

Daniel Chapter 2

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Last week we finished going through Chapter 1 where Daniel and his three friends showed courage when they purposed in their hearts not to compromise. They stepped out in faith and were kind and considered other people's situations and feelings, especially that of the eunuch in charge. They were willing to negotiate and compromise in a godly way and not just demand their own way—even if it was the right thing. This is a model for us to follow - especially in our families. Seek God to know His will, but then seek to achieve that in a way that brings glory to God. This would minimise much marital conflict, conflict between parents and children, and also problems between people in the church. It's so easy to be obnoxious and dogmatic and unsympathetic and even rude when we have strong convictions about something.

Imagine Daniel talking down to the chief of the eunuchs, "You pagans, you don't know anything about following God. Don't you know that idols are stupid and dumb, and that those who worship them become like them? Why do you bother sacrificing animals and wine to them? I know the truth and you don't, so do what I say! Take away that disgusting and defiled food and just give me water and a vegetarian diet so I can avoid food sacrificed to idols." Daniel may have been right, but his actions would lead to death. Firstly, death to the relationship with the chief of the eunuchs, and then to himself because he would have been seen to be deliberately refusing the king's command.

Often the issue changes from whether or not we are right or wrong, to how we treat the other person. As we consider this, remember that Daniel was not compromising. If the chief of the eunuchs refused, then Daniel would have been prepared to die for his faith — there was no compromise in his heart. But what we do see in his life, in addition to his purity and devotion to truth, is a gentleness and empathy which is very much Christ like.

Philippians 1:3-5 - ³ *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**

The passage goes on to describe how Jesus modelled the above verses, putting other peoples interests (ours) ahead of His own in a huge way when He died for us on the cross.

Also consider that true wisdom is not just about right and wrong.

James 3:17 NLT

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favouritism and is always sincere.

Being demanding only turns people away from God. It means I am seeking my will at the expense of others because my first priority is getting my own way. Being willing to yield is a fruit of having the attitude which Jesus had, of esteeming others as better than ourselves, and putting ourselves in their shoes and seeking to do what is best for the other person, and all the while not compromising on what we know is right.

An example of this in practice is found in the gospels.

Matthew 17:24-27 NKJV

²⁴ When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the *temple* tax?”

²⁵ He said, “Yes.” And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

²⁶ Peter said to Him, “From strangers.” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free.

²⁷ Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

Jesus would have been completely justified in refusing to pay the temple tax. After all, the tax was basically paid to Him. Jesus is the object of the temple worship, so why should He pay the tax. But He was so gentle, so willing to yield, so humble. Jesus had the upper hand, but He chose not to use it. Love bears all things, even if they are annoying or unnecessary. Ask God to help you to examine your own relationships and see if there are any problem areas that could be due to being unwilling to yield.

A quick reminder of the main emphasis's or the big picture in the book of Daniel:

The principal theological emphasis in Daniel is the absolute sovereignty of the Lord, the God of Israel. The book consistently emphasises that the fortunes of kings and the affairs of humans are subject to God's decrees, and that he is able to accomplish his will despite the most determined opposition of the mightiest potentates on earth. The miracles recorded in chs. 1–6 clearly demonstrate God's sovereignty on behalf of his saints.

A second theological emphasis is the power of persistent prayer. Daniel and his companions were delivered from dangers and dilemmas by prayer. Especially impressive is Daniel's intense prayer on behalf of his nation for God to restore his people to their land at the end of the seventy years (9:2–19; cf. 10:12–14).

Another theological emphasis is the long-range purview of God's marvelous plan of the ages. Daniel predicts the precise year of Christ's appearance and the beginning of his ministry in A.D. 27 (cf. Da 9:25–26). Daniel was given the revelation of the eschatological Seventieth Week (9:26b–27), a week that we still eagerly look forward to.

Lastly, underlying the entire scenario is the inexhaustible grace of God. Even after the sternest warnings of the prophets had been disregarded and severe judgment of near total destruction had overtaken the nation in 587 B.C., the Lord never abandoned his people to the full consequences of their sin but in lovingkindness subjected them to an ordeal that purged them of idolatry. Then he allowed them to return to their homeland, thus setting the stage for the coming of the Messiah. The book of Daniel thus sets forth the pattern of God's persevering grace that characterises the NT as well, that “God's gifts and his call are irrevocable” (Ro 11:29).

