

I. The King's Dream (Daniel 2:1-49)

A. Introduction

King Nebuchadnezzar was disturbed greatly by a dream he had and he wondered its meaning. Summoning his wise men, he demanded that they both recite the dream and interpret it or else face death. When they failed to do so, Daniel asked for the opportunity to meet the king's demands which he did with the Lord's help.

The dream's contents and meaning revealed to Daniel "provide a history of the world through four successive Gentile empires. During the final phase of the fourth empire, all earthly dominions will be destroyed, and the kingdom of God that will endure forever will be established."⁷⁸

B. Expository Notes

1. The Failure of the King's Advisors (vs. 1-13)

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.

- The word "dreams" is plural which implies that the king either had several dreams or had the same dream over and over again.
- Since Daniel only interpreted one dream, it is likely that this dream recurred night after night.
- In the ancient world, dreams were thought to be shadows that gave a glimpse into what lay ahead and people believed that the gods spoke through dreams.
- The interpretation of the dream was therefore important to Nebuchadnezzar.
- Today many people wonder whether their dreams mean something.
- In the OT, God used dreams as a means of revelation and a way to communicate with His people (Gen 20:3; 28:12; 37:1-11; 41:1-37).
- However, since the canon is closed and God is giving no additional revelation, no dream is to be understood as God speaking to someone.
- Charles Spurgeon: "What if you did see an apparition or a dream, what would that prove? Why, it would prove nothing whatever except that you were in an ill state of health, and that your imagination was morbidly active." ("A Word with Those Who Wait for Signs and Wonders," preached 31 October 1869).
- The dreams the king had deeply "troubled" (פָּעַם, *pa'am*) him...this word means "to stir, to trouble, referring to a deep disturbance inducing apprehension."
- He was so agitated by the dream that he couldn't sleep.

⁷⁸ Miller 1994: 75.

Daniel 2:2-3 ~ 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. 3 The king said to them, “I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.”

- Many of the kings of the ANE, kept a bevy of dream specialists close at hand to interpret dreams.
- Nebuchadnezzar was no different; he employed a staff of diviners whose job it was to interpret the significance of such dreams and whatever omens might occur.
 - “magicians” = comes from a root that means “engraver” and refers to those who engraved Babylonian religious activities and astrological movements of the stars onto clay tablets. They were scholars not magicians who performed magic.
 - “conjurers” = refers to astrologers, stargazers, and prognosticators who used spells and incantations to communicate with the spirit world for signs of the future.
 - “sorcerers” = those who practiced witchcraft with herbs, charms, and various potions and talked with the dead.
 - “Chaldeans” = a generic term for people who were Babylonian ethnically and a specific term for priests who served as astrologers, soothsayers, and wise men in the king’s government (its use here).
- So desperate was he to learn the meaning of his dream that Nebuchadnezzar summoned all four classifications of wise men.
- He hoped through their collaborative effort that they could interpret his dream.
- If the method used by one failed to produce the desired result, hopefully the method employed by another would reveal the dream’s significance.

Daniel 2:4-11

- The Aramaic portion of this letter begins in verse 4 and goes through the end of chapter 7.
- “It is now known that although the language of culture and scholarship in Babylon was Akkadian, Aramaic was already becoming the dominant commercial language of the empire.”⁷⁹
- The king’s counselors were confident that, with their collective wisdom, they could provide an interpretation of the dream.
- The only thing they need to know was the dream.
- However, Nebuchadnezzar refused to provide them with the contents of the dream but rather demanded that they supply both “the dream and its interpretation” (3x in vs. 5-6) or face death.
- Some have suggested, based on a faulty translation of verse 5 (“the thing is gone from me” ~ KJV), that the reason Nebuchadnezzar demanded that they tell him the contents of the dream was because he had forgotten it.
- However, in verse 9, his withholding of the dream from the wise men is not because he has forgotten it but because he desires to put the wise men to a test.

⁷⁹ Whitcomb 1985: 37.

