

The Great BEAST of Daniel 7

(The Problem was with the Bear!)

Almost Without Exception, Bible Commentaries Identify the Four Beasts of Daniel 7 as being a Reiteration of those in Daniel 2. The True Identity of those in Daniel 7 are Even More Revealing, When Correctly Understood!

© Rich Traver, 81520-1411, 12-27-04 [24] www.goldensheaves.org

Few books of the Bible are as incredibly specific in their portrayal of future events, especially those involving world affairs. Bible students of nearly all persuasions are generally familiar with Daniel's God-given interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, that from his time onward, there would be four world ruling Empires, extending down to the end-time. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greco-Macedonia and Rome, with the latter experiencing seven successive restorations.

Daniel was given understanding of the specific meaning of the King's dream in Daniel 2. But in his own night vision of chapter 7, Daniel did NOT understand, and remained alarmed of its facts. If, in fact, these two were two views of the same historical progression, one would think Daniel would be the first to realize it. He didn't! Daniel remained profoundly troubled with what he'd seen, even after having it explained to him, angelically. (7:28) This strongly suggests we are **not** looking at two visions relating the same exact scenario.

However, by the ten horns on the seventh head references, we can see that these two lead to the same end summation, but from different prophetic paths. (Compare Daniel 7:19-24 to Revelation 13:1)

Daniel's vision came 60 years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel 2 is oriented from the beginning, Daniel's personal dream is end-time oriented, showing those final world empires dominating the world scene leading up to the very end. The basic picture in Daniel 7 is a detailed exposé of the ten toes era in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2.

Daniel's vision (v.19) incorporates certain aspects of Daniel 2's 3rd and 4th beasts: Iron teeth of Rome, (a brutal governmental regime) and brass claws of Greece, (a world influencing culture). (Even our modern western society exhibits Greco-Roman

attributes. The Roman influence: Government and Religion; the Greek influence: Democratic tendencies and intellectual and philosophical orientation.)

No specific scripture establishes the certainty of the four empires of Daniel 2 corresponding to the four beasts of Daniel 7, though the 'ten horns' on the Beast of Daniel 7 are the same as in Revelation 13. It is this final 'restoration' that evokes the most fascination, the one having 'ten horns', which a few correctly recognize as corresponding to those 'ten toes' on the feet of the Great Image in Daniel 2.

As a side note, we should notice that the prophetic progression in Daniel 2 is from the top down, with the ten toes being presented last. In Daniel 7, it focuses on the 'ten horns', which represent the 'ten crowns' (kingships), which surrender their national sovereignties to form the final (seventh) restoration of Rome, which is the fourth beast of Daniel 2.

What has escaped the notice of most scholars is the fact that in Daniel 2, the four world empires are historically successive, where in Daniel 7, the three empires and their ten emergent kings are contemporaries of one another, who deliberately and willingly co-operate to meld into and thus create the final Fourth Beast! This is essential to understand what's being presented to us in Daniel chapter 7.

As a further side-note, we see the three beasts in Daniel 7 mentioned in the correct order of their formation, where the reiteration or reflection in Revelation 13 lists the same entities in retrospect. The most recent empire first, the oldest last. A reverse order, viewed from the modern perspective.

Successors or Contemporaries?

What has complicated our understanding of these incredibly explicit prophesies is the premise that

the 'beasts' in Daniel 7 are sequential, as they are in chapter 2, and that the ten kings (horns) are also sequential, when they are not! Though the seven heads comprising the fourth stage of Nebuchadnezzar's Image **are** sequential, these ten kings on the seventh head are **not** sequential. If the ten kings were sequential, as some explanations pose, with the first being gone before the second came to power, and the second becoming passé before the third, etc, etc, then HOW could these ten co-operate to enhance the Great BEAST of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13? How could they come to HATE the BEAST and the Great WHORE at the time of the end, and work God's WILL and DESTROY both it and her, just as Christ returns? Obviously, these ten kings must be viable contemporary powers at the end-time! Further, we see these ten existing for a 'season and a time' **after** the demise of the BEAST! (Daniel 7:12) To do that, they must exist concurrently!

