

Visions In The Night

A wife said to her husband one morning over breakfast, “I had a dream last night and I dreamed that you gave me a pearl necklace. What do you suppose that means?” Her husband answered, “You will find out tonight.” And sure enough, that evening he gave her a book entitled Interpreting Dreams. We may think this is funny but have you ever had a dream or a vision during your sleep that was serious or caused you to be afraid? In the Old Testament God sometimes used dreams and visions to communicate to His prophets. However, these were not your ordinary dreams and visions. They left the prophets exhausted - sometimes for days. The next chapter in our study in Daniel is the first recorded dream/vision of the prophet Daniel. But we are not given all of the details. We are only given a summary. But this is normal in scripture.

DANIEL’S DREAM. In the first six chapters of Daniel we have seen God pursue Nebuchadnezzar, defeat Belshazzar, and witness to Darius. God used those chapters to show us that He cares for the unbelieving, godless leader of a nation. God even gave King Nebuchadnezzar a dream of the future just because the king wanted to know. We were challenged by the faith of Daniel and his friends when they were unwilling to compromise their faith in God in order to save their lives. We were glad when God rescued them and honored them in this world. Those chapters were about actual historical events, and now we come to six chapters of prophecy - dreams/visions that God gave Daniel.

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it. Daniel said, “I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. “And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. Daniel 7:1-3 (NASB)

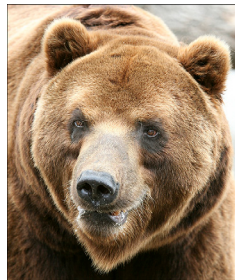
Daniel’s first dream/vision occurred during the reign of Belshazzar. It was about four beasts: a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a dreadful and terrifying beast that comes up out of the

Daniel’s Vision of Four Beasts

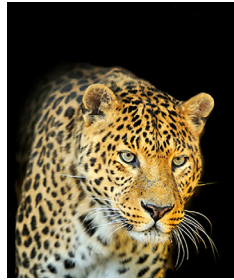
Daniel 7:4-7



Daniel 7:4
**Babylonian
Empire**



Daniel 7:5
**Medo-Persian
Empire**

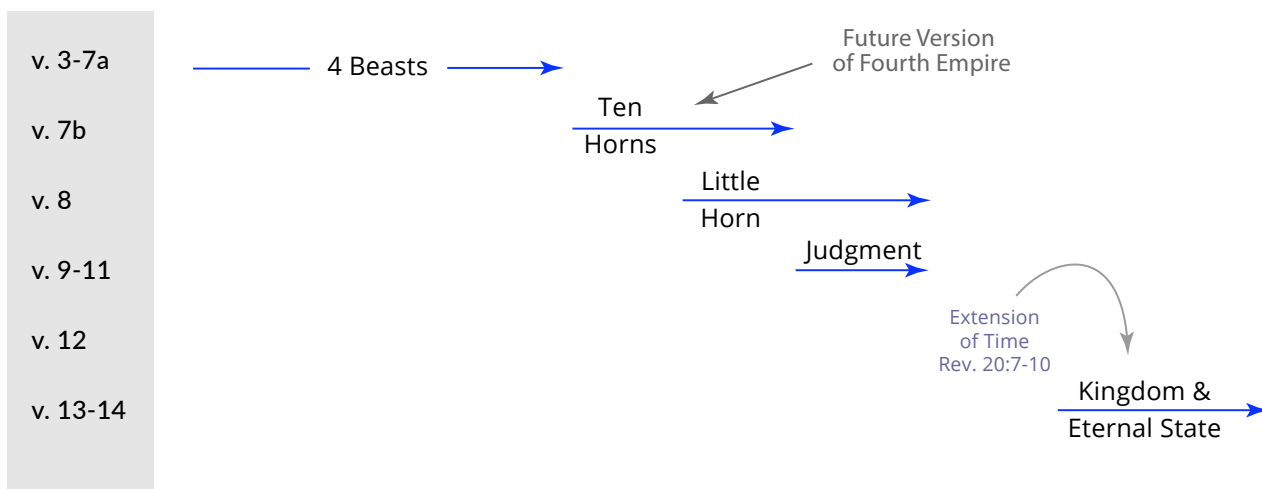


Daniel 7:6
**Empire of
Greece**



Daniel 7:7
**Roman
Empire**

Dream of Visions in Daniel 7



human race.