This week we get into chapter 2 where we Daniel both reveals and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream. By this time, Daniel has been in Babylon for three years, having just finished his three years of training.

Daniel both reveals and interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream

Daniel 2:1-49 NKJV

¹ Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. ² 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. ³ And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

⁴ Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do 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. ⁶ 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."

⁷ They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

⁸ The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹ if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹ It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

¹² For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. ¹³ So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men*; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill *them*.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

¹⁴ Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon; ¹⁵ he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

¹⁶ So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. ¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

²¹ Daniel answered and said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.

²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.

²² He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what *is* in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.

²³ "I thank You and praise You,

O God of my fathers;
You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,
For You have made known to us the king's demand."

Daniel Explains the Dream

²⁴ Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. 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."

²⁵ Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

²⁶ The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

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. ²⁸ 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: ²⁹ As for you, O king, thoughts came to your *mind while* on your bed, *about* what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

³⁰ 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 to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

³¹ "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. ³² This image's head *was* of fine 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 clay. ³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ 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.

³⁶ "This *is* the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. ³⁷ You, O king, *are* a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸ and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given *them* into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you *are* this head of gold. ³⁹ But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain 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.”

Daniel and His Friends Promoted

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” ⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

The second chapter of Daniel has been called the backbone of Bible prophecy for Daniel 2 unlocks the rest of the prophecies of the Book of Daniel, which, in turn, unlock the prophecies of the Book of Revelation. For a good handle on eschatology—the study of end times—you need to be thoroughly familiar with the Book of Daniel and of chapter 2 specifically.

Daniel 2:1 NKJV

Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

Here’s some useless information, but it’s interesting. Psychologists tell us that ninety percent of a person’s free mental time—the time not devoted to a specific activity—is spent wondering about the past or worrying about the future. Nebuchadnezzar was no exception.

v 1 **In the second year:** It is difficult to understand the exact time this speaks of. Some commentators say this happened while Daniel was in his three-year training course; others say that it was soon after he finished. The ancient Babylonians spoke of the beginning and end of the reign of their kings in a way that often overlapped years. Therefore, the year 602 b.c. could be both the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign and after three years of training for the Hebrew youths. The first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign would be year 0.

v 1 **His spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him:** There was something disturbing about this dream and Nebuchadnezzar knew that it was unusually significant.

Does God still use dreams to communicate His will? Certainly He can do so if He pleases, but this isn’t His usual approach. God guides His children today by His Holy Spirit as they pray, seek His face, meditate on His Word, and consult with their spiritual leaders. The danger is that our dreams may not come from the Lord. The human subconscious is capable of producing dreams, and Jeremiah 23:25–32 indicates that demonic forces can cause dreams that are Satan’s lies and not God’s truth. It’s dangerous to accept dreams as messages from the Lord without them being confirmed by the word of God or other ways.

Daniel 2:2-3 NKJV

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. ³ And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”

Schooled in the ancient literature and writings of other cultures, the Chaldeans were the most educated men in the empire. “Tell me what my dream means,” Nebuchadnezzar said.

NOTE:

From Daniel 2:4 to 7:28, the Biblical text is in Aramaic—not Hebrew. This is the only section of the Bible written in Aramaic. This was the language of the Babylonian Empire. The Aramaic chapters pertain to the Babylonian and Persian empires, whereas the other six chapters relate to God’s special plans for his covenant people. Why some chapters in Aramaic? Because this was for people of the day to be able to read about and understand. God was revealing Himself to them at the time.

Daniel 2:4 NKJV

Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

“Tell us the dream,” the Chaldeans said, “and we’ll give you the interpretation.”

Daniel 2:5-6 NKJV

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do 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. ⁶ However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honour. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

“If you are as wise as you say you are, you should be able to tell me not only the interpretation, but the dream itself,” Nebuchadnezzar answered. “Either tell me what I dreamed, or you guys are through.”