- If they could predict the future by interpreting dreams, he assumes that they should be able to reconstruct the past and recall the details of the king's dream without being told.
- He reasoned that, if they could not recall the past, their predictions about the future could not be trusted either.
- The king threatened them with death and destruction (vs. 5 ~ torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap) if they didn't meet his demands.
- This was no idle threat by Nebuchadnezzar, whose harsh treatment of King Zedekiah (2 Kgs 25:7), two Jewish rebels named Ahab and Zedekiah (not King Zedekiah; Jer 29:22), and Daniel's three friends (chap. 3) proved that he would have no qualms about carrying out this cruel threat upon his counselors."⁸⁰
- He also promised them gifts and honor if they could declare the dream's contents and interpretation (vs. 6).
- Three times the wisemen tried to persuade Nebuchadnezzar to relent of his demands but to no avail (vs. 4, 7, 10-11).
- In their exasperation, the wise men uttered a statement that sets up the rest of the chapter: vs. 11 ~ Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh."
- They were exactly right – no one could do what the king demanded.
- However, there was one who was able to reveal both the dream and the interpretation because he was a God-fearer.

Daniel 2:12-13 ~ Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

- Life is pretty cushy in the most powerful nation of the world until the king gets into a foul mood.
- The king issued a decree to kill all the wise men, including the apprentice wise men like Daniel and his three friends.
- Since Daniel and his three friends were considered wise men, the judgment also fell on them.

2. The Response of Daniel and His Friends (vs. 14-23)

a. A Wise Response

Daniel 2:14-16 ~ 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

⁸⁰ Miller 1994: 81.

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.

- Daniel spoke with “discretion and discernment.”
- Daniel didn’t panic because he knew, with God’s help, he could tell the king his dream and its interpretation.
- Daniel’s wisdom and courage are evident in his request for more time, something the other wise men previously asked for but were denied (cf. vs. 8).

b. A Prayerful Response

Daniel 2:17-18 ~ Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, 18 so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

- Daniel and his friends were unfazed by the king’s threat; rather, in faith and simple trust in the Lord, turned to Him in prayer, asking for wisdom and help in discerning the dream.
- They trusted in the Lord and brought their needs before Him in prayer, trusting that the Lord would help them in the midst of their distress.
- “This passage provides for us the key to Daniel’s entire career as an instrument of the true God of Israel. He knew the supreme importance of believing prayer, preferably with other believers.”⁸¹
- “Here is a beautiful picture of four young men, possibly still in their teens, united in prayer. This was a life-and-death crisis, and they pleaded with God to have mercy on them and to preserve their lives.”⁸²

c. A Worshipful Response

Daniel 2:19-23 ~ Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven 20 Daniel said, “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.”

- Upon receiving the revelation from God concerning Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation, Daniel launched into a great hymn song of praise, exalting God for His wisdom (vs. 20), His power (vs. 20), His sovereignty over kings and rulers (vs. 21), and His revelation (vs. 21-22).
- All his heart can do is respond in wonder, love and praise (vs. 23).

3. The Dream Revealed by Daniel (vs. 24-45)

⁸¹ Whitcomb 1985: 42.

⁸² Miller 1994: 85.

a. The Introduction to the Dream

Daniel 2:24-30

- Daniel gives all the glory to the Lord, just as Joseph had done before Pharaoh (Gen 41:16).
- The God of heaven demonstrates Himself to be vastly superior to all the great Babylonian gods who were not able to reveal the kings' dream to all the wise men of Babylon.
- In a respectful manner, Daniel was telling Nebuchadnezzar that all false gods are worthless.
- “Here is a comforting message for believers today. There *is* a God in heaven, and this God may be called upon to supply sustenance and wisdom far beyond what is available from human resources. Although circumstances sometimes may look impossible from an earthly standpoint, there is a God in heaven who can do all things. He can solve seemingly insoluble problems, supply needs, and provide strength for impossible tasks. He is a God who is there and who is able.”⁸³
- The events in the dream would take place “in the latter days” (vs. 28), referring to events both in the near future and the far future.

b. The Content of the Dream

Daniel 2:31-35 ~ You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 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. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

- This is one of the most amazing prophecies in the Scriptures.
- The large statue which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was probably in human form to describe what would happen when the Gentile nations ruled the earth (cf. Luke 21:24 ~ the time of the Gentiles).
- It was of “extraordinary splendor” in that it shined brilliantly.
- Its appearance was “awesome” in that it inspired terror, awe, and fear within him (cf. vs. 1).
- Daniel describes the specific characteristics of the statue: a gold head, silver breast and arms, bronze abdomen and thighs, and iron legs with iron and clay feet. (vs. 32-33).

⁸³ Ibid., 89.

