

Detectives of Prophecy



As a little girl, Ms. Tina went to some Bible prophecy meetings with her parents. There, she saw pictures of strange beasts that scared her. She did not understand what those scary-looking animals were, and she did not want to go back to the meetings. Then, Tina attended a special seminar on Revelation just for children. The speaker explained that the beasts were not real; they were just symbols. She gave Tina the keys to unlock the meaning of Daniel and Revelation. Once Tina understood, she was no longer frightened by the strange-looking animals.

 **Symbol:** A thing that represents or stands for something else

Some things seem scary to us when we don't understand them. Imagine that you grew up in a mountain village where you never saw a car or bus. Now you are ten years old. You walk down the mountain to the city below. The trail crosses a mountain road; and for the first time you see a fast-driving, loudly honking taxi.

Match each symbol to its meaning.



Red Cross

McDonalds

Toilets

Would that be scary to you? You might think the taxi was a strange wild animal and run away from it!

Of course, you **aren't** scared of cars and trucks, because you understand them.

Bible prophecy is the same. Before you understand it, Daniel and Revelation may seem a little scary. But once you learn what the symbols mean, you will not be scared anymore.



This lesson is fun because we get to be detectives. Detectives are people who try to solve mysteries from just a few clues. God has some very important things for us to understand today about the future. And in order to learn the lessons He wants to teach us, we have to pay close attention to the clues He has given us in the Bible.

 **Detective:** Someone who solves a mystery with just a few clues

1 God has put clues in the Bible that are like keys to unlock its mysteries. But to find these clues, what do we need to do?

James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him _____ of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."



The Bible is like a giant puzzle. One part of the Bible explains another part of the Bible. When we see how it all fits together, we are amazed by God's power and wisdom.

Let's learn some symbols that will help us figure out the Bible prophecies.

Beasts are a symbol of KINGS or KINGDOMS.

2 **Daniel 7:17** "Those great _____, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth."

Daniel 7:23 "The fourth beast shall be a fourth _____ on earth."



BEASTS =
kings / kingdoms

Water is a symbol of PEOPLE.

3 **Revelation 17:15** "The _____ which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."



WATER =
peoples,
nations, tongues

Wings are a symbol of SPEED.

4 **Habakkuk 1:8** "Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they _____ as the eagle that _____ to eat."



WINGS =
speed

Wind is a symbol of STRIFE or WAR.

5 **Jeremiah 49:36** "Against Elam I will bring the four _____ from the four quarters of heaven, and scatter them toward all those winds; there shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go."

6 **Jeremiah 49:37** "'For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies and before those who seek their life. I will bring disaster upon them, My fierce anger,' says the Lord; 'and I will send the _____ after them until I have consumed them.'"



WIND =
strife / war

We now have four very important clues. Let's use them to unlock Daniel chapter 7. In your own Bible, read Daniel 7:1-3.

Let's see if we can interpret it (tell what it means) by using these Bible symbols we've learned.

7 Use the symbol to fill in the blanks:
winds = war, sea/water = people, beasts = kingdoms
Daniel 7:1-3 "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. Daniel spoke, saying, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the **four winds** of heaven [_____] were stirring up the Great **Sea** [_____]. And four great **beasts** [_____] came up from the **sea** [_____], each different from the other."

These kingdoms didn't all come up at once; they didn't all rule at the same time. They came out separately—one after the other. (Daniel 7:4-7.) Also, they were different from each other, so they represent different kingdoms.

8 What was the first beast like?
Daniel 7:4 "The first was like a _____, and had eagle's _____. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it."





A **lion** was coming out of the **water**, so we know this represents a **kingdom** coming out of a lot of **people**. It had **wings** which represent **speed**, so it was conquering very **quickly**.

What king or kingdom does this lion represent?

Often prophecies begin in the time of the prophet. We read that Daniel had this dream in the first year of King Belshazzar, the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar. So this prophecy begins at Babylon, just like the metal statue found in Daniel 2.

At first, the lion had wings, representing speed. King Nebuchadnezzar conquered other nations very quickly.

9 Then what happened to the wings of the lion?
Daniel 7:4 "I watched till its wings were _____ off."

Babylon wasn't conquering other nations anymore by the time of Belshazzar. He was partying and being very careless. (Daniel 5.)

The lion stood up on two legs like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. Do you think a lion can run quickly on only two legs? No! These symbols show that the kingdom of Babylon would not conquer quickly anymore.

