

# A More Sure Word of Prophecy



by Edwin de Kock

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# Chapter I

## Ancient Prophetic Historicism

### An Amazing Image

*Head of gold*  
Babylonia (605-539 BC)

*Chest and arms of silver*  
Medo-Persia (539-331 BC)

*Belly and thighs of bronze*  
The Greeks (331-168 BC)

*Legs of iron*  
Rome (168 BC-AD 476)

*Feet and toes of iron and clay*  
Ten kingdoms (AD 476-)



*The Stone*  
Christ the king

I first heard about Nebuchadnezzar's dream in 1935, almost 80 years ago. That is, I was five years old when I also heard about 4 empires together with 10 kingdoms, prophecy and history, simultaneously.

Daniel 2, augmented by Daniel 7, is the chief Historicist key to Bible Prophecy.

The four beasts of Daniel 7 basically represent the same political powers as Nebuchadnezzar's image.



**A lion with eagle wings**

**A bear with three ribs between its teeth**

**A leopard with four wings of a bird and four heads**

**A beast with iron teeth, bronze claws, and ten horns; then another little horn**

*Babilonia*  
(605–539 BC)

*Medo-Persia*  
(539–331 BC)

*The Greeks*  
(331–168 BC)

*Rome and Europe*  
(168 BC–)

Let us now compare these two representations. The first one records a dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

First note, however, that the bronze includes the thighs—the upper legs—all the way down to the knees. This is different from most pictures of the image. What you see was not prepared by a Seventh-day Adventist, yet it is correct. Charles Fitch (1805-1844), a great Millerite preacher, on his chart of 1842 also depicted the bronze that way.<sup>1</sup> The upper and lower legs blend together to indicate a *Greco-Roman* Empire. The strongest muscles of the legs are in the thighs. The Romans derived most of their culture, practically all their philosophy, and much of their religion from the ancient Greeks.

The four beasts were shown to Daniel in a vision that he had many years later, when Belshazzar ruled over Babylon.

In its symbolism, the dream image, a message from God to a king, was tactful and considerate. To Daniel, the four empires are portrayed as carnivorous beasts and came as a terrible shock.

There is also a shift in focus. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed in his bed at Babylon on the Euphrates. In his vision, Daniel stood on the shore of the Great Sea, the Mediterranean. The four beasts had a more western bearing, especially the fourth beast.

These two prophecies have much in common. The statue symbolizes Babylon, Medo-Persia, the Greeks, imperial Rome, and its division into ten kingdoms. The four beasts do much the same, but further details are added.

New prophecies dealing with the same entities never just repeat. They always give more information. I discuss this in my book *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* where I call it the principle of augmentation. We now briefly consider this factor.

**Like the head of gold, the lion with eagle wings represents the Babylonian Empire.**

The eagle is a symbol of nobility; the wings, speed in conquest. So it was under the mighty Nebuchadnezzar. But the eagle wings are plucked off. Belshazzar, its last ruler, was

a weak and timid king besieged by the Medes and Persians, whom he feared. When the wings were gone, the lion was pulled up onto its hind legs to stand like a man, and it acquired a fearful human heart.

**Like the arms and chest of silver, the bear symbolizes Medo-Persia.**

This beast “raised itself up on one side.” First the Medes emerged as a mighty state, but later the Persians, who were related to them, became more powerful. The three ribs between the bear’s teeth have been interpreted as Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt, which they conquered. The words “Arise, devour much flesh” indicate the vast extent of the Medo-Persian Empire.

**Like the belly and thighs of bronze, the leopard represents the ancient Greeks.**

But to what do the four wings and the four heads refer?

The wings denote speed of conquest. The Babylonian lion had two, but the Grecian leopard twice as many. The conquests of the grand army left by Alexander the Great were much more rapid.

And why four heads? The ancient Greeks never formed a single kingdom. Not even under Alexander. For example, he never ruled over the western Greeks in Sicily and Italy.

This is a historical fact, reflected in Bible prophecy.

