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# FOUR BEASTS AND ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN

**DANIEL 7**



## 2 LAST WEEK...



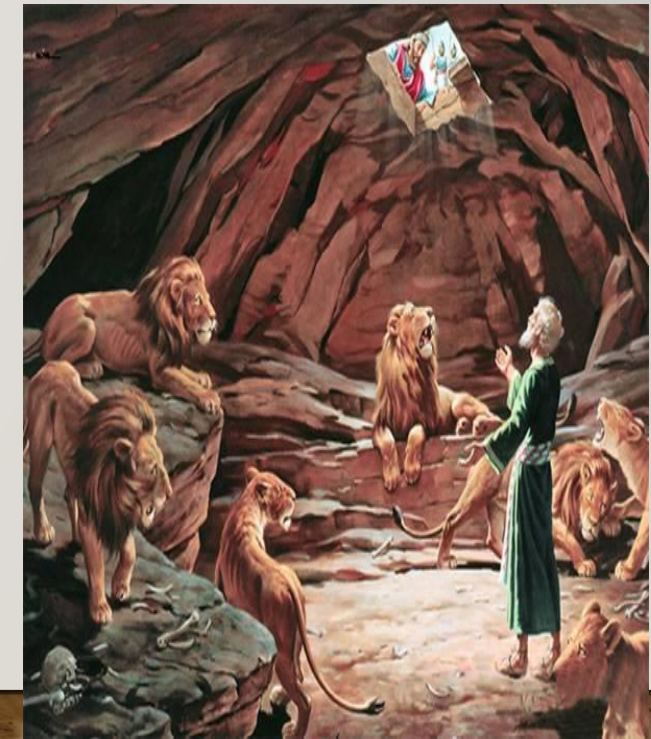
LOOKING  
BACK...

- We read the most familiar of the Daniel stories.
- King Darius was manipulated by the envious satraps. They convince him to approve a new law forbidding worship or petition to anyone but the king for one month. Anyone who does so was to be thrown to the Lions.
- Daniel continues to pray three times a day.

# DANIEL 6-

## 3

- The satraps know Daniel's habits about prayer.
- They despise having a Jewish exile as their superior. They plan to eliminate Daniel as a member of the court.
- Once the law was signed they follow Daniel to his home, to the upper chamber where he is privately praying.
- Daniel was thrown to the lions.
- He is saved by an angel of God.



## 4 THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS QUITE DIFFERENT

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- Chapter 7 is the first of 4 apocalyptic visions.
- We have a date for when the vision appeared to Daniel.
- It was the first year of the reign of King Belshazzar – 553 BC.
- The vision appears to Daniel and terrifies him.

## 5 WHY IS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE SO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?

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- **The nature of symbolic language;** the meaning may be evident to people of the era in which it is written, but over time some of the meaning is lost.
- Example – a handshake or a swastika-
- **The problem with ancient language and modern translations.** The meaning of words themselves can change even in a single generation.
- **Generations of copying** can create variances or editor's redactions.

## 6 TRANSLATIONS AND OTHER PROBLEMS

- Some Bibles are based on translations of Daniel found the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament. Other Bibles, are translated from the Hebrew Bible.
- In later years, additions or corrections were made to earlier versions of Daniel 7.
- **Example** – Dan 7:4 NABRE <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, but with eagle’s wings. While I watched, the wings were plucked; it was raised from the ground to stand on two feet like a human being, *and given a human mind.*
- Dan 7:4 AB and JBC –The first one was like a lion, but with eagle wings. It had three tusks in its mouth [between its teeth], and it was given the command: “Up, devour much flesh!” **While I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was taken away from the earth.**

# WHAT IS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE? WHAT DOES IT DO?

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It is written to be **hopeful during times of crisis.**

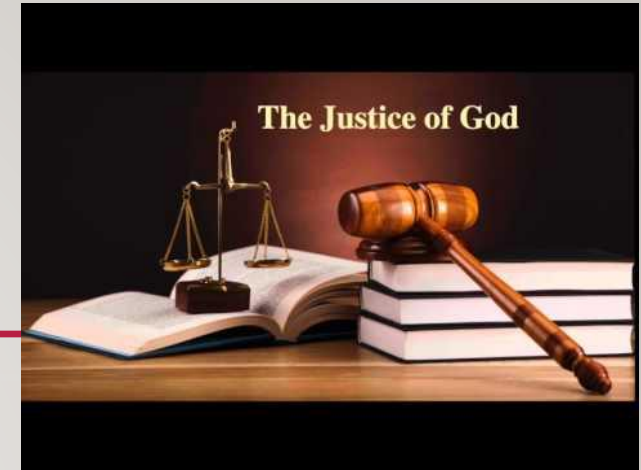
Wars, plagues, political upheaval and natural disasters would be so horrific, that it feels to many that the end is near.

