

(Daniel) Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon explores Nebuchadnezzar's troubling dream, highlighting God's sovereignty and the power of prayer through Daniel's experience.

Duration: 53:17

Scripture: Daniel 2:20-23, Daniel 2:44-45, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Nebuchadnezzar"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar as recorded in the book of Daniel. The dream involves a great image with different parts made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay. The preacher emphasizes the specificity and accuracy of the dream, highlighting that it was a divine revelation from God. He then focuses on the significance of a stone, cut without hands, that destroys the image and becomes a great mountain, representing the establishment of God's eternal kingdom. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the power and wisdom of God, and the importance of God's revelation to humanity.

Transcript

Tonight in Daniel chapter 2, we're going to talk about this amazing dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had. This is one of the most important chapters in the Bible regarding prophecy. Now, I say one of the most because it's interesting.

The themes of this chapter are repeated in a later chapter in the book of Daniel, but from a different perspective entirely. And a chapter like this does something extremely important, something extremely important for your Christian life. It should give you more confidence in God and his word.

If you listen carefully both to what I say, to what the Bible says, to what the Holy Spirit says to your heart, you're going to leave here tonight with more confidence in God's word and in his ability to speak to your life than what you came in with. So Nebuchadnezzar chapter 1, Nebuchadnezzar chapter 1, that's silly. Daniel chapter 1, beginning, Daniel chapter 2, excuse me, beginning of verse 1. Now, in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar is the king, or if you will, the emperor of the mighty Babylonian empire, the empire that conquered Jerusalem, that took Daniel and his companions from their home in Jerusalem and took

them by force as exiles and put them in the University of Babylon, training civil servants, the MBA program of Babylon, and training him in that whole system. And we saw last week how Daniel and his companions, at least three of them with him, the vast majority of the Jewish young men who were taken away captive to Babylon didn't care about what they ate, but Daniel and his three companions did. And we saw how God blessed Daniel and the courageous stand that he took in the midst of all of that.

In any regard, this great king Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. And if you say, see it right there, the dream troubled him. If you ever had that experience, I'm not like that.

When I have dreams, I almost never remember them. I'll wake up with just sort of a fleeting memory of a dream. And then it leaves me almost immediately.

I guess I sleep very soundly and just that the dreams don't hang around with my wife. On the other hand, sometimes she has very entertaining dreams and she'll wake up and tell me about her entertaining dream. Now Nebuchadnezzar's dream wasn't entertaining.

It was troubling. So troubling was that he couldn't sleep. And I've never had this happen to me.

Maybe you've had it happen to you. You've had a dream that was so disturbing, so troubling that you couldn't go back to sleep. Well, that was the case for Nebuchadnezzar.

Now look, as it continues here in verse two, then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. Now I know I'm going to read a little bit into the text here, but if I was making a film of this, I would write the screenplay to where Nebuchadnezzar does this in the middle of the night.

You know, maybe his dream happens at one o'clock in the morning and he's so troubled, you know, he wakes up in a cold sweat. He's panicked because he had this dream and it's very disturbing to him. And then he can't sleep.

It's two o'clock and he can't sleep. It's three o'clock and he can't sleep. And he's a king.

He's a mighty king, an absolute dictator of a man. And they're not people accustomed to waiting for anything. And so he says, well, I need to talk to my wise men.

I need to talk to my circle of counselors about this. Bring them in now. Well, it's three o'clock in the morning.

I don't care. Bring them in now. So they all wander into the king's presence, you know, and they're all sleepy.

They've all been woken up. And so they came and they stood before the king. Now, verse three, and the king said to them, I've had a dream and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.

Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, Oh, King, live forever. Tell your servants the dream and we will give you the interpretation. I need to just sort of a textual note here.

Beginning now at verse four of Daniel, chapter two, all the way through the end of chapter seven, it's not written in Hebrew. It's written in Aramaic, which was the official court language, the government language of the Babylonian kingdom. Interesting.

This is the only section in the Old Testament that's written in Aramaic. The rest of it is written in the Hebrew language. So just sort of an interesting note for you.

It begins now to be written in Aramaic. So in any regard, the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic saying, Oh, King, live forever. Tell your servants the dream and we'll give you an interpretation.

This is probably something they're very familiar with. King has a dream. Important person has a dream.

Tell us the dream. Okay, we'll make an interpretation. I don't know if you've ever been in this dream interpretation business.

There's even a, a column in the Los Angeles times where people write letters to somebody and say, this was my dream. And they're supposed to tell them what the dream is about or what it represents. And you know, as well as I, that people are, you know, it's six of one half dozen of the other.

