

Daniel 2—a Commentary

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Introduction

Daniel 2 is the longest chapter in the book. With Isaiah 2, Joel 2, and Acts 2 it is a pivotal Biblical chapter. It is also a key chapter to understanding the book of Daniel itself. Much of the remainder of the book is an amplification of the outline of the four great world empires and the working out of God's plan pertaining to them as introduced to us in Nebuchadnezzar's notable dream-figure. However, the centerpiece of the chapter (and of the book) is the kingdom prophecy—the image symbolizing the empires is merely the inspired vehicle to bring us to the time in which the timeless kingdom would be—was—established.

I have outlined the chapter as follows:

1. Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream (vv. 1–7).
2. Nebuchadnezzar's furious decree (vv. 8–13).
3. Daniel's plea to Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 14–16).
4. Daniel's plea to God (vv. 17–18).
5. God's response to Daniel's thanksgiving (vv. 19–23)
6. Daniel's approach and address to Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 24–30).
7. Daniel relates Nebuchadnezzar's dream (vv. 31–35).
8. Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream (vv. 36–45).
9. Daniel and his friends promoted by Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 46–49).

Now, let us study the text of this remarkable chapter.

Exegesis and Exposition of Daniel 2:1–49

Verses 1–7: Nebuchadnezzar's Forgotten Dream

Verse 1: Daniel dated the events of this chapter in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign—about 602 B. C. The king was troubled by “dreams”—later called “a dream” (v. 3).¹ God used dreams on many occasions in past ages, both with believers and with the heathen and in both Old and New Testaments, to reveal His will to men. Perhaps the same dream kept recurring or “the dream in its parts contained a plurality of subjects.”² This experience was causing him to lose sleep, either by waking him up when it occurred, after which he could not return to sleep, or by insomnia caused by dread of the dream's repetition.

Verses 2-3: The dream(s) became such a problem that Nebuchadnezzar sought a solution from his wise men, sorcerers, magicians, and astrologers (*Chaldeans* is apparently used here in reference to a class of wise men, rather than to an ethnic group). Such were highly prized, in fact, counted almost indispensable, in the courts of the ancient Eastern monarchs. Nebuchadnezzar told these men he had dreamed a troubling dream and wanted them to tell him its meaning.

Verse 4: The Chaldeans expressed their willingness to do so if he would but tell them the dream. Dream interpretation was a fairly safe activity. After all, if the dreamer himself did not know the interpretation, how could he judge another's interpretation to be false (just as one must know Biblical Truth to be able to recognize error). The Chaldeans responded to Nebuchadnezzar in the "Syriac" (i.e., Aramaic) language, and the book of Daniel continues in this language through chapter 7. Liberals claim that the form of Aramaic found here belongs to the second century B.C. and is not common to the sixth century when Daniel claims to have lived and written his book. However, conservative scholars long ago exposed the attempts of skeptics to date the book of Daniel in the second century B.C. (and thus discredit it) on this basis.³

Verses 5-7: This exercise in dream interpretation had a special hook, however: The interpreters first had to **tell** the dream and **then** give its interpretation thus requiring the ability to reveal the past as well as the future, both abilities beyond those of these court wise men). Had Nebuchadnezzar really forgotten his dream, or was he merely testing his flatterers? Was he only feigning forgetfulness? (How could he know if they were able to tell him what he had dreamed if he could not remember it?) We may never know for sure, but it really makes no difference in the outcome.

Nebuchadnezzar used the "direct approach," threatening to brutally execute them and to memorialize their failure and shame by turning their homes into public outhouses if they could not both tell and interpret his dream. He promised corresponding rewards and honor if they were able to do so. They must have all been in shock – all they could do was babble forth again their previous response: "You tell us, then we will tell you." They were totally helpless to say or do more. They were accustomed to giving fanciful dream interpretations to which their imaginations gave wings, but they always were told the dream to begin with. One almost feels sorry for them. **Almost.**

