

¹ In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream filled with visions while he was lying on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream in summary fashion. ² Daniel explained:

“I was watching in my vision during the night as the four winds of the sky were stirring up the great sea. ³ Then four large beasts came up from the sea; they were different from one another. ⁴ The first one was like a lion with eagles’ wings. As I watched, its wings were pulled off, and it was lifted up from the ground. It was made to stand on two feet like a human being, and a human mind was given to it. ⁵ Then a second beast appeared, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and devour much flesh!’ ⁶ After these things, as I was watching, another beast like a leopard appeared, with four bird-like wings on its back. This beast had four heads, and ruling authority was given to it. ⁷ After these things, as I was watching in the night visions a fourth beast appeared—one dreadful, terrible, and very strong. It had two large rows of iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and anything that was left it trampled with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that came before it, and it had 10 horns. ⁸ As I was contemplating the horns, another horn—a small one—came up between them, and three of the former horns were torn out by the roots to make room for it. This horn had eyes resembling human eyes and a mouth speaking arrogant things.

⁹ “While I was watching, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His attire was white like snow; the hair of his head was like lamb’s wool. His throne was ablaze with fire, and its wheels were all aflame. ¹⁰ A river of fire was streaming forth and proceeding from his presence. Many thousands were ministering to him; many tens of thousands stood ready to serve him. The court convened, and the books were opened.

¹¹ “Then I kept on watching because of the arrogant words of the horn that was speaking. I was watching until the beast was killed and its body destroyed and thrown into the flaming fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their ruling authority had already been removed, though they were permitted to go on living for a time and a season.

¹³ “I was watching in the night visions, and with the clouds of the sky, one like a Son of Man was approaching. He went up to the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. ¹⁴ To him was given ruling authority, honor, and sovereignty. All peoples, nations, and language groups were serving him. His authority is eternal and will not pass away. His kingdom will not be destroyed.

¹⁵ “As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed, and the visions of my mind were alarming me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those standing nearby and asked him about the meaning of all this. So he spoke with me and revealed to me the interpretation of the vision:

¹⁷ ‘These large beasts, which are four in number, represent four kings who will arise from the earth. ¹⁸ The holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will take possession of the kingdom forever.’

¹⁹ “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others. It was very dreadful, with two rows of iron teeth and bronze claws, and it devoured, crushed, and trampled anything that was left with its feet. ²⁰ I also wanted to know the meaning of the 10 horns on its head, and of that other horn that came up and before which three others fell. This was the horn that had eyes and a mouth speaking arrogant things, whose appearance was more formidable than the others. ²¹ While I was watching, that horn began to wage war against the holy ones and was defeating them, ²² until the Ancient of Days arrived and judgment was rendered in favor of the holy ones of the Most High. Then the time came for the holy ones to take possession of the kingdom. ²³ This is what he told me:

‘The fourth beast means that there will be a fourth kingdom on earth that will differ from all the other kingdoms. It will devour all the earth and will trample and crush it. ²⁴ The 10 horns mean that 10 kings will arise from that kingdom. Another king will arise after them, but he will be different from the earlier ones. He will humiliate three kings. ²⁵ He will speak words against the Most High. He will harass the holy ones of the Most High continually. His intention will be to change times established by law. The holy ones will be delivered into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. ²⁶ But the court will convene, and his ruling authority will be removed—destroyed and abolished forever! ²⁷ Then the kingdom, authority, and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be delivered to the people of the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; all authorities will serve him and obey him.’

²⁸ “This is the conclusion of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts troubled me greatly, and the color drained from my face. But I kept the matter to myself.”