**Middle East Peace**

**How? When?**

**Chapter 9**

**The Great Image, Great Beasts (1)**

**Identity of Daniel’s Image, Four Great Beasts**

The “*great image*” in **Daniel** chapter **two** (divided into four parts [vv. **31-43**]), and the “*four great beasts*” in chapter **seven** (vv. **1-8**), are viewed by most premillennial students of the Word as representing *four successive world kingdoms*. These four kingdoms, as seen by most, begin with Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and end with a revived Roman Empire under Antichrist. But is this the correct way to view the matter?

Note a summary picture of the four parts of the “*great image*” and the four “*great beasts*” in the preceding respect, as viewed by most Christians who interpret Daniel’s prophecies from a premillennial standpoint:

1. *The head of gold* (**2:32**, **38**) and *the first great beast* (**7:4**) have to do with *the kingdom of Babylon* under Nebuchadnezzar and his immediate successors, extending to Belshazzar (605 B.C. to 538 B.C.)
2. *The breast and arms of silver* (**2:32**, **39**) and *the second great beast* (**7:5**) have to do with *the Medo-Persian kingdom*, beginning with Darius and Cyrus, rulers of Media and Persia at the time of the conquest (538 B.C. to 330 B.C.).
3. *The belly and thighs of brass* (**2:32**, **39**) and *the third great beast* (**7:6**) have to do with *the Grecian kingdom* (330 B.C. to 323 B.C. and beyond), beginning with a conquest of the Medo-Persian kingdom by Alexander the Great, who died seven years later (323 B.C.).

The kingdom was then divided into four parts, with Alexander the Great’s four generals each commanding a part. And the kingdom, over time, gradually faded from existence as a world power.

1. *The legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay* (**2:33**, **40-43**) and *the fourth great beast* (**7:7**, **8**) have to do with *the Roman Empire*, *forming a Roman kingdom* (27 B.C. to 476 A.D.), followed by a revived Roman Empire, forming a future Roman kingdom.

This would be the position set forth in the Scofield Reference Bible footnotes for example, a position followed by most premillennial commentators.

The only part of the prophecy really in question would be the fourth part of the “*great image*” (chapter **2**), or the fourth “*great beast*” (chapter **7**). Daniel identifies the first three beasts (and, correspondingly, the first three parts of the image) as particular Gentile nations forming world kingdoms whose governmental rule had been established in Babylon (the first by conquering the Assyrian Empire [*the beginning of the Babylonian kingdom under Nebopolassar*, *then several years later under his son*, *Nebuchadnezzar*], and the succeeding two [*Media-Persia* and *Greece*] by conquering Babylon itself). And this part of the prophecy has been fulfilled and is a matter of history.

But should the fourth part of the image (or the fourth beast) be identified as *Rome*? There are two main reasons why individuals interpret the prophecy after this fashion:

1. Rome was the next world power following Greece.
2. The words, “*and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*,” in Daniel **9:26**, are usually associated with a Roman destruction in history (by Titus in 70 A.D.) and a Roman prince in prophecy (the beast of **Revelation 13:1ff**, Antichrist).

In this respect, both the historical and prophetic aspects, as they are said to relate to Rome, are seen connected with the fourth part of the image (or the fourth beast).

*Greece* was the third kingdom (represented by the belly and thighs of brass on the image); and the fourth kingdom (represented by the legs of iron, and in its final form by the feet part of iron and part of clay) would, from history, seem to be *Rome* — the next world power following Greece — with the final form of the image looked upon as a revived Roman Empire. And this interpretation would appear to be substantiated by **Daniel 9:26**.

In this verse, as previously shown, “*the prince that shall come*,” would be Antichrist; and “*the people of the prince* [understood as ‘his people’],” who would one day destroy the city of Jerusalem, are looked upon as a reference to the Romans destroying Jerusalem in 70 A.D. under Titus.

Thus, Antichrist is said to be *a latter-day Roman prince who will rule a revived Roman Empire*.In this respect, all four parts of Daniel’s “*great image*” except the feet would have a historical fulfillment. The legs would represent the Roman Empire in history, and the feet would represent the revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation.

And the same would hold true for the corresponding description set forth by the “*four great beasts*” in **Daniel** chapter **seven**. The first three beasts would have a historical fulfillment, and the fourth would have a fulfillment in both history and prophecy. The fourth beast would represent the Roman Empire in both history and prophecy, corresponding to the legs and feet of the image.

But, is the preceding the way Scripture sets forth the fourth and final part of this Babylonian kingdom? Or, is this an attempt to interpret biblical prophecy by using events in secular history rather than interpreting prophecy by comparing Scripture with Scripture?

*The answer is easy to ascertain if one remains solely within that which Daniel* (*and related Scripture*) *reveals about the whole matter*.