Verses 8–13: Nebuchadnezzar's Furious Decree

Verses 8–9: Nebuchadnezzar accused them of stalling for time while trying to think of what to do or say. He was very likely correct, and he would have none of it. Whether or not the king was lying (about forgetting his dream), he knew his court wizards were capable of doing so in their interpretation. Thus he put them on trial – “If you can **tell** me the dream, this will be evidence that you can also render a correct interpretation. If you cannot, you thereby demonstrate your inability to **interpret** the dream.” This dream was so troublesome and foreboding to the king that he had to have some assurance that its interpretation was not a flattering fabrication. This was his way of gaining such assurance, and, I must say, a rather effective way. Those once revered as court wizards are now made to appear as little more than court jesters.

Verses 10–11: Nebuchadnezzar's pressure on these men compelled them to confess their utter inability to comply with his demand and to sue for mercy on the grounds of its injustice. They excused their impotence in this matter by saying that the king's demand represented an impossibility for any mere man, and for this cause no king had ever expected such of his advisers. He was expecting of men what only the gods could do.

What a significant confession: “There is none other that can show it...except God”! Perhaps this is the first time these fellows had **ever** spoken the truth. In their confession they told the truth about Jeane Dixon and all her astrology cohorts who dish out their pitiful guesses based on what star is where at a given time. They told the truth about all of the self-proclaimed psychics with their crystal balls, tea leaves, tarot cards, and palm readings who bilk the public of millions of dollars every year – while they laugh all the way to the bank. They told the truth about all of the self-appointed Swamis and Gurus and their myriads of dupes. They told the truth about Shirley MacLaine and her ilk and all of their New Age idiocy.

It will be a memorable day when the Lord's people genuinely accept what these Babylonian astrologers and sorcerers **said about themselves** – “There is none that can show it ... but God”! Moreover, may the day soon come when they hear what **God** says about such deceivers (Exo. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deu. 18:9–12; 1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Chr. 33:6; Isa. 8:19; 47:12–14; Mic. 5:12; Mal. 3:5; Acts 8:9–13; 13:6–11; 19:18–19; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 9:21; 21:8; 22:15; et al.)

It is amazing to me that our enlightened Western World, originally founded on the solid foundations of pursuit of truth and exercise of reason, has been so greatly influenced for at least

two generations now by the mysterious malarkey of oriental superstition which has no basis whatever in reality or fact. Some people will not brush their teeth or pick out the socks they will wear for the day without consulting their horoscope. Tragically, it is not just worldlings—many among the Lord's people, especially women it seems, have become almost obsessed with astrology. They think that it really works, or at least, that it is a harmless pastime, neither of which is true.

We must all remember one thing—only God can see the future as plainly as the past (both are the ever-present with him). Any human being who claims this ability—whether by stars, crystals, pyramids, cards, lines in the palm, tea leaves, or reading goat entrails—is a deceiver, a liar, a cheat, and a fraud. Their interest is not to provide you with your future life, but to relieve you of your present cash.

Verses 12–13: When it became apparent that the necromancers could not produce the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream—much less the dream itself—Nebuchadnezzar was "very furious." Perhaps his great fury sprang not only from this failure, but also from the realization that now hit him with full force—these trusted advisors had been deceiving him all along. In his unbounded rage he ordered the execution of "all the wise men of Babylon," most likely meaning all those of the capitol city proper, rather than of the entire empire.⁴ The earlier threat now became a decree, and its execution was begun. Daniel and his three faithful companions (Hananiah [Shadrach], Mishael [Meshach], and Azaria [Abednego], Dan. 1:6–7, 19) were included in the round-up of those to be slain.

Nebuchadnezzar assigned Arioch to execute his decree. Why did Arioch have to seek Daniel and his friends? Why were they not among those in the king's court when he issued his death decree? The answer lies in the fact that they were mere youths and they were yet considered but novices among the wise men, an assessment which was soon to change dramatically. Nebuchadnezzar had called only his oldest, most experienced, and trusted wizards for this great challenge; the newcomers need not be bothered, or so he thought.

