

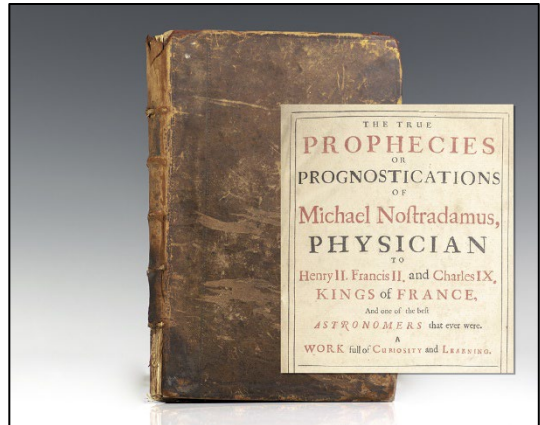
The Book of Daniel

CHAPTER TWO

Nebuchadnezzar's Image

As we enter chapter two of the Book of Daniel, we need to underscore the importance of this chapter. It has been called the ABC's of Bible prophecy. Dr. Ironside said, *"I suppose it contains the most compete, and yet the most simple, prophetic picture that we have in all the Word of God."* It is without dispute the single most important revelation given in all the Bible. Its importance comes from its subject matter. When the disciples wanted to know, when the "end of the world" would be, Jesus pointed them to the prophecies of Daniel: **"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoke of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place..."**

Since the dawn of civilization, mankind has been pondering and predicting the end of the world, from the Mayans and their 2012 calendar, to seers like Nostradamus and his famed prophecies, even to our day with the Hale-Bopp cult "Heaven's Gate group," or the hysteria around the four blood moons occurring on the feasts of Israel in 2014-2015.



However, these are but failed attempts to predict what only God can. C. S. Lewis said, *"History is a story written by the finger of God."* It is God who declares end-time events from the beginning of time: **"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"** (Isaiah 46:9-10). It is God who can speak about future events as though they already took place (Romans 4:17), for God is the author of all things. In this very chapter, Daniel will declare before Nebuchadnezzar, **"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days"** (Daniel 2:28).

What we have in this first revelation is the end of the world, the end of Gentile dominion over the earth and even more specifically, Israel. The revelation in Daniel gives us a time on the dawn of a new era, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The "Times of the Gentiles" will have run their course, crumbling away under the mighty mountain, and giving way

to the “Kingdom of Heaven” which shall stand forever! It is in the Book of Daniel, and specifically this first revelation, where it is made known to all the world that, “... **in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.** (Daniel 2:44). What a powerful revelation given to mankind. So then as we move into this first revelation and beyond, may we appreciate and give glory to God for the simple and weighty truth that the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom that will stand forever.

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. (Da 2:1)

A Troubling Dream (vs. 1): In the scriptures it was not unusual for God to give revelations in dreams: “**if there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make Myself known unto him in vision, and will speak unto him in dream**” (Numbers 12:6). God has revealed Himself in sleep to such as Abimelech (Gen. 20:3), Joseph (Gen. 37:5), Pharaoh (Gen. 41:1, 25), and Solomon (I Kings 3:5). However, it is equally true that people could lie about their dreams, as did the false prophets in Jeremiah’s day: “**How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD**” (Jeremiah 23:26-28).

Now, a couple of things about the dream of Nebuchadnezzar: *first*, this dream was the result of what Nebuchadnezzar was troubled over. Nebuchadnezzar fell asleep worried about the “hereafter,” the end of his empire: “**As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter...**” (vs. 29 cf. Ecc. 5:12).

Secondly, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was so troubling that it woke him from his sleep. We would call this a nightmare, something so troubling that it literally wakes us up from sleep. *Lastly*, Nebuchadnezzar did not remember the dream (vss. 1, 3, 8) and this would prove to be the challenging aspect for the wise men, the challenge to know the dream and the interpretation (vs. 5).

Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. (Daniel 2:2-3)

The Challenge (vss. 2-3): Nebuchadnezzar called forth all the wise men of Babylon to make known the dream and the interpretation thereof. It is the issue of not knowing the dream that will prove to be the source of contention.

Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. (Daniel 2:4)

The First Response from the Wise Men (vs.4): The issue the wise men have is the *dream* itself. They are asking for the narrative of the dream because it would be much easier to fabricate the interpretation if one knew the details of the dream. Such is the case with all the charlatans in the world, mediums, soothsayers, and all prognosticators claiming supernatural abilities in fortune telling.

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. (Daniel 2:5-6)

The First Rebuke from Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 5-6): Nebuchadnezzar tells the wise men that the dream is gone from him, and issues a stark warning to them if they do not make known not only the dream, but the interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar's threat, and soon to be decree, is that the wise men would be "cut in pieces" and their "house," or their lineage, be made a "dunghill," a house of dishonor. However, Nebuchadnezzar would reward them greatly if they were able to tell the dream and interpretation thereof.

They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. (Daniel 2:7)

The Second Response from the Wise Men (vs.7): This second response seems to carry with it almost a rebuttal of sorts by the wise men. The wise men having received the

warning, but they come right back to the very issue of needing to know the dream itself. This will put Nebuchadnezzar on edge.

