

Daniel's Dreams

(Sunday Service - Dec 24, 2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtLYoVok-Tg>

Night: Daniel had good dreams and visions from God. What do you go to bed with? Can you go to bed with a song? With a chapter and verses from the Word? God will connect with the word.

I. The Vision of the Four Beasts

The restless sea in the Bible is a picture of the Gentile nations (**Rev_17:15; Isa_17:12**). Here it is the Great Sea, or the Mediterranean Sea, and all of the empires mentioned in this vision bordered on this sea. Daniel saw four beasts, and the angel explained what they meant. Each beast represented a kingdom (**Dan_7:17**).

A. The lion with wings (**Dan_7:4**)

Here we have Babylon, corresponding to the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image (**Dan_2:36-38**). The winged lion was a favourite image in Babylon; you may see these figures in any museum that has a Babylonian display. The animal made to stand like a man certainly reminds us of Nebuchadnezzar's humbling experience in **Dan_4:27-37**. Babylon was still ruling the world at this time, but in just a few years (as explained), the empire would fall. So, that takes us to the next beast.

B. The bear with the ribs (**Dan_7:5**)

Here we meet the Medo-Persian empire, known not for its swiftness or skill, but for its brute force, just like a bear. The three ribs depict the three empires already defeated (Egypt, Babylon, Libya); and the fact that the bear stood "raised up on one side" indicates that the one half of the empire (the Persian half) was stronger and more honourable (higher) than the other half (the Medes). Medo-Persia conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., but their empire lasted only some two hundred years.

C. The winged four-headed leopard (**Dan_7:6**)

This is certainly Greece, led by Alexander the Great, who swiftly conquered the world, defeating the Persians about 331 B.C. But the great general died in 323, and his vast kingdom was divided into four

parts (and thus the four heads). Four of his leading generals each took a part of the kingdom and ruled it as the monarch.

D. The terrible beast (Dan_7:7-8)

This beast startled Daniel because nothing like it had appeared in any of the previous revelations. It seems clear that we have here the Roman Empire, corresponding to the iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image. But the picture seems to go beyond history into "the latter days," because we see ten horns on the beast, and these parallel the ten toes of the image in the revived Roman Empire of the last days. **Dan_7:8** and **Dan_7:20** both tell us that a "little horn" (ruler) will appear, and defeat three of the ten kingdoms represented by the ten horns and ten toes. This little horn will then become a world ruler, the Antichrist. His mouth will speak great things, and he will persecute the saints (believing Jews and Gentiles during the Tribulation period) for three and a half years (**Dan_7:25** — time, times, and half a time). This is the last half of the Tribulation period, the "seventieth week" that Daniel will tell us about in **Dan_9:24-27**. According to **Dan_7:11-12**, the three previous kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece) will be "swallowed up" and included in this last great world empire, but the Antichrist himself will finally be judged and slain. Read **Rev_13:1-2**, where John describes the beast (Antichrist) and uses the very same beasts we find in **Dan_7:7-8**. But notice that their order is reversed. This is because Daniel was looking ahead while John was looking back.

Son of Man. The Messiah, Christ is meant;

He often designated Himself by this phrase (**Mat_16:26; Mat_19:28; Mat_26:64**). "The clouds of heaven" are seen again in **Rev_1:7**. Here, He is distinct from the Ancient of Days, or Eternal One, the Father, who will coronate Him for the kingdom (**Dan_2:44**). The picture of old age is not that of being feeble; rather, it highlights God's eternity and divine wisdom to judge (**cf. Dan_7:9-10**).