Verses 14–16: Arioch was obviously a reasonable man, perhaps even a man who was carrying out his orders with a heavy heart and no zeal for the slaughter. Upon Daniel's inquiry into this sudden, seemingly capricious decree, Arioch informed Daniel of the circumstances. "Then Daniel went in." It is most likely he could not have gone in on his own, unannounced by a superior, or unsummoned by the king, without thereby risking his life (Est. 4:11). On the basis

of the plain statement that Arioch later “brought in Daniel before the king” (vv. 24–25), we assume that he did so on the present occasion. In his description, Daniel simply hastened past the means by which he gained a successful audience with Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel openly pled for time with a promise to the king that he would interpret his dream. Why did Nebuchadnezzar trust this untested foreigner? (1) Nebuchadnezzar had already been greatly impressed with Daniel and his friends (1:19–20). (2) Daniel did not whine and complain that the task of telling the dream was impossible. (3) He confidently, unconditionally promised the interpretation, which was the king’s desire. Nebuchadnezzar saw none of the guile, none of the stammering, none of the stalling he had seen in his other wise men. He perceived that Daniel was not saying, “Give me some time so I can figure out a way to get out of this predicament.” He said, “Give me some time, and I will interpret your dream.” Nebuchadnezzar must have reasoned that Daniel was his last hope; besides, what did he have to lose? If Daniel failed, he could always carry out the executions.

I am made to marvel that so young a man (perhaps only still in his teens), a captive in a strange land and under the most stressful circumstances conceivable, evinced such unmitigated faith and trust in God as he did. What a lesson in faith Daniel teaches all of us, whatever our age might be!

Verses 17–18: Daniel’s Plea to God

Verse 17: Daniel allows us to infer that Nebuchadnezzar granted him time to produce the interpretation. Had time not been granted Daniel’s life would have ended at verse 16 and we would not have his book at all. (Did any of the other magicians know why the executions suddenly stopped? Did they ever thank their benefactor?) He immediately returned to his three friends upon departing the palace and related to them what he had told the king.

Verse 18: Accordingly, Daniel counseled that they must all beg for God’s “mercies” in granting them this wonderful secret of the king’s dream and its meaning. This was their only hope to escape the execution decree of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was a man of incessant prayer, which would eventually get him into serious trouble, but which also brought him great blessings. He referred to Jehovah as “the God of Heaven.” Although this description of God is used in the Bible only once before (Gen. 24:7), it is commonly found only among the exiles (cf. other passages in Daniel, also in Ezra and Nehemiah). Daniel also called God the “Lord of heaven” (5:23). “Heaven” here includes all of the heavens, all of the stars, worshipped as gods by the pagans and consulted by the astrologers (both then and now) as controllers of the

destinies of men. The astrologers consulted the stars; Daniel consulted the Creator and governor of the stars. (The Christian who knows the Bible, though he may possess little formal education, knows more about human behavior and destiny than any astrologer can ever know; the God Who created and controls the stars has revealed it in His Word.)

Verses 19–23: God's Response and Daniel's Thanksgiving

Verse 19: God heard and answered the prayers of Daniel and his friends (Jam. 5:17). In a night vision (not necessarily a dream), God revealed both the content and the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In response, Daniel "blessed" (i.e., gave thanks to, cf. Mat; 26:26–28) God, as subsequent verses indicate.

Verses 20–23: Daniel blessed the "name" of God, because His name stands for His very nature, character, existence, and power (cf. Acts 4:7). The prayer of thanksgiving Daniel uttered is a rare jewel of beauty and simplicity. Daniel listed several of God's specific abilities in this outburst of praise:

