

A Dream that will come true (Daniel 2:1-49 and Matthew 6:28-34) 11-Aug-2024

Daniel 2:1-49

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. **2** So the king summoned the magicians, enchanter, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, **3** he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

4 Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

5 The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. **6** But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

7 Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

8 Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: **9** If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

10 The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. **11** What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

¹² This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³ So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

¹⁴ When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. ¹⁵ He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. ¹⁶ At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

¹⁷ Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ¹⁸ He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven ²⁰ and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

²¹ He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.

He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

²² He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

²³ I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Daniel Interprets the Dream

²⁴ Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

²⁵ Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

²⁶ The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

²⁷ Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

²⁹ “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. ³⁰ As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

³¹ “Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. ³² The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. ³⁴ While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ “This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. ³⁷ Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; ³⁸ in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of

the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

³⁹ “After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. ⁴⁰ Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. ⁴¹ Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. ⁴² As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

⁴⁴ “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

“The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honour and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

⁴⁸ Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. ⁴⁹ Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

Matthew 6:28-34

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Sermon: “A Dream that will come true”

Please turn your Bible to **Daniel chapter 2** – starting at verse 1. We will briefly mention our New Testament reading from **Matthew 6** also.

There is an outline if you would like to take down some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

Context

[Slide-Context]

- It's around about **605BC**

- Last week we left the **people of Southern Israel** – living in **exile** in a **strange land** – called **Babylon** – ruled by the **most powerful man in the world** at the time – **King Nebuchadnezzar** – who is ruler of this huge kingdom of Babylon
- King **Nebuchadnezzar** has **everything at his feet** – he's **swallowed up many nations** – and **taken** the **most gifted people** from these nations – and he's **indoctrinated them** – and built them into a **master race**
- What **Nebuchadnezzar** doesn't realize yet – is that he **only has power and authority** because **God has allowed it** (John 19:11)
- What could possibly **stop Nebuchadnezzar?**
- Then he has a dream...

Humans think they are in control – but they're not (vv1-16)

[Slide-Control?]

- We pick up the story in Daniel chapter 2 verse 1 – where King **Nebuchadnezzar** is **troubled** and can't sleep
- He's greatly **troubled by what he dreamt** – verse 2
- And he **summoned his wise men** – magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers - to **tell him what his dream means**
- Why is King Nebuchadnezzar **so troubled?**
- Well – **he thinks he is in control** – he is head of this great kingdom – but **something about this dream** has him **so troubled** that he's **uneasy about the future** – maybe he's not in control after all?

- Nebuchadnezzar is so troubled – he **uses a carrot and stick approach** with his wise men – in vv5-6
- If the wise can tell him what his dream is and what it means – **they will get gifts and rewards and great honour** – if they can't tell him what his dream is and what it means – **then Nebuchadnezzar will chop the wise men into pieces and have their homes turned into rubble!**
- You see the problem Nebuchadnezzar has is – that **deep down he knows these wise men are not up to the job** – they want him to tell them what the dream is – so they can then look up in one of their Babylonian “meaning of dreams” text books and come up with an answer
- The **wise men** kind of **give themselves away** in v11 when they say “*What the King asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the King except the gods, and they do not live among humans*”
- What the King and wise men all realize is that there are **some things which are beyond human understanding and beyond human control**
- **Humans think they are in control – but they're not – that's our 1st point!**
- Nebuchadnezzar is so frustrated and angry – v12 – he **orders the execution of all the wise men** in Babylon – which **includes Daniel and his mates** (v13)
- We **have to be impressed with Daniel** when Arioch the man in charge of the execution of all the wise men turns up in v14
- Remember **God gave Daniel knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning** back in 1:17 – so **Daniel speaks to Arioch with wisdom**

and tact – and v15 – **inquires why the King has issued such a harsh decree?**

And Daniel - **following the proper chain of command** – v16 – is able to **speak directly with the King** and **gain time to interpret** the dream.

Notice Daniel doesn't do what the other wise men did – and ask the King to tell him the dream so he can give the meaning – **Daniel just asks for time to come up with the interpretation.**

- This **tactic placates the King**

It is God who is in control (vv17-35)

[Slide-God is in control]

- **Daniel is wise enough to know** that
- **It is God who is in control** – that's our second point – in vv17-35
- **Daniel is wise enough to know** he needs to do more than **just buy time**
- So, in vv17-18 – **Daniel shares the problem with his mates** – and urges them to **plea for mercy from God** concerning the **mystery of Nebuchadnezzar's dream** – and to also **pray for deliverance from the King's order to execute all the wise men of Babylon!**

Application: We must surely **learn from Daniel** here that when we face a difficult situation – we need to 1st - **be wise and tactful with those who seem to have control over us** – and 2nd - then **go to the ONLY ONE who is really in control of all things** – and **pray** to Him – and **ask for His wisdom and guidance and intervention**. Just like we do with **our prayer chain** here at church!

