means to remove that which conceals something. In the context of Daniel 7-12, the idea is that spiritual truth that was heretofore hidden, now has the "lid removed", so that it can be seen and understood by all who have eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. And when we understand (and believe) these truths, we will be transformed to live in light of them, in short, to live in the light of God's Plan for the Ages. Remember that what a person believes, always determines how he or she behaves.

Beloved, **"we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which (we) do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in (our) hearts."** (2Peter 1:19-note). **May we all make those daily choices to live in the light of God's eternal truth, in the light of His glorious, victorious plan for the ages! Amen**

RECALL THE... TWO DIVISIONS OF DANIEL		
	DANIEL 1-6	DANIEL 7-12
J Vernon McGee	The Historic Night with Prophetic Light	The Prophetic Light in the Historic Night
Irving Jensen	Mainly Historical: 6 Historical Narratives	Mainly Predictive: 4 Apocalyptic Visions
Irving Jensen	Daniel Interprets Other's Dreams	Angel (?) Interprets Daniel's Dreams

In summary, Daniel 1-6 is primarily **history** with a "dash" of prophecy, while Daniel 7-12 is primarily **prophecy** with a "dash" of history. The structure of Daniel 7 may be summarized as...

- Daniel 7:1 Introductory setting

- Daniel 7:2-14 Vision
- Daniel 7:15 Response
- Daniel 7:16-27 Interpretation
- Daniel 7:28 Response

Why is Daniel 7 so important? In a word, Daniel 7 gives us God's **Blueprint for Bible Prophecy**! When you get a good **'hold'** on Daniel 7, the truth of Daniel 7 will **hold** you when everything in the world seems to be falling apart! You can remain confident that because of God's sovereignty over kings and kingdoms in the past, the present is not falling apart but in fact is coming together for the consummation of the ages the capstone event being the **Second Coming** of the King, Christ Jesus! Learn the "skeleton" truths of Daniel 7 and you will be able to put "meat" on the bones, for all other Bible prophecies of the end times fit into the framework of Daniel 7. God's heart is for His children, His Son's bond-servants, to know His secret counsel as emphasized by the following passages...

Amos writes that...

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His **secret counsel** to His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

David adds that...

The **secret** of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. (Note what one who "fears" Him will chose to do...) My eyes are continually toward the LORD (**Jehovah**), for He will pluck my feet out of the net. (Beloved snares and traps are thrown out for us every day in manifold ways, but looking to our Lord will ensure that we are like spiritual "Boy Scouts" whose motto is "**Be Prepared**") (Ps 25:14)

Comment: **Secret counsel** and **secret** are the same Hebrew word **sod** ([05475](#)) which conveys the primary meaning of "confidential speech" (cf. Arabic sa'wada "speak secretly") as when one in a group of intimates shares confidential matters. Note these other uses of this wonderful Hebrew word (in bold) in the NAS: Pr 3:32 = **intimate** with the upright; Ps 55:14 = **sweet fellowship**; Ps 111:1 = In the **company** of the upright; Job 29:4 = the **friendship** of God).

C H Spurgeon on Ps 25:14: The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him Some read it "the friendship:" it signifies familiar intercourse, confidential intimacy, and select fellowship. This is a great secret. Carnal minds cannot guess what is intended by it, and even believers cannot explain it in words, for it must be felt to be known. The higher spiritual life is necessarily a path which the eagle's eye hath not known, and which the lion's whelp has not traveled; neither natural wisdom (1Co 2:14) nor strength can force a door into this inner chamber. **Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics; they can unriddle celestial enigmas.** They are initiated into the fellowship of the skies; they have heard words which it is not possible for them to repeat to their fellows.

And He will show them His covenant. Its antiquity, security, righteousness, fulness, graciousness and excellence, shall be revealed to their hearts and understandings, and above all, their own part in it shall be sealed to their souls by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The designs of love which the Lord has to His people in the covenant of grace, He has been pleased to show to believers in the Book of Inspiration, and by His Spirit He leads us into the mystery, even the hidden mystery of redemption. **He who does not know the meaning of this verse, will never learn it from a commentary; let him look to the cross, for the secret lies there.** ([see full note](#))

Oswald Chambers on Ps 25:14 asks: "What is the sign of a friend? That he tells you secret sorrows? No, that he tells you secret joys. Many will confide to you their secret sorrows, but the last mark of intimacy is to confide secret joys. Have we ever let God tell us any of His joys, or are we telling God our secrets so continually that we leave no room for Him to talk to us?... The things that make God dear to us are not so much His great big blessings as the tiny things, because they show His amazing intimacy with us

Why is Prophecy so important? **Dr Charles Feinberg** a Jewish believer offers the following encouragement regarding why believers should study prophecy...

From the positive angle a study of the prophetic Scriptures will accomplish several things **for the willing heart:** (**Ed: This begs the question dear reader "Is your heart willing to receive what God's Spirit desires to give?"**)

(1) It will bring us near to God (Ge 18:17 and Jn 15:14,15). Friends, not servants, are told confidences (**Ed:**

See above Amos 3:7, Ps 25:14). In prophecy God invites us into His deepest plans. What attitude is that which cares much for God to provide our daily need, but will not listen to Him disclose His plans?

(2) It affords a knowledge of world-wide purposes What vast subjects are handled! The greatest in the world: the destiny of Israel, the nations, the Church, the goal of men: heaven or hell, the reign of Christ on earth. What a cure for narrow-mindedness or limited vision!

(3) It brightens hope (Ro 8:24a-note). This element plays a large part in the believer's life. It has a relation to all he is, hopes to be, and will experience in realization. Faith looks up and back; love looks around; hope looks onward.

(4) It presents the words and speech of God, as does the rest of the Word(Dt 29:29). God has spoken in prophecy. This is paramount. Whenever and wherever and however God speaks, it is our duty to listen and obey.

(5) It affords the true perspective of history (Ro 11:36-note). Sometimes in the midst of the affairs of life our vision gets blurred and out of focus. It is prophecy that gives us the proper perspective of history. Only in its light can we know our day (2Pet 1:19-note).

(6) It purifies the life (1Th 3:11, 12, 13-note; 2Pe 3:11-note, 2Pe 3:14-note; 1Jn 3:1-note, 1Jn 3:2-note, 1Jn 3:3-note). It is a mighty force to shape the life in conformity with God's will for our sanctification. Chief Sekomi said to Livingstone in Africa, "I wish you would change my heart. Give me medicine to change it, for it is proud, proud and angry, angry always." He would not hear of God's way but wanted an outward means. God has provided cleansing by the blood of Christ in salvation and through the believer's experience. Prophetic truth is an aid to this end.