1. God possesses wisdom and might (v. 20). All of the wisest men of the mightiest monarch on earth were no match for Him. Paul's description of God's wisdom is appropriate here:
For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought. Where is the wise? where is the scribe: where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ...Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Cor. 1:19–20, 25).
2. God changes the times and seasons (v. 21). He sets these "within his own authority" (Acts 1:7). He makes the sun to rise and set. He begins things and ends things. Concerning men, He has "determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation" (17:26). He is in control.
3. He removes kings and sets up kings (v. 21). No matter how weak a man might be, God can make him a king (1 Sam. 9:20–10:1). No matter how powerful a king might appear to be, God can remove him (Exo. 14:16–28). He causes nations to rise and fall according to His own purpose (Dan. 2:37). Thus, Paul described the Christ is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).
4. He gives wisdom and knowledge (v. 21). He is the ultimate source of both. No man is wise or educated if he does not know God's revelation of wisdom and knowledge through His Word.
5. He reveals deep and secret things (v. 22). The dark cannot conceal secrets from God because He is absolute light (John 1:4–9; 1:17; 1 John 1:5–7). "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" (Gen. 18:14).

Daniel closed his prayer by thanking God that He had given him that wisdom and power he needed to reveal the king's dream and its interpretation (v. 23).

Verses 24–30: Daniel Approaches and Addresses Nebuchadnezzar

Verse 24: As already stated, Daniel could not directly approach the king, but went to Arioch once more to be presented for audience. Daniel assured Arioch that the execution decree would be lifted because he knew the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Verse 25: Arioch took credit for finding Daniel, almost to our amusement, but also to our disgust. He stretched the truth beyond its bounds. He had not found Daniel – Daniel had learned of the motive for the death decree only after **he** asked **Arioch** about it. Daniel then took all of the initiative, though it is likely Arioch brought him before Nebuchadnezzar so he could make his initial appeal and promise (see comments on vv. 14–16). It is obvious that Arioch was currying favor with his lord for something of which he was but an incidental part.

Verses 26–27: Nebuchadnezzar addressed Daniel with the burning question of his soul – could he tell and interpret the dream? Daniel's answer was lengthy, but to the point. He wanted there to be no doubt in the mind of the king by whose power the "impossible" achievements would be wrought. He first reminded the king that all of his wizards and their wizardry could not produce the secret of the dream or its meaning.

Verses 28–29: "But there is a God in heaven." He alone is the one who can reveal such secrets because He alone knows them. By implication Daniel denied that the heathen gods have any such power. Further, the reason the other wise men had no power to reproduce the dream or give its meaning was because their gods were powerless. God would show through Daniel the secrets of what would be in the "latter days" as portrayed by the dream. *Latter days* here may just mean "hereafter" (see v. 29). However, it seems to me more likely to refer to the events from Nebuchadnezzar (with whom the interpretation begins) to the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom (with whom the interpretation ends, vv. 38–45). The suggestion by premillennialists that "latter days" refers to a brief period just before the Second Coming is a ridiculous figment of overtaxed imaginations – as is their whole theological system.

At first glance verse 29 seems at to be a recapitulation of the content of verses 27 and 28 combined. However, Keil may be right that Daniel was not saying that the thoughts of the king on his bed were his dream, but that as he pondered the future of his kingdom while on his bed, God opened the scenes of the future to him by means of the dream.⁵ However, it was a dream that the monarch could not decipher. Through Daniel God used the dream to cause Nebuchadnezzar to honor His existence and power.

Verse 30: Daniel unequivocally refused to take the credit for himself (cf. John's disclaimer [John 1:19-27]). He professed no superior wisdom of his own. The dream and interpretation would be told for the sake of others (to demonstrate God's power?) and to inform Nebuchadnezzar of the future.

Verses 31-35: Daniel Relates Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Verses 31-33: Daniel began relating the dream by describing an image of a man that Nebuchadnezzar had seen. Daniel used several strong words to convey the appearance of this curious statue: "great," "mighty," "excellent brightness," "terrible." It was mostly metallic of varied materials, beginning with the pure gold of the head and deteriorating in its various parts to silver, thence to brass, and finally, to mixed iron and clay in its feet.

Verses 34-35: This ominous man-made image was short-lived in the dream. A stone (of unidentified source here but said to be cut out of a mountain in verse 45) that had been quarried without human hands, struck the image in its iron-clay feet. The destruction of the feet brought the entire image down with such force that the entirety of it was pulverized to dust and the wind blew it away so that it disappeared. Further, the stone became a mountain of such magnitude that it filled the earth.

