

Daniel 7:15-28

Daniel 7:15,16 I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things.

Daniel reacted to the vision that he had seen in a very physical way. "I ... was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the vision of my head troubled me." To be grieved in your spirit would be to be disheartened, discouraged, and to feel an absence of energy or motivation. It would be to feel lifeless. For this grievance of spirit to be felt in the body would be to experience this discouragement physically. Your limbs would be heavy and seem impossible to lift. You would have no appetite and no desire for anything. Even the prospect of a Mountain Dew would have no appeal. Daniel's description, "the visions of my head troubled me." indicates that the images he had seen were spinning through his mind. The violence of the beasts was alarming and it would seem that they awakened in Daniel sensations of fear and dread. These emotions were so powerful that Daniel's head hurt with them.

All of this left Daniel writhing in so much pain that he could do nothing but cry out to God for help, for relief, for understanding of what and when the horrors indicated by his vision would take place.

One of the questions the Book of Daniel has avoided to this point has been that of the private thoughts and opinions of Daniel and his friends in respect to all that they suffered and to the devastations they witnessed in their service of the empire. Daniel's vision here gives us a suggestion of the burden they carried. We might even see the vision as the cumulative consequence of his years among Babylon's elite rather than a sudden insight into the nature of the beast he served. In either case, Daniel saw the truth about the beast and it was more than he could bear.

In analyzing the vision, the big picture might be helpful. Daniel sees the four hybridizations of the beasts of prey and is told that they represent 4 successive kingdoms. Each kingdom succeeds its predecessor until finally God's kingdom is established as an everlasting kingdom of His triumphant rule.

Daniel's distressed response to the vision is due to the fact that he knows that he lives during the time of the first beast. The

vision lays out a vast specter of the future, a future that will be dominated by these beasts of prey who will wreak havoc and horror for as long as they breathe. The final victory indicated by the vision is welcome but far removed from Daniel's place or position in the prophecy.

The four beasts are identified with Babylon, the Medes and Persians, Greece, and Rome. The only problem with this view is that there is no historical circumstance that compares with the 10 horns, the little horn and the 3 horns of the 4th beast. Obviously, God's kingdom has not yet been established as described by Daniel. One solution is to see the 4 kingdoms as typical of the times that fall between Daniel and the coming of God's kingdom reign on the earth. During this span the beasts will reign, often to the detriment, disadvantage, and even the demise of God's people (at particular times and places). Since God's kingdom has not yet arrived in the way that Daniel described it, we continue to live in a world dominated by these hybrid beasts with all of the chaos and suffering that they perpetrate. Note Daniel's position after he was given understanding, "As for me... my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart. "