

4 Beasts DANIEL 7



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In Daniel, chapter seven, God gives to Daniel a long view of the future (mostly history to us) of the powers that would war against the church of God. God loves His people and gives them advance warning of what is to come. That way we can know that God is God and that He loves us and is taking care of us.

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed.” “According to Babylonian sources, Belshazzar, crown prince of the Chaldean dynasty, was officially elevated (550 BC) to coregent by his father, King Nabonidus.”*

This dream took place about 550 BC. Daniel was a man of great faith. God honored his faith and revealed to him the future persecutions the church would go through. In verses two and three Daniel talks about seeing wind, sea and beasts. To understand these symbols we will turn to history, Biblical references and geography. It is my belief that the Bible should always interpret itself. To learn about the meaning of wind, I turned to Jeremiah 49:35-37. Here it talks about wind as a metaphor for war. That fits very well in Daniel. Daniel talks about the “great sea” in verse two. I believe this has two meanings which become one. In Revelation 17:15, we are told that “sea” represents peoples and nations, etc. That makes sense. Have you ever stood on a tall building or object, and looked down upon the masses of people below. They look like the sea flowing along. One good example of this is to view the crowd at a football game from the height of the blimp camera. A “sea” of people.

I also believe that Daniel wanted to limit the geographical area of this vision. These just weren't nations coming out of any people, anywhere in the world. They were specific nations coming up in a specific location. The use of the phrase, “great sea” was well

known in his day. It meant the Mediterranean Sea. The beasts, explained as kingdoms in Daniel 7:17, were all located around the Mediterranean Sea.

Now that we know the symbolism, let's put it all together. The peoples and nations of the Mediterranean area were going to be involved in wars and strife. As the peoples and nations fought each other, kingdoms would fall and kingdoms would rise.



A lion with the wings of an eagle symbolizes the first kingdom. In some encyclopedias you will find pictures of a lion with wings from the Babylonian ruins. Daniel was well aware of the symbolism. He knew that this lion symbolized Babylon.

“The ruins of Babylon (from Bab-ili, meaning “Gate of God”), the 2d-1st millennium BC capital of southern Mesopotamia (BABYLONIA), stand beside the Euphrates about 90 km (55 mi) south of modern Baghdad, Iraq. Occupied in prehistoric times but first mentioned in the late 3d millennium BC, the city became important when its AMORITE king HAMMURABI (r. 1792-50 BC) gained control of all southern Mesopotamia. Raided by the HITTITES about 1595 BC, Babylon then came under KASSITE rule about 1570 BC, only to be sacked again about 1158 BC by the Elamites, who removed many Babylonian monuments to SUSA, including the famous Law Code stela of Hammurabi (now in the Louvre, France). Dominated by Assyria from the 9th century until that country's fall to the Medes in 612 BC, Babylon once more became a major political power under the 6th-century CHALDEAN kings, in particular NEBUCHADNEZZAR II (r. 605-562), builder of much of the existing city.”*

“Nebuchadnezzar's triple-walled city measured at least 18 km (11 mi) in circumference. In the old city, on the east bank of the Euphrates, stood Esagila, the temple of Marduk, the city god, and

the associated seven-staged ziggurat Etemenanki, popularly associated with the Tower of BABEL. Northward from Esagila, the Processional Way, decorated with animals in glazed and relief brickwork, led through the Ishtar Gate (now in the Berlin Museum) to the New Year (Akitu) temple. Northwest of the Processional Way stood Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Vaulted structures at its northwest corner may be remains of the legendary Hanging Gardens, numbered among the SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD.”*

“The Chaldeans under NEBUCHADNEZZAR II destroyed Jerusalem and burned the Temple (587 or 586 BC); the royalty, nobility, and skilled craftsmen were deported to Babylonia.”*



The next kingdom was represented by a bear that was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth. Going back into history we look to see if another kingdom did arise and conquer Babylon.

