

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

April 30, 2023

SPEAKER

Dave Owen

SERIES

Far From Home

PART

3

TITLE

When The Bottom Falls Out

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 2



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Well, good morning to you, Providence. It is great to see you. My name's Dave, one of the pastors here, have the joy of teaching you this morning. If you've joined us online, we say good morning to you as well. If you're new to Providence, we welcome you. We're so glad that you've come today. If you have a Bible, I want to encourage you to turn with me to Daniel 2. It's in the Old Testament. If you don't have a Bible, there's some under the seats there in front of you, and we want to give that to you as a gift. You can take that if you don't have one. Daniel 2, so we're in a series called Far From Home. The idea behind that is that Daniel and many of his friends have been taken captive by a king named Nebuchadnezzar. He came from the Babylonian Empire and came to Jerusalem and besieged it, and over three different invasions, over 20 plus year span, removed people from Jerusalem.

As he was removing them, his idea was to train them in the ways of the Babylonian Empire, both the food they ate, the language they learned. What's so interesting about this is that Daniel, he was taken some 900 miles away from home, so he was definitely far from home. But there was a deep resolve in his heart to follow God even in those hard days. I want to show you a map really quick just so you can get the context. Where Jerusalem and Judea is in this area, the Babylonian Empire's here all the way down south of Baghdad, which would be modern-day Baghdad in Iraq. This is how far they were taken out, and this is the reign of this empire. What's interesting is that Jeremiah would write to the exiles that are living in those intense days from Chapter 29, he would actually lean in and say, "Listen, build houses, plant gardens and live. Seek the peace of the city and pray for the city. 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future.

Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me and I will listen. You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all of your heart, I will be found by you,' declares the Lord." What's interesting about your coffee cup at home that has this verse on it that you drink out of, they never put this last verse, "And I will bring you out of captivity." We don't sip to that one. This is what he's writing to them to say, "Now, listen, live in this hard place." It's a hard place. They'd been taken captive. They're exiles. They're living in the Babylonian Empire and Jeremiah's leaning in to say, "Seek the peace, seek God." What God desires for His people is to live with conviction and character in the midst of chaos without compromise. See, most people when culture caves tend to have two responses, the two responses seem to go like this: they either separate and isolate, try to completely remove themselves from, or they assimilate in such a way there's no distinctive.

They use the same language that others use in the office, this nothing that smells of God as they try to assimilate into culture. God desires for His people to live and leverage everything for the sake of His name, for the good of others, and for the gospel to go forth. So let's pray, and we'll dive in this morning. God, we pause to pray and ask for help. We need help listening. I need help teaching, so we are dependent on You in this hour. Thank you for Your word, God, we pray as we have seen the rain come this morning. Isaiah 55 says that, "As rain falls and touches the ground and quenches the earth's thirst and always affect what it touches, so shall it be with My word as it goes out and lands." I pray, God, that Your word would land this morning on our heart. As we read this word, may it read us. God, please help us to not just be informed with the narrative but be

transformed. So help we pray in Jesus' name, amen.

So how do you and I live in a culture that is caving seemingly to every ideology that contradicts the Word of God, the character of God, and everybody wants to do what is right in their own eyes. Our culture, think about it for just a moment, just last year, Harvard University who used to train pastors in theology named its first atheist as its school's chaplain. Think about the studies that have come out recently that shows the U.S. is number two in the world in depression behind Ukraine. The Ukraine, number one in depression, we have categories for that, don't we? You see tanks coming at you and millions flee for their life as refugees, it leads to depression. When you live in this culture and you drink your latte and get a extra pump in it and go to the beach on the weekend and the mountains and just you're living and you're like, "What's wrong?" What's wrong is it's a spiritual war. You can't see it. It's ideologies. It's like E. coli and water.

You can't see it, but if you get in it's going to make you sick, and this is what's happening in our culture. Think with me for just a moment. As we've gathered in a place we call a church where the people of God are singing to God and worshiping and this weekend, this weekend, this Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Boston is the Satan Conference, hour flight, hour-and-a-half flight north. It's the largest gathering of Satanists that's ever gathered, the second annual conference taking selfies with the image that looks like Satan. This is what's taken place. Paul says in Ephesians to, "Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil, making the best use of time because the days are evil." The word for time there is interesting. It's not like it's 5:00. There's a few words that's translated from the original language for time. This is this era or this season.