I could tell you that your dream meant one thing. Another person could tell you a dream meant nothing. And who knows who cares? It's just guesswork.

So, so the, the, the counselors aren't worried because who can prove them wrong. You just say, well, this is what your dream means. King.

It means you're a great guy and everybody loves you. Go back to bed. Oh, okay, great.

Well the king isn't going to let them up the hook that easily. Verse five, but the king answered and said to the Chaldeans, my decision is firm. If you did not make known the dream to me and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces and your houses shall be made an ash heap.

However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore, tell me the dream and its interpretation. Well, the, the Chaldeans, the wise men, the astrologers, they looked at him and they blinked Mr. Nebuchadnezzar, you're crazy.

You, you don't understand how this works. You tell us the dream and we tell you the interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar was a smart man though.

He knows that any fool could dream up any interpretation about the dream. But if you really had a message from God, you could tell him what the dream was. And then it's interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar knows that the guy who can tell him what the dream was could also give him the real interpretation of the dream instead of just some folder all cooked up by a creative imagination. Therefore Nebuchadnezzar comes and he says, you must tell me what the dream is. Now he was not expecting something that was out of these guys leagues.

Supposedly these men had come to their position that the Chaldeans, which was a class of wise men in the Babylonian kingdom, the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, these were all men who pretended to be in contact with supernatural knowledge that was on their business card. Chaldean in touch with the world beyond and they'd lay it down. Nebuchadnezzar put up a shut up.

You've got supernatural knowledge. Let's see it. Very wise man.

But then again, he's also a very brutal man. When Nebuchadnezzar made threats as cutting them in pieces, it was no idle threat and they knew it. These guys knew that Nebuchadnezzar was the kind of guy who could do this.

As we discussed last week, Nebuchadnezzar was the kind of man who this is what he did to one of the Kings of Judah. He got the King's sons in front of the King and then he murdered the King's sons right before the King's eyes. And then as soon as he murdered him, he went up to the King or actually he had one of his men do it.

I'm sure. And he gouged out the eyes of the Judean King. Therefore, the last thing that that King saw the last memory that he saw for the rest of his day was his own sons being murdered before his eyes.

That's the kind of guy Nebuchadnezzar was. So they know he can make good on it. Verse seven, they answered again and said, let the King tell his servants the dream and we will give its interpretation.

The King answered and said, I know for certain that you would gain time because you see that my decision is firm. If you do not make known the dream to me, there's only one decree for you, for you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the time has changed. Therefore, tell me the dream and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.

Tough customer, this Nebuchadnezzar, but you see that he's entirely rational. He's thought this through this thing through logically and he's confronting the soothsayers, the Chaldeans, the sorcerers, with his logic. Verse 10, the Chaldeans answered the King and said, there is not a man on earth who can tell the King's matter.

Let me ask you this. Is that true or not true? Well, yes and no, because the knowledge was not with any man, but there was a man in close contact with God who could receive the knowledge. So in any regard, verse 10, there's not a man on earth who can tell the King's matter.

Therefore, no King, Lord or ruler has ever asked such a thing of any magician, astrologer, Chaldean. This is an operating procedure. Nebuchadnezzar, you're going outside of the rules.

You're not going to get very far with a man like Nebuchadnezzar telling him you're going outside of the rules. He makes the rules. Verse 11.

It's a difficult thing that the King requires and there's no other who can tell it to the King, except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh. Mr. Nebuchadnezzar, your Highness, this knowledge sits with the gods alone. And Nebuchadnezzar is thinking in his mind when he says, I thought you guys were in contact with the gods.

That's what you say. That's what you pretend to be. Apparently you're not in contact with the gods.

And then if you notice what they say at the end of verse 11, they talk about the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh. You know, as far as these pagan magicians and astrologers and wise men knew this was true, they did not know what we know so plainly in Jesus Christ that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. You almost wonder if there's not a ache, a longing in the voice of these wise men when they say, you know, the gods are out there and they're distant.

They don't speak to us. Nebuchadnezzar hears these words from the wise men, them telling the gods don't talk to us. They don't dwell with man.

But praise God, he does dwell with man, that he did come in flesh, that he came as a human being and walked among us, adding humanity to his deity, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, Emmanuel, God with us. Matter of fact, the legends say, and please understand I'm only speaking on legend, but I regard it as fairly reliable legend that Daniel took this order of wise men and Chaldeans later on in his career in the Kingdom of Babylon, and he transformed it and he established certain things in it and sort of reformed the order of this and made them godly men. And many, many years later, the descendants of the men, or at least the ones who carried their office, were the wise men who came and sought Jesus in Bethlehem.