“Chaldean rule ended when the Persians under CYRUS THE GREAT captured Babylon in 539 B.C.. Henceforth, Babylonia was merely a province in a succession of large empires: Persian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanian (539 B.C.-AD 650). Its capital was moved from Babylon to nearby SELEUCIA by the Seleucids; later CTESIPHON, near Seleucia, was the administrative center of the Parthians and Sassanians.*

“The name Persia (from the ancient province of Persis; modern Fars, Iran) was given by the Greeks to the entire land occupied by various Iranian tribes from which the ACHAEMENID dynasty arose. It is the land of present-day IRAN and AFGHANISTAN, geographically the Iranian plateau.*

“By the end of the 2d millennium BC invaders from the north had begun to spread over the Iranian plateau. These were Indo-European speakers, one branch of which invaded the subcontinent of India while their close relatives the Iranians penetrated the plateau. Both the Indians and Iranians called themselves Aryans.

the Turks conquered Constantinople. The Western Empire was overrun and gradually dismembered by various Germanic tribes. In 410 the Visigoths and in 455 the VANDALS plundered the city of Rome. Finally in 476 the German ODOACER deposed the last emperor of the west, the child Romulus Augustulus. And so the history of ancient Rome ended ingloriously. The idea of Rome and of the Roman Empire, however, survived its fall, and from the symbiosis of Roman and Germanic elements arose the new states and societies of medieval Europe.”*

Daniel was troubled by what he saw. Nation after nation; kingdom after kingdom was rising and falling. Each one was persecuting God’s people. Would it ever end? Would the saints ever find rest?

To answer that unspoken question, God raised Daniel’s eyes from the turmoil of the earth and placed them in heaven. There in verses 9 through 14 Daniel sees God sitting on the throne and has everything under control. The “play” on earth must proceed, but in the end Jesus will take up His rulership and will reign with justice and righteousness.

With that understanding, Daniel is again directed to the earth and the turmoil that will take place from the dividing of Rome. Starting in verses 13 through 28, Daniel is given the interpretation of the vision. But what Daniel was most interested in was what emerged from the ten horns (kingdoms) of Western Europe.

He saw a little horn come up among the ten horns and do six very important things.

- 1) Came up among the ten horns
 - 2) It uproots three of the ten horns
 - 3) It spoke boastfully against the Most High
 - 4) It wages war against the saints and oppresses them
 - 5) It attempts to change set times and laws
- It rules for a time, times and half a time

They had war chariots pulled by horses, but the Iranians soon found that cavalry was more effective in mountain areas. By the 9th century they had entered the Zagros Mountains; the Medes, the most prominent of the Iranian peoples, are mentioned as being there by Assyrian sources in 836 BC. More than a century later the Parsa, or Persians, appeared in the south. Other Iranian tribes spread over the entire plateau. *

“The first kingdom, which was a federation of tribes, created by the Iranians, about 700 BC, was that of the Medes in western Iran. The rise of MEDIA was hindered by invasions from north of the Caucasus Mountains, first by a Thracian people called CIMMERIANS, followed by Iranian nomads called SCYTHIANS. About 625 BC a new attempt was made by the Medes under CYAXARES to form a united kingdom, and after defeating the Scythians, the Medes turned against Assyria. An alliance was made between the Babylonians and the Medes, and the allies stormed and destroyed the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, in 612 BC, a date used today by the KURDS, who claim descent from the Medes, to begin their Kurdish era of time reckoning.*

“The Medes also subdued the Persians and other Iranians on the plateau, but the Median empire lasted only until 549, when the last Median king, Astyages (r. 584-549), was defeated by his Persian vassal CYRUS THE GREAT, who became the heir of the Median king and ruled an even greater empire from 549 to 530 BC. The conquest of the great and ancient city of BABYLON in 539 BC made Cyrus the ruler of a vast domain from the Mediterranean Sea to the borders of India. Cyrus is famous in the Old Testament for freeing the Jewish captives in Babylonia and sending them back to their home. Cyrus then marched to central Asia, where he was killed in a battle with nomads. *

“He was succeeded by his eldest son, CAMBYSES II. His son CAMBYSES II, who ruled from 530 to 522, invaded Egypt. Following an interregnum of a year, DARIUS I took power by killing the usurper Smerdis and established the Achaemenid empire on a firm basis. He consolidated and further extended Persian conquests (so that the empire stretched from Egypt and Thrace in the west to northwestern India in the east); established

the system of satraps (local governors) under firm centralized control; encouraged the spread of ZOROASTRIANISM; and was a great patron of the arts. Darius's son XERXES I (r. 486-465), after his defeat by the Greeks in the PERSIAN WARS, retired from active government and set a precedent for future kings who were kept in power by the efficient bureaucracy organized by Darius. Constant revolts were put down, but the weakness of the empire was apparent under ARTAXERXES I (r. 465-424), Xerxes II (r. 424-423), and Darius II (r. 423-404). Under ARTAXERXES II (r. 404-359), the revolt of his brother CYRUS THE YOUNGER almost cost him his throne. Artaxerxes III (r. 359-338), an able although cruel monarch, saved the empire from disintegration by reconquering the provinces of Phoenicia and Egypt, which had previously regained their independence. Unfortunately for the Achaemenid empire, Artaxerxes III was poisoned, and a puppet Arses ruled for two years. The last prince of the Achaemenid family, DARIUS III Codomannus, assumed the throne in 336.”*