On this basis and because of the Greco-Roman factor, my book *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* points out a striking fact: in Daniel 7, the four beasts have altogether seven heads. Of these, four heads are Greek. This explains a verse in Revelation 17:10: “. . . seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.”

**The legs of iron plus the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay refer to Rome plus the ten European kings into which the Empire later divided. So does the fourth beast with its ten horns, but it focuses on the kingdoms that arose after AD 476.**

This is a very important prophetic point: the terrible fourth beast has iron teeth, which means *Roman*, and bronze claws, which means *Greek*. That is, the power which this creature symbolized was not a purely Roman but a **Greco-Roman Empire**. History shows that such indeed it was.

An eleventh little horn came up among the ten horns and then grew tremendously. It symbolizes the papacy, which would speak blasphemous things and think to change times and the Law of God.

What is blasphemy? For a human being to equate himself with God (Mark 2:7; John 8:56-59; John 10:33). Some Catholic writings have put forth tremendous claims.

The pope is often called the Holy Father, sometimes the Most Holy Father, and even Our Most Holy Lord. Lucio Ferraris (fl. 1748-c. 1763), said the pontiff was “as it were God on earth . . . the supreme King of Kings.”<sup>2</sup> More than a hundred years later, Pope Leo XIII wrote most boldly: “We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.”<sup>3</sup>

Three of the ten horns were uprooted: the Vandals in North Africa as well as the Heruli and Ostrogoths in Italy. Why? These kingdoms refused submission to the pope.

They were not really Arians. Also, they were Sabbathkeepers. Not ancient Jehovah’s Witnesses but so to speak ancient Seventh-day Adventists. This is dealt with in my *Christ and Antichrist* as well as *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*.

### **1. Now I have a question for you. Who do you think wrote the following words?**

“The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander’s time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that

smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

## **2. Was it Uriah Smith (1832-1903), in *Daniel and the Revelation*?**

No, it was Hippolytus,<sup>5</sup> (c. 170-235), almost 1800 years ago, 200 years after Jesus was born.

I quote this passage in my first two prophetic books: *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001, 2013) as well as *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth* (2007).

Hippolytus was the bishop of Portus Romanus, an ancient harbor town about 15 miles (24 km) from Rome.<sup>6</sup>

A learned ante-Nicene theologian, he wrote books on prophecy:

A commentary on Daniel,<sup>7</sup> a largely lost treatise on Apocalypse, and his *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*.<sup>8</sup>

The most remarkable thing about what he said was the time when he wrote it: eighteen centuries ago.

Rome was still ruled by pagans; Constantine had not yet been born and accepted Christianity; and the breakup of the Western empire lay more than two centuries in the future.

## **2. Hippolytus lived in a very unstable period.**

Historians call it the Troubled Century. Numerous Caesars were assassinated, and barbarians repeatedly invaded the Empire.

## **3. This learned man was most courageous.**

To write like that invited for him a martyr’s death.<sup>9</sup> Rome, the capital, was only 15 miles from his home, and it was treason to foretell the end of Roman domination at a time like that.

## **4. Coming Kingdoms.**

Simply on basis of Bible prophecy, Hippolytus boldly predicted “the kingdoms that are to arise.”

Daniel said the beasts represented four kings or *kingdoms*

(In Dan. 7, compare 17 and 23).

They were the Western European powers of Hippolytus' future.

Hippolytus also said the Antichrist would appear "in their midst."

He believed the 10 kingdoms would survive until the Second Coming.

## **5. The apostle John had written:**

"As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists" (1 John 2:18). John was confronting Gnosticism.

But Hippolytus knew that the Bible focused mostly on one Antichrist. He did not, however, realize it was the papacy, which already existed but was not yet fully developed.

## **6. Antecedents.**

### *6.1. Jewish rabbis*

After Titus had destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and Bar Kokhba's rebellion in A.D. 132-136, sixty years later, the Jews regarded Roman rule as "the 'reign of Esau' or Daniel's Fourth Beast, and prayers for its ending were offered in the synagogues."<sup>10</sup>

6.2 Also earlier, two *Christian writers* interpreted Daniel much like Hippolytus:

Irenaeus (c. 130-c. 203) Bishop of Lyons in Gaul.