(From the body of the article Dr Feinberg expands this point) A knowledge of prophecy, particularly of the imminent return of the Lord, is conducive to a proper Christian walk. Values are seen in their relative importance. There is not a dissipating of purpose and energy between the things of this world and those of heaven (**Ed:** cp Eph 5:16-note, Ps 90:12-note). A wise teacher once attributed the suffering and misery of man to the fact that he has one foot in the finite and one in the infinite, with the result that he is torn asunder between two worlds (**Ed:** cp Mt 6:24-note and its association with "anxiety" Mt 6:25-note). Many Christians are attempting to walk with Christ, while they consort with the world (**Ed:** cp Jas 4:4-note, 1Jn 2:15-note, 1Jn 2:16-note, 1Jn 2:17-note). **The cause is often to be found in their lack of knowledge of prophetic things, which would have a strong tendency to draw their eyes from the things of this world, and to fix them upon Christ and His future purposes.)**

(7) It influences our service (1Th 2:19-note). All truth in the Word of God is meant in one way or other to influence or affect our service. If it has not or does not, we have misunderstood it or willfully failed to apply it. If the study of prophecy has not and does not affect our service for God, we have not felt the full power and force of it. We have not permitted it to touch our lives. (**I recommend reading Dr Feinberg's entire article [God's Message to Man through the Prophets](#)**) (Bolding, color and some cross references added)

SOME THOUGHTS ON STUDYING DANIEL 7

If one accepts that Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 describe the same prophetic/historic events (and I do take that approach), then what we find is that Daniel 7 gives us "**progressive revelation**" of the foundational truths in Daniel 2, especially the facts regarding the **Fourth Kingdom/Fourth Beast** (in particular that portion of Daniel's prophecy which has not yet been fulfilled) and the **Fifth Kingdom**, the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. Daniel 7 in turn provides a framework which is progressively expanded with new truths revealed in Daniel 8-12 and then finally and fully in the NT in the **Revelation of Jesus Christ**. Without the framework of Daniel 7, accurate interpretation of these other chapters in Daniel and the book of the Revelation become very difficult, if not even impossible! Therefore it behooves anyone who honestly seeks to know God's heart and His plan for the "History of the World" to study Daniel 7 diligently. That does not mean reading the chapter twice or even twenty times! What it means is that one takes the chapter apart verse by verse, phrase by phrase, sometimes even word by word, carefully observing for those truths which are not controversial or nebulous (some phrases are difficult to interpret dogmatically) and comparing these truths with those found in Daniel 2. While there are other ways to study Scripture, after 30 years of studying, I have found that far and away the most productive has been **inductive Bible study** and that in particular the discipline of **observation** (Note Daniel "**kept looking intently**" [Da 7:2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 21] something every student of this chapter should do) especially valuable in comparing the many pictures and figurative allusions that one typically encounters in the study of prophetic (apocalyptic) literature (especially Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Revelation).

As someone once said (maybe it was Yogi Berra) "You can't go where you're going until you know where you've been!" Study Daniel 7 diligently and you will come to know that you know that you know!

I cannot encourage you too strongly to set aside some time to carefully study this chapter led by your Teacher the Spirit (Jn 16:13) taking care to avoid being biased by any commentaries (including this one - **in fact** I would suggest you read no further until you've observed the text for yourself!). I own upwards to 50 commentaries on the book of Daniel and have been absolutely flabbergasted and amazed as I read through what some of these authors' interpretations of Daniel 7! Not only was I confused but I became somewhat frustrated, which may explain why **Daniel chapters 1-6** are taught (in Sunday School lessons, in sermons) much more frequently than **Daniel chapters 7-12**.

Daniel 7-12 is categorized as "**Apocalyptic Literature** (Genre)" (along with the Revelation, Ezekiel, Zechariah) which is in itself revealing (pun intended). How so? The word for **Revelation** (Rev 1:1-[note](#)) in Greek is from the verb apokalupto (from **apo** = from + **kalupto** = cover) which literally means to remove the cover from and so to uncover so as to cause something to be fully seen or known, thus exposing to open view what was before hidden. Beloved, inherent in God's inspired "title" of the book of the Revelation we find in a sense His promise of unveiling or uncovering to full view the truths therein. So far from being closed, hidden, hard to comprehend, confusing, mysterious, etc, Daniel 7-12 (and the other apocalyptic literature in Scripture) is meant to be understood (not that there won't be specific phrases or details that remain somewhat difficult to interpret dogmatically, but that the main points of prophetic truth are exposed so that they might be clearly grasped).

Stephen Motyer has an interesting description of **apocalyptic** as a

Type of biblical literature that emphasizes the lifting of the veil between heaven and earth and the revelation of God and His plan for the world. **Apocalyptic** writings are marked by distinctive literary features, particularly prediction of future events and accounts of visionary experiences or journeys to heaven, often involving vivid symbolism. Later apocalypses often build upon and elaborate the symbolism employed by earlier ones... The fundamental conviction of **apocalyptic** is that the world may be understood, but only by revelation that enables understanding... **Apocalyptic** is distinguished from other forms of prophecy in that God himself rarely speaks. The revelation is communicated through angels or other heavenly figures. (See complete article - [apocalyptic - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

Jesus promised His disciples (and by way of application all believers) that...

when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and **He will disclose to you what is to come.** (Jn 16:13)

John adds that...

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you (speaking of the indwelling Holy Spirit), and you have no need for anyone to teach you (John is not saying we never need teachers but in context is speaking of the Spirit's enabling believers to discern truth from error); but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (1 Jn 2:27+)

So if all believers have the Resident Teacher, the Holy Spirit and He is able to guide us into all the truth and even disclose what is to come, why is there such confusion and disagreement in studies and commentaries on the apocalyptic writings like Daniel 7? The short answer is...

**The book of Daniel isn't hard to understand...
It's hard to believe!**

Apocalyptic literature contains predictive prophecy but many commentators surprisingly refuse to believe in a God who can predict future events and since Daniel 7-12 is partially fulfilled (history) and partially unfulfilled (predictive prophecy) you will find a wide range of comments which in some works actually express conflicting views! In short, you need to study the text for yourself so you will be able to comment on the commentators! Remember that when it comes to predictive prophecy...

