

This chapter opens with the background to Daniel being given the opportunity to interpret the king's dream.

Dan. 2:1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

Dan. 2:2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Magician = a horoscopist

Astrologer = practice enchantment

Sorcerer = to whisper a spell, to enchant or practice magic

Chaldean = well versed in literature or wise men and expert astronomers that connected astronomical phenomena to human events (It was from this group that the wise men came searching for Jesus.)

Dan. 2:3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

It seems that Nebuchadnezzar instinctively knew that this dream was important and was important to understand.

Dan. 2:4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

Dan. 2:5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

"The thing is gone from me" = "Here is what I have decided" (CJB)

Dan. 2:6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

Dan. 2:7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

Dan. 2:8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

Dan. 2:9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but one* decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

Obviously, the king did not trust these men.

Dan. 2:10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore *there is no* king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

Dan. 2:11 And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

Dan. 2:12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon.

These verses (3-12) set the scene and describe the character of Nebuchadnezzar—demanding and ruthless, one who did not expect to have his will thwarted. It stood out to me that he was willing to have all the wise men destroyed without first hearing from all the wise men.

Tony Garland makes a thoughtful observation concerning the image: “In its essential posture of self-will, self-aggrandizement, and defiance of the one true God, the composite image represents a sustained revolt of organized human society and government against the Lord.”

Dan. 2:13 And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

Dan. 2:14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king’s guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon:

Dan. 2:15 He answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, Why *is* the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

Dan. 2:16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

When Arioch came to kill Daniel and his friends, Daniel wanted to know why the king had made such a rash decision. Arioch must have respected Daniel since he took the time to explain the whole situation. Obviously, he asked Arioch for time to approach the king. The king did not intimidate Daniel; he asked the king for some extra time to determine the meaning of the dream. He did not say that he might be able to interpret the dream; he said that he would interpret the dream (which included revealing the dream itself). Daniel’s confidence was in stark contrast to the other “wise men” and must have influenced Nebuchadnezzar to grant his request.

Dan. 2:17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

Dan. 2:18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon.

Daniel knew that there is power in prayer and evidently felt that the more support he had in prayer the better. The Hebrew friends approached God in light of His mercy. Their motive was to have their lives spared. They weren’t thinking past their immediate physical safety.

I think verse 18 implies that if Daniel and his friends had not prayed, they would have been killed. Our choices are important, and the power of prayer is not to be

taken lightly. Daniel knew this; verse 17 of chapter 1 indicates that he was aware of possessing a gift in understanding dreams.

I am sure that the young Jewish men were familiar with the psalms.

Psalms 50:15 "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

Psalms 145:17–19 "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them."

Dan. 2:19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Dan. 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

Dan. 2:21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Dan. 2:22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

Dan. 2:23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter.

As I look at this section, I am reminded of the scripture where Jesus says, "according to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). Daniel asked for his friends to support him in prayer, but he had declared to the king that he would reveal the dream. I am so amazed every time I see examples of that kind of faith. I truly have faith that God can do anything He chooses at any time, but I'm not sure enough of myself to truly believe that He will act according to my request in a given situation. I often attribute that to not trusting my motives. "Lord, increase my faith."

One of the important things to note is the acknowledgement that it is God who removes and sets up kings. It is God who changes times and seasons; He set them in motion as the Creator. It is God that is the source of knowledge to teachers and thinkers. I think the context connects this knowledge to spiritual understanding. God is the one who reveals deep (profound, unsearchable) and secret things (hidden, concealed). Although God created man in His own image and gave him the ability to make choices, He is still in control and will accomplish His purpose through placing men of His choosing in positions of leadership. He reveals wisdom and knowledge in accordance with his purposes for each individual. We have nothing that we have not been given.

John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Daniel's prayers are always beautiful. Once he received the answer to his prayer, he was very quick to praise God for it. Daniel acknowledges that all wisdom and power belongs to God, and that He delegates these attributes to whomsoever He chooses. Daniel recognizes his God-given gifts of wisdom and ability and expresses his thankfulness for the answer to his very specific request.

