

In Search of the Prophesied Ten Kings—Part Two: A Coming Geopolitical Shift in Global Power

Did Nebuchadnezzar's vision reveal a future confederation of ten kingdoms? Who were the ten kings of Daniel's vision? What about the "beast" that John saw in his vision, was it symbolic of a coming world government or a league of governments that will bring the world into conflict?

When the prophet Daniel revealed the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a "great image" he explained that the head of gold represented the Neo-Babylonian kingdom that began with the Chaldean dynasty of King Nabopolassar.

However, Daniel did not explain to Nebuchadnezzar that the chest and arms of silver—as depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's vision—represented the consolidated kingdoms of the Medes and Persians. Nor did Daniel explain that the belly and thighs of brass represented the empire of Greece, and Daniel did not reveal to Nebuchadnezzar that the legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay, represented the Roman Empire or revivals of the Classical Roman Empire.

Which leads us to make an observation about Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a great image.

That is that Nebuchadnezzar's vision is—for the most part—understood in the context of secular history, with the biblical premise being that the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's vision represented the king and kingdom of Babylon.

Therefore—according to some expositors—this has implications

for understanding a vision given to the prophet Daniel.

For Daniel had a vision of four "great beasts" that are assumed to symbolically represent the same four successive empires associated with the vision given to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. So it is commonly concluded that Daniel's vision has—for the most part—been fulfilled, and this fulfillment is assumed to be confirmed by the record of secular history, just as the record of history is thought to confirm the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar.

Which presents us with a problem.

Because Daniel's vision of four "great beasts"—being representative of kings and kingdoms—cannot be confirmed in the record of secular history for the simple reason that Daniel's vision did not establish a biblical premise that would allow us to associate the symbolic lion-like beast with the ancient kingdom of Babylon. Therefore, we are left with the realization that Daniel's vision must be understood apart from the record of secular history, making it subject then to an interpretation that casts the fulfillment of Daniel's vision forward into the future.

Something that may be confirmed by the record of secular history.

Now, the northern tribes of the Commonwealth of Israel were displaced by the Assyrians beginning generally with the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, and this displacement continued with the reign of his successor Shalmaneser V and his successor Sargon II, leading to the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE. This, of course, meant that the kingdom of Judah, along with many other city-states in the region, would remain under the yoke of the Assyrians for more than 100 years until the coming of the Babylonians under King Nabopolassar and crown-prince Nebuchadnezzar II.

Giving us then something to consider in regard to the history

of the fall of the Commonwealth of Israel and the early geopolitical configuration of nations that came to successively dominate the Middle East.

That is to say that the Assyrian domination not only initiated the commonwealth's diaspora, while making the kingdom of Judah a repressed vassal kingdom, but its long-term hegemony in the region also influenced—and perhaps forestalled—the political and territorial developments of four successive empires that would come to rule over Palestine. Allowing us then to say that the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greco-Macedonian Empire and the Roman Empire were relatively contemporaneous in their earliest beginnings relative to the fall of the Commonwealth of Israel and the eventual decline of the Assyrian Empire.

For when we examine the period of Israel's earliest annexation into the Assyrian Empire we find that Babylon was already experiencing a rise in Chaldean influence that began with the vassal King Nabonassar, while the region of Persia was witnessing—in the same general time period—the founding of the Achaemenid royal dynasty under the legendary founder Achaemenes. Noting also that these events generally coincided with the Archaic Period of Greece, which was a time that saw the emergence of the Olympic Games, and a time when the works of Homer were committed to writing, and it was these writings that were influential in the later Classical Age that produced the conqueror Alexander the Great. Which brings us then to the legendary founding of Rome—conventionally dated to c. 753 BCE—that occurred only a few years before Tiglath-pileser III began to expand the Assyrian Empire into the Middle East. (The Roman Republic under Julius Caesar subjugated the region of Palestine before the coming of the Roman Empire.)

Therefore, we can reasonably conclude from the record of secular history that the respective empires of the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks and the Romans were relatively contemporaneous in their earliest beginnings,

but each in their time came to dominate the region of Palestine in a way that allows us to associate these four particular empires with the symbolic "great image" of Nebuchadnezzar's vision.

However, this historical perspective is predicated on Daniel's interpretative statement that the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's vision represented the ancient kingdom of Babylon.

This is not the case with Daniel's vision because there is no confirmation for it in secular history related to the four successive kingdoms associated with the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar.