It's like, I've shared this with some of you in the past when I played ball in college, we would always huddle up in the locker room and my boy from Michigan always would say, "What time is it?" We'd say, "It's game time." So what time is it? We didn't say, "It's 7:15, man." We didn't say that. No, listen, Paul is saying it's game time. The days are evil, and it's game time to live in a way that reflects the glory of God and gets the gospel to all people, and Daniel helps us. Daniel helps us to see God for who He is and live in His world and stay grounded in His ways and live out His word. So I want to show you this morning quickly four truths about God as seen in Daniel. The first is this, is that God is the source. God is the source of true power and prudence. Now we've got 49 verses, and so I'm going to narrate some of the texts, and then I'm going to put some on the screen. So let's stay together and lean in.

This is 11:00, your coffee's already kicked in, so let's stay in it together. So think about it, Chapter 2:1, in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, he had this dream and his spirit was troubled. His sleep left him. He couldn't sleep. He calls the magicians, the enchanters, all of this. He says, "Tell me what this dream was and what this dream means." He pleads with them even twice because he's like, "Listen, I'm going to kill all of you if you don't tell me what it is. I'm going to make a decree for all the wise people in the Babylonian Empire to just be killed if they can't tell me what this dream is about." So in Chapter 2:10, the Chaldeans they answered the king and they said listen, "There's not a man on earth who can meet the king's demands, for no

great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing the king ask is difficult and no one can show it to the king except the gods whose due dwelling is not in flesh, or not with flesh.”

There's some theology that's decent there that these non-followers of God are leaning into. He doesn't want to tell them the dream because he feels like they'll lie to them. He wants them to tell what the dream was and the meaning of the dream. The king gets so angry in the next few verses because he doesn't trust them. He's perplexed. The word comes to Daniel, and in Chapter 2:14, notice how Daniel responds. Remember, he's a young Hebrew boy. He is in exile, and he replies with prudence and discretion to Arioch the captain who's going to try to carry out this decree to kill all the wise people. Daniel went in and requested the king, like “What moves you to be able to live in such a way that you want to approach the king who has decreed he wants you dead?” I think it's a deep, deep trust in another king, the king who has true power and true wisdom. Listen, culturally, there's so much uncertainty. People are in a secular worldview, they're constantly looking. They're looking to astrology, they're looking to the horoscopes, they're looking at the zodiac signs.

There's a palm reader two miles down the road on Glenwood Avenue that you can pop in. You can go to Barnes & Noble, and it's crazy with the self-help prediction, the books that line up the shelves. Websites now, popular websites that people get news from and all, there's a banner across the top for horoscopes. Everybody's looking for somebody to help. For Daniel, and I would suggest for you, for me, it'd be God. Think about this, the king is known in the world, this king Nebuchadnezzar. He's conquered the world. He can't conquer his heart. He can't sleep. He's got everything that anybody would ever want, more than enough and he can't sleep. He's fearful, he's troubled. Listen, Daniel's looking to the true God, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he's looking to Him. He's looking to Him because when you trust God, peace and power rise.

When you trust Him, it's like a good friend in our church two weeks ago came up to me and says, “Dave, one of my great friends is a pastor in the Middle East and he was helping the earthquake victims in Lebanon. He's crossing the border two weeks ago back into Syria. His name is on a list because he preaches the gospel in that area of the world and as he's crossing, they've noticed that he's on a list where he's baptized people and so therefore, he is on a list with the government, so they arrest him. They put him in a jail cell with 36 other inmates, all Muslim, for five days.” He gets out and he calls his buddy who goes here, who's telling me this firsthand, and he says, “It was the most remarkable ministry experience I've ever had in 30 years of ministry.” Yeah, that's amazing. You know what he says? He says, “I smuggled a Bible in with me and began to just read it aloud, and they wouldn't stop asking questions about it. They would wake me up at three in the morning asking me questions.

I got out and a few days later, two other prisoners got out. They found my church in Syria and came and wanted to know more about this book that you're reading.” Yeah. Yeah. That's amazing. That's God. That's two weeks ago. This is what God's doing when you trust, and so let's look, let's look to God for power and wisdom

to live. It's a broken world, but there is a king who will put you in that brokenness to speak words of hope and life. Notice second is this, is that God is the supplier. God is the supplier. God is the supplier of our needs as we humbly seek his wisdom and ways. God is the supplier of our needs as we humbly seek his wisdom and ways. So notice what happens really quickly. In Daniel 2:17, "Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions and told them," notice what he tells them, he says, "Seek mercy from God," who he's not panicking. He's running to God in prayer. Most of the time, what do we do first? We panic before we pray.