Verses 36-45: Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Verse 36: Having told the dream itself (which must have amazed the king no little), Daniel announced his intention immediately to give its interpretation. So certain was he that the dream was accurately presented, he did not even wait for Nebuchadnezzar to acknowledge its accuracy. Alexander Maclaren makes a good observation on the interpretation:

This image embodied what is now called a philosophy of history. It set forth the fruitful idea of a succession and unity in the rise and fall of conquerors and kingdoms. The four empires represented by it are diverse, and yet parts of a whole, and each following on the other. So the truth is taught that history is an organic whole, however unrelated its events may appear to a superficial eye. The writer of this book [i. e., Daniel] had learned lessons far in advance of his age, and not yet fully grasped by many so-called historians.⁶

Verses 37-38: Daniel began the interpretation by identifying the image's striking head of fine gold with Nebuchadnezzar and his great empire. Daniel called him "king of kings" in relation to other earthly kings and reminded him that the God of Heaven had given him his kingdom (i.e., Babylon), his might, and his glory. The dominion of the Babylonian monarch over men, beasts, and birds was also a gift from God. He possessed such authority, not merely by his own might and certainly not because of any personal

moral merit, but because of God's great plan of the ages that necessitated such a ruler as Nebuchadnezzar. It is obvious from the first point of interpretation that each of the four parts of the image is representative of a successive kingdom or empire of great extent.

Verse 39: The silver breast and arms symbolized a kingdom that was to succeed Nebuchadnezzar, which would be inferior to his. This is a reference to the Medo-Persian Empire, dominated by Persia, which toppled Babylon in 538 B.C. The third part of the image, the belly and thighs of brass, is given more emphasis than the second part. Of it, Daniel said, it "shall bear rule over all the earth." This third world empire was that founded by the brazen Alexander of Macedonia, whose might was unquestionably established over the Persian Empire and all lesser nations as well in his eastward sweep from Greece, begun in 331 B.C. Perhaps Keil's explanation of the brevity of Daniel's description of the second and third kingdoms is correct: "Little is said of these kingdoms here, because they are more fully described in chapters vii. viii. and x."⁷

Verses 40-43: The fourth part of the image and the kingdom it represented received the most attention in Daniel's interpretation. It was to be a strong kingdom, as indicated by its iron content, and it would subdue and crush that which got in its way. However, it was to be a divided kingdom, "partly strong, and partly broken," as signified by the mixed iron and clay of the feet of the image. This fourth kingdom would be characterized by its mingling with others different from it, as iron differs from clay. And, as iron and clay will not combine, those of this kingdom would not be able to become one with other men. This mixture of power and weakness stands for the Empire of Rome and her Caesars

Verses 44-45: While the kings of this fourth great kingdom or empire – the Roman Empire – were ruling, God would set up His own kingdom. The kingdoms of men just reviewed by Daniel would all come to naught, but God's kingdom would never be destroyed. Whereas the kings of the four human empires left their rule to others who conquered and replaced them, such would not be so with the kingdom of God. Rather, as the stone destroyed the image, God's kingdom would subdue all human kingdoms and endure forever. The kingdom which Daniel foresaw was the kingdom God had earlier promised to David, namely that He would set David's seed upon the throne of his kingdom, a kingdom that would stand forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16; 1 Chr. 17:11-14).

Has this kingdom been established, or is it yet to come, as the premillennialists and dispensationalists (e.g., Hal Lindsey) aver? The principal basis of their adamant advocacy that the kingdom has not yet come is their insistence that Daniel prophesied, and God promised an earthly political kingdom. It matters not to them that the Lord Jesus refused just such a kingdom when the Jews sought to force it on Him (John 6:15) and totally disavowed any plans for an earthly kingdom, such as the Roman Empire, which Pontius Pilate served (John 18:36). In their warped view the church is only a spur-of-the-moment substitute for the kingdom, made necessary because the Jews thwarted Jesus' plans to set up His earthly empire. Further, in their erroneous scheme, the church is to serve merely as a stopgap measure until Christ comes again. Since the Son of God, the son of David, does not now possess and never has possessed such a kingdom, it is yet to be established, which will occur when He comes again, they argue. What shall we say to these things?

