

Daniel 2 (TAC)

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

1:21 PM



Good evening, Arising Church!

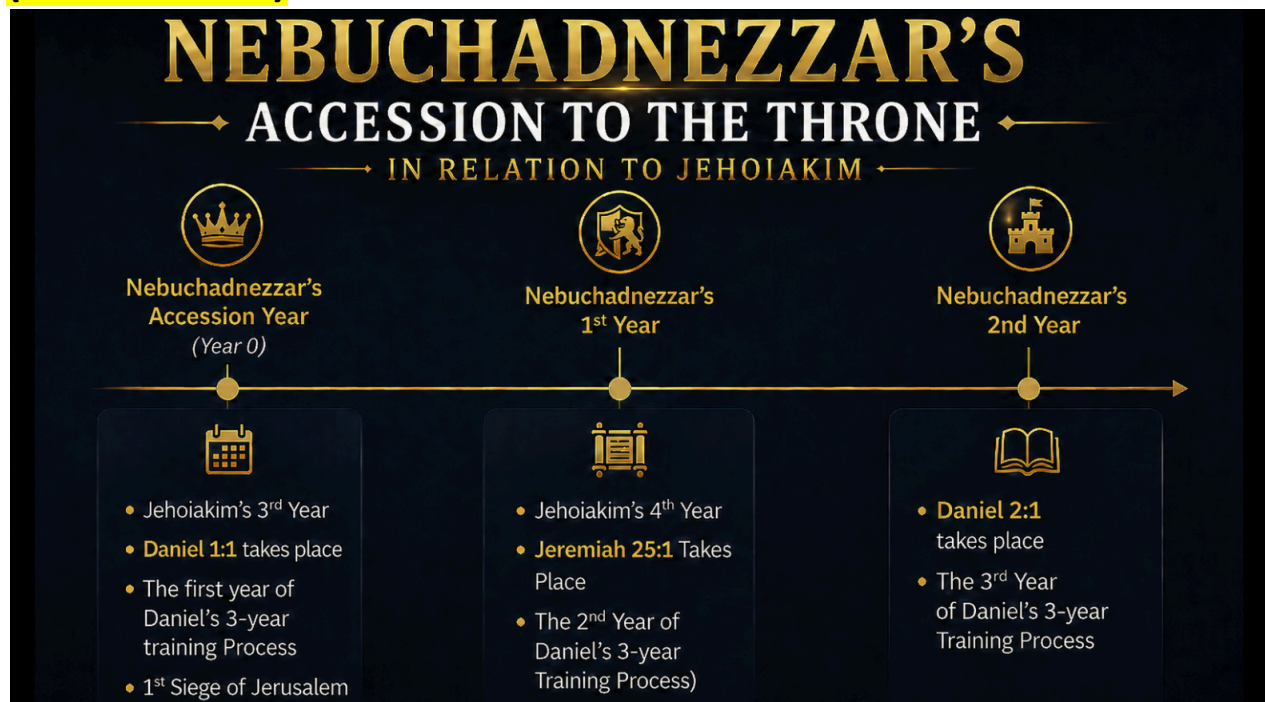
We have a special evening in store for you all. Tonight you will see the seeds of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion experience and you will grow in respect for the true Israelite youths who are the "good figs" Jeremiah prophesied about. Tonight you may even see the Kingdom of God in new ways that have long been obscured by overly allegorizing and spiritualizing things that are actually real, tangible, and physical realities coming upon this world. Let's go over our table of contents!

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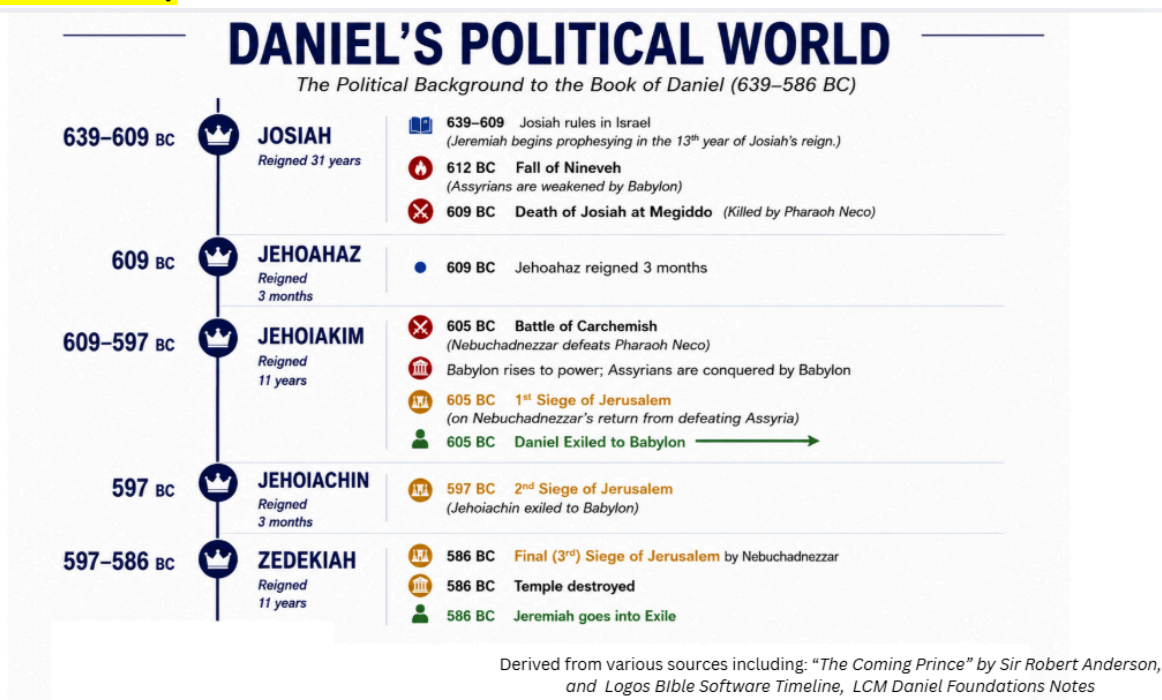
Setting the Context: Chronology and Climate

(Do Not Read)



To set the context of the chapter you are about to read, you should know that Nebuchadnezzar is in the third year of his rulership and the second year that he has ascended to kingship. Remember the timeline: Daniel 1:1 falls in the third year of Jehoiakim, which is Nebuchadnezzar's accession year. Jeremiah 25:1 states that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, confirming the Babylonian accession method, where zero to twelve months is not counted as an official year. Tonight we pick up in Daniel 2:1, the second official year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

(DO NOT READ)



Here is an overview of the world events leading up to tonight's chapter: between the years of 609 and 597 BC, we have Jehoiakim, the first siege of Jerusalem on Nebuchadnezzar's return from defeating Assyria, and the exile of Daniel and his companions. Nebuchadnezzar's father dies and Nebuchadnezzar enters his accession year. As we pick up in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar is about 25 years old, newly enthroned as king, and, on top of everything else, he is grieving the recent loss of his father.

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Timing of Nebuchadnezzar's Accession Year

The Battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. established Babylon as the dominant power all the way to the border of Egypt (the Wadi el-Arish). In 604 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar campaigned in Palestine and conquered Ashkelon. Jehoiakim quickly gave allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, who had recently been crowned king of Babylon after his father's death shortly after the Battle of Carchemish. Perhaps during this campaign Nebuchadnezzar took hostages, including Daniel and his three companions Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and carried them captive to Babylon (Dan. 1:1–7).

Thomas V. Brisco, Holman Bible Atlas, Holman Reference (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 155–156.

You also have to appreciate the political climate surrounding Nebuchadnezzar's transition to power. It was an extraordinarily chaotic time. While he was away fighting at Carchemish, his father died. Nebuchadnezzar hurried back to Babylon to secure the throne before returning to consolidate his newly acquired empire.

Now put yourself in his position. You've inherited your father's advisors in a newly established empire. You don't know whom you can trust. Many of the men surrounding you are older, more experienced, and deeply connected within the government. Who knows what ambitions they may harbor—or whether their loyalty truly belongs to you?

(Read Slide)

Constant Rebellions in Babylon

“Several scholars have argued that the king’s brother, Nabu-šuma-lišir, mounted a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of his reign... It seems that for the next 10 years or so, Nebuchadnezzar would become engaged in a game of political whack-a-mole, trying to squelch uprisings and rebellions within the borders of his empire and even his own city itself.”

Legends of the Ancient World: The Life and Legacy of King Nebuchadnezzar II - Charles River Editors

Not only was Nebuchadnezzar a young and newly established ruler of a worldwide empire, but shortly after the events of this chapter, he would also face a series of rebellions, some of them led by members of his own family and trusted advisors. A study of Babylonian history reveals that Nebuchadnezzar was not entirely unjustified in suspecting his counselors of conspiring against him. Some of those closest to him would, in fact, later lead revolts against his rule.

Keeping this historical context in mind helps explain his actions in Daniel 2. While Nebuchadnezzar was certainly driven by the flesh in many ways, he was more than simply an irrational and angry dictator. He faced genuine threats to his throne and carried the weight of preserving the empire and legacy his father had built.