- Having prayed – v19 - **Daniel receives a vision from God** which reveals the **mystery of Nebuchadnezzar's dream!**
- **Daniel is so thankful** for God's revelation of this mystery that **he breaks out in a prayer of thanks and praise to God** – in vv20-23
- It's an **amazing prayer** with so many truths about the **God of Heaven & Earth**.

From Daniel's prayer, we learn:

- God is **all knowing** and **all powerful!**
- His **name is to be praised forever** and ever!
- He is in control of times and seasons of human history and human lives
- He **decides when Kings are deposed** and **when Kings are placed on thrones**
- He is the **only one** with **true wisdom**
- He is the **only one** who can **reveal deep and hidden things**
- He **knows the dangers of the dark and evil forces of the world** – because
He **is the source of light**

Application: Again, surely, we are **meant to learn from Daniel** that when God does answer our prayers – **we must not forget to thank and praise God for answering us!**

- **Daniel wastes no time in going to the King with the answer** to his mysterious dream

- Again, Daniel **follows the chain of command** – going to Arioch – v24 – and is **ushered into the King's presence** v25
- Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar – vv27-28 – *there are no wise men on the Earth who can explain the mystery of the King's dream – but only God in Heaven can reveal such mysteries!*

Application: Again, a lesson **we can learn from Daniel** – is to **make sure we give God the glory** – and **not claim God's glory for ourselves!**

In vv31-35 – Daniel describes Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Nebuchadnezzar saw **an enormous statue which was awesome in appearance**.

[Slide-Statue]



The Statue consists of:

- Head of **Gold**
- Chest and arms of **Silver**
- Belly and thighs of **Bronze**
- Legs of **Iron**
- Feet partly of **Iron** and **Clay**

And a rock or stone cut, not by human hands – which struck the statue and on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. This rock represents Jesus Christ.

None of the wise men **would ever** have been able to describe Nebuchadnezzar's **dream** – not even Daniel.

Only God can do that!

Because – **it is God who is in control**

God has a forever Kingdom that cannot be stopped (vv36-49)

[Slide-Metals of the Statue]

Daniel goes on to give **God's interpretation** of the dream of the statue

And what we see in vv36-49 is that – **God has a forever Kingdom that cannot be stopped!**

Daniel says that Nebuchadnezzar is currently the king of kings and that God has given Nebuchadnezzar dominion and power and might and glory.

All humankind and animals are in Nebuchadnezzar's hands.

Daniel says that the **gold** of the statue represents **Nebuchadnezzar** and the **Kingdom of Babylon** (v38)

The **silver** represents **another kingdom** after Nebuchadnezzar's which is **inferior**.

Followed by **another Kingdom**, represented by the **bronze**, which will rule over the whole Earth. Then a **fourth Kingdom**, strong as **iron** – which will break all the other Kingdoms. The feet and toes, which are partly **iron and clay** – represent **a divided Kingdom**; yet it will have some strength.

The mixture of iron and clay also represent **a fifth Kingdom** which is partly strong and partly brittle and also represents a mixture of people, which will not remain united, just like iron and clay doesn't mix.

[Slide-Kingdoms of the Statue]



The most likely interpretation of these kingdoms is:

1st Head of Gold=Kingdom of **Babylon**

2nd Chest and arms of Silver = Kingdom of **Mede and Persia**

3rd Belly and thighs of Bronze = Kingdom of **Greece**

4th Legs of Iron = Kingdom of **Rome**

All these **Kingdoms followed on from each other replacing the previous one.**

But regardless of what kingdoms these precious metals represent in the statue.

The main point of this chapter is **verses 44 and 45.**

And that is - in the time of these Kingdoms - **God will set up His Kingdom** – the

Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ – and His Kingdom will **never be destroyed** and it will crush all the other kingdoms represented by the metals in the statue. **The**

rock that is cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands, represents none

other than **King Jesus** – the forever King who came 2000 years ago to usher in His Kingdom and He will come again - to establish His Kingdom forever – and to judge the world.