- Some interesting observations of the statue:
 - Only the head is a united whole and the rest of the sections are divided: silver chest and arms, bronze abdomen and thighs, two iron legs/feet.
 - There is a descending order in the metals from the top to the bottom as to their wealth; the metals become less valuable toward the bottom of the image (possibly indicating the decreasing morality of each kingdom, manifested fully in the final stage of the fourth kingdom).
 - At the same time, there is an ascending order in the metals as to their strength; they increase in strength from top to bottom.

Wealth		Strength
1	Gold	4
2	Silver	3
3	Bronze	2
4	Iron	1

- The image is comprised of:
 - A gold head (vs. 32)
 - Chest and arms of silver (vs. 32)
 - Belly and thighs of bronze (vs. 32)
 - Legs of iron and feet of iron/clay (vs. 33)
- The smiting of the image results when a force outside itself, a stone, strikes and grinds it into fine dust (vs. 34-35).
- The entire statue is toppled by a crushing blow at its feet, reducing it to rubble and such fine particles that it is blown away by the wind.
- The “stone” that struck the statue, however, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (vs. 35).



c. The Interpretation of the Dream

Daniel 2:36-45

- The main point of this chapter is that starting with Babylon there would be four major Gentile powers that would rule over the world and Israel, but a day is coming when God's kingdom will suddenly crush these kingdoms and will establish itself over the entire earth forever.
- The statue that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about is actually a prophecy about four world empires in succeeding stages from Babylon to Jesus Christ.
- Israel is no longer God's leading nation because they lost that privilege through their disobedience, rebellion, and idolatry.
- No longer is Jerusalem the center of God's dealing with men; instead, four great world powers will exist until Christ comes and restores Israel.
- This vision contains, in one panoramic sweep, the history of human civilization from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the end of time.
- "Kings and kingdoms, presidents and dictators, democracies and monarchies come and go and enter the landfill of history."⁸⁴

i. The First Kingdom

- The first kingdom is Babylon (vs. 36-38).
- "you are the head of gold" (vs. 38) is a plain statement identifying the meaning of the head, so there can be no equivocation about the interpretation of this first kingdom.
- In October 626 BC, the Chaldean prince Nabopolassar (Nebuchadnezzar's father) defeated the Assyrian army outside of Babylon and claimed the throne in Babylon.
- The kingdom Nabopolassar founded became known as the Neo-Babylonian Empire which existed from 626 BC to 539 BC (87 years).
- It is important to note that it is God who gave (נָתַן, *yhb*; not the same word *nathan* as in chapter 1) Nebuchadnezzar his throne (vs. 37) (cf. Dan 2:21; Prov 21:1).
- Nebuchadnezzar was king over Babylon for 43 years and his rule is described as a worldwide empire in which he ruled over all mankind as well as over beasts and birds (vs. 38).
- The fact that Babylon is represented by a single head and that Nebuchadnezzar alone is the head (vs. 38) indicates that he really was the supreme ruler in Babylon.
- He was the unifying force of the nation and almost solely responsible for the great status of his empire. In other words, he WAS the Babylonian empire!
- The same was not true of any other ruler of the succeeding empires which explains why the remaining three Gentile kingdoms are called "kingdoms."

⁸⁴ Davis 2013: 46.

There was a change in the way the rule was rendered in that it was less defined by one man as Babylon was.

- Babylon is represented by gold because it was the most distinctive metal that characterized ancient Babylon, with its temples, gods, and furniture made of gold.

ii. The Second Kingdom

- The second kingdom is Medo-Persia (vs. 39).
- Although Daniel doesn't state the name of this kingdom, it is known that the kingdom that followed Babylon was Medo-Persia.
- It is represented by silver breast and arms (vs. 32) which Daniel indicates is "inferior" to Babylon (vs. 39).
- Although silver is stronger than gold, it lacks the glory of gold; in the same way, while Medo-Persia was stronger than Babylon (they defeated the Babylonians in 539 BC), they lacked the glory of Babylon.
- The fact that this kingdom is represented by a chest and two arms (each arm representing one nation) signifies that it was not as unified as Babylon.
- Silver is used to represent Medo-Persia since they made silver plentiful, even requiring that taxes be paid in silver.
- The Medes and the Persians ruled until 331 BC.

iii. The Third Kingdom

- The third kingdom is Greece (vs. 39).
- The bronze indicates that this kingdom is not as glorious and as valuable as silver or gold, but is stronger than them.
- The Greeks conquered the Medes and Persians in 331 BC and ruled until 146 BC.
- Greece is characterized by bronze because its armies were clad largely in bronze helmets, breastplates, shields, and swords.
- This kingdom would "rule over all the earth" (vs. 39), likely a reference to Alexander the Great's military might.
- He ascended the throne when he was 20 and began his reign by eliminating potential rivals to his throne.
- He crossed the Hellespont (the strait between European and Asian Turkey) in 331 BC and conquered the Persian empire.
- He spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa and even parts of Europe.
- He really did rule over the whole earth, all the way from Egypt and Europe eastward to India.
- By the age of 30 he had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world.
- He was undefeated in battle and is considered one of history's most successful military commanders.

