

Daniel 7:23-26

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The Interpreter explains that the boastful horn will challenge God and attack God's people. He will rule for 3 ½ years before God destroys him.

While Daniel sleeps, he is shown by God a bizarre sequence of events in a vision. An angel explains to him what the vision means. First, Daniel watches four beasts rise out of a stormy sea. Each beast represents a kingdom that will rise and fall. The fourth beast grows a horn that is boastful and blasphemous. The horn wages a war against God's saints, and looks like he will destroy them.

Before the horn can be victorious, a courtroom with many thrones appears. On the judge's throne sits the Ancient of Days, God. His throne is surrounded by fire and shoots fire out from it, representing God as the ultimate judge. Angels surround him. He judges the beast with many horns, specifically the boastful horn. God kills the beast, destroys its body, and it is consumed in the fire. Afterwards, someone like a Son of Man comes among the clouds and presents Himself before God. God gives him everlasting rulership over an everlasting kingdom. No other kingdoms will take its place. It will never be destroyed. The saints populate and participate in the kingdom.

Daniel wants to know the meaning of the strange fourth beast (v. 19), so the angel explains. The fourth beast *will be a fourth kingdom on the earth*, coming after the Grecian Empire (the many-headed leopard). This kingdom is Rome, which conquered Greece. A brutal empire, which *will be different from all the other kingdoms* in many ways. Specifically, *it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it*. Indeed, the Roman Empire was far more brutal and destructive than those that preceded it.

Rome ruled with an iron fist. Many were killed during the Roman Conquest, from Britain to Asia Minor. The Roman military was more disciplined and relentless than the kingdoms before it. The Roman era as a world empire lasted for nearly five hundred years. Then, just as was predicted in Daniel Chapter 2, Rome was not defeated, it simply crumbled into pieces. In an attempt to reconstitute the Roman Empire in a Christian context, Charlemagne was crowned emperor of what was deemed the Holy Roman Empire in 800 AD. Harkening back to the glory of Rome, the German Kaiser and the Russian Czar are transliterations of the word Caesar.

Although the title Holy Roman Emperor lasted until 1806, when it was dissolved during the Napoleonic wars, the countries and regions that were a part of the Holy Roman Empire ebbed and flowed. Again, as predicted by Daniel 2, brittle like iron and clay. During the entire era of the Holy Roman Empire, it was a coalition of nations.

Although the Roman Empire title has been out of use for a couple of centuries, according to this biblical formulation, we are still in the Roman era. And, in fact, Rome's influence on modern democracies and republics is quite evident. The Roman worldview regarding technology,

society, philosophy, government, and economics are omnipresent in modern life. The American capitol in Washington D.C. is filled with Roman architecture. The buildings, currency and images are filled with Roman symbols. The Roman era has not ended, it just keeps morphing.

The Interpreter explains to Daniel that out of this empire *ten kings will arise*, which are represented by the *ten horns* growing from the beast. Apparently, ten kingdoms will appear from out of the Roman Empire. The Holy Roman Empire era was a coalition of nations. Since 1806, western nations have formed many coalitions, for a number of purposes. The formation of the European Union is an example. (And Britain exiting is yet another example of the brittle mixture of iron and clay breaking apart.) We could be living in a time when this ten-nation coalition exists. It seems more likely that the founding of this ten-nation coalition of kingdoms is a future event.

Another king *will arise after them*, the boastful horn, and *he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings*. As this arrogant king climbs the ladder of power, he will in some way conquer three other kings out of the ten Roman kingdoms.

The unique horn/king will not just seek to conquer the earth; he defies God Himself, for he *will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One*. This king will battle the people of God. His aim will be to destroy them, and for a while he will seem to succeed as he wears them down and challenges God openly. While this wicked king rules, he *will intend to make alterations in times and law*. It seems apparent that this king will alter the culture and legal system in such a way to persecute the people of God.

This king will rule unchallenged for three and a half years: *they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time*. A time (one year), times (two years), and half a time (half a year) add up to a 3 ½ year period, which matches exactly the prophecy in Revelation 13:5, “There was given to [the beast] a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.” This dictator will declare himself God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He will oppress the people of God. And he will control the earth for three and a half years.

Just as the other kingdoms have their authority taken away, it will be the same for this tyrant. Yet it will be far worse for him. The beasts in Daniel’s vision had their dominion taken from them but their lives spared (v. 12). The boastful “beast” faces the *court* of God, where there is *judgment*. Not only will *his dominion be taken away*, he will be *annihilated and destroyed forever*. There will be nothing left of him.

Biblical Text

23 “Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the *other* kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into

his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 But the court will sit *for judgment*, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.