We see three of the ten 'suppressed' in some manner only after the 'Harlot' arises to a position of influence upon the Beast, yet we see the ten ultimately surviving her demise. (Rev. 17:16)

How could the 'little horn' arising after the ten kings become the 'eighth' after she suppresses three, if the ten were successive. If each faded into history in succession, why wouldn't she remain the 'eleventh' for all time, rather than move into 'eighth' position once ten are reduced to seven?

The 'toes' (it doesn't say ten toes) on the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's dream Image are side by side, not one in line after the other. All of these considerations illustrate the fact that the ten in each representation are contemporaries, not successors! So then, under any explanation that requires the three beasts or the ten kings be successive, we are led away from their ultimate identifications.

Ten Toes / Ten Kings

One thing the Image in Daniel 2 has in common with the vision in Daniel 7 is these 'ten'. The ten 'toes' of Daniel 2 are the ten 'horns' (kings) of Daniel 7. This detail is a clue to the point of these two different narratives. That BOTH are leading up to the ultimate end-time BEAST Power, but from different points of view. Daniel 2 represents

the entire stripe of history from Daniel's time to the present. The four consecutive or successive world empires: Babylon, Persia, Greece then Rome. Daniel 7's exposé focuses on those world powers existing at the time of the end, which consensually merge into and form the seventh head of the fourth world empire of the Daniel 2 image. The seventh head of the Roman Empire, which Daniel 7:7 alludes to as having a Greco-Roman characteristic! The God-given interpretation in Daniel 2:44 absolutely confirms the ten toes / ten kings correlation!

Three Plus One is not Always Four!

It is convenient to surmise that the four image components in Daniel 2 are the same four as we see in Daniel 7. Some deduce, if there are four in one place and four in the other, then the first four must be the identical four we see in the second narrative. Only, these 'four' in Daniel 7 are three beasts which merge to become the fourth! This is **not** the pattern or picture we see in Daniel 2. That is especially important to notice. Convenient to the deduction that they are the same is the component number four in the third beast of Daniel 7 **and** the four divisions of the third stage of the Daniel 2 image. Despite this similarity, Greece is not the only empire that involved the number four. We should not let this oblique detail obscure the obvious, that being, that one narrative describes a consecutive series of empires, while the other describes a contemporary set of three empires. Babylon, Persia and Greece did **not** merge to become Rome! The Lion, Bear and Leopard of Daniel 7 DO merge to become the seventh and final head of the restored Holy Roman Empire, that is to be destroyed at Christ's Second Coming!

Broad View / Narrow View

The key to understanding the point of these two descriptive narratives is that the Daniel 2 image represents the long course of history from Babylon to the present time, while the narrative of Daniel 7 amplifies the picture of the final world empires that exist on earth in these last days! Daniel 7 shows us the three contemporary powers existing at the end-time, and their participation in forming the final BEAST of mankind's last autonomous government and religious expression.

It will not be a pleasant time, especially for God's True Saints, though both Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 repeatedly emphasize the Christian Hope!

The Problem Was the Bear

Through most of the twentieth century, a situation existed that caused people to **dismiss** the obvious. After all, how could 'the Bear' that we know ever become a component in this nationalistic/religious end-time BEAST? The 'Bear' we in the twentieth century knew was the old Soviet Union. That bear, being reclusive, totalitarian and deliberately atheistic would not fit into the scene as we would have conceived it! At least, not since 1917 through to the early 1990's. Then, the unbelievable happened. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics collapsed!

Daniel 7 reveals three beasts. These three are seen as **combining** themselves, involving their ten kings for legitimacy, into an Ultimate Super BEAST, which would stand, unchallengeable, and trample on the rest of the world. These three are characterized symbolically by a **lion**, a **bear** and a **leopard**. Daniel saw these vividly in vision. He was given a glimpse into the future world scene, the end-time, which we recognize as being the world of our day. Revelation 13 and 17 adds more to the picture, offering a review of the same basic situation.

Who are these beasts? What powers do they represent? Much of what Daniel wrote was kept concealed until the end. Does that mean we today can and should understand them? If these characterizations represent modern nations, shouldn't we be able to match them with their modern counterparts?