The bear being raised up on one side is significant. The Medes and the Persians united to destroy Babylon. But as history shows, the Medes eventually were absorbed by the Persians and lost significance. The three ribs in its mouth represent the territories it ate up and devoured.



A leopard with four wings on its back represents the third nation. A leopard is very fast. If it has four wings to help it along, it could be extremely fast. In history we find that the next nation to conquer and dominate the “world of Daniel” was very fast in its conquering.

“Aided by a battle-hardened Macedonian army that possessed the cavalry necessary for a campaign against the Persians, Alexander conquered the entire Persian Empire in ten years (334-25). He created an empire stretching from Macedonia to the Indus River, a magnificent achievement that had even more important, far-reaching effects. Alexander initiated the systematic Hellenization

down. In the 50 years from 235 to 284 more than 2 dozen emperors ruled, all but one of whom suffered a violent death.”*

“Out of the turmoil of the 3d century a new totalitarian Rome emerged. The emperor DIOCLETIAN (r. 284-305) adopted the title dominus (master) and transformed the principate into the dominate and citizens into subjects. He adopted an elaborate court ceremonial with many oriental elements. The requisitions and forced labor to which the emperors of the 3d century had resorted in order to save the state were transformed into a lasting system. Peasants were gradually deprived of their personal freedom and tied to the soil. The artisan corporations, and even the higher civil servants, were organized as hereditary castes, and a crushing burden of taxation was imposed on them. Two social groups were preminent: the rich landowners, who in their fortified villas foreshadowed the medieval feudal lords, and the imperial bureaucracy.”*

The Bible tells us in verse seven of chapter seven that Rome would divide into ten basic kingdoms. We learned in Daniel chapter two about this division. We will recap it here. “From 395 the empire was permanently divided into the Latin Western and the Greek Eastern or BYZANTINE EMPIRE, with its capital at Constantinople. The Eastern Empire lived on until 1453, when



who won the respect and support of the people. The priestly conservatives came to be known as SADDUCEES, the more progressive lay party as the PHARISEES. The latter came to dominate the SANHEDRIN, which was the highest religious and legal authority of the nation.”*

“In AD 66 the moderates could no longer control the desperate populace, and rebellion against Roman tyranny broke out. After bitter fighting the Romans captured Jerusalem and burned the Temple in 70; at MASADA the Zealots held out until 73, when most of the 1,000 surviving defenders killed themselves to defy capture by the Romans. As a result of the revolt thousands of Jews were sold into slavery and thus were scattered widely in the Roman world. The last vestiges of national autonomy were obliterated.”*

Rome grew large and powerful. It ruled from England to India and all around the Mediterranean Sea. Paganism was the national religion. There was one religion, one economy, and one government. About the only exception to this were the Jews in Jerusalem. They were allowed a semi-autonomous government. They also were allowed to worship their own way. They worshiped One God, as opposed to the multi-god pagan worship. They also worshiped their God on His Sabbath, Saturday, and not on Rome’s pagan, 1st day, Sunday.

But Rome grew too large and was unable to sustain itself. “In the 3d century the Roman world plunged into a prolonged and nearly fatal crisis. The reasons were manifold. Sharp divisions between the opulent notables in the cities and the poor and hardly civilized peasants created tensions. The wars that began under Marcus Aurelius continued, and increased taxation destroyed the prosperity of the empire. To meet rising military costs and to pay the bureaucracy, the emperors, including CARACALLA (r. 211-17), debased the coinage; the resulting inflation proved pernicious. The defenses of the empire on the Rhine and Danube collapsed under the attack of various Germanic and other tribes, and the eastern provinces were invaded by the Persians. Finally, the discipline of the army—in which half-Romanized provincials and totally non-Romanized barbarians were now serving—broke

of the East. Greek and non-Greek culture fused together over the centuries, promoting new concepts of ethics and new religions, including Christianity.”*