And they saw that God does indeed dwell with man in the flesh. In any regard, we're here to verse 12 now. For this reason, the king was angry and very furious and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

So the decree went out and they began killing the wise men and they sought to kill Daniel and his companions to kill them. Wow. You ever see the cartoon, the Disney classic Alice in Wonderland, and what does the queen of hearts say when she gets angry at something off with their heads? That was never going to enter.

Oh, you guys don't know. Fine. You're dead.

Start. Start killing him. Well, who the wise men here in your room here tonight at four o'clock in the morning? No, all of them.

These guys are useless. I don't need them. They can't do what I need them to do anymore.

Just off with their heads. Let's get some new wise men. But just these, these ones are gone.

I'm done with these. And so they start executing them. If you notice there in verse 13, it says they began killing the wise men.

Nebuchadnezzar was not, you know, he wasn't one of these guys who makes a threat just to get his way. No, you're dead. So they start killing some of them.

And Daniel's companion to get a knock at the university door, or maybe he's graduated by this point. We don't know for certain. He's either at the end of his time or, or whatever, but there's a knock at the Daniel's door.

We'll get up at six o'clock in the morning. And you know, already 50 of the wise men have been killed. And well, Daniel, come with us.

The King's killing all the wise men. What we do. Well, you'll find out here.

Verse 14. Then with counsel and wisdom, Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the King's guard who'd gone out to kill the wise men about this is his executioner. He speaks to his executioner with counsel and wisdom.

No panic. No, no fear. Counsel and wisdom.

You know, this is this is when your relationship with God is really proven, isn't it? It's in the crucible. When the executioner comes to the door, says, it's time to chop off your head now, you know, and you don't panic. God's in charge of this.

And we'll see if God doesn't have a way out of this. If not one way or the other, my life is with God either here or not. It doesn't matter.

Verse 15. He answered and said to Arioch, the King's captain, why is the decree from the King so urgent? You know, he looks at his sundial and goes six o'clock in the morning. Well, why, you know, why now? Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time that he might tell the king the interpretation. Now, that's boldness, my friends. It's boldness for a couple of reasons.

First of all, just to add, you saw that Nebuchadnezzar was not a man to be trifled with. So just to go in and request this was bold. But then to say, well, give me time because I can bring you the interpretation that you might say, well, who cares? He's dead one way or the other.

Oh, no, you don't understand. Nebuchadnezzar was the kind of guy trained in torture. And Daniel well knew that if he said, give me time and I'll come up with the interpretation.

If he didn't come up with an interpretation, not only would he die, but they'd probably torture him to death in the most agonizing way conceivable. So he's really putting it on the line here. Verse 17.

Then Daniel went into his house and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning the secret so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Isn't that amazing? See, Daniel was in the kind of situation where he knew that only God could meet his need. Only God.

Daniel knew what these other wise men knew that it wasn't within the power of any man. And you weren't going to go into Nebuchadnezzar's presence and just start guessing at what the dream was. You know, like the psychics do a tall, dark stranger in your future, you know, when something important will happen, you know, all these big kind of things.

Nebuchadnezzar was way too smart for that. So Daniel knew that he needed to get a revelation from God. And he knew that that came by prayer.

They said the whole battle of the chapter is one right there in verses 17 and 18. The battle was won when Daniel prayed with his friends. I think one of the greatest privileges any man or any woman on this earth can have is praying friends.

And history was made in this prayer meeting. History was revealed from this prayer meeting. These men got together and prayed that God would do an unprecedented miracle.

They didn't have any place to turn to in the Bible from pages before to see a place where God revealed a dream to somebody. Well, sure, God gave miraculous interpretations of dreams. They could get to gather that from the life of Joseph.

But Joseph didn't have to say what the dreams were. He just interpreted them. They said, well, listen, we'll pray and we're going to pray with earnestness and with passion that they prayed that they might not

perish.

And when we get some of that heart, some of that passion into our prayers, I think God answers in a glorious way. You know, passion and heart in prayer is a funny thing. I think cold prayers are an abomination to God.

Prayers from a cold heart. From a dead mind that are just sort of spun out, cast out to heaven, you know, just done by rote, done by routine. I don't think those please God at all.

But I think that God is also. Offended by what we might call emotionalism in prayer, not emotion, but emotionalism. As if God was Bale.

