

CAPITOL STUDIES

JANUARY 24, 2024 • WEEK 3



DANIEL: CHRIST'S CIVIL SERVANT IN BABYLON

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Verse of the Week

Daniel 2:44

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Crisis of Babylon's Civil Servants



PROPHECIES, DREAMS, FORTUNE TELLERS, READING CARDS and palms, attending seances—people have a desperate desire to know the future. They are afraid. They want assurance and security. It seems that the unknown is one of the greatest fears that men face today! Those who are God's children are spared this kind of fear. They need not be anxious because they know the Place of safety and have the promises of an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God. This all-knowing God has also given a clear outline of the world's future. We do not have all the details, but the general, broad outline has been given so men can see God's control in the future course of world events.

The books of Daniel, Revelation, and Ezekiel specifically give us prophecies of the end times. In 2 Peter 1:19, God commands us to give our attention to all prophetic truth (biblical prophecy). He promises blessing to those who read the prophecy of the book of Revelation (1:3). Prophecy is a source of encouragement, comfort, and consolation (2 Thess. 1:5-10). The study of prophecy ought to fortify our faith in God's faithfulness, omnipotence, immutability, and omniscience, for He knows the beginning from the end. He is the Alpha and the Omega (Revelation 1:8).

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INTRODUCTION

Daniel chapter two begins to unfold truths regarding the future of world nations. Insight is given into the panorama of world empires from the Babylonian conquest of Judah until Christ's return to rule and reign. These empires will dominate the political scene during what the Bible calls "the times of the Gentiles." Most of these empires are now off the scene, but it is well for Christians to look at what is still to come. Christ is returning, and His will be the final empire to rule.

I. RAMPAGE: NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM & DEMANDS

Daniel 2:1-4

Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. ²Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. ³The king said to them, "I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream." ⁴Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation."¹

One night King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which disturbed him so much that he woke up and could not get back to sleep. The king was desperate to know the meaning of the dream. It seems he was afraid of something bad happening to him. He called his wise men and asked them to interpret his dream. They agreed to interpret, provided the king would tell them the content of the dream.

Daniel 2:5-13

The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. ⁶But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation." ⁷They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation." ⁸The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, ⁹that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation." ¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. ¹¹Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh." ¹²Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.



¹³So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

Nebuchadnezzar's wise men were totally helpless. The king perhaps had cause to question the ability and honesty of his wise men. He demanded to know the content of the dream and the meaning of it. If they knew the dream, their reward would be great, but if they could not tell it, they would be killed. They proved themselves to be frauds, as there was no way they could produce both the dream and its meaning. The wise men's excuse was that only the gods could know the dream. This only confirmed to King Nebuchadnezzar that everything they had told him in the past was most likely guesswork, assumption, and lies. In anger, he gave command to destroy all the wise men, which included Daniel and his three friends.

II. RESPONSE: DANIEL'S PLEA, PRAYER, & PRAISE

A. Daniel Wisely Pleaded for Time to Understand and Pray

Daniel 2:14-18

Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. ¹⁶So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king. ¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, ¹⁸so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

When the man appointed to lead the execution of the king's decree came to Daniel and told him of the decree, Daniel responded with *discretion*—behaving or speaking in such a way as to avoid causing offense. He calmly asked a question. He also responded with *discernment*—a view to obtaining spiritual guidance and understanding. Daniel asked to be brought before the king and requested a little time to reveal the dream and its interpretation. He then implored his friends to join him in seeking God's favor and revelation. Their approach to God was based not upon their own merit or their own faithfulness but upon God's mercy and lovingkindness. They knew that for God to answer would be due to His great mercies that are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23).

B. Daniel Prayed, Believing God Would Give the Answer

Daniel 2:19-23

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; ²⁰Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. ²¹It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and





establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. ²²It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. ²³To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter.”

