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OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

PROPHECIES

OF

DANIEL,

AND THE

APOCALYPSE

OF

St. *JOHN.*

In Two Parts.

By Sir *ISAAC NEWTON.*

CHAPTER 4

Of the vision of the four Beasts.

IN the next vision, which is of the four beasts, the Prophecy of the four Empires is repeated, with several new additions; such as are the two wings of the Lion, the three ribs in the mouth of the Bear, the four wings and four heads of the Leopard, the eleven horns of the fourth Beast, and the son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven, to the Ancient of Days sitting in judgment.

The first Beast was like a lion, and had eagle's wings, to denote the kingdoms of **Babylonia** and **Media**, which overthrew the **Assyrian** Empire, and divided it between them, and thereby became considerable, and grew into great Empires. In the former Prophecy, the Empire of **Babylonia** was represented by the head of gold; in this both

Empires are represented together by the two wings of the lion. And I beheld, saith **Daniel**,

*“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 to it;”*¹

that is, till it was humbled and subdued, and made to know its human state.

The second Beast was like a bear, and represents the Empire which reigned next after the **Babylonians**, that is, the Empire of the **Persians**. “*Thy kingdom is divided,*” or broken, saith **Daniel** to the last King of **Babylon**, “*and given to the Medes and Persians.*”² This Beast “*raised itself up on one side;*” the **Persians** being under the **Medes** at the fall of **Babylon**, but presently rising up above them. “*And it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it,*”³ to signify the kingdoms of **Sardes**, **Babylon**, and **Egypt**, which were conquered by it, but did not belong to its proper body. And it devoured much flesh, the riches of those three kingdoms.

The third Beast was the kingdom which succeeded the **Persian**; and this was the empire of the **Greeks**.⁴ It was “*like a Leopard,*” to signify its fierceness; and had four heads and four wings, to signify that it should become divided into four

¹ Daniel 7:4

² Daniel 5:28

³ Daniel 7:5

⁴ Daniel 8:6, 7, 20, 21

kingdoms,⁵ for it continued in a monarchical form during the reign of **Alexander** the Great, and his brother **Aridaeus**, and young sons **Alexander** and **Hercules**; and then brake into four kingdoms, by the governors of provinces putting crowns on their own heads, and by mutual consent reigning over their provinces. **Cassander** reigned over **Macedon**, **Greece**, and **Epirus**; **Lysimachus** over **Thrace** and **Bithynia**; **Ptolemy** over **Egypt**, **Lybia**, **Arabia**, **Coelosyria**, and **Palestine**; and **Seleucus** over **Syria**.

The fourth Beast was the empire which succeeded that of the **Greeks**, and this was the **Roman**. This beast was exceeding dreadful and terrible, and had great iron teeth, and devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet; and such was the **Roman** empire. It was larger, stronger, and more formidable and lasting than any of the former. It conquered the kingdom of **Macedon**, with **Illyricum** and **Epirus**, in the eighth year of **Antiochus Epiphanes**, Anno Nabonass. 580⁶; and inherited that of **Pergamus**, Anno Nabonass. 615; and conquered that of **Syria**, Anno Nabonass. 679, and that of **Egypt**, Anno Nabonass. 718. And by these and other conquests it became greater and more terrible than any of the three former Beasts. This Empire continued in its greatness till the reign of **Theodosius** the great; and then broke

⁵ Daniel 8:22

⁶ "The Babylonians dated from the commencement of the reign of their first king Nabunatsir B.C. 747, and they used A.N. (Anno Nabonass) the same as we use A.D." *The Only Key to Daniel's Prophecies*, by William Stuart Auchincloss, 1903.

into ten kingdoms, represented by the ten horns of this Beast; and continued in a broken form, till the Antient of days sat in a throne like fiery flame, and

*“the judgment was set, and the books were opened, and the Beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flames; and one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Antient of days,”*⁷

and received dominion over all nations, and judgment was given to the saints of the most high, and the time came that they possessed the kingdom.

*“I beheld,” saith **Daniel**, “till the Beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flames. As concerning the rest of the Beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.”*⁸

And therefore all the four Beasts are still alive, though the dominion of the three first be taken away. The nations of **Chaldea** and **Assyria** are still the first Beast. Those of **Media** and **Persia** are still the second Beast. Those of **Macedon**, **Greece** and **Thrace**, **Asia Minor**, **Syria** and **Egypt**, are still the third. And those of **Europe**, on this side **Greece**, are still the fourth. Seeing therefore the body of the third Beast is confined

⁷ Daniel 7:13

⁸ Daniel 7:11, 12

to the nations on this side the river **Euphrates**, and the body of the fourth Beast is confined to the nations on this side **Greece**; we are to look for all the four heads of the third Beast, among the nations on this side of the river **Euphrates**; and for all the eleven horns of the fourth Beast, among the nations on this side of **Greece**. And therefore, at the breaking of the **Greek** empire into four kingdoms of the **Greeks**, we include no part of the **Chaldeans**, **Medes** and **Persians** in those kingdoms, because they belonged to the bodies of the two first Beasts. Nor do we reckon the **Greek** empire seated at **Constantinople**, among the horns of the fourth Beast, because it belonged to the body of the third.