He runs to his friends. He says, Seek along with me mercy from God so that he could encourage us with this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men." See, Daniel is calling on his friends to pray. Do you have friends who can pray with you? Are you in a life group? Are you connected? This is the way God has intended the Christian life to be lived. Listen, the animal kingdom gets this better than we do. Think about it, fish, they swim in a school, so when the shark sees that image, he thinks it's a larger fish than himself, and so he won't attack. But you swim by yourself, night, night, it's over. Buffalo, they travel in a herd. Then the one that's a little arrogant, thinks he can go take care of things on his own. He goes off, man, it's bad news. The lion's going to kill you. Birds fly in a flock.

Think about the animal kingdom, and for the Christian, for God's people, He wants you to run together and lock arms and move this mission to get this good news to all people. Listen, God reveals, it's amazing what happens, He reveals the dream in a vision, both the dream and what it was and what it means to Daniel. God answered. It was incredible. Immediately, Daniel runs to not King Nebuchadnezzar. He runs to the king who's revealed that and gives praise and thanks. Notice what he does. We read it early in Chapter 2:20, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes the times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wives and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with him. To You, O God of my fathers, I give," notice what he says, "thanks and praise.

I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and might, and it made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter. I give thanks and praise." Oh, for the church, listen, oh, for the church to be marked by a people who are grateful. Grateful. Do you complain all the time? What would your co-workers say of you this week? What are you marked by? Are you thankful to God? Listen, Daniel is made aware of God's plan through God's revelation of both the dream and what it means, and he gives thanks. Listen, the church in the West, listen, we've lost in all of God when He answers, when the answers come from God. We're so entitled. We need to be dependent. Listen this room, I say it often, and I'm going to keep saying it. Listen, this room, this room right here in 28 years of serving at Providence has been full on one prayer night, full. Many of you come to prayer night, but it's been full one prayer night, to the wall, standing room only, and it was September 11th, 2001.

Planes flew into buildings, everybody showed up. See, I'm shocked we're not showing up at prayer night

'cause they're not flying into buildings every day. Dependence is kindness to us. Listen, notice what happens, 24 to 26, the captain, the captain brings Daniel back to the king and notice what he says in 28 and 30, he goes, "But there is a God in heaven who ... " immediately, he doesn't take credit for it. He's humble in seeking. He's humble in saying. He says, "Listen, there's a God in heaven who's done this. There's a God in heaven who's done this. But as for me," in Verse 30, ask for me. Not because of any wisdom that I have, but because of God. It's because of God, what God's done." He's so quick to depend on God in prayer, and he's so quick to give praise to God when he answers. Elizabeth Elliot, the wife of the missionary who was martyred, Jim Elliot, in the 1950s in South America in a village on a sandbar, in a river where he and his five buddies were killed trying to get the gospel to some people.

He writes this. This is what he writes. He says, "The secret," Elizabeth writes this, she says, "The secret is Christ in me, not me in a different set of circumstances." That's the secret. So listen, let's seek God. Let's seek God daily and praise him quickly. May 21st, couple of weeks out we're going to have a prayer night, worship night, and God shows up in amazing ways, so I'm just putting it on the radar, just putting it on the radar. Love to have you, love to have you. So listen, God, He's the supplier. But listen, "God is the Supreme One. God is the Supreme One who sets up history for the arrival of His Son, Jesus." So stay with me on this text. This is a lot of texts, so lean in with me. So God's the Supreme One who sets up history for the arrival of His Son. So Daniel begins to tell him both the dream and the meaning of the dream. There's an image, the head is gold, the chest, the arms are silver, its thighs of bronze, the legs are iron and the feet are partly iron and clay.

It's this statue, this image that he sees. In Verses 36 on, in the dream, you see in the God of heaven is revealing this to him and he's telling them even in 37, 38 that God's actually set you up, King Nebuchadnezzar. We learned that in Chapter 1, that it was the Lord orchestrating this whole exile. It's fascinating what's happening, and each of these medals, many theologians would hold to were representative of these four different empires. There's a lot of prophecy in Daniel. Some of the conservative theologians would hold to this top part of this image, this gold, Nebuchadnezzar himself, just incredible wealth, incredible riches. But each empire, the dream as it's told and it's interpreted says that it's not going to last this. There's going to come another one. So as we study history, some would hold to the Persian Empire rising and then the Greek Empire rising and then the Roman Empire rising and each represented by this medal, and there's so much. There's so much to dive into with regards, and we'll get into latter parts of Daniel and try to put this together.

If you love eschatology and you love the in time images and things, which we enjoy studying and thinking about. But if you've got questions about that and you want to know more about that, you can send me an email at brian@pray.org. Okay? So just send the email at brian@pray.org, that's my email, so all the questions will get answered, just kidding. Listen, listen, we're going to get into it. But here's the thing, here's what did happen. The dream, the dream was both the revelation of what was to come prophetically speaking, but it was also, listen, it was also an invitation to acknowledge the one true God and trust Him. Look what happens in the dream and the interpretation. Verse 34 and 35, "As you looked, a stone," this should catch your eye, "a

stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them to pieces.

Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold all together were broken in pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away, so that," look, look, "not a trace of them could be found, but the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." What in the world is happening here? Verse 44 and 45, "And in those days, in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed." He's interpreting the dream. "Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain, not by a human hand, and that it broke and pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, the gold, a great God has made known this to the king." So what is happening? As you study the Bible and you read texts like this, you should ask questions like this, who and what is the stone of all the precious metals from gold to silver to bronze, a simple small stone shows up in the tacks and destroys it all.

What is going on here with this insignificant stone that's going to come and then spread like mountains? Well, it's none other than the Christ Himself. Christ, when He came, John the Baptist says, "Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Christ's first coming was the inauguration of the kingdom of God. It is already, but not yet, it is here but not fully manifested. Acts 4 would say it like this, "Then know this, you and all people of Israel, it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you heal. Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there's no other name under heaven given to mankind by which you must be saved." Jesus Christ is the stone that will destroy all empires and His kingdom will reign forever. Listen, Matthew 16 is a beautiful text, and it says that Jesus says listen, "I'm going to build my ..." He's the cornerstone, "I'm going to build my church," and notice what the promise is.

The promise of the mission of God for the kingdom of God to advance for the gospel, to go forth and churches to be planted in this city, in this country and in nations is a promise from God that the gates of hell won't prevail against Him. Listen to what happens, here's what's happening. In the West, we interpret Matthew 16 like this. We read it and it says, the gates of hell, "Jesus is going build this church, and the gates of hell won't prevail." So what we do is we think of, "Let me get in as many Bible studies as I can get in. Let me go from one to another in my own city." Here's the idols of the Western church. The idols of the Western church are comfort and security. That's the idol that's in your heart. It's the idol that knocks at my heart. So the way we interpret this text is, "Let's get into many Bible studies as we can get, and then what we'll do is we'll build a wall around us.

We'll build a little wall around our little holy club and then the gates of hell right outside of that, the enemy's not going to get to us because we just want to be safe and comfortable. What the text means, what the text is actually saying is that the enemy has set up gates around people groups all over the world. When God's

people are sent with beautiful feet, gospel preaching feet that go, those walls are coming down. That's what he said, he's saying, listen, when you go and speak words of hope with humility and kindness, the gospel, the good news of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, the gates of hell around people groups, 3.2 billion people in the Middle East and North Africa and crossing into India have never even heard. They're taken captive by the dominion of darkness, and there's gates around them, spiritual gates. When God's people are sent one at a time, two at a time, trips in the summer, and we go and we share this good news. There's a stone. It's a miracle.

He takes people from the dominion of darkness into the marvelous, glorious light of the sun, of a kingdom to live, to live on this earth, but be a part of a kingdom. It's fascinating about the stone. It's cosmic in its implications, I get that. But we also see something extremely practical. Notice where the stone struck. Do you see it in the text? It didn't strike the head, it struck the foot, the foundation. Verse 34, "The stone was cut out by no human hand." Hello, incarnation. "It struck the image on its feet." See, listen, the foundation of the image was weak and it collapsed, and your foundation built on anything other than Christ is weak. Matter of fact, Daniel paints a picture for us. It's like chaff, just empire after empire. Listen, if you're trying to build your life, a personal kingdom on anything other than Christ, it won't last. If you are the center of your life and you're trying to build a personal empire on your namesake, it's not going to last. If you are the center of your empire, you will be plagued with fear and threat all the time.

Listen. Listen. Let's just go a little deeper real quick. Let's think about this for just a minute. If your empire is built on popularity, you are always looking at your media feeds to see how many likes and followers you have because your identity rests in what others think and say about you. If you get massive likes, it puffs you up to be prideful, and you're never more empty than when you are so full of yourself. If you don't get enough likes, it crushes you because you don't believe you were worthy enough to get other people's attention. The gospel, the gospel invades that worldview and says, "Empty yourself of yourself and trust Christ and be filled with Him and exalt Him, and lose yourself in making much of Him and find peace and joy in Him like you never experienced before." Because when you fall short of living that way, He doesn't crush you, He was crushed for you. You confess your sin and He cleanses you.

