

# Daniel's Visions in the Night (Part 2)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 February 2016

Preacher: Don Coleman

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, so we are now looking at Daniel, what I've called his visions in the night.

! The parts of it as we go along. This is, if you remember, last week I mentioned this is a key chapter in the book of Daniel, and some have even gone so far as to say that it is one of the most significant passages or chapters in the entire Bible, not just the Old Testament, the New Testament as well.

It deals, of course, with God's plan or biblical prophecy as he has revealed it through this vision, deals with issues that are long past for us, and we're going to be looking at some of that here tonight.

But it also deals with some pretty exciting issues way out into the future, and we don't know when. So, it encompasses all of that, so it's a very significant passage, and so we're going to take our time as we work through it.

Now, last time I spent our time together looking at the historical setting, the historical setting of Daniel's visions, kind of giving you a kind of a look at the context historically, you know, who the king is at this time, and Daniel in relation to the various kings that we read about in the book of Daniel.

[ 1 : 46 ] Not just kings, but kingdoms from the Babylonian kingdom and empire, and then we got into the Persian or Medo-Persian empire, and some of those kings that we've mentioned.

And so now you might remember, I mentioned that when we get to chapter 7, we're kind of digressing. We're going back, and the vision that Daniel has here, this dream or vision, whatever it may have been, occurred even before Belshazzar was out of the pictures.

So, we're kind of going back, and then the events that he's going to be revealing, or God's revealing through this vision, the substance of it, mirrors in many ways Nebuchadnezzar's dream that Daniel interpreted back there in chapter 2.

So, there's some parallels there. In fact, really the subject matter is the same, about the kingdoms of the world, the major kingdoms of the world, during Daniel's day and on into the future, even into our day today.

All right, so we've looked at the historical setting of Daniel's visions. Now, tonight, we're going to look at the, what I want to call the horrific specifics of Daniel's visions.

[ 3 : 03 ] Horrific, or horrifying, or hideous. I thought of a lot of words, and I might use that and start with the letter H, you know, just to keep with my alliteration. But I settled on horrific.

This vision is weird. It's strange. It's horrifying. In fact, in so many words, and the number of places throughout the chapter, we get that sense that what Daniel saw was strange and weird and horrifying to him.

All right, so verse 1 begins, or the latter part of verse 1, says, Then he wrote down the dream telling the main facts. All right?

So that kind of gets us started here. So Daniel had his dream. He had this vision, this night vision, and thankfully, he wrote it down.

Okay? Have you ever written down any of your dreams? Raise a hand if you've ever done that. All right? Just one. And Sherry, you don't do that for every dream you've had, but sometimes a dream is so profound, and you wake up for the next day, and you kind of write it down.

[ 4 : 14 ] And I've never done that. I've wished that I had. Not for the same reason that Daniel wrote it down, because my dreams are not biblical prophecy. They're not prophecy, revelation from God.

God's already given all the revelation, and it's closed now, and it's in this book, and so there's no more revelation given. But aren't you glad that Daniel wrote his vision down?

Because if he hadn't, well, we'd never know about it. And we would not know the significance of it, so he wrote it down. And really, you know, we're grateful to God, actually, when you think about it. Grateful to him that, number one, he revealed his word through this vision, or that he reveals his word to men, and has down through the centuries.

I'm glad that he has revealed his word. Hebrews 1.1 says, God spoke to the fathers by the prophets. So, it all begins with God speaking.

[ 5 : 13 ] So, aren't you glad God spoke? That is, God revealed his person, his plan, his purposes, the present, the future. I wouldn't have anything, actually, I wouldn't have anything to preach if God had not spoken.

And really, we can make it even more personal for every one of us. Not any of us would know anything about God if he hadn't spoken. Not only could we never know God, but we would know anything about him and know that he existed.

And so, I'm glad that God spoke. God revealed. But I'm also glad that he inspired men to write it down. To write what he spoke down.

In fact, you know, dozens of times in the Bible, we have this phrase, it was written. And Jesus spoke that many times. You find that in a number of places in the gospel, especially the gospel of Matthew.

