

# The Great Image and Four Beasts of Daniel

By Kenneth M. Heck

## The Great Image

There have been many interpretations of this image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, but two details have apparently never been understood.

First, where was the Great Image geographically located?

Second, why was Nebuchadnezzar unable to remember his dream?

Daniel was able to describe the Image as representing a succession of empires, the first being the Babylonian. The image was of a man, terrible in countenance, representing the gentile kings and emperors ruling over the land of Israel during the Times of the Gentiles. After the times of the Gentiles the Kingdom of God will expand to fill the entire earth and Jerusalem will become its capitol. The Image was divided as follows:

**Head** – Gold

**Neck, Chest, and Arms** – Silver – (It isn't clear from the Image's description if the two arms were clearly visible, folded together, or obscured by clothing.)

**Belly** – Bronze - (The text refers to the thighs as also of bronze, but the Aramaic word used for thighs in Daniel is singular, not plural, and is more likely to euphemistically refer to the male generative organ. (See Strong's entries 3409 and 3410.)

**Legs** – Iron

**Feet** – Iron mixed with clay

The descending order of metals from gold to iron represents the descending value of the dominating empires to the Jewish religion. Babylon's empire was symbolized by the golden head because Nebuchadnezzar actively inquired about the Will of God or the Gods through his various advisors before engaging in major activities. These were the wise men, magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, soothsayers, and Chaldeans residing in Babylon. One type he had apparently left out was the prophet, which Daniel remedied. If the Jews had listened to their own prophets they would never had been deported to Babylon. Silver, the promise of the Messiah, and bronze, the Son of God

concept, represent aspects of Judaism that were little known or not understood beforehand. Iron, representing written scriptures, is quite useful but less valuable because Judaism itself is largely based on the written word.

Daniel wisely interpreted the dream from Nebuchadnezzar's viewpoint, since he was speaking face to face with him; Nebuchadnezzar had no idea of who the Jews actually were. He could not have imagined that all the religions within his empire would eventually become defunct except for Judaism. The long term consequences of carrying the Jews off to Babylon could not have been explained by any of his wise men.

Since the dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar we might suppose that the image was placed in Babylon for the entire dream. But this doesn't work out from a historical viewpoint.

Babylon was succeeded by the Persian Empire, then the Greeks conquered it, and the Seleucid Empire ruled Babylon until 120 BC. The Parthians then ruled until the Romans temporarily conquered it in 116 but withdrew shortly thereafter in 117 under Hadrian (he considered the area to be indefensible). Then the Parthians and Sassanians (both Persian) ruled until the Muslims successfully invaded beginning in 633 and ending in 651. Babylon has been under Islamic rulership until the present day.

If Babylon were the location of the image, then the legs or thighs should have been silver rather than iron. The remainder of the legs or feet would be Muslim. The religions of Zoroastrianism, prevalent in the Persian Empire, and Islam, are so different that they could not both be of the same metal.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream the image was struck by a stone made without hands which destroyed the entire image and grew into a great mountain. This stone is well known to represent Christ, who will set up an empire, the Kingdom of God, which will never be destroyed. Is Babylon the place where the Kingdom of God begins? No, it is more likely in Israel, or Jerusalem. Babylon is prophesied never to rise again and Mystery Babylon suffers the same fate.

However, the Jews were not in Israel under the Babylonian Empire; they had been largely deported to Babylon and remained there until permitted to return under the edict of Cyrus the Great in 539 BC. The location of the Great Image must therefore represent wherever the Jews primarily are until the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled. This is why Nebuchadnezzar's memory was removed by God – the dream pertained only to the Jews. It needed a Jew to interpret it, not any of the other types of wise men residing in Babylon at the time.

The successive empires after Babylon which dominated and possessed Judea and Jerusalem were as follows:

**Persian Empire** – Silver (539 BC to 332 BC) - The Savior Period. Zoroastrianism was the religion of the savior or messiah concept, the *saoshyant*, expected to come at the end of time. In fact, Cyrus was called the “anointed” (or Messiah) of the Lord (Isaiah 45:1) since he permitted the Jews to return to build their temple. Looking at the image, the joint allowing movement of the head represents the changeover to the Persians when the city of Babylon was taken with the Jews inside. The Persians can be identified as issuing from Madai, a son of Japheth, or the Indo-Iranians.