Listen, Tim Keller says it like this, "You are more wicked than you ever dare believe, and yet you are more loved and accepted in Christ than you ever dared hope. Think, if you build your life on your own empire, it's like a beach house built on the sand. You've got a great view out the front window until the storm rises and lives are falling apart left and right every day, maybe your life. What are you building? What are you building your life on? It's not going to last, empire. I'm not giving you an example of an individual whose life, I'm giving you an example of an empire that didn't last. Listen, Matthew 7, it's fascinating what Jesus says at the end of this Sermon on the Mount. He says, "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practices like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose winds blue beat against that house, yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock."

Listen, “But everyone who hears these words of mind and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Listen, did you see that text? It says anyone who doesn’t put these words into practice is like a foolish man. The Bible says in Psalm 14:1, “The fool says in his heart, there is no God.” So now watch this. Watch this. There’s a way that you could profess Jesus with your mouth and your lips and deny Him by the way you build your life. The fool says, “There is no God.” How would I know that? You can give lip service to God all day, but if you’re building your life and empire own your life, look, you’re living like an atheist. You’re giving lip service to God and the rest of the week, it’s your empire. It’s your kingdom, and it’s like chaff.

Listen, if God has provided a way through the greatest of all storms, the greatest storm you and I have ever or will ever face is the wrath of God at the end of our life. If He has provided a way through that storm by the sending of His Son to live the life we couldn’t live and die the death that we deserve hung on a cross, crucified, drank every drop of the wrath of God that’s rightly due us was buried and then rose from the dead, do you not think He wants to help you live your daily life, if He can take care of your eternal destiny? Listen, if He has conquered the greatest of storms, will He not help you build your life? Listen, Florida, the state of Florida implemented a new criteria in their building codes after Hurricane Andrew hit in 1992. Florida has one of the strongest building codes in the U.S. for homes, but it came after 125,000 homes were destroyed in that storm. So listen, as the tide rises in culture, let’s not wait for everything to crumble and then build it. He’s telling you how to build it.

Acknowledge Him. Trust Him. This morning place your faith in Christ the true King. If you’ve never done that, admit that you have fallen short. You don’t live up to this holy standard that He has, none of us have. Lean in and place your trust and faith and listen, if you have, if you have trusted Christ and you’re walking with Christ and you’re being sanctified. He’s just working. Listen, keep trusting Him. Keep trusting, keep leaning into His Word. Keep building your life on these principles from this Word by faith on the Son of God, the rock. The storm’s coming. It’s going to blow, it’s going to hit. There’s a stone and a rock that you can build your life on that when it does, it might hurt a little bit, but it won’t take you out because He was taken out for you. He loves you and He extends grace to persevere. Well, the last, and I’ll do this one really fast, is this, is God is the Sovereign One. He’s the Sovereign One that puts his people in hard places to help bless and reach many.

He’s the Sovereign One that orchestrates and ordains where people are to live and place. He is over all of this. Daniel 1 you don’t get over that incredible text that the Lord gave Jehoiakim, King of Judah into his hand. The Lord works. He puts people in hard places to help many people. This is what happened at the end of the text. What happened is, the king paid homage to Daniel, not God, ‘cause you’ll see next week in Chapter 3, he still built the image. He didn’t get it. But what’s fascinating is that He put Daniel in a place where he would serve faithfully for year after year. Daniel encouraged his friends. He put his friends in place of influence,

and they were living out Godly values in a Godless empire. So where has God put you? Where has He placed you? Are you seeking His face?

Listen, Hebrews 12 says this, and we'll close. "Consider Jesus who endured such opposition from sinners so that you do not grow weary and lose heart." Where does He put you? He may put you in a hard place, but consider the way you get through hard places, the way you get help in hard places is you consider Jesus who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. The gospel is that which saves you and strengthens you, and so let's live distinctly even this week. Let's be a people who would extend themselves. Let's be a people who would extend themselves to the point of discomfort, to reach and to bless many people. We have the hope, we have the hope that the world is looking for and longing for.

They're just looking in all the wrong places. So be a voice this week and point them to the true King, Jesus Himself. Let's pray. Father, we love You. Thank You for your kindness, for Your grace, for Your mercy. Thank You for all that You've accomplished that we could not accomplish. Thank You for this Word that reminds us to trust You, to lean into You, to praise You, to thank You, to walk with You, to resolve in our heart, not to defile ourself in a culture that's caving like crazy, God. Would You allow us to rise above that, God? May praise and thanksgiving even be the buoy of our heart that would lift us above the sea of despair. God, may we be able to speak not arrogantly or prideful, but humbly and winsomely of the hope that's in Christ and Christ alone. God, do a work, do a work this week. Do a work in this city this week. Send Your people out this week, God, and help, help us to speak in hope in You, and point others to this hope. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.



© 2022 Providence Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.