You know how they thought Bale worked, remember that Elijah and the prophets at Mount Carmel, what did the prophets of Bale do when they wanted to get Bale's attention? They started running and jumping and screaming and yelling up to heaven and cutting themselves, mutilating themselves because they had to get Bale's attention. Elijah just laughed. He said, you know, scream a little louder, maybe your God's gone to the bathroom and he can't hear you.

Literally, that's what that's what Elijah said. You know, the way some people pray, you think they must be praying to Bale instead of God. Because it's like, well, is God deaf? You know, do you have to flag God down? So I have to say that there's a there's a middle road in there.

There's a middle road between coldness of heart and emotionalism. There's a middle road that knows how to show godly passion and emotion in prayer. I love the passage in the Book of Acts where it talks about earnest prayer being made for the disciples and the earnest prayer that was made.

The Greek word there literally means stretched outedness. And it has the idea. Have you ever reached for something, you know, on a top shelf or something like that? And you just have to stretch with everything that you can, every fiber of your being has to stretch out to grab something.

And that's the idea behind that Greek word. It's stretching out to heaven with everything that you have. God honors that kind of prayer, prayer that we might not perish.

I would say, by and large, as I look at us, I don't think we're in much danger of our prayers being too emotional. I think we need to pray that God would breathe into his heart and passion. God forbid, if our attitude in prayer is almost, well, God, you know, I don't really care much about it.

Can you care about it for me? No, we need to have our heart beating in sync with the heart of God. And they prayed, they prayed that they might not perish. Verse 19, then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.

So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Isn't that great? Now, do you know what a night vision is? If you do tell me, because I don't really know. Some people think a night vision could be a dream.

Well, that's possible. Maybe it's a vision that he had that just happened at night. I don't think we exactly know what a night vision is, but we know that it's something that came supernaturally to Daniel to reveal to him both the dream and the interpretation.

And so Daniel is going to praise God here in verse 20. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are his. And he changes the times and the seasons.

He removes kings and raises up kings and gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what's in the darkness and light dwells with him.

I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers. You have given me wisdom and might and now have made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's demand. Isn't that glorious? I love how Daniel exalts the Lord as being higher than any king, because he was in the presence of a terrifying king.

Sometimes I wonder about that when I find myself nervous around prominent people. I don't mix socially or professionally with prominent people very often, but sometimes when I do, I find myself nervous about it. And when that's the case, sometimes I almost get angry with myself.

Well, what are you thinking? First of all, they're just a man or just a woman, just like you. And secondly, there's a God in heaven who's so much greater than them. How come I don't tremble that way in the presence of the Lord? If there's anybody I should tremble before, it's God in that manner.

So you think about God and Daniel recognizes, well, God removes kings and raises up kings. If Nebuchadnezzar's the king, God could remove him if he wanted to. God could raise him up if he wanted to.

It's all in God's hands. God's in control of this. I love the verbs he uses in verses 20 and 21, 22 and 23.

He says he changes, he removes, he knows. Daniel knows that the power and might of God and how God is a mightier, well, mightier than a mighty king like Nebuchadnezzar. But then he also says, and this is glorious in verses 21 and 22, he says he gives and he reveals.

You know, friends, all of God's might, all of God's wisdom, all of God's power would be meaningless to us unless he gave to us and revealed to us. It's a very famous title of a book that a great Christian man named Francis Schaefer wrote many years ago, and it sort of expresses this idea. The title of the book was He Is There.

You know, God is there and he is not silent. And really, to have a correct understanding of God, you've got to believe both things, not just that he's there, but he's not silent, that he communicates to us. Daniel is grateful that God has revealed his great knowledge.

And you know, it's amazing that did you notice what he says here at the end of verse 23, for you've made known to us the king's demand. First of all, he says to us, well, I thought he just made it known to Daniel. Look at it.

You almost say if you want to get picky, well, there's a contradiction in the text there, isn't it? Look at verse 19. The secret was revealed to Daniel. Look at verse 23.

You have made known to us. Well, who was it revealed to? Just Daniel or all four of them? And the answer is yes, because Daniel knows that it was real to all of them because of their prayer. They all sought God for the answer and God was bringing deliverance to them all.

They all had a share in this because of their prayer. I'm absolutely stupefied by this. Daniel, you could see him rejoicing here right at the end of verse 23.

How does he know? How does he know he hasn't run it by Nebuchadnezzar yet? He knows before even running it by Nebuchadnezzar. That is right. Oh, God, this is it.

Well, aren't you going to check with Nebuchadnezzar first that it really is the right one, just in case, you know, you had the right dream. Maybe God showed you Nebuchadnezzar's dream from a week ago, not last night. No, no, this is it.

