

DANIEL

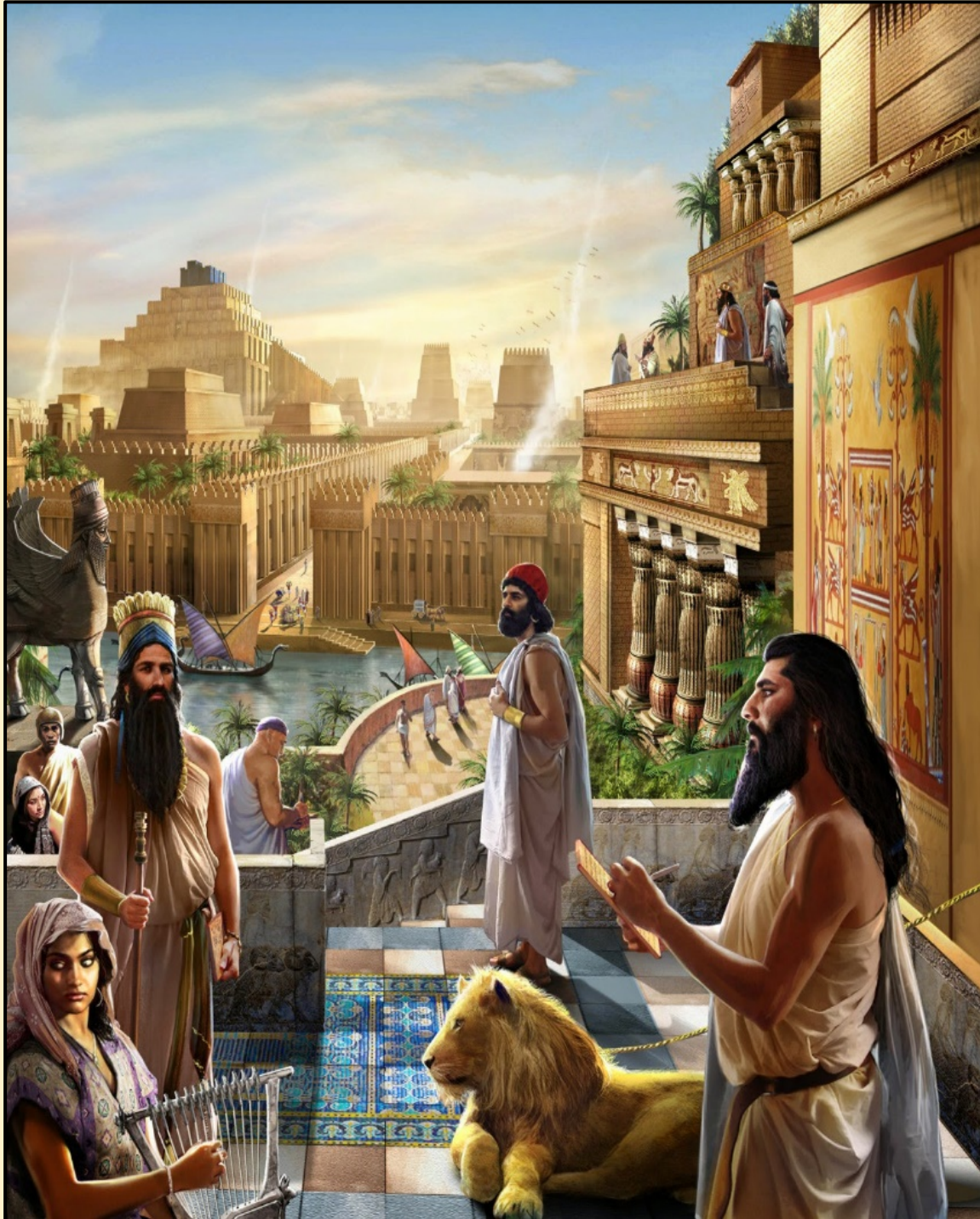
Chapter 7, part 1

A Dream of 4 Beasts and 4 Empires

Basic and General Study
of the Book of Daniel

by Gaetan





Daniel Chapter 7 Part 1

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The prophecy of the four kingdoms of Daniel chapter 2 is further expanded in this chapter 7 with a vision of Beasts and Horns representing great Empires of history.

Daniel dates the remarkable revelation documented in this chapter during king Belshazzar's year as coregent of Babylon (circa 550 B.C., according to Encyclopedia Britannica). Daniel was taken as a captive to Babylon in 605 B.C. as a young man. If at that time he was in his middle to late teens, then he would now be in his 70s.

