

The Keyhole of Prophecy

Daniel 2

INTRODUCTION: Remember last week we saw the Judgement of God as Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon invaded and defeated the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The custom of Babylon was to take captive the best and the brightest among the conquered Kingdom. Among those excites were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. These four teenage young men were entered into a three year program designed to Babylonianize them. To train them to think, behave and see the world as a Babylonian.

Last week we saw how they survived in Babylon U. If you haven't heard that sermon let me strongly encourage you not only to listen, but share it with anyone who is moving into college or adulthood.

This week we see that the four Hebrew young men as serving among the Mystics of Babylon.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM -

TEXT: Daniel 2:1–49 (ESV)

¹ In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

It appears this was a terrifying dream, a **nightmare**. Imagine the King waking up soaked with sweat, trembling from this dream, perhaps screaming out as he awakes. Ever had a dream like that? Well, imagine having it **over and over** - Notice that the word "dreams" is plural - it seems this was a recurring dream, same terrifying nightmare over and over, until Nebuchadnezzar dreaded nightfall.

² Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

Now our tendency is to think, these poor backward people - turning to sorcerers to give meaning to their dreams. But keep in mind that the Magicians of Babylon were as much **scientist as they were sorcerers**.

They had the most sophisticated system of understanding the stars and planets known to the ancient world. They understood medicine and the spread of contagions. They organized the first public school system on planet earth This was a tribe of **mystic geniuses** the like of which the world has rarely been seen.

ILLUSTRATION: As a matter of fact there is a religion right here in America where the adherents to that has statues of these guys in practically all their homes. It's

called, "Christianity". Yes, that's right - practically every family has statues of the ancient magicians in their homes as a part of their **Nativity set**.

These men here in Daniel 2 are the **ancestors of the Magi** in the Gospels. So keep in mind, there is a reason those guys showed up at the birth of Jesus. It is because of the things Daniel taught in passages like the one before us today.

³ And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." ⁴ Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." ⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. ⁶ But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation." ⁷

Nebuchadnezzar was a smart man. He knew that anyone could make up a subjective interpretation that could not be validated. So he asked them to provide the objective substance of the dream as well as the interpretation. If they cannot do so, they would be killed.

DANIEL RECEIVES WORD OF THE KINGS PLAN and did as God fearing men do. He called his tribe together for prayer.

¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel goes to his friends. He goes to his tribe. Remember last week we said when you move to a new area, ***the first order priority is to identify your tribe.***

- You need your **TRIBE** before your **TRIAL**
- You need your **CREW** before your **CRISIS**

Or else, here is what happens - a crisis comes, everything falls apart and you call the church to respond, we respond... but you suddenly realize that we don't know you and you don't know us. So we are ill equipped to minister to you properly through the need.

Relationships are **CROCKPOT** meals, you can't **MICROWAVE** them. They are NOT fast food, they take time.

This was Daniel's small group, his Sunday School class. These are the people that you come together with around the Word to study, fellowship, serve and do life together. You need a small group of people who KNOW YOU and KNOW GOD.

Trials are inevitable, friends are not. Trails will find you, you have to find friends.

You must be intentional to find a group of likeminded believers.

Look what happens next.

GOD REVEALS THE MEANING TO DANIEL

¹⁹ Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

DANIEL APPEARS BEFORE THE KING

²⁴ Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation." ²⁵ Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: ***"I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."*** ²⁶ The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?" ²⁷ Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanter, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, ²⁸ but ***there is a God in heaven*** who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar ***what will be in the latter days.***

Throughout your journey, God will give you situations like this - where God gives you a solution, an answer, a direction. Whether you receive more moments like this is determined by how faithfully you give God credit and glory for the last revelation.

If God shows you something and you appreciate, THANKS GOD and GIVE GOD CREDIT. If you don't, you will find that it just doesn't happen anymore.

Some of you today, received and insight years ago that God very clearly gave to you, but rather than give God glory you enjoyed the praise, you enjoyed people thinking highly of you. As a result your spiritual experience has been stunted for years. Repent of that today and ask God for another chance.

DANIEL REVEALS THE DREAM [Play Statue Video as I read]

³¹ "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

³⁴ As you looked, a ***stone*** was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

Now this stone not cut by human hands would have meant something to the Hebrew readers of Daniel. This was the prescription for an altar in the OT. The Jews could not fashion an altar for Yahweh, they had to find a stone uncut. So immediately the Hebrew reader would say - this stone is somehow related to atonement, sacrifice.

³⁵ 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 not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. ³⁶ “This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

Now I don't have time to unpack this - but later in **Daniel 7**, Daniel will have a dream of **4 beast**. The 4 Parts of this statue represent 4 Kingdoms. The 4 Kingdoms correspond to the 4 Beast in **Daniel 7**. So in other words there are 4 major Dominions or Kingdoms that will arise on the Planet. The final Beast will have 10 horn, here the statue has 10 toes. Just make a mental note of that for later.

DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM

1. The Head of Gold - Nebuchadnezzar

³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, ³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.