If we were to ask ourselves, who are the major powers, the empires of the modern era, which ones would we name? Who dominated the world as we know it in, say, the last century? The list would be fairly short. Likely, we would include the United States, Britain, Russia, Germany and Japan. But the prophecy isn't intended to include **all** nations of importance, only those who would coalesce into the Ultimate BEAST. That would suggest a certain contiguity and commonality, a single race, a compatible cultures and a single creed. That would exclude the first and the last of these 'nominations'.

We always identified Germany as being the major entity within the BEAST Power, we just couldn't identify her cohorts with certainty.

In fact, there is a commonality in the middle three, that might not be so apparent to someone who grew up in the late twentieth century. The royal families of Germany and Russia (not the Soviet Union) were, prior to World War I, children of Queen Victoria of Britain! Racially, these peoples are of similar stock. The Saxons of eastern Europe, particularly middle Europe: (Germany), who a millennium earlier had pressed into Britain, as well as the 'White Russians', were of similar racial stock.

Not only that, but each of these nations were also "Empires": The British Empire, the Russian Empire and the German Empire. These came into prominence in that order. Not entirely coincidentally, these were also represented by the **Lion**, the **Bear** and the **Panther**.¹ What is particularly fascinating is the fact that Daniel saw these visual representations in the order of their ascent. John did also, but in reverse order.

The Standing Lion

First, we're introduced to a Lion, one that had 'eagles wings' plucked off of it. One that was at some point in time given the heart of a man.² It is noteworthy that the most famous of England's early kings was Richard the Lion-Hearted. This characteristic was apparently later overturned. In other words, it became much more humanitarian, concerned with human rights, bequeathing that new characteristic to its colonies. The Bill of Rights of the U.S. being one notable example, having its ultimate origin in the Magna Charta of 1215.

Prominent in British heraldry is the lion, not only the lion, but a *standing* lion. The wings of an eagle are presented as having been 'plucked' off, not without force. The eagles wings seem to have disappeared from British heraldry with Elizabeth I. It was under James I (of Scotland) that the Puritans sailed for America, being fully 'plucked off' in 1776. It was also under James I that we got the King James Bible, further 'changing the heart' of this Empire.

¹ Panthers, Jaguars and Cougars are all Leopards. What Daniel named a Leopard, we today might call a Panther.

² "*The first was like a lion, and had eagles wings: I beheld til the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.*" Daniel 7:4

If the eagle's wings being removed represents the Americans gaining their independence, and if the Magna Charta suggests the point in time when England became changed in character, then the British Empire would be the prime candidate for being the "**Standing Lion**". JF&B Commentary on this passage says, 'standing' suggests an awareness of a higher destiny!

The Leaning Bear

The **second** of Daniel's empires resembled a Bear.³ A bear that stood up, but on one side, having three ribs in its mouth, an early representation of its nature, a devourer of much flesh. (*'They'* said, 'Arise, devour much flesh', not God!) What nation ever devoured more flesh than did Russia? Even before the Stalin era, under whom some 50 million died, Russia was known for being particularly brutal to its own peoples.⁴ No nation in history ever murdered so many of its own peoples! The leaning to one side may refer to being 'leftist' in its political stance. Of course, in today's world, Russia is represented as being "the Bear"! Even secular Russian poets and historians, unaware of this prophecy, lamented the fact of their nation's lethal brutality upon even its own peoples.⁵ Russia has been ruled by the cruelest tyrants the world has ever known!

One of its early acts was to 'devour' three small nations on its western side: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Another possible explanation of this could be the Russian 'annexation' of three narrow strips (ribs) of land on its left side from Poland under Catherine the Great, in 1772, 1793 and 1795.