In Daniel chapter 2, God gave the vision of future World empires to Nebuchadnezzar, the great King of one of those governments (Babylon), in the form of a great image or statue. Its upper part appeared valuable, made of gold and silver and continued to look pretty good even though its lower components deteriorated into bronze, iron, and finally clay.

However, when God gave another vision of the same governments to His own prophet Daniel, who could be trusted with the way God looks at the governments of Man, they were pictured as cruel, ravenous, and horrible beasts! This intriguing beast vision of Daniel 7 explains what was already covered in Daniel 2, but with more details. The vision portrays four great beasts rising up out of the sea, and the fourth beast had ten horns.

These four great beasts, plus the ten horns, correspond to the four great empires, plus the ten toes, envisioned in the image of Daniel chapter 2. How remarkable - that Daniel saw by vision and prophecy the rise and fall of these great empires many years before it actually happened!

In the vision of the beasts, Daniel goes over it the first time in verses 7 through 14. Then the rest of the chapter becomes a sort of question-and-answer session with his guiding angel. By the time we reach the end of the chapter, the vision has been described three times. The Lord does want us to understand.



Chapter 7 throws special light on some additional revelations concerning the last world empire. It offers a brand-new piece of the puzzle of the End Time by introducing the madman dictator of this last regime of man, the Antichrist.



DAN.7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

DAN.7:2 Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

DAN.7:3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

Daniel dreams of four great beasts that form as a result of the winds stirring up the Great Sea. The Great Sea is thought to represent the Mediterranean, which implies that these four beasts are in that general area. But the great sea also has a further significance in that it represents the peoples of the world. From Revelation chapter 17, we learn the sea is representative of the masses or the people of the world. *"The waters which thou sawest... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues."* (Rev.17:15).

The 4 winds *"are the four spirits of the heavens,"* (Zec. 6:5) spiritual forces that God uses to manipulate the physical world to do His will. *"For the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."* (Dan.4:25)



Later on, verse 17 states:

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth"

And verse 23 states:

"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom".

These verses indicate that a beast here is symbolic of a king and/or kingdom.

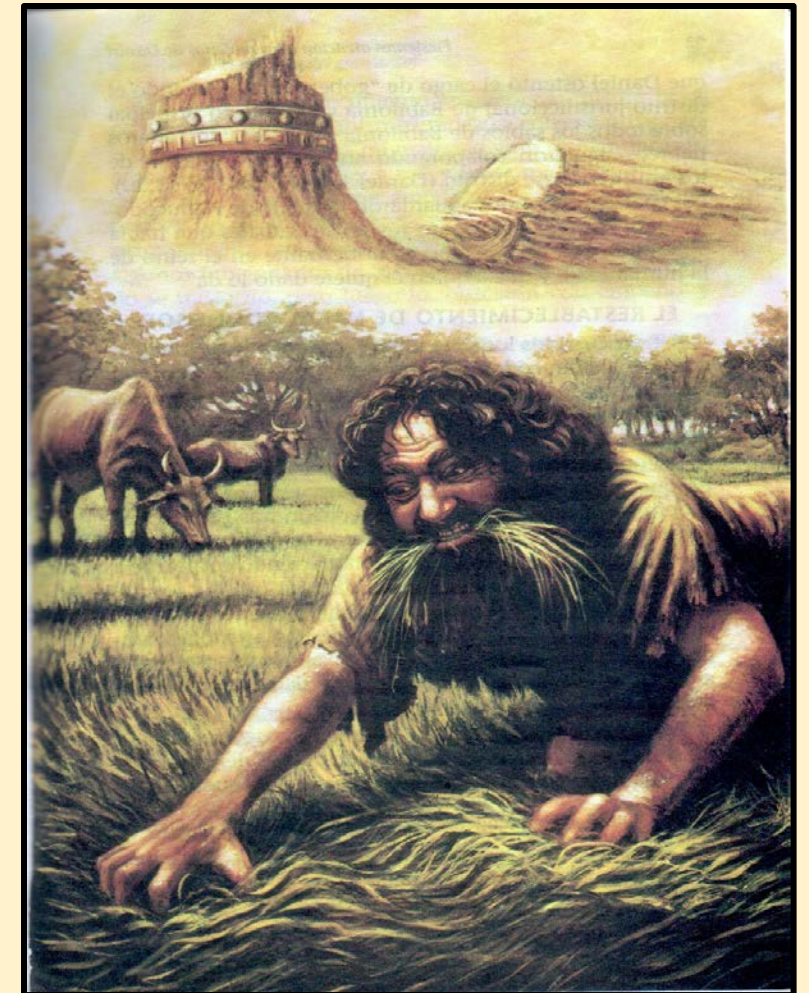
DAN.7:4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

While God through this heavenly person did not reveal to Daniel the names of these empires, Daniel described them in such terms that — as we look at history — it's easy to see the similarities between the descriptions and the empires that followed.