Daniel knows. You see, even before confirming it with Nebuchadnezzar, he knows. I think that our level of faith is often indicated by how long it takes us to start praising God in a situation.

You know, if we won't praise him until the answer is in hand, it shows we don't have very much faith, right? But if you can praise God when you have his word on it, even before you have the answer in hand, but you have his word on it, it shows you trust God a lot, doesn't it? Well, I'll take your word for it, Lord. God, I believe, God, that you're not lying to me. Boy, that makes you a giant of faith, doesn't it? To say, God, you're not a liar, God.

You promised it, and it's true. And when you can praise God just at his word, instead of waiting till you have it in your hand, that's faith. That's where Daniel was.

What a godly, wonderful man. Verse 24. Therefore, Daniel went to Ariok, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon, his executioner.

Again, if I write in the screenplay for this, he'd be wearing one of those classic executioner hoods, you know, and speaking from running that he wouldn't, of course, but it's just it's a nice picture visually. Verse 24. He went and said thus to him, Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon.

Take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation. Okay, kid, whatever. It's no skin off my nose.

If you let me do it now, I'll kill you quick. If I take him for the king and you blow it, I'll kill you slow. Either way, you know, we'll settle this.

Verse 25. Then Ariok quickly brought Daniel before the king, but Ariok saw something in Daniel. Look at it here and said thus to him.

I have found a man of the captives of Judah who will make known to the king the interpretation. Now that's gutsy of Ariok. He really believed in Daniel, didn't he? I don't know what it was about Daniel's manner, but why should Ariok trust Daniel so much? But he's putting his neck on the line.

You know, you could just see Nebuchadnezzar saying, sorry, Daniel, that's not the dream. And Eric, you brought this man to me off with your head. But whatever it was about Daniel, I don't know.

But doesn't it show us that real trust in God is contagious? It is. Daniel had faith. I don't know how I can explain it, but it rubbed off on area.

Maybe he was telling Ariok what it was on the way walking to the king's place. I don't know. But whatever it was, Ariok was convinced so much so that he introduced it, taking some of the credit for himself.

I found him. Yeah, Ariok, you found him. Sure.

But yeah, Nebuchadnezzar, I searched high and low for a man who can interpret your dream. And here he is. Verse 26, the king answered and said to Daniel, his name was Belshazzar.

Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen in this interpretation? I would be scared to death, wouldn't you? Nebuchadnezzar, are you really able to do this, boy? You can step up to the plate and come through here. Verse 27, Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, the secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed were these. Such beautiful boldness. Verse 29, as for you, OK, thoughts came to your mind while you're on your bed about what would come to pass after this.

He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living. But for our sakes, who make known the interpretation of the king, that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

This is amazing. Daniel's saying, look, I don't know this because I'm smarter than anybody and God didn't reveal it to me really for my sake. Nebuchadnezzar, God wants you to know this.

This is wonderful, amazing. Do you know what it is to be an others-centered person? An others-centered person doesn't live their life thinking it's all about them. Everything's about them.

Everything that happens around them, their only consideration, how does it affect me? I want you to see that if anybody had a right to be self-centered in this, Daniel, his neck is on the chopping block. His body is destined for the torturer's rack unless he comes through here. But Daniel says, Nebuchadnezzar, this is for your benefit that God gave you this dream in the interpretation.

God cares about you. You'd hardly blame Daniel for feeling sympathetic towards Nebuchadnezzar, but this is what he says, that you may know the heart. God wants you to know this, Nebuchadnezzar.

So here it is. Verse thirty one. You, O King, were watching and behold, a great image, this great image whose splendor was excellent stood before you and its form was awesome.

This image's head was a fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut without hands, which struck the image on the feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed together and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors.

The wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found and the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. That's your dream. That's not something you pick up from Miss Cleo in the psychic hotline.

You know, this isn't one of those vague dreams. How much more specific can you get? Talk about putting your neck on the line. What if Nebuchadnezzar said, no, you know, the middle one wasn't silver.

It was wood off with your head. But he's right in every detail, because God has revealed it to him. And you get the picture here.

Here's an image. And it's an image of a man. And the head is made of gold.

And the trunk in the arms is made of silver. And the belly and the thighs are made up of silver, excuse me, of bronze. And then the fourth one describes the legs made of iron.

And then finally, you have the feet made of iron mixed with clay. And then here's this great image standing in a spectacular way. It's an impressive image.

It's an image that really conjures up strength and power. But then a rock comes out of nowhere. It's like a meteor, a comet coming.

But it says it's cut, but not without hands. You look at the rock and it's shaped, it's molded in some way. But you look and just for some reason in the dream, you instantly know that no hands molded this.