Because even though we are able to discern and compare some relative symbolic characteristics in Daniel's vision with the vision given to Nebuchadnezzar, we have no reason to conclude from Daniel's narrative that the four "great beasts" represent the ancient empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

And so we are left to take a closer look at Daniel's vision.

Now, in the first year of Belshazzar's reign over Babylon, Daniel had a vision, and after making some notes about what he saw, he "told the sum of the matters," which are recorded for us in Scripture.

And what Daniel said was this.

"I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagles [vultures] wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 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. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and 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" (Dan. 7:2-7). [Author's emphasis throughout.]

Now, according to what is stated in Scripture these four "great beasts" represent "four kings [kingdoms], which shall arise out of the earth," and given the political nature of Daniel's vision we can reasonably surmise that each "beast" symbolically represents a piece in a geopolitical puzzle (Dan. 7:17). But, collectively, they form a picture of a geopolitical blueprint depicting the eventual union of four kingdoms that will at some time arise to prominence on the world stage—one after the other, or perhaps one by reason of the other—to become influential contemporary modern world powers.

Thus, Daniel's vision creates an expectation of an unprecedented geopolitical shift in global power in the not-too-distant future.

This expectation is deduced from the fact that Daniel's vision of four great beasts was given to him in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, after the Davidic dynasty had been overturned at Jerusalem, and after the rise of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome as influential world kingdoms, following the decline of the ancient Assyrian Empire. But more than this, we read in Daniel's vision that the first three kingdoms associated with the "great beasts" have their dominions "taken away" at the same time the fourth kingdom is brought to destruction by a still greater power whose coming is on the political horizon according to Daniel's vision and

the testimony of Jesus (Dan. 7:11-12; Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 21:31).

This then is only possible if these four kingdoms are at some time contemporaneous world powers at the time of Jesus' return, and so by reason of this fact we cannot directly associate the "great beasts" of Daniel's vision with the four ancient empires that long ago overthrew the Davidic dynasty and displaced the Commonwealth of Israel (Dan. 7:26-28). (It is not possible to historically confirm a commonly accepted interpretation that there were to be ten successive revivals of the Classical Roman Empire respective to Daniel's vision.)

But there is still more we need to look at.

Now, of all the beasts that Daniel saw in his vision he observed that the fourth beast had "ten horns," and while he was considering the meaning of these ten horns, "there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things," which according to Scripture are spoken against the "most High" at a time when this kingdom moves to "wear out the saints of the most High" (Dan. 7:8, 25).

Bringing us then to question—as did Daniel—the meaning of the ten horns and the "little horn" that came up among the initial ten horns that Daniel saw. For Daniel was told that the: "fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth [instigate global conflict], and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another [king, implied] shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings" (Dan. 7:23-24).

Giving us then a political scenario that allows us to reasonably say that the "little horn" represents a political "linchpin" who will in a time of political evolution initiate

the overturn of three governments, and so it could be said that the rising influence of this political leader is not without internal conflict, and from this conflict emerges a political agenda that at some time moves this kingdom to project its power against the “saints” of the most High.

The sense of this is understood from the political intent of these world powers—couched perhaps in political deception—that expresses an alarming political ideology—to “devour much flesh” and to “break in pieces” other nations of the world (Dan. 7:5, 7).

Summarily, then, we may reasonably expect to see in the future the forming of a collective political entity—composed of four contemporary kingdoms—that might initially appear to be a politically ineffective and unsettled union of nations—perhaps including autonomous regions—that become subject to internal political and military workings that eventually bring about a restructuring that paves the way for an expanding alliance that will include ten nation-states who will politically and militarily align themselves with four political entities represented by the four “great beasts” of Daniel’s vision.

Which brings us to ask a question.

Can Daniel’s vision be accepted as a credible voice in today’s arena of geopolitical concerns and world affairs?

Now, we know that no one person or organization can with certainty predict the future of this world’s political affairs, and so the means by which Daniel’s vision is interpreted can have consequences on how we are to understand its application to today’s geopolitical world.

Consequently, if we assume that Daniel’s vision has been largely fulfilled, and confirmed as such in the record of secular history, then its current relevance is diminished. But, if we accept that the dimensions of Daniel’s prophecy are yet future, then we are given the expectation that Daniel’s

vision projects forward for us—in symbolic terms—a blueprint of a coming geopolitical shift in the nature of world politics. Therefore, by reason of the symbolism of the four great beasts we can discern fundamental political frameworks in this blueprint that reflect the rise of militarily assertive political entities, each with its own distinct geopolitical configuration. (Perhaps a change in the role of world arbiter will be the diplomatic “sign” of the times that will precede an observable change in the exchange and application of world power among the nations.)