Obviously, if our interpretation of the fourth empire represented in the image is the Roman Empire, the kingdom has necessarily been set up. Daniel stated explicitly, "**And in the days of those kings** [emph. DM] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom..." (Dan. 2:44). Curiously, while premillennialists deny that the kingdom of God has been established, they agree that Rome is the fourth empire of the dream-image. However, they insist that Rome should be divided into (1) the ancient empire of the first few centuries of our era and (2) a modern Roman Empire to be revived in modern times. I charge that this "New Rome" is as much a figment of their imaginations as is their insistence upon an earthly political kingdom to fulfill the prophecy.

The truth of the matter is this: The eternal kingdom of God was established in the days of the Roman Empire in the first century, and it is identified in the New Testament as the church of Christ. Note the following brief list of proofs of this premise:

1. The writer of the Hebrews epistle wrote of this same eternal kingdom: "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12:28). First, note that this passage clearly refers to an unshakeable kingdom **that had been received** by these saints. Second, note that earlier in the context (v. 23) the inspired writer had referred to the "church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven." It was to these members of the church that he wrote, saying they had received an everlasting kingdom, thus he identifies the church as that unshakeable kingdom.
2. Jesus identified His church with "the kingdom of Heaven" (Mat. 16:18-19). He first promised to establish His church and then, in the same breath, told Peter He would give him the keys

to His kingdom. Did he build one thing and give the apostle the keys to something different, or are they one and the same?

3. In Mark 1:15, the Christ declared in His preaching, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Premillennialists insist that He was wrong and that the time is still not fulfilled and that the kingdom has not yet been established. Both of them cannot be correct.
4. The words of the Lord in Mark 9:1 are conclusive to the Truth-seeker: "Verily I say unto you, there are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." If the premillennialists are right, the Son of God was wrong. If Jesus was right, the premillennialists are wrong. His **church** was established on the day of Pentecost with great power (Acts 1:3-8; 2:1-47) in the days of those who lived when He did, which is what He said would be true concerning His **kingdom**. This does not mean He was confused about His kingdom and His church, but that His kingdom on earth and His church are one and the same; when He spoke of one, He spoke of the other by implication. His **church** was established in the days of the "kings" of the Roman Empire, the very time at which Daniel said God would set up His everlasting **kingdom**.
5. The Lord said to the apostles in the upper room on the night of His betrayal, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at **my table in my kingdom...**" (Luke 22:29-30, emph. DM). However, we find that when the Lord's Supper on the **Lord's table** began to be eaten and drunk, it was **in His church**, established on the first Pentecost after His resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16, 21; 11:17-29). If the table was to be in the **kingdom**, but we find it was actually in the **church**, either Christ made a serious blunder, or **the kingdom and the church are one**.
6. To the **church** in Colossae Paul addressed the following words: "Who [the Father] delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the **kingdom** of the Son of his love" (1:13, emph. DM). Thus, **church** membership and **kingdom** citizenship are one and the same.
7. When Christ comes again it will not be to **establish** His kingdom, but to "...deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15:23-24). He cannot both **establish** an eternal kingdom (or even a 1,000-year reign) and **deliver** such a kingdom to the Father at His coming. Obviously, His kingdom must already be in existence **before** He comes, or He will have nothing to deliver to the Father. This passage simply foretells the fact that Christ will take His church home to eternal glory at His coming. Once again, we must choose between the claims of the premillennial theorists and the clear statements of Scripture.
8. Furthermore, the church is not an afterthought or spur-of-the-moment concept in the mind of God, nor is it a substitute for the Kingdom of God or for anything else. Rather, it is "according to the eternal purpose which he [God] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-10).