Tertullian (c. 160-240), who was born at Carthage, North Africa.

The latter was the soundest interpreter. Among other things, he taught that the resurrection would take place at the Second Coming.

Unlike Irenaeus or Hippolytus, Tertullian also said Apocalyptic Babylon was Rome.<sup>11</sup>

6.3 We now focus on Hippolytus passage because of its wording.

Why did he say *lioness* instead of *lion*?

This word is found in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of Old Testament c. 2nd century B.C. by Jewish scholars at Alexandria, Egypt, ruled by the Greek-speaking Ptolemaic dynasty.

I checked in my copy of it. It does use the word “léaina,” *lioness*. Our Old Testament is mainly based on the Masoretic text, which has *lion*, which is probably the correct original form. But like many early Christians, Hippolytus relied on the Septuagint cited by the apostles, especially Paul.

6.4 Like many after them, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus thought the Second Coming was near. For them, the 3.5 years or 1260 days in Daniel the Revelation was literal time. Only in later centuries did prophetic interpreters begin to apply the year-day principle.

## **7. Our Heavenly Father Wants His People to Know the Future.**

7.1 Amos 3:7 tells us: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Through their writings, we are given a prophetic roadmap of what lies ahead.

7.2 Biblical scholar Gerhard F. Hasel loved to tell about his father, a German pastor and colporteur. During World War II, Nazis forced him into their army and sent him to the Russian front. “From time to time when alone he drew courage from a fading picture of the Daniel 2 image, which he treasured in a pocket, reminding himself that Hitler must fail sooner or later.”<sup>12</sup> What made him so sure? One verse in the prophecy, Dan. 2:43: “They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”

Hitler did fail and is long gone—like Charlemagne, Charles V of Spain, and Napoleon Bonaparte, who had also vainly tried to unite Europe.

## **8.3 The European Union (EU) a similar ambition:**

Will there be a United States of Europe some day? No, for God has said: “They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” The Western European countries

are not made entirely of Roman iron; in them, there is also fragile clay.

Perhaps the present events in Ukraine will begin to shatter this dream.

#### **8.4 An important wider implication.**

If the European countries which used to make up the Western Roman Empire will not unite, this also means no world government can come into existence before the Lord returns—despite the Dispensationalists, who with their gap theory predict that the Antichrist will become the ruler of our entire planet.

### **9. Interpreting prophecy as we do is known as Historicism.**

This is also called the *Continuistic* School.

Historicists interpret prophecy by comparing its predictions with the events of history, point by point. This is how Historicism is validated.

9.1 Historicism predominated during three periods of Christianity:

(a) *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic* times, from first to about early fourth century. This included men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

(b) *The Protestant Reformation* for a few hundred years from before Martin Luther until early nineteenth century.

(c) Among *Seventh-day Adventists*.

9.2 Most expositors gave up Historicism, twice:

From about the fourth century and since the nineteenth century.

They preferred other schools: Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism. We will discuss these concepts in the next lecture.

Note, however, that only Historicism can be perfectly validated, *proven* through comparisons of Bible prophecy with what actually happened.

So why, in spite of this, have so many interpreters abandoned Historicism, preferring Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism? To answer this question, let us look again at what

the apostle Peter wrote about prophecy:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private *interpretation*. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. 1:19-21 (emphasis added)

9.3 Dependable prophecy is given only under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Also notice that word *interpretation*. The understanding of prophecy also requires heavenly guidance. In both early Christian times and the nineteenth century, theologians turned away from truth to error. To God the Holy Spirit this is offensive, so he deprives such people of ability to correctly interpret prophecy.

9.4 In the time of Hippolytus, the Great Apostasy was already at work.

Therefore, religious writers lost the ability to understand prophecy correctly.

9.5 The same thing happened to Protestants since the early nineteenth century onward.

In Britain, leading theologians began to favor the doctrines of Rome. The engine that drove them is called the Oxford Movement.

