

Daniel 2 - Dreaming of Kings and Kingdoms

- The book of Daniel gives us a glimpse in the kingdom that will never end, the one that triumphs in righteousness for eternity.
- Wherever God's people are in the world, God provides them the means to be faithful to him. Suffering through exile does not prevent faithfulness.
- God is the Almighty, all-surpassing Creator, all of world history is shaped by divine providence.
- In Daniel we see God exercising his all-surpassing wisdom over all world affairs, even the actions of the most powerful individual rulers of his day.
- The book of Daniel helps us:
 - have a clearer perspective of the heavenly kingdom;
 - encourages us to live with peace and prudence despite our cultural surroundings;
 - and rebukes our weak faith that sees God as too small to conquer the seemingly insurmountable power of the world's rulers.

A simple outline of Chapter 2:

1. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-16)
2. God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:17-30)
3. Daniel Interprets the Dream (2:31-45)
4. Daniel Is Promoted (2:46-49)

Notable themes for Chapter 2:

1. **Prudence** and **patience** on the part of Daniel under pressure
2. **Purity** - seeing clearly the connection between holiness and Daniel's determination not to succumb to the cultural, religious, and social pressures of Babylon and his receptivity to seek and obey the wisdom of God with life and death hanging in the balance.
3. **Prayer** - where the battle is won and lost.
4. **Power** - the attention and the spotlight isn't about how great Daniel was at interpreting dreams, or even about how strong his faith was. The spotlight is continually on God's almighty power that is completely unmatched by even the strongest ruler of the strongest empire.
5. **Perspective** - kingdoms rise and fall, but there is still one King reigning over all.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-16)

- **This serves a greater, more providential purpose -**
 - the dream **rattles** the king,
 - **reveals** the ineptitude of the magicians, and
 - **rallies** the faith of the exiles to show who is really in charge.

Daniel Interprets the Dream

Reminder - Daniel has been prepared for this. His life has been fashioned around devotion and obedience, however inconvenient and potentially harmful. He's shaped the habits of heart and mind around a clear conscience of what God says is right and wrong - he has not haphazardly floated to a place of readiness.

Vision of the Statue (Daniel 2)

head of gold (vv. 36-38)	Babylonian Empire (625-539 b.c.)
chest and arms of silver (vv. 32 , 39)	Medo-Persian Empire (539-331 b.c.)
middle and thighs of bronze (vv. 32 , 39)	Greek Empire (331-63 b.c.)
legs of iron; feet of iron and clay (vv. 33 , 40-43)	Roman Empire (63 b.c.–a.d. 476)
messianic kingdom: the stone (vv. 44-45)	Christ the Cornerstone: The Kingdom of God

- This stone cut without hands is the Messiah | Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 28:16, and Zechariah 3:9

Psalm 118:22-23 ESV –

22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. 23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Matthew 21:42-44 ESV –

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. 44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

*The Kingdom of God will win over the kingdoms of men in the end
"We are either with the stone or with the statue."*

Daniel Is Promoted

Consider the similarities to the account of Joseph -

- Young men brought against their will to a land with an oppressive, powerful authoritarian ruler;
- Both of their names were changed to illustrate the power of their conquering rulers;
- Faithful obedience and holiness in **exile**, despite every excuse or justification as to why he could live in step with the conquering empire and its culture;
- life hanging in the balance, trusting God;
- **dreams** as a way to show that the power and glory goes to God alone;
- a king that stands in awe of real power;
- A **promotion** to power that stemmed from God's providential hand

Genesis 50:20

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Summary: God is over all; faithfulness and integrity under pressure; a "behind-the-scenes" glimpse at the kingdom that really matters; perspectives and conduct of exiles.