But this rock comes like a missile or like a mortar from heaven. And it comes and it crushes the feet of the statue. And when the feet of the statue, of course, the whole thing crumbles down and it just becomes dust and it blows away like chaff.

And then that rock grows and grows and grows, and it becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth. And that's the dream that Nebuchadnezzar saw. Okay, great.

Was it me? Here we go. Verse 36. This is the dream.

Now we will tell you the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings, for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength and glory. And whatever the children of men dwell or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, he's given them into your hands and he's made you ruler over them all.

You are this head of gold. That's got to make Nebuchadnezzar feel pretty good. You're the head of gold.

See that that that head of gold, that's the best. It's where the brain is. It's where all the critical faculties are.

It's where the vision is. You know, the most, you might say the most important part of your body is the head. And that it's gold.

That's the best metal of them all. You, Nebuchadnezzar, you're the head of gold. Okay, well, what about next? Verse 39.

But after you shall rise another kingdom inferior to yours, then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule all over the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron in as much as iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided. Yet the strength of the iron shall be in it. Just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay. So the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw the iron mix with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seat of men, but they will not adhere to one another.

Just as iron does not mix with clay. So Nebuchadnezzar, you're the head of gold, but then there's another kingdom after you, a kingdom will succeed your kingdom. And that kingdom is typified by the, the, the chest and the arms of silver.

And then there's another kingdom, a third kingdom, the, the, the, the belly and the, and the thighs of brass. And then there's a fourth kingdom, the legs of iron. So, oh, well, Nebuchadnezzar sees it now.

The different materials and the different parts of the body represent different kingdoms. We would probably call them empires. You know, you and I think of kingdoms and we might think of, you know, a little tiny kingdom nestled away in some corner of Europe, you know, with a little snow white castle or a sleeping beauty, Cinderella, whatever, whichever one of those had a castle and, you know, and they're all there.

And no, this is an empire. That's what we would call it in our own modern vocabulary. It says there's going to be empires succeeding yours.

And they're going to be characterized by these metals. Now there's a couple of things that you say about the progression of metals. First of all, that the metals become less valuable as you work your way down the body, right? Gold, silver, bronze, iron.

Now the kingdoms that they represent are very clear. I'd say in history, in biblical understanding, there's a lot of things that scholars like to debate about. There's really no debate about these because succeeding the Babylonian kingdom was a kingdom that was a confederation of the Medes and the Persians.

That was the chest and silver. Then there was a third kingdom that succeeded them. The kingdom of Alexander, the great, the great Macedonian or Grecian kingdom of Alexander, the great, which by the way, covered more territory than any of these kingdoms.

And that's why it says in verse 39, a kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. He highlights the breadth of his rule. And then there's a fourth key, the kingdom of Rome, which succeeded the kingdom of Alexander, the great.

Now we see that there's a diminishing of value as you work your way down the image. And the point of the diminishing in value is not to speak of the size of the kingdoms, nor the strength of the kingdoms, because the matter of fact, the kingdom of Alexander and the kingdom of Rome were larger in size. And you might say mightier than the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar.

Then why is Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom represented by gold and the other ones of diminishing materials, diminishing in value. Well, for this simple reason, Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch. He held power in a way that these other emperors did not.

Now in the Medes and the Persians, did they have a mighty emperor? Yes, but he ruled with the noble men. You see, in the Babylonian idea, the king was absolutely unique. The king was a child of the gods and the other people weren't.

That's not the way the Medes and the Persians saw there was a whole group of royal people of noble people. And the king was one of them. Then you have the Grecian kingdom.

And again, Greece is set forth by brass because it had an even larger set of aristocracy. And then the fourth one, you have Rome, which was really a democratic imperialism. You see the centralization, the raw power of government diminished down the image.

But this is what you have to realize about each one of these kingdoms. Even though the value of the materials decreased as you went down the image, the strength of the materials increased. What's stronger, silver or gold? What's stronger, bronze or silver? What's stronger, iron or bronze? You see, and as each one of the kingdoms go, they are less centralized in authority, but they are mightier as kingdoms.

And indeed they were both in their strength and their power in their influence. So we find this absolutely vividly and explicitly fulfilled in history. And might we remind ourselves that this was written while while the city of Rome was still just a little village on a river there in what's modern day Italy.

I mean, this is God seeing the course of human history before it ever happens. And you know why God can say this? Not because he's Nostradamus and not because he's Gene Dixon and make some predictions are right. Some positive all of its jive.

