___The Lion, the Bear & the Leopard

Daniel 7:1-8

Over the years I've learned an interesting scriptural principle that applies to all Bible study, but has particular application in the study of <u>prophecy</u>. If you've spent much time studying the scriptures, you've seen this principle in action. It may be described as follows.

As I've continued to study The Word Of God, certain passages have proved difficult to interpret, and all commentaries and explanations I've ever found continue to prove unsatisfactory. In these areas, there is always a hidden blessing if you will simply persevere and dig deeper as you seek to discern the meaning. This principle was recently reaffirmed as I'm convinced that I've finally 'broken through' to an understanding of a passage that has intrigued me for years. I'm referring to Daniel's famous dream of the **four beasts** that are documented in Daniel chapter seven.

In this chapter, Daniel sees four unusual beasts that are clearly symbolic of four kingdoms in world history. The <u>first</u> beast was a like a **lion** that had the wings of an **eagle**, while the <u>second</u> beast was a **bear** described as having "three ribs in the mouth of it."¹. The <u>third</u> beast was a **leopard** with 4 heads, and the <u>fourth</u> beast was described as "...dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth...and it had ten horns."².

There is no doubt that the vision describes four world kingdoms as an angel specifically tells Daniel that "these great beasts which are four are four kings which shall rise out of the earth."³. The problem I've had with this chapter is the identification of the four kingdoms.

Practically every scholar and prophecy commentator has routinely identified these 4 kingdoms of Daniel 7 as simply a reiteration of the four kingdoms described earlier in Daniel chapter two. In fact, several popular Bible editions actually interpret Daniel 7 right in their margin notes as the same four kingdoms mentioned in Daniel chapter two. 4. This gives the conventional interpretation an added credibility which it does not deserve.

You'll recall Daniel chapter two has the description of **Nebuchadnezzar's** dream of the great statue. In this classic prophecy the king sees a great statue with a head of Gold, arms of silver, thighs of brass, and legs of iron. The description of the legs is further described as including two feet with ten toes. There really isn't much doubt about the identities in this dream for Daniel specifically tells the king of Babylon that he, Nebuchadnezzar, is the head of gold. ⁵.

Daniel's interpretation continues as he describes three kingdoms that will succeed the Babylonian empire. These three kingdoms are represented by the silver arms, the brass thighs and the iron legs. Since secular history clearly establishes the fact that the **Babylonian** empire was followed by the **Medo-Persian** empire (the arms of silver), **the Grecian** empire (the thighs of brass) and the **Roman** empire (the legs of iron), Nebuchadnezzar 's famous dream is a striking example of the accuracy of Bible prophecy.

But are the four world empires of the statue in Daniel chapter two necessarily synonymous with the four beast kingdoms of Daniel chapter seven? I'm convinced they are different kingdoms from different eras, and the fact that this interpretation of Daniel's four beast kingdoms has been distorted has masked the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in our time. In other words, there's a reason for the misinterpretive system being propagated. It is designed to mislead and deceive the believer in *Jesus Christ* into a deadly misunderstanding and false identification of the key components of *last days* prophetic fulfillment.

Before I offer an alternative interpretation of the four beasts, I need to outline the reasons why the conventional synchronized interpretation is usually followed. There are many similarities between the two vision/dreams and that may account for the broad acceptance of the synonymous/concurrent interpretation of the two vision/dreams. For example, in Daniel chapter two, the head of gold is described as superior to the kingdoms of silver, brass, and iron. The commentators commonly connect the regal aspect of the Babylonian kingdom (the head of gold) with the royal imagery associated with the lion of chapter seven's vision.

There is very little to identify the second beast (the bear) with the second "statue" empire of Daniel chapter 2 (the Medo-Persian) so interpreters usually focus on the third kingdom as it provides a more credible argument. The **third** kingdom of the **statue** dream (brass thighs) was <u>Alexander The Great's</u> Grecian empire, and it is routinely compared to the **third** kingdom of the **beast** vision, the leopard.

Because the leopard is noted for speed, it is commonly identified with <u>Alexander's</u> meteoric military acquisition of territory. Another apparent connection between the third kingdoms is found in yet another chapter of the book of Daniel. In that passage (found in Daniel chapter eight), <u>Alexander</u> is symbolized as a "rough goat" with a large horn. ⁶.

In that vision, the large horn is broken, and replaced by <u>four horns</u>; and once again, an angel is there to interpret the vision. The angel tells Daniel that "the great horn is...the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation..." ⁷.