- He is said to have wept while still in his 20's because there were no more lands for him to conquer.
- The two parts of the statue (belly and thighs) likely represent two different parts of the vast Greek empire: the Eastern and Western territories.
- Following Alexander's death, because he had no heirs, his kingdom was divided amongst four generals (Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander, Lysimachus) (cf. Dan 8:21-22).
- Note: a clear identification of the second and third kingdom is given in Daniel 8:20-21.

iv. The Fourth Kingdom

- The fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire (vs. 40-43).
- Rome conquered Greece in 146 BC and were the dominant world power for over 500 years in the West (until 476 AD) and until 1453 AD in the East.
- The 2 legs (vs. 33) possibly refer to the divided status of the Roman Empire.
- The legs are the longest part of the image, probably because Rome ruled the longest of all the kingdoms.
- Rome's power is demonstrated in it being represented by iron, the strongest of the metals in the image.
- Iron appropriately signified Rome's power and strength since they ruled with an iron fist.
- Even their armies, known as the Iron Armies, were clad in iron armor, helmets, shields, and swords.
- The length of the Roman kingdom argues for its iron-like strength: Babylon lasted about 87 years (626-539 BC), Medo-Persia lasted about 208 years (539-331 BC), and Greece lasted about 185 years (331-146 BC).
- Rome, however, lasted about 622 years in the West and much longer in the East (even today it continues in smaller form).
- Verse 40 describes the crushing power of Rome: vs. 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.
- This verse emphasizes the might of this fourth kingdom: "crushes...shatters...breaks...crush...break."
- "break" in Aramaic means "to crush with a hammer" and refers to the shattering power of Rome.
- That's exactly what Rome did – It crushed all the empires that had preceded it by swallowing up the lands and peoples that had been parts of the three previous empires and assimilating them into itself.
- Rome was probably the strongest empire the world has ever known.

- They were a strong empire, highly organized, with well-trained armies, strong leaders, and well-defined policies.
- This is what enabled them to pull off Pax Romana (“Roman peace”), something which largely eluded the world’s empires prior to Rome.
- Despite this crushing power, however, Daniel indicates that a weakness exists in this empire, not in the legs, but in the feet.
- Verse 33 notes the feet are made partly of iron and partly of clay.
- Verses 41-43 corroborate this makeup up of the feet.
- Clay and iron don’t mix together in such a composite as Daniel notes (vs. 43).
- The contrast in strength between the iron (vs. 42 ~ strong) and the clay (vs. 42 ~ brittle) likely points to a weakness that will exist within the Roman empire.
- Some parts of the Roman empire would be strong and powerful while others would be weak.
- The feet/toes portion of this image is not a fifth kingdom, but rather still part of the fourth kingdom.
- This points to two parts of the Roman empire: 1) The legs referring to the first phase of the Roman empire (146 BC – 476 AD) – Rome 1; 2) The feet/toes referring to a future revived Roman empire – Rome 2.
- Rome 1, symbolized by the legs made of iron, was strong and powerful.
- Rome 2, symbolized by feet and toes partly made of clay and partly made of iron (vs. 41), will be made up of nations, some of which are strong and others which are weak.
- The feet/toes indicate the final form of the Roman empire.
- The 10 toes represent a 10-nation confederacy in the revived Roman empire
- Rome 1 was not made up of a 10-nation confederacy.
- So this must refer to a revived Roman empire in the future in which the final form of the Roman empire will be 10 nations in a confederacy.
- The final, future state of the Roman empire will be a mixture of strength and weakness (vs. 43 ~ they will combine with one another in the seed of men).
- Though it will be strong and able to conquer enemies (iron), it will have inherent weaknesses (clay) indicating that the future 10-nation confederacy will have fatal flaws of human weakness, so that it will be inherently vulnerable.
- The “seed of men” refers to human beings, the source of the empire’s weakness.
- It won’t be like Babylon which was ruled by a dictator; rather, the confederacy will be weakened by the presence of weaker leaders.
- Thus, the fourth kingdom possesses two parts: Rome 1 and Rome 2.
- Daniel could not have known that there would be a gap between the fall of Rome 1 and the establishment of Rome 2 in the future.