But really, you find that concept many places throughout scripture. Where not only God revealed his will or his truth, his purposes.

[ 6 : 17 ] Not only did he give revelation, but he also prompted and led people to write it down. And the end result was this book. I'm so glad that God did that. All right, so God spoke to Daniel in his vision or dream.

And it revealed to Daniel God's plan for the world. And so, he did that so that we could know what God's plan is.

He led Daniel to write down the specifics of his vision. What were the horrific specifics of Daniel's vision?

Well, first of all, or number, not number, letter A in your outline. This is what he sees. The striving winds and the stormy waves.

He sees that. Now, exactly what that looked like. I don't know. I guess we could probably imagine what that might have looked like. Like, you know, winds that are whipping up the seas, making white caps and waves and so forth.

[ 7 : 22 ] And this is the first part of what he sees. The striving winds and stormy waves. Verse 2 says, Daniel spoke, saying, I saw in my vision by night and beheld the four, behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.

So, the striving winds and stormy waves. So, I put those together for a reason, rather than two points, because they interact with one another.

So, let's just take the reverse first, take it in reverse order, and begin with the stormy waves. Or, as the scriptures say, stirring up the great sea.

The great sea. Now, the designation great sea, sometimes in scripture refers to the Mediterranean. Mediterranean sea. So, there have been scholars who have tried to say, well, you know, well, just what sea is this?

Great sea. Is this the Mediterranean? So, there's been a lot of time and copying commentaries that would bore you to a place of, make you cross-eyed.

[ 8 : 28 ] To kind of figure out what sea this is. But, remember, this is a vision. All right? It's a dream or a vision. And, as we shall see, when we get a little bit further on into it, it is a vision, not of a sea or things jumping out of the sea, but primarily a vision of great empires on the earth.

All right? So, the more appropriate view would be that the designation great sea is symbolic. It's symbolic of the earth. Of the earth.

And, this is confirmed a little bit later in Daniel 7. I gave you those verses. In fact, the very next verse, verse 3. According to the vision, the four beasts came up from the sea.

So, the four beasts, whatever they represent, came up from the sea. And so, then we can skip to verse 17 and discover that according to the vision's interpretation, it says, those great beasts, which are four, are four kings.

All right? So, the great beasts represent four kings or kingdoms which arise out of what? The earth. All right? So, see, this is a vision.

[ 9 : 41 ] It's counterproductive to try to figure out just what sea this is. And even if you were to settle on some opinion about that, it wouldn't make any difference because it's symbolic. So, the sea is symbolic of the earth.

And so, Daniel's vision is of the stormy world of man or sinful man. That's the idea here. Isaiah chapter 57 verse 20 says something similar.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea. When it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. All right? I gave you a few quotes from some theologians that I consulted and know a lot about. Gleason Archer has written a commentary on Daniel. And he made this comment. The sea is symbolic of polluted, turbulent humanity as they try to exploit and govern in their own wisdom and strength.

That's a pretty good description of the way the world is today. But it has always been that way. It was in Daniel's day. And really throughout these major empires, these major world powers that will come, rise on the stage of the world, that description is indicative of them as well.

[ 11 : 03 ] S.R. Driver described the sea as the agitated world of nations. And, I mean, that's the way it is today. Stephen Miller, one of my professors from Mid-America, wrote, The peoples of the earth are portrayed as a great sea of humanity in a constant state of unrest, chaos, and turmoil.

And, you know, that's the way it is today. So, the sea represents the world. The stormy waves of the sea represents humanity.

But, what does Daniel see? What else does he see? He sees the striving winds. So, the stormy seas, the striving winds.

And so, that really identifies for us the cause of the stormy seas. The four winds of heaven, he says here. Now, these winds then, in the vision, if you just take the literal, what he saw, these winds were stirring up or churning up, literally.

That's how the NIV translates it. And that's really a better translation. Churning up. You can see that. Visualize that. Churning up the great sea. So, the Hebrew word that is translated stirring up, it's a participle, by the way, and it can mean bursting forth.