Apocalyptic literature describes the **justice of God.**

The faithful and good will ultimately receive their reward.

The evil will be punished. (Good always triumphs over evil.)

**There will be an end to the suffering!**



# DANIEL 7

## 8

- Daniel 7 was written in Aramaic. Remember that some of Daniel was written in Hebrew and other portions were written in Aramaic.
- While the visions are said to have appeared in 538 BC, there is evidence in ancient texts, that changes had been made over time by editors or redactors. Some biblical scholars believe the final form of the story was written during the persecution of Jews by Antiochus IV, 175-164 BC.

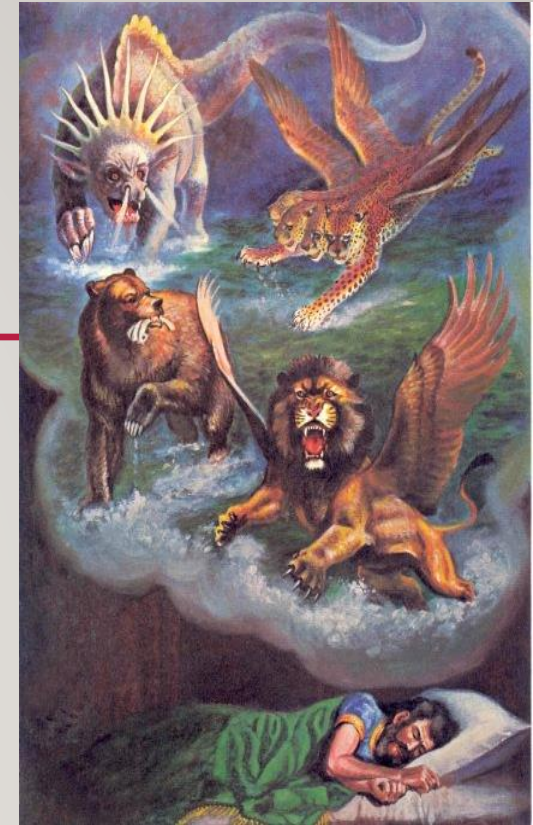


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## THIS VISION COMES TO DANIEL IN A DREAM

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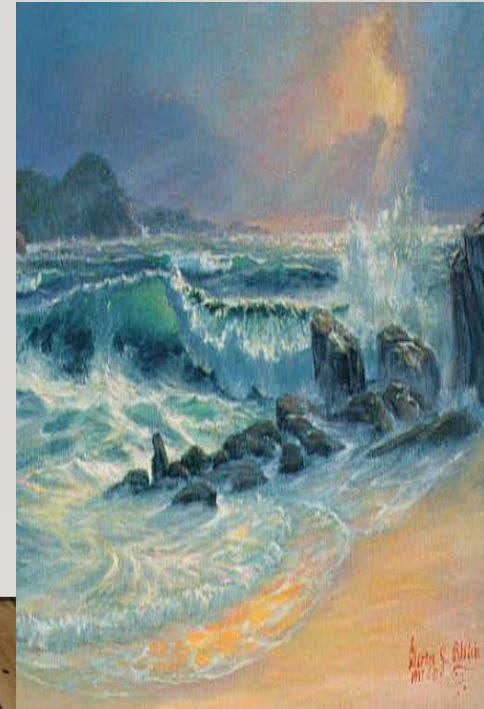
- In Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar's vision also came in a dream:
- <sup>1</sup> In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, as Daniel lay in bed ***he had a dream, visions in his head***. Then he wrote down the dream; the account began: <sup>2</sup> In the vision I saw during the night, suddenly the four winds of heaven stirred up the great sea, <sup>3</sup> from which emerged four immense beasts, each different from the others. (7:1-3)



## 10 FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN AND FOUR BEASTS

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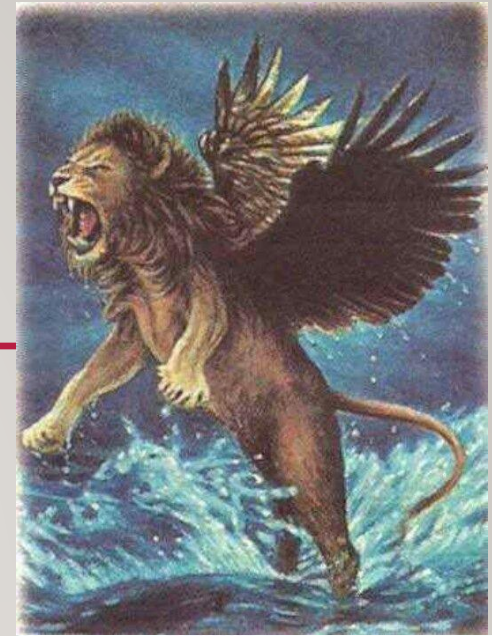
- **The four winds** indicate the **four corners of the world**  
In Babylonian literature, it was a phrase used to indicate “the whole earth.”
- **The “sea”** would not be the Mediterranean, but the waters of the earth. It is a symbol for chaos. The beasts emerge from chaos that engulfs the world.
- Later the Son of Man emerges from the clouds of heaven.