This passage validates once again prophetic accuracy as history records that after <u>Alexander's</u> death, **his kingdom was divided between four of his generals**. The fact that the Grecian empire (the third "statue" empire) was divided four ways

helped to identify the four heads of the Leopard (the third "beast" vision) with Alexander and his four generals.

Just to keep the confusion to a minimum with all these 'fours,' I need to point out that these four horns that succeed Alexander's Grecian kingdom in the "goat" vision of chapter eight are entirely separate from the four "statue" kingdoms of chapter two and the four "beast" kingdoms of chapter seven.

It's not hard to see why there's confusion on this, but bear with me, for we're closing in on the true identification of all of these kingdoms.

The final factor that is usually used to connect the four "statue" kingdoms with the four "beast" kingdoms is the fact that both fourth kingdoms incorporate the number ten. In the statue dream, *the ten toes* on the feet of the iron legs (the fourth and final kingdom of chapter two) are specifically highlighted. In the beast vision, the fourth and final beast has *ten horns*. Because the ten toes are associated with the Roman empire, it is commonly believed that the ten horns on the fourth beast somehow represent a 'revived' Roman empire.

It is these two chapters, and several other passages in the book of **Revelation**, that give rise to the notion that the Roman empire will somehow be "revived" by the prophetic figure we commonly call *The Antichrist*. Because the fourth **beast** kingdom is plainly seen to be the final world dominion run by *The Antichrist*, it is crucial that we accurately identify these four kingdoms. In other words, if we get this chapter wrong, we may not actually recognize key prophetic events because we'll looking in the wrong place. I contend that is precisely what is occurring today, and the Christian church is running out of time to recognize the truth.

There are two separate sets of four kingdoms. These two visions are millennia apart and the key to understanding each of them is the nation of <u>Israel</u>. The common denominator in every one of them is their relationship to the Jewish people. The four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's statue are the four kingdoms that provide a historic *countdown* to the **destruction** of the Jewish state.

Beginning with <u>Babylon</u>, all four kingdoms dominated the people of Israel. The fourth kingdom (the legs of iron), the <u>Roman</u> empire, presided over the destruction of Israel in 70 AD. The fourth kingdom also provided the *countdown* to the first coming of **Jesus Christ**, the Son of God. Conversely, the four beast kingdoms function in reverse as they provide the historic *countdown* to the **resurrection** of the state of Israel; and once again these empires also serve as a sequential countdown to the second coming of Christ.

THE LION

The first great beast was "...like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld until the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."8. This beast does not describe the <u>Babylonian</u> empire of the 5th century BC. but instead describes *the British empire* of the last two hundred years. It begins the historic chronology of nations that brought about the resurrection of the modern state of Israel.

Throughout most of its history, **England** has employed the crowned lion as the official heraldry symbol of the royal families. The lion appears on almost every coat of arms in the British royal line going back at least 700 years. It is instructive to note that the British lion is usually seen standing up on its two hind feet precisely the way the prophecy states The figure shown in figure I is an actual rendering of a genuine British heraldic coat of arms.



In addition to dozens of examples of British lions standing on two legs, I have at least one documented copy of a coat of arms of <u>William I</u> (1066-1087) that shows the British lion with eagles wings. ⁹. Because the **United States** is so widely associated with the eagle, it is difficult not to associate the eagle's wings that are attached to the lion with America. The fact that the wings were removed would clearly seem to refer to the American independence and thereby strengthens the identification.

Historically speaking, it is not an understatement to say that the action of the British throne in the <u>Balfour Declaration</u> of 1917 was the single most important move towards the establishment of a Jewish state in modern history. If you remember your World War I history, you'll recall it was the British army, led by General George Allenby that liberated **Jerusalem** from the Moslems in 1917. The British then opened the door to Jewish immigration into the Holy Land. Daniel's prophecy stated that this lion empire will be humane as "...a man's heart was given to it."¹⁰.

In an odd role reversal, one of the most famous British monarchs was *Richard the Lionhearted* -- instead of a lion with a man's heart, this king was styled as a man with a lion's heart. Ultimately, while the British lion's constructive interaction with the dispersed Jewish people began the countdown towards a resurrected state of Israel, the Russian Bear also affected Jewish immigration -- but in a more ominous way.

The Russian purges and persecutions of native Russian Jews were called **pogroms**, and they manifested some of the worst anti-semitic hatred ever seen in modern history.

THE BEAR



The beast prophecy describes "...a second beast, like to 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, Arise, devour much flesh."11. This dark characterization of the devouring beast is in stark contrast to the humane lion before it, and again strengthens the identification of the beast kingdoms with the modem states that impacted the emergence of the state of Israel.



The Russian Bear sits on the tail of the Persian Cat while the British Lion looks on - a cartoon representing a phase of The Great-Game.

