

Fulfilled Prophecy in Recent History

Daniel 7:1-6, Zechariah 12:1-9, Ezekiel 37:1-8, Psalm 83

It is widely known that the rebirth of Israel in the twentieth century was fulfilled prophecy. But it is largely unknown that the wars the Israelis fought to defend their new nation were also prophesied. It is also unknown that, as the Jews were beginning to return to their land, the end-time storm prophesied by Daniel began. During the storm, four beasts arise to oppose Israel. This storm is going on now. The first three beasts have recently arisen and have gone unrecognized, though they were the greatest threats to the Jewish people and to the world in all history. The fourth beast is yet to come.

Daniel's prophecy in Revelation

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Revelation 13:1

The fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7 appears in Revelation, but the first three beasts are notably absent. These three were not ancient empires (see Note 2). Nor will they come at the very end of the age, for their stories are not told in the book of Revelation. Their stories are written in modern history.

Daniel 7:1-2, the storm This storm is also prophesied in Jeremiah 23:19-20; 25:30-33; 30:23-24

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.

Daniel's storm began with the world wars. This hurricane redrew the map of the Middle East and put Israel on it. With WWI Palestine passed from Turkish to British control, and the Balfour Declaration allowed the Jews to restore their homeland. In the eye of the hurricane was the Great Depression. Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Japan, and more were rising up. The local Arabs rose up against the Jewish restoration of the land. Then came WWII and the Holocaust. After this, Israel became a nation.

But Daniel's storm continues. The two world wars, put together, were only its first wind. We are now in the eye of Daniel's storm. Its second wind will bring in the fourth beast, the antichrist's kingdom.

In the late nineteenth century there was a spontaneous stirring among Jews around the world to return to their homeland. Unknowingly, they heard the Lord's word in Ezekiel 37:4-6: *O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live.* As the decades-long labor to bring forth Israel began, the four winds of Daniel 7:2 started blowing, revealing the condition of the world so that its final judgment could also begin. The winds stirred up the great sea, bringing up the beasts that would attack the Lord's people.

Daniel 7:3, the four beasts

And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

The sea is symbolic of something deep and dark encompassing the whole earth. The beasts have been hidden in this sea, working covertly for thousands of years. At the appointed time they are revealed.

Daniel 7:4, the lion

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. 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.

This prophecy matches Germany in every detail. Nazi Germany was a lion, the most deadly enemy in Jewish history. It killed six million. The lion with eagle's wings is a picture of the German blitzkriegs, which had the speed of an eagle with the power of a lion. The wings must also represent Germany's eastern and western fronts. The Soviet Union plucked off the eastern wing, and the western Allies plucked off the western wing. Then it was made to stand on two feet like a man. Germany made a remarkable economic recovery after the war. The whole country was rebuilt, and it now has the strongest economy in Europe. And it was given a man's heart. After the war the people turned away from Nazism. The Berlin airlift in 1948 helped to turn their hearts toward their former enemies. The "candy bombers" won over the children. Germany has been a U.S. ally ever since.

Adolf Hitler was a forerunner of the antichrist. He was the lion's mouth, persuading the masses. He believed the Jews were conspiring to take over the world, and the Holocaust was his attempt to remove them in order to make way for a German thousand-year reich. Like the antichrist, he had no respect for treaties (Daniel 9:27). They were just pieces of paper to use deceitfully to accomplish his purpose. Like the antichrist, he had a false prophet. Joseph Goebbels, his Minister of Propaganda, caused the people to worship Hitler. As the antichrist and the false prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire together, so also Hitler and Goebbels were together in the Berlin bunker and died just one day apart.

Daniel 7:5, the bear

And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: "Arise, devour much flesh."

Suddenly, just as the lion made its greatest conquest and appeared to be invincible, a power shift began. The bear stood up with three ribs in its mouth. In June of 1940, while the world was watching the fall of France, the Soviet Union seized the three Baltic states: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The bear devoured much flesh, including millions of its own people. And it killed many Jews, for the Jewish diaspora was centered in the bear's territories. The bear also devoured nations, bringing Eastern Europe under its tyranny. Then it threatened the whole world with nuclear holocaust.

Many assume *raised up on one side* means a lopsided bear. (Then they make a stretch and say this bear is the ram of Daniel 8:3, the ancient Medo-Persian empire.) But we cannot assume a side means left or right. A four-legged animal has a front side and a hind side. Also, the Aramaic word for *raised up* was translated *made to stand* in Daniel 7:4. This bear was doing what bears do, standing on its hind legs.

Daniel 7:6, the leopard

After this I looked, and there was another, 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.