One World Kingdom, in Babylon

Note first of all that Daniel’s image is seen *standing in Babylon* (**2:31**). This image has to do with a Babylonian kingdom from beginning to end. The “*head of gold*” has to do with *the kingdom of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and any immediate successors prior to the conquest of the kingdom by Gentile power*(*s*) *represented by the breast and arms of silve*r (**2:37**, **38**). The “*breast and arms of silver*” have to do with *the Medes and the Persians coming in and conquering the preceding kingdom* (**2:39**; **5:28**, **31**). And the “*belly and thighs of brass*” have to do with *the Grecians coming in and conquering the kingdom ruled by the Medes and the Persians* (**2:39**; **8:6**, **7**, **20**, **21**; **10:20**).

The mechanics of the preceding, of course, form the interpretation held in common by almost anyone reading Daniel. This is simply what the record in **Daniel** states, along with secular history.

But note something often overlooked about the preceding: *This kingdom is Babylonian throughout*. The powers represented by the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the belly and thighs of brass all reigned from Babylon.

When the Medes and the Persians came in and took the kingdom in 538 B.C., they conquered the kingdom at Babylon, reigned from Babylon, and were still there when Alexander the Great came over in 330 B.C., two hundred and eight years later. Then, when Alexander the Great took the kingdom, he also conquered the kingdom at and reigned from Babylon.

In other words, the image is not seen lying down, with the head of gold in Babylon, the breast and arms of silver in Media and Persia, and the belly and thighs of brass in Greece. That’s not the picture at all.

*The image is seen standing in Babylon*. *It is Babylonian in its entirety*.

(Note that “Babylon” in history was *a city-state,* which, from biblical prophecy, will evidently exist once again when the final form of Daniel’s image appears [i.e., Babylon existing as a city-state yet future as well]. In this respect, *Babylon* is used in Scripture referring *to both the city and the state*, which included [and evidently will include] a number of Middle Eastern cities or countries; cf. **Jeremiah 51:29-32**, **42**, **43**].)

The fact that the image in **Daniel** chapter **two** is Babylonian in its entirety is one place where those who view a Roman Empire next in the prophecy go astray. Rome had *nothing* to do with a reign from Babylon in history. *The capital of the Roman Empire was Rome*, *not Babylon*.

*And Rome is not Babylon*, regardless of the attempts by some individuals to see certain things moved from Babylon to Rome in time past, seeking to align and identify Rome with Babylon in this respect.

Those viewing Rome as representing the fourth part of the image try to press secular history into biblical prophecy at a point where it seems to possibly fit, but really doesn’t. Then they further complicate the matter by a misinterpretation of **Daniel 9:26**.

But the most interesting thing about the whole matter — the central thing that voids all thought of Rome having a part in the prophecy — is the fact that *Daniel identifies all four parts of the image*, and he identifies the fourth part as being other than the Roman Empire.

Daniel, in his identity, has Antichrist coming into power following a four-way division of the kingdom after Alexander the Great’s death. The kingdom under Antichrist *follows the Greco-Babylonian kingdom and is represented by the legs of iron*, *and in its final form by the feet part of iron and part of clay*.

(*No break in time* is seen in the book of **Daniel** between powers represented by the third and fourth parts of the image, similar to *no break in time* subsequently being seen in the book between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks in Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy [**9:24-27**].

However, it is evident from both biblical and secular history that *a break in time* exists at these respective points in both prophecies, though *no break in time* precedes these in either prophecy.

This break in time though between the third and fourth parts of the image doesn’t lead to, and end with Rome. Rather, *it leads to*, *and ends with* *a kingdom in the Middle East* [*in Babylon*], *the kingdom of Antichrist*.

Also, as with Daniel’s subsequent prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, events seen occurring within the prophecy itself cannot occur during the break in time not seen in the prophecy. *Events as seen in the prophecy must occur within time covered by the prophecy*.

For example, the destruction of Jerusalem in Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks [**9:26**] must occur within time covered by the prophecy itself, not outside of this time [as the destruction under Titus in 70 A.D. would be]. If this prophesied destruction didn’t occur during time covered by the first sixty-nine weeks [which it didn’t], then it *must* occur during time covered by the seventieth week. And events foreshadowed by the things stated about the great image and the great beasts [chapters **2**, **7**] must be understood the same way.

In the preceding respect, it is just as impossible to fit Rome into the prophecy regarding the great image and the great beasts [chapters **2**, **7**] as it is to fit Titus’ destruction of Jerusalem into the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks [chapter **9**].)

