

Daniel's Vision of Change

***Key Verse: "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 7:14***

***Selected Scripture:
Daniel 7:9-14***

(Dan. 7:7) Daniel then saw another small horn come up among the ten horns, and this little horn had eyes like a man, and a "mouth speaking great things."—vs. 8

Continuing the explanation of his vision, Daniel said that he then saw the "Ancient of days." He wore a garment white as snow, had hair like pure wool, and sat on a throne like fiery flame, with wheels as burning fire. A

IN THE FIRST YEAR OF Belshazzar's reign as king of Babylon, the Prophet Daniel had a vision which was most unusual. He saw four great beasts arise out of the sea, all different in appearance. The first had the appearance of a lion, the second a bear, and the third a leopard. The fourth beast did not have the appearance of any particular creature. Daniel described it as "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."

fiery stream went before him, and thousands ministered to him. The Ancient of days then opened a book and began to render judgment. (vss. 9,10) As a result of this judgment, the fourth “dreadful and terrible” beast was slain, while the first three beasts had been previously conquered and brought to an end by each successive beast.—vss. 11,12

Then, Daniel said, he saw “one like the Son of man” come to the “Ancient of days.” (vs. 13) Our Key Verse says that dominion, glory, and a kingdom was given to this “Son of man,” to such an extent that his kingdom would never be destroyed. With that scene, the vision ended.

Daniel was troubled by what he had seen in the vision, so an angel came to him and interpreted its meaning. The angel explained that the four beasts were four great kingdoms on the earth. Each successive one would defeat the previous one, and finally “the saints of the most High,” having appeared in the vision as “one like the Son of man,” would defeat the fourth beast, “take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever.”—vs. 18

Looking at the matter in the light of history and other Bible prophecy, we now can identify the four beastly kingdoms that Daniel saw in vision. Indeed, they were four great Gentile empires which ruled much of the world from Daniel’s day forward. Specifically, the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, fulfilled the description of these kingdoms. The last of these, the Roman Empire, was diverse from the others in that it transformed itself into a powerful church-state system which ruled much of Europe, crowning and uncrowning kings, until as recently as the early twentieth century.

We are thankful that God, the Ancient of days, has given the “Son of man” and his faithful “saints” rightful authority to rule over earth. This rulership, in Christ’s coming kingdom, will bring blessings of life and peace to “all families of the earth.”—Gen. 12:3 ■