³ "And behold another beast, a **second, like to a bear**, and it **raised up itself on one side**, and it had **three ribs in the mouth** of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, **Arise, devour much flesh.**" Daniel 7:5

⁴ "As many as 100 million died under Communist tyrannies around the world since 1917", according to Prime Minister Victor Orban of Hungary. (Parade Magazine, 3/3/02)

⁵ In a poem in 1963, Yevgeny Yevtushenko wrote of his homeland: "She was christened in childhood with a lash, torn to pieces, scorched, Her soul was trampled by the feet, inflicting blow upon blow, of Pechenegs, Varangians, Tartars, and our own people—much more terrible than the Tartars." 19th century revolutionary, Alexander Herzen, wrote of Catherine the Great's Winter Palace: "Like a ship floating on the surface, it had no real connection with the inhabitants of the ocean, beyond that of eating them." (Nat .Geographic, 9/98)

We could not have explicitly understood or even have conceived of the identities of one of these three end-time component empires, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was logical that the religious world saw it the way they did previously. But world conditions call for a review of the matter, now that we have a better picture, on account of these recent developments. We now see through a glass much less darkly!

The Leopard.

The **third** and final "Empire" of the twentieth century is the German Empire. It's interesting that Hitler's Germany was known as the 'Third Reich'! Daniel saw an Empire that he characterized as a Leopard. If it were all black, we'd know it as a "**Panther**". By this time, we'd have to be struck by the apparent co-incidence at least, that Germany often symbolically used leopard-type cats,⁶ those exhibiting stealth, speed and one likely to pounce suddenly from above.⁷ This empire's military was well known for its *Panzer* divisions. A Panther (of the same specie as the leopard) is an especially predatory cat, but less powerful than a lion. Today's latest German tank is called the "**Leopard**".

But it's the four wings and four heads that are particularly curious. If we apply the 'four heads' consistently with Daniel's imagery, of a head being a restoration to power, then we see an Empire that faded and more than once was restored to power in its history. Interesting that four of the 'restorations' of the Holy Roman Empire were based in the territory that is today's Germany: Charlemagne, Otto I, the Hapsburgs and Hitler.

But the 'four wings' are also a visually notable characteristic. This area of central Europe is well known in history as displaying the iron cross, or a later derivative, formed of four radiating bent 'winged-shaped' blades, the swastika! The symbol of this empire at her zenith of power, that was struck a seeming final death blow in 1945.⁸

⁶ Ancient Aryan territories referred to leopards as 'panthers'!

⁷ "After this I beheld, and lo **another, like a leopard**, which had upon the back of it **four wings** of a fowl; the beast had also **four heads**; and dominion was given to it." Daniel 7:7

⁸ "And I saw **one of his heads as it were wounded to death**; and his **deadly wound was healed**: and **all the world wondered after the beast.**" Revelation 13:3

How would Daniel describe one of these symbols? Now, this recurrence of the number four causes some to associate this vision with Alexander the Great, (the third segment of Nebuchadnezzar's Great Image) whose empire was divided among his four generals, following his untimely death. But we ought to also remember that Germany was divided among the four conquering nations in 1945: Russia, the United States, Britain and France. Berlin had its four sectors. Germany was originally formed of four major Germanic tribes: Angles, Saxons, Alemans and Franks. Before the turn of the century, as it was approaching Empire status, there were four prominent German states: Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Wurttemberg. These possibilities in addition to the four 'restorations' mentioned two paragraphs above, show Alexander did not have an exclusive on the association with the number four.

Three Modern Empires

Do these three Empires of Daniel's vision, that he, by the way, **did not** understand the meaning of (though he **did** understand Nebuchadnezzar's dream), possibly fit this picture?

Here we have identified the three Empires, sharing a similar ethnicity and culture, sharing a common religious persuasion, sharing, at least in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, members of the same royal family. Why would it be preposterous to suggest that these three, under extreme duress of a chaotic, terrorized, war-ravaged and economically-threatened world, would see political unity, under the auspices of the Church of Rome, as being a prudent survival arrangement? Especially in a world where that 'eagles wings' nation is unable to respond to its own defense challenges, possibly accounting to its dire economic situation.

But, so long as the Bear remained locked in atheistic totalitarian state, this was inconceivable to us.

The problem was with the Bear!

Few are aware that Russia, prior to the revolution, regarded itself as the continuation of the religious tradition of the eastern Roman Empire: Byzantium. The Russian Tsar, ('Caesar', a title first used in Russia under Ivan III) originally laid claim as representing the eastern 'leg' of the Roman Empire. Moscow was the religious successor to Byzantium

(Constantinople) after its fall. The Russian Orthodox Church is effectively Greek Orthodox, thus explaining the widespread Byzantine character in its iconography and architecture.