We also have a template to follow regarding how to understand this dream, because it parallels the dream that Daniel had interpreted for King Nebuchadnezzar about 50 years before in Daniel chapter 2.



In that chapter, Daniel states specifically that Babylon is the first empire, represented by the “*head of gold*”. Likewise, in chapter 7, the first beast or empire arising from the sea is Babylon represented as a lion. Sculptures of lamassu — winged lions and bulls with human heads — were common in Mesopotamia, of which Babylon was the current master. Thus, Daniel’s vision pictures a lion whose wings were plucked. This represented Nebuchadnezzar's abasement as a beast for seven years (*Dan.4:29-37*), until “*a man's heart was given to it*” (7:4), his subsequent salvation.



DAN.7:5 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.



The second beast was a bear, who corresponds to the silver arms and torso of Daniel 2. Bears are some of nature's strongest and largest predators. From history, we know that the empire following Babylon was Medo-Persia, so it would represent the federation of the Persians and Medes. The bear was lifted up on one side to indicate the dominance of the Persians.

The Medo-Persian Empire grew into the largest empire known in the Middle East up to that time. In war it fielded massive armies and conquered by force of numbers.

The three ribs in its mouth appear to indicate three kingdoms that Persia either conquered or whose territories it inherited. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, conquered the territories of the three empires:

Egypt, Assyria,
and Babylon

which had previously ruled much of the Middle East and included the lands of Israel and/or Judah.

Another interpretation is that the ribs represented the three main kingdoms first conquered by Persia: first Media, second Lydia, and third Babylon.





DAN.7:6 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.

This beast represents the empire of Alexander the Great and corresponds to the belly and thighs of bronze in the image of chapter 2. The four wings are understood to represent the swiftness of his conquests. At 20 years of age, Alexander began his military campaign and conquered all the civilized world from Greece to India and from Southern Russia to Northern Africa, in only

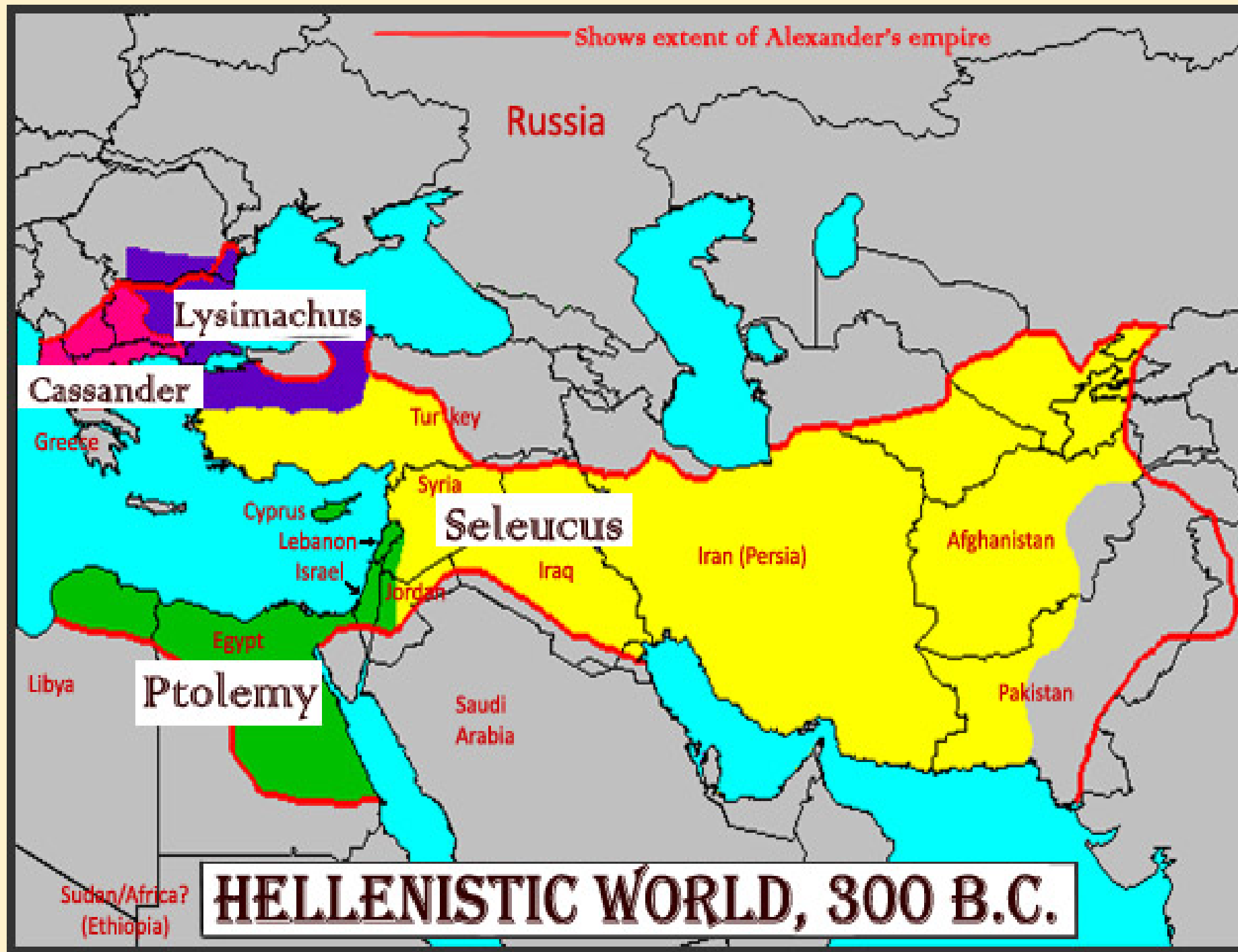
10 years! He conquered the Persian Empire in 333 B.C. at the battle of Issus.