- The existence of the future phase of the fourth kingdom is confirmed by the fact that the fourth kingdom will be around when the stone destroys it and fills the earth forever (vs. 34-35, 44-45).
- It is viewed as still existing when the stone (Christ) smites it.
- The consummation of human history is the coming of the stone that destroys all previous earthly nations and, in their place, God's kingdom is set up.
- But that hasn't happened yet... God's eternal kingdom has not come and destroyed the Roman empire.
- The Roman empire essentially just faded out and disintegrated because no nation ever truly conquered it.
- In fact, in the eastern part of the Roman empire, it took 1500 years before it ultimately disappeared as a world power.
- Because the final kingdom represented by the stone will conquer Rome indicating it must be in existence when God's kingdom comes in its full and final form, this phase of the fourth kingdom (a revived Roman empire under the control of Antichrist) must still be future.
- Furthermore, the existence of a future revived Roman empire is corroborated by vs. 44 ~ In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom...
- What kings are referred to here? → The only king mentioned in this dream is Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold; the others are referred to as "kingdoms" not kings.
- What kings are in power when the God of heaven comes to set up His kingdom?
- This can only refer to the 10 kings in the final form of the Roman empire.
- The 10 toes represent 10 kings that are in power when God comes to establish His kingdom.
- This is corroborated in Daniel 7, the parallel chapter to chapter 2.

Vision of the four world empires (2)

Deliverance of Daniel's friends from the fiery furnace (3)

Judgment of Nebuchadnezzar – resulting in repentance (4)

Judgment of Belshazzar – resulting in death (5)

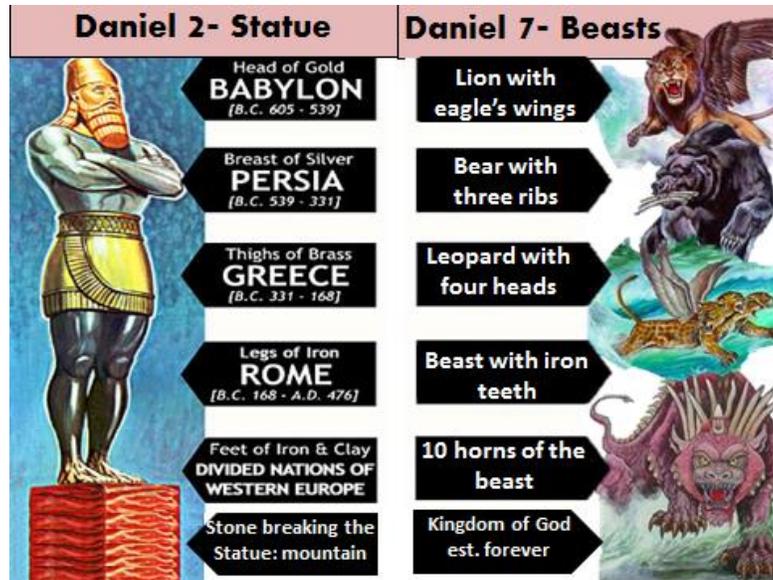
Deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den (6)

Vision of the four world empires (7)

