

# Daniel 2: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”

Daniel 2:44

## Introduction:

1. Our spirits should be excited to consider the secrets of world history revealed early by our glorious God.
  - a. Fulfilled prophecy is the greatest proof of inspiration and integrity of the precious Scriptures.
  - b. Written by Daniel prior to 450 B.C., both breath-taking in scale and intricate in detail, these prophecies outline the major elements of world history from that time to the end of the world.
2. You should read and reread these chapters of Daniel with your children until they know them very well.
3. You should ask all your questions about each chapter as we proceed, so there is no confusion or doubt.
4. You are very privileged to have God's secret mysteries revealed to others and explained to you, for we have the glorious benefit of knowing Jesus Christ of Nazareth and being part of His eternal kingdom.

## I. The FORGOTTEN DREAM (2:1-13)

- A. The dream was shortly after Daniel graduated from the School of Eunuchs (1:5,18).
  1. Daniel was not promoted (2:48-49), while under the preparation of Ashpenaz.
  2. Nebuchadnezzar was not sole king when he captured Daniel (1:1; Jer 25:1).
- B. The dreams were impressive enough to wake him from sleep, likely in the night (2:1); but as is often the case, he could not recall the details or meaning of the dream.
- C. As pagan as can be, Nebuchadnezzar called those men he trusted for matters like this: the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans were called, but Daniel was not.
- D. These foolish pretenders ask the king for the dream, so they can “interpret” it for him.
- E. Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream by the providence of God for His and Daniel's glory.
  1. The king was smart enough to feign a loss of memory, but there is no evidence.
  2. Without convincing evidence, we take the words of the king as they are given.
  3. His words are these: “The thing is gone from me” (2:5) and “ye see the thing is gone from me” (2:8). We take these words in their simple and plain sense.
  4. If he didn't trust them, he could have played “pick a card” with them before; but he called them in the middle of the night, because he did trust them.
  5. Dreams often awake men; who know they had a dream, can remember the general emphasis of it, but cannot recall the details, even when they try: but if it were told to them perfectly by a “Daniel,” they would recognize it instantly.
  6. He explained his situation to men who claimed to be in contact with the stars, with the dead, with the spirits, with the gods, with the underworld, etc., etc.
  7. He fears their incompetence and fraud when they cannot tell him the dream, so he makes a typical statement of destruction or reward to extract their best effort.
  8. By this means God humiliated the wisdom of the Chaldeans and exalted Daniel.
- F. The threat of such dissection and destruction were common in those times and parts of the world (I Samuel 15:33; I Chronicles 20:3; II Kings 10:27; Ezra 6:11).
- G. As their inability to help him in his great need becomes clear, he identifies their stalling tactics (2:8) and lying interpretations to satisfy him until the situation changed (2:9).
- H. His request was unreasonable, but these presumptuous prophets deserved His wrath.

- II. The DREAM TELLER AND INTERPRETER (2:14-23)
- A. From 2:14 to 7:28, the original language of the Bible was Chaldean, not Hebrew; for all these verses were written in Chaldean, as a good center column reference will indicate.
  - B. Daniel spoke very discreetly to the man given the charge to kill him (Pr 15:1; Ec 10:4).
  - C. Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, had a prayer meeting; which is the most productive use of time, especially facing difficult or impossible tasks.
  - D. God answered their prayers and gave Daniel a night vision, and they blessed the Lord.
    1. What a prayer of worshipful, submissive, confident, and thankful words (19-23)!
    2. The expression “times and seasons” describes political environments, national situations, or the state of things (2:9; 7:25; 11:6; I Chron 29:30; Esther 1:13; Job 34:29; Ps 31:15; Ecc 3:1-8; Jer 27:5-7; I Thess 5:1; II Tim 4:2).
- III. The RECOVERED DREAM (2:24-35)
- A. Daniel was clearly not considered a magician, astrologer, sorcerer, or Chaldean (2:25).
  - B. Daniel begins speaking by pointing out the total inability of the king’s wise men (2:27).
  - C. Though the Babylonians had many gods, only the God of heaven could reveal it (2:28).
  - D. Daniel humbly confesses that no wisdom on his part brought the revelation (2:30).
    1. This is the honest humility that is necessary for any man to be great with God.
    2. God gave Daniel the interpretation for the protection and promotion of the four.
    3. God gave Daniel the interpretation for the instruction of this great monarch.
  - E. He saw a terrible image made from various metals forming different body parts.
  - F. The head was of fine gold, which is an illustrious, glorious, and very precious metal.
  - G. The shoulders, arms, and chest were of silver, which is a precious metal of lesser value.
  - H. The belly and thighs were of brass, which is a stronger metal with less glory and value.
  - I. His legs were of iron, a very strong metal that can crush all the others; and his feet were a mixture of iron and clay, which is a combination that does not meld together.
  - J. A supernatural stone hit the image’s feet causing the whole thing to crumble away.
  - K. The stone, though small in the beginning, became a mountain and filled the whole earth.
- IV. The INTERPRETATION (2:36-45).
- A. Let us consider some general facts and characteristics of the dream and interpretation.
    1. God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar what “shall be in the latter days” (2:28), “should come to pass hereafter” (2:29); “shall come to pass” (2:29), and “shall come to pass hereafter” (2:45); and we may understand this of the large political movements and kingdoms in the world to the end of the world, for the fifth monarchy was the final kingdom, which we know shall stand forever and ever.
    2. The dream and interpretation were certain and sure (2:45; Is 46:9-11; Ac 15:18).
    3. We may add more facts from further prophecies in Daniel, but in their place.
  - B. The head of gold: Babylon.
    1. Nebuchadnezzar was a king of kings, for he was glorious and over many kings.
    2. God gave him great glory and power (5:18-19; Jer 27:5-7; 28:14; Eze 29:18-20).
    3. God had made this man the absolute ruler over all the civilized world of the day.
  - C. The chest and arms of silver: Media-Persian.
    1. Darius the Mede (and Cyrus the Persian) take Babylon by diverting the waters of the Euphrates into the desert and enter the city by the riverbed, 456 B.C.
    2. This second kingdom would be inferior to the glory and power of the Babylonian kingdom, as silver is inferior to gold.
    3. The arms have no value here, but can signify Media and Persia (5:28; 7:5; 8:3).
    4. This second kingdom occurred in Daniel’s life, for he told Belshazzar (5:30-31).