Daniel 2:7–11 NKJV

⁷ They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.”

⁸ The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹ if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹ It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

“There is not a man on earth that can do what you ask,” the Chaldeans said.

Despite all their wisdom—real and imagined—these wise men had no answer for Nebuchadnezzar, because only *God* could bring an answer to the king.

“They were like some modern ministers of our own day who spend their time studying philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, social science, political science, and then continue under the pretence of being God’s messengers to men.” (Strauss)

v 11 **Except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh:** As far as these pagan magicians, astrologers, and wise men knew, this was true. They did not know what we

know so plainly since the revelation of Jesus—that He is *Immanuel, God with us* (Matthew 1:23).

Throughout Bible history, you find occasions when God exposed the foolishness of the world and the deceptiveness of Satan. Moses and Aaron defeated the magicians of Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt (Ex. 7–12), and Elijah on Mount Carmel exposed the deception of Baal worship (1 Kings 18). Jeremiah confronted the false prophet Hananiah and revealed his wickedness (Jer. 28), and Paul exposed the deception of Bar Jesus the sorcerer (Acts 13:1–12). But it was Jesus who by His life, teaching, and sacrificial death declared the wisdom of this world “foolishness” with God, and that includes all its myths and false religions (1 Cor. 1:18ff). The statement of the advisers in Daniel 2:10 wipes out astrology and other forms of human prophecy! Out of their own mouths they condemned their own practices!

Daniel 2:12 NKJV

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

Is there anything in tarot cards, astrology, palm reading? Yes. The devil is in them and that’s why we’re to stay away from the them. The Bible says very clearly that magic of any sort is to have no place in the life of the believer because the enemy uses it as a hook to get us involved in realms of the demonic.

Having said that, there are tremendous limitations as to what Satan can actually do. That’s why these men couldn’t answer Nebuchadnezzar’s demand.

Daniel 2:13-14 NKJV

So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. ¹⁴ Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon;

Because of the failure of the Chaldeans to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream, all of the wise men—including Daniel—were to be killed.

v 14 **With counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch:** “Daniel was obviously innocent in all this, yet he calmly and discretely dealt with the crisis. Daniel’s calmness in this crisis showed what kind of man he really was. In one sense, crises do not *make* the man. Instead, they *reveal* the man” (David Guzik).

Daniel 2:15-16 NKJV

¹⁵ **He answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.**

¹⁶ **So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.**

Daniel asked for permission to speak to the king. “Give me some time,” he said, “and I will tell you your dream as well as the interpretation.”

v 16 **Asked the king to give him time:** This wasn’t just a stalling tactic. Daniel knew that it takes time to listen to the Lord and to wait upon Him, and Daniel was willing to take the time if the king would grant it.

Daniel 2:17-18 NKJV

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Don't you know that Daniel and his friends had one powerful prayer meeting that night?! They were literally praying for their lives. They needed to have revelation. They desired it desperately and they prayed accordingly.

v 18 **That they might seek mercies from the God of heaven:** Daniel was in the type of situation where only God could meet his need. Therefore, he knew how important it was for both him and his companions to pray.

The battle was won when Daniel prayed with his friends. Praying friends are a blessing, and "In prayer meetings such as this history has been made." (Strauss) Nebuchadnezzar took his problems to bed. Daniel took his to God—and what a difference that makes.

Daniel 2:19 NKJV

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

When Daniel received an answer, did he run out in order to save the lives of those in jeopardy? No, he stopped and blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel 2:20–23 NKJV

²⁰ **Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His.**

²¹ **And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.**

²² **He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.**

²³ **"I thank You and praise You,
O God of my fathers;
You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,
For You have made known to us the king's demand."**

Daniel stopped and offered praise before he went out to save lives. I think that's an invaluable lesson. So often the Lord shows us something or gives us something and we can't wait to get going. In reality, before we run out, we should slow down and look up. We should worship and give thanks. Let's have a look at Daniel's response:

v 21 **He changes times and seasons ... He removes and raises up kings ... He knows all things:** Daniel praised God for His power and might. Daniel thought of how God is in command of all things, and how God is mightier than a mighty king like Nebuchadnezzar.

v 21-22 **He gives wisdom ... He reveals deep and secret things:** Daniel praised God for His *communication* to man. All God's power and might were of little help to Daniel if God stayed silent. Daniel was grateful that God revealed His great knowledge.

v 23 **You have given me wisdom and might ... You have made known to me what we asked of You:** Daniel had the certainty of faith to believe that God gave him the answer, even before confirming it before Nebuchadnezzar.