If the church and the everlasting kingdom of Christ on earth are to be identified as one (as we have seen from many passages they are) then **Daniel's prophecy of an everlasting kingdom was actually a prophecy concerning the church**. Thus, when the church was

established in about A.D. 30, in the days of the Roman “kings,” Daniel’s prophecy was fulfilled – that a never-ending kingdom would be established.

R.L. Whiteside makes the following powerful point on Daniel 2:44:

In that image each kingdom merged into the one following it till Rome; then the stone smote the image and destroyed it. As the kingdom was to be set up during the existence of that image, and as that image has been destroyed, it proves beyond a doubt that the God of heaven has set up his kingdom.⁸

In verse 45 Daniel reminded Nebuchadnezzar that his dream had been correctly set forth by the power of God and that this was proof that the interpretation must come to pass with certainty.

Verses 46–49: Daniel and His Friends Promoted

Verses 46–47: Nebuchadnezzar responded in the only way his paganism had taught him. He was literally awestruck at what Daniel had shown him, and he fell on his face in worship before the prophet. He commanded that offerings be made to him as if he were a god. Although the record does not say so, from the clarity with which Daniel had announced that his recital and interpretation of the dream were not of himself, but of God (vv. 27–28), we must assume that he rejected all such worshipful homage. Had he accepted it, it would have been completely out of character with everything else we know about Daniel’s humility and his reverence for God. Perhaps the fact that the king “answered” Daniel (v. 47) indicates that Daniel rejected his overtures by once more declaring to him (though the words were not recorded) the real source of his information. Furthermore, the record does not say that Daniel accepted the worship of Nebuchadnezzar. It was a powerful confession that fell from the lips of the earth’s mightiest monarch, a confirmed pagan: “Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret.” It is tragically shameful that this Pagan expressed a clearer concept of and greater faith in the true and living God than many professed believers in Him in our day.

Verses 48–49: Nebuchadnezzar had earlier promised his wizards great rewards and honor if they could tell him the dream and its interpretation (v. 6). He was true to this promise. The king made Daniel governor of the province of Babylon and president of all of his wise men. Besides this, Nebuchadnezzar gave him great unspecified gifts. In his hour of honor and glory Daniel did not forget his three friends who had striven with him in prayer that God would give the dream and its interpretation. He requested that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be made

his lieutenants in the governing of Babylon, and the king granted his request. This allowed Daniel to remain in the very court of Nebuchadnezzar. Young sums this up well: “The three companions had assisted Daniel in prayer, and he requests their promotion to be under-officers to himself that he might serve in the court of the king.”⁹

Conclusion

The Trickett-Fillmore hymn we sometimes sing sounds forth the great theme of Daniel 2:

The kingdoms of earth pass away one by one,
But the kingdom of heaven remains;
It is built on a rock and the Lord is its King,
Till all foes Christ shall conquer — He reigns.
It shall stand, it shall stand,
Forever and ever and ever, it shall stand
It shall stand, it shall stand,
Forever and ever. Amen and amen.

The glorious practical application of the wonderful prophecy of Daniel 2 is that we can be citizens in His eternal kingdom, members of His church! Indeed, the Scriptures teach that we **must** be if we hope to live with God, His Son, and all the redeemed of the ages in Heaven. By the preaching of the saving Gospel, the Lord keeps calling men, through faith and obedience, into His kingdom (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37–47; 2 The. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9–10).

Endnotes

1. All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.
2. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982 rep.), p. 86.
3. Jim McGuigan, *The Book of Daniel* (Lubbock, TX: Montex Pub. Co., 1978), pp. 16–18, 42.
4. Keil and Delitzsch, pp. 95–96.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
6. Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), 6:49.
7. Keil, p. 105.
8. Robertson L. Whiteside, *The Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy* (Denton, TX: Inys Whiteside, 1956), pp. 157–58.
9. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953), p. 82.

[**Note:** I wrote this MS for and presented a digest of it orally at the Southwest Lectures, hosted by the Southwest Church of Christ, Austin, TX, April 10–13, 1994. It was published in the book of the lectures, *The Book of Daniel*, ed. Gary Colley (Austin, TX: Southwest Pub. 1984.)]

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