**Ignorance of the future...
Is NOT bliss!**

As **Rodney Stortz** writes...I would venture to say that most Christians could not tell you what is contained in chapters 7–12 of the book of Daniel... Some people do not study the prophecies of Daniel 7-12 because they are convinced they will never be able to understand them. They have the opinion that if scholars cannot agree on the interpretation of these chapters, they will not be able to understand the true meaning. Other people do not study these chapters because they think the prophecies are too frightening... Listen, if these prophecies trouble you or disturb you, you are in good company. Daniel 7:15 says, "I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit,

and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me." (Stortz, R. Daniel: The triumph of God's kingdom. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books)

Dr John Walvoord the dean of modern prophecy (now with the Lord) wrote that chapter 7 of Daniel is...one of the great prophecies of the Bible and the key to the entire program of God from Babylon to the second coming of Christ... (and) provides the most comprehensive and detailed prophecy of future events to be found anywhere in the Old Testament ([Daniel 7 - Daniel's Vision Of Future World History](#))

Pastor Chuck Swindoll entitles Daniel 7 "**A Prophetic Collage**" (**Ed: Collage** = an artistic composition made of various materials) for "gives us a panoramic perspective of what God has in store for both believers and unbelievers." He adds that while Daniel 7 "appears to be a confusing collection of animals, persons, nations and events, it is actually a harmonious **collage** of the Lord's sovereign activity in human history." (From Bible Study Guide: Daniel - God's Pattern for the Future, page 62, 1986)

IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

The following list is by no means exhaustive but is given to highlight the vital importance of the study of prophecy (fulfilled and unfulfilled) in these last days...

(1) The Bible is true because of fulfilled prophecy. In fact fulfilled prophecy is one of the best if not the best verification of the authenticity and reliability of the Bible. Prophecy is a confirmation of God's omniscience and omnipotence. Daniel's accurate prediction of 4 great world empires assures us that those aspects of the Daniel 7 prophecy not yet fulfilled will in fact be fulfilled... perfectly!

Lehman Strauss in his commentary quotes in E. L. Langston of England in The Prophetic News and Israel's Watchman (January 1959)...

Do we realize that at least half of the prophecies foreshadowed in this book have literally come to pass, just as specified 2,500 years ago? Therefore, surely we are to expect the remaining prophecies to be just as literally and minutely fulfilled." (Lehman Strauss – The Prophecies of Daniel)

(2) The Bible is true because it touches experience and experience verifies its truth This includes the effect of the Bible on society and on individuals, specifically the evidence of a changed life (2Co 5:17).

(3) The Bible is true because it is scientifically accurate.

(4) The Bible is true because it is historically accurate as verified by archaeology. As discussed the skeptics pointed to Daniel 5 and the use of the name Belshazzar as proof of the inaccuracy of Daniel, until the mid-1800's when archaeology proved his existence. The Hittites mentioned some 50 times in the Scripture were unknown until discovered by archaeology digs 90 miles east of Ankara, Turkey in 1906. Nelson Glueck, a Jewish archaeologist said

It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.

(5) The Bible is true because its manuscripts are reliable The Dead Sea Scrolls attest to its reliability - fragments of every OT book were found and a book of Isaiah and textually there was no difference with the next oldest manuscripts copied some 1000 years later, findings which assure the OT text has been accurately preserved. Similarly, thousands of NT manuscripts have been discovered and although none are original, and reveal only minor variations with none that change the meaning of the passage. Compare 10 manuscripts of Caesar's Gallic wars the earliest dating to AD900 with 14,000 manuscripts of the NT, the earliest dated to AD125. (**Related Resource:** For more discussion of this important topic see the RBC Booklet - [Can I Really Trust The Bible?](#))

What the Bible says will come to pass because only an omniscient, all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful God, could both know and bring to pass the things that are predetermined - see Isa 42:9 44:7 45:21 46:9,10.

John MacArthur writes that Daniel 7 is...

significant for a number of reasons:

- (1) it demonstrates God's sovereignty over earthly affairs and human history;
- (2) it provides a clear glimpse of the prophetic future—specifically the events leading up to the Second Advent of Christ;
- (3) it shows the veracity of the Word of God (in the numerous prophecies already fulfilled in history);
- (4) it gives believers a wonderful role model in the person of Daniel, who lived a life of faithfulness and

devotion.

(MacArthur, J. Daniel : God's Control over Rulers and Nations. MacArthur Bible Studies. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group)

In the first year of Belshazzar - The year would be about 553BC, almost 50 years after Daniel's prophetic interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's metallic statue dream and 14 years before the party of Da 5:1,2,3. This places the vision after Daniel 4 but before Daniel 5.

Observe that each of Daniel's **visions** in Daniel 7-12 are specifically dated as shown in the table below. The last four visions focus on God's plan for Israel, whereas the prophecy in Daniel 2 was primarily focused on God's dealings with the Gentile kingdoms until the end of this age.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF DANIEL'S FOUR GREAT PROPHETIC VISIONS		
CHAPTER	DANIEL'S DESCRIPTION	DATE
Da 7:1	first year of Belshazzar	553BC
Da 8:1	third year of the reign of Belshazzar	551BC
Da 9:1, 21, 23	first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus	539BC
Da 10:1	third year of Cyrus king of Persia	536BC

Nebuchadnezzar died in 562BC (we last read about him in Daniel 4), nine years before Belshazzar began to reign (we read about him in Daniel 5), so that the **vision of Daniel 7** was given to Daniel between chapters 4 and 5. From the table it is clear that Da 8:1 also occurred between chapters 4-5 and the visions of Da 9:1 and Da 10:1 are related to Daniel 6 and the inception of the Medo-Persian kingdom.

Although **King Belshazzar** seems to have paid little attention to the great prophet **Daniel** (Da 5:10, 11, 12, 13, 16-notes), God clearly had not forgotten his highly esteemed servant (Da 9:23, 10:11, 19) and choose to reveal to him the most incredible prophecies in all the Word of God during his time out of the "limelight". It is notable that all of these visions were given when Daniel was in the latter years of his life (from about 68yo to about 85yo), emphasizing that "retirement" (even Belshazzar's "shelving" of Daniel!) was not on God's agenda for His chosen vessel (nor is it on His agenda for any of His esteemed bond-servants, so let us all take Paul's charge to heart and redeem the time [Eph 5:16-note]!).

Daniel saw a dream and visions (dream = singular, visions = plural ~ several "stages") - In Da 1:17-note we observed that one aspect of God's "**favor**" (Da 1:9-note) was that Daniel was given the ability to understand "**all kinds of visions and dreams**", which is interesting because he did not understand these **visions** (Da 7:16).

Towner writes that "Daniel turns now from public demonstrations of the power of the God of Israel in a strange land to the private reception of visions of the future destiny of God's chosen ones." (Towner, W. S. Daniel. Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching. Atlanta: John Knox Press)

Leupold writes that by **summary** Daniel - Appears to say that the essential features were culled out of the great variety of details that a long dream presented so as not to present a bewildering array of detail... a significant reminder that every word is carefully chosen and to the point; unessential items are passed by.

Daniel 7:2 Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea

- Rev 7:1
- **great sea**: Rev 17:15
- Daniel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Daniel said - From this point on the account is in the first person as Daniel shares this personal revelation from God to His choice servant. Some might question that if this is in the first person, then who wrote Daniel 7:1 which is written from the perspective of third person?

Jeske explains that

Unlike other prophets (Isa 1:1; Jer 1:1), the book of Daniel contains no heading or clear statement calling Daniel its author. Yet the book does point to Daniel as the author. We have here a situation something like that of the first five books of the Old Testament, in which **Moses** often writes of himself in the **third** person, as does Daniel here... If Daniel is named as the one who received the divine revelation recorded here, then it follows that he is the author. The question "Who wrote the book?" is settled finally for us by Christ himself. Quoting from the book of Daniel, Jesus referred to the words as being "spoken ... through the prophet Daniel" (Mt 24:15). Both the Jewish and the Christian churches have for centuries agreed that Daniel wrote this book...

For a number of reasons, many Bible scholars prefer to think that the book of Daniel was not written by Daniel, and not in the sixth century BC, but by an unknown author, some pious Jew, in the second century BC. At the heart of the debate about the date of the book is the matter of predictive prophecy, since Daniel frequently refers to events in the distant future. Many scholars reason as follows: It is impossible for any human being to predict events that lie in the future; therefore, a book that contains such predictions must have been written after the events which it predicts. But if we believe that the God who controls the future chose to reveal to Daniel events that were still in the future, then there is no valid reason for contesting the book's claim to be the record of the life and visions of Daniel himself. (Jeske, J. C. Daniel. The People's Bible. Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Pub. House)

I was looking (Da 7:4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 21) - This repeated phrase is similar to the other phrase in Daniel 7 **kept looking** which more literally is "I was gazing intently". What is the significance of this repetitive statement? Clearly Daniel was fascinated by the vision God had given him and he examined it carefully. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ we see John uses the verb "saw" 49 times and "look" (looked, etc) some 14 times. Both these apocalyptic books are very "visual" if you will!

Behold - An interjection which indicates surprise and/or amazement and (not surprisingly) occurs 5 times in Daniel 7 (Da 7:2, 5, 6, 7, 13)! To say that this interjection calls attention to something unusual is an understatement in the context of this chapter! Little surprise that by Daniel 7:14 the prophet's "spirit was distressed" and his "mind kept alarming" him! (Da 7:28)

Four winds of heaven (cp Da 8:8) - These winds are described in a way that pictures them as contemporaneously **stirring up the great sea**. These probably represent supernatural "winds" and not literal winds, for it states that these winds originate in heaven. The Hebrew word (related to the Aramaic word in this passage) for winds in the OT can be translated as **angel**. **TWOT** notes that the Hebrew word may "designate a supernatural, angelic being, "a spirit from God" (1Sa 16:23)." (See also Jer 49:36, 51:1, Zec 6:5).

Gregg Allen - The four winds of heaven probably represent circumstances, under the divine hand of the Sovereign God, that cause turbulence and a stirring in the Gentile world. It is from this "stirring" of the "sea" that these four world-kingdoms arise. ([Daniel 7](#))

See related discussion -

- [The Number Four in the Revelation \(Tony Garland\)](#)

Four may denote the four directions of the earth (N, S, E, W) and thus implies the "churning" or "stirring up" by the winds is universal.

Keil - The **winds** of the heavens represent the heavenly powers and forces by which God sets the (Gentile) nations of the world in motion.

Whitcomb - **The four winds of heaven** probably speak of the angelic forces through which God controls and moves the nations. Of more than 120 references in the Bible to wind (more than 90 in the OT and about 30 in the NT), **well over half are related to events and ideas which reflect the sovereignty and power of God** (**Ed note:** In other words >50% of the uses of "wind" in Scripture refer to God's sovereignty causing something to happen! As an aside many of the uses of wind are associated with judgment, eg, see Ge 8:1, Ex 10:13, 15:10, Rev 7:1-[note](#)). ([Whitcomb, J: Daniel- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#))

Stirring up - Churning up. The **Septuagint** translates it with a Greek verb (prosballo) which means to strike, to dash against, to blow violently upon and the **imperfect tense** picturing this as happening over and over. One gets the picture of waves continually chaotically crashing, an apt description of the **great sea** the Gentile nations of the world (see note below).

Beloved, the world may look like it's falling apart, but in fact it is "coming together" a truth understood by those who know the end of "the story" (even as expounded here in Daniel 7). As we see the foundations of our world seemingly shaken by economic woes, poverty, senseless bloodshed, etc, we need to continually recall that world "**History**" is "**HIS-tory**"! Our God has not abdicated His throne but is still in control of kings and kingdoms (cp Da 2:21-note) and is working all things out toward a glorious consummation, the return of the Rightful Heir and King of kings (**Second Coming**). There is a "**stirring up**" going on even today in the Gentile

nations of the world -- just look at the headlines of your newspaper!

The great sea - A number of commentators interpret this phrase as a reference to the Mediterranean Sea, which in Scripture is specifically called the **great sea** (Nu 34:6, 7, Josh 1:4, 9:1, 15:12, 47, 23:4, Ezek 47:10, 15, 19, 20, 48:28). To be sure, all four of the kingdoms (see below) alluded to in this beastly prophecy were at least partially contiguous with the Mediterranean Sea (Mediterranean = "middle of the earth"). However many conservative commentators interpret the **great sea** as a picture of the (Gentile) nations of the world or the "sea of humanity" (cp Jesus' figurative use in Mt 13:47) in a state of continual turbulence (cp "sea" in Isa 17:12, sinful humanity compared to the sea in Isa 57:20). The context would seem to support the figurative interpretation of **great sea**, for in Da 7:3 we read of **"four great beast... coming up from the sea"** which would be more compatible with the view that the **great sea** referred to peoples and nations (Gentiles). Further confirmation is another prophetic passage in Revelation which defines the **waters** as "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." (Rev 17:15-[note](#)) Although the fact that that Da 7:17 says they arise **from the earth**, would also support a figurative usage, in this case the mass of humanity.