After this, after two thirds of the Jews in Europe had been killed in the first beast's death camps, another beast appeared which was about to destroy their nation as it was being born (compare with the future event of Revelation 12:4). The Arab League must be the leopard. The Arab League also must be the Psalm 83 confederacy which said, "Come, let us cut them off from being a nation." The leopard's

four wings suggest the four winds, the four directions from which it attacked. The four heads must be the nations that sent their armies: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. They were stealthy as a leopard, especially on Yom Kippur in 1973. But they were unable to destroy Israel in spite of three attempts (1948, 1967, and 1973). Yet the leopard was given dominion. Saudi oil, discovered in 1938, gave the Arabs power over the world and the boldness to attack Israel. The Arabs have also been empowered by the lying spirit behind Islam. This deceitful spirit brought forth a false prophet and false scriptures in opposition to the truth of Christ. Islam was spread by force and is maintained through fear. World leaders cower before it and call it a religion of peace, for they dare not offend its 1.8 billion adherents. And they are deceived by its clamor for an Arab state on Israel's land.

The leopard was the lion's successor. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husseini, was one of the links between them. Before WWII, he incited Arab attacks on the Jews. In 1941 he met Adolf Hitler, who called Islam a religion of warriors. The Mufti spent time with Heinrich Himmler and learned all about the genocide. He made pro-Nazi radio broadcasts from Berlin to the Arab world, even exhorting them as Muslims to kill Jews. The Arab League was founded while the Allies were crossing the Rhine.

Daniel 7:12, the season and time

As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

The first three beasts have lost their dominion. Germany was defeated, the Soviet Union was dissolved, and the Arab League's attempts to destroy Israel have been stopped. Yet all the nations that composed these beasts still live. Now, during the season and time, we may catch some glimpses of the fourth beast. It is different. We should not expect this beast to be composed of nations, for its horns receive no kingdom until the last hour (Rev. 17:12-13). These horns must be other kinds of powers.

Three beasts, three lies, and three ways to deny the truth

The beasts were "each different from the other" (Daniel 7:3). The Nazis were occultists. The Russian Communists were atheists. The Arab Muslims deny the Christ, the Son of God, and believe a false prophet instead. These are the ways that are taken by those who do not hold the truth.

The Nazis said to the Jews, "You are not human; you must be killed." The Communists said, "Your faith is nothing; there is no God." The Arabs said, "Your hope for a land, a nation, and Jerusalem is in vain." The fourth beast will tell the same such lies and will attempt to destroy faith, hope, and love. (Matthew 24:9-13,24; Luke 18:8; Revelation 12:17; 13:7,10)

The first three beasts foreshadow the fourth

Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. Rev. 13:2

The fourth beast is beyond the scope of this paper except for one thing. Revelation 13:2 says the fourth beast will have characteristics of the first three. This can be understood with new light after the first three beasts have been identified. The antichrist will be stealthy as a leopard, like the Arab League on Yom Kippur. His feet will be like a bear's, like the Soviet Union's, a massive brutal kingdom trampling people and nations. His mouth will be like a lion's, like Hitler's, the most infamous mouth in history.

The founding of modern Israel was prophesied by Zechariah

In chapters 12 through 14, Zechariah prophesies about "that day." This is the time of Israel's two-fold restoration, which occurs before and after the Lord's return. "That day" has already begun, and it will continue into the next age (Zech. 14:16-21). Zechariah 12:1-9 is the battle for Israel's restoration in this age, before the Lord returns. It is not the battle of Armageddon where the Lord Himself will defeat all the nations of the earth and rescue Israel. Zechariah 12:1-9 does not look anything like Armageddon, for a victorious Israel is seen. Israel defeats the surrounding peoples (not all the nations of the earth) while the Angel of the Lord goes before them unseen. This is what happened in the twentieth century. The surrounding peoples were the confederacy of Psalm 83 and the leopard of Daniel 7.

Zechariah 12:1

The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him.

These profound opening words indicate the gravity of what follows. The Lord who created the heavens and the earth and man is telling us about a sign that will occur shortly before His coming.

Zechariah 12:2

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.

Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, which was the last day of the British Mandate and the day all British troops departed. Immediately, all the Arab nations surrounding Israel attacked from every direction. Israel miraculously defeated all those armies and established their nation. However, the Old City of Jerusalem was besieged and taken by Jordan's army.

Zechariah 12:3

And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

The United Nations Partition Plan was the beginning of the gathering of all nations against Jerusalem. The plan was to internationalize Jerusalem and thus "heave it away" from the Jewish state. But then the Arabs attacked, and King Abdullah of Jordan heaved it away instead. The king was assassinated three years later in the Al Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount during Friday prayers.