Many of them also, particularly in America, rejected the First Angel’s message described in Rev. 14:6, 7, and persecuted those who had accepted it. As a consequence, the Lord—according to verse 8—regarded them as part of Babylon. They likewise turned away from Historicism and increasingly favored other methods of interpretation. These have a demonstrable kinship with Catholic eschatology.

9.6 Seventh-day Adventists are now the only Protestant denomination of any size that is still Historicist. Are we going

to remain faithful to this precious legacy?

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1. A chronological chart of the visions of Daniel and John. Lithograph, devised by Charles Fitch with the assistance of Apollos Hale; lithographer, B. W. Thayer & Co., Boston, 1842. In the Jenks Collection of Adventual Materials, Prophetic Charts, Aurora University, Aurora, Illinois.

2. Lucio Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica, Juridico-Moralis Theologia*, Vol. 6, art. “Papa” (Venice, Italy: Apud Frasciscum Storti, et Jo: Baptistam Recurti, 1746), 33.

3. Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter “The Reunion of Christendom,” 20 June 1894, trans. in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger, 1903), 304, qtd in SDASB, 684.

4. Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170-235): *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, translated by Stewart Dingwall Fordyce Salmond (1838-1905), Professor of Theology, United Free Church College, Aberdeen, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, edited by the Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., And James Donaldson, L.L.D (Edinburg: T. T. Clark, 38, George Street, MDCCCLXIX [1869]).

5. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Ultimate Reference Suite, 2011), s.v. “Hippolytus, Saint.”

6. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*. 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946-54), Vol. I: 268.

7. John McManners, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (Oxford, Eng.: UP, 1990), 48.

8. Froom, Vol. I: 268-271. 9. Froom, Vol. I: 273.

10. Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 429.

11. Froom, Vol. I: 256-260.

12. C. Mervyn Maxwell, “Life Sketch of Gerhard Franz Hasel, 1935–1994,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 6 (1/1995) (Collegedale, TN: Adventist Theological Society), 61-62.

## Chapter II

### The First Eclipse of Historicism

As shown in our previous lecture, second- and third-century writers like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus interpreted Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 much as Uriah Smith did in the nineteenth century, more than one and a half thousand years later.

This method is known as Historicism.

It interprets prophecy by comparing the Bible's predictions with the events of history, point by point. Historicism is therefore also called the *Continuistic School*. This is how it is validated.

#### 1. **Historicism predominated during three periods of Christianity.**

1.1 *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic* times, from first to about early fourth century. This included men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus.

1.2 *The Protestant Reformation* for a few hundred years from before Martin Luther until early nineteenth century.

1.3 Among *Millerites* and present-day *Seventh-day Adventists*.

#### 2. **Most expositors gave up Historicism, twice:**

From about the fourth century and since the nineteenth century. Then a preference developed for other schools: Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism. What are these?

**2.1 Preterism** teaches that the Antichrist was some specific person of very long ago, such as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Hellenistic king who persecuted the Jews and profaned their temple in pre-Christian times, or Roman Emperors like Nero (37-68) and Domitian (51-96)—but not the papacy.

**2.2 Futurism** also rejects the idea that the Antichrist has anything to do with the pope. Supposedly he will appear just

before the Second Coming and the Jewish temple will be rebuilt at Jerusalem. In our time, this view, which originated in Catholic eschatology but became popular among many Protestants, is known as Dispensationalism.

**2.3 Idealism** does not interpret Bible prophecy in relation to historical events but mostly as allegorical symbols. It likewise rejects the idea that the Antichrist is the papacy.

These three schools have one thing in common: they all undermine the Historicist view, still held by Seventh-day Adventists. They all deny that the Antichrist is the papacy.

This is strange, since only Historicism can be perfectly validated, that is, *proven* through comparisons of Bible prophecy with what actually happened, without twisting facts in funny ways.

Why, then, in spite of this, have interpreters abandoned Historicism, preferring Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism? The answer to this question is to be found in what the apostle Peter wrote about prophecy:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private *interpretation*. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Pet. 1:19-21 (emphasis added).