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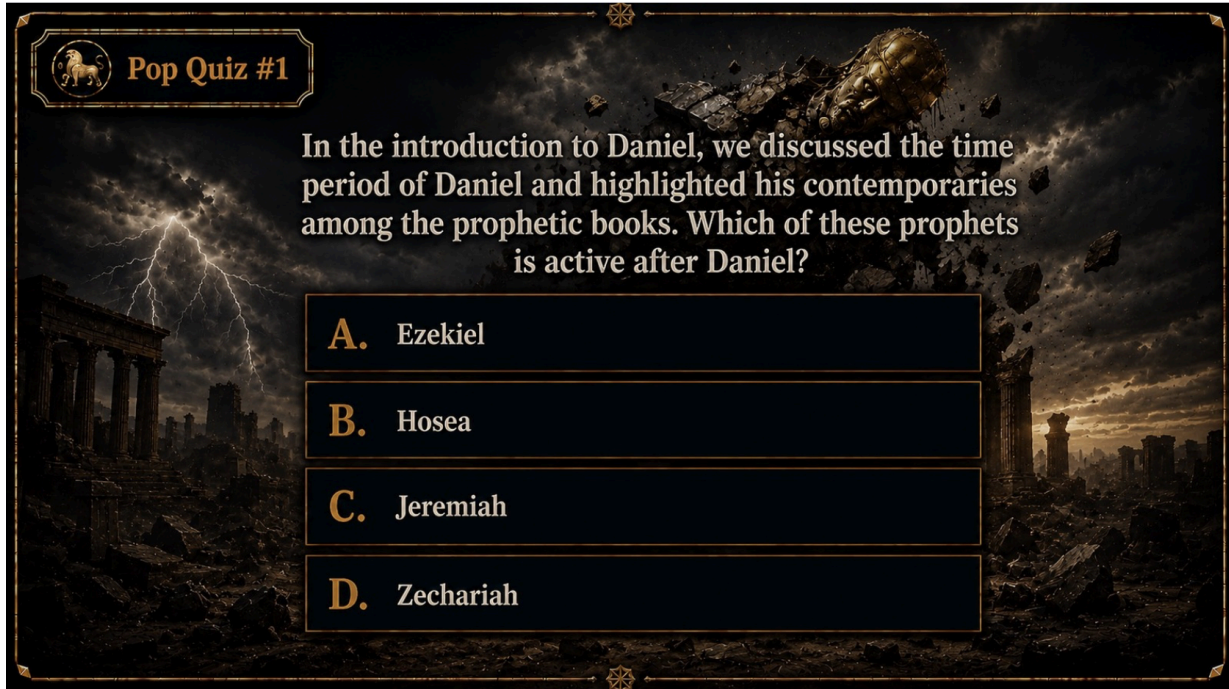
Kingdom VS Empire

Kingdom - Smaller Regional Power

Empire - Multi-ethnic world power (Can contain many kingdoms)

Before we jump into the text, we want to make one more note. Up to this point, we have intentionally referred to Babylon, Persia, and Greece as *empires* rather than *kingdoms*. We have done this because the biblical word translated as "kingdom" is used broadly and can refer either to a vast, multiethnic empire or to a much smaller regional kingdom.

This distinction will become increasingly important as we move through the book. For the sake of clarity, we will use the term *kingdom* to describe smaller regional principalities, while reserving the term *empire* for large, multi-ethnic world powers.



Pop Quiz #1

In the introduction to Daniel, we discussed the time period of Daniel and highlighted his contemporaries among the prophetic books. Which of these prophets is active after Daniel?

- A. Ezekiel
- B. Hosea
- C. Jeremiah
- D. Zechariah

Read the Text and Pray

Verse 1 — Prolonged Dreams and the Joseph Parallel

1 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

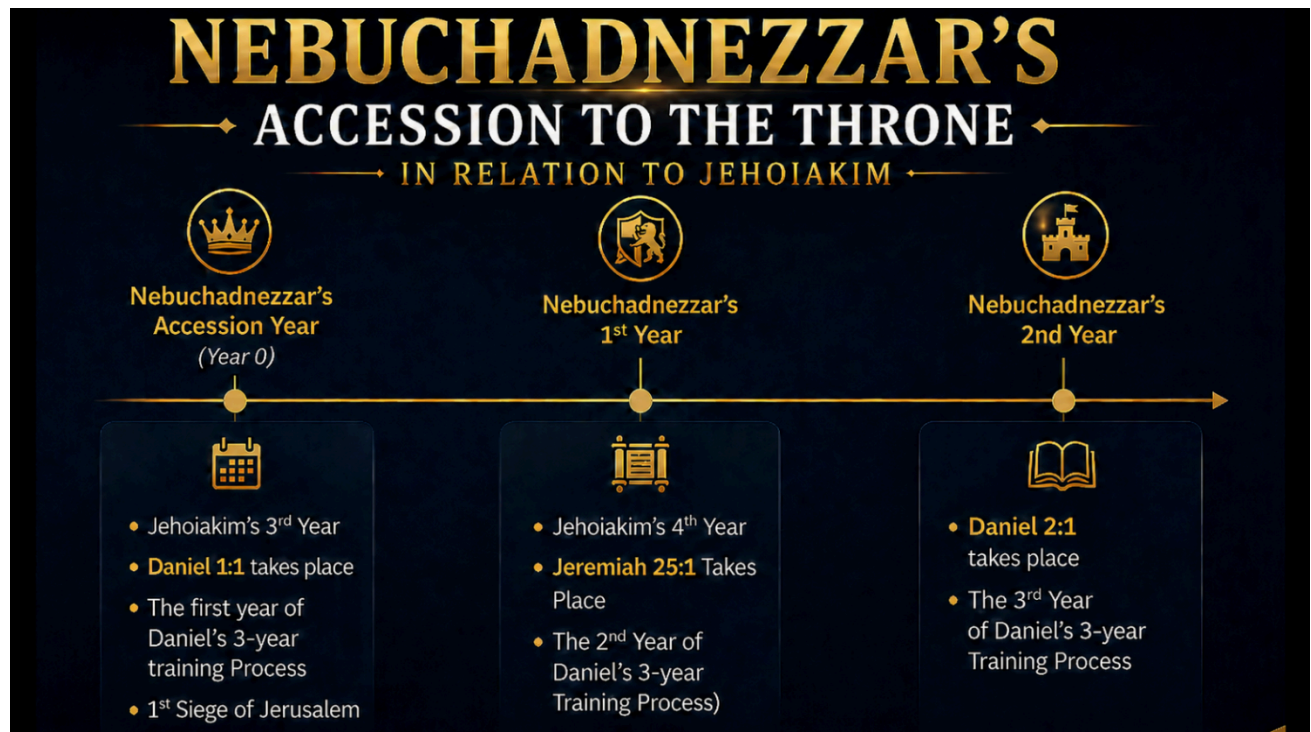
A fact that is very easy to read past without consideration is that verse 1 says "Nebuchadnezzar had dreams" — plural. These words indicate a prolonged season rather than a singular event. Something has been troubling him repeatedly. Many aspects of this upcoming encounter are reminiscent of another son of Abraham in captivity—Joseph.