You see **Jesus is the foundation stone or cornerstone of this Kingdom.**

People can either **believe in Jesus and build their lives on Jesus as the cornerstone of their lives - or - they can stumble over Jesus and not believe in Him and be crushed** (Matthew 21:42-44)

(pause)

As for this **fifth kingdom of feet made of clay and iron.**

Opinions differ as to its identity

Some have tried to identify **various periods in Europe's history** as the **clay-and-iron feet**

Some **claim** the **feet represent the divided remnants of Rome** before being **"conquered" by Christianity.**

Still others **believe that the clay/iron kingdom is yet to come and is the kingdom of the Antichrist which will be a "revived Roman Empire."** **This last theory seems to be the best. We know, according to Revelation 17:12-13, that the Antichrist will lead a coalition of ten nations (the statue's ten toes?). And we know that Christ will defeat the forces of the Antichrist (Revelation 17:14). After that, Jesus will firmly establish His forever kingdom—as the rock that smashes the other kingdoms of this world and they will "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).**

Notice too: The various metals mentioned in the statue **decrease in value and quality which most likely represent our world which is rapidly deteriorating,**

declining and becoming more ungodly, as the time for Jesus to return approaches.

Daniel concludes the interpretation in verse 45 with the words:

“The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

You see, **God has a forever Kingdom that cannot be stopped!**

Nebuchadnezzar knew this interpretation to be true which is why – in v46 - Nebuchadnezzar **fell prostrate before Daniel**; paid him honour and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him.

The King said – v47 - that ‘***Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries***’

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged no-one else could say what his dream was or give an interpretation. However, Nebuchadnezzar **does not denounce his other false gods but only that they are inferior to the one true God!**

Nebuchadnezzar **could have repented** and even **released the exiles** and returned them to Israel.

Daniel is rewarded by Nebuchadnezzar and placed in a **high position** and lavished with **many gifts**. Daniel is **made ruler of the entire province of Babylon** and placed **in charge of all the wise men**. Daniel negotiated **jobs for his friends**, Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego who were made administrators over the province of Babylon, whilst Daniel remained in the royal court.

Throughout this chapter: **God is in control** of a) giving Daniel the **gift of understanding dreams and visions** (1:17) and b) **giving Nebuchadnezzar a favourable disposition towards Daniel.**

The bottom line is – **all the Earthly Kingdoms are temporary** – they **don't last forever** – **all those kingdoms** represented by the statue are **long gone.**

God's Kingdom is a forever kingdom – ruled by a forever King – King Jesus.

How do we gain access to this forever kingdom?

[Slide-gain access]

Jesus tells us how - in Mark 1:15

“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Our Response (Matthew 6:28-34)

[Slide-Response]

So, as we **live in this fallen and broken world** – our **Babylon** – and we wait to live in Jesus' forever Kingdom in Heaven – how do we respond.

Our NT passage – from **Matthew 6:28-34** - gives us our response

1. 1st - **Don't worry about this world – don't let the problems of this world get us down –don't let wars and rumours of wars consume us - don't let sickness and cancer consume our thoughts – trust God through it all**

Don't worry about our bosses who Lord it over us – don't worry about the company we work for – in the last 50 years the average lifespan of an Australian company has fallen from 65 years down to 10 years. We're going to outlive most companies!

Don't worry about people who seem to be controlling us – they are not in control – **God is in control** – so instead we do as v33 says – ***we seek God's Kingdom first and all these things will be given to you as well.***

This means **God is our first priority** and not **our last resort**. That's what Daniel did – He **sought God first** – and **trusted God first** – He **pleased God first** not humans – and when Daniel did this– then **all things were given to him as well** – He was given the **gift of interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream** – he was instrumental in **saving the wise men** – and given a **new position in Babylon** – and acquired **jobs for his mates**.

[Slide-question]

2. 2nd – we need to question what we invest our time and energy in – are we investing our time and energy in things that won't last – like Nebuchadnezzar did?
- Or are we investing our time and energy in God's Kingdom work? Things like: teaching our children about Jesus; discipling people; showing mercy and

compassion; building relationships and taking care of our own spiritual well-being by praying and reading God's Word.

[Slide-Be a Daniel]

3rd – notice - Daniel was a type of Jesus – a saviour figure – his action saved all the wise men in Babylon. We can imitate Daniel –and be a saviour figure - we can be God's instruments - sharing our faith in Jesus with others – and being bold and not being afraid – and in doing so -- save people from Hell and destruction – and by doing so – **we are storing up treasures in Heaven!**

Let's pray.

Father God, we thank you that you are in control of all things – and we thank you for sending Jesus – the King of a forever Kingdom that can never be destroyed.

Thank you that because of Jesus – we can be part of this forever Kingdom.

Help us to constantly seek your Kingdom before anything else – and to invest time and energy in your Kingdom work – and please give us opportunities to share the good news of Jesus and His forever Kingdom with others. In Jesus name, Amen.