## || BEAST # 1

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- <sup>4</sup> The first was like a lion, but with eagle's wings. While I watched, the wings were plucked; it was raised from the ground to stand on two feet like a human being, and **given a human mind.**
- Babylon is the lion that devoured Judah. The lion's wings were plucked off, meaning the empire lost its dominion.
- In some translations, the tusks from beast #2 are a part of the lion instead!



## 12 BEAST # 2

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- <sup>5</sup> The second beast was like a bear; it was raised up on one side, and among the teeth in its mouth were three tusks. It was given the order, “Arise, devour much flesh.”
- This is Media, the bear. The teeth are so long that they look like tusks. However, the Syrian bears were small and *less dangerous than the lion*. The bear attacks when provoked. In Daniel 6 the Medes are depicted positively. Yet that must not always have been the case:
- Isaiah 13:17-18 See, I will stir up against them the Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold. Their bows will strike down the young men; they will have no mercy on infants, nor will they look with compassion on children.

## 13 BEAST #3

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- <sup>6</sup> After this I looked and saw another beast, like a leopard; on its back were four wings like those of a bird, and it had four heads. To this beast dominion was given.
- The leopard is not as strong as a lion. This beast's wings are of a bird, rather than an eagle. This is Persia. It was less destructive than Babylon as far as Judah was concerned. The four heads are the four emperors mentioned in the Bible, Cyrus, Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes and Darius II.
- Persia was given dominion over the former Babylonian empire and the Jewish exiles.

## 14 FATE OF THE FIRST THREE BEASTS

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- The first beast, Babylonia was “taken away from the earth” after its wings were plucked off, according to some translations such as the Anchor Bible, rather than being given a “human heart” in verse 4.
- The second and third beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives were “prolonged for a season and a time.”
- This may mean that remnants of their empires, or a few small kingdoms remained for a limited time.

## 15 THE FOURTH BEAST 7:7-9

- After this, in the visions of the night I saw a fourth beast, terrifying, horrible, and of extraordinary strength; it had great iron teeth with which it devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet what was left. It differed from the beasts that preceded it. It had ten horns. <sup>8</sup> I was considering the ten horns it had, when suddenly another, **a little horn**, sprang out of their midst, and three of the previous horns were torn away to make room for it. This horn had eyes like human eyes, and a mouth that spoke arrogantly.



## 16 THE FOURTH BEAST

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- This beast is more ferocious than the Babylonian lion.
- It is thought by the Anchor Bible, the New Jerome Biblical commentary, Collegeville Bible Commentary and the International Bible Commentary that the fourth beast is the Greek Empire. The vicious manner in which it is described suits the Seleucids and Antiochus IV.
- The ten horns are said to be ten kings. The Seleucids, of the Greek Empire actually had more than 10 kings.



## 17 ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES - “ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION”

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Antiochus IV reigned from 175 to 164 BC. While attempting to Hellenize the world, he proclaimed that the worship of Yahweh and all of the Jewish rites were forbidden on pain of death. In the Temple an altar to Zeus was erected, and sacrifices were to be made at the feet of an idol in the image of the King. A pig was sacrificed on the altar as well. As a result, Judas Maccabeus, leader of the anti-Greek Jews, led a revolt and defeated the generals Antiochus had commissioned to deal with the uprising. In December 164 BC altar of Zeus was torn down and the Temple was re-consecrated.

## 18 THE SMALL HORN- ANTIOCHUS IV?

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- The “small horn” is one of the later additions to the original text.  
“I was considering the ten horns it had, when suddenly another, a little horn, sprang out of their midst, and three of the previous horns were torn away to make room for it. This horn had eyes like human eyes, and a mouth that spoke arrogantly.” (7:8)
- It is explained by a “holy one” or angel in 7:24-25 that he shall speak against the Most High and oppress the holy ones of the Most High, thinking to change the feast days and the law.

## 19 THE FATE OF THE FOURTH BEAST

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- <sup>11</sup> I watched, then, from the first of the arrogant words which the horn spoke, until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the burning fire.