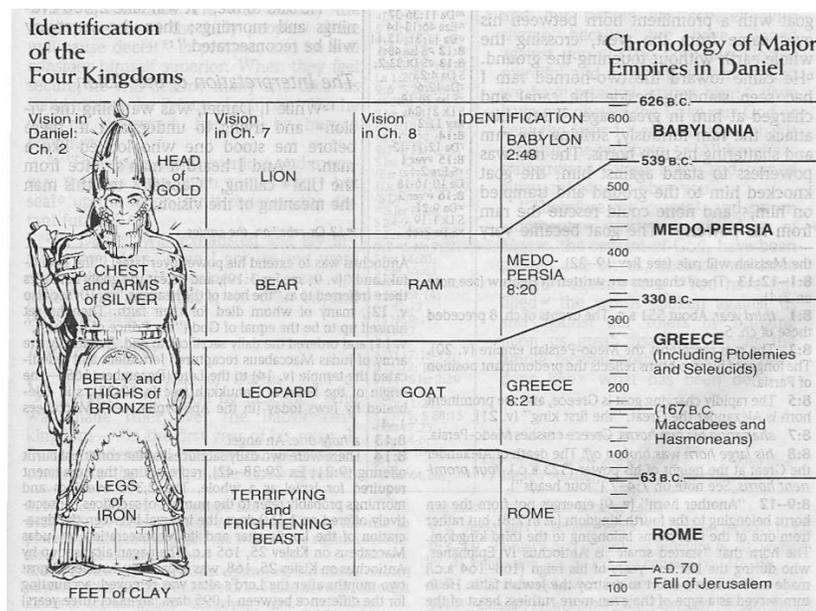
- Daniel 7 contains the description of four beasts that represent the same empires as those described in Daniel 2.
- The lion corresponds to Babylon (Dan 7:4)
- The bear corresponds to Medo-Persia (Dan 7:5)
- The leopard, with its four heads, corresponds to Greece (Dan 7:6)
- The terrifying beast, with its 10 horns (which correlate to the 10 toes in Daniel 2), corresponds to Rome (Dan 7:7).
- The terrifying beast will also be characterized by a “little horn” which will “utter great boasts” and will bring 3 of the 10 nations under his authority in his initial rise to power (Dan 7:8).
- This is a description of the Antichrist, the leader of the final phase of the fourth kingdom.
- That the 10 horns here signify 10 kings is clearly stated in Daniel 7:24 ~ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise...



- Since nothing in history corresponds to a 10-nation Roman confederacy subdued by another king which endures until it is succeeded by the kingdom of heaven, this must refer to a future, revived Roman empire in the days just preceding the Second Coming of Christ and His Kingdom.



- Revelation 13 confirms that a confederacy of 10 kings will comprise the final form of the world government in existence prior to the return of the Messiah: Rev 13:1 ~ And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having **ten horns** and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names.
- John confirms Daniel: the final world system will be headed by a revived Roman empire made up of a 10-nation coalition (cf. Rev 17:3, 7, 12).



v. The Divine Kingdom

- The eternal, divine kingdom is described in vs. 44-45 where the stone represents Christ and His kingdom.

- The “stone” (vs. 45) refers to Christ.
 - The Messiah was frequently referred to in this way in the OT (Ps 118:22; Is 28:16) and the NT (Acts 4:10-11; Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6).
 - Christ also identified Himself as the Stone (Luke 20:18).
 - Christ is already the Stone in His first advent; however, He does not do the catastrophic, sudden, destructive work described in vs. 44-45 until His second coming.
 - This has not happened yet, but when it does, God will establish His earthly kingdom which will crush and put an end to all Gentile nations and will itself endure forever.
 - The kingdom of God obliterates all human kingdoms in one sudden, instantaneous crushing blow.
 - This will happen at Christ’s 2nd coming when His feet hit the Mount of Olives (Zech 14:4), when He destroys his enemies, and sets up his literal, earthly, millennial kingdom (Is 9:6-7).
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- This stone will “crush” all other earthly kingdoms, reducing them to rubble, in the same way the statue was reduced to rubble (cf. vs. 34-35).
 - A day is coming when God’s kingdom will suddenly crush all earthly kingdoms and itself will be established as a geo-political entity over the entire earth forever.
 - “It is significant that the smiting Stone crushes not only the feet and toes of iron and clay but also the entire image...This is historically, culturally, and religiously accurate. Just as the silver kingdom absorbed Neo-Babylonian religion and cultures into itself...so also Alexander the Great adapted Greek culture to Persian culture...And finally, Rome did not annihilate the religious, philosophic, and cultural aspects of the various Greek and Hellenistic kingdoms but incorporated them into the multi-faceted empire called Rome. At the second coming of Christ, however, there will be no absorbing, adapting, modifying, merging, or restructuring of previous kingdoms. There will be total destruction...Thus, every trace of gold (Babylonian), silver (Medo-Persian), and bronze (Hellenistic), as well as iron and clay (Roman) influence will be removed from the earth by the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁸⁵
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- That the stone is cut “without hands” (vs. 45) emphasizes that God does it, without human hands needed to help.
 - Christ Himself is not of human origin or power as is clear from His virgin birth.
 - Likewise, His kingdom is not of this world (cf. John 18:36); it is of divine power.
 - The “mountain” (vs. 45) denotes God’s all-powerful, all-transcending government that overshadows man’s government as a mountain looms over a puny human, represented in Daniel 2 by the image of a man.

