

✠ *In the Name of Jesus* ✠

[Readers are encouraged to read Daniel 7 in its entirety, also Daniel 2, 4 and 5.]

Am I awake or asleep? It sure feels like a dream. But I'm more awake than asleep. The colors and sounds are so vivid, I should be able to remember this and write it all down later.

Look at that! Winds are blowing from all four directions, making the high seas choppy. Huge swells are being churned up!

Look at that! Four huge beasts have come up out of the sea. Each one is different from the others. I'm trying to move closer for a better look—but not too close. These beasts are scary!

That one looks like a lion, except that it has the wings of an eagle. No, it's not what people will someday call a griffin. A griffin also has the head of an eagle. This creature looks like a lion and has just the wings of an eagle. Ouch! I'll bet that hurt—its wings were just torn off.

I'm sorry, I can't give you any more details. The lion is disappearing, and the second beast is all I can see right now. This one looks like a bear. One side of the bear is bigger than the other. What a ferocious beast! It has three ribs in its mouth between its teeth like it just finished devouring its prey. Listen! Someone is telling it, 'Get up and eat

your fill of flesh!' I don't know what that means yet. And now the bear is fading from view.

But the third beast, it's scary too! This one looks like a leopard, smaller than the bear, but just as vicious. It has one, two, three, four wings like the wings of a bird. I'll bet it can cover ground fast—no prey is going to get away from this beast. It also has one, two, three, four heads. I just heard someone say that this beast has authority to rule. I'm not sure what that means yet.

And now the leopard is obscured by the fourth beast. I don't know how to describe it, but all the people are running away from it and screaming. It's muscles ripple. And look at those large, iron teeth. It is crushing and devouring its victims and trampling underfoot all that's left. Somehow this beast is different from the other three. It also has ten horns—that's a lot of horns to gore people with. But I wonder what all this is supposed to represent.

Ooh, look at that! A little horn just came up among the ten horns on the fourth beast, and when the little horn came up, it uprooted three of the other horns. Weird! The little horn has eyes like the eyes of a human, and it's boasting about how great it is.

Man alive! This is just about the most troubling dream I've ever had. Wait. I'm still dreaming. But I can walk.

Okay... I'm going to ask one of those people standing around over there to explain all this. Good, he's explaining it to me! I'll repeat for you what he tells me.

Yeah, I kind of thought so. He says those four great beasts signify four kingdoms that will rise up to rule, probably in the next 500 years, between my time and—I'm called Daniel by the way. You may know me from the night I spent in a pit with very hungry lions, but God protected me—these four kingdoms will rise in the 500 years between my time and the time the Messiah comes. How exciting is that?! The Messiah—finally coming to save us in only 500 more years! Then these “former times,” the years before the Messiah comes [Old Testament] will be over and the “last times” [New Testament], the years after the Messiah comes, will begin.

The man explaining all this to me is reminding me how I, Daniel, have announced the interpretation of many other dreams. He says I ought to recognize the first beast as representing the Babylonians. Yeah, I can see that now. The Babylonians seem to have unlimited power in my day, like the king of the beasts, the lion, combined with the baddest bird of prey, the eagle. The Babylonians are so powerful, they do act like they are gods. Really?!? Their kingdom is about to end quickly? Shshsh. I hope none of them is listening in on this dream. They won't like it.

I'm being told that the Babylonians will be replaced by the Medes and the Persians. That makes sense, since they are a rising power in my time. They will be as ferocious as a bear. They will devour their enemies. The Persians will have more influence than the Medes—oh, so that's why the bear I saw was bigger on one side. Despite its ability to destroy other armies like a flesh-eating bear, the great Persian empire will be quickly taken over by the next great empire, which I saw as a leopard. Leopards are smaller than bears, but just as deadly. Oh, I'm being told that the leopard represents the Greeks, who will come with a small army—only 30,000 soldiers. But they will defeat several huge Persian armies, and they will quickly take over the Persian territory as if they are carried along by four wings.

These earthly kingdoms just keep passing away, one right after the other. It wouldn't surprise me if someday people will be able to find only traces of the past greatness of these four earthly kingdoms.

The fourth beast, the really scary one—whom does it represent? The *Roman* empire? Ha! Who names these nations? Anyway, I'm being told that the Romans won't try to advance any of the peoples they conquer—they won't teach them their language or culture like the Greeks will have done—just crush and trample to get their way.