BABYLONIAN EMPIRE. These four beasts represent the same kingdoms that we saw in Daniel 2. The first one is a winged lion.

The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. Daniel 7:4 (NASB)

The lion with wings represents the Babylonian Empire. Historical references tell us that Babylon had many statues of winged lions guarding the gates to the royal palace. There were also lions along the walls of the Ishtar Gate. Babylon had even placed a lion on the back of its silver shekel - a coin - just as many nations place a significant symbol on the back of their coins. The lion was a symbol of the Babylonian Empire.

This is no ordinary lion. It has the wings of an eagle. It can stand up like a man, and it has a human mind. Now we need to ask, "Who lived and ate like an animal with hair like eagle's feathers for seven years before returning to his senses?" The answer is Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:28-33). This winged lion symbolizes the Babylonian Empire.

MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE. The second beast is a bear.

And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' Daniel 7:5 (NASB)

This beast represents the Medo-Persian Empire which was initially led by Darius and Cyrus (Dan. 5:30-36). It is important to note that one side of the bear was higher than the other. This refers to the fact that Cyrus was the greater of the two leaders. Cyrus was a Persian (Dan. 6:28) and Darius was a Mede (Dan. 11:1). Darius died after the first year and then Cyrus was the only ruler. The two men had come together to form a new empire, but history only refers to it as the Persian Empire. The three ribs are three kingdoms which the Medo-Persian Empire defeated: the Lydian Kingdom (546 B.C.), Chaldean Empire (539 B.C.) and the Egyptian Empire (525 B.C.).

GRECIAN EMPIRE. The leopard is the third symbol.

After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. Daniel

7:6 (NASB)

It is a symbol of speed and power. This symbol represents the empire of Greece. Alexander the Great was the military leader who pushed his army to establish this empire with blazing speed. But as soon as he established this empire, he also died. His empire was split among his four generals: Lysimachus, Cassander, Seleucius Nicanor, and Ptolemy. Lysimachus ruled Thrace and Bithyna. Cassander ruled Macedonia, and Seleucius Nicanor had Syria, Babylon, and India. Ptolemy ruled Egypt, Petra and Canaan. These generals are the four heads to whom dominion was given.

ROMAN EMPIRE. The last beast is not an animal.

After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. Daniel 7:7 (NASB)

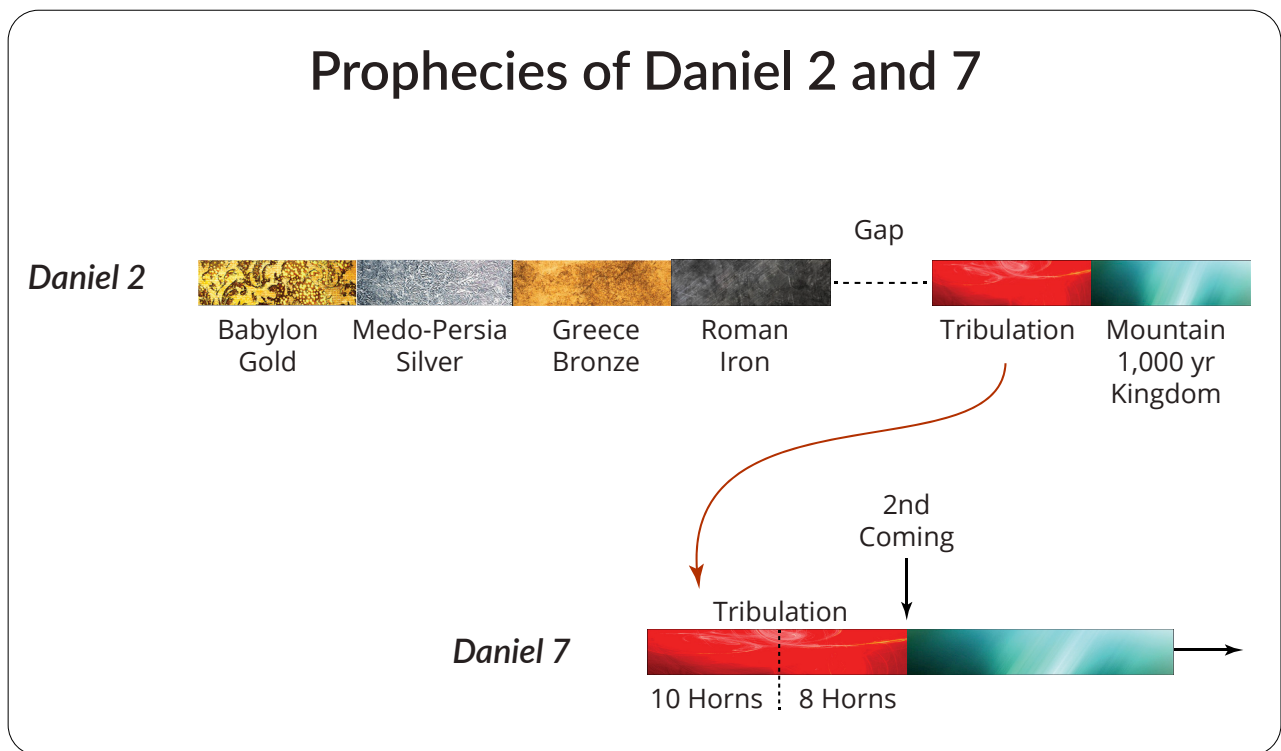
It is a monster with ten horns. Now that is a bad dream. This monster symbolizes a world empire which causes great