**Greco-Roman Empires** – Bronze (332 BC to 638 AD) - The Son of God Period. The Greco-Romans originate from Javan, a son of Japheth, or the Myceneans, and afterward the Greeks. The Greek, Roman, and Christian religions recognize the son or sons of god. From the Jewish viewpoint a son of god had little or no place within their religion. Actually, the sons of god are the origin of God-instituted government. The Greek and Roman religions were quite similar despite differences in language, and the Romans could trace their origin back to Greek colonists who amalgamated with other natives such as the Etruscans. The change to Christianity with a monotheistic Son of God didn't change the empires ruling over the Holy Land. The actual sequence was Ptolemaic, Seleucid, Roman, and Byzantine, with short periods of discontinuity and revolt, such as for example the Hasmonean Dynasty.

This period was quite complex in its history and it is reflected in the complex bone structure of the pelvic region. The two halves of the pelvic bone represent the Greek and Roman cultures. The male generative organ is suggestive of the nature of the religions in their capacity to produce sons of god. There is no joint within the spine representing a battle changing over to the Son of God Period because there was no battle to take Jerusalem and Judea. Jerusalem capitulated peacefully to Alexander on his way to conquer Egypt.

**Islamic Empire** – Iron (638 AD to the Present) Period of God's written word. The Muslims spiritually originate from Ishmael, the first son of Abraham.

The religion of Islam best exemplifies rulership according to the written word. Any religion can create written records, but there can also be oral transmission, priestly functions, mysteries, and elaborate ritualism. In Islam these are relatively minimal. The written word makes rule by law, not by men, possible. The transition to Islam (when Jerusalem was captured in 638 AD) begins at the joints connecting the thigh bones to the pelvis. The knee joints represent the time of the Crusades when the Kingdom of Jerusalem was temporarily established by Christians (1099 to 1291 AD). Down at the joints of the ankles we have World War III and the end of Islamic domination over the Holy Land.

Many interpreters believe the two legs should represent two empires, or halves of the Roman Empire. But legs always work together, not independently or in contrast. If the separate function of each leg is believed, then the separate functions of the arms should also be explained. We don't really know if the legs were actually visible or covered by clothing. The legs more likely represent the pen and the sword, the two methods of advancing Islam, or the missionary/cultural and militaristic methods.

**Empire of Iron and Clay** – (from the end of WWII to the end of the time of the Gentiles - Rev 10:6). The combination of iron and clay is peculiar; certain types of clay can be processed for use as ceramics which resists melting at very high temperatures. The combination of iron and clay as a composite could theoretically create a material even stronger than iron. Iron itself is symbolic of religious belief in written scriptures. Clay relates to the soil or ground from which Adam was formed; it contains aluminum, the lightest metal in the image. Clay represents true human knowledge, observation, logic and proven scientific explanation. Those of clay are able to support and maintain the technology required for the Kingdom of God.

The people of clay believe because they have seen with their own eyes. Both iron and clay are arguments for believing in the appearances of Christ around the world after the end of WWII, plus other phenomena during the time period. The clay would originate from those of Javan, the Greeks and Romans, who have no traditional religious belief surviving at that time. This empire is based on the word of Christ coming from the scroll with seven seals.

This empire begins with Christ appearing in mercy (as a

member of the Holy Trinity, not in the flesh) to preserve Christianity and the human race, not in judgment. Christ will introduce the world to the contents of the first seal of the scroll (Rev 6:1-2), the covenant for Christ's reign on earth from his Father's throne. This is the beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth, but the earth is only under the umbrella of the Kingdom of God, not as in the resurrection. This empire is actually a voluntary association of nations which join together in a manner somewhat like the United Nations, with others joining later. The association will possess much stronger power, including military, to intervene in conflicts within and without the association. It will include the nation of Israel. The capitol is prophesied to be in Istanbul (a seven-hilled city), which eventually becomes the head of Mystery Babylon. The empire might aptly be called the "Fourth Rome" after Rome, Constantinople, and Moscow. The ten toes represent the government of the Empire divided into ten different independent functions.