But just at the height of his power ‘when he was strong’, at the young age of only 33 years, Alexander died. The Empire of Alexander the Great was not necessarily the most powerful, but it was the most extensive... dominating the Mideast world of his day.

The four heads indicate that Greece wouldn’t remain a single empire for long. With the heads pulling their own ways to the four corners of the empire. And so it was fulfilled that, after Alexander’s death, the empire quickly fragmented into four separate kingdoms led by his generals.

Soon the map of the former empire crystallized into four major divisions, and these could well have been what the four heads of the leopard namely:





Macedonia and Greece under Cassander; the realms of Lysimachus, who ruled Thrace and the western half of Anatolia (now Turkey); the Seleucid empire that covered modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran; and Ptolemaic Egypt. The lands we now know as Palestine and Israel alternated between the rule of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, with occasional times of independence from both. These four kingdoms show up again in the next chapter.

DAN.7:7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

DAN.7:19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

DAN.7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

The fourth beast — a dreadful, terrible, strong monster with huge iron teeth and bronze nails that apparently didn't resemble anything Daniel had seen before, because he couldn't find the words to liken it to anything.



This **"fourth beast"** with the **"great IRON teeth"** corresponds to the **"fourth kingdom"** in the Daniel 2 image, which includes legs of IRON and feet of IRON and CLAY. So this fourth beast represents both Rome and the modern, final empire. This great and terrible beast of force and power **"devoured and broke in pieces"** all the known, civilised world of Roman times. And yet so magnificent was the Roman concept of law, so advanced their ideas and ideals, so learned their language and literature that they were to influence all cultures and civilizations to come. This truly diverse beast literally **"stamped the residue"** of civilizations with the imprint of its principles!



These verses are certainly an apt description of Rome, and it was written hundreds of years before Rome even existed! **"Teeth of iron and claws of bronze"** - that's

Rome, and they crushed their neighbors for hundreds of years.

Everything here in this description implies fierceness and power. If a revived Roman Empire is coming in the future, centered somewhere in the general geographic extent of the old empire, the people of the earth are in for a very bad time. Ten major persecutions were conducted against the Christians by this Roman Empire according to secular history.

From here on, the vision jumps into the future. Don't miss part 2 of this study of chapter 7 of Daniel.



You can receive Jesus at this very moment. It is a free gift of God.

*"For **by grace** are ye saved **through faith**; and that **not of yourselves**: it is the gift of God: **not of works**, lest any man should boast."* (Eph.2:8-9)

If you haven't done it yet, please pray this simple prayer:

"Dear Jesus, I want to know You personally. Please forgive all my faults. I accept that You are the Son of God and that You died for me. I invite You into my heart and life. Thank you for your gift of eternal life and please fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Help me to read and understand Your Word. Amen"

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