

## The Kingdom of God on Earth - 10

About 70 years after king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon received his prophetic dream of the image, the prophet Daniel received a dream with the same conclusion -

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! ...Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” - Daniel 7:13.

The reader may be curious to know what reason there could be for sending the same prophetic message - the development of four empires to be followed by the kingdom of God. The rationale can be seen in the sending of two differing dreams to Pharaoh. They both foretold the seven years of abundant harvests in Egypt which were to be followed by seven years of famine.

Joseph, son of Jacob, explained, “The dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass” - Genesis 41:32. Similarly, the two similar prophetic dreams, one to the king and the other to Daniel, was a depiction of events that God would surely bring about.

The king saw in his visions the kingdom of men from a human point of view - depicted as four glittering metals in a human image “whose splendor was excellent.” But Daniel saw those same empires represented as wild beasts, animals that one would be terrified to meet face to face, with their fangs and claws, etc - the kingdom of men from God’s point of view -

“The first was like a lion” - Daniel 7:4. The lion was the symbol of the Chaldean powers of Assyria, and Babylon - “Israel is like scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away. First the king of Assyria devoured him; now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones” - Jeremiah 50:17. The spade of the archaeologist has unearthed many huge images of lions at both Nineveh and Babylon - the head of gold in the king’s dream.

5 “Another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!’” The bear “was raised up on one side” to represent the uneven sharing of power by the Medes (now western Iran) and the Persians (Eastern Iran). Their reign - the silver chest and arms of the image - began under a Mede and in two years passed by inheritance to Cyrus, a Persian.

Darius was the only Mede to rule and he ruled two years while the Persians ruled for more than 200 years. The three ribs foretold the three divisions of the empire ruled over by three presidents of whom Daniel was chief - Daniel 6:1-2.

6 “Another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.” This was the third universal empire analogous to the bronze of the image - the kingdom of the brazen-coated Greeks. Just as the leopard was swift to the prey, so were the conquests of Alexander the Great.

The four wings answer to the four-fold divisions of Alexander's forces, by which his conquests were completed with such rapidity. At the height of his power, and when only a young man, Alexander died with no offspring able to continue his dynasty. The four heads speak of the division of Alexander’s empire into four parts with four separate rulers over them.