That very night, through a vision, God revealed to Daniel both the dream and its interpretation. Imagine Daniel exclaiming, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever!” Before doing anything else, Daniel took time to praise and worship His God, the Source of all wisdom and power. Daniel had no doubt that God was in control of the times and the rulers. Things that were hidden to man were not hidden to God, and He had shared them with Daniel in response to the prayers of Daniel and his friends.

C. Daniel Gave All Praise to God as the Source of the Dream and Its Revelation

Daniel 2:24-30

Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king’s presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king.” ²⁵Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king’s presence and spoke to him as follows: “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!” ²⁶The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?” ²⁷Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. ²⁸However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. ²⁹As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. ³⁰But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

Daniel hurriedly went to Arioch telling him to spare the wise men and asking to be taken to the king. When the king asked of Daniel’s ability to interpret the dream, Daniel took no credit for himself. Instead, he contrasted the limited knowledge of man and the unlimited knowledge of God. He wanted the king to know that he was about to receive information concerning the latter days that could not be revealed by human means—it had to come from a special divine revelation of God. Daniel was just the instrument God used to share that revelation with Nebuchadnezzar. God alone deserved the praise.



III. REVELATION: THE DREAM'S ENCAPSULATION AND EXPLANATION

A. Daniel Encapsulates the Dream

Daniel 2:31-35

“You, O king, were looking, and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. ³²The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”

Before explaining the meaning of the dream, Daniel gave a summary of its content so the king would see that Daniel did indeed know the dream. The king had seen an image in the form of a man. Its composition consisted of various kinds of metals: gold, silver, bronze, and iron mixed with clay. While he was looking at the image, Nebuchadnezzar saw a stone strike the feet of the image with the result that the whole image crumbled. The stone then became larger and larger until it filled the entire earth. All of this had great and very significant meaning. The image represented all the world-ruling empires that would come into existence from Daniel's time until the second advent of Christ*. This is expressed in verse 28 in the phrase “latter days.”

*All the references to Christ's coming in the Old Testament deal with His coming to rule and reign. Daniel supplies no information about the church age or anything pertaining to it. He knows nothing about the rapture of the church.

B. Daniel Explains the Dream

Daniel 2:36-38

“This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. ³⁷You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; ³⁸and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.”

Babylon: The gold depicts the magnificence and dazzling splendor of the Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar possessed absolute dictatorial power: his eventual successors would have much less power. The metals in the images indicate a lessening of the significance, power, and grandeur of each successive empire. There is a progressive decentralization of authority in each of the succeeding governments.





Daniel 2:39

“After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.”

Medo-Persia and Greece: The second and third empires are not identified in this verse. We are told later in the book of Daniel who these empires are. Briefly speaking, we go from the glory of gold to the diminished value of silver. Daniel 5:31; 6:1, 28; 8:20 give us details that indicate that the silver part of the image had its fulfillment in the Medo-Persian empire under Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian. The Persians gradually arose into the position of power over the Medes. In Daniel 8:21 we are told that the belly and thighs of brass (or bronze) speak of the successor to Persia, and he is identified as the King of Grecia whom we recognize to be Alexander the Great. The Greek empire was massive as it extended to India.

Daniel 2:40-43

“Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. ⁴¹In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. ⁴²As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. ⁴³And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.”

Rome: The legs of iron describe the Roman empire under the Caesars and beyond. While this is not identified in this book of Daniel, we recognize that Rome followed the Grecian empire as a world ruler. Rome was in power when Christ walked upon this earth. The descriptions in these verses fit Rome, for Rome ruled with an iron fist. Even though it was a republic with a senate, it was the weakest form of government yet to appear. They had sovereign sway over the known world as all roads led to Rome. Iron suggests the power of Rome.