The first part of the image is identified in **Daniel 2:37**, **38**. Then, following this, the remaining three parts of the image are presented, though not identified at this point in the book. Then, note the prominence given to the fourth part — two verses cover the first part (vv. **37**, **38**), one verse covers the next two parts (v. **39**), but six verses are devoted to the final part, along with its destruction (vv. **40-45**). And such prominence relative to the fourth part is true elsewhere in **Daniel** as well (see chapters **7**, **8**, **11**).

Why would such prominence be given to Rome and not to nations associated with the first three parts of the image? It’s not! Rather, it’s the kingdom of Babylon under its last king (Antichrist) which occupies *the forefront* in the book of **Daniel**.

The identities of the other three parts of the image, beginning with the breast and arms of silver, are given in the interpretation of the vision of the “*four great beasts*,” and this interpretation is provided in chapters **seven** and**eight**. The “*four great beasts*” are said to represent *four kingdoms* (four sequential kingdoms forming *the one Babylonian kingdom* [**7:17**; cf. v. **23**]); and beginning with the second beast, the last three are identified in chapter **eight**:

1. For the identity of *the second*, compare verses **three** and **four** with verse **twenty** (cf. **Daniel 5:28**, **31**).
2. For the identity of *the third*, compare verses **five** through **eight** with verses **twenty-one** and **twenty-two**.
3. For the identity of *the fourth*, compare verses **nine** through **fourteen** with verses **twenty-three** through **twenty-six**.

Note that the identity of the second is *Media* and *Persia* (a dual kingdom, corresponding to the breast and arms of silver on the image), the identity of the third is *Greece* (corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass), and the identity of the fourth is *the kingdom under Antichrist* (corresponding to the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and part of clay).

Where is Rome? Rome is not in the prophecy!

Following Alexander the Great’s death, the kingdom was divided among his four generals (8:8, 22), and the vision then goes immediately into *the days of Antichrist yet future* (the “little horn” in v. 9 is not Antiochus Epiphanes, as many expositors contend, but *Antichrist* [see parallel verses, vv. 23-26]).

Though the prophecy in **Daniel** chapter **eight** covers this division of the kingdom following Alexander the Great’s death (**8:8b**), it does not cover events during the reign of these four generals following this division. Rather, following this division of the kingdom, Daniel’s prophecy in chapter **eight** goes immediately into the power represented by the fourth part of the image (or the power represented by the fourth beast), i.e., *into the days of Antichrist* (vv. **9ff**).

(As previously seen, there is a break in time of *over two millennia* at this point in the prophecy [unseen in the prophecy], between the four-way division of the kingdom and the rise of the “*little horn*” [Antichrist], as there is a break in time of *two millennia* between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy [unseen in the prophecy as well].)

About three hundred years following Alexander the Great’s death, Rome appeared on the scene as the succeeding world power (27 B.C.), *but not as a world power fulfilling any part of Daniel*’*s prophecy surrounding the kingdom of Babylon*.

According to the way that the book of **Daniel** is structured, *this prophecy cannot again continue to be fulfilled until Antichrist appears at the beginning of Daniel*’*s Seventieth Week.* Then, and only then, will the fourth part of the image from **Daniel** chapter **two** and the fourth beast in **Daniel** chapter **seven** come into existence.

(Also, as previously seen, Daniel’s image presents matters as if the Babylonian power represented by the fourth part of the image [the future kingdom under Antichrist] immediately follows, in time, that seen represented by the third part of the image [the kingdom under Greece]. However, there is a gap of over two millennia between these two parts of the kingdom, which is not seen in the prophecy.

This may seem strange to the Western way of viewing material of this nature, but not so with those in the East. Those in the East are interested in *the next important event*, not in the time that might intervene between two events. And Scripture, humanly speaking, is an Eastern book.

Franz Delitzsch, a Hebrew scholar from past years, put the matter in these words: “*Prophecy sees together what history unrolls as separate.*”

This same thing can be seen in Daniel’s vision of the “*four great beasts*” in chapter **seven** and the interpretation of the vision in chapter **eight**. These four great beasts simply present another picture of the four parts of the image in chapter **two**, with added details provided in the interpretation.

And, as in chapter **two**, the complete prophecy presents matters as if there were no break in time between any of the four parts, though the same break in time exists between the third and fourth parts as exists between the third and fourth parts of the image.

Examples of this same thing can be seen in other parts of Scripture as well. This is simply a peculiarity of the way Scripture is structured, which is seen at the very beginning, in the opening two verses of Scripture.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*.

*The earth was without form*, *and void*; *and darkness was on the face of the deep*. *And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*. [**Genesis 1:1**, **2**]

Scripture presents all of the events in these two verses together, as if no break in time exists. But, in reality, two breaks in time exist, a break between the two verses, and another break between the first two sentences and the third sentence in verse two.

