

Q – Have you ever had one of those dreams that just scared you to death and you really did not want to go back to sleep?

Daniel has dream that causes him to be troubled in his spirit. The images in the dream just keep running through his head and he can't keep from being disturbed. They have shaken him up and he can't get them out of his mind. We will learn that through this vision, God told Daniel about the coming of the Messiah and the final judgment. Daniel didn't understand everything he saw, because some of the events would take place 500 years later.

READ DANIEL 7:1-7

Daniel is digressing as he refers back to this horrible dream he had in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar King of Babylon. Remember that Belshazzar was killed and King Darīus the Mede took over the land. Babylon became the Kingdom of Media.

- 1. From where did the beasts in Daniel's vision come?** (*Up out of the sea as the four winds of heaven were churning up the great sea.*)
- 2. What did the first beast look like?** (*A lion who had the wings of an eagle.*)
- 3. What happened to the lion?** (*Its wings were torn off and it stood up like a man and the heart of a man was given to it.*)
- 4. What did the 2nd beast look like?** (*A bear that was taller on one side than the other. Weird. It had 3 ribs in its mouth and was told to eat all the flesh it wanted.*)
- 5. What did the 3rd beast look like?** (*A leopard with four wings like a bird on its back. It had 4 heads and was given authority to rule.*)



*****Daniel 7:6** describes a vision in which a kingdom is represented by a leopard with 4 wings and 4 heads. The wings represent great speed, but the heads signify that the kingdom was split into several domains. The leopard symbolizes the Greek kingdom of Alexander the Great, a kingdom that was established with lightning speed but that broke into several parts, ruled by various Greek dynasties, after his death.

The **Ptolemies** were a dynasty of Greek kings who ruled Egypt from just after the death of Alexander the Great to the time of the annexation of Egypt by Rome. Their history is closely connected to that of the region later known as Palestine in the 3rd century BC (the Ptolemies ruled Palestine and thus also Jerusalem from 323-200 BC). Important Ptolemaic rulers were as follows:

***Ptolemy I Soter** (323/305- 282 BC): Immediately after the death of Alexander in 323, his general Ptolemy headed to Egypt and seized control of the administration, assuming the title “king” in 305. Ptolemy was highly intelligent and after having taken control of a wealthy and relatively isolated domain like Egypt, was able to begin a dynasty that would last for over 2 centuries. His capital, Alexandria, was a Greek city in Egypt. Ptolemy was the “king of the South mentioned in Daniel 11:5.

***Ptolemy II Philadelphus** (282-246 BC): The reign of this king was prosperous and marked by impressive building projects, such as the completion of the lighthouse of Pharos and the library of Alexandria. He was also engaged in wars with the Seleucids over control of Palestine and Anatolia. Ptolemy II did much to establish Greek culture and education in Egypt and elsewhere but offended his Greek subjects by marrying his full sister, Arsinoë.

***Ptolemy III Euregetes** (246-222 BC): The reign of this king was marked by further wars with the Seleucids, brought about by the fact that the Seleucid king, Seleucus II, murdered Ptolemy's sister Bernice and her son. Bernice was the daughter of the king of the South (11:6).

***Ptolemy IV Philopator** (222-205 BC): This king is often described as a weak ruler, although he did defeat Antiochus III of Syria at Raphia in 217 BC. He deployed Egyptian troops in his army (instead of using exclusively Greek soldiers), and some believe that this sowed the seed for future native revolts by the Egyptians. He is the "King of the South" in 11:11.

***Ptolemy V Theos Epiphanes** (204-180 BC): During the administration of this regent Palestine was lost to the Seleucid kingdom 200 BC. The Rosetta Stone commemorates his coronation.

***Ptolemy VI Philometor** (180-145 BC): During his reign Ptolemaic control of Egypt nearly collapsed. Antiochus IV fought his way to Memphis in Egypt around 168 BC and no doubt would have taken control of the country had he not been forced out by a delegation from Rome.

*Thereafter, Ptolemaic power declined as members of the royal family struggled for control as Rome began to take an increasingly important role in the affairs of Egypt. The last Ptolemy to rule Egypt was the famous **Cleopatra VII** (51-30 BC). Intelligent and resourceful (she was the only Ptolemy who gained the loyalty of Egyptians by learning to speak Egyptian, but she also murdered her brother, Ptolemy XIV, in order to secure the throne for herself), she used sexual relations with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony to better her political position in dealing with Rome. Her alliance with Antony proved her undoing, however. He was defeated by Octavian (Augustus) at Actium in 31 BC, and she committed suicide when she realized that Octavian was implacable toward her. (taken from NIV Archaeological Study Bible)

READ DANIEL 7:8

- 6. What happens next to the terrifying beast with the iron teeth and 10 horns?** (*A little horn comes up and it uproots 3 of the large horns. The horn had eyes like a man and a boastful mouth! In Hebrew the horn was always a symbol of armed strength. This beast had 10 horns signifying great power!*)
- 7. If a horn represents armed strength, what did the little horn with man's eyes and a boastful mouth that uprooted 3 larger horns mean?** (*It means that this king would be wiser (men's eyes) and yet arrogant and probably even blasphemous, far more powerful than 3 great kings.*)

Q – Has the world Daniel is seeing that will take place over many years seem that much different than we see today? (*No, men will always try to overthrow governments either by military force or by the lies and power of their mouths. Peace is not of this world because the prince of this world prowls about like a roaring lion always encouraging evil and conquering and blasphemy against God.*)

READ DANIEL 7:9-10

- 8. All Daniel has seen looks so terrifying and hopeless, what does Daniel see next?** (*The Ancient of Days was seated on a throne. The term Ancient of Days always was a reference to the Almighty God who was, is*

and is to come! He sees 1,000 X 1,000, 1 million ministering to God and 10,000 X 10,000, 100 million standing before God, the court of heaven is seated and the books were opened.)

