

The Rise of the Beasts: Why Daniel 7 Matters Today

For centuries, the prophecies of Daniel have captivated and perplexed theologians and laypeople alike. His visions of a great statue and terrifying beasts have often been relegated to the annals of ancient history, interpreted as a symbolic retelling of empires long since turned to dust. However, a futurist, non-dispensational understanding of these prophecies suggests a different, more urgent reality: that Daniel's visions are not about the past, but about our present and immediate future. If this interpretation is correct, the rise of the beasts described in Daniel 7 is a critical sign that the world is on the threshold of the period known in Christian eschatology as the end-times, culminating in the tribulation and the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The Global Framework: The Statue and the Beasts (Daniel 2 & 7)

The prophetic timeline begins with two parallel visions. In Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar dreams of a great statue with a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron mixed with clay. In Daniel 7, Daniel himself has a vision of four great beasts emerging from the sea: the first was like a lion with eagle's wings, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard with four wings and four heads, and the fourth was a terrifying and powerful beast with large iron teeth.

From a futurist perspective, these visions are not a history lesson about Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Instead, they represent a sequence of modern and future global powers that arise in the last days. A key to this interpretation is that while these empires appear sequentially, they also exist concurrently on the world stage before the final events unfold. Each subsequent power emerges based on the geopolitical landscape created by the one before it.

Following this framework, we can see a potential correspondence with nations rising to power in our time:

- **The Lion with Eagle's Wings (Head of Gold):** This could be interpreted as modern **China**. The lion is a symbol of power and authority, while the eagle's wings suggest rapid economic and military ascent. The wings being "plucked off" could symbolize a future check on its global expansion, forcing it to stand on its own feet as a dominant, yet more grounded, world power.
- **The Bear (Chest and Arms of Silver):** This beast, told to "arise, devour much flesh," can be seen as representing **Russia**. The bear is a traditional symbol of Russia, and its aggressive, expansionist nature in the vision aligns with its recent geopolitical actions and military posture.
- **The Leopard (Belly and Thighs of Bronze):** The leopard is known for its speed

and cunning. This could point to a coalition of powers in the Middle East, led by **Iran**, which has rapidly expanded its influence through proxy forces and strategic alliances, creating a sphere of control that challenges the global order.

If these identifications are accurate, the emergence of these three powers as distinct and influential global players is not a coincidence. It is the fulfillment of the first stages of Daniel's prophecy, setting the stage for the final, most formidable power to appear.

The Focus Narrows: The Rise of the Fourth Beast (Daniel 8 & 11)

While Daniel 2 and 7 provide a global overview, the prophecies in Daniel 8 and 11 shift the focus to the Middle East—the "Holy Land"—and detail the rise of the fourth and final beast. This terrifying beast, corresponding to the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay, represents the last human empire that will dominate the world.

Daniel 11, in particular, provides a detailed, almost journalistic, account of the conflicts, treaties, and betrayals that will lead to the emergence of this final kingdom and its ruler, often referred to as the Antichrist. The chapter describes a series of wars and political maneuvers between a "king of the North" and a "king of the South," culminating in a global conflict that brings the fourth beast to absolute power. The beginning of these specific events is the ultimate sign that the final stage of the prophecy is underway.

The Link to Revelation: Unsealing the Scroll of Destiny

The connection between Daniel's prophecies and the book of Revelation is crucial. In Daniel 10, a glorious angelic messenger, who is obstructed by a "prince of Persia," comes to give Daniel understanding of what will happen in the "latter days." This same powerful messenger appears to be the one who reveals himself to the Apostle John in Revelation 1, thus linking the two books as a continuous prophetic narrative.

Furthermore, in Daniel 12, the prophet is told to "seal up the words of the scroll until the time of the end." This sealed scroll is the key to understanding the timing of the final events. It is the very same scroll that appears in Revelation 5, held in the right hand of God, which only the Lamb (Jesus Christ) is worthy to open.

The unsealing of this scroll in Revelation 6 is the catalyst for the tribulation. The events unleashed with each seal correspond directly to the events foretold in Daniel 11. The opening of the first seal, revealing a rider on a white horse going out to conquer, signals the rise of the fourth beast and the beginning of the end-times conflict described by Daniel. This is the moment when the sealed-up prophecy becomes

current events.

The Urgency of a Single Generation

Jesus himself gives us a timeframe for these events in Matthew 24:34: "Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened." When applied to the end-times prophecies, this indicates that from the moment the key signs appear—the rise of the beasts and the beginning of the Daniel 11 conflict—the entire sequence of events will unfold within the span of a single generation. This lends an incredible urgency to our need to be watchful.

A Concluding Call to Watch

The rise of nations that fit the description of Daniel's first three beasts is a profound sign of the times. It suggests that the world stage is now set for the final act of human history before the return of Christ. For Christians, this is not a time for fear, but for vigilance and preparation. We are called to watch for the signs of the rise of the fourth beast, which will manifest through the specific geopolitical conflicts described in Daniel 11 and will be confirmed by the opening of the seals in Revelation 6.

By understanding these prophecies, we can avoid being caught unaware. We can discern the times and prepare our hearts, not just for the coming tribulation, but for the glorious appearing of our Savior, who will crush the final beast and establish His eternal kingdom, the "stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands" which will fill the whole earth.