- o **Genesis 41:1 (ESV)**

After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile.

Joseph, a forefather of Daniel, had been taken captive into prison. Two years after a cupbearer had received the successful interpretation of his dreams by Joseph, the king of the world began to have dreams of his own. Not only is another Imperial Leader having dreams, but there is also a timeframe of two years clearly

present! Do you remember how many years it has been since the events of chapter 1?



It has been approximately two years since the Jewish youths were taken into captivity. Just like Joseph, who had been waiting to be remembered for two years since he interpreted the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker. In many places tonight you will see patterns repeated and actions inspired by Joseph.

o **Genesis 41:8 (ESV)**

So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh, like Nebuchadnezzar, was troubled by his dreams — and an anointed Jew was the only man on earth who could interpret them.

<https://youtube.com/live/3N9bUqQvwX8?feature=share>

o **Genesis 41:25 (ESV)**

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do."

In both cases — Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar — the dreams speak a repeating matter and are considered one message, though they are multiple dreams. More importantly, in both cases, there is only one people group on earth that can help the Gentile king: a Jew in their midst. In both cases the issue was considered "firmly decided" — attested to by the repetition, the sleeplessness, and the troubling of the monarch prior to receiving revelation from the Jewish people.

You are going to see this thread in a few places throughout the chapter, and when you begin to add up all the similarities it becomes obvious that the Spirit wants to connect the two events. These stories would have been told to Daniel his entire life, and now as a young Jewish man he finds himself in a similar situation to undoubtedly one of his heroes. Let's keep reading.

Verses 2–6 — Nebuchadnezzar's Skepticism and the Lying Prophets

²So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, ³he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."⁴Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic,

O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

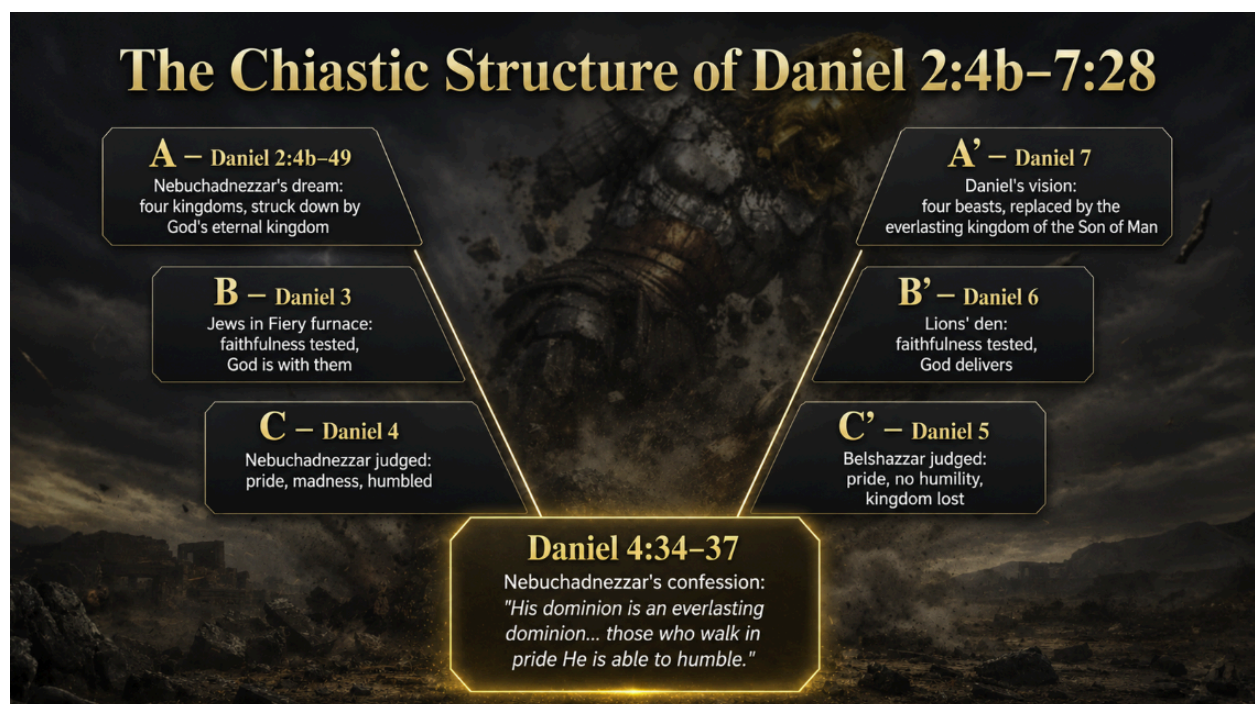
Whatever the differences were between the individual dreams, there was apparently a very strong repeating theme — a main thread — that Nebuchadnezzar could grab hold of and that particularly troubled him, the same way Pharaoh was troubled in Genesis 41.

