

# The Four Beasts

## *A Bible study of Daniel 7*

As recorded in Daniel chapter 2, in 602 BC King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream of a great image, which the prophet Daniel interpreted to represent succeeding world empires, from his day right through to when Jesus returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

Nearly 50 years later, in 553 BC, Daniel himself had a dream in which four of the same empires were represented, as well as the Antichrist world government.

*In my vision that night, I, Daniel, saw a great storm churning the surface of a great sea, with strong winds blowing from every direction. Then four huge beasts came up out of the water, each different from the others. (Daniel 7:2-3)*



*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.*

*Then I saw another animal there in front of me that looked like 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, 'Get up and eat all the meat you want!' (Daniel 7:4-5)*



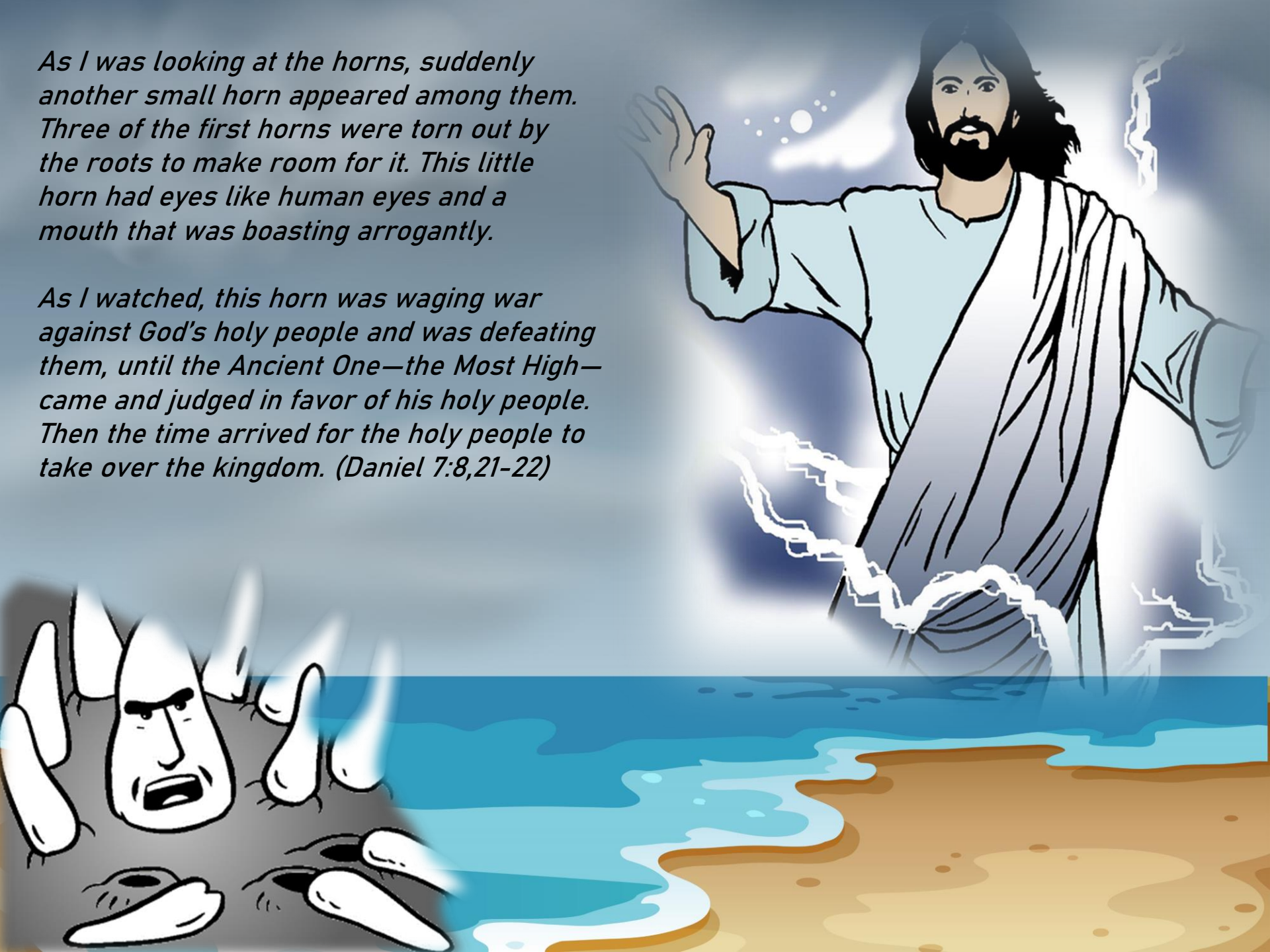
*Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a leopard. It had four bird's wings on its back, and it had four heads. Great authority was given to this beast.*