10 What kingdom came next?
Daniel 7:5 "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a _____. It was raised up on one side, and had _____ ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'"

Daniel saw another beast coming up out of the water. The first beast represents Babylon. Which kingdom came next? It was Medo-Persia. (Daniel 5:30, 31; 6:15.)

Let's see how Medo-Persia fits with this description of the bear.

Remember from Daniel 2 that the silver part of the image had two arms: the Medes and Persians. These two kingdoms had joined together. Did you notice that this bear was raised up on one side? This symbol showed that one of the two parts of the kingdom would be stronger. As predicted, the Persian part of the kingdom was stronger than the Median part.



The bear had three ribs in its mouth. When Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, it took over three kingdoms: Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.

Which kingdom came next?

11 **Daniel 7:6** "After this I looked, and there was another, like a _____, which had on its back four _____ of a bird. The beast also had four _____, and dominion was given to it."

12 Leopards run **fast / slow**.
Wings would make the leopard go even **faster / slower**.



Greece was the kingdom that conquered Medo-Persia. Its leader, Alexander the Great, conquered the nations from Greece all the way to India at lightning speed. Alexander the Great died at a very young age. Some historians say he died from drinking too much alcohol, and others say that he was passing through swamps with his men and got weakened by a disease that mosquitoes gave him.



As he was dying, his four generals came to ask him who should reign in his place. All he said was... "The strongest." After he died, his four generals divided the kingdom into four parts. Each of them ruled one of the parts. That's why the leopard had four heads.

What was the last beast that Daniel saw?

13 **Daniel 7:7** "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth _____, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge _____ teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was _____ from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten _____."

This beast looked so horrible that Daniel couldn't even compare it to anything he had ever seen. He could only describe it as dreadful and terrible. He said the teeth of this terrible beast were made of iron. Does that remind you of anything?

14 **Daniel 2:40** "And the **fourth kingdom** shall be as strong as _____, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others."

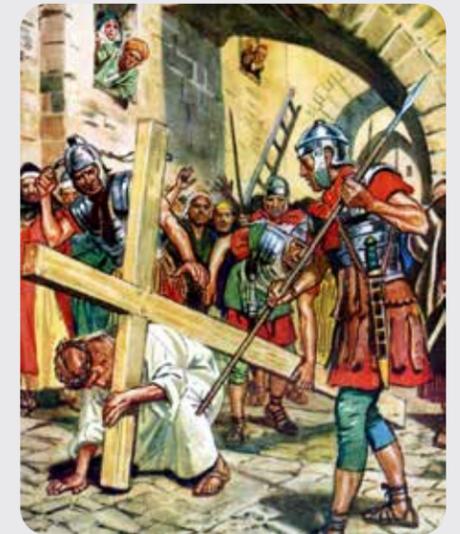
15 This fourth beast represents the iron kingdom of Rome. It



was such a dreadful, terrible kingdom. Do you remember what Roman soldiers did to Jesus?

They killed Jesus, our Savior. Later, Rome put to death thousands of His followers. Rome tried to destroy the Bible and its truths. As we keep studying Daniel, we will learn a lot more about this fourth beast.

Do you remember what we learned in Daniel 2—that the iron kingdom doesn't completely go away until Jesus sets up His kingdom? In the feet of the Daniel 2 image, the iron is there, along with the clay. The ten horns on the terrible beast tell us a lot more about this time. We are going to learn about these horns in a future lesson.



Are these beasts as scary now that you understand more about them?

You can see that God gave us a timeline of four different kingdoms. These are the same four kingdoms we saw in Daniel 2, but with many more details.

BABYLON



MEDO-PERSIA



GREECE



ROME

Remember, in Daniel's time, three of these kingdoms were still in the future. Looking back, we can see how accurately God described them. He knew exactly what was going to happen. This helps us know that what God says will happen in the future will always certainly happen.

Do you think Satan wants us to understand these important things? Certainly not! But God gives us the Bible so we won't be deceived by Satan.

16 Do you want to keep studying these prophecies so you can avoid being tricked by Satan? _____



Answers

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. ask | 6. sword | 10. bear / three | different / horns |
| 2. beasts / kingdom | 7. war / people / kingdoms / people | 11. leopard / wings / heads | 14. iron |
| 3. waters | 8. lion / wings | 12. fast / faster | 15. They crucified Him. |
| 4. fly / hastens | 9. plucked | 13. beast / iron / | |
| 5. winds | | | |

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