The man telling me all this says I'll have to come back to him later for an explanation of the little horn with the boastful mouth. I'm supposed to watch what happens next in my dream. Oh, I now see why. As powerful as the little horn is, that's nothing compared to what's unfolding before me. It's like a throne room has opened up. They are bringing in some thrones, at least two. I don't have the words to describe how awesome what I'm seeing is. I don't know what to call the One who just entered the throne room and took his seat. Wait. Shsh. The angels nearby are calling him "the Ancient of Days." That makes sense since, as the One who is really in charge, he exercised kingly control and authority long before any of the four beasts came onto the scene, and he will continue to be the Ruler long after these beastly kingdoms are gone [GSB—OT-B, p. 390]. How different he is from the beasts who came along and took over, only to be replaced by another world government! He's even more amazing than I imagined God to be. I'm kind of squinting because his clothing is as white as fresh snow on a sunny day. His hair is white like wool. But it's hard to see him because his throne is flaming with fire, and its wheels are all ablaze—so there's lots of smoke. Yes, I said wheels. His throne has wheels, like it could roll anywhere fast. Look at that underneath the throne! A river of fire is flowing out from before him, like lava. He must be very powerful.

I didn't notice till now, but there are several million angels carrying out his orders, and there are an uncountable number of people standing nearby, waiting to be judged—at least a hundred million of them. (That's the biggest number anyone in my day can imagine.) Ah, now I see that this isn't just a throne room, this is a courtroom too. In fact, court is now in session. Books full of evidence have just been opened. But there's a little delay in the proceedings, as if time has not fully run out yet.

That boastful little horn on the ferocious beast is taking advantage of the delay, running its boastful mouth again. He is speaking against the Most High, blaspheming the Lord by teaching the opposite of what God has revealed! Oh no. Now the little horn is oppressing God's holy people on earth. He's trying to change the laws so that good is hampered and evil can flourish. He's even trying to change the plans God has announced about the future in order to keep God's prophesies from coming true. And now he is waging war against the saints. Aawww! These saints, God's people on earth, are being handed over to him, and the little horn is defeating them. But I'm being told that this won't last long.

Whoa, what's happening? I'm being moved back into the courtroom. The Ancient of Days is now pronouncing judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High. Well, that was quick! As

promised, they didn't suffer all that long. Ha! The fourth beast with its boastful horn was just slain. They threw its body into the blazing fire. I hope the people reading this dream will take warning never to become an enemy of God. That never works out well.

Now look! Someone wonderful is approaching! No, not another beast. He looks human, but he's arriving on the clouds. Only the Lord does that. [See Psalm 18:1-14, 97:2-4, 104:3, Isa 19:1, Eze 1:4ff, Na 1:3.] The Lord in human form, hmmm. Maybe someday God's people will understand more about him. Yes, I'm being told that they will, since this part of my dream/vision will be the most often referred to by other prophets and then by the apostles of the Lord. He just stepped off of the cloud he was riding. He's walking up to the Ancient of Days, as if the two of them are very close. [See John 5:23, 8:54, 10:30, 12:26, 14:13, 16:15.] He is being given authority, glory, and sovereign power. Now he's the king. The Ancient of Days is saying that his dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingly activity won't ever be destroyed [see Matthew 16:18]. And now the saints on earth, together with the saints already in heaven, are receiving their full place in the kingdom. The look on their faces says it all, like they will never face danger or trouble ever again.

Wow! Can you hear the deafening roar?
All the nations and the people of every

language are worshiping him, giving him the honor due him—even the rulers of the nations. Look how many people are clearly not happy about praising the Lord. But even those who didn't love him must praise him and obey him now [see Philippians 2:10-11]. They spent their time on earth acting as if the Lord wasn't their Lord, as if God's promises meant nothing for their day-to-day lives. They accused God's people of being out of touch with the times, but they were the ones who slipped further and further out of touch with the Lord. Even God's own people were tempted to go along with their way of thinking, and many did desert the Lord, some in their later youth, but others throughout life as difficulties happened, or as riches happened, or as they got bored with the Lord, or as they refused to see how relevant he was to their daily living.

But look at how joy-filled God's holy people are. They kept paying attention to the Lord's message, kept reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting all the truths that God revealed to them in his Word. Look at them now, free from every burden, worshiping the Lord with their hearts and minds and mouths. They had to go through a lot before they got here. But the Messiah, whom they will eventually call Christ the King, was with them always, just as he promised. They win. God be glorified! Amen.