No, God can do it because he controls history. He's in charge of it. Now, this is where it gets really interesting.

Verse forty four. And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed and the kingdom shall not be left to other people. It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever in as much as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountains without hands and that it broke in pieces, the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold.

The great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain and its interpretation is sure. And friends, this brings us to a huge dividing line in biblical understanding.

There are some people who will tell you that verses forty four and forty five have been fulfilled and that when Jesus Christ brought the gospel to the world and the apostles preached it in the days of the Roman Empire, that it shattered the Roman Empire and it became something that grew. And now the kingdom of God rules the earth and dominates the earth or will one day. I don't believe that the accurate understanding of this at all.

First of all, history provides no fulfillment of this ten federation of kings. Yes, it's true that the empire of Rome oftentimes ruled with a federation of different kings, but you'll never find this this idea of ten kings or or the ten collection there together. Never.

We also see that the kingdom of God has not functioned in this way, hasn't filled the earth and dominated it, nor nor should we hope it would in the way that some people do. Friends, I don't trust the church to run the institutions of this world. I don't trust the church to run the government.

And to run Wall Street, if you will, and to run all the rest of it, you know, there was a time when the church was the absolute ruling institution of all culture and society. There was a time when the church determined who would be the political leaders, that the church determined what wars would be fought, when the church determined what would be done economically in the whole culture. There was a time most historians call it the dark ages of Europe.

See, the church isn't. We're not we're not godly enough or responsible enough to handle that kind of political power. The church should concern itself would be in the church.

Now, what I think is amazing is that since the fall of the Roman Empire, there's never been a world dominating empire equal to Rome. Many have tried. You had the Huns, you had Islam, you had the so-called the Holy Roman Empire, you had Napoleon, you had Hitler, you had Stalin, but none of them had succeeded.

Yes, they had amazing power and influence, but nothing compared to that of the Roman Empire. And the Bible tells us that the Roman Empire, in some form or another, will be revived under the leadership of the final fallen dictator of this earth, the Antichrist. In the days of that final political kingdom, which which is distinct, if you'll notice in this image, there's the legs of iron, but then the feet of iron mixed with clay.

It comes from the legs, but it's not exactly the same as the legs. And in the days of that final kingdom, there will come a missile from having a stone cut without hands. And by the way, might we say that Jesus Christ is that stone cut without hands? The church isn't it? Psalm 118, Isaiah chapter eight, Isaiah 28, Zechariah three, all referred to the Messiah as a stone.

And it describes a single decisive event. This isn't talking about the gradual Christianization of the earth. This talks about the destruction of the kingdoms of this world and then coming into submission to the rulership of Jesus Christ and friends that the church or the gospel have not and will not in a single decisive event shatter the reign of human kingdoms.

But Jesus Christ will do it when he returns in glory and power to this earth. It's going to be a smashing, a smashing of the rule of the authority of man. Therefore, because of all this, we understand that the final superpower of the world is going to be a revival of the Roman emperor.

Now, friends, you might think I'm making a little bit making a whole lot out of a little bit right here in Daniel, and I could understand your point, but in my mind and in saying things we don't have time to go into tonight, we're drawing from a whole other set of passages that speak along the same lines that run along in the same currents from the book of Daniel that we'll see later on together. This final world empire will be the one that the returning Jesus will conquer over. It's interesting that Daniel tells us that this final world empire will be partly strong and partly fragile, this iron mixed with clay, you know, iron doesn't really mix with clay, does it? You got a mixture there and it sticks together, but it doesn't stick together and it's partly strong and partly weak.

And it'll have more the image of true strength rather than the substance of strength. And I think that that's that's going to be so true of the Antichrist kingdom. You know, when you look at that image, this image that represents human rule, the kingdoms of man as it stands there, Nebuchadnezzar, it seems so impressive, so glorious, what a mighty image.

That's great. But look at the foundation of it at the very base of it. It was unstable and one blow to the foundation of it makes the whole image crumble.

Friends, I want you to know one other thing before we move on. That some 40 years from this, Daniel had a vision describing the same succession of empires. Do you understand that? 40 years after this, God gave Daniel a vision of these same empires.

Daniel saw it from God's perspective. Now, when Nebuchadnezzar saw these human empires, this kingdom of man, he saw it from man's perspective. And how did it look as an impressive image of might and power and strength? You know what Daniel saw these successful these succession of empires as ravenous beasts.

That's how God looked at them. Well, Daniel concludes here, verse 45, and the dream is certain and its interpretation is sure. Daniel wasn't guessing.