Many Jews will become Messianic Christians. The one on the white horse represents those leaders of the winning side of WWIII. After some time of peace, the rider on the red horse, winning his war, takes peace from the Earth. This is where the 10-horned beast begins, also persecution of the Jews and Mystery Babylon. It corresponds to the first joint of the 10 toes of the image and the second seal. The second joint of the 10 toes corresponds to the war of the black horse, the overthrow of Mystery Babylon, and the third seal. The war of the pale green horse corresponds to the joint of the 8 small toes (the big toes only have two joints) and the fourth seal.

All these seals are opened by Christ in heaven and transmitted to earth through prophets or other methods. Dan 7:8 explains that the little horn which arises after the 10 horns makes war and plucks up three horns, making a new total of eight. It is at this time that the great tribulation of the Jews is at its peak, as expressed in the fifth seal. The defeat of the pale green horse

rulers is accomplished by the kings of the east (Rev 16:12) and the armies of heaven led by Christ, the Word of God (Rev 19:11-21). The stone destroying the image, most likely a literal asteroid or comet, is expressed in the sixth seal (Rev 6:12-17). Then the mighty angel of Rev 10:1, 5-6, representing Christ in an angelic manifestation, announces the end of the times of the Gentiles.

The whole period of time began in c. 605 BC and ends somewhat before the final battle of Bozrah in c. 2207, according to the timeline of *The Heck Hypothesis* (p. 193).

These five aspects of God-instituted government, the Wise Man or Prophet, the Savior, the Son of God, the Written Word of God, and the technology expert, are in effect for over 2800 years, with each succeeding empire emphasizing one of the aspects. The stone destroying the image represents a new relation between these five aspects because its crystalline structure combines different chemical elements into a new, more perfect unity expressing the nature of the Kingdom of God.

The end of the Image and the Times of the Gentiles doesn't mean all troubles are over for the Jews, who are now mostly believers in Christ as the true Messiah. The 10-horned beast will not be completely destroyed until the final battle of Joel 3:9-17 in the valley of Jehoshaphat (popularly mistaken for the battle of Armageddon).

Finally, the true and final Antichrist arises out of the two-horned beast of Rev 13:11 to tempt and seduce the Jews in a manner analogous to Balaam. The Antichrist's forces are overcome by military defeats (Zech 9:13-16), and Christ in his physical body returns to slay the Antichrist and judge the nations. All this occurs during the time of the seventh seal. This seal, opened by Christ, reveals the final form of the Kingdom of God on earth.

## The Four Beasts of Daniel

The four beasts of Daniel 7 have been mysterious for Bible commentators. They are said to be kings or kingdoms which had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time (vs. 12). In distinction to the great image, these four beasts are alive, and live beyond the time of the image until after the kingdom of God begins. They all begin as chimeras, or combinations of different animal parts, implying they neither reproduce nor arise from reproduction, but are artificially made. They all issue from the sea, a realm where divine law is inapplicable. Although each is concentrated within a particular region, they do exert a global influence.

These four beasts represent four demonic spirits of anti-Semitism and they are concerned with Jews living both inside and outside the Holy Land. They arise after the advent of new religions or spiritual revelations within the four empires, but as beasts have no human spirituality in or of themselves, or human conscience. These new Gentile religions generally elevate humanity, but there is always a cost, and for the Jews it would be new types of persecution. The pattern is similar for all four - they are initially associated with a metal (or empire) of Daniel's great image. Each beast begins within a particular empire, but migrates to other empires and other parts of the earth with influence over the entire planet long after the original empire has been dissolved.

There is no beast associated with the Babylonian Empire, since the head is the non-bestial part of the human body. The head of any animal its least bestial, most human part. Babylon is never described as a beast in scripture, rather as the "lady of kingdoms" (Isa 47:5), and "a golden cup in the LORD'S hands" (Jer 51:7). The Jews were carried away to Babylon as a punishment for their grievous sins; they were not unjustly oppressed or persecuted in Babylon. They actually tended to flourish there, perhaps initially due to the high positions Nebuchadnezzar granted Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego within the government. Daniel's vision occurred under Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, and pertains to the future experience of the Jews, not their past experience. All prophetic dreams in the Bible pertaining to the future do not include the past.

