

THE FOUR BEASTS

Daniel 7:1-28



SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, we got into the details of Daniel's vision of the four beasts. In his vision, he sees four beasts that correspond with four kingdoms (similar to King Nebuchadnezzar's dream). The first beast was like a lion with wings of an eagle - this beast represents Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar. The second beast was a bear raised up on one of its sides with three ribs in its mouth. This beast represented the Medo-Persian Empire and King Cyrus. The third beast was a leopard with four heads and four wings. This represented the Grecian Empire and Alexander the Great. The fourth beast was different than the others, terrifying, and very powerful. It represented the Roman Kingdom, but also (in the futurist view), an End-Time Empire that would be exceedingly ruthless and powerful. This beast had ten horns - representing a 10-nation confederation with an 11th horn (leader) rising up. The 11th horn starts out small and insignificant, but grows in power and influence and subdues three of the ten 'kings.'

This last beast led by the 11th horn speaks boastfully, opposing God and His people. His words create great fear because of the threats made against the people of God, but it also creates great excitement because of the false promises made to rally people against God. He will change the set times and the laws and oppress God's people for "a time, times, and half a time."

The scene changes to a Son of Man approaching the Ancient of Days (God) and receiving power and authority to ruler the nations - and all peoples worshipped Him. Although this was a strange sight for Daniel, we can tell from our side of history that this is our first look at the person of Jesus. "Son of Man" was Jesus' favorite reference for himself - Jesus is the Son of Man, Son of God who has been given keys to His everlasting Kingdom.

The vision ends as Daniel seeks understanding for this troubling vision.



3 POINTS TO CONSIDER

1

THE KINGDOM THAT OUTLASTS ALL KINGDOMS

Our focus drifts to the scene of the horrifying 'fourth beastly kingdom' where the horn is able to oppress the people of God, but we can find hope in fixing our eyes on Jesus - the Son of Man who will reign for all of eternity.

2

THE COSMIC STRUGGLE

The reality is there is a cosmic struggle happening in the spiritual realm that bleeds into the natural realm. We should not be surprised when we face persecution and opposition - but again, our comfort is knowing that the end has been written: Jesus has overcome.

3

A REAL RELATIONSHIP

Without relationship, it will be difficult to persevere in the face of persecution. Let's cultivate the soil of our heart and treasure our relationship with Him so that we will come to trust His perfect leadership.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Icebreaker: Are you a half-cup full or half-cup empty type of person? Why do you think that's the case?

2

How do you personally approach these visions and dreams that are apocalyptic and somewhat mysterious in nature?

3

What are your experiences with spiritual warfare? What are your thoughts on this cosmic struggle that is happening and what do you think that looks like in our society, specifically in San Diego?

4

What does it look like for you to see God's Kingdom come on earth as it is heaven? What does it mean to you to be part of God's Kingdom?

5

What does it look like to cultivate a real and living relationship with Jesus? Share ways that are helpful for you and encourage one another.



BIG IDEA

Depending on your eschatological view, you may come to different conclusions regarding what it will look like in these 'last days.' Nevertheless - as we eagerly await the return of Jesus - our trust and hope must be solidly found in Jesus as the King of an everlasting Kingdom. As the cosmic struggle rages on, let's diligently cultivate our own relationship with Him and come to trust His perfect leadership.