A Most Astounding Vision.

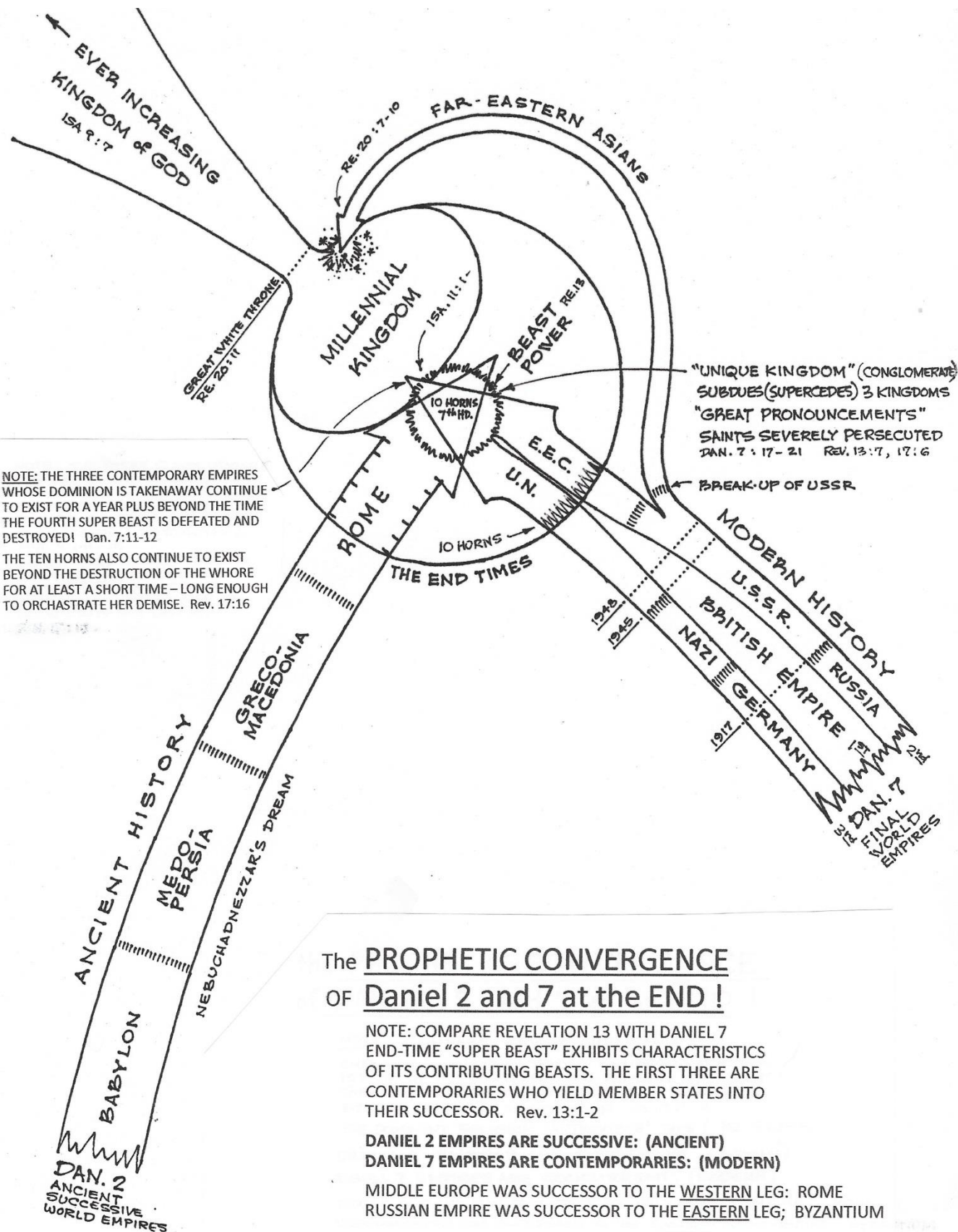
The details in Daniel's writings, especially those of chapter 2 and chapters 8 and 11, are so intricately specific, that scholars have insisted that they had to have been written contemporaneously with the events as they happened, or later. Here in chapter 7, we have a vision, that Daniel didn't understand, and that the world hasn't understood until this generation, that identifies the three major world Empires of the twentieth century. Not only these, specific three, but that there would be another world power, represented by 'eagles wings', and correctly identifying which European Empire it would be 'plucked' from!!