“The Mediterranean basin saw the dawn of modern military strategy and tactics. It was under such leaders as Philip II (382-336 BC) and Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) of Macedonia and Hannibal (247-183 BC) of Carthage that the first great strides were made in military science. Philip combined INFANTRY, CAVALRY, and primitive ARTILLERY into a trained, organized, and maneuverable fighting force backed up by engineers and a rudimentary signaling system. His son Alexander became an accomplished strategist and tactician with his concern for planning, keeping open lines of communication and supply, security, relentless pursuit of foes, and the use of surprise.”*

The leopard also had four heads. These four heads represented the breakup of Alexander’s Empire. Upon his death, his four generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy divided up the empire.

“Alexander’s huge empire broke apart at his death in 323 BC. His generals, known as the Diadochi (successors), claimed his legacy. By 275 three Macedonian dynasties had established themselves in the natural units of the empire. The successors of ANTIGONUS I (the Antigonids) ruled Macedonia; those of SELEUCUS I (the Seleucids), the Asian provinces; and those of PTOLEMY I (the Ptolemies), Egypt.”*

The beast with iron teeth is the fourth kingdom to rule the Mediterranean.

“Rome became the decisive factor in Greek affairs after 200. It conquered PHILIP V of Macedonia in 200-196, charging that Philip had



supported Rome's Carthaginian enemy, Hannibal, and was mistreating Pergamum and RHODES, powers friendly with Rome. The liberty of the Greeks was proclaimed by the Roman general Titus Quinctius FLAMININUS at the Isthmian Games of 196, but it was not long before Rome intruded again in both Macedonia and Asia. Macedonia became a Roman province in 148, and the Achaean and Aetolian leagues were dissolved in 146. Meanwhile, the Seleucid ruler ANTIOCHUS III had been defeated by the Romans in 189, and the diminution of his authority led many of his subjects to rebel. By 100 BC, the Jews had established a state in Palestine and the Parthians had acquired Mesopotamia. Pergamum was bequeathed to the Romans by Attalus III in 133.”*

“By the end of the 1st century BC, POMPEY THE GREAT, Julius CAESAR, and AUGUSTUS had settled the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire into their final form. The old Greek city-states, though subject to Rome, enjoyed local autonomy. The propertied classes controlled the local governments, and Greek was retained as the official language. For a time there was much prosperity. Many cities were patronized by the Roman emperors. Athens, especially, flourished as a university town.”*

“Ancient Rome grew from a small prehistoric settlement on the Tiber River in Latium in central Italy into an empire that encompassed all of the Mediterranean world. The Romans developed a civilization that formed the basis for modern Western civilization. The history of Rome comprises three major epochs: the kingship from the legendary foundation of Rome to 509 BC; the republic from 509 BC to 31 BC; and the empire, which survived until Rome finally fell to the German chieftain Odoacer in AD 476.”*

“Octavian, assuming (27 BC) the title and name Imperator Caesar Augustus, carried forth many of the reforms of Julius Caesar. He established his government in 27 BC, rebuilt the city of Rome, and became a great patron of the arts. During his reign the Roman Empire was at its height; it had no rivals —thus began the 200 years of peace known as the Pax Romana. The system of

Nivose (snow), Pluviose, Ventose (wind), Germinal (sprouting time), Floreal (blossom), Prairial (meadow), Messidor (harvest), Thermidor (heat), and Fructidor (fruit). France returned to the Gregorian calendar on Jan. 1, 1806, under Napoleon I.”*

Since the people were not able to talk directly with god, Caesar proclaimed himself the “Vicarius Filii Dei.” This Latin term stated that Caesar was the vicar, or representative of god on earth. Therefore, if you had a question to ask the pagan god, you went to your priest, who got the answer from Caesar, who got it from god.



Rome built hundreds of temples throughout its empire to fill the spiritual needs of the people. Little round white wafers were used to symbolize the sun-god they were worshiping. The little round white wafers symbolized the sun. Have you ever been to a Catholic Mass?

As stated earlier, the reason God gave Daniel this vision was to let His people know of the persecutions that would come upon them by the pagan governments. All four of the beasts were pagan. All four of these kingdoms persecuted the Jews.