As we move forward in the text, you will notice several different terms used to describe the king's advisors — magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, astrologers, Chaldeans. Rather than getting lost in the distinctions between each group, what matters for our purposes is that they were summoned collectively and expected to function as one. What the unfolding of this scenario reveals is something telling about how these men operated: they were accustomed to being handed information and then crafting an interpretation around it. Give them the dream, and they would give you an answer. What Nebuchadnezzar is about to demand exposes that system for exactly what it is.

The one detail worth mentioning among this group is that of Chaldean. “Chaldeans / Kasdim” can refer broadly to an ethnic/geographic people group from Babylonia, but in Daniel 2 the term also seems to function more narrowly as a title for a class of court wise men/astrologer-priests. So we should not flatten the word into only one category. In this passage, it belongs within the larger collective of Babylon’s religious/intellectual advisers.”

Note the transition here: verse 4 tells us the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic. The LXX says "Syristi" while the Masoretic text says "Aramaic" — both are names of the same language spoken across the majority of the biblical world at that time. This also marks the transition into the Aramaic section of Daniel, which runs from Daniel 2:4 through Daniel 7.

This is a good time to remind you of the chiastic structure that is now beginning.



We described the chiastic structure in Daniel as a **book within a book**, framed by two major visions. The first bookend is Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2, where the wisest men in the world are exposed as powerless imposters. The second bookend is Daniel’s own troubling vision in chapter 7, which is interpreted by a divine being.

This section begins in Daniel 2:4 and continues through the end of chapter 7. As this “book within a book” unfolds, we will see the Jews tested and delivered from the fire and from the lions of Babylon. We will also see kings humbled, until the most powerful Gentile ruler is brought to a realization and confession that the Most High God rules over an eternal kingdom and that he alone is worthy of praise.

As we begin the Aramaic portion of the book, pay close attention to the contrast between the supposed power of Babylon’s great men and the divine distinction given to these young Jewish men.

Take notice of the initial confidence displayed by the wise men: *“Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”* That confidence is about to fall very quickly.

⁵The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. ⁶But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”

This is certainly an interesting professional development program. Most employers offer annual reviews, performance improvement plans, or perhaps a strongly worded email. Nebuchadnezzar's approach is a little more direct. If you are right, you receive gifts, rewards, and great honor. If you are wrong, you are cut into pieces and your house becomes a "pile of rubble."

Though, if you do just a little language research, "pile of rubble" is not quite as sanitized as it sounds in English. The term is a bit more graphic. Let's just say it describes the kind of place that makes flowers grow and attracts flies...apparently, Nebuchadnezzar believed in providing performance feedback that would leave a lasting impression on the employee...

When you consider the timeline of Nebuchadnezzar's rise to kingship, it seems likely that he is skeptical of these advisors. Perhaps he inherited them from his father's administration and has never fully trusted them. Perhaps some questionable advice had already made its way across his desk. Whatever the reason, he is clearly not evaluating their performance through rose-colored glasses.

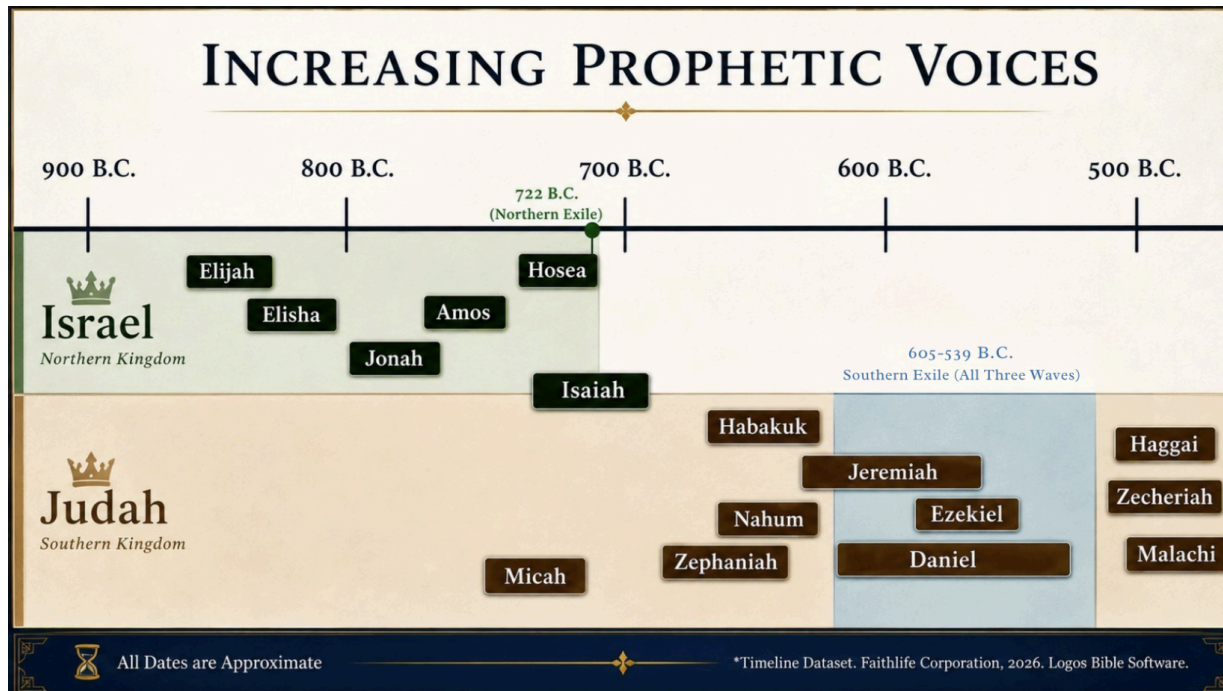
On a historical note, in this same season of Israel's history, they too were being plagued by lying prophets. Listen to the words of the prophet to Judah who is a contemporary of Daniel:

