

Life in the Lion's Den

"The Unshakable Kingdom"

(Daniel Chapter 2)

Lesson #3

Scripture: 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."*

Introduction:

The stage or the backdrop for Daniel chapter 2 is imperative for its understanding. During those years leading up to Christ, there was a world wide fight for dominance and power.



Syrians:

The Syrians (Aram in Hebrew), under Hazael and Ben-Hadad, were located just north of Northern Israel and did a lot of warring against them, until the Assyrians to their east with King Tiglath Pileser III 745-727BC defeated them and annexed all of its territory into the Assyrian empire.

Assyrians:

The Assyrians under Tiglath Pileser III in taking control of their new territory, also conquered their arch nemesis Babylon and forced them to pay tribute. Afterward that they marched south toward Israel. With fear of these Assyrians, King Pekah of Northern Israel partnered with King Rezin of Aram and they both tried to force Ahaz King of Judah to join them to fight the Assyrians. But Ahaz said no, and against Isaiah's advice, formed an alliance with King Tiglath for protection. Northern Israel became subject to Assyria along with Judah they both paid tribute to King Tiglath.

King Tiglath eventually placed Hoshea on the throne of Northern Israel as a puppet King, but Hoshea by the time of Tiglath's successor Shalmaneser V, rebelled and refused to pay tribute anymore.

So Shalmanaseer V attached Northern Israel in Samaria and after long siege his successor Sargon II hauled Northern Israel off into Assyrian captivity. Sargon II also defeated the Medes and the Persians and forced them to pay tribute.

Sargon was succeeded by Sennacherib who tried to take Jerusalem, but an angel of God killed 185,000 (2 Kings 19:35) his soldiers thus stopping the Assyrians from taking Jerusalem.

Then Babylon rises to world power:

The Mede King Cyaxares II allied with Babylonian King Nabopolassar and they soundly defeated the Assyrians in 612 BC by tearing down Nineveh the capital dwelling of the Assyrian Kings. The Babylonians claimed all the Assyrian land, and Nebuchadnezzar takes over as King of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar married the Mede King's daughter and peace existed between Babylon and the Medes....but Egypt King Pharaoh Necho became Babylon's new threat.

So, Judah found itself in the middle:

Judah, now comprehensively known as Israel, had in the past paid tribute to Assyria and under the reign of Jehoiakim seeing the power of Babylon allied with Pharaoh Necho of Egypt for protection and paid tribute to him. But after a Babylonian and Egyptian battle, Jehoiakim switched his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And later Jehoiakim switched his allegiance once again and Nebuchadnezzar wouldn't stand for it and besieged Jerusalem and hauled God's people off to Babylonian captivity for 70 years.

Persia then takes control of the Medes

In 539 BC Cyrus the Great became King of Persia and he killed the Median King Cyaxares and became leader of the Medes and Persians. Cyrus subjugated Babylon and freed Israel to return to Jerusalem to rebuild, even letting them take their temple treasure back. It was his son Artaxerxes who called a halt to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. But later Darius became King and allowed the rebuilding to continue.

Then the Greeks rose up against the Persians.

Alexander the Great defeats the Persians and takes control of all the Persian territory and most of the world. But Alexander drank himself to death and as a result the Diadochi wars came about between the Ptolemys of the south (Egypt) and the Seleucids of the North (Babylon) for control of Alexander's territory.

Rome: Eventually Rome rises to power and takes control over them all.

Transitional Statement:

The world then much like today is focused on worldly power and domination. Earthly kingdoms today are still jockeying for position and power. But here in Daniel chapter 2, God reminds His people that earthly kingdoms come and go but there will be established a spiritual kingdom which will last forever.

Israel had sought a king to judge them like the nations, but the name Daniel says it all. "Judged by God" Church God is the only King that counts.

I. King Nebuchadnezzar was loosing sleep.

Daniel 2:1

“Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.”

A. Nebuchadnezzar with his alliance with the Persians and His vast territory of Assyria, was pretty much sitting on top of the world.

1. He was generally considered one of the most powerful Kings that the world has ever seen.
2. It was probably easy for him to feel untouchable

B. But he had a dream

1. A particular dream that troubled his spirit.
 - a. And his sleep left him.
2. Nebuchadnezzar says in Verse 3 *“..my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.”*
 - a. He knew this wasn't an ordinary dream, but it had meaning behind it.
 - b. And he wasn't going to sleep until he figured it out.