Simply, we can observe in the imagery of Daniel’s vision some familiar geopolitical frameworks that are symbolically represented in the four “great beasts,” and so we may deduce that they can represent the rise of singular political entities, or the rise of influential political and economic autonomous regions under a single political entity, and perhaps even the rise of a collective confederation or council of nation-states, whose collective political agenda will eventually bring them into conflict with the coming kingdom of God.

Considering also that these political frameworks would certainly be recognizable by today’s political analysts, political think-tanks and many world leaders, because such political frameworks can be confirmed in the record of history, and observed in today’s geopolitical world. Which means that Scripture does indeed have a voice in world affairs that merits being heard, even though biblical prophecy may seem foreign to the workings of international diplomacy, and also perhaps to some professing Christians.

But it should be brought out that Jesus spoke to his disciples about the “end of the age,” and in the context of the “beginning of sorrows” he acknowledged that the ever-present problems of political and spiritual deception, wars and rumors of wars, disease epidemics, and famine among the nations, would play a role in bringing the world into a period of

political and economic instability, when diplomacy fails and when some nations would seek to aggressively change the dimensions of world conflict on an unprecedented geopolitical scale (Mt. 24:3-8).

Thus, Jesus spoke of a coming time of "tribulation" at his return that would be unlike any other previous conflict "since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Mt. 24:21). Noting that this time of tribulation cannot be consigned to the record of secular history, and it cannot be said that Jesus' words were fulfilled in the times of the four ancient empires that long ago dominated the lands promised to Abraham and his descendants.

So, why then is it necessary for us to understand Daniel's vision today?

Simply because the prophecies of Daniel bring to our attention that there is another hand involved in shaping world affairs, and this hand represents a spiritual dimension that is fashioning the geopolitical world in such a way as to unwittingly bring it into conflict with the coming kingdom of God and its future ruler, Jesus the Christ.

Making Daniel's vision a timely warning for those nations that will at some time seek to be in conflict with the promise given to Abraham and the modern-day nations, or perhaps cultural and political groupings, that form the modern-day descendants of the ancient Commonwealth of Israel.

Being a concept that is decidedly outside of today's diplomatic conventions.

Because the identity of the modern-day twelve tribes of Israel—in relationship to the ancient Commonwealth of Israel—cannot be definitively determined at this time.

That is to say that the whereabouts of the descendants that make up the "lost" tribes of Israel cannot be confidently

confirmed from the record of secular history and from their current national and cultural identities—with the exception of the nation-state of Israel—which means that we should not expect Daniel’s vision to receive recognition in today’s diplomatic dialogue.

And that is a reasonable expectation.

Nonetheless, we find that Jesus, who is an anticipated world leader according to Scripture, valued and confirmed the prophecies given to Daniel. But, more than this, Jesus also confirmed the modern-day existence of the twelve tribes of Israel when he told his disciples that: “ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt. 19:28).

Thus, Jesus was affirming that his disciples would someday be among the leaders of the nations of this world. No doubt making this an eye-opening concept for some professing Christians and for those who profess to accept beliefs of other world religions.

But such was the testimony of Jesus.

Confirming then what we read in the book of Daniel.

For Daniel’s narrative regarding the four great beasts speaks of a “judgment” from God upon the nations—particularly upon the four future kingdoms depicted in Daniel’s vision—and this judgment will be carried out by one like the “son of man” who is given a kingdom that will not be destroyed. Noting also that the establishment of this kingdom—the coming kingdom of God—will not be without territorial gains in the context of the promise given to Abraham, because the dominions of these particular four kingdoms will become the landed possession of the saints of God (Dan. 7:12, 26-27).

Something that was affirmed by the Apostle John who recorded

for us what he heard from the seventh angel, and what he heard was this: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

Bringing us then to the vision given to the Apostle John who saw a frightening beast rising out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, and these ten horns are said to represent ten kings that will arise in the future.

Who then are these ten kings? What did the Apostle John see in his vision?  (andrewburdettewrites.com) **(Continued in part three of this series.)**

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Also see: [In Search of the Prophesied Ten Kings–Part One: The Rise of Empires and the Fall of the Commonwealth of Israel](#)