NOTE: that Daniel doesn't say this is Babylon, he says it's the King, Nebuchadnezzar.

There was no human Kingdom like it before, nor would there be after.

ILLUSTRATION: In 1804 as Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned King of France. He proclaimed, “I am the Revolution”. Well the truth was his reign was short lived.

Nebuchadnezzar however, was Babylon. He was endowed by God with supreme skills of leadership and organization.

Under his rule Babylon was Advanced in:

- **Government**
- **Education**
- **Science** - The Babylonians were outstanding mathematicians, they were using the Pythagorean theorem long before it was known as such.
- **Military** - They had weapons that were far advanced than their neighbors.
- **Literature** - I'm sure you had to read the ***Epic of Gilgamesh*** in school. It is still regarded as one of the great works of literature ever penned.

So keep in mind they were radically advanced, without the advantage of the Greek, Roman or the Persian shoulders to stand upon.

Yet despite their great advancements - they were conquered by an **inferior** kingdom.

2. The Chest and Arms of Silver - Medo-Persian Kingdom

³⁹ Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you.

This is the Medo-Persian empire under the leadership of **Cyrus the Great**.

In the dream there were two arms....The Medo-Persian Empire.

During the time of the Medes and Persians **CYRUS** allowed Israel to go back and rebuild their capital city in Jerusalem. So that is what you see recorded in **Nehemiah** and **Ezra**.

3. Torso of Bronze - Greek Kingdom

and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

Alexander the Great oversaw the first true World Wide Empire. The Greek Kingdom extended from western Europe to India. I am told that in China you can find evidence of Greek influence, even European DNA in the population from around the time of the Greeks.

Thus Greek becomes a **common language** spoken throughout the known world. Now your NT is written in what language? Greek. Jesus came at a time when news could travel fast.

When Alexander died they Kingdom was divided into 4 parts, those parts were overthrown by the Romans.

The Greek Kingdom lasted just **under 200 years**.

4a. Legs of Iron - Roman Kingdom

⁴⁰ And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

The Unified Roman Empire lasted **500 years**, then it was split east and west, the two legs on the statue.

This is the portion of history that we are most familiar with in the West. Our system of government is modeled after that of Rome. However, in God's eyes it is portrayed as inferior to the Greek, Persian, and Babylonian systems.

4b. Feet of Clay & Iron - Future Kingdom

⁴¹ And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. ⁴² And as the **toes of the feet** were partly iron and partly clay,

so the kingdom shall be partly **strong** and partly **brittle**.⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Because this statue has 10 toes, and because this corresponds with the 10 kings in **Daniel 7**, that the final form of the Roman Empire which will be a 10 Nation confederacy.

In **Revelation 17** again there is this 10 kingdom confederacy.

VERY IMPORTANT POINT:

- **Rome has never in history consisted of a 10 nation confederacy. But we are told that this 10 Nation confederacy exists when the STONE comes and destroys the other Kingdoms and fills the Earth.**

This is just one of the many occasions in the OT where there is an **APPARENT gap** in prophecy. You see a perfect revelation of history up until the Roman empire, then it seems to skip 2 Millenia. Why is that?

It is because of what Paul calls in the NT the great **Mystery of the CHURCH**. The Church age, where the Kingdom of God is no longer relegated to ethnic Israel, but rather men and women of every tribe and every tongue are brought into the Kingdom of God.

The OT does not portray this 2000+ year gap of history.

In **Revelation** John tells us that there is a Beast that is wounded and seems to die, but he comes back from death - I believe that is a picture of Rome, that will be revived in the final days, and take the form of this 10 Nation confederacy.

PEOPLE ASK - Does all of the things happening with **COVID19** have anything to do with prophecy? Indirectly, everything does. I would suggest that you watch alliances, treaties, formal agreements that evolve as a result of the pandemic. Watch organizations like the CDC and WHO and governments that align with them.

Out of those 10 nations will come a **little horn**, a man of sin, the son of perdition, we know him as the **Anti-Christ**. He will be a great world ruler that will come on the scene in Europe. This ultimate confederacy will only last 3.5 years, the first half of the Tribulation period.

WHY IS IT NOT SEQUENTIAL?

Because of the radical nature of Messiah's rejection.

Jesus came unto his own and his own received him not. Jesus at one time said, “I came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it is not proper to give the children bread to dogs”

Jesus came to save and they rejected... as a result the church age began. Romans tells us the natural branch was broken off and an unnatural was grafted in.

5. The Stone from Heaven - The Kingdom of Jesus Christ

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. ⁴

INVITATION: Why should we care about statues with toes and beast with horns? This all seems so weird and difficult.

1. Keep in mind over 25% of your bible is Prophecy. God wants you to know and understand the times.
2. By knowing History (what preceded us) and Prophecy (what comes after us) we can have our bearings on how to live today.
3. We could be a generation of wise men who study the prophecies alongside the new reports and prepare the world for the second coming.

Are you ready?