I liked another observation by Mr. Garland: "Daniel's view of God differs from much worship one hears in Christian media and churches nowadays. The common fare today is man-centered worship. It is 'all about me' and 'what God did for me.' As we see, Daniel's worship is God-centered. He extols the greatness of God's attributes and God's qualities."

Personally, I think worship should be a mixture of both—praising God for who He is and gratitude for what He has done for me.

Dan. 2:24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

Dan. 2:25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

Dan. 2:26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

Dan. 2:27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

Dan. 2:28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

Dan. 2:29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

Dan. 2:30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

Daniel goes to the officer given the command to destroy the wise men and asks for an audience with the king so that he may tell him his dream and give the interpretation. The audience is granted, and the king asks Daniel if he can reveal his dream and what it means. Daniel is very quick to tell the king that there is no man that can do what he requests; however, there is a God in heaven who is communicating to the king through his dream.

Daniel goes on to tell the king that this dream is about future things; the Hebrew word even implies *end times*. Again, Daniel emphasizes that this knowledge is not coming from him. He is no wiser than any other man. He does say that this

dream and what it represents will be important to future generations (“their sakes”). Also interesting to me is that God is revealing this information for Nebuchadnezzar to “know the thoughts of thy heart.” God is always concerned about and reaching out to the individual.

Daniel now proceeds to reveal Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a “great image.”

Dan. 2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible.

Dan. 2:32 This image’s head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

Dan. 2:33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Dan. 2:34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Dan. 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Dan. 2:36 *This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.*

I think the “we” is a reference to Daniel speaking as representative of all the wise men. Then again, as I think about it some more, it could be a reference to God speaking through Daniel through the inspiration of the Spirit.

Dan. 2:37 Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

Even as Daniel recognizes Nebuchadnezzar as the most powerful king on earth, he is careful to credit that position as a gift from the God of heaven. The prophet Jeremiah also emphasized this truth.

Jeremiah 27:4–5 “And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters; I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.”

Dan. 2:38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.

Dan. 2:39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

Daniel identifies Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold on the image. I think this is more a reference to him as representative of his kingdom (Babylon) because of the wording in verse 39. Point is made that the succeeding world kingdoms will be inferior to Babylon. Inferior how? The Hebrew for the word *inferior* indicates

“low.” Is this because the “kings” of the succeeding kingdoms will not possess the individual power that Nebuchadnezzar exerted over his kingdom? He seemed to be a dictator with no limitations by the law. We know that Darius was bound by the law (cf 6:8). The succeeding kingdoms seemed to cover a lot more territory than Babylon.

Dan. 2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

Dan. 2:41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

Dan. 2:42 And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

Dan. 2:43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Though the metals decrease in value, they seem to increase in strength. Maybe this is because they are increasing in size and encompassing more land and people. Brief mention is made of the second and third kingdoms, but more is revealed about the fourth. Its influence will be very dominating on the earth, but it will eventually be divided. The resulting divisions of this kingdom will still be quite strong; they just won't be as stable as the original kingdom.

“they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men” – This is a very puzzling phrase to me. I immediately thought of the sons of God mating with the women on earth as in Genesis 6. The wording seems to reference “they” as different from men. Who are “they?”

The CJB translates verse 43 with another possibility and the ESV supports it: “You saw the iron mixed with clay; that means that they will cement their alliances by intermarriages; but they won't stick together any more than iron blends with clay.”