[ 12 : 28 ] Now, that sounds like something different, but that's the idea. The sea is bursting forth. It's something that's happening very suddenly. And what is bursting forth from the sea?

Well, these four beasts that Daniel sees. And the number four is significant. Number four denotes, not about the beasts, but the four winds.

It denotes the four directions of the earth. North, south, east, west. And so, it's signifying the universal nature of this havoc that is taking place on the planet.

Then and as well as now and will continue to until Jesus comes. All right. So, what do these winds signify? Well, the four winds signify two things.

One, the judgments of God. All right. So, get the picture in your mind. The seas represent this earth.

[ 13 : 30 ] Lost sinful humanity. And the striving that goes on. And the chaos and the havoc that is going on. And going on because of certain things that are happening.

One of those things is God's judgment upon their sin. Revelation 7, 1 says, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Now, that passage is talking about withholding for a time the judgment of God. But the judgment of God is likened to the four winds of the earth. Other references in the Bible seem to use wind or winds to signify God's judgment.

And you can look those up on your own. I've given those to you. But not only the judgments of God, but also these four winds signify the sinful activities of people who do not know God.

Now, we can certainly account for the chaos of our world by identifying, noting the sinfulness of unbelieving man, of unbelievers, people who do not know God.

[ 14 : 42 ] I mean, that accounts for a lot of the chaos that's taking place in our world and will continue. So those two things are at work. And if I were to say that one is the primary reason, would be the sinfulness of man, sinful activities of man.

All right, so the horrific specifics of Daniel's vision, stormy waves and the striving winds. Then be what I decided to call the strange walkers, walkers in Daniel's vision.

He saw four beasts walking up out of the sea. Verse 3 says, The four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other.

And we'll look at each one of them individually as we go along. But this is what he saw. Now, this is kind of a summary of the vision. He didn't see all of these animals walking out of the sea at the same time.

They came out one right after the other. And so we'll see that as we go along. Can you imagine in a vision? I mean, first you see the winds going every which way and churning up the waters.

[15:51] And then suddenly, one by one, these very strange beasts are coming up out of the sea. Now, I want to go ahead and just say that according to the angel's interpretation, we'll get to this about this time, but next time.

According to the angel's interpretation, comes later in the chapter in verse 17. These four beasts represent four kings. Four kings or kingdoms, all right, that will rise from the earth.

Four kingdoms. We could even use the term superpowers that will arise to great power and influence and take over large territories of our planet, of the civilized world.

There is the symbolism, and we really understand that even before we get into it. They are, though, I would mention to you, the same kingdoms or empires represented by the four parts of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2.

I mentioned that earlier tonight. Though, you'd have to say that Daniel's dream here in chapter 7 provides more detailed information about each of these kingdoms.

[17:09] Also, we're going to get some more information. So, there's a parallel here, chapter 2 and here chapter 7. Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's dream.

Totally different dreams. That is, you know, Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a huge image, you know, and it had basically four parts to it. And, of course, Daniel was able to interpret the dream and the four parts of that image or that statue represented four kingdoms that will come on the earth, one of them existing in Daniel's day, Babylon, the others that will come later, Persia, then Greece, then, and we'll get to the fourth one a little bit later.

All right, so, there are two main views concerning the identity of the nations represented by the four beasts. This is just a little bit of information for you.

It may not be important, but they're really just two main views. And it is important in how you interpret the passage and the significance of it. The first one is what's called the Maccabean interpretation.

And it's named for that because of where certain scholars see the end of these nations and the timing of the existence of the fourth nation represented by the beast.

[18:34] It's a belief that all four kingdoms existed prior to the end of the Maccabean era. That would be a time period between the Testaments, between the Old and New Testament, before the coming of Christ.

And so, it would have ended there and the reign of this fellow, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. You may have heard that name before. I don't know. You might have read some of the books of Maccabees. Though they're not scripture, they are interesting. And as far as history goes, they are pretty significant for historical information. For that time between the 400 years between the two Testaments, between the Old and New Testament.