David Guzik: “Our level of faith is often indicated by how long it takes us to start praising God. If we won’t praise Him until the answer is in hand, then we don’t have much faith. Greater faith is able to praise God when the *promise* is given and received.”

I think of the ten lepers in Luke 12. Jesus told them to go their way and show themselves to the priest. And as they went, they were healed. All ten rejoiced—but only one came back and thanked the Lord. “You are made whole,” Jesus said to him. All ten were healed—but only the one who came back and worshiped was made whole, which speaks not only of his body but his soul and spirit, as well. Are we like the nine or are we like the one?

I like Daniel because he wasn’t just a prayer warrior, but a praiser and a worshiper.

Daniel 2:24–28 NKJV

24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. 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.”

25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.”

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?”

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. 28 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...

Daniel didn’t say, “I can tell you your dream.” He said, “Only the Lord can give you the information and understanding you seek.” I believe this was why Daniel was used from the time he was a young man all the way until he was eighty-five. He didn’t take credit. The fastest way to see the work of God through your life stopped is to begin to think it’s because you’re special.

What will be in the latter days: Nebuchadnezzar’s dream didn’t just concern himself for his kingdom, but the whole span of the future—right up to **the latter days**.

The phrase “latter days” (“last days,” “last times”) is found frequently in Scripture, beginning with Genesis 49:1 and ending with 2 Peter 3:3. Our Lord ushered in the “last days” with His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven (Heb. 1:2; 1 Peter 1:20), so we are living now in that period of time when God is “wrapping things up.” God has plans for the “latter days” of Israel (Gen. 49:1; Deut. 31:29; Dan. 2:28) which will climax with Messiah returning to earth and being received by His people (Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1; Joel 2:28–29). The “last days” for the church include perilous times (2 Tim. 3:1), the apostasy of many, and the rise of scoffers and deniers of the truth (2 Peter 3:1ff); and this period will end when Christ takes His church to heaven (1 Thes. 4:13–18).

Daniel 2:29, 30 NKJV

As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you

what will be. ³⁰ 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 to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

“The Lord is simply using me as an errand boy in order that you might have answers to those things about which you’re concerned,” Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 2:31–35 NKJV

³¹ “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. ³² This image’s head was of fine 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 clay. ³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ 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.

What a dream! Nebuchadnezzar saw a massive image of a man with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, a brass belly, iron legs, and feet and toes a mixture of iron and clay. Looking at this huge statue, Nebuchadnezzar saw a stone not cut with hands come rolling down. It hit the statue in the feet and pulverised it entirely. Suddenly, the stone became a great mountain that filled the entire earth. No wonder Nebuchadnezzar was troubled!

Notice that the head, arms and chest, belly, and the legs regressed in value. That is, gold is of greater value than silver, which is of greater value than brass, which is of greater value than iron. These four metals in this single image speak of world history in its entirety as it relates to Israel from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the coming of Christ.

Daniel 2:36–38 NKJV

³⁶ “This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. ³⁷ You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸ and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.

The Babylonian empire, an absolute monarchy, had a greater effect on the known world than any other empire in history. That is why it was represented by gold.

Daniel 2:39 (a) NKJV

But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours...

The Medes and the Persians would overthrow the Babylonians in 530 b.c. The Medes and Persians, represented by two arms of silver were a constitutional monarchy.

The Babylonian Empire stood for 66 years; the Medo-Persian Empire for 208 years; the Grecian Empire for 185 years, and the Roman Empire stood for more than 500 years.