The first beast was like a lion.

"The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given it" (Dan 7:4). As

king of beasts, the lion symbolizes the inevitable victor in any battle, since it is best. "May the better man win," a phrase not found in scriptures, describes the kind of oppression promulgated by this beast. It is the only animal of the four that can be truly tamed.

The lion arose from the Zoroastrian religion in Persia. Zoroaster traditionally lived from 628 BC to 551 BC. Images of lions with wings can be seen in both Persia and Babylon, but Babylon was incorporated into the Persian Empire. When the Persians under Cyrus the Great captured Babylon in 539 BC and ended the Neo-Babylonian Empire (or Chaldean Empire), Zoroastrianism was already well established. After the defeat of the Persians by the Greeks, the lion became oppressive under the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires; it finally provoked the Maccabean rebellion and the resulting Jewish Hasmonean Dynasty. The lion transferred to the Roman Empire after the defeat of the Greeks. After the western half of the Roman Empire fell in 476 BC, the lion subsequently travelled further into Western Europe (Italy, Spain, France, Britain, Netherlands, etc.) ultimately winding up primarily in the British Isles. After the colonial empires of Western Europe reached their furthest extent, the lion's wings were removed and the lion's domain began to shrink, but persecution continued. The lion was raised up to walk like a human and given a human heart after World War II and the Holocaust, meaning that oppression due to the lion had virtually ceased. Today what is left of the lion is mainly found in the United Kingdom, USA, and some former colonies of the UK such as Australia and New Zealand, but it is still world-wide in influence.

### The second beast was like a bear.

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh" (Dan 7:5). The bear, the world's largest carnivore, resides in the temperate regions and the north. The three ribs may actually be three enormous fangs, like the fangs of a saber-toothed tiger, between its normal teeth. As a chimera, the bear had the least modification. The bear's oppression can best be described as "the larger naturally dominates the smaller."

The emperor Diocletian divided the Roman Empire into two parts in 285 AD. The Eastern half was governed from Byzantium. When Constantine came to power, he legalized Christianity in 313 AD and moved the capitol of the Roman Empire to Byzantium, renaming it

Constantinople. Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in 381 under emperor Theodosius. The bear arose from the Byzantine Empire and after its decline, it migrated north to Russia, and west to Central and Eastern Europe, mainly where the Roman Empire had not been established. Oppression was mild initially, but gained in intensity over the centuries.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century pogroms in Russia and eastern and central Europe marked the beginning of increased oppression and persecution of Jews at a time when the lion's oppression was beginning to wane. The bear reached its apex with the Holocaust by the Germans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Nazi extermination program was unique in its genocidal objective, possibly explained only by the divine command to the bear to "Arise, devour much flesh." None of the other three beasts had this command. Since then the bear has been raised up to walk on two feet, mimicking a characteristic of humanity, and losing a significant amount of its prior ferocity, but much anti-Semitism still exists in Central and Eastern Europe and around the world.

#### **The third beast was like a leopard.**

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: and the beast had also four heads: and dominion was given to it" (Dan 7:6). The leopard is smaller than the lion or bear, but compensates with higher mentality through its four heads and unusual quickness through its four wings. The leopard's oppression can be described as "consultation will defeat individual action."

The third beast arises from Islam. Islam is known for the quickness of and appetite for conquest of Northern Africa, Southeastern Europe, and Southwestern Asia, as suggested by the four wings of the leopard. Except for the time of Mohammed when significant numbers were slaughtered in the battle for control of Arabia, the Jews generally fared better in Islam than those in Europe did, especially during the Middle Ages. When Jews were expelled from Christian states, they frequently found refuge in Islamic lands. This might be due to the recognition of Jews in the Koran, the Islamic holy book, and also because the Christians during this time were mercilessly against both Jews and Muslims. Persecution gained in intensity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it is now at its peak with the establishment of the state of Israel. At present, only a very few Jews still live in Islamic areas. The seemingly independent status of Israel since 1948 has not terminated the Times of the Gentiles, any more than the Hasmonean Kingdom or the Kingdom of Jerusalem did in past centuries.

The four heads represent the moving centers of political power for Islam. First, the religion began in Arabia; then power shifted to Iran; then it shifted again to Egypt under Saladin. The final shift was to Turkey, which is where we are in the 21st century.