All right. So, they see then that last kingdom ending with the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. All right. So, therefore, the fourth and final kingdom in both Nebuchadnezzar's dream as well as Daniel's vision must be the Greek Empire.

So, they would see the fourth beast representing the Greek Empire. Now, in order to make that work then, they must separate the Medo-Persian Empire into two distinct kingdoms.

[19:46] Remember? Medo-Persian. So, they separated. So, there's Median Empire and then the Persian Empire. So, that way they can get four. So, they would have it Babylon, Media, Persia, and then Greece.

Greece being the fourth kingdom or represented by the fourth beast. All right. Now, that's one view. It's called the Maccabean interpretation and I don't think it's correct.

The other view is the traditional interpretation. You know, tradition's okay sometimes. You know, in fact, when it comes to the Bible, I think it's usually okay. Usually the better choice.

And so, this view recognizes the fact that the Medo Empire never existed as a separate world power after the Babylonian Empire. So, there was the Medo-Persian Empire, but there was never a Median Empire.

That never existed. So, the traditional interpretation holds that the four kingdoms of Daniel are Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

[ 20 : 51 ] Okay. Now, we don't have to guess about that. That's a matter of history. Rome was the empire that came out of the earth after the end of the Grecian Empire, the Greek Empire.

All right. So, now, one other thing before we consider each of the beasts of Daniel's vision. Daniel states that the beasts were each different from the other.

And they were, weren't they? I mean, they were dramatically different. And so, likewise, then, the empires that they represented were also different in many ways. Different in size.

In fact, really, you could make the argument that with each one, the size became increasingly larger. Different in size, in power, in wealth.

Different somewhat in cruelty. And really, a progression of that as well. So, we get to the Roman Empire and they were perhaps the most cruel empire on the face of the earth. And in many other ways.

[ 21 : 53 ] So, they're different. All right. So, let's get to these beasts. Beast number one, I'm calling the supremacy of the Babylonian Empire.

The supremacy of the Babylonian Empire. Look at verse four. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. And I watched till its wings were plucked off and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man and a man's heart was given to it.

Some translations, by the way, have a man's mind was given to it. And that might be the more accurate translation. All right. So, this beast clearly represented what man?

What king? Nebuchadnezzar. The king of Babylon. Babylon. So, even though Nebuchadnezzar was not the only king of the Babylonian Empire, we've already studied one other one, Belshazzar, who was the last king, but Nebuchadnezzar was the first and perhaps arguably the greatest of all the kings of Babylon.

And so, when we think of Babylon, we always think of Nebuchadnezzar. So, the vision, this beast, really, in a sense, typifies Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire as it was in his day.

[ 23 : 16 ] So, Nebuchadnezzar is symbolized as a lion in Scripture. All right. So, we have a lion here and that's very indicative historically and even scripturally of Nebuchadnezzar.

And I gave you one example. There are several. But in Jeremiah 4, verse 7, and that's a prophecy concerning the Babylonian invasion, Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, the lion has come up from his thicket and the destroyer of nations is on his way.

He has gone forth from his place to make your land desolate. Your cities will be laid waste without inhabitants. So, this is a reference to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire.

And he is likened to a lion. And there are other references, similar references in Jeremiah. Nebuchadnezzar also is symbolized as an eagle in Scripture.

All right. So, we have a lion with eagle's wings. So, the beast, what the beast looks like, what the beast is made up of is intended to point us to Nebuchadnezzar.

[ 24 : 32 ] Jeremiah 49, 22, behold, he shall come up and fly like the eagle. Again, it's a reference to the coming of Nebuchadnezzar who will conquer Judah, the southern kingdom, and take them away captive.

And so, Jeremiah is prophesying of that day. And there's some other references in some of the other prophets. Lamentations, Ezekiel, and I heard somebody talk about Habakkuk.

Did I ever tell you that one time I had a Sunday school teacher that was determined to call it Habakkuk? Called Habakkuk, that's how it's pronounced, she said. Okay, well, maybe she's right and we're all wrong.

