

Manna for Your Soul

The Grecian Leopard

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

“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 7:6**

Looking at the Word:

As the winds continued to rage, Daniel saw the third of four dream creatures emerge from the storm-tossed sea. From Daniel 7:17 we know each animal on parade represented a king and his kingdom. They do not rule simultaneously. Instead, each kingdom would be given world dominance in the same sequential order as their emergence from the sea. It is significant to note that even when a kingdom is at the height of its preeminence, the balance of power remains in flux in the community of nations; the winds continue to blow and the sea continues to churn in preparation for the next dominating power.

- **The Leopard with Four Wings:** The third animal-nation to emerge from the sea had the body of a leopard but there were also four wings attached to its back. Leopards still live in some regions of Israel and Jordan today. During Bible times they were a constant threat to the herds and flocks of Israel. They were also used by the Lord as a specter of His judgment against the nation (Hosea 13:7). The leopard had a reputation in antiquity for its cunning, ferocity, and speed of attack (Jeremiah 5:6; Habakkuk 1:8). Augmenting this idea of speed was the four wings attached to the back of the leopard. That there were four wings may be an allusion to the four points of a compass picturing Alexander’s ability to move quickly in any chosen direction. It should be noted that the wings of the leopard were not “eagle’s wings” like the winged-lion. However, what the winged-leopard lacked in grandeur was more than compensated by its greater speed. Alexander’s army may not have conquered with as much royal glory as Nebuchadnezzar’s army—but in terms of speed the Greeks far surpassed anything the world had ever seen. Kelly writes, “If ever there was a case in which impetuous courage in pursuing great designs and speed in achieving a succession of conquests were united, we find it in the history of Alexander the Great” (Lectures on the Book of Daniel, page 122). In 334 BC Alexander led an army of 40,000 soldiers across the Hellespont into Asia Minor on his quest for glory. In less than ten years Alexander marched his army more than 10,000 miles conquering every army he ever faced and acquiring more territory than any man had before him. (map file is in the public domain)



- **The Leopard with Four Heads:** Daniel also noted that the leopard had four heads. Most Bible students understand the four heads (kings) as a reference to the division of Alexander’s empire into four rival territorial states following his death on June 11 or 10, 323 BC. After a transitional period of 20 years the empire was divided among his generals as follows: 1) Cassander ruled Macedonia and Greece; 2) Lysimachus ruled Thrace and Bithynia; 3) Seleucus ruled Syria, Babylonia, and Persia; and 4) Ptolemy ruled Egypt, Arabia, and Palestine.

Application and Meditation:

Ecclesiastes 5:15-16 “As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?” Following his death Alexander’s body was taken to Alexandria where it was buried. His son was murdered and his kingdom divided as a spoil of war. Whose kingdom are you building? Where is your treasure being stored? Where is your heart? When you die will you receive eternal reward for what you’ve done or will it all be blown away by the sands of time? Will it be lost in the fires of the Bema seat? Only what is done for Christ and by His enabling grace will last. © Mike Davidson