“ALEXANDER THE GREAT conquered Palestine in 322. His successors, the Macedonian rulers of Egypt (the Ptolemies) and Syria (the SELEUCIDS) vied for control of this strategically important area; eventually the Syrians won. Hellenistic influences penetrated Jewish life deeply, but when the Seleucid king ANTIOCHUS IV tried to impose the worship of Greek gods upon the Jews, a rebellion ensued (168 BC).”*

“New spiritual forces emerged during the Maccabean and Herodian periods. The leadership of hereditary priests was contested by laymen distinguished for their learning and piety,

(Sunday).

Rome named the days of the week in honor of their gods, giving the sun-god the preeminence of the first day. “Caesar introduced (Jan. 1, 45) the Julian CALENDAR.”*

“Independently, the Romans associated a cycle of seven days with the Sun, the Moon, and the five known planets. Their names became attached to the days of the week: Sunday (dies solis, “Sun’s day”), Monday (dies lunae, “Moon’s day”), and Saturday (dies Saturni, “Saturn’s day”) retain their names derived directly from the Roman culture, and Tuesday (“Tiw’s day”), Wednesday (“Woden’s day”), Thursday (“Thor’s day”), and Friday (“Frigg’s day”) are derived from the Germanic equivalents of Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus, respectively.”*

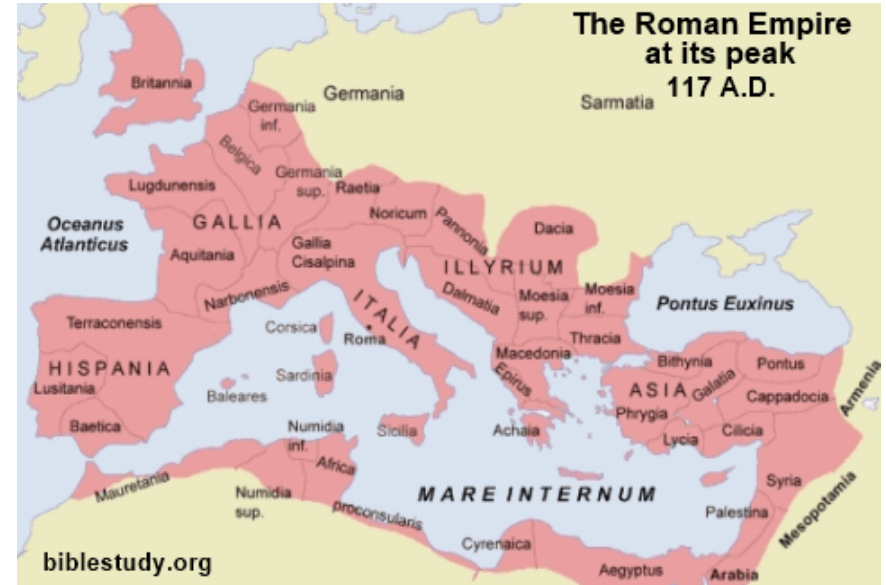


“In ancient calendars, years were generally numbered according to the year of a ruler’s reign. About AD 525, a monk named Dionysius Exiguus suggested that years be counted from the birth of Christ, which was designated AD 1 (anno

Domini, “the year of the Lord”). This proposal came to be adopted throughout Christendom during the next 500 years. The year before AD 1 is designated 1 BC (before Christ). Dionysius had referred the year of Christ’s birth to other eras. Modern chronology, however, places the event at about 4 BC. The 1st century of the Christian Era began in AD 1, the 2d in AD 101; the 21st began in 2001.”*

“During the French Revolution a reformed calendar rid of religious connections was in fact adopted having a 10-day week and 12 months of 30 days. The days left at year’s end were given over to vacations and celebrations. The calendar began on Sept. 22, 1792, the day the republic was proclaimed. The months were called Vendemiaire (vintage), Brumaire (mist), Frimaire (frost),

ROMAN ROADS and a sophisticated postal system helped unify the empire. Commerce and trade boomed among the far-flung possessions. Augustus reformed the Senate, made the system of taxation more equitable, and revived the census. He died in AD 14 and was succeeded by his stepson Tiberius.”*