Might be Habakkuk. Archaeologists have unearthed statues of winged lions or winged, if you please, winged lions in the ruins of Babylon.

Very interesting. Lions, and I don't know if you remember back when I had a picture of the Ishtar Gate of Babylon. I showed some of those pictures, renditions of what Babylon perhaps looked like.

[ 25 : 39 ] In fact, the Ishtar Gate, they've unearthed most of it, so they know pretty much what it looked like. And on the Ishtar Gate on the walls, there were pictures of lions, majestic lions.

They even had statues of lions. And so, clearly, this beast represents the Babylonian Empire, specifically Nebuchadnezzar.

The rest of the verse also seems to point to Nebuchadnezzar. And I think this is interesting. The vision depicts Nebuchadnezzar's humbling and restoration recorded for us in chapter 4.

Remember when we studied chapter 4 and Nebuchadnezzar went up on the top of his palace and looked out over Babylon and he said, Oh, great Babylon. And he's so proud of himself. This is all that I've done. What did God do? Humbled him. Turned him into an animal. He's out eating grass and his fingernail grew out like claws and his hair was matted like feathers and just turned into a madman, turned into an animal.

[ 26 : 55 ] He was humbled. And that's the idea behind this phrase, wings were plucked off. So, he plucked his wings off. And it's a reference to his humbling.

But also, there's a reference to his restoration. Lifted up from the earth. That means to give a place of high honor. God restored him.

Allowed him to be a great, great king in the latter days of his life. And he was, it says, made to stand on two feet like a man. And a man's heart was given to him.

And it speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's humanitarian rule after his restoration. So, that's beast number one.

Beast number two. Beast number two. The savagery of the Persian Empire. The savagery of the Persian Empire.

[ 27 : 56 ] Verse five. And suddenly, another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth.

And they said, thus to it, arise, devour much flesh. Now, what we know, what do we know about the Medo-Persian Empire?

Well, we know that it was, it was huge, a huge empire, even larger than the Babylonian Empire. It was a huge empire and it was relentlessly savage in war.

We know that about the Persians. So, let's just notice a few details given by Daniel. First of all, it was like a bear.

Right? Like a bear, which was, I think, an apt symbol of size, of course. Huge bear. Can you imagine? Size, but also its relentless savagery in battle, in attacking.

[ 29 : 00 ] its prey. It says it was raised up on one side. What side? Well, the front side was raised up.

I mean, like you would imagine seeing a bear that's about to attack. So, its meaning is that it is standing. It's standing and going forward to attack.

And this is what Daniel saw in his vision. You know, you never want to see a bear like that. Not up close, anyway. And usually when you see that, you know, like on TV or in some movie or whatever, it's usually because that bear is mad and that bear is attacking.

And can you imagine seeing a large grizzly bear? I think we all can because we've seen pictures of it. A large grizzly bear standing up and coming after you.

Now, it had three ribs. This is interesting. Three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. Three ribs. meaning that it had devoured other beasts.

[ 30 : 01 ] All that's left are the ribs. So, what does this tell us? Well, it reveals this. The Medo-Persian Empire had conquered and devoured three major nations of that day.

First of all, we know the Babylonian Empire. Persians devoured the Babylonian Empire.

Remember, they marched into Babylon, destroyed Belshazzar, took over the kingdom of Babylon. But then, a little bit later, Lydia, the nation of Lydia, which would be kind of to the north of there, and then eventually Egypt. So, really, its empire was vast by that time, all the way from Egypt to the eastern reaches of India and further than that, perhaps.

It was told, it says here, told to arise, devour much flesh, meaning that the beast was commanded to devour more and more animals, or in this sense, in the sense of the symbolism, more and more nations.

Medo-Persian Empire would become larger than any nation that preceded it. And when the Bible says, by the way, when the Bible says, and they said thus to it, you know, to devour, it's referring to God's sovereign decree in the history of nations.

[ 31 : 31 ] And he decreed that they would be a conquering nation. A little bit of history of the Persians' overwhelming power in battle when Darius, and we've already met Darius, when Darius marched on Scythia, he mobilized nearly three-quarters of a million men in his army and six-hundred ships to destroy Scythia.