Miller reasons that...

The phrase **the great sea** does denote this body of water elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g., Josh 1:4; 9:1; 15:12, 47), but that identification does not appear to have any significance here. Daniel interpreted this symbol for the reader later in the chapter, and Scripture passages elsewhere also make the meaning clear. In Da 7:3 four **great beasts** are portrayed as coming up from the **sea**, whereas Da 7:17 states that these **beasts** rise up from the **earth**. Thus Da 7:17 interprets the "sea" to be symbolic of the "earth," and the beasts that rise out of this "sea" are interpreted later in the chapter as being great "earthly" kingdoms. ([Miller, S. R. Vol. 18: Daniel The New American Commentary \(195\). Nashville: Broadman & Holman](#))

Whitcomb writes that...

In biblical symbolism, **the great sea** pictures fallen humanity (cf Isa 8:6, 7, 8; 17:12,13; 57:20; Je 6:23; 46:7, 8; 47:2; Mt 13:47; Rev 13:1;17:1,15). ([Whitcomb, J: Daniel- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#))

Hitchcock feels it has...

both a literal and a (figurative) interpretation. Literally speaking, **"the great sea"** generally refers to the Mediterranean Sea, which is so-called because it is situated geographically in the center of the earth. It is a **great sea** because it borders on so many large continents. It is a **great sea** because, around its shores the great empires of history have risen and fallen. We shall assume, therefore, that the **great sea** in its literal (sense), in this passage refers to the Mediterranean Sea. In a (figurative) sense, however, the **great sea** refers to the great unorganized masses of mankind. ([Daniel Commentary](#))

Daniel 7:3 "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another

- Da 2:32,33,37, 38, 39, 40 Zec 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- **beasts**: Da 7:4, 5, 6, 7, 8,17 Ps 76:4 Eze 19:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Rev 13:1
- Daniel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ANIMALISTIC ANALOGY

Four great beasts - We learn in Da 7:17 that the **great beasts** are **four kings** who **will arise**. Naturally, **kings** speak of a kingdoms and thus the vision is of 4 great kingdoms (e.g., in Da 7:23, 24 instead of "**king**" we read the **fourth beast** represents a "**kingdom**") which are pictured as ferocious, wild beasts. These world empires are human in origin and vicious in character. This metaphor undoubtedly conveys several truths, including the eagerness of these kingdoms to gratify their own appetites even at the expense of inflicting harm on other men. As indicated in the table below, Daniel 2 is man's perspective of the world empires (man's view of world history) and Daniel 7 is God's perspective (God's view of world history). God sees the same kingdoms which appear glorious and powerful in Daniel 2 (cp men's esteem of his accomplishments - Ge 11:4, 5, 6, 7) but **God is not impressed** for from His perspective they are **beastly** not **beautiful**, beasts filled with self glory, not God glory! (cp Ps 49:12) This line of thinking reminds us of Jesus' words...

that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God (Luke 16:15)

Scofield writes that...

The monarchy vision of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2) covers the same order of fulfillment as Daniel's beast

vision, but with this difference: Nebuchadnezzar saw the imposing outward power and splendor of "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk 21:24; cp. Rev 16:19), whereas Daniel saw the true character of Gentile world government as rapacious and warlike, established and maintained by force. It is remarkable that the heraldic insignia of the Gentile nations are all beasts or birds of prey.

Gregg Allen adds...

Though this chapter presents the terrible and brutal nature of the world empires of the times of the Gentiles, it nevertheless ends on the high note of the earthly reign of Jesus Christ. God does not leave us in the dark about His plans. He lets us know that, though the times of the Gentiles will grow increasingly brutal, the return and reign of His Son is sure and certain. We have cause for great and confident hope. (["The Vision of the Four Beasts"](#))

Four - One cannot avoid a comparison with the **4** metals of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in Daniel 2 (gold, silver, bronze, iron). The resemblance to Daniel 2 leaves little doubt that these four beastly kingdoms correlate with the four metallic kingdoms of Daniel 2. There is a tendency for some commentators to give undue significance to the number **4** (and later the number **10** - e.g., the [ESV Online Study Bible](#) suggests the possibility that **10** in Da 7:7, 20, 24 could signify "completeness" instead of signifying a literal number "**10**"!) but this seems unwise and speculative. Speculation on the meaning of numbers, terms and phrases (etc.) can easily lead to misinterpretation and confusion in regard to any passage of Scripture, but especially if it is of the apocalyptic genre as in Daniel or the Revelation. Remember that the apocalyptic genre by the nature of the "beast" (pun intended) tends to set our imagination into a frenzy and can result in interpretations that border on frenetic and fallacious.

Coming up from the sea - Da 7:17 says these beasts arise **from the earth** which supports the premise that the **great sea** is a symbolic reference to the nations of the earth arising as it were out of the chaotic sea of people and nations.

Different from one another - Four distinct beasts.

Keil has summarized the issues involved in chapter 7...

There yet remains for our consideration the question, What are the historical world-kingdoms which are represented by Nebuchadnezzar's image (Da 2), and by Daniel's vision of four beasts rising up out of the sea? Almost all interpreters understand that these two visions are to be interpreted in the same way. "The four kingdoms or dynasties, which are symbolized (Da 2) by the different parts of the human image, from the head to the feet, are the same as those which were symbolized by the four great beasts rising up out of the sea. These four kingdoms, according to the interpretation commonly received in the church, are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedo-Grecian, and the Roman. 'In this interpretation and opinion,' Luther observes, 'all the world are agreed, and history and fact abundantly establish it.' This opinion prevailed till about the end of the last century, for the contrary opinion of individual earlier interpreters had found no favour. But from that time, when faith in the supernatural origin and character of biblical prophecy was shaken by Deism and Rationalism, then as a consequence, with the rejection of the genuineness of the book of Daniel the reference of the fourth kingdom to the Roman world-monarchy was also denied."

At this point it would be appropriate to summarize the similarities between Nebuchadnezzar's Multi-Metallic Statue dream in Daniel 2 and Daniel's beastly nightmare/vision in Daniel 7.