Zechariah 12:4

In that day, says the Lord, I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

Blindness and confusion played a large part in the Six Day War in 1967. On the first day, Israel made a pre-emptive strike against the airfields of Egypt; and the Egyptians never saw them coming. Israel destroyed or neutralized the air forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq and gained complete air superiority. A false report of Egyptian success caused additional confusion among the Arabs.

Zechariah 12:5-6

And the leaders of Judah shall say in their heart, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God." In that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place – Jerusalem.

This is the Six Day War. They defeated all the Arab armies that came against them and took Jerusalem as well as the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Gaza, and the Sinai Peninsula. Verse 5 indicates that the Lord had not returned. Why would they "say in their heart" if they could see Him with their eyes?

Zechariah 12:7

The Lord will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah.

This detail has been fulfilled. In 1948 the Jews got a nation, but it was incomplete. Nineteen years later, in 1967, that nation was completed with Jerusalem.

There is a book about how they lost Jerusalem in 1948: *O Jerusalem*, by Larry Collins and Dominique LaPierre. It could have been titled "The Fulfillment of Zechariah 12:7." While Jerusalem was under siege by Jordan's army, there was a meeting between David Ben-Gurion and his Chief of Operations, Yigal Yadin (pages 482-484). Ben-Gurion told Yadin to occupy Latrun and open the road to Jerusalem. Yadin argued that if they moved more resources there, they would save their capital and lose their state. But, to Ben-Gurion, Jerusalem was indispensable. He ordered Yadin to take Latrun. They lost those battles and were unable to get both their state and their capital in 1948.

Zechariah 12:8

In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the Lord before them.

One example, among many, of one with a feeble beginning who became like David was Golda Meir. She was born into poverty. Five of her siblings died in early childhood. But the Lord chose this one to bring in the money to buy the armaments that Israel needed for its survival. In 1948 she spoke to Jews all over the United States and brought back fifty million dollars, which is more than half a billion in today's dollars. Behind the scenes, the Angel of the Lord defended them.

Zechariah 12:9

It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

The words "seek to" indicate an intent which may or may not be carried out, as well as a period of time before it would be carried out (Ex. 4:24-26; Jonah 3:1-10). The Arab League has already come against Jerusalem, and there has already been some judgment. Iraq and Syria have been ravaged by war. Egypt and Jordan may have escaped for now, for they made peace treaties with Israel. At the end of the age many nations of the earth will come against Jerusalem (some of these same four nations could be among them). They will all find themselves on the list of nations He has been seeking to destroy.

The first nine verses of Zechariah chapter 12 are the history of modern Israel. In verse ten the Lord returns, and Israel sees Him whom they pierced. This is the event of Revelation 1:7.

The rebirth of Israel in a figure, Ezekiel 37

In the vision of the dry bones, Ezekiel was told to prophesy twice. In verses 7 and 8 the dry bones came together, but there was no life in them. This is the rebirth of Israel in the twentieth century. In verses 9 and 10 he was told to prophesy again, and this time breath came into them. This is the far greater rebirth of Israel at the Lord's coming.

Fulfilled prophecy is a sign

The reappearance of Israel near the end of the age and the world events surrounding it were prophesied 2500 years ago. These prophecies have been fulfilled. *Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Matthew 24:32-33*

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Note 1: The location of the beasts

The beasts were going after the Jews, so they went where the Jews were. The battle between the first two beasts, the Eastern Front of World War II, was fought in the lands where the great majority of European Jews lived at the time. This was the site of the Holocaust. Afterwards, the third beast met them in their homeland and attempted to destroy their nation.

Some believe the great sea is the Mediterranean and then conclude that all the beasts must be located in that area. But, in Daniel, the great sea is not literal. Symbolic beasts must come out of a symbolic sea. Luke 21:25 says "the sea and the waves roaring" is the distress of nations. But if one insists it is literal, the great sea does not end at Gibraltar. It is the ocean which encompasses the whole earth.

The first two beasts had Eastern counterparts. Like Germany, Japan started its war with lightning conquests, was utterly defeated, and then also made a remarkable economic recovery and became an ally of the United States. Like the Soviet Union, China under Mao was a brutal Communist regime. Like Russia, it is still ruled by dark powers. Some of the fourth beast's horns may now be arising there.

Note 2: The beasts are not ancient empires

The great image of Daniel 2 represents all the empires of the world throughout time. It is a solid structure which will stand for thousands of years, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (the head) until the end of the age (the feet). But the four beasts of Daniel 7 arise during a storm, a brief chaotic event. This storm may be the event that turns the world into chunks of iron and clay (the feet).