Daniel 2:39 (b) NKJV

... then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

The Medes and Persians would be overthrown by the Greeks in 330 b.c. Alexander had conquered the known world. Heartbroken and depressed that there were no more worlds

to conquer, he died at the age of thirty-three in a drunken stupor. Contrast this with Another who died at thirty-three years of age, One who conquered sin and death, Jesus Christ. The Grecian empire was represented by brass because, as an oligarchy, it was less powerful than the Medo-Persian Empire.

Daniel 2:40 NKJV

And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

The Greeks would be unseated by the Roman empire. Although they crushed everyone into bloody submission, the Romans, represented by brass, had a limited democracy, which made it even less powerful than Greece's oligarchy.

After four empires, the succession stops because in a.d. 70, the Romans annihilated Israel. The Jews scattered and Israel was never again a sovereign nation—until 1948. Suddenly, the prophetic clock miraculously started ticking again when Israel re-emerged as an independent nation. And now we see the appearance of the last world power...

Daniel 2:41–43 NKJV

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. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

In the feet, the composition is changed. These ten toes which are part iron and part clay don't hold together. In May, 1948, Israel became a nation once again. In May, 1950, two years later, six nations came together, formed the Treaty of Rome, and instituted a new, resurrected, Roman empire. They called it the European Common Market.

Daniel 2:44, 45 NKJV

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. ⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain 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."

In the time of the ten nations, a stone not cut with hands comes down and strikes the feet. The entire image is pulverised. The stone is the Rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ. Peter says that, to the Jews, He is s a stone of stumbling (1 Peter 2:8). Indeed to this day, the Jewish people, for the most part, still stumble over Jesus being the Rock. In 1 Corinthians 1:23 Paul says that To the Jews He is a stone of stumbling, and to the gentiles foolishness. But Jesus speaks about Himself in:

Matthew 21:42-44.

⁴² Then Jesus asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'

⁴³ I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. ⁴⁴ **Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.**”

Concerning Jesus, the Rock of our salvation, we either are broken before Him or will be broken by Him. The choice is ours.

There are those who say that the kingdom will be ushered in as Christians change the economic, political, and educational systems. That is, we'll bring the King back by changing the world. But that is heresy. As seen in Daniel, the stone doesn't come to convert the kingdoms of the world. It comes to crush them. It comes instantaneously, explosively, cataclysmically, and all of the empires—the great image of gold, silver, brass, and iron—are wiped out in a moment.

That is not to say we shouldn't be concerned citizens, praying for our country. But if you think that by changing the world, we'll bring back the kingdom of God, you are sadly mistaken. The ultimate solution is when the King Himself comes back and strikes the feet of the image. Down it will go. And in its place, Jesus Christ will rule and reign. Oh, glorious day that will be!

There are some people who say that Revelation and Daniel's prophecies are already fulfilled. Let's think about that. Obviously the first three kingdoms have come and gone, but what about the last one, the feet with the 10 toes with iron mixed with clay?

Since Roman history provides no fulfillment of this federation of ten kings (because of the number of toes, and passages like Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12) who rule the world at the same time, this prophecy must still be future.

Since the fall of the Roman Empire, there has never been a world-dominating empire equal to Rome. Many have tried—the Huns, Islam, the so-called Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin—but none have succeeded. Each of these had amazing power and influence, but nothing compared to that of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire, in some form or another, will be revived under the leadership of the final fallen dictator, the Antichrist.

v 45 **It broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold:** This described a single, decisive event that shattered the image representing the glory of man's rule on earth. Since the Church or the Gospel have not, in a single decisive event, shattered the reign of human kingdoms, this event is still in the *future*.

This isn't the gradual salvation of the world by the church; “Smashing is not salvation. Crushing is not conversion. Destroying is not delivering nor is pulverizing the same as purification.” (Heslop)

This stone cut **without hands** is the Messiah, not the Church. Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, Isaiah 28:16, and Zechariah 3:9 also refer to Jesus as a stone.

Therefore, the final superpower of the world is thought to be a revival of the Roman Empire, a continuation of this image. This will be the final world empire that the returning Jesus will conquer over.

It's also significant to see that the image described *devolution*, not *evolution*. Instead of man beginning in the dust and evolving into gold, this vision declares that man's dominion

begins with gold and devalues into dust. Our societies and nations are getting more and more depraved as time goes on.