Q – How does it lift your spirit, your resolve, your faith to realize what God showed Daniel? (It is a glimpse that the judgment upon all nations and evils will be done and it is coming. Nothing can change that fact! That excites me and gives me a confidence that this crazy immoral and brutal world is soon to fall forever!)

READ DANIEL 7:11-14

- 9. What judgment comes upon these kingdoms Daniel has seen represented by the beasts? (The mouthy beast with all the power is destroyed by God. All of the others lost their power and lives were lived without power for a time. God is sovereign. No evil can overcome His perfect will!)**
- 10. Describe this introduction of Jesus once again in the Book of Daniel. (One like the Son of Man, the Messiah, comes from heaven with the clouds of heaven. He comes to the Ancient of Days, God the Father, who then gives the Messiah complete rule with glory over peoples, nations and languages forever. His kingdom is the only kingdom NEVER to be destroyed. It is eternal.)**

Q – How could this passage be used to comfort a friend or acquaintance who is terrified by the war, the immorality and hate in the world? (The eternal reign of Christ is foretold here over 500 years before Jesus was born into this world. His mission from heaven to earth and back to the throne of God is clearly presented all throughout the Old Testament. His eternal reign surrounded by those who love Him is clearly pictured as the permanent future to come that never ends!)

READ DANIEL 7:15-28

- 11. When Daniel asks one of those at the throne of God what he has seen, what is the interpretation the messenger of God gives to Daniel? (The 4 great beasts = 4 king who will rise to power, but the saints of the Most High will rule the kingdom forever when the time comes that God gives it over to them. Imagine all the kings of the earth, the presidents, the ruthless dictators, all rulers will cease to ever have power again. The clock is ticking on their reign. The 4th beast is the 4th kingdom on earth that shall destroy the earth. The 10 horns are 10 kings from this kingdom. The little horn with the Blasphemous mouth against God will kill 3 kings and rise to persecute the saints of God and shall be overpowered by the king for a while. This is the last king because we see that he is destroyed and God's everlasting kingdom is given over to the saints, which are those who are in Christ. All dominions or powers will serve and obey Him. Think about that. When Jesus judges the world, the faithful will live with Him forever and reign. The evil, those who reject Christ will still be under Jesus' dominion to be separated from all that is holy and righteous forever in a kingdom with no God, no Messiah. They will have their wish and Jesus will enforce it forever.)**

Q – Why do you think Daniel was still troubled after everything was explained? (Daniel did not know what we know. He is trying to digest all this and make sense of it.)

Max Lucado tells this story from his book, *When God Whispers*: I sit a few feet from a man on death row. Jewish by birth. Tentmaker by trade. Apostle by calling. His days are marked. I'm curious about what bolsters this man as he nears his execution. So I ask him some questions. *Do you have a family, Paul?* **I have none.** *What about your health?* **My body is beaten and tired.** *What do you own?* **I have my parchments, my pen, a cloak.** *And your reputation?* **Well, it's not much. I'm a heretic to some, a maverick to others.** *Do you have friends?* **I**

do, but even some of them, have turned back. Any awards? Not on earth. *Then what do you have, Paul? No belongings, no family, criticized by some, mocked by others, what do you have, Paul? What do you have that matters?* (I sit back quietly and watch. Paul rolls his hand into a fist. He looks at it. I look at it. What is he holding? What does he have? He extends his hand so I can see. As I lean forward he opens his fingers. I peer at his palm. It is empty. **I have my faith. It's all I have, but it's all I need. I have kept the faith.** Paul leans back against the wall of his cell and smiles. And I lean back against another and stare into the face of a man who has learned that there is more to life than meets the eye. For that's what faith is. Faith is trusting what the eye can't see. Eyes see the prowling lion. Faith sees Daniel's angel. Eyes see the storm. Faith sees Noah's rainbow. Eyes see giants. Faith sees Canaan. Your eyes see your faults. Faith sees your Savior. Your eyes see your guilt. Your faith sees His blood. Your eyes see the grave. Your faith sees a city whose builder and maker is God. Your eyes look in the mirror and see a sinner, a failure, a promise-breaker. But by faith you look in the mirror and see a robbed prodigal bearing the ring of grace on your finger and the kiss of your Father on your face.

Q – How does this story about Paul relate to Daniel. (*He didn't understand everything, but throughout his life of captivity he has never let go of His faith in God.*)

Q – What are some of the lessons you and I can learn from this chapter?