The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. (Daniel 2:8-9)

The Second Rebuke from Nebuchadnezzar (vss. 8-9): Notice Nebuchadnezzar's increased irritation by toward the wise men for their continual request for the dream. He accuses the wise men of a delay tactic, trying to delay their expected fate. They are accused of seeking to change the time appointed them, whereby they might come up with "**lying and corrupt words to speak.**" This is called "buying time."

The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. (Daniel 2:10-11)

The Third Response from the Wise Men (vss. 10-11): The wise men show their inability to do that which only God can do. When placed in a situation where their very lives are at stake, they are left only with bargaining. They try convincing the king by saying there is no king, lord, nor ruler that asked such things, therefore neither should he. This ploy of the wise men is not wise! You might not want to threaten a king that has all power and authority. But, when put to the test all such magicians, astrologers and soothsayers fail, as did the 400 prophets of Baal.

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. (Daniel 2:12-13)

The Rage and Ruling of Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 12-13): Nebuchadnezzar's irritation is provoked to rage; he was "**angry and very furious.**" People that respond in anger react in haste, as did Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 15 cf. Proverbs 14:29). Nebuchadnezzar makes a

decree to destroy all the wise men of Babylon; this included Daniel and his three friends. One can only wonder if this was a tactic of Satan to destroy Daniel.

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. (Daniel 2:14-18)

The Intervention by Daniel (vss. 14-18): Daniel's character should be noted here, for as throughout the book as a whole, Daniel "answered with counsel and wisdom" (vs. 14). Also, Daniel not only prayed himself, but asked his friends to pray for mercies from God over this situation (vs. 17-18).

Daniel moved quickly, for the king's decree was with haste. Arioch captain of the king's guard was preparing to follow the orders. Daniel first goes to Arioch, the one given the task of executing all the wise men, and asks why this most shocking and furious decree was so hastily put forth. Arioch tells Daniel all that had transpired. Daniel, in haste to stop the mass execution of the wise men, goes before the king, utilizing his position and favor with the king to have a personal meeting with him. Keep in mind that Daniel and his three friends stood before the king as his personal advisors (1:19-20). Daniel's request for more time is granted by Nebuchadnezzar, the very thing the wise men had previously sought, but to no avail (vs. 16). Daniel receives leniency from the king, gaining time to seek the dream and its interpretation. Daniel tell his three friends all that had transpired and asks them to seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning the dream (vss. 17-18).

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made

known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter. (Daniel 2:19-23)

God Reveals the Dream and Interpretation to Daniel (vss. 19-23): As it has been stated throughout this chapter, knowing the *dream* was the source of contention between the wise men and Nebuchadnezzar, it was not just the interpretation. God answers their prayers, **“Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in the night vision” (vs. 19)**. Yes, the God of Heaven showed them mercy and gave to Daniel a night vision. It is most plausible to me that God gave Daniel the exact vision that was given to Nebuchadnezzar, with the interpretation. Only with Daniel there were no night terrors, for Daniel knew the God of Heaven.

Upon receiving the revelation Daniel blesses the God of Heaven (**vs. 19**). It is this very title, the “God of Heaven” that is associated with the revelation given to Daniel, for the revelation is concerning the time in which the God of Heaven sets up His Kingdom, a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed (**vs. 44**).

Daniel blesses the name of God, acknowledging all wisdom and might are His (**vs. 20**). The fact that Daniel saw the vision and its interpretation is highlighted by his words in verse 21, in which he blesses the God of Heaven says **“he changeth times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings.”** Daniel’s revelation is exactly that, it is a prophetic calendar of the times and seasons of the kings and kingdoms of this world, leading up to the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

When Paul is rebuking the Thessalonians for not understanding the prophetic order of things, he says to the church, **“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)**. The “times and seasons” concern the order of prophetic events that had been revealed through the book of Daniel, the prophets, our Lord’s ministry, and through Paul himself as he communicated the revelations given to him. It should be noted that Paul is using the “times and seasons” terminology to communicate events concerning prophecy, not concerning the *mystery*. Any time prophetic events are the subject of scripture, we are dealing with a calendar, for Israel always operated on a calendar; however, when we are dealing with the mystery concerning the Church, there is no calendar in operation, only signs of the times (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Daniel continues blessing the God of Heaven for giving **“wisdom unto the wise and knowledge to them that know understanding” (vs. 21)**. Two Proverbs come to mind on

this verse. **"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels."** (Proverbs 1:5) **"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."** (Proverbs 9:9) Daniel mentioning wisdom and understanding is a rebuke to the supposed "wise men" of Babylon, for in all their collective wisdom and understanding they could not know Nebuchadnezzar's dream, nor its interpretation.

Daniel then acknowledges the omniscience of God (vs. 21), for God knows the deep and secret things, and those things in the darkness God can see, for the light dwells with Him. God is the revealer of the deep things of wisdom and knowledge, only He can reveal that which is hidden from man. In the darkness of the night Daniel is shown the light of the vision from God.