Did Daniel, 2500 years in advance, see the three world Empires that would come into prominence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even seeing and describing their heraldry or common symbolic representations, seeing in advance their national characteristics, their flaws and virtues? Not only that, but that there would be among these three a continuing behind-the-scenes Religious Power, who would be an influence in each of the seven 'heads' of the described Holy Roman restorations.

Now, here's the ultimate question: Will these three, with their kings, (whether literal kings or heads of state) merge into one 'Super State' in the end-time? This will be the ultimate PROOF.

Even if not, it remains astounding that the elder statesman / prophet Daniel, the second man in the most powerful nation of his day, in Babylon, would look 2500 years into the future and describe three end-time world powers, and only three, yet alluding to two others, one externally involved and one religiously involved with these three, that just happen to correspond to the Empires that dominated our world in this century. Three Empires that also happened to share the same royal lineage!

Explain this, please! We have something very profound to ponder. The following **illustrations** present the scriptures of these three chapters, with pertinent comments. 



The PROPHETIC CONVERGENCE OF Daniel 2 and 7 at the END !

NOTE: COMPARE REVELATION 13 WITH DANIEL 7
END-TIME "SUPER BEAST" EXHIBITS CHARACTERISTICS
OF ITS CONTRIBUTING BEASTS. THE FIRST THREE ARE
CONTEMPORARIES WHO YIELD MEMBER STATES INTO
THEIR SUCCESSOR. Rev. 13:1-2

DANIEL 2 EMPIRES ARE SUCCESSIVE: (ANCIENT)
DANIEL 7 EMPIRES ARE CONTEMPORARIES: (MODERN)

MIDDLE EUROPE WAS SUCCESSOR TO THE WESTERN LEG: ROME
RUSSIAN EMPIRE WAS SUCCESSOR TO THE EASTERN LEG; BYZANTIUM

R.T. 2.9.02



Today, Germany has corrected itself from the path of tyranny, and now fights along side former enemies Britain and the US in the world's most powerful military alliance: NATO, also known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Tanks like this **Leopard 2** were originally built to counter Russian attack if the Cold War went hot in Eastern Europe. In the end the West won without conflict. The wall came down and the Soviet Union dissolved into its former states like the Ukraine, Georgia, Russia, etc.

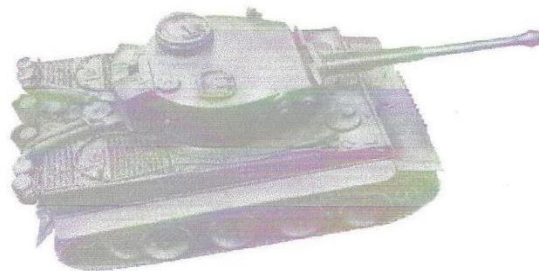
In All Fairness:

To those of us who do not speak German, it should be pointed out that the word: 'PANZER' itself does not mean 'Panther', despite apparent similarity. According to an English / German dictionary, the word means 'Armor'. However, the obvious affinity of German military people for the symbolism of the predatory cat is abundantly evident in their choice of names for other tank designs. Germany did have a tank production model bearing the name "PANTHER", with the most lethal tank model of World War II being the "TIGER" and the next generation, designed in the 1940's, but not put into production until the Cold War era, called the "LEOPARD". (Apparently, it was not the right time for the 'Leopard'.) Still, the connection is rather hard to ignore. What other empire exhibited this characteristic in its military iconography? Look for future 'Leopard' elements, as opposed to 'Panzer Divisions', to break any connection with the negative association that carries with the former name.

Interestingly, Daniel related that name associated with the Post-War production model, the

premier European tank, in vogue into the pre-tribulation era. Daniel's description of the characteristic of the Beast Power, that of 'worshipping the god of forces' (Dan. 11:37-38) reveals the nominal identifying component contributed by this Third Empire to arise.