### **3. Dependable prophecy is given only under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.**

But also notice that word *interpretation*.

### **4. Understanding prophecy also requires heavenly guidance.**

In both early Christian times and the nineteenth century, theologians turned away from truth to error. To God the Holy Spirit this is very offensive, so he deprives such people of the ability to correctly interpret prophecy.

**5. In the time of Hippolytus, the Great Apostasy was already at work.**

Therefore, Christian religious writers lost the ability to understand prophecy correctly.

Historicism was eclipsed two times, during the Catholic Middle Ages and in the nineteenth century, among Protestants.

This lecture deals with the first eclipse, in the Middle Ages.

We look again look at the statue of Daniel 2 as Nebuchadnezzar saw it:



Let us now focus on the last part: the stone. What does it symbolize?

Daniel 2:44 says it will be an everlasting, indestructible kingdom established by God himself.

According to Hippolytus and other Historicists, including modern Seventh-day Adventists, the stone represents the kingdom of Christ, beginning with his Second Coming.

This was shown in the previous lecture.

But Catholic scholars after Hippolytus taught that it symbolized the Roman Church.

Let us compare these two views:



*The Stone*  
**Christ the king**

*The Stone*  
**Catholic Church**

Why did the Roman Church adopt this view?

It claims that Peter, who it teaches was the first pope, is the rock on which the Lord Jesus built his Church.

If you go to Rome, you can see this for yourself. Inscribed within the rotunda of St. Peter's at the Vatican are the words from Matt. 16:18: "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam" (Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church). According to the doctrine of apostolic succession, every pope is like a reincarnation of that apostle.

This idea links together all the popes from century to century.

But what does the Bible say? The apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, declared that the Church was “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

Peter himself, allegedly the first pope, quoting the Old Testament, put it this way: “Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on *him* shall not be confounded” (1 Peter 2:6, emphasis added).

His source, Isaiah 28:16, is even stronger: “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.”

We now look at *The New American Bible* (2000), a Catholic version with the imprimatur of James A. Hickey, Archbishop of Washington in 1986 and previously endorsed by Pope Paul VI on 18 September 1970.<sup>1</sup>

When they read the Scriptures, members of the Roman Church are required to understand them in accordance with notes that Catholic Bibles also contain. This is what *The New American Bible* says about Nebuchadnezzar’s image:

“The four successive kingdoms in this apocalyptic perspective are the Babylonian (gold), the Median (silver), the Persian (bronze), and the Hellenistic (iron). The last, after Alexander’s death, was divided among his generals (vv 41f). The two resulting kingdoms, which most affected the Jews, were the dynasty of the Ptolemies in Egypt and that of the Seleucids in Syria, who tried in vain, by war and through intermarriage, to restore the unity of Alexander’s empire (v 43). The stone hewn from the mountain is the messianic kingdom awaited by the Jews (vv 44f).”

For Catholics like other Christians, “the messianic kingdom” can refer only to that of Jesus, our Lord.

Here is a graphic portrayal of what is meant by these notes on Daniel 2:36-45, where Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is explained:

## Catholic Interpretation

*Head of gold*  
Babylonia

*Chest and arms of silver*  
Median Empire

*Belly and thighs of bronze*  
Persian Empire

*Legs of iron*  
Two Hellenistic Kingdoms

*Feet and toes of iron and clay*  
Egypt and Syria



*The Stone*  
**Catholic Church**

The basis for this view was especially created by Augustine of Hippo, (St. Augustine), 354-430. He lived about two hundred years after Hippolytus. Augustine believed the stone which struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay represented not Christ's Second Coming but his *first* Coming, when he set up his kingdom as personified by Catholicism.<sup>2</sup>

Fourteen hundred years later, the American Catholic Bible teaches the same idea.