The **bear** is widely recognized as the universal symbol of Russia and her various satellite nations during the era of the **Soviet Union**. The imagery associated with the bleak Russian winters probably contributed to this symbol. The fact is, in political cartoons, historical essays, and native Russian symbology, the bear is broadly identified with the Russian state (see figure 2). Even <u>Time Magazine</u> once ran a major story that depicted **Russia** as a hungry bear on the cover.

It should be noted that the Bolshevik revolution that brought about the world's first communist regime actually occurred in the very same time period and year (November 1917) as the British liberation of Palestine (Israel). This helps to establish the chronological continuity between the first and second beasts.

A subtle prophetic detail is found in the fact that the world's first communist dictatorship that emerged in **Russia** actually brought about the political idiom that describes nations and political parties as 'leftist' or 'rightist.' To this very day, the <u>communists</u> are said to be to the left, the <u>fascists</u> are to the right, and democracies are centrist. How fascinating that <u>the first leftist government</u> in the history of the world was described in scripture 2,500 years ago as a beast that "...raised up on one of its sides." ¹².

The three ribs "between its teeth" probably relates to the three <u>Baltic</u> states that were gobbled up by The Soviet Union; or they could describe the three <u>Trans-Caucasian</u> states (Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan) assimilated by the earlier Russian empire -- take your pick. In any event, the corollary verse where the bear is told to "devour much flesh" was certainly fulfilled by the greatest single mass murderer in the history of planet Earth, **Joseph Stalin**. He brutally executed approximately 50 million people in the evil empire that was The Soviet Union.

While other prophecy observers have noticed the similarities between the **British** Lion and the **Russian** Bear,¹³. it is the third beast that has caused all the trouble.

THE LEOPARD (PANTHER)

The scripture describes it as "..like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast has also four heads; and dominion as given to it."¹⁴. This prophecy baffled me for quite a while until I simply asked myself what world power coincided with the British and Russian empires. The Leopard can't refer to **America** for our symbol is obviously the eagle, so what nation's twentieth century history has played a role that is comparable with that of **Russia**, **England**, and The **US**? What modern nation has played a similarly crucial role in their relationship with the Jewish people? It could only be **Germany**.



The question of identifying the **Leopard** with <u>Germany</u> is advanced by consulting the <u>Encyclopedia Americana</u> where we abruptly realize that a leopard is actually another word for *Panther*. The leopard "...is more commonly called Panther in **India**..."¹⁵. It is interesting to note the German language is from the Indo-European branch where the Nazi party extracted their distorted concept of the term Aryan Sanskrit word from **India**.

The German people seem to have a particular fondness for the Panther, and we find the term is utilized broadly in Germanic culture. In the German television industry, for example, a major vendor is <u>Panther Electronics</u>. In the military, two prominent naval vessels (a cruiser and a gunboat) were both named *The Panther*. Under Hitler's Third Reich, the primary tanks were named **Panthers**, while another tank was the Panther's relative the **Tiger**. The armored divisions of the Nazi's were known as **Panzer** divisions -- certainly evocative of panthers.



Panzer Leopard 2, a modern main battle tank

Because the lion, the bear, and the Leopard/Panther are all beasts of prey, the connotation intrinsic in the imagery of these beasts is clearly militaristic. The panther would probably be the best predatory animal image of the German militarists of both world wars. As the big cat is known for speed and agility, so was the military machine of the Weimar Republic (World War I) as well as the Wehrmacht of World War II.

According to the <u>Encyclopedia Americana</u>, "...lightning war was thought by the Prussian (German) general staff to 'be the only means to win...'."¹⁶. Similarly, Hitler inaugurated what was called "Blitzkrieg" (lightning) warfare. Again, the historical record shows that "...German theory was based on mobile warfare...German artillery was therefore exceptionally mobile."¹⁷. The panther is probably the most mobile beast of prey in existence.

The *Leopard* in Daniel's vision was described as "having four wings like those of a fowl" as well as "four heads." Lets take the wings first. Unlike the eagle's wings mentioned in connection with earlier British/Lion figure, the prophecy specifically states there were four wings. Because no bird has one wing, this would appear to imply two sets of wings, or perhaps two forces that assist

the panther. History records the forces of *The Axis* encompassed <u>Germany, Italy, and Japan</u>. Both Japan and Italy were active in the air war, so it's possible this refers to Germany's two air power allies that backed Hitler in World War II.