Prophecies often begin at some earlier time and then conclude at the end of the age. The beasts and the empires both end with the antichrist, but this does not mean they are the same kingdoms. We know the fourth beast has a brief reign, so it cannot be the long fourth empire. Likewise, the other beasts in the same prophecy must have brief reigns and cannot be the long empires. We know the fourth beast is in

the feet of the great image (it is the toes). Likewise, the other beasts must be in the feet. And we can see that these three are not the first three empires by comparing Daniel 7 with Daniel chapters 4 and 8:

The first beast was a lion, but the first empire was a great tree (chapter 4).
The lion had eagle's wings which were plucked off. Nebuchadnezzar did not.

The second beast was a bear, but the second empire was a ram (chapter 8).
The bear held three ribs in its mouth. The ram did not.
The ram was cast down and trampled. The bear was not.

The third beast was a leopard, but the third empire was a goat (chapter 8).
The leopard had four wings and heads. The goat's one horn was replaced by four.
The goat attacked its predecessor. The leopard did not.

Similarities do not make them equivalent:

A man's heart Nebuchadnezzar was a lowly beast for seven "times" (Daniel 4:16,32-34). Germany was a rampaging beast for seven years (1938 to 1945). Afterwards, both were given a man's heart. Nebuchadnezzar regained his kingdom, and the German people regained their nation.

Not a lopsided bear This bear is standing on its hind legs. The supposed (and strained) similarity with the ram of unequal horns has no validity. See the section on Daniel 7:5 in this paper.

The number four The Greek empire was divided toward the four winds. The Arab League was a four-headed beast, divided, not controlled by one head. After World War I the Arabs were no longer headed by one caliph or sultan. Their armies came against Israel from four directions and from four nations.

The prophecies converge at the end. The empires and the beasts end with the same ten kings (compare Daniel 2:42-44, *the toes...these kings*, with Daniel 7:24, *the ten horns are ten kings*). They also end with the same little horn (Daniel 7:8 and 8:9). These are the ten kings and the antichrist of Revelation.

Note 3: No empire must be revived

All four empires of the great image of Daniel 2 must continue to the end of the age; for, at that time, one stone to the feet will crush them all together. The first empire is Babylon. We see it at the end of the age in Revelation, and it is worldwide. The second empire is the East, represented by Persia. The third empire comes from the west, is divided toward the four winds, spreads over all the earth (2:39), and continues to the end of the age (Daniel 8). It is Western civilization. The fourth empire is like iron that shatters all things wherever it goes. It must be the Islamic empire. Its 1300-year occupation of the Temple Mount is a conspicuous sign. The world is composed of these four empires.

The feet contain the final forms of the four empires. This global kingdom is called the United Nations, but it is a chaotic mixture of oligarchies (iron) and democracies (clay). Daniel's storm brought up the beasts, ended the age of monarchies, and turned the world into chunks of iron and clay. The great image is now complete except for the toes, which are the horns of the last beast. We should not be looking for ten nations, for these horns will not be reigning first as heads of ten nations. They will not reign until they join together at the last hour (Rev. 17:12-13). They must be other kinds of powers, global powers without crowns (as in Rev. 12:3) until they reign with the antichrist (Rev. 13:1).

Appendix

Others have proposed that some of the beasts have arisen recently, but they misidentify them. Most of them say Britain was the lion. Noting the symbols of Britain (lion) and of the United States (eagle), they say the wings were plucked off the lion in 1776. This is imaginative, but not sober. Britain is not a beast. In fact, Britain stood alone for a year against the real first beast, and that truly was its greatest hour. Those who say the first beast was Britain are not making the connection between the four beasts and the restoration of Israel.

Another proposal is that Iraq under Saddam was the first beast. But Iraq was about a 3 on the Richter scale next to Nazi Germany's 10. The idea behind it is that the four beasts will be latter-day versions of the four empires. But there is no scriptural evidence that the beasts and the empires are paired up. And this proposal is just one more that makes no connection with the rebirth of Israel in the past century.

The misidentification of the beasts has only served to discredit the whole matter of recent fulfillment of Daniel 7:1-6. I wrote to the author of several books on prophecy who believes that the beasts are the ancient empires. I explained my view of Daniel 7 and he responded, "My problem with such futurist interpretations of Daniel 7 is that they are rather subjective and arbitrary. Most who take this view see it as either the US or UK (lion)..." He did not give a reason why the lion could not be Nazi Germany. He simply wrote it off, citing the fanciful proposals made by others.