Let us therefore see how it interprets the feet and toes of iron and clay? We first read its translation of Daniel 2:41-43:

“The feet and toes you saw, partly of potter's tile and partly of iron, mean that it shall be a divided kingdom, but yet have some of the hardness of iron. As you saw the iron mixed with clay tile, and the toes partly iron and partly tile, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. The iron mixed with clay tile means that they shall seal their alliances by intermarriage, but they shall not stay united, any more than iron mixes with clay.”

The note says that the rulers of Hellenistic Egypt and Syria “tried in vain, by war and through intermarriage, to restore the unity of Alexander’s empire.”

But they were not really trying to reunite that vast empire which stretched from Greece to India and included all of Persia. Further, there is no attempt to explain in what sense Hellenistic Egypt and Syria were “partly strong and partly fragile.”

But explaining the stone as the Church of Rome is futile. Why?

Because, according to this Catholic Bible, “In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed” (vs. 44). Which kings/kingdoms? Supposedly Hellenistic Syria and Hellenistic Egypt. But both were conquered by the Roman Empire before the time of Christ.

The Catholic Interpretation depicted by the image shown above suggests that the Roman Church originated in pre-Christian times!

That is absurd, *historically*. It also runs into much trouble when compared with the symbols of Daniel 7.

Remember that in Lecture I we cited the following passage from Hippolytus, (c. 170-235), a pre-Nicene prophetic expositor:

“The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander’s time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

The notes of the Catholic Bible acknowledge that the beast symbols in Daniel 7 correlate with the symbols in Daniel 2. On verses 4-6, the comments are:

“The representation of the Babylonian empire as a winged lion, a common motif in Babylonian art, symbolizes the bestial power hostile to God. The two wings that are plucked represent Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. On two feet like a man . . . a human mind contrasts with what is said in Dn 4, 13, 30. A bear represents the Median Empire, its three tusks symbolizing its destructive nature . . . A leopard used to symbolize the swiftness with which Cyrus the Persian established his kingdom. Four heads corresponding to the four Persian kings of Dn 11, 2.”

The note in the Catholic Bible on the fourth beast of Daniel 7 identifies it with the empire established by Alexander the Great. This, it says, “was different from all the others in that it was Western rather than Oriental in inspiration. The ten horns represent the kings of the Seleucid dynasty, the only part of the Hellenistic empire that concerned the author. The little horn is Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), the worst of the Seleucid kings, who usurped the throne.”

This is a Preterist explanation, which also strangely seems to imply that the Roman Church originated before the time of Christ. It contrasts strongly with the Historicism of men like Hippolytus eighteen centuries ago and Seventh-day Adventists like Uriah Smith.

In Lecture I, we saw a pictorial representation of the four beasts in Daniel 7. Below them, we read:

<b>A lion with eagle wings</b>	<b>A bear with three ribs between its teeth</b>	<b>A leopard with four wings of a bird and four heads</b>	<b>A beast with iron teeth, bronze claws, and ten horns; then another little horn</b>
<i>Babilonia</i> (605–539 BC)	<i>Medo-Persia</i> (539–331 BC)	<i>The Greeks</i> (331–168 BC)	<i>Rome and Europe</i> (168 BC–)



short-lived empire, which included Greece and the entire Persian Empire. After his death, the unity of the Greeks disappeared, so they are aptly symbolized by four heads on the leopard beast, as interpreted by Hippolytus and Uriah Smith. But it is a weak and false opinion that in the book of Daniel the Lord was concentrating on only two Hellenistic kingdoms.

In Daniel 7, the heavenly being who explained the vision of the four beasts emphasized their universality: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth” (vs. 17). Also: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth” (vs. 23). The focus is definitely not just on two Hellenistic kingdoms.

As for the notorious Little Horn which grows into a huge horn, the Bible first says it would “come up among” the ten horns (vs. 8), but as the heavenly being said to Daniel it would truly “arise after them” (vs. 24). This cannot be Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, a ruler of passing and minor interest, except for the Jews, who had to fight bitterly to throw off his yoke.

Daniel 2 and 7 provide a prophetic key to unlock the meaning of the Apocalypse. So now, for our comparisons, we jump over more than six hundred years and apply it to Revelation 13.