

# Daniel 7:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till 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.

## Analysis

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The first beast "like a lion, and had eagle's wings" combines royal authority (lion, king of beasts) with swift dominance (eagle, king of birds). This represents Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, matching Daniel 2's golden head. The lion symbolized Babylon in ancient Near Eastern iconography, and the eagle's wings emphasize rapid conquest. The transformation—"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"—depicts humiliation followed by humanization.

This imagery parallels Nebuchadnezzar's personal experience (Daniel 4) when pride led to beast-like madness, followed by restoration when he acknowledged God's sovereignty. The "plucking" of wings represents loss of imperial power and mobility, while receiving "a man's heart" indicates restored reason and humility. Historically, Babylon's power peaked under Nebuchadnezzar but declined under successors, fulfilling this vision of initial strength diminished.

Theologically, this demonstrates that human empires, however magnificent, remain subject to divine sovereignty. God elevates and humbles kingdoms according to His purposes. The transformation from beast to human also illustrates redemptive possibility—even proud empires can be humbled to acknowledge truth. This points to Christ who humbles the proud and exalts the humble (Luke 1:52), and whose kingdom will outlast all earthly empires (Daniel 2:44).

## Historical Context

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Babylon (626-539 BC) dominated the ancient Near East under Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC), conquering Egypt, Judah, and surrounding nations with remarkable speed. The lion-eagle combination appeared in Babylonian art and architecture, making the symbol immediately recognizable to Daniel's contemporaries. Babylon's decline under Nebuchadnezzar's successors (Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar, Nabonidus) fulfilled the vision of diminished power.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does Nebuchadnezzar's transformation from beast to man illustrate the redemptive possibility when proud rulers acknowledge God's sovereignty?
2. What does Babylon's rise and decline teach about earthly empires' temporary nature compared to God's eternal kingdom?
3. How does this vision encourage believers living under powerful secular authorities that seem invincible?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי הַלְּה נִשְׁר קָדְמִית אֵ

The first was like a lion the wings

H6933

H744

כָּאֵרִי הַ

H1611

דַּי

H1768

גַּפְיָה

H5403

נִשְׁר

נִשְׁר

H0

H2370

מִן וְנִטְעָת יָלָת עַד בְּנֵי יִתְחָר

I beheld till thereof were plucked the wings and it was lifted up from

H1934

H5705

H1768

thereof were plucked

H4804

גַּפְיָה

H1611

וְנִטְעָת

H5191

יָלָת

H4481

אֶת שָׁרֶב אֶת אָרֶץ אֶת עַל

the earth upon the feet and a man's and made stand heart and a man's

H772

H5922

H7271

בְּנֵל אָי

H606

בְּקִימָת

H6966

אֶת שָׁרֶב

H3825

אֶת אָרֶץ

H606

לְהָיָה יְהָיָה

was given

H3052

H0

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 4:7** (Parallel theme): The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

**Ezekiel 17:3** (Parallel theme): And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; A great eagle with great wings, longwinged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar: