

# All Saints Sunday

## HOLY ONE

**Daniel 7:1-3, [9-14], 15-18**

## All Saints Sunday

## Analysis by Chris Repp

In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream: 2I, Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea, 3and four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.

[9As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire. 10A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. 11I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. 12As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. 14To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.]

15As for me, Daniel, my spirit was troubled within me, and the

visions of my head terrified me. 16I approached one of the attendants to ask him the truth concerning all this. So he said that he would disclose to me the interpretation of the matter: 17'As for these four great beasts, four kings shall arise out of the earth. 18But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever-for ever and ever.'

*Note: Verses 9-15 are not part of our pericope, but I have chosen to include them to give us more grist for our mill.*

---

## **DIAGNOSIS: Beastly**

### **Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : Trouble and Terror**

Times are tough-whether for Judah in Exile (the setting for the Book of Daniel), Jews oppressed by Hellenistic tyrants (the book's likely audience), or for North Americans plagued by the threat of terrorism, economic uncertainty, and political turmoil. Things are getting out of hand. We're losing control of our own lives. Our 401Ks are anemic and our mortgages are "under water." Capital One's question, "what's in your wallet?," isn't just a bank's rhetorical advertising slogan. It has become the fear-filled question of the average person on the street. We lie awake in the dark of the night envisioning worst-case scenarios.

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : Ruled by Beasts**

The reason that things are out of our control is that we've given over control, along with our allegiance and our hopes and dreams, to the rulers of this world: political and economic ideologies that promise to fulfill the desires that reign within us-greed, pride, hedonism, sloth, envy, gluttony, and the other usual suspects. We are ruled by our baser instincts, and the beastly structures they create when they combine forces with those of others. The bulls and bears of our market economy are

only two examples. (“Whose back pocket are you in?” the ad might well ask us.) And we would be happy with that arrangement, except that our beast-rulers aren’t living up to their extravagant promises. In fact, they have begun to turn on us.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Foreclosed***

But things are even worse than our worst nightmares have envisioned. Not only are our beast masters failing us, we have had to mortgage ourselves (“expose [ourselves] to future risk or constraint for the sake of immediate advantage,” according to my dictionary) in order to buy into their beastly investment scheme. Now the books are open and the mismanagement of our lives is exposed. But it is not Capital One we face, with our house on the line. We stand instead before the Ancient One, who threatens to foreclose on our future. The beasts within and without are liquidated, or put into receivership (even if some are allowed to linger for a time) and we are convicted as their accomplices.

## **PROGNOSIS: Priestly**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Bailed Out***

Now into our courtroom comes another One, the “One-like-a-human-being.” Having endured the fate of the beast-that-was-slain (though he is no beast), he now takes our place before the judge, vindicated in his innocence and holiness. To this One (we know him by his saving moniker Joshua [“he saves”]/Jesus) is given charge of our failed portfolios. In his mercy, he stands ready to commute our sentences, open his treasury, and bail us out.

### **Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *Under New Management***

Having settled our accounts, he then goes about putting us under new management and rebranding us (let’s call us “Holy One” this time). In the new management philosophy selfish, beastly profit-

at-all-cost is replaced by merciful, generous spending on the insolvent and bankrupt-even on those who helped cause the crisis in the first place! And the management that has been given by the Ancient One, this One is eager to share with us.

**Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) :** *Reigning with the Holy Ones*

Our rebranding is no mere public-relations stunt, though-not like when AIG renamed itself 21st Century Insurance. Our restructuring is for real. Having been rebranded “holy” we begin living up to our new name, and as co-managers we help to implement new and different policies that are aimed at a corporate takeover the likes of which has never been seen. At Holy One, however, we don’t do hostile takeovers-only friendly ones. And that policy is eternal.