In reference to the "four heads," we find there are so many groups of 'fours' that it's difficult to know which one is actually being referred to. In the early stages of the nation, there were four major Germanic tribes: The <u>Angles, Saxons, Alemans, and Franks</u>. Before the turn of the century there were four prominent states -- <u>Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, and Wurttemberg</u>. The first federal government of Germany "consisted of four free cities loosely bound together..."¹⁸.

The likelihood is the four heads refer to the fourfold division of authority that occurred under the four victorious allies under the QUADRIPARTITE agreement that legally enforced the occupation of Germany after Hitler's defeat. After the war, <u>four military</u> commanders controlled Germany.

"An interallied agency, called the Kommandatura, operated as the four power coordinating group...."¹⁹. in the administration of the country. The Encyclopedia tells us a government structure known as <u>The Allied Control Authority</u> was created "...composed of the four zone commanders."²⁰. A **Russian** general controlled the Eastern zone, a **British** general ran the Northwestern zone, a **French** general ran the Southwestern zone, and an **American** general administered the western zone. This arrangement continued for years after the war.

It is at this point that we see one of the most striking examples of dual fulfillment in biblical prophecy. Just as the third kingdom of **Nebuchadnezzar's** statue dream (the Grecian empire of <u>Alexander The Great</u>) was replaced by <u>four generals</u> in what has come to be known as the Ptolemaic period, the **third** kingdom of Daniel's beast vision (Nazi Germany) was also replaced by four generals.

In the previously mentioned "ram/goat" vision described in Daniel chapter 8, we saw a detailed prophecy concerning this fragmenting of the third kingdom of the statue prophecy. In the ram/goat vision, the "great horn" of the powerful goat was predictive of <u>Alexander The Great</u>. The scripture says that...when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven."²¹. The "four notable ones" were the four key generals that had served under Alexander, and they divided up the empire between them. The power struggle that ensued eventually boiled down to 2 factions that produced a series of wars known as the <u>Ptolemaic-Seleucid</u> wars.

The Seleucid kings were descended from <u>Seleucus I</u>, the general that ruled Syria under <u>Alexander</u>. His opponent was <u>Ptolemy I</u>, the general that ruled Egypt. For almost 200 years, these two dynasties controlling *Syria* in the north and *Egypt* in the south brought the Israelites into constant military turmoil. The northern Syrian kingdom eventually generated the most hideous and demonic leader of his day: <u>Antiochus Epiphanes</u>.

Antiochus persecuted the Jews in unheard of ways, but he was finally overthrown. The occupied state of Israel then passed into the hands of the fourth kingdom of the statue dream -- *Rome*.

The reason I've gone into such detail here needs to be clarified. Since both vision/dreams are clearly operating in parallel with dual fulfillment of the prophecies, an accurate identification of the various players should provide solid evidence relating to the identity of the final world empire and its leader. To put it another way, if we misidentify the first 3 kingdoms of the beast vision, how could we possibly expect to accurately identify the fourth, and final kingdom?

This point is so important that it's worth repeating. The *third* kingdom of both vision/dreams is the next to the last kingdom. In both cases, they precede the fourth, and most important kingdoms. Both third kingdoms were noted for the speed in which they conquered surrounding nations. Both third kingdoms culminated in the death of their charismatic leader, and both kingdoms were marked by a transitional governmental composed of four military leaders.

In the statue dream, the fourth kingdom was the empire that witnessed the coming of "him whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."²². This fourth kingdom was the **Roman** empire, the most powerful military and political confederation in antiquity. The Romans were in power when **Jesus Christ** was born. The Romans crucified our Lord, and witnessed his resurrection. Following the ascension of Christ and the birth of the Christian church, the Roman empire completely obliterated the nation of **Israel**.

This identification means the four kingdoms of the statue dream provided a countdown to the first appearance of **Jesus Christ**. The four statue kingdoms also provides us with a *countdown* to the <u>destruction</u> of God's Old covenant people. Conversely, instead of being simply a reiteration of those four kingdoms, the four beast visions represent <u>four different kingdoms</u> that begin their chronology about 2,000 years later. These four kingdoms provide us with a prophetic countdown to the <u>resurrection</u> of God's Old Covenant people. This occurred in 1948 when the Jewish people were re-gathered in their historic land and formed the modern nation/state of Israel.

Following this line of interpretation, because the first four statue kingdoms were all manifested sequentially before the destruction of ancient Israel, the four beast kingdoms must all have been sequentially manifested before national Israel was resurrected as a modern state. The fourth kingdom should have been established shortly before the founding of the nation of **Israel**, and obviously, the first three must precede the fourth. This establishes a rather narrow time frame within which we may identify the fourth and final kingdom of planet Earth.

Adolph Hitler, the leader of the third beast kingdom of Daniel's prophecy, committed suicide on May 1, 1945 and Nazi Germany surrendered a week later. Shortly thereafter the allied powers installed the four generals to administer post-war Germany. Since Israel became a nation in 1948, it follows that the fourth and final world kingdom must have been established within those two dates -- 1945 to 1948.

Another factor important to the identification is the requirement that this fourth kingdom must have the same thing in common with all the other kingdoms mentioned: a significant interaction with the Jews. These two requirements, the narrow time frame, and the necessary interaction with the Jewish people, preclude the popular notion that the fourth kingdom is the so-called 'Revived Roman Empire,' as personified by The European Community (EC).

<u>The European Community</u>, and its predecessor organization <u>The European Common Market</u>, developed as a result of *The Treaty of Rome*. This treaty was signed in **1957**, and accordingly, does not fit within the appropriate time frame. Further, the **EC** has had virtually no historic role whatsoever in terms of a significant impact on events in national Israel.

Because the fourth kingdom is the empire that catapults The Antichrist to power, our identification requires a **global** perspective. Every verse in The Bible implies he is a global figure. The text does say "...he causes ALL to receive a mark...."23. The word *all* would appear to imply far more than Europeans. Indeed a quick bit of research in practically any Encyclopedia will find the <u>European Community</u> listed under regional organizations. Yet, to this day, the vast majority of prophecy teachers confidently and categorically state that the <u>European Community</u> is the final empire that will host *The Antichrist*.

There is only **one** global political entity of a lasting consequence in the world today. It was founded between 1945 and 1948. It has claimed absolute authority in establishing jurisdiction over the historic land called Palestine. Its power and political reach is now reaching overwhelming proportions as its members include virtually every government on the face of the Earth. The <u>United Nations</u> **IS** the prophesied one world government so frequently mentioned in the Bible.

Through international treaty, the *UN* is now determining how nations educate their children. The *UN* is forcibly intervening in international military conflicts. The *UN* is overseeing the world's financial systems as well as all legal matters involving disputes among nations. These are not activities that are scheduled to occur next year or next century -- <u>The United Nations is running the world NOW</u>.

In spite of the common perception that The **UN** is a benevolent organization seeking to guarantee peace and safety, the prophet **Daniel** gives us the most accurate description of the last government of a Christ rejecting world.

"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 broke in pieces and stamped the residue with its feet; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."²⁴.

With this world government now in power, we can be certain that **Jesus Christ** will soon return. We can also be certain that we are about to witness the emergence of **The Antichrist**, for the Apostle Paul warns us that the return of Christ, characterized in Thessalonians as The Day Of The Lord, "...shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."²⁵.

It's time to throw away what you've been told and study this for yourself. The Beast isn't coming to power in some 'Revived Roman Empire" in Europe. He's here in America -- **NOW**. He will take advantage of every man, woman, and child that fails to recognize the truth that **Jesus Christ** repeatedly warned us about.

The Apostle Paul wrote that the emergence of the one world government headed by "the man of sin" (the Antichrist) would be preceded by a counterfeit gospel. **Jesus** said "take heed that no man deceive you for many will come in my name."²⁶.

The deception is upon us, and time is running out. The spiritual trap is about to spring shut and most of the world will fall in it. Leaders that you consider to be Christian may be among them, and they want you to follow them to their unpleasant fate.

Turn to Jesus while you still can.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1. Daniel 7:5
- 2. Daniel 7:7
- 3. Daniel 7:17
- 4. The Scofield Reference Bible, The Zondervan Study Bible, etc. The Bible publisher's practice of adding to the scriptures with

conjectural interpretations that are described as fact, not theory, is a contributing factor to a continuing blindness to true prophetic understanding. All will be held accountable on the last day.

- 5. Daniel 138
- 6. Daniel 8:21
- 7. Daniel 8:22
- 8. Daniel 7:4
- 9. The Lives Of The Kings and Queens Of England, Antonia Fraser, page 27
- 10. Daniel 7:4
- 11. Daniel 7:5
- 12. ibid.
- 13. Shadows Of His Coming. William Juring,
- 14. Daniel 7:6
- 15. Encyclopedia Americana, 1954, Volume 17, page 268
- 16. Encyclopedia Americana, 1954, Volume I2, page 524
- 17. Encyclopedia Americana, 1954, Volume 29, page 55
- 18. Encyclopedia Americana, 1954, Volume 12, page 53
- 19. ibid., page 538
- 20. ibid.
- 21. Daniel 8:8
- 22. Micah 5:2
- 23. Revelation 13:16
- 24. Daniel 7:7
- 25. II Thessalonians 2:3
- 26. Matthew 24:4, 5



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