“An intricate transportation network, the Roman road system gave citizens of the ancient empire access to the most distant provinces. The first all-weather roads connected the capital and those Italian towns which had been recently subdued or colonized by the Romans. The Via Appia (Appian Way; begun in 312 BC), for example, joined Rome with Capua, which had just been crushed in the Samnite War; the Via Flaminia connected Rome with the Latin colony of Ariminum in former Celtic territory. These paved roads and others—usually constructed of stones, rubble, and concrete—were of great strategic importance, facilitating the administration and control of conquered lands. By the end of the republic (1st century BC), roads had been constructed in some of the provinces—such as southern Gaul and Illyria—but the great period of construction outside of Italy came under the emperors. In Britain and North Africa, as in Italy, the progress of Roman expansion may be traced by charting the

development of the Roman road network.”*

“Initially, Roman authorities constructed roads to accommodate military movements and transport — communication between towns and camps being an essential precondition of control—the roads were also used by merchants (who paid duties on goods at regular intervals), couriers, and ordinary citizens or subjects. Although traffic was carefully monitored by Roman officials, the road network facilitated the exchange of ideas, styles, and goods; it was a vital link between the central authority and the inhabitants of the provinces.”*

“The Romans constructed a total of about 80,000 km (50,000 mi) of highways through more than 30 modern nations. The network remained in use during the Middle Ages, and remnants of it are still in existence.”*

As Rome conquered the world, it had a habit of picking up the local religions. “The historical background out of which the myths of Rome emerge is similar in some aspects to that of the Greeks. There, too, the Indo-European elements were superimposed on the cultures of the indigenous peoples. In later periods cultural religious meanings from Greece, Syria, Iran, and Egypt played a role in Roman mythology.”*

“A straightforward correspondence can be set up between the gods of the Greek pantheon and their Roman counterparts: Zeus and JUPITER; Hera and JUNO; Poseidon and NEPTUNE; Demeter and CERES; Apollo-Apollo; Artemis and DIANA; Athena and MINERVA; Hephaestus and VULCAN; Aphrodite and VENUS; Ares and MARS; Dionysus and Bacchus. This correspondence, however, barely scratches the surface of Roman mythology.”*

They also took from the Egyptians what pleased them. “In the Old Kingdom mythology the sun Atum (or Aten) often appears as the first creator. He makes Shu and Tefnut (air and moisture) out of himself, and they in turn produce Geb and Nut (earth and sky). The children of the latter couple are OSIRIS, ISIS, Set, and Nephthys. Thus the first four deities establish the cosmos, and the

later four are mediators between humans and the cosmos. Osiris is the symbol of the dead king, who is succeeded in the form of Horus, the living ruler. Isis is the consort of Osiris, and after his murder by Set, she reconstitutes his body and thus achieves for him eternal life; her ally in this role is Nephthys, the consort of Set. Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, ultimately vanquishes Set, a symbol of antistructure or antiorder. Set is related to the desert of Upper Egypt. As a deity of clouds, he opposed Atum, the sun.”*

From the Indo-Iranian culture, Rome picked up Mithraism. “Mithraism, the worship of the ancient Indo-Iranian god of light, Mithra, became early Christianity’s most serious rival as the mystery cult rapidly spread from Syria and Anatolia throughout the Roman Empire reaching into Gaul and Britain. Its cultic origins remain obscure. Although the focus of the cult was the Persian god Mithra—who is the chief ally of Ahura Mazda, the force of good in later Zoroastrianism—Western worship of Mithra had few connections with Zoroastrianism apart from its emphasis on the eternal struggle between good and evil. There were seven grades of initiation into the cult, completion of which conferred immortality. Most important was the slaying of the bull, a reenactment of Mithra’s killing of the cosmic bull of creation, symbolizing the conquest of evil and death. Astrology and Sun worship also played a role in Mithraism.”*

“Roman soldiers who had fought against the Parthians, the cult remained particularly popular among the military—the god embodied such soldierly values as victory, courage, and loyalty—and merchant classes. Women were excluded from the cult. One of the most powerful religious movements in the Roman Empire by the 4th century, Mithraism, along with other non-Christian sects, suffered persecution after the conversion of Constantine and gradually died out. Significantly, Mithra’s birth was commemorated on December 25.”*

In the development of its pagan ceremonies, Rome developed a highly sophisticated religious ritual. It had priests to minister in temples of magnificent beauty. The leading god of all the pagan worship was the sun-god. The sun-god was worshiped by all the pagan nations on the first day of the week, the Sun’s – day