- o **Jeremiah 14:14–15 (NIV)**

14 Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds. 15 Therefore this is what the LORD says about the prophets who are prophesying in my name: I did not send them, yet they are saying, ‘No sword or famine will touch this land.’ Those same prophets will perish by sword and famine.

Both nations — Israel and Babylon — were plagued by the same problem. There were men in spiritual advisory roles whose advice was not worth anything. When the standard-bearing nation has this kind of problem, of course the pagan nations do too. The nation of God is supposed to set the standard for what truth-telling looks like. It is always the same answer in an age of lying prophets: we need men like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to stand up and speak the truth in love.

Let's also look at this from another angle:



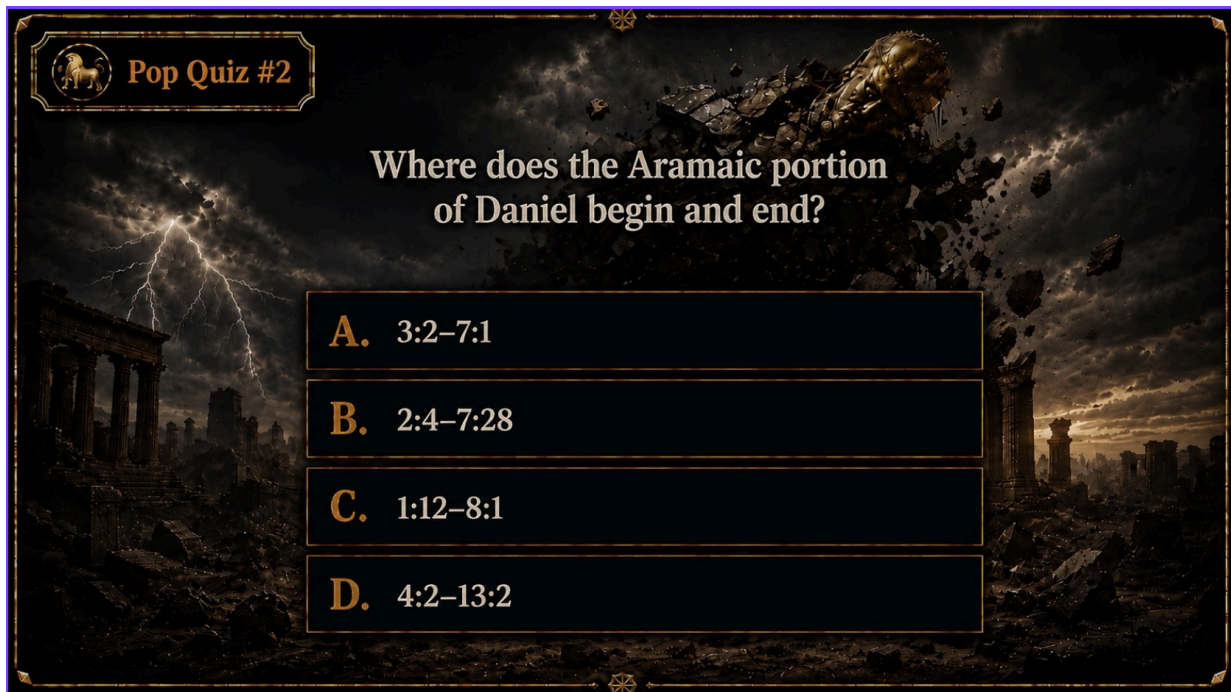
What this timeline shows us is that God did not send judgment without first multiplying his warnings. As Israel moved toward the Assyrian exile, the prophets began to increase. Then, as Judah moved toward the Babylonian exile, the prophetic voices increased again.

We often divide the prophets into two groups: **Major Prophets** and **Minor Prophets**. But in Jewish tradition, the so-called “Minor Prophets” are simply referred to as **The Twelve**. This timeline includes nearly all of them. The only two not shown are **Obadiah** and **Joel**, largely because their exact dating is more difficult to place, though both certainly belong within this larger prophetic witness.