**Nebuchadnezzar's Multi-Metallic Statue
Daniel 2**

COMPARISON & CONTRAST BETWEEN CHAPTERS 2 & 7	
DANIEL 2	DANIEL 7
Dream	Dream and visions
Given to Nebuchadnezzar	Given to Daniel

Given to an unbeliever, a pagan king	Given to a man of God
Humanistic View of History	Theocratic View of History
Gentile kingdoms from man's perspective - As glorious empires with intrinsic value	Gentile kingdoms from God's perspective - As brutal beasts devouring one another
What the kingdoms look like externally (their "reputation" among men)	What God knows the kingdoms are internally! (their "character" before God!)
Interpreted by Daniel	Interpreted by an angel (?)
Four Metallic Subdivisions- One Stone (cp Mt 21:44)	Four Beasts - One Son of Man (cp Mt 24:30)
Ten toe stage	Ten horn stage
Ten toe stage Smashed by Stone	10 horns give rise to little horn whose... Dominion is taken away, destroyed forever
Stone become great mountain Fills whole earth Kingdom endures forever	Son of man receives a kingdom Everlasting dominion Will not pass away or be destroyed

How can we be sure these two chapters are referring to the same entities? From Daniel 2 we know with certainty the identity of the head of gold (Babylon). When compared to the first beast in Daniel 2 there is little disagreement even among liberals that the winged lion represents Babylon. In short both prophecies begin with a description of the empire of Babylon. The next 3 subdivisions of the statue and the next 3 beasts are not specifically identified. But when we compare the last kingdom described in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, it is clear that this is the same kingdom (forever... everlasting) and with minimal "detective" work the Stone in Daniel 2 is obviously the Son in Daniel 7. Therefore the 3 middle subdivisions of each prophecy must also equate with each other. "God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1Cor 14:33) and He desires for His children to know His plan for the ages, not so much that we might be "smarter sinners" but that we would be strongly motivated to live for the eternal rather than the temporal and to continually grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:18-note), during our short tenure on planet earth (Jas 1:10-note, Jas 4:14, Job 14:2 Ps 37:2-note Ps 90:4, 5, 6, 12-note, Ps 102:3, 11-note Ps 103:15-note Isa 40:6, 7 1Pe 1:24-note)! **Is your study of prophecy causing you to grow smarter or more like the Savior?** If the former, than you need to confess and repent and seek Jehovah and His strength, seek His face continually (Ps 105:4). He will grant you grace to grow in Christ-likeness for ultimately He receives the glory for this supernatural result in your life.

Charles Feinberg has some cogent comments comparing chapters 2 and 7...

In chapter 2, the four earthly kingdoms and Christ's heavenly kingdom were seen in their outward political appearance; by contrast, chapter 7 presents God's estimate of their innermost moral and spiritual features. "In chapter 2, the symbols were taken from inanimate objects; here in chapter 7, they are taken from the animate. In chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar saw the splendor of world empires portrayed in the dazzling statue of a man, while the Kingdom of God was symbolized by a stone. By contrast, in chapter 7, Daniel's vision reveals the animalistic character of world empires and the fact that it is only in the Kingdom of God that man's full dignity is realized—in the Son of Man." ([Charles L. Feinberg: Daniel the Kingdom of the Lord. BMH Books. April 1984](#))

Lehman Strauss adds...

The vision of "four great beasts" (Da 7:3), "which are four kings" (Da 7:17), corresponds to the four metals of the image in chapter 2, thus Daniel's vision parallels Nebuchadnezzar's dream image. We see in these two chapters the principle of parallelism, which is a similarity of construction and meaning in two passages. The four beasts in chapter 7 correspond to the four kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The "ten horns," which are "ten kings" (Da 7:7, 24) correspond to the "toes" of the great image (Da 2:41, 42) and the "ten horns" in Revelation 13:1 and Rev 17:12. These represent a confederacy of ten nations the details of which we will study later. (Lehman Strauss Commentary – The Prophecies of Daniel)

Daniel 7:4 "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it."

- **like** : Dt 28:49 2Sa 1:23 Isa 5:28,29 Jer 4:7,13, 25:38, 48:40, La 4:19 Eze 17:3 Hab 1:6, 7, 8 Mt 24:28
- **wings** : Da 4:31, 32, 33 Jer 50:30, 31, 32
- **lifted**: Da 4:30 5:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 Isa 14:13, 14, 15, 16, 17 Jer 25:9-26 Hab 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
- **human mind**: Da 4:32,36 Job 25:6 Ps 9:20 Eze 28:2,9
- Daniel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BEAST #1 WINGED LION

Babylon 626-539BC

Like a lion - What is the significance? One must be careful to not let an active imagination replace accurate interpretation. To be sure the lion is the king of the beasts, and thus it would appear that this king would correspond very well with King Nebuchadnezzar, the "**king of kings**" (Da 2:37), the one whom God caused to rule over all the sons of men and beasts of the field (Da 2:38). In somewhat of a parallel, even as gold is the most precious metal, so the lion is recognized as the king among beasts.

As an aside, pictures of lions have been identified as frequent images in the Babylonian ruins which is probably more than a coincidence. Jeremiah 4:7 refers to Nebuchadnezzar as "a lion from the thickets of the Jordan" (following passages also refer to Babylon Jer 4:13, Jer 48:40, 50:44). Extra-biblical sources state that winged lions were on either side of the gates of the royal palaces of the Babylonians. In Ezekiel 17:3, 12 a great eagle symbolizes Babylon.

Wings of an eagle - Here the metaphor becomes somewhat bizarre, for lions do not have wings. A lion with wings of an eagle would have been a fitting symbol of [Babylon](#) which was swift in its conquest of other peoples (see Jer 49:22; Lam 4:19; Ezek 17:3; Hab 1:6, 8).

Winged lions flanked the gates of Babylon (below)

Winged lion

Wings were plucked - Whatever else this might mean, it clearly pictures a significant alteration in the character of the "beastly" kingdom of Babylon. While not everyone agrees, given the fact that the **beast** represents a **king** (Da 7:17), it is reasonable to identify this "plucking" of the beast with the humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar described in Daniel 4 (see below).

It was lifted up from the ground - Da 4:15, 23 describes a tree chopped down **with its roots in the ground** which Daniel interpreted as Nebuchadnezzar who was humbled and made to eat grass like cattle (which implies he was on all fours on the ground) (Da 4:32, 33). At the end of 7 periods of time (seven years) the king lifted his eyes toward heaven and his reason returned (Da 4:34), at which time he began to walk on two feet rather than on all four like a beast.

See also Da 4:36 where we see the kingdom was restored and reestablished which would be very compatible with God lifting up the king to his former place of sovereignty and power.

A human mind (KJV "man's heart") **also was given to it** - Da 4:34-note says **my reason returned to me**. History records that in the later years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (which Biblically would be after he had been humbled by God), he and his kingdom ceased conquering other peoples and became more humane (less bestial) in their treatment of their subjects.