#### **The fourth beast was not specifically identified by Daniel.**

Between the third and fourth beast there is a repetition of the words "I saw in the night visions." This indicates the passage of an interval of time between the first three and the fourth beast, suggesting a significant amount of time elapses before the fourth beast appears. Dan 7:7: "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns "...and his nails of brass" (Dan 7:19). The word "nails" might also be translated as "hooves" (Strong 2953). The other three beasts were carnivores – this beast might actually have been an herbivore. Based on the strength, hooves, stamping of the residue, and presence of horns, a likely animal would be the bull. If so, it would be the largest and heaviest of the four beasts. The iron teeth and brass hooves indicate a time of highly advanced technology, even beyond our own time. The unrivaled ferocity of this beast seems to be a substitute for the prior three after they have become virtually quiescent. However, we can draw a parallel with the golden calf of Exodus 32, in that the bull would be the adult version of the calf, spreading over the entire world, not just the land of Canaan.

This beast can be spiritually called Esau. Esau had three wives, two of Canaan and one of Ishmael, who bore five sons and eleven grandsons that evolved into eleven dukes or sheiks. Amalek, whom the LORD swore he would have war with from generation to generation (Ex 17:16), was the last-born from a concubine. The eleventh horn that rises up and plucks up three other horns (Dan 7:8) would spiritually be Amalek. Isaac's prophecy regarding Esau is perhaps the least known in the bible: "...Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (Gen 27:39-40). When did Esau have dominion over Jacob? Not in the Old Testament, but only in the New, potentially at the time of the fourth beast and the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7).

It can be seen that the fourth beast goes through a rapid evolution in oppression and persecution of the Jews. The fourth beast will arise during the time of peace occurring after World War III and after what is called the “Middle Coming” of Christ which establishes the initial form of the Kingdom of God. The beast religion is actually a heretical mockery of true Christianity, and will originate from satanic, demonic sources. The beast will also claim it is a valid part of the Kingdom of God. After this period of peace, the rider on the red horse of the second seal, winning his war, takes peace from the Earth. This is where the 10-horned fourth beast (Esau) first appears in the Middle East (Rev 13:1), in association with Mystery Babylon. It corresponds to the first joint of the 10 toes of the great image and the second seal. The second joint of the 10 toes corresponds to the third seal, the war of the black horse, and the overthrow of Mystery Babylon. The war of the pale green horse (Amalek) corresponds to the third joint of the eight small toes (the big toes only have two joints) and the fourth seal. It is at this time that the great tribulation of the Jews, the time of Jacob’s trouble, is at its peak, as expressed in the fifth seal. The defeat of the pale green horse is accomplished by the kings of the east (Rev16:12) and the armies of heaven led by Christ, the Word of God (Rev 19:11-21), but the beast will not be totally destroyed until the final battle of Joel 3:9-17 (not recorded in Revelation). After this the “beast is slain and, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning

flame” (Dan 7:11) in c. 2273 AD, according to the timeline of *The Heck Hypothesis* (p. 194)

Looking at the origin of the beasts, we have the lion from the east (yellow), the bear from the north (white), the leopard from the south (black), so it is quite possible that the bull arises from a capitol in the west (red), perhaps even from the Americas. Interestingly, both Ezekiel (1:5-14) and Revelation (4:6-9) describe four beasts around the throne. It is only after the fourth beast that the Kingdom of God is in full force on earth. These four beasts may be demonic analogs of the four around the throne.

The true antichrist is the final figure issuing from the two-horned beast of Rev 13:11, who claims to be God while sitting in the temple of God in Jerusalem. He rules his kingdom temporarily (more accurately empire) as a counterfeit of the earthly Kingdom of Heaven and as a counterfeit of God who sits on the heavenly throne. He is not the false prophet of Rev 13:11, since the false prophet directs everyone to worship the 10-horned beast rather than himself. He is perhaps the most mysterious figure in the Bible, and until the body fourth of the beast has been given to the flame (Dan 7:11), there will be no general agreement as to who he actually is. The Jews will be particularly vulnerable to the antichrist since he does not appear in the Old Testament or other Jewish literature.