terror on earth. We will see later in this chapter that the ten horns are ten kings. It is a union or coalition of ten nations. This monster started as the Roman Empire which defeated the empire of Greece. But the ten horns add new meaning to this beast. They symbolize a future form of the Roman Empire - the Revived Roman Empire.

Dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel. These four beasts and the four metals in King Nebuchadnezzar's statue of Daniel 2 represent the same four kingdoms. The nation symbolized by the winged lion is the same nation symbolized by the head of gold in Daniel 2 - the Babylonian Empire. The bear in Daniel 7 and the chest of silver in Daniel 2 both represent Medo-Persia. The leopard and the statue's waist of bronze symbolize Greece, and finally the dreadful and terrifying beast of Daniel 7 and the legs of iron in Daniel 2 are the same kingdom. It is the Roman Empire (see Appendix B for other views of this kingdom). These four kingdoms are past history.

Of these four kingdoms only three of them were defeated by another empire. Rome died from within. Yet, there is also a future for the Roman Empire. It is called the Revived Roman Empire.

Did you notice that Daniel 2:41-42 talks about the toes



of the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue and Daniel 7 refers to ten horns on the monster? This is the future empire which will be a coalition of ten nations. It will control the world. This coalition of ten nations will come to power during a time we call the Tribulation. It will be a terrible time in which to live. Jesus spoke of this future empire during his last recorded sermon, the Olivet Discourse. He warned those who were listening and He warns us today about the misery this empire will cause.

But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short. Matthew 24:20-22 (NASB)

New Details. God gave both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel dreams about the future, but Daniel's dream has more details.

While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts. Daniel 7:7-8 (NASB)

In Daniel's dream we find that the little horn - a world leader - rises up and gains control of three of the world leaders or nations. Now there are only seven of the original ten leaders or nations plus the little horn. The little horn is the antichrist and he rules this great world coalition. This world coalition is a group of nations who come together to control the world. We believe they will come from Europe and from European ancestry. This world coalition will take control during a period of time we call the Tribulation. The last section of Daniel will explain more of our future.

CONCLUSION. Dreams! Dreams about the future. What do you dream about, if you do dream? Today, many seek dreams thinking that God will speak to them. Others search their dreams worrying about themselves, their past traumas, and abuses. Still others claim that God has spoken to them

in dreams. But every Christian needs to be warned that many false prophets existed not only in the Old Testament but also today. men who claim to have a word from the Lord. Listen to what God has said,

I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, 'I had a dream, I had a dream!' How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another . . . Jeremiah 23:25-27 (NASB)