⁸⁵ Whitcomb 1985: 47-48.

- “mountain” is often used in Scripture as reference to “kingdoms” and “governments” (Is 2:2; 27:13; Micah 4:1).

4. The Promotion of Daniel (vs. 46-49)

Daniel 2:46-49 ~ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. 47 The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery.” 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 prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king’s court.

- Daniel’s ability to describe and interpret his dream absolutely overwhelms Nebuchadnezzar such that the only thing he can do is prostrate himself and acknowledge the supremacy of Daniel’s God.
- It is a remarkable scene – the king of Babylon bowing down before one of his captives.
- The king rewarded Daniel for his ability to interpret the dream by making him “ruler over the whole province of Babylon” (vs. 48-49).
- Daniel’s friends were also honored with positions of great privilege.

C. Theological Notes

1. The Kingdom of God

- The kingdom of God refers to the rule of the sovereign God over His creation, both now and in the future.
- The Kingdom of God, a term used over 200 times, is a dominant theme in the Bible.
- “The concept of the Kingdom of God involves, in a real sense, the total message of the Bible.”⁸⁶
- “It is a theme that unifies all of Scripture.”⁸⁷
- “In focusing on the kingdom of God we are really looking at a key element that gives biblical theology its coherence.”⁸⁸
- “From Genesis through Revelation the kingdom involves a beautiful and fantastic restoration of all things. It involves God’s reign over every aspect of creation. It includes people, animals, and all creatures in the universe. It involves food, music, celebration, laughing and rejoicing. Most importantly, the kingdom brings a thriving relationship with God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is at the center of God’s kingdom program. It also involves real interactions and activity with other people who know God. The kingdom also includes nations doing real cultural activities (Rev 21:24, 26). In other words, the kingdom is life and life abundantly (John 10:10).”⁸⁹

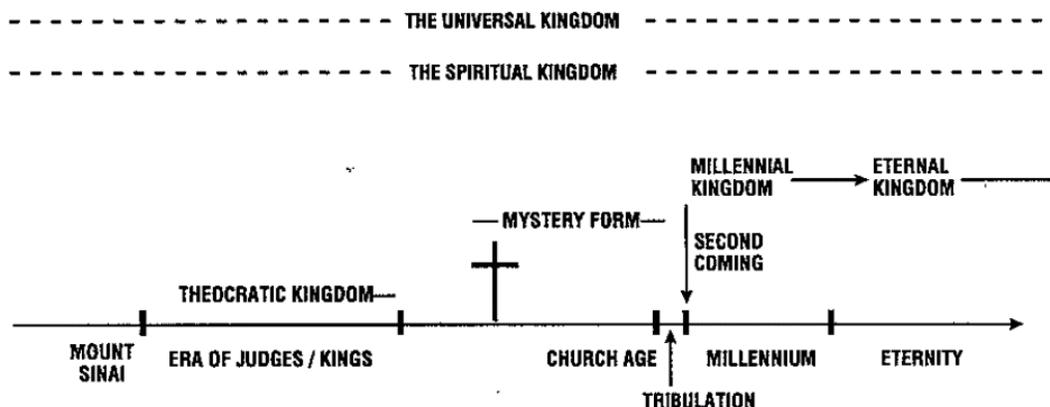
⁸⁶ Bright 1953: 7.

⁸⁷ Pentecost 1990: 11.

⁸⁸ Graeme Goldsworthy, “The Kingdom of God as Hermeneutic Grid,” in *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12 (Spring 2008): 4.

⁸⁹ Vlach 2017: 8-9.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



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- A kingdom involves three essential elements:⁹¹
 - a. Ruler – a kingdom involves a ruler with a rightful and adequate authority and power.
 - b. Realm – a kingdom involves a realm and a people to be ruled.
 - c. Rulership – a kingdom involves the exercise of ruling.

- The kingdom concept in Scripture can be summarized as follows:

“The Plotline of the Kingdom Program”⁹²

1. Creation	Genesis 1–2	The kingdom is present with <i>creation</i> as God the King of creation tasks His image-bearer, man, to rule and subdue His creation.
2. Fall	Genesis 3	The <i>fall</i> marks man’s failure to rule God’s creation; both God’s image-bearers (humans) and the creation come under the devastating effects of the fall.
3. Promise	Genesis 3:15–Malachi	The <i>promise</i> plan guarantees the seed of the woman will eventually succeed over the power behind the serpent (Satan);

⁹⁰ This chart taken from Benware 1995:145.