*Then in my vision that night, I saw a fourth beast—terrifying, dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with huge iron teeth and trampled their remains beneath its feet. It was different from any of the other beasts, and it had ten horns. (Daniel 7:5-6)*



*As I was looking at the horns, suddenly another small horn appeared among them. Three of the first horns were torn out by the roots to make room for it. This little horn had eyes like human eyes and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly.*

*As I watched, this horn was waging war against God's holy people and was defeating them, until the Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favor of his holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom. (Daniel 7:8,21-22)*



*I, Daniel, was confused and worried. The visions that went through my mind bothered me. I went to someone who was standing there and asked him what all this meant. So he explained it to me. He said, 'The four great animals are four kingdoms that will come from the earth. (Daniel 7:15-17)*

The four beasts in Daniel's dream represent the first four empires that were represented by the image King Nebuchadnezzar had seen in a dream years earlier, as recorded in Daniel chapter 2.



*“The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings” (v.4).* Babylon is symbolized in the Bible by both a lion (Jeremiah 4:7) and an eagle (Jeremiah 49:22).

*Then I saw another animal ...that looked like a bear. (v.5).* A bear is slow, awkward, and lumbering, and depends on brute force, and that is how Persia became a dominant empire—by brute force and strength of numbers. Modern historians estimate that the combined land and naval force of Xerxes, the fourth king of the Persian Empire, was between 200,000 and 300,000 warriors—huge for the sixth century BC.

*Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a leopard. It had four bird’s wings on its back, and it had four heads. (v.6).* The leopard, which represents the Greek Empire here, is the most agile of wild beasts and extremely fierce. Its four wings denote the swiftness with which Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia and the leader of the Greeks, conquered the Persian Empire. Its four heads represent the division of Alexander’s empire after his sudden death.



*“And he explained this to me: ‘The fourth animal is a fourth kingdom that will come on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms. That fourth kingdom will destroy people all around the world. It will walk on and crush nations all around the world. The ten horns are ten kings that will come from this fourth kingdom. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will subdue three of them. (Daniel 7:23-24)*

Babylon, Persia, Greece, and other empires had conquered and ruled by might, but the world had never seen anything like the Roman Empire!

We can tell from looking at history that Daniel correctly predicted the next three empires that would follow Babylon, the empire in power at the time of this dream. So what did God reveal to Daniel about *our* future?



*This king will say things against God Most High, and he will hurt and kill God's special people. That king will try to change the times and laws that have already been set. God's people will be under that king's power for three and one-half years. (Daniel 7:25)*

This “little horn” with “eyes like a man” and “mouth speaking great things” is the world dictator known as the Antichrist, the Devil incarnate (also called “the Beast” in Revelation chapter 13). He will come to power peaceably (Daniel 11:21), but halfway through his seven-year rule he will manifest his true evil character (Daniel 9:27) and persecute all those who oppose him. This three-and-a-half-year period is known as the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15,21; Daniel 7:21; 11:31; Revelation 13:5–7).





*But then the court will pass judgment, and all his power will be taken away and completely destroyed. Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last forever. (Daniel 7:26-27)*

The Antichrist will fail in the end because Jesus will return and God's holy people will receive the kingdom. The happy ending!



[www.freekidstories.org](http://www.freekidstories.org)

Text from the Bible and Activated magazine.

Image Credits:

Background on pages 1,2,5,6 and 10: Designed by Upklyak / Freepik

Background on pages 3,4,7-9: Designed by brgfx / Freepik

All other art © TFI.