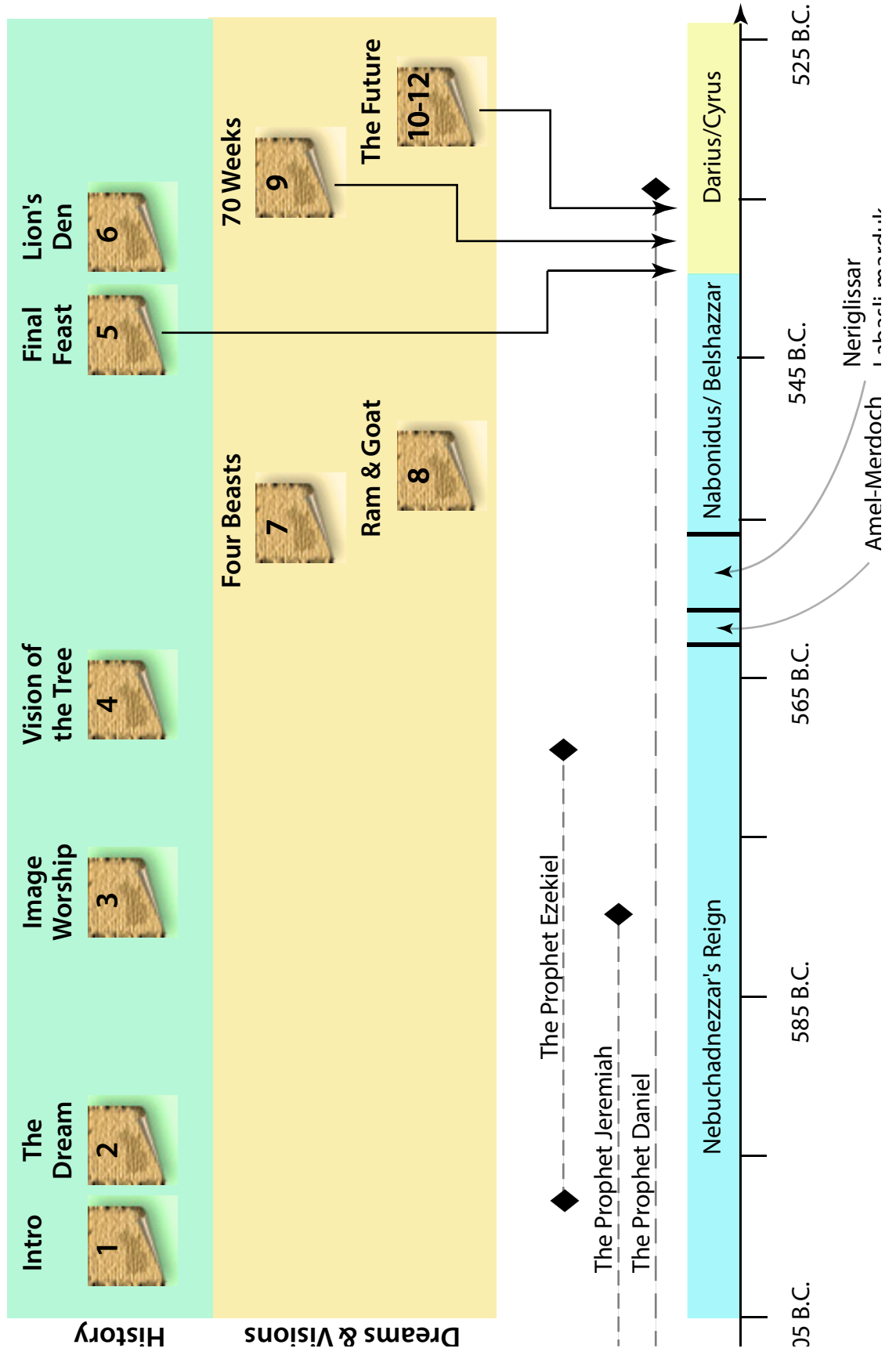
God has not always spoken through dreams and visions.

. . . And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent. 1 Samuel 3:1 (NASB)

God has already spoken to us in sixty-six books, 1189 chapters, 31,173 verses, and 807,361 words. We call it the Bible. There are fewer than 25 dreams and visions in the Bible. Yes, God has spoken through dreams to select individuals but there is something more important in the Christian life than seeking dreams. It is seeking to know and love God!

Appendix A

Outline of Daniel



Appendix B

Meaning of the Monster?

THERE are at least four major views about the meaning of the monster in Daniel 7:7-8. Most of the views reject a future, literal understanding of scripture. Most of these views are not careful about the details in the verse which help us understand the meaning of the monster.