Panzerkampfwagen VI Tiger Ausf. E



**"Wir werden Sieger - durch unsren Tiger"
(We will be victorious - thanks to our
Tigers)**

The development of one of the most famous tanks of World War II started in 1937, and first massive **Tiger I** heavy tank, emerged in July of 1942. From 1937 to mid 1941, Henschel produced designs and prototypes of various medium and heavy tanks such as DW (Durchbruchwagen) I and II, VK 3001, VK3601 and VK 6501. At the same, Dr.Porsche developed his VK 3001 **LEOPARD** medium tank. None of those tanks entered production but provided both companies with valuable experience in tank design and production, which came to be useful in working on the Tiger heavy tank.

Tiger I heavy tank originally received the designation of Panzerkampfwagen VI H (8.8 cm) Ausf H1 - Sd.Kfz.182, but then in March of 1943, was redesignated to Panzerkampfwagen Tiger (8.8 cm L/56) Ausf E - Sd.Kfz.181. It was commonly referred to as Tiger, Tiger I and PzKpfw VI. Officially there was only one type of Tiger tank produced, but during the duration of production, improvements were carried on. Based on their modifications, Tigers can be divided into three main production models - early, mid and late (final). Late production Tigers differed slightly from early models and shared number of common parts (mechanical) with **Panther** and **King Tiger** in order to simplify the production. Also many older Tigers being rebuilt were fitted with newer components. (from the internet)

Hungary Faces Its Brutal Past



Viktor Orban, who recently opened a museum of misery.

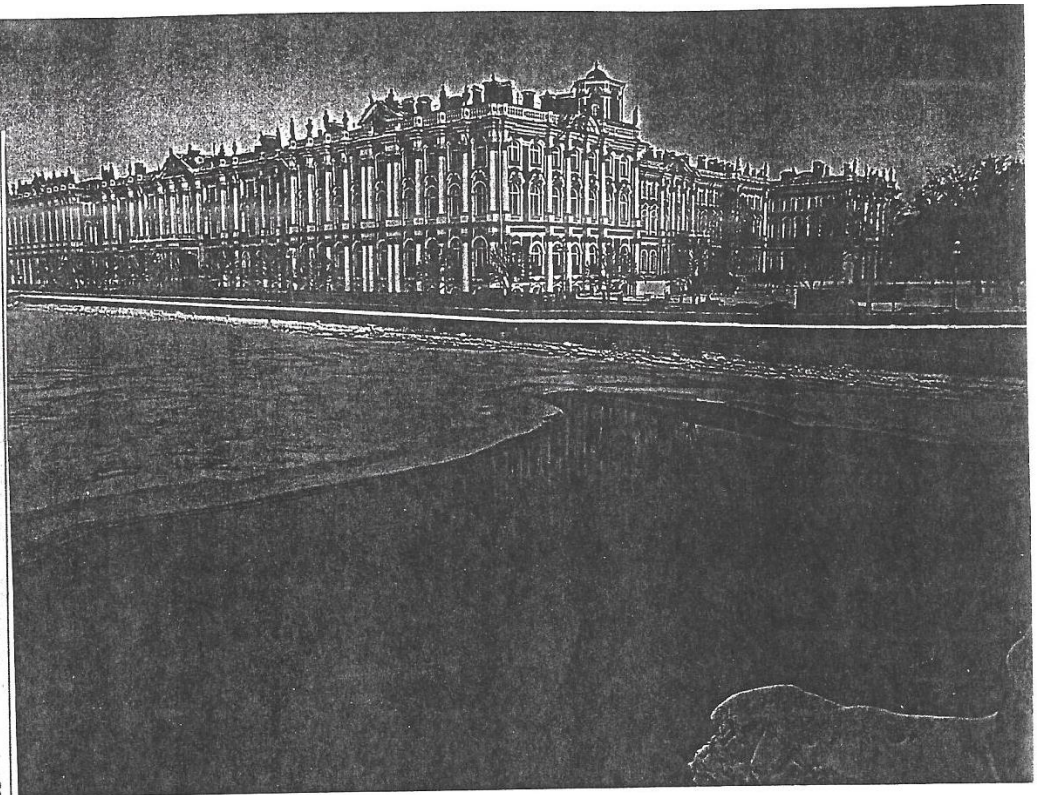
Coming to terms with the worst abuses of the Nazis and the Communists is a big challenge for Eastern Europe. Hungary is now putting this ugly past on display.

