

1. Daniel 7 opens during the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. Chronologically set between chapters 4 and 5.
2. The year was approximately 553 B.C. - fourteen years before the fall of Babylon.
3. One night as he slept, Daniel had a dream in which he saw visions. He realized that the revelation was important and recorded the "substance/summary" of it.
4. As the vision unfolded during the night, Daniel was looking at the scenes being displayed before him and he saw four winds "stirring up the great sea."
5. In verse 2 the "wind" is used to represent the judgment and sovereign power of God.
6. The "four winds of the heaven" represent the heavenly powers by which God sets the nations of the world in motion.
7. The "great sea" represents the nations and the four "great beasts" of verse 3 represent the four great world empires - each differing from the other.
8. So - what do these four beasts/animals from the sea represent?
9. In chapter 7 and verse 17 we find an explanation of the four beasts and the great sea.
10. They are the same empires represented by the statue's four parts in Daniel 2. Daniel 7 merely provides more detailed information concerning them.
11. Daniel describes the first beast as being like a lion but having the wings of an eagle. (verse 4)
12. The first beast in verse 4 combines the majesty/dominion of the lion with the power/strength of the eagle.
13. The lion and the eagle are both used by Jeremiah in a description of Nebuchadnezzar. The plucking off of wings and being made to stand up like a man speaks of the events of chapter 4, where the proud, self-sufficient king was made to realize his weakness. (Jeremiah 49:19-22 and Psalm 49:20)
14. The next beast is described as a bear in verse 5. The identification of the bear is the next portion of the image from chapter 2; the Medo-Persian Empire.
15. What can we draw from the description of the bear?
16. It appears to represent the one-sided union of the Persian and Median Empires.
17. Persia - at this time - was by far the greater and more powerful and had absorbed the Medes.
18. The "ribs" apparently refer to the additional conquests of the Medes and Persians in the years which followed the fall of Babylon.

19. Taken as a whole - the prophecy of the second beast accurately portrays the characteristics and history of the Medo-Persian Empire which continued for over 200 years - until Alexander the Great, 336B.C.
20. The next beast depicted in the vision was different from either of the first two. (verse 6)
21. The third beast is identified as the Grecian Empire and the only thing said about the beast was - "dominion was given to it."
22. With the swiftness of a leopard - Alexander the Great conquered most of the civilized world all the way from Macedonia to Africa and eastward to India.
23. The speed of his army is without precedent in the ancient world. The Greek Empire divided into four after Alexander the Great's death.
24. The fourth beast is Rome. (verse 7-8)
25. Beginning with the occupation of Sicily in 241 B.C. the dominion of Rome quickly made the Mediterranean area and Europe - Roman.
26. The Roman Empire continued to grow reaching its height in A.D. 117.
27. The Roman Empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples.
28. Rome was known for killing its captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands.
29. The difficulty comes in the last part of verse 7.
30. The "ten horns" - like heads - commonly symbolize kings or kingdoms in Scripture. (Psalm 132:17; Revelation 17:12 and Daniel 7:24)
31. Since the "horns" protrude from the fourth beast - these kings must have a connection with the empire.
32. The "uprooting of three horns" symbolizes that three kings or kingdoms (nations) will be conquered by the new ruler.
33. Daniel predicted that in the last days a powerful empire made up of a confederation of kingdoms or nations will rise out of the ashes of the old Roman Empire.
34. This final empire will have incredible power - and the Antichrist will be unleashed to rule the whole earth. (Revelation 13:3, 7-8, 12)