## 20 ANCIENT OF DAYS, ANCIENT ONE

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- <sup>9</sup> As I watched, Thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days took his throne. His clothing was white as snow, the hair on his head like pure wool; His throne was flames of fire, with wheels of burning fire.<sup>10</sup> A river of fire surged forth, flowing from where he sat; Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him, and myriads upon myriads stood before him.



## 21 THE DIVINE COURT JUDGEMENT AGAINST THE BEAST

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It is at this court that the fourth beast with the little arrogant horn is judged, slain and cast into a consuming fire. (7:11)

Psalm 9:8-10 The LORD rules forever, has set up his throne for judgment.<sup>9</sup> It is he who judges the world with justice, who judges the peoples with fairness. <sup>10</sup> The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.



## 22 SON OF MAN

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<sup>13</sup> As the visions during the night continued,  
I saw coming with the clouds of heaven

One like a son of man.

When he reached the Ancient of Days and was presented before him, <sup>14</sup> He received dominion, splendor, and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, his kingship, one that shall not be destroyed.



## 23 SON OF MAN

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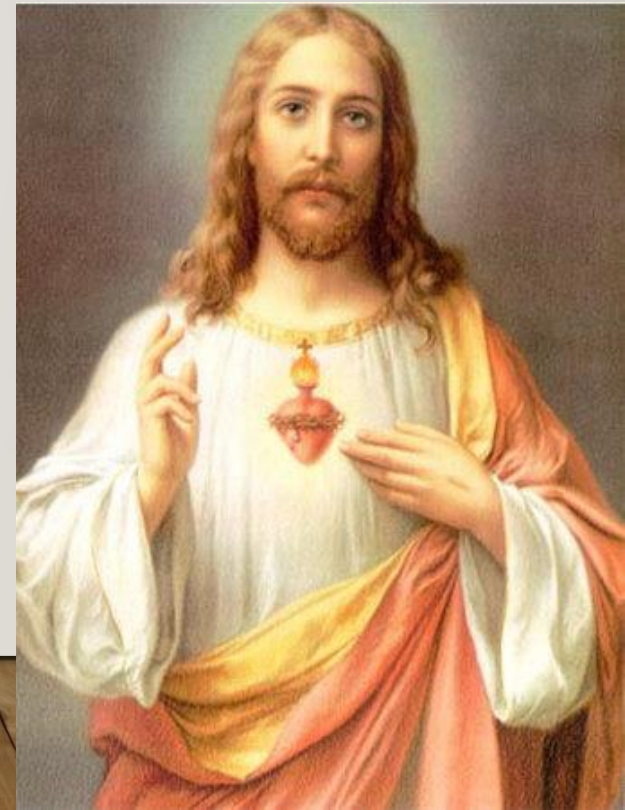
- “Son of man” is used to designate Jesus Christ in the New Testament no fewer than eighty-one times — thirty times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, twenty-five times in Luke, and twelve times in the Gospel of John.
- It is found once in Acts, where St. Stephen exclaims: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).



## 24 THE MESSIAH IS ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN

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- The early church Fathers were of the opinion that the expression “son of man” was used out of humility and to show Christ’s human nature.
- In Daniel 7 “son of man” was interpreted early on to mean Messiah. It became known as a Messianic title in later use.
- “Christ” is the Greek word for “Messiah”





## 25 THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

- The beasts will be destroyed or defeated.
- The judgment for the faithful will show God's justice. The faithful holy ones of the Most High will be rewarded.
- “Then the kingship and dominion and majesty of all the kingdoms under the heavens shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High, Whose kingship shall be an everlasting kingship, whom all dominions shall serve and obey.” (7:27)

## 26 WHAT DO WE TAKE AWAY FROM THIS CHAPTER?

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- We do not know the day or the hour of the end times. Be prepared.
- There will be judgment in the end.
- If Jesus will act as judge, it is very good news if we have a loving, faithful relationship with Jesus!
- Good will ultimately overcome evil in all its forms and in every age.

## LET US PRAY, PSALM 111

- I will praise the LORD with all my heart in the assembled congregation of the upright.

<sup>2</sup> Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.<sup>3</sup> Majestic and glorious is his work, his righteousness endures forever.<sup>4</sup> He won renown for his wondrous deeds; gracious and merciful is the LORD.<sup>5</sup> He gives food to those who fear him, he remembers his covenant forever.

- <sup>6</sup> He showed his powerful deeds to his people, giving them the inheritance of the nations.<sup>7</sup> The works of his hands are true and just, reliable all his decrees,<sup>8</sup> Established forever and ever, to be observed with truth and equity. <sup>9</sup> He sent release to his people, decreed his covenant forever; holy and fearsome is his name.<sup>10</sup> **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; prudent are all who practice it.** His praise endures forever.