



Last study we looked at a dream in the book of Daniel that God gave to King Nebuchadnezzar. This study we'll look at another dream that God gave specifically to Daniel alone. The famous 4 beasts of Daniel 7. There's been a lot of speculation as to what these beasts represent. I've heard the lion with wings represents England and the U.S. That the bear represents Russia and so forth. Just like our last study, we'll allow the Bible and history to explain to us what these beasts mean.

Daniel received this vision after King Nebuchadnezzar had died and the Babylonian Empire eventually passed to his grandson, Belshazzar. We'll read most of the whole chapter of Daniel 7, because it gives the prophetic dream and the interpretation. Then we'll dig deeper into just what this prophecy means to us in our day and age.

**Daniel 7:1-6** *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. <sup>2</sup> Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. <sup>3</sup> And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. <sup>5</sup> "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' <sup>6</sup> "After this I looked, and there was another, 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.*

**Daniel 7:7-8** *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.*

This is the main part of the vision we'll be digging into this study, so we're gonna jump to its interpretation in just a second, but first, to spend some time really unpacking the vision, we'll summarize the next few verses although we'll come back to one or two of them later.

In the next 6 verses YHWH sits on His throne and is worshipped by multitudes, then the record books are opened. Then the little horn speaking pompous words and the beast it came from are both destroyed while the other beasts have all their power taken away. After that The Son of Man, (Christ Himself) comes from the clouds and stands before The Father, and all power and authority is given to Him and He is given the Everlasting Kingdom of God. We'll touch back on some of that later, so don't worry. Ok, so now let's get the interpretation of Daniel's dream.

**Daniel 7:19-22** "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet;* <sup>20</sup> and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows. <sup>21</sup> "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, <sup>22</sup> until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.



The Bible tells us that the 4 beasts aren't actually 4 beasts, but 4 kingdoms that rise up on the earth, one after the other. But the True Kingdom will come afterwards, and the saints of God will receive it. Let's continue...

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Daniel asks specifically about the 4<sup>th</sup> beast which was different from all the others, and the 10 horns that came from it. Then he really wants to know about the little horn that made 3 of the other horns fall and spoke boastfully, while making war against the saints of God. Let's keep reading...

**Daniel 7:23-25** *"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. <sup>24</sup> The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. <sup>25</sup> He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.*

**Now that we've laid the foundations, let's look at the first beast, the winged lion...**

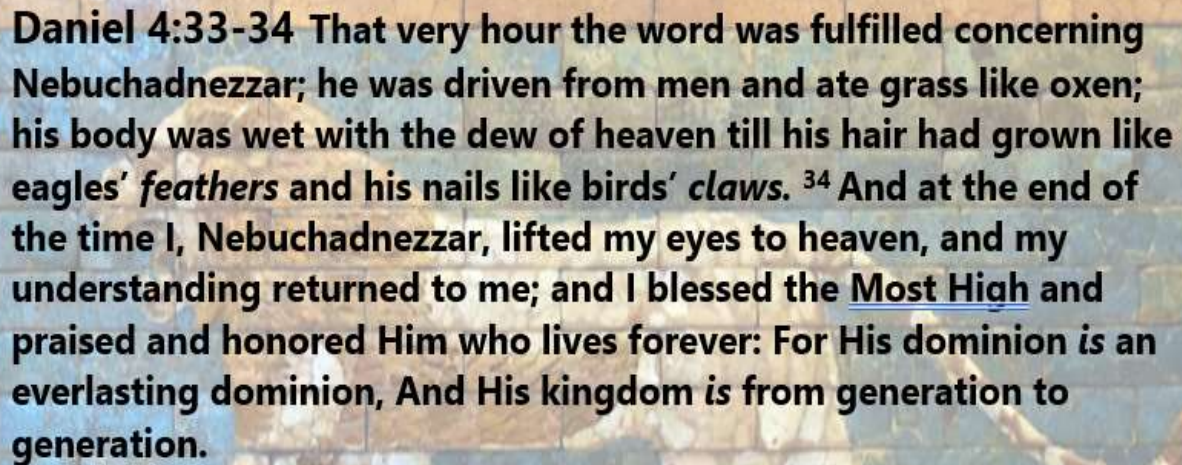


### **The Ishtar Gate made of bricks inscribed with Nebuchadnezzar's name**

This is actually a very famous artifact from a very famous ancient kingdom. This is a restored part of the wall in what's called the Ishtar Gate, and it's one of the most famous artifacts from the ancient kingdom of... Babylon. The Ishtar Gate was one of Nebuchadnezzar's greatest archaeological accomplishments. He even stamped his name on the bricks that made the gate, and for decades archeologists didn't believe Nebuchadnezzar even existed... until they uncovered these bricks inscribed with His name and title. Notice the eagle's wing on the lion's side.

In ancient times, the winged lion was a symbol of both Ishtar and the Kingdom of Babylon. They were one in the same. For centuries before the time of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon had worshipped demons. Marduk, Baal, and yes, Ishtar. But when a young Israelite man named Daniel was taken into slavery and first interacted with Nebuchadnezzar, something changed in the king's heart. He went from being a boastful, lion hearted beast, to having a new heart and becoming a servant of God. But don't take my word for it, let's see what the Bible says...