The interpretation of Daniel's dream in chapter 8 affirms with world history that the kingdoms being referenced are:

- the breast and arms of silver = the combined kingdom of the Medes and the Persians
- the belly and thighs of brass = the kingdom of Greece
- the legs of iron = the Roman Empire

The Roman Empire was eventually divided into Eastern and Western seats of power before losing world influence altogether. The question arises as to why no reference is made to other great empires such as the Ottoman Turks. I think the key is that the scripture is a revelation of God's purposes for man and planet earth through His dealings with the nation of Israel. When the Romans conquered Israel in 70 AD, Israel ceased to be a nation; and its people were

dispersed throughout the empire. Biblical reference to events on planet earth basically resumes at a time when Israel is once again established as a nation. Much is revealed regarding God's dealing with the "church," "the body of Christ"; but the rest of human history is basically ignored until the time that God again resumes His dealings with the nation of Israel and the nations/kingdoms that have direct influence upon her.

It is clear that each kingdom represented in this dream includes much of the territory of the preceding kingdom. Since the Spirit only referenced four kingdoms consistently in the revelations to Daniel in this book, we can assume that the Kingdom represented by the ten toes is considered part of that fourth kingdom—the Roman Empire. Just as Israel was reborn, the Roman Empire will be reborn to fulfill her destiny as the kingdom of Antichrist. If that were not the case, the Spirit would have referenced a fifth kingdom. The two legs of iron representing the Roman Empire were strong and powerful. History shows that the influence of the Roman Empire remained powerful for about 500 years. The fact that the toes were part iron and part clay indicates a change in the makeup of the kingdom and its ability to endure as an influential world power. The kingdom of Antichrist will enjoy its greatest influence for only 3.5 years, as we will learn in later chapters of this book as well as through the study of the book of Revelation.

In reading through this section again, it seemed clear to me that the mingled seed was a reference to the Kingdom of Antichrist, the final form of this 4th Kingdom. Scripture is clear that the power of Satan and lying wonders will be prevalent at that time. It stands to reason that demon possession and unholy unions between fallen angels and women will once again become prevalent as well—as in the days of Noah before God judged the world by the flood.

Dan. 2:44 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.

Dan. 2:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

"these kings" – I believe this is referencing the kings ruling the ten parts of the kingdom represented by the ten toes. Just as each of these four kingdoms continued to envelope the previous one, these ten kings are representative of the whole.

At the time of "these kings" God will set up a kingdom on earth that will never be destroyed. It will be a kingdom that consumes the land and peoples of all the kingdoms that have existed before it. It is an eternal kingdom.

In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a “stone cut out of the mountain without hands.” That stone was thrown or dropped on the feet (the ten toes) of the image; this resulted in the destruction of the whole image. This image to me is representative of the whole God-rejecting world. The stone then grew into a great mountain and filled the whole earth (v35); in other words, it becomes the final world kingdom, God’s kingdom, which lasts forever.

“stone cut out...without hands” – I think this is a direct reference to the fact that God is the one who destroys these kingdoms through His Son Jesus. He will have no help from man.

Isaiah 63:3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

Jesus is the one who will destroy the kingdom of antichrist. He is referenced as a *stone* in other scriptures as well.

Acts 4:10-11 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

1Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Daniel clearly declares to the king that God is revealing the future to him. He further emphasizes that God’s words are true and His prophecy certain. Daniel also emphasizes that his interpretation of the dream is also true and certain.

Dan. 2:46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

Dan. 2:47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

When King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face to worship Daniel, verse 47 makes it clear that he was recognizing Daniel’s God. He also commanded that a sacrifice be made and incense burned in honor of Daniel’s God. He still only recognized Daniel’s God as one of many gods; but he did acknowledge that Daniel’s God was the most powerful of gods to be able to reveal such secrets/mysteries.

Garland makes another interesting observation on these verses:

“Nebuchadnezzar falling prostrate before Daniel prefigures Gentiles bowing the knee before Jesus and the eventual submission of Gentile governments below Israel in the millennial kingdom.”

Dan. 2:48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon.

Dan. 2:49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

King Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel many great gifts and delegated him as the ruler of Babylon and as the greatest in authority of all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel didn't forget his friends. He requested that the king allow him to delegate authority regarding the rulership of Babylon to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; this request was evidently granted. Daniel basically headed up the government and represented the king regarding matters of justice in the land.