Some 40 years from this, Daniel had a vision describing the same succession of empires. Daniel saw it from God's perspective, and Nebuchadnezzar saw it from man's perspective. Nebuchadnezzar saw these empires as an impressive image; Daniel saw them as fierce beasts.

v 45 **The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure:** Daniel didn't guess or analyze. Through him God announced the future. **The only reason that God can predict history is because he can control it. Amen!**

Daniel 2:46–49 NKJV

⁴⁷ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” ⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar doesn't say to Daniel, “Your God is my God.” He says, “Your God is pretty impressive.” Nonetheless, Nebuchadnezzar is making the first of a series of steps that will eventually lead him into the kingdom of God.

v 47 **Your God is the God of gods:** Nebuchadnezzar knew that it wasn't Daniel himself that revealed these things, but Daniel's God revealed it through Daniel. Daniel wanted the glory to go to God, and it did.

v 48 **The king promoted Daniel:** Daniel not only had his life spared, but he was promoted to high office—and he made sure his friends were also promoted. It was fitting that Daniel's friends got to share in his advancement, because they accomplished much of the victory through their prayers

LEARNING TO LISTEN A Topical Study of DANIEL 2:16–19

(Adapted from Jon Courson's Application Commentary)

People have a tendency to be either fascinated with or frightened by the future. In our country alone, billions of dollars are spent by people going to fortune tellers, astrologers, or channellers. But those who truly know something about the future are more often than not frightened by it. Economists, political scientists, and biologists have a tendency to be upset about it. The economists are concerned about the size of the national debt. The political scientists are concerned about nuclear power in the wrong hands. The biologists are concerned about the ramifications of genetic engineering. What's happening is ominous.

Such was the case with Nebuchadnezzar. The most powerful king in the history of the world, he tossed and turned as he wondered about the future of his kingdom. When he finally fell asleep, he had an incredible dream about the future. When he awoke, he knew he had a dream of significance, but it seems he couldn't remember the details. So he called his astrologers, magicians, and wise men. When they were unable to help him, he called Daniel who, in turn, called upon the Lord.

Maybe, like Nebuchadnezzar, you feel troubled. Maybe, like Daniel, you need to hear from God. The question is, does God really speak today like He spoke to Daniel? I say absolutely, unequivocally, with tremendous certainty, the answer is Yes!

Notice with me five elements seen in the life of Daniel that will unlock your ability to hear the voice of God clearly...

Separation

Daniel lived a separated life. Others were drinking the king's wine, eating the king's meat, but Daniel had already purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the things of the world (1:8).

God is speaking. The problem is the wax of the world has plugged our spiritual ears. In Matthew 13, said that the cares of this world and the lust for riches choke out the Word of God. God is speaking. The question is, are we listening—or are our ears so plugged with the things of this world that we can't tune in to His frequency?

An Indian was walking down Wall Street with a fellow stockbroker. A businessman who had grown up on a reservation, he suddenly stopped and said, "Did you hear that?"

"Hear what?" his colleague asked.

"Listen," he said, walking a few steps to a gutter and picking up a little cricket.

"How in the world among all these people and hustle and bustle and horns and traffic, did you hear the sound of a single cricket?" his friend asked.

"It all depends on what your ears are tuned into. Watch this," he said, as he tossed a quarter on the sidewalk. As it hit, everyone stopped.

No one heard the cricket, but they all heard the quarter. It all depends on what you're listening for. Does God speak? Yes. But the problem is that our ears are so filled with the sounds of the world that we don't hear His voice.

"No partying for me," Daniel said. "I'm going to seek the Lord." And that's why he was in a position to hear from the Lord.

Expectation

“Give me a day,” Daniel said, “and I will show you the interpretation.” In other words, Daniel knew God would speak to him. When you ask the Lord for His guidance or His Word, separation is where it begins. Expectation or faith is the next step. You’ve got to believe the Lord is going to speak.