**Daniel 4:33-34** That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*. <sup>34</sup> And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation.

**Jeremiah 27:6** And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him.

We're not gonna spend a lot of time on Nebuchadnezzar, although he's one of those guys that deserves his own Bible study, but I do want to point out a few things. First, that God calls Him His servant, (and that verse in Jeremiah is just one of many), so there was something special about Nebuchadnezzar that makes him different than the other rulers of Babylon before and after him.

Second is that the verse in Daniel 4 was about a punishment for Nebuchadnezzar's pride and was actually written by Nebuchadnezzar. In fact the entire chapter of Daniel 4, was written by Nebuchadnezzar, and the context is that these verses are the fulfillment of another dream he had.

**Daniel 4:14-16** He cried aloud and said thus: 'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, And the birds from its branches. <sup>15</sup> Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, Bound with a band of iron and bronze, In the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven and let him graze with the beasts On the grass of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him.

Daniel interpreted the dream and said "Oh king, that tree is YOU! You shall be humbled and know that the Most High is the TRUE ruler. Exactly 1 year later to the day, the dream came true and the prophecy was fulfilled. The king was walking around and proudly proclaiming how great of a ruler he was. That very hour, he went insane and was driven out of his own kingdom. For 7 years, the once proud Nebuchadnezzar was running wild with the heart of a beast in the fields. After the 7 years was finished, he was given a new heart and his senses were restored, and I'm pretty sure he had a better attitude too.



**Daniel 4:16** Let his heart be changed from that of a man, Let him be given the heart of a beast, And let seven times pass over him.

**Daniel 4:33** That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

**Daniel 7:4** The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.



Since ancient times Babylon and its ruler were symbolized as a winged lion, meaning it was both swift and vicious in its conquests. So when we see the mighty Nebuchadnezzar, the Lion of Babylon, so full of pride and arrogance, crawling around with the heart of a beast -with fingernails like bird talons and hair like eagle feathers, we can easily see the comparison coming to life. When we see him humbled at the end of the 7 years and glorifying God, it doesn't take much imagination to see the heart of a beast taken away and replaced with a man's heart.

From all this, we can deduce that the winged lion in Daniel's dream is in fact, Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar as its king. If the winged lion is Babylon, then who or what is the next beast, the hunched up Bear with 3 ribs in its mouth?



*Daniel 7:5 and suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!*

Last study we looked at Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue made of different metals. History and the Bible showed us that each of the different sections represented a different empire, starting with the

gold head of Babylon and ending with the mixed kingdoms of iron and clay. If we follow the pattern from the statue, then the next empire to rise up would be the Medo-Persians. But if that's the case, then the hunched up bear with 3 ribs in its mouth has to somehow relate to the Medo-Persians. So does it?... Yes it does...

Also from last study, we learned that the Persian Empire was actually made of two different kingdoms that joined together under a powerful king called Cyrus the Great. Those Kingdoms were Media and Persia, which is why its called the Medo-Persian Empire. Even though Media was bigger and they were joined together, Persia was the more dominate of the two, because Cyrus was from Persia, so the strength of the empire was on one side more than the other.

The thing that solidified their status as an empire was the fact that they conquered the 3 super powers of their time: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt. The three ribs in the bear's mouth.

Now, I searched far and wide to find how Medo-Persia related specifically to a bear, and the best I could do was some vague comparisons of how strong and ferocious they were. But I did find something interesting relating the Medo-Persians with another animal... a ram.

One of the main gods of the Persians was named Marduk, and spoiler alert, he's the same god the Babylonians worshipped as Bel, the Greeks worshipped as Zues, and the Romans worshipped as Jupiter. This false god had many names and many aspects. One of its aspects or symbols is the goat and the ram. In another vision Daniel has, in the very next chapter, Daniel 8, God uses the image of both a goat and ram to make a point to Daniel.



A little context to these verses is that Daniel has a dream of a ram with two horns, but one horn was higher than the other.



Then he saw a he-goat with one large horn running up to and attacking the two horned ram. The goat broke the two horns and trampled the ram and destroyed it. But at the height of the goat's power, the one big horn broke and 4 horns grew in its place.

If you remember from the last study, the Medo-Persian Empire had two great leaders, Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great, both of which are mentioned in the Bible. Then the Greek Empire, led by Alexander the Great, destroyed the Medo-Persians. BTW, this is actually a Biblical mention of Alexander the Great, just not by name, but it describes his circumstances to perfectly. And remember, this was written 200 years before Alexander was even born. At the height of Alexander's power, however, he died mysteriously, and his empire was divided between his 4 generals. That's Biblical confirmation of what we've been studying. One horn= One king. 4 horns that rise up=4 generals that take over.

In a future study, we'll look a little deeper at that goat of Daniel 8 and let the Bible and history reveal some awesome things to us, but for now, this is a good segway into the next beast in the vision, the 4 headed leopard with wings.

So by now, we've probably guessed that the 4 headed leopard is Greece, and we can see God repeating the pattern over and over. Like He has something important to teach us, but we're kinda hardheaded and need to hear it repeatedly to get it... So, that means we'll have to continue our study in the next part of the series to get the rest of the story. AMEN.