Leupold comments that...

This is undoubtedly an allusion to the experience of Nebuchadnezzar which is related in detail in chapter four. The incident signifies that, as nearly as it is possible for a beast to become like a man, so nearly did Babylon lose its beastlike nature.

In short, this unusual description in Da 7:4 could reasonably be associated with the episode of humiliation in King Nebuchadnezzar's life. Nebuchadnezzar added that...

At that time my **reason** returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride." (Da

Daniel 7:5 "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, '**Arise, devour** much meat!'

- **another**: Da 2:39, 8:3 2Ki 2:24 Pr 17:12 Ho 13:8
- **on one side**: Da 5:28 8:4 11:2
- **three ribs**: possibly Babylon, Lydia, Egypt
- **Arise**: Isa 13:17, 18 56:9 Jer 50:21-32 Eze 39:17, 18, 19, 20
- Daniel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BEAST #2 BEAR

Medes & Persians - 539-331BC

Another beast, a second one - He numbers this one.

Resembling a bear - Corresponds to the breast and arms of silver in Da 2:32-**note** and most conservative commentaries identify this as the **Medo-Persian Empire**. For completeness, it should be noted that liberal interpreters separate the Medo-Persian empire and identify the **bear** as Media but the historical facts do not support the liberal interpretation of the **bear** as a single kingdom. More importantly, the Biblical record states that the kingdom that defeated Babylon was a combination of **the Medes and the Persians** (Da 5:28, 6:8, 12, 15), effectively negating the liberal gibberish!

S R Driver writes that...

In the O. T. it (the bear) is spoken of as being, next to the lion, the most formidable beast of prey known in Palestine (1Sa 17:34; Amos 5:19; cf. 2Ki. 2:24; Ho 13:8); at the same time, it is inferior to the lion in strength and appearance, and is heavy and ungainly in its movements.

A bear is larger than a **Lion** and the **Medo - Persian Empire** was larger (as demonstrated by the maps below) and stronger but less majestic than Babylon

Babylonian Empire click to enlarge	Medo-Persian Empire click to enlarge
---	--

A **bear** although slower than the lion is also a ferocious beast which was exemplified in the Medo-Persian style of war (see Isaiah 13:17, 18 "*They will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will their eye pity children*") The greater size of the bear may also be related to the larger armies fielded by the Medo-Persians which allowed them to overwhelm their enemies with sheer numbers.

Raised up on one side - The Scripture does not answer this dogmatically. However, in Da 6:8 we see the **Medes** mentioned first whereas in Esther 1:19 we see the **Persians** mentioned before the Medes. They were never equal powers and one always dominated the other. Given the power and influence of the Persian Cyrus the Great it is not surprising that some commentators interpret the bear's posture as indicative of Persian dominance over the Medes.

Whitcomb comments on the lop-sided posture noting that...Median influence (was) predominate during the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses... but shifting to Persian dominance by the time of Xerxes fifty years later (Est 1:19, "the laws of the Persians and the Medes"). ([Whitcomb, J: Daniel- Everyman's Bible Commentary](#))

John Walvoord comments that...Persia at this time, although coming up last, was by far the greater and more powerful and had absorbed the Medes. This is represented also in Daniel 8 by the two horns of the ram with the horn that comes up last being higher and greater (Da 8:3). The ram with its unequal horns is identified as "The kings of Media and Persia" (Da 8:20). This interpretation also helps to support the Medo-Persian character of the second empire and is true to the facts of history. ([Daniel 7 - Daniel's Vision Of Future World History](#))

Strauss comments that...

The statement that "it raised up itself on one side" (Da 7:5) has been more literally translated to read, "raised up one dominion," which of course the combined kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians did. Of the Medo-Persian Empire Larkin wrote,

It was ponderous in its movements, and gained its victories by hurling vast masses of troops upon its enemies. Xerxes' expedition against Greece was undertaken with 2,500,000 fighting men (see secular record [The Persian Wars](#)). It is easy to be seen that the movements of such enormous bodies of men would 'devour much flesh,' not merely in the shape of food, but by death by exposure, disease, and in battle. (See Clarence Larkin's chart on the [BOOK OF DANIEL](#))

The large, lumbering bear is an apt description of a huge, slow-moving but mighty force. The conquests of the Medo-Persian Empire were frightfully destructive. (Ibid)

Three ribs - Ribs picture the remnants of a meal which has been devoured. This picture most probably speaks of the nations conquered by the Medes and Persians, which were historically **Lydia** (546BC), **Babylon** (539BC) and **Egypt** (525BC).

They said to it - Said can convey the sense of giving orders (used in Da 2:15). The verb is masculine plural (in the Lxx = 3rd person plural) Who is **they**? Not sure. If the **four winds** are spirits (or angels - who are often "messengers" although there is a specific word for that function) that is a possibility. Ultimately it must be a decree from heaven, from God. Again we see the implication of God's Sovereignty over kings and kingdoms.

Arise devour much meat - The "bear-like" kingdom is issued two commands. While the speaker is not stated, we know that God is in some way behind the stirring up of these Gentile kingdoms. The Medo-Persian empire seems to have "obeyed" the commands to **arise** and **devour** for they extended their conquests (~ "devoured" **much meat**) until their borders reached from the Indus River on the east to Egypt and the Aegean Sea on the west, which constituted more territory under the control of the Medo-Persian empire than any empire had conquered to date.

Daniel 7:6 "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.

- **Behold:** Da 2:39 8:5, 6, 7,20,21 10:20 11:3-20 Ho 13:7 Rev 13:2
- **four wings** : Da 7:4 Eze 17:3
- **four heads:** Da 8:8,22 11:4-20
- Daniel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BEAST #3 LEOPARD

Greece - 331-63 BC

After this - This would imply that next in sequence after the bear kingdom would be the leopard kingdom. Historically the Grecian empire followed the Medo-Persian empire and corresponds to the "**belly and... thighs of bronze**" (Da 2:32, 39, cp Da 8:8, 21)

I kept looking and behold - The picture is that of an intense gaze accompanied by a degree of amazement. Remember that Daniel is seeing this vision in about 553 BC, some 200 years before the Greeks would rise to power.

Another one - He does not number this beast but in sequence it is the third beast and thus the third king (kingdom - cp Da 7:17)

Like a leopard - What characterizes this beast besides the fact that it is a carnivore? The leopard is known for its speed. For example the horses (of the Babylonians) were said to be "swifter than leopards" (Hab 1:8+). Another characteristic of leopards is that they would lie in wait so as to surprise their prey (cp Jer 5:6, Ho 13:7).