The toes of the image were composed of iron mixed with clay. This chapter does not speak of five empires. The feet and toes are a development of the legs. The legs probably symbolize the division that split the Roman empire into Western and Eastern sections. They also represent ten kings ruling simultaneously. The legs, feet, and toes are all parts of one empire. The vision depicts a time in the future when the territory once occupied by Rome will develop into ten distinct parts of a political unification. **This has not taken place to date!**

Daniel 2:44-45

“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the



bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

The Divine Kingdom: Some have suggested that the toes may refer to the current European common market. Others feel that it awaits the period of the tribulation. These ten kings and their kingdoms will most likely join together after the removal of the church and at the time of, or during the time of, the great tribulation. They will be in existence at the time of Christ's second coming to rule and reign. When Christ, Who is a Stone of stumbling (1 Peter 2:8, Romans 9:33, Isaiah 8:14) returns to the earth, He will destroy this ten-nation confederation.

It is only consistent to believe that the stone “cut out of the mountain” filling the earth is the millennial kingdom of the future. What we have here is a sudden intervention in history in which Christ comes to smash the final stage of Gentile world domination and set up the empire of Heaven on earth—the visible, literal, political, social, and historical kingdom of God on earth. Everywhere this kingdom is spoken about in prophecy is still future. Earthly empires will be replaced with a divine government proceeding from Jerusalem. This kingdom will be spiritual and eternal as well as political.

IV. REWARD: CIVIL SERVANTS’ PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION

Daniel 2:46-49

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense.

⁴⁷The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.” ⁴⁸Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

⁴⁹And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king’s court.

The king responded with great emotion over the unfolding of the dream as given by God through Daniel. He recognized that Daniel’s God, the God of Heaven, had the power to reveal dreams. He was a God of gods and a Lord of kings. Nebuchadnezzar humbly fell on his face and gave respect to Daniel for his ability. He did not destroy the wise men, and he put Daniel and his friends into places of prominence, power and position.²

CONCLUSION

God works in humanly impossible predicaments. When things are impossible with man, God manifests His sovereignty, immutability, and power. Our most effective source of stability is prayer. When God works, there is no room for pride—only praise. We are rapidly approaching the



Theme Verse

Daniel said,

“Let the name of God be **blessed** forever and ever,

For **wisdom** and **power** belong to Him.

It is He who changes the **times** and the **epochs**;

He **removes** kings and **establishes** kings;

He gives **wisdom** to wise men and **knowledge** to men of understanding.”

Daniel 2:20-21



Serving Civil Servants with Scripture

Capitol Studies™ exists to serve kings for the King of kings until His glorious return. We are privileged to minister to Civil Servants at all levels of government for their good and God's glory. Capitol Studies is led by Pastor Arin Hess, who has over 40 years of ministry experience in the State of Nebraska and Washington, D.C.

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end of time as we know it, rapidly coming to the end of the times of the Gentiles. **Christ is coming soon!** All investments in earthly kingdoms are at best only temporary. So, the question is, “Are you ready?”

“When we consider these truths, our response ought to be one of joyful confidence, knowing that the Lord has everything under control and will one day reign on this earth. While God's people should do everything they can to alleviate suffering and make this a safer and happier world, our hope is not in laws, political alliances, or moral crusades. Our hope is in the Lord. People's hearts need to be changed by the grace of God, and that means God's people must be witnesses to the ends of the earth. The only kingdom that will stand forever is Christ's kingdom (Daniel 2:44), and the only people who will be citizens of that kingdom are those who have trusted Him and been born again by the Spirit of God (John 3:1-18).”³ Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior from sin? Have you been born again by the Spirit of God? If not, do not delay! Time is short!

Pastor Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
2. Some of this material is taken from Edward Watke Jr., *Study of the Book of Daniel*, Revival in the Home Ministries, Augusta, GA, 1992.
3. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute (Daniel): Determining to Go God's Direction*, David C. Cook, Kindle Edition, 2000, p. 26.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
108th Legislature's
Second Session

SENATORS

6:45-7:45 A.M. Wednesdays

STAFF

12:00 P.M. Wednesdays

Location for study may vary.
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