Taken together, this means that the major prophetic voices of **The Twelve**, along with Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, were all raised up before, during, and immediately after the exiles. Before the fall of Samaria and before the fall of Jerusalem, God sent a rising chorus of prophetic voices to confront sin, call for repentance, announce judgment, and promise future restoration. The closer exile came, the louder the warnings became.

Put these thoughts together, both the Gentile nations and the nation of Israel had problems with false prophets, but true prophetic voices that heard from heaven

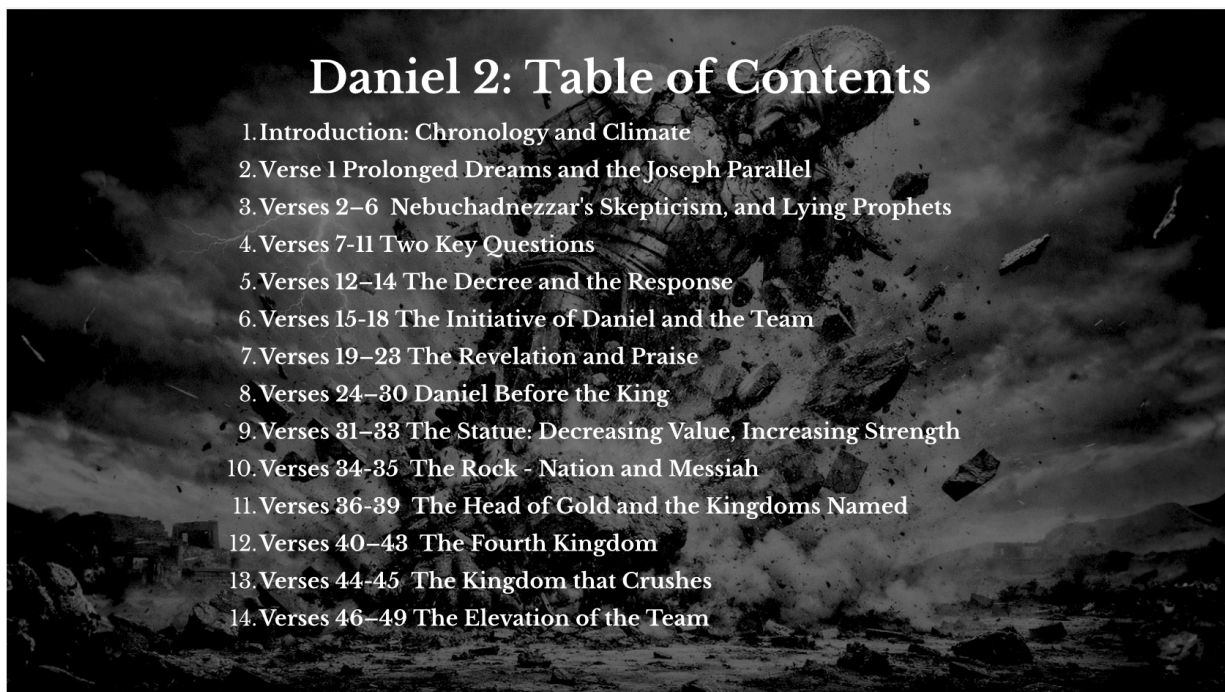
and spoke for the Lord came from Israel. Israel wasn't perfect but they did have the solution, and King Nebuchadnezzar is going to find this out first hand.



Pop Quiz #2

Where does the Aramaic portion of Daniel begin and end?

- A. 3:2–7:1
- B. 2:4–7:28
- C. 1:12–8:1
- D. 4:2–13:2



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Verses 7–11 — Two Key Questions

7 Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

8 Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: 9 If you do not tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

If there was any doubt about Nebuchadnezzar's mistrust of his advisors, these verses prove it: He says, *"I am certain that you are trying to gain time... You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things."* It is clear that he suspects his wise men and does not trust them.

What is happening is that a stage is being set up. He's surrounded by a pantheon of lying prophets and men who have no spiritual ability, but it is important to remember that in dark and lying days, our God may just be setting up an impossible situation in order to reveal Himself as the God of Heaven and the God of the impossible.

Perhaps God is setting the stage so that these teenage lovers of Torah would stand up and tell the truth to Nebuchadnezzar.

10 The astrologers answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. 11 What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."

Their first claim—"no king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing"—must be understood in light of what Nebuchadnezzar is actually demanding. Kings had certainly sought the interpretation of dreams before. As we have already stated, Pharaoh did exactly that in Genesis 41, and God raised up Joseph, to provide the interpretation.