Later, when Xerxes marched against Greece, he took 2.5, this is a matter of history, 2.5 million troops with him.

And so, that tells you a little bit about the Persian Empire. Great, vast empire, a very strong empire, savage empire. All right, that gets us to the next beast.

And we call this the swiftness of the Greek Empire. The next empire is the Greek Empire. Verse 6, After this I looked and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. Now, I mentioned this already before, but after this, that phrase after this, means that the beasts, these four beasts came in sequence, one right after the other coming out of the sea.

[ 32 : 56 ] They weren't simultaneous. He's not looking at all four of them coming. It's one right after the other. Just like the world empires they represented coming one right after the other.

Now, the leopard, which is a beast of prey, is known for three things that make it a perfect representative of the Greek Empire. One, swiftness.

Swiftness, which had on its back four wings of a bird. Four wings of a bird. Alexander the Great invaded Asia Minor in 334 B.C.

and within 10 years after that, he had conquered the entire civilized world of the day. Just in 10 years. Look how fast that is. And guess how old he was when all that was done.

32 years old. Conquered the world in his early 30s. Swiftness. I mean, it spread across the globe or across the known world, civilized world of the day in really a relatively short time.

[ 34 : 13 ] The second thing would be its insatiable thirst for blood and more of it. The beast also had four heads. All right?

That's symbolic of a constant desire to devour. To devour. According to legend, by the way, Alexander, after Alexander had conquered the known world, the legend says he wept.

He wept that there were no more lands to conquer. Insatiable thirst for blood. And then third, fiercely territorial.

dominion was given to him. The world in Alexander's day before he died, the world was a Greek world.

It conquered all the world. Dominion was, the whole world was his dominion. Very indicative of the Greek empire. Now, the four heads though also signifies something else.

[ 35 : 16 ] The four heads of the leopard, prophetic of what Greece would become after the death of Alexander the Great. The empire would really basically be divided into four kingdoms.

Still be the Greek empire, but primarily four kingdoms. So there were four rulers in history. And I have given those to you. Adipater, I don't know if you've heard of any of these guys.

You might have heard of Cassander. That was, he was later called that. Greece and Macedonia.

Lysimachus, what today would be Bulgaria, Turkey, part of Turkey, large part of Asia Minor.

Seleucus, the first, Syria, Babylon, much of the Middle East. And then Ptolemy, the first, Egypt and Palestine. So, interesting.

The image has four heads. The wings signify the swiftness of its conquering of the world. And the four heads signify ultimately the four rulers of this empire before it would later be defeated.

[ 36 : 31 ] That brings us to the fourth beast, which we're going to wait for until next time and we'll introduce it. Beast four, the strength of the Roman Empire.

Obviously, we don't know what this beast would look like. The other three, at least the names that he used, bring up images in our mind because they're real animals today.

But, what is described about this beast doesn't fit with anything that we know of. Verse 7, After this I saw in the night visions and behold a fourth beast, dreadful, terrible, exceedingly strong.

It had huge iron teeth. It was devouring, breaking in pieces and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it.

Certainly so. And it had ten horns and then we'll see more about those horns as we move on. But now, again, I'll just introduce this.

[ 37 : 37 ] Unlike the previous three beasts, beast, no animal name is given by Daniel. All right, the others, lion, eagle, bear, leopards, bird wings, I mean, those are all recognizable, but Daniel gives no such name for this fourth beast.

The reason, he explains, Daniel said it was different from all the beasts that were before it. That is, I think the idea is it defied any zoological category known to Daniel.

I think it defied any zoological category known today. Different, totally different, and we'll focus on that beast and what happens to it next time.

And of course, this beast represents the Roman Empire, the mightiest of all of the four empires that are mentioned here.

An empire that, by the way, still exists today. Roman Empire was never defeated. It became Christian, so-called. Many would say that it will play a part in the end times as well, so we'll talk a little bit about that as we go along.

[ 38 : 49 ] Thank you.