Note another similar example in **Isaiah 9:6**. Over two millennia lie between the first sentence and the remainder of the verse, though Scripture places all of these events together, as if no break in time exists:

*For unto us a Child is born*, *unto us a Son is given*; *and the government will be upon His shoulder*. *And His name will be called Wonderful*, *Counselor*, *Mighty God*, *Everlasting Father*, *Prince of Peac*e.

Or, another example would be **Isaiah 61:1**, **2**:

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me*, *because the LORD has anointed Me* *to preach good tidings to the poor*; *He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted*, *to proclaim liberty to the captives*, *and the opening of the prison to those who are bound*;

*To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD*, *and the day of vengeance of our God*; *to comfort all who mourn*.

Christ, in the synagogue in Nazareth, read most of this passage from a scroll; but He stopped with the words, “*To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD*.” Then, after rolling the scroll up and handing it to the minister, He sat down. And the eyes of all those in the synagogue were fastened upon Him when He said,

*Today this Scripture is fulfilled* [lit.,‘This day this Scripture has been fulfilled’ (Greek perfect tense, pointing to a fulfillment in past time, with the matter existing during present time in that finished state)] *in your hearing*” [**Luke 4:16-21**].

Christ stopped reading at this point in the passage because the remainder had to do with events that would occur at the time of His second coming. But note how the entire matter has been placed together in the two verses.

And understanding the manner in which Scripture is structured in this respect is vitally necessary when studying biblical prophecy, particularly in the book of **Daniel** when studying prophecies relating to the great image in chapter **2**, the four great beasts in chapter **7**, of the Seventy Weeks in chapter **9**.)

The People of the Coming Prince

Now, what about “*the people of the prince that shall come*” destroying the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in **Daniel 9:26**? Many commentators attempt to see this fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and his Roman legions in 70 A.D., with the Romans then being Antichrist’s people in history.

But, as previously seen, events in the prophecy have to occur *within* time covered by the prophecy, with the events in 70 A.D. occurring *outside* the scope of the prophecy.

First note the expression, “*the people of the prince that shall come*,” and compare this with a similar expression in **Daniel 7:27** — “*the people*, *the saints of the Most High* [lit. ‘the high places’ (also plural in the Hebrew text in vv. **18**, **22**, **25b**)],” who will one day take the kingdom (v. **18**).

Note in verse **eighteen** that the ones who will one day take the kingdom are said to be “*the saints of the Most High* [‘the high places’],” and in verse **twenty-seven** they are said to be “*the people*, *the saints of the Most High* [‘the high places’].” The expression, “*the people*, *the saints of the Most High* [‘the high places’]” in verse *twenty-seven*, is, contextually, a reference to *the saints themselves* from verse *eighteen*.

And this same type expression in **Daniel 9:26** should be understood the same way that interpretation has already been established in the previous chapter of the book. The “*people of the prince*” in **Daniel 9:26**, contextually, has to be understood as a reference to *the prince himself* (*and possibly also including those ruling with him*). Failure to recognize the book’s own built in interpretation for **Daniel 9:26** has resulted in confusion.

And the destruction of Jerusalem in **Daniel 9:26**, as previously seen, cannot be a reference to the destruction which occurred in 70 A.D, for this destruction occurred outside the scope of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy. Rather, since the destruction seen in this verse did not occur during the first sixty-nine weeks of the prophecy, *it can only be a reference to a future destruction under Antichrist during the Tribulation*.

This is the same destruction referred to in **Luke 21:20-24** (cf. **Revelation 11:2**). Also note that **Matthew 24:15ff** and **Luke 21:20ff** parallel one another, depicting events in and around Jerusalem *beginning in the middle of the Tribulation*. Matthew’s gospel centers on one aspect of the matter (the rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem), and Luke’s gospel centers on another aspect of the matter (the city of Jerusalem itself).

Again, the destruction in **Daniel 9:26** *must occur within the framework of time covered by the Seventy Weeks*. This destruction has to do with events occurring in connection with Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy Weeks; and, contextually, it is seen occurring in connection with Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel (v. **27** [cf. **Daniel 11:22-32**; **12:11**; **Matthew 24:15**; **2 Thessalonians 2:3**, **4**; **Revelation 6:3**, **4**]).

And where this man’s actions will then lead is outlined in detail in both the books of **Daniel** and **Revelation**, along with a number of other books and numerous sections of Scripture. This is the man whom God, in the final analysis, will use to bring *His plans and purposes surrounding Israel to pass*. Despite this man’s goals, aims, ambitions, and aspirations — as he exercises power and great authority from Satan’s throne itself (**Revelation 13:2**) — God, *in His sovereign control of all things*, will use this man to bring both Israel to *the place of repentance* and Gentile world power to *the place of destruction.*

This will then be followed by *God*’*s judgment* *falling upon this man*, *on the basis of the unchangeable principles set forth in* ***Genesis 12:3***.