Last month in Budapest, Prime Minister Viktor Orban unveiled the House of Terror, a new national museum that's housed in the former headquarters of the Gestapo and later the Communist secret police. Visitors will see the interrogation center, the prison and torture chambers used both by the Nazis and by Hungary's old totalitarian government.

"It's been documented that as many as 100 million died under Communist tyrannies around the world since 1917," says Orban. "The House of Terror is a tribute to all those who suffered."

Budapest's new House of Terror is a tribute to all those tortured by the Nazis or the Communist police.

PARADE 3/3/02



From the cold grandeur of the Winter Palace, Catherine oversaw the expansion of her empire through wars with the Ottoman Empire and seizures of Polish land. To 19th-century revolutionary Alexander Herzen the palace perfectly symbolized the Russian state: "Like a ship floating on the surface, it had no real connection with the inhabitants of the ocean, beyond that of eating them."



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SEPT, 1998

DAN
7:5



The BEAR having three ribs in its mouth, which is described also as “devouring much flesh” (including its own peoples on a massive scale) fully meets the description of Daniel 7. On two occasions **Russia** “annexed” three ribs of territory on its western flanks: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the early 1900’s.

Prior to that, it annexed three narrow strips of land (see map above) during the reign of Catherine the Great in the late 1700’s.

Those who correlate this beast with ancient Medo-Persia (the second segment of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image) have little of substance to offer in support of such association. Persia was only slightly “inferior” to Babylon (the head of gold) and nowhere comparable to the murders and brutality of Imperial Rome.

A LONG AND VIOLENT HISTORY

*She was christened in childhood with a lash,
torn to pieces,
scorched.*

*Her soul was trampled by the feet,
inflicting blow upon blow,
of Pechenegs,
Varangians,
Tartars,
and our own people—
much more terrible than the Tartars.*

In these few lines from a poem published in 1963, Yevgeny Yevtushenko conveyed the history of Russia and, by extension, the history of the Soviet Union. A land unprotected by natural barriers, it has suffered invasion after invasion—from the east by Pechenegs, Tartars, Khazars and countless others, from the north and west by Varangians, Swedes, Lithuanians, Poles, French and Germans. It has been oppressed by its own rulers, who have included some of the cruellest tyrants the world has known. Such a history explains why the Russian people seem so passionately possessive of their land, so distrustful of foreigners, so submissive to authoritarian rule. “Russia’s endurance became famous,” wrote Yevtushenko. “She did endure.”

The story begins in about 1,000 B.C. with the Cimmerians, farmers of the plains north of the Black Sea. Around 700 B.C., they were overrun by the first Asiatic horsemen, the Scythians, another long-vanished people, who left behind in burial mounds a fortune in

golden ornaments—diadems, necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings—that today are national treasures.

The Scythians in turn yielded to a new group of Asiatic nomads, the Sarmatians, and these were followed by the Goths and then the Huns; under their leader, Attila, the Huns went on to terrorize much of Europe, rampaging as far to the west as Orléans, where they were at last defeated by Visigoths and Gallo-Romans in 451 A.D. In the wake of the Huns came the Avars and then the Khazars.

The Khazars were traders, and among the peoples they dealt with were the Slavs, a group of slash-and-burn farmers and fur trappers living in the forested area of present-day Kiev, Novgorod and Moscow. Little is known of their earlier history. Related to other Slavic peoples of Central Europe, these Eastern Slavs waited out the Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Avars and other conquerors to become the enduring Russians, a name they acquired in a roundabout fashion during the ninth and 10th centuries.

The name was a Norse gift. Scandinavian traders, the Varangians, using the inland waterways of the Volkov and Dnieper Rivers to reach the rich market of Byzantium, passed right through the Slavic heartland. In time, these Norsemen, one group of whom are believed to have been called the Rus, established trading posts in the Slavs’ territory. Two of the trading posts,