Four wings of a bird - Nebuchadnezzar was "two wing" swift, but Alexander was "four wing" swift! This adds to the picture of speed, which characterized the military conquests of Alexander the Great.

Whitcomb writes that...The kingdom of Alexander the Great grew with almost incomparable speed, so that a short ten years after he invaded Asia Minor (334BC), he had conquered the entire Medo-Persian empire under Darius III including Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the eastern territories to the borders of India, and then died at the age of thirty-three. If Nebuchadnezzar conquered swiftly (two wings), Alexander exceeded him (four wings). Frequently in the Old Testament, **leopards** depict that which is terrifying (Jer. 5:6; Hos. 13:7; Hab. 1:8). For further discussion of Alexander's kingdom, see Da 8:5-8+. The fact that this beast is shown with "four heads" (compare its "four wings of a bird") points to the four major divisions of Alexander's empire following his death in 323

B.C.: (1) Babylon and north Syria under Antigonos (later under Seleucus I Nicator); (2) Egypt under Ptolemy I Soter; (3) Macedonia under Cassander; and (4) Thrace and Bithynia under Lysimachus. Compare comments on 8:8 and 11:4.2 ([Whitcomb, J: Daniel-Everyman's Bible Commentary](#))

Walvoord writes that...With the swiftness of a leopard, Alexander the Great 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 itself and the four wings on its back. ([Daniel 7 - Daniel's Vision Of Future World History](#))

Four heads - When Alexander "the Great" died as an alcoholic at age 33yo (Da 8:8+), his kingdom was divided between four generals (Da 8:8+, see map below). As one might imagine, the "higher" critics and liberal "scholars" take great umbrage at the conservative interpretation, for otherwise they would be forced to acknowledge that Daniel's prophecy was amazingly (supernaturally!) accurate, his vision occurring 200 years before it occurred. On reading the liberal pondering (wanderings!) on the "four heads" one is tempted to refer them and their specious arguments to the Almighty God, of Whom the words of Whom Isaiah records...

"Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. (Now when one accepts the truth that God is the supreme, supernatural, sovereign Who can not only declare but bring about what He declares they are in a humble spiritual position to heard His call in the next verse which brought C H Spurgeon to salvation) "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:21, 22, cp Isa 42:9, 44:7, 46:9, 10)

Dominion was given to it - This is the only fact stated about this kingdom. Clearly it was the Sovereign God (Da 2:21) who gave Alexander the Great the dominion over the broad expanse that he conquered (as He had to all the previous kingdoms) ().

This same event is repeated in Daniel 8...

Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up **four** conspicuous horns toward the **four winds** of heaven (N,S,E,W). (Da 8:8)

The **book of Daniel** repeatedly emphasizes God's **Sovereignty** over nations...

This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers, and the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and **bestows it on whom He wishes**, And sets over it the lowliest of men." (Da 4:17)

Compare **Cyrus the Great's** explanation of why he was "great"...

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up! (2Chr 36:23)

Donald Campbell adds that...The expression "**dominion was given to it**" is most interesting and significant. Did Alexander imagine that it was his military genius alone that enabled him and his small army of 35,000 men to defeat the massive hordes of the Persians numbering, some believe, in the millions? It is true that Alexander was a great leader, but his victories and subsequent **dominion** over a great empire were his because God, in the execution of His plans, allowed it to happen. **Will world rulers ever understand this important fact?** (Ed: I doubt it!) ([Daniel: God's Man in a Secular Society by Donald K Campbell](#)) (Bolding added)

Grecian Empire: Four Divisions
Click to Enlarge

The map above shows the Hellenistic world, circa 300BC. Alexander's empire is demarcated by the red lines. After Alexander died, the kingdom was eventually divided between 4 of his generals (who after the [Wars of the Diadochi](#) gave rise to 4 kings):

1. **Ptolemy I Soter** (**purple** = south of Israel ~ Egypt) (See [description of his succession of Alexander](#) in the area of Egypt).
2. **Seleucus I Nicator** (**yellow** = north of Israel ~ Syria) (He eventually assumed the title of [basileus](#)^[B] (CF "KING") and established the [Seleucid Empire](#) over the bulk of the territory which Alexander had conquered in [Asia](#)).
3. **Lysimachus** (**orange** ~ Thrace and much of Asia Minor),
4. **Cassander** (**green** ~ Macedonia).

The latter two divisions (**#3** and **#4**) are not discussed further in Daniel's prophecy as geographically and politically they do not interact with Israel and the Jews to the extent as the **Seleucid** dynasty (cf Antiochus IV "Epiphanes") and the **Ptolemaic** dynasty. Both of these dynasties are described in much greater detail in Daniel's 4th vision in Daniel 11. Remember that Daniel's 4th vision actually covers 3 chapters beginning in Da 10:1 and extends through Daniel 12.

NOTE: Walvoord adds that "It is a well established fact of history that Alexander had four principal successors. Calvin, after Jerome, considered these **Ptolemy, Seleucus, Philip, and Antigonus**. Keil and most modern commentaries prefer to recognize the four kings who emerge about twenty-two years after the death of Alexander after the overthrow of Antigonus at the battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.). These four kings and their reigns were, according to Keil, Lysimachus, who held Thrace and Bithynia; Cassander, who held Macedonia and Greece; Seleucus, who controlled Syria, Babylonia, and territories as far east as India; and Ptolemy, who controlled Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia Petrea.⁴¹ ([Daniel 7 - Daniel's Vision Of Future World History](#))

ADDITIONAL NOTE - The [Diadochi](#) (plural of Latin **Diadochus**, from Greek: Διάδοχοι, *Diádokhoi*, "successors") were the rival **generals**, families, and friends of [Alexander the Great](#) who fought for control over his empire after his death in 323 BC. The [Wars of the Diadochi](#) (= THE Wars of Alexander's Successors = a series of conflicts fought between Alexander the Great's generals over the rule of his vast empire after his death) mark the beginning of the [Hellenistic period](#) from the Mediterranean to the Indus River Valley.

(ED: **Bolding** added to emphasize the two divisions of Alexander's kingdom [the Ptolemaic and Seleucid] that had the greatest impact and interaction with Israel, both of which are described in much greater detail in Daniel's 4th vision in chapter 11 [Remember that Daniel's 4th vision actually begins in Da 10:1 and extends through chapter 12]).

PREVIOUS

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