II. So Nebuchadnezzar gathered up his top advisors to help him understand the dream. Daniel 2:2-13

Daniel 2:2

2 Then 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.

A. So the King calls in special men of his kingdom that had apparent connections with things beyond this world... i.e. magic, conjurers, sorcerers and astrologers.

1. He tells these guys to tell him what he dreamt and what it means.
 - a. And whoever does this will have great reward ... Verse 6

B. In Verses 4-9 we see the these guys do anything they can to get the king to tell them the dream so they would only have to help with its interpretation.

1. But Nebuchadnezzar tells them if they don't give both dream and interpretation, that they will be torn limb from limb and their houses would be torn down.... Verse 5
2. These guys had claimed powers beyond this world to understand human events by the stars and perform things seemingly impossible, so Nebuchadnezzar's idea was simply this: If you can tell me what the dream is, I will surely be able to trust your interpretation of it... Verse 9b

C. These guys admit that it is impossible for them...Verse 10

1. The parlor tricks have been exposed.
2. But these conjurers and magicians came up with one certain truth for the king.
 - a. "...there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh." Verse 10b

D. So Nebuchadnezzar became furious Verses 12-13

1. And ordered all the wise men of Babylon destroyed.
 - a. Which included Daniel and his friends.

III. Then Daniel's makes a plea for time to figure out the dream and interpretation. Verses 14-23

Daniel 2:14-16

14 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; 15 he 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. 16 So 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.

A. So Daniel goes to his house and prays with his friends for God's compassion in this matter so all these people wouldn't die. Verse 17-18

1. And God revealed the mystery to Daniel in a night vision Verse 19

B. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven by saying

*"Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,
For wisdom and power belong to Him.
21 "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.
22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And the light dwells with Him.
23 "To 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."*

IV. Next, Daniel goes to King Nebuchadnezzar. Verses 24-30

A. Daniel goes to the King and says that the God of heaven has provided the answer.. Verse 28

1. Daniel further explains that this isn't coming from his wisdom ...Verse 30

- a. Note the complete exalting of God and humility of Daniel...a lesson for all Israel and even us today.

B. Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that this dream was about real future events...Verse 29

V. So Daniel tells the King what his dream was. Verse 31-34

31 "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. 32 "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

34 "You 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. 35 "Then 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.



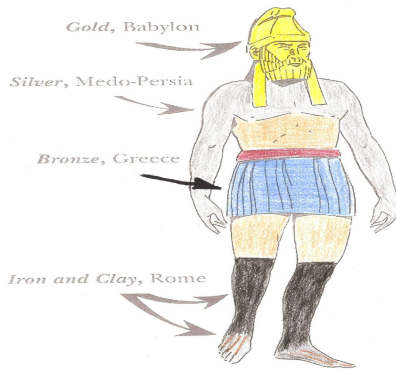
VI. Then Daniel gave God's Interpretation. Verses 36-45

36 "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; 38 and 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.

39 "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you,

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

40 "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. 41 "In 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. 42 "As 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. 43 "And 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.



- A. This statue, while impressive, represents earthly kingdoms that God himself will destroy and replace with an everlasting spiritual kingdom.

Verses 44-45

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. 45 "Inasmuch 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."

1. With this, we might understand better why Jesus is declared to be the rock of our salvation.
2. And why He is called the chief corner stone
 - a. Because He was...not hewn by human hands...but by the hand of God
3. So during the last of these empires the rock of Christ hit the Roman empire and toppled the earthly kingdom's forever...replacing them with an everlasting kingdom
 - a. And the rock turned into a great mountain that filled the whole earth...Verse 35b
 - 1) This is the replacement of human kingdoms with the Kingdom of God.
 - 2) By which even the gates of Hades will not be able to overpower Matthew 16:18

VII. Then Nebuchadnezzar gives recognition to God. Verses 46-49

- A. Nebuchadnezzar says in Verse 47 *"Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings.."*

1. With the telling of his dream, he submits himself to trust its interpretation.

2. He acknowledges that God is over him, and is in control of all things.
- B. Then Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel and his friends according to God's will, plan and purpose.

Conclusion:

Israel like many wavering Christians today needed to be reminded not to get caught up in the building of earthly kingdoms. We all need this reminder that Christ is to be our King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and it is His judgment that we seek.

And that the Kingdom of Christ will not be shaken or destroyed...Heb 12:28