⁹¹ Vlach 2017: 28.

⁹² This chart taken from Dr. Paul Lamey’s Sermon on the Mount course notes, 32-33.

		the fall will be reversed and man will effectively rule over creation.
4. Redemption	Gospels–Epistles	Jesus the King brings <i>redemption</i> through His atonement, and His death is the basis for the kingdom and reconciliation of all things.
5. Restoration	Revelation	With the <i>restoration</i> of all things God’s kingdom plan is fulfilled as Jesus successfully reigns over the earth; this kingdom merges into the perfect kingdom of the Father.

- Jesus came offering this kingdom in his first advent (Matt 3:2; 4:7; 10:7); however, because of the rejection by the Jews, the fulfillment of the kingdom promises awaits His second coming.
- The kingdom of God is something believers should long for and pray for (Matt 6:9-10).
- The kingdom of God is what believers are commanded to seek (Matt 6:33).
- The kingdom of God makes every trial a believer faces worth it (Acts 14:22).
- The kingdom of God is not a concept believers should study simply theologically; rather it is an intensely practical issue giving believers hope that the broken world presently lived in will give way to the coming earthly kingdom of Christ.
- Unfortunately, many believers today have no clear concept of the kingdom.
- They have only a foggy idea of what awaits them in the kingdom, often simply thinking of it only as a “better place.”
- Furthermore, believers today largely don’t think enough or talk enough about the kingdom, an omission that detracts from their spiritual health and sanctification.

2. An Amillennial vs. a Premillennial Response to the Fourth Kingdom

- Amillennialists use Daniel 2:44 as a key text to argue that the Messianic kingdom actually began “in the days of those kings,” namely the four empires of chapter two.
- They argue that the Messianic kingdom was instituted at Christ’s first coming, in the form of the church.
- They believe that the present church constitutes the Kingdom that was promised in this chapter.
- They explain the 1000 years in Revelation 20 as being symbolic of the completeness of the kingdom.
- They hold that Satan is bound today.

- They hold that there is, therefore, no need for a future, literal, earthly kingdom following the 2nd coming of Christ because the millennium is present in the church age.
- After the 2nd coming, they hold that the final judgment and eternal sense of the Messianic kingdom will occur.
- They look at the kingdom that God ushered in as a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of Christ is set up in the hearts of men.
- A Premillennial Response:
 - a. “those kings” (vs. 44) refer to 10 kings of Dan 7:24 during the future tribulation age which correlate to the 10 kings/toes of chapter 2.
 - b. Even if “those kings” (vs. 44) are taken to refer to the four kings described in chapter 2 (in agreement with amillennialists), it is possible that the period of “the days of those kings” carries all the way to the 2nd coming of Christ so that Christ’s future coming will still be within the period of the Gentile empires (cf. Luke 21:24).
 - c. The church, inaugurated soon after Christ’s resurrection, did not do away with the Roman empire. Rome continued for many centuries after the church began.
 - d. The church did not destroy a 10-nation Roman confederacy when it came into existence.
 - e. The destruction of the fourth kingdom, by the fifth/divine kingdom, comes about suddenly and catastrophically, not gradually as amillennialists argue occurred with the church.
 - f. The church did not end all earthly kingdoms.
 - g. If the first four kingdoms were literal, earthly kingdoms, then the kingdom of God must also be a literal, earthly kingdom (as opposed to the church which is a “spiritual kingdom”). It is faulty and inconsistent interpretation to introduce a spiritual kingdom where only literal kingdoms are understood. “Christ, of course, is now reigning and will continue to do so throughout eternity, but in this context his kingdom would appear to be an earthly rule like the others.”⁹³

D. Preaching Helps

1. Todd’s Outline

Three messages to work through this outline:

1. The Unsettling Dream (vs. 1-3)
2. The Unreasonable Demand (vs. 4-13)
3. The Unflappable Daniel (vs. 14-23)
 - a) A Wise Response (14-16)
 - b) A Prayerful Response (17-18)
 - c) A Worshipful Response (19-23)
4. The Unflinching Declaration (vs. 24-30)
5. The Unbelievable Description (vs. 31-45)
6. The Unparalleled Distinction (vs. 46-49)

⁹³ Miller 1994: 101.