

FOUR GREAT BEASTS

“Four great beasts each different from the others, came up out of the sea” (Dan. 7:3)

Daniel had a dream involving four great beasts. The first three beasts were a lion, a bear, and a leopard. The fourth beast was different from the others and had ten horns. It also had large teeth and crushed and devoured its victims. When the dream was interpreted we discover that the four beasts represented four kingdoms (Dan. 7:17). While there may be many reasons human kingdoms are characterized as beasts, their vicious unpredictability is certainly one factor.

- Travis the chimpanzee was raised by Sandy Herold. Travis could open doors using keys, drive a car, paint, and he even took baths with his owner. However, one day Travis attacked a family friend (Charla Nash) and ripped off her nose, hands, lips and eyelids.
- In Wilkes-Barre, Pa. a trained elephant named Dumbo attacked and killed its trainer.
- On Feb. 24, 2010 Dawn Brancheau died after being attacked by a killer whale in front of hundreds of Sea World visitors.
- On Dec. 24, 2009, Alexis Martinez also died from an attack by a trained killer whale.
- Alexander Crispin was killed by a Bengal tiger during a packed performance in Suarez, Mex.
- In April 2016 Stacey Konwiser was killed at the Palm Beach Zoo while cleaning a tiger cage.
- In 2003 Roy Horn was attacked on stage by a trained tiger while performing in Las Vegas.
- On Nov. 4, 2012, Benjamin Cloutier was killed by grizzly bears while cleaning their cage.
- On April 22, 2008, Stephen Miller was also killed by a domesticated grizzly bear.
- Timothy Treadwell dedicated his life to studying grizzly bears. On October 5, 2003, Timothy and his girlfriend Amie Huguenard were both killed by a grizzly bear.
- Malaysian snake charmer, Ali Khan Samsudin, died from being bitten by a cobra.
- An unnamed trainer at the Kilmarden Wildlife Park had worked with eight wolves since their birth. In June of 2012, they killed her.
- Famous wildlife expert and TV personality, Steve Irwin, died on Sept. 4, 2006 after being attacked by a sting ray while filming an underwater documentary.
- Etc. Etc. Etc.

The four kingdoms in Daniel’s dream were the Babylonians, the Medes and Persian, the Greeks, and the Romans. Each of these kingdoms not only conquered and destroyed other kingdoms, but sometimes turned on their own citizens and murdered them en masse. No wonder they were symbolized in the Bible by beasts. There is a sense in which such symbols do not need to be explained or interpreted. For example, if you opened the door and confronted a lion, a leopard, or a bear you would not need to consult a commentary in order to know what to think. Do not be deceived, wild animals may jump through hoops when they want to, but they are still beasts.

Let us consider, for example, Rome under the Emperor Nero. Young Nero was gifted in poetry and music. He was so genial and humane that statesmen like Seneca and Burrhus expected him to restore to Rome the Golden Age of mankind. After becoming emperor he was proud that his government was not responsible for shedding one drop of blood throughout the empire. Soon, however, Nero degenerated into a fiendish monster who murdered his brother, mother, and wives. He killed Christians by the thousands including both Peter and Paul. Tacitus wrote that Nero put Christians to death, not for the benefit of the state, but rather to satiate his own desire for cruelty.

Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king. Jesus replied: **“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight . . .” (Jn. 18:36)**. Praise God! The Kingdom of Christ is not symbolized by a “beast” but by a “Bride”.