James 1:5–8 NLT

⁵ If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶ But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

If I really believe the Lord is going to speak to me in my morning devotions or when I’m at a Bible study, I’ll always have pencil and paper ready. James says the person who doesn’t believe the Lord will speak will not receive anything from Him concerning wisdom and direction. Therefore, when you have your morning devotions don’t lazily and halfheartedly say, “I wonder if there’s anything in the Word for me today,” but come eagerly and expectantly. Also remember that we need to be patient in prayer. Think of Daniel praying for 21 days before his prayer was answered. Think of what both he and us would have missed out on if he had quit on day 20. God promises to answer our prayers, so in faith, persevere.

More about faith:

When God’s people today face a crisis, they need to follow the example of Daniel and his friends and take the matter to the Lord in prayer. *Faith is living without scheming*, and faith brings glory to God. Daniel and his friends couldn’t take credit for what happened because it came from the hand of God. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Ps. 50:15, NJKV). “Whatever God can do faith can do,” said A.W. Tozer, “and whatever faith can do prayer can do when it is offered in faith. An invitation to prayer is, therefore, an invitation to omnipotence, for prayer engages the Omnipotent God and brings Him into our human affairs.”

Cooperation

Daniel went to his friends and said, “Let’s seek the Lord together.” Over and over in His Word, the Lord teaches us that we are not to live in isolation but to live in cooperation. If you want to hear the Lord’s voice, follow the example of Daniel who sought the Lord with his friends.

Jesus said that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, He would be in their midst (Matthew 18:20). It’s not that He’s not with us when we’re alone—it’s that there’s another dynamic that comes into play when we seek the Lord with our brothers and sisters. It’s all part of His plan to develop a body that is linked together and dependent upon one another.

Desperation

Daniel and his friends knew that if the Lord didn’t give them an answer, they were dead. We don’t often seek the voice of the Lord because we don’t think our situation could be classified as desperate. That’s how the early church initially felt. It wasn’t until James was sawn in half by Herod that the church got on her face before the Lord and prayed with intensity on behalf of Peter. And, as they prayed for him with desperation, Peter was delivered miraculously (Acts 12).

Jon Courson: “We never know what lies around the corner in our lives, in our vocations, with our children. We don’t know what tomorrow holds. Therefore, we can’t afford to take life casually. James tells us we don’t have because we don’t ask (4:2). Kids get into trouble unnecessarily because parents aren’t praying desperately. Divorces and separations occur tragically because, when things were going smoothly, the couples weren’t praying together consistently. I’m convinced all kinds of trouble comes our way unnecessarily because we think we don’t need to pray.”

We need to realize that we’re at war, that Satan goes about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). Therefore, we need to keep our guard up and our knees bent. We need to be building a wall of protection around our families and around our lives personally. If God allowed us to see the very real dangers that surround us, I guarantee we wouldn’t be so casual.

Are you a proud person? If you are not praying, you are proud. Why? Praying demonstrates our dependance on God. A lack of prayer demonstrates our dependance on ourselves.

Communication

Daniel was given an answer in order that he might pass it on to Nebuchadnezzar. In Genesis 18, as the Lord and two angels moved toward Sodom and Gomorrah en route to destroy the city, the Lord said, “Shall I not show unto Abraham the things that I am going to do? For I know him that He shall command his children and make My ways known to them.” God knew that His friend, Abraham, would pass on His words to his children.

Revelation from the Lord is not necessarily given to those who treat it merely as an interesting insight. It is given to those who will faithfully pass it on to others.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (a)

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets.
2 And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son....

The ultimate Word concerning anything you need to know about life and eternity is found in listening to and learning of Jesus. It all starts there. Then, having been in touch with the living Word, you will be in position to receive the directive word concerning your specific situation.

Learn of Jesus. Listen for Him. Believe that He will speak to you—because the bible promises that He will.

Conclusion

1. What started out as possible tragedy—the slaughter of four godly men—was turned into great triumph; and the God of Daniel received great glory.

2. The world will be delivered from evil, not by a process, but by a crisis, the promised return of Jesus Christ. Whatever remains of the four Gentile kingdoms, passed from one kingdom to the next, will be destroyed and turned into chaff. Then Christ will establish His kingdom which will fill all the earth.

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 (Dan. 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).