- D. The belly and thighs of brass: Greece.
1. Alexander the Great, severely outnumbered, defeated Darius III for the final time at Gaugamela, in the plains of northern Iraq, and took Persia, 331 B.C.
  2. This third kingdom would be inferior to the Babylonian and Persian kingdoms.
  3. But it would rule over all the earth, for Alexander conquered as far as India.
  4. The first three metals are to be compared based on value and appearance.
- E. The legs and feet of iron and clay: Rome.
1. Octavian, who later became Caesar Augustus, defeated Marc Antony of Rome and Cleopatra VII of the Greek Ptolemies at the naval battle of Actium, 31 B.C.
  2. Rome was strong and crushed all opposition, as iron does gold, silver, and brass; its legions were formidable and for near 500 years ruled from Britain to Persia.
  3. Rome was divided into two kingdoms (the two legs?), which also weakened it.
  4. Rome degenerated into ten kingdoms, the ten toes, which were strong and weak.
  5. They, the pure and strong Roman stock of iron, tried to mingle themselves with the seed of baser men, the servants and subordinates of Orientals and barbarians.
  6. Rome tried to integrate various kingdoms by force, assimilation, marriage, and treaties, but the effort never fully worked. Romans were different than the Orientals and the barbarians. The barbarian nations finally overran it in 476.
- F. The stone cut without hands: Kingdom of Jesus Christ.
1. “Without hands” is a divine and spiritual kingdom (2:44; Mark 14:58; Col 2:11).
  2. The stone would strike the image in the feet – during the time of Roman rule.
  3. Jesus was born under Caesar Augustus, victorious Octavian of Rome (Luke 2:1).
  4. John and Jesus began preaching in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1-3).
  5. John announced the Messiah and God’s kingdom (Matt 3:1-2 cp Luke 16:16).
  6. The kingdom was a present reality and men were pressing into it all over Israel.
  7. It was not visible, for it was a spiritual kingdom (Luke 17:20-21; John 4:20-26).
  8. If the God of heaven set up a kingdom (2:44), it is the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20; Matt 19:24) and the kingdom of heaven (Matt 11:12; 19:23; 22:2; 23:13).
  9. It would begin small, but would grow to be a great mountain and fill the earth.
    - a. Its king was born in a manger to poor parents without any earthly notice.
    - b. At the time of His death, the dedicated followers only numbered 120.
    - c. Fifty days later it was 3120, and it soon turned the world upside down.
  10. It would break the Roman Empire to pieces, which it did by the gospel of Jesus.
    - a. An Empire built by ruthless force now faced spreading Christian virtue.
    - b. Constantine thought he saw a cross and gave Christianity legal freedom.
  11. It broke the four empires to pieces and left only their chaff – small nations.
  12. The stone became a great mountain to fill the earth – took citizens everywhere – including us in the United States of America on the North American continent.
  13. Jesus of Nazareth was crowned King after rising again, 30 A.D. (Ac 2:32-36).
  14. Jesus and His kingdom was a Stone to break or to grind, depending on your obedience to it (Matthew 21:33-46; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:19-22; I Peter 2:4-10).
  15. Jesus presently reigns as King of kings with a rod of iron breaking the nations in pieces (Revelation 2:25-26; 12:5; 19:15; Psalm 2:1-12; 110:1-2,5-7).
  16. And a day is coming in which He will shew that He is the Blessed and Only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords (I Tim 6:13-16; I Cor 15:23-28).
  17. Citizenship is by repentance, faith, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, when we swear allegiance to Him as Lord and Saviour, copy in water the most important event in His life, and commit to keep His commandments for life.
  18. Jesus will reign over this kingdom forever and ever, as He is an eternal King.

19. The kingdom of God is permanent and perpetual; it will never be destroyed!
20. It will destroy all these kingdoms (their remaining influence) and stand forever.

V. The RESPONSE (2:46-49)

- A. Rather than killing Daniel, as he intended (2:13), Nebuchadnezzar worships him: the great reversals of fortune in the history of the world are by the power of the living God.
- B. God is magnified highly by the world's greatest monarch through this event, as he gives honor and glory to Jehovah for His supremacy over all gods and kings and His wisdom.
- C. As Daniel had stated (2:30), God used the interpretation to exalt four Jewish captives, who were now promoted over all the wise men of Babylon. Give God the glory!

**Conclusion:**

1. Learn these chapters well, as they are interesting, faith building, Christ-honoring, and truth preserving.
2. The whole of human history is a march toward the arrival of the Redeemer and His rule over all things.
3. Baptism is the glorious act of citizenship, in which we swear allegiance to Jesus Christ of Nazareth and follow Him by copying in water His burial and resurrection.
4. Our lives should be simple, by the rules of our King, according to His example, which all should see.
5. Submit to Jesus Christ today, Who is the King of kings. If any man love not the Lord Jesus ...