He wasn't thinking this was God announcing the future. Let me ask you a question before we look at verse 46. Does God know the future about big things or big things and little things? Is it just the big things? You know, God, just give him the big picture and all the details.

Well, you know, that's up for the people to work out. I don't know, a commission of angels or something. Now, what did Jesus say about God and the little things? Now, Jesus said things to us that if anybody else said them to us, we'd say you're crazy.

God sees every sparrow that falls to the ground. Honestly, if I told you that and Jesus didn't, come on, you're using preacher's license there. God knows the number of hairs on your head.

You'd only believe that from the mouth of Jesus. Yes, God has the big picture in control, but he has the little picture of your life. You know, just as much as God has not left human history to wander aimlessly anywhere it might go, but God has a plan and a direction and a destination for it in the same way.

He's got a plan for your life. Your life. A destiny, a purpose, and you might be kicking against it with everything that you have.

You know, his plan, his purpose, his destiny for your life is so good. You know, you tremble or you fear, you withdraw from that plan because you doubt his love for you. You think that maybe he's brought that plan into your life, you know, just because he's the kind of God who is looking around and seeing if anybody's having fun and then he wants to stop them.

And so, you know, his plan for your life pretty much involves taking away all your fun. What a misunderstanding about the heart and nature of God. Verse 46, then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face prostrate before Daniel and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.

The king answered Daniel and said, truly, your God is the God of God, the Lord of Lords, the king of kings, a revealer of secrets, since you could not reveal this secret. You wonder if Daniel said, so I was right? No, I guess so. I guess that's it.

Huh? No, Daniel didn't have to say that because he knew it. He knew it as sure as anything. Verse 48, then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and the chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon, those that were left anyway.

Also, Daniel petitioned the king and he said Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel sat in the gate of the king. You know, when you think about how mighty and powerful and arrogant this king of Nebuchadnezzar was, for him to fall on his face before Daniel like this shows how deeply he was struck.

I'm sure that the courtiers around, you know, in the royal court there were dumbfounded when Nebuchadnezzar did that. I mean, they're saying Nebuchadnezzar couldn't have just said right. You know, I mean, but no, he falls on his face and he says to Daniel, your God is the God of God.

It's your God who's revealed these things to you. And because Daniel wanted the glory to go to God, it did. You know, God.

God wants to be glorified in our life. He wants your life to bring him glory and he's given you gifts, he's given you talents, he's given you abilities, he's given you ways you can serve him. Do you have a passion to see God glorified to those things? Or do you want to take some of the glory for yourself? How easy it would have been for Daniel to take some of the glory for himself? It's amazing that he's able to resist it.

You know, God is jealous about his glory. And it's not because God's an egomaniac. You know, people around us who want all the glory, we really don't like them, do we? They're very annoying to be around, very frustrating.

It's like they want all the credit, they want all the glory. And you think, well, is God like that? No, not at all. Do you want to know why God wants all the glory? Because it's the right thing.

He deserves it. It's not because he's an egomaniac or the most insecure being in the entire universe. It's because he deserves it.

And when the creature gives glory to the creator, things are positioned right. It's just right. It fits right.

Daniel was careful to give glory to God. But, you know, God made sure that Daniel was promoted because it says there that Daniel was promoted by the king and he didn't only have his life spared. That would have been enough.

But he was promoted to high office and he made sure that his friends were also promoted. And isn't that appropriate that his friends shared in the advancement because they shared in the victory, didn't they? Through what? Through the prayers. Friends, we just marvel at the great power that God gives to the believer in prayer.

I think that one of the mightiest things that any human being can have is influence, right? Isn't that what a lot of people want with money? It's not like they want the money for itself like, you know, Scrooge McDuck in the Disney cartoons where he has his vault filled with money. He likes to go in there and just lay in it, you know. Oh, money, money, money.

What do most people want money for? They want influence. And money can buy you a lot of influence. Why do people want fame? Influence.

You think, who are the most influential people in the world today? Well, you know, the president, George Bush. Now, that's an influential man. You think of titans of business like Microsoft's Bill Gates.

Oh, man, there's an influential man. This isn't just preacher talk, folks. People of prayer are the most influential people on this earth.

Do you understand that God has put it in front of you to be more influential than the mightiest men and women on this earth? Because through prayer, you can move the hand of God. I don't care how many billions Bill Gates has. I don't care how many nuclear warheads and bombers that the president of the

United States has at his command.

The hand of God is mightier than any of those things. And through prayer, you can move the hand of God. Daniel's friends did it, revealed to us the future.

It reminds us that God has a glorious plan for our life. Let's thank him for it right now.

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