After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts. (NASB) Dan. 7:7-8

The key points in this passage are the fact that the beast starts with ten horns and that a new horn comes to power by removing three of the ten horns. This leaves eight horns. These horns are kings who rule different nations of the world (Dan. 7:24). These are the key points.

LIBERAL VIEW. The first view is held by some who reject the Bible as being the Word of God. It is called the Liberal View. This view says that the monster is the nation of Syria or the Seleucid Empire. They claim that Syria had seven kings and Antiochus Epiphanes, the eighth king, was the little horn.

This view ignores the fact that the prophecy says the kings will not rule sequentially, but at the same time. The ten kings will live at the same time. The Syrian kings ruled in sequence, as a normal monarchy, and not concurrently. Another reason this view is in error is that there will be ten kings and Syria only had eight kings. This view ignores key

facts of the prophecy and as a result is rejected.

ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW. The next view says that the monster, including the horns, is the Roman Empire of the past. That is, the beast is simply historical. This is a view held by some Amillennialists.

This view states that the Roman Empire was a collection of ten nations: Britain, Egypt, Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Macedonia, Spain and others. It states that the little horn is the pope of the Roman Catholic Church, and they teach that the pope removed three kings from different nations at different periods of time. It states that the church is the physical kingdom on earth.

There are several problems with this view. First, those who hold this view do not agree among themselves as to which countries are the ten countries. Even the historic maps of the Roman Empire do not agree with their list of countries since they include more than ten countries. In fact, around A.D. 750, at the height of the Roman Empire, there were thirteen dioceses (R. R. Palmer. *Historical Atlas of the World*, Rand McNally. p. 8). That is a major problem. Second, this view ignores the fact once again that ten kings ruled at the same time and that a new king came to power by crushing three existing kings. They have also ignored the fact the pope has never been a king and they miss the point that the pope did not come to “power” as the result of defeating three ruling kings. That never happened. The Roman Catholic Church peacefully assumed religious authority. Further, the church is not a world military power.

THE CAESAR VIEW. Another view says that the ten horns of the beast were the Caesars of the Roman Empire. This view has a major problem since the Roman Empire had eighty-five Caesars. This position is also to be rejected.

These are the major views about the meaning of the beast. There are several minor views which we will not explore

here, but all of them, except for the liberal view, believe that the beast is the Roman Empire. It is clear from history that the next kingdom after Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece is the Roman Empire.

ROME OF THE FUTURE. Now, how do we know that the ten horns of the beast are still in our future? The answer is as follows. The lion, bear, leopard and the monster are all related. They are the succession of world powers from one to the other. Revelation 17 uses the same symbols when describing our future.

... the beast ... which has the seven heads and the ten horns ... The seven heads are ... seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. And ... is himself also an eighth ... And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings ... These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. (NASB) Rev. 17:9-13

Just as in Daniel, the beast in Revelation has ten horns and later seven heads with the Antichrist as the eighth ruler of this future world empire. It is important to remember that the prophecy of Revelation was written about A.D. 90-100 when the apostle was talking about the ten horns and the little horn. The ten horns are not the old Roman Empire but a future form of it.

In Daniel 2, we discovered that different body sections of Nebuchadnezzar's statue symbolized different nations. The head was the Babylonian Empire, the chest was the Medo-Persian Empire and the waist was Greece. The legs were the Roman Empire; but then what do the feet represent? The legs were one nation and the feet are also a nation, but it is related to Rome since both are made of iron. This

implies the two are different, even though they are related. One is older and one is future.

When will the ten horns come to power? The answer is found in Daniel 7:25 and Daniel 9:26-27. Both passages describe the same event. We read that the little horn goes to war against the nation of Israel for "times, time and half a time" or 3.5 years. It is called a time of abominations in Daniel 9:27. We will explore this more in the coming studies and we will discover that Jesus refers to this time when He says,

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come. Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet (NASB) Matt. 24:14-15

Has the gospel been preached throughout the entire world? The answer is no. This implies the coming of the beast is still future. It is the next major event in God's future.

CONCLUSION. It is important that we objectively look at the words in scripture when we want to know what it means. It is easy to be careless and quick. We need to understand scripture literally and not be quick to make it have a "spiritual" meaning because it fits something we are taught.