Daniel closes his prayer with thanks and praise (vs. 23). Daniel acknowledges the "wisdom and might" that belong to God, and thanks Him for sharing it concerning this revelation (vss. 20 cf. 23). God answered Daniel and his friends' prayers.

Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. (Daniel 2:24-30)

Daniel, standing before the King (vss. 24-30): Everything here continues in haste. Upon receiving the dream and interpretation, Daniel rushes off to Arioch, the captain of the guard and head over fulfilling the king's decree of execution. Daniel's words to Arioch are **"Destroy not the wise men of Babylon, bring me in before the king and I will shew**

unto the king the interpretation” (vs. 24). Daniel’s act of intervening for the lives of the wise men of Babylon will win him a place of influence over them, and not only Daniel but the God whom Daniel serves. This truth is seen in the wise men coming to Jerusalem!

Arioch brings Daniel in before King Nebuchadnezzar with haste (vs. 25) and says, **“I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation.”** It would seem from the passage that the guard Arioch did not know the relationship between Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel, but in his excitement to exhort himself claimed to have discovered Daniel among the captives of Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar asks if Daniel is able to tell the dream and its interpretation, to which Daniel poses a question to Nebuchadnezzar that they both know the answer to (vss. 26-27). This is done to lend emphasis to the fact that of all the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers, only One can give such an answer, and He is the God of Heaven (vs. 28). This harkens back to what the wise men told Nebuchadnezzar, **“... it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”** This God, the One and only God, whom the wise men were unaware of, is now made known to them. This is similar to Paul’s address to the heathens at Mars Hill in Athens. He said, **“For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:23).** This is what Daniel will now do, declare the God of Heaven!

Daniel is not only revealing the message given to Nebuchadnezzar but also the One true God, the God of Heaven, who alone is the revealer of secrets, making known to Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days, what will come to pass hereafter (vs. 28-29). As we will see in the revelation, these “latter days” concern the days leading up to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Lastly, Daniel gives all the glory to God for all he is about to reveal (vs. 30). Daniel also mentions that the revelation was given not only for the king but for “their sakes.” Who are these? Could it be all the wise men to whom the decree so hastily went forth to execute? This would also include Daniel’s three friends.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His

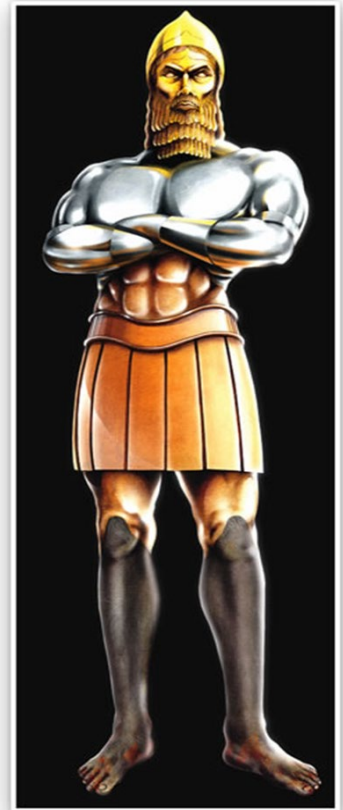
legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:31-35)

Daniel Reveals the Dream (vss. 31-35): Daniel stands before the king of Babylon and begins to tell the dream to him. One can only imagine how Nebuchadnezzar must have moved to the edge of his seat as Daniel began to tell what the king saw. **“Thou, O king saw a great image.”** The image was great in stature, a massive image of a man standing. The image did not move, it only shined in its brightness from the metals that it was made of. Its form was **“terrible.”** This is often a term used to describe the fierceness of nations. Later in Daniel the fourth beast is described as **“dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth.”**

Daniel begins to describe details of the great, colossal statue¹ beginning with its head. The head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass and his legs of iron, with his feet part of iron and part of clay (vss. 32-33).

- HEAD OF GOLD
- BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER
- BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRASS
- LEGS OF IRON
- FEET PART IRON & CLAY

Then Daniel begins to describe movement in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, a stone that was cut without hands (it was a natural stone in appearance) smote the great image at its feet of iron & clay, breaking it into pieces, obliterating all the other metals into a powder that is driven away by the wind, like the chaff of the



¹ A couple of things concerning this image: the metals that make up the image cascade down, each inferior to the previous one, thus each kingdom is inferior to the preceding one. **“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee...” (Daniel 2:39)** Secondly, notice there is a division of authority in these kingdoms: two arms, two legs, and eventually ten toes.

summer threshing floor (**vss. 34-35**). This utter destruction of the total image, brought to dust and blown away by the wind, gives the idea of its never being revived again. Daniel saw the stone that was cut without hands “**become a great mountain and fill the whole earth**” (**vs. 35**).

As Daniel told the king his dream, Nebuchadnezzar did not refute, correct, or add one thing to what Daniel described. It was truth; it was what Nebuchadnezzar saw to the smallest detail. All that was left now was the interpretation.