What makes Nebuchadnezzar's request unique is that he refuses to tell the dream itself. Pharaoh revealed his dreams and then sought an interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar demands both the dream and its meaning. His requirement exposes his wise men who want to rely on observation, deduction, or flattery. If

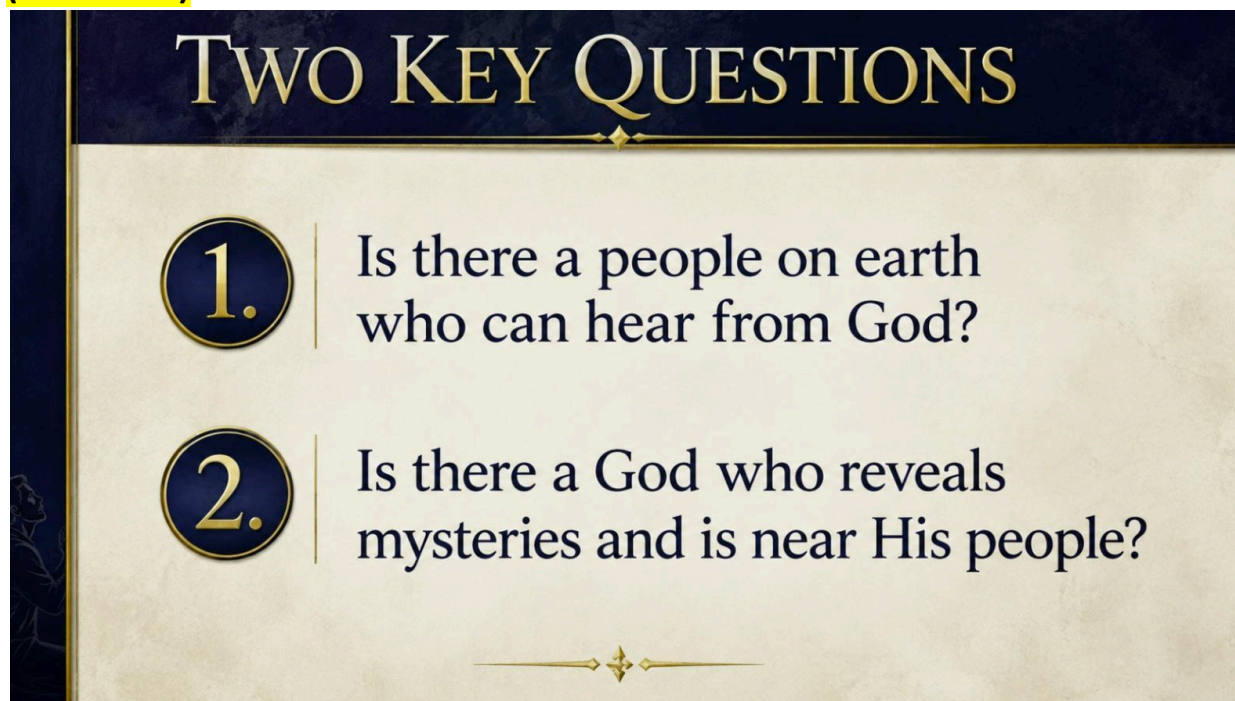
they can recount the dream, then he will know that their interpretation comes from a genuine supernatural source.

Ironically, the wise men are closer to the truth than they realize. They confess, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks." In one sense, they are absolutely correct. No man, by his own wisdom or power, can reveal mysteries. Yet what they declare impossible for man becomes the very opportunity through which God will reveal His power.

The issue is not whether there is a man on earth who can do this, but whether there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

Unknowingly, the wise men have just asked the two questions that get answered in the rest of the chapter.

(Read Slide)



The slide features a dark blue header with the title "TWO KEY QUESTIONS" in gold, serif, all-caps font. Below the header is a light beige background with a dark blue vertical bar on the left. Two questions are listed, each preceded by a gold circle containing a number. The first question is "1. Is there a people on earth who can hear from God?" and the second is "2. Is there a God who reveals mysteries and is near His people?". A decorative gold flourish is centered at the bottom of the slide.

TWO KEY QUESTIONS

1. Is there a people on earth who can hear from God?
2. Is there a God who reveals mysteries and is near His people?

The chapter ultimately answers both. Daniel and his friends receive revelation from God, proving that there is a people on earth who hear His voice. And through Daniel's confession ("there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries"), the chapter demonstrates that **God is not distant from His covenant people, even in exile.**

What appears to be a crisis for God's people is actually an opportunity for God to display the very thing that distinguished Israel from every other nation.

- o **Deuteronomy 4:7 (ESV)**

7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

In Babylon, surrounded by astrologers, magicians, and false prophets, God is about to answer that question again. The exile has not changed who He is. He is still the God who reveals mysteries, hears His people, and dwells among them.

Verses 12–14— The Decree and the Response

12 This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

13 So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah had already survived one national catastrophe. They had watched Jerusalem fall. They had been torn from their homeland, separated from their families, and carried into exile. Yet no sooner had they escaped one death sentence than another appeared.

Notice that they are not in danger because of some personal sin or failure. They are simply living in dark times.

- o **Psalms 116:5–6 (NIV)**

5 The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

6 The LORD protects the simple-hearted;
when I was in great need, he saved me.

Throughout Israel's history, this pattern repeats itself. Great need becomes the stage upon which God reveals a great Savior. Consider what the 13th-century Rabbi Ramban observed:

(Read Slide)

GREAT NEED = GREAT SAVIOR

“Precisely at the time where one king arises to pillage our possessions and destroy us, another shall arise to protect and save us... This is an important lesson for future generations.”

– Nachmanides, 13th Century Rabbi

From **Egypt**, where babies were slaughtered solely for being Jewish and God raised up Moses as a deliverer...

To **Babylon**, where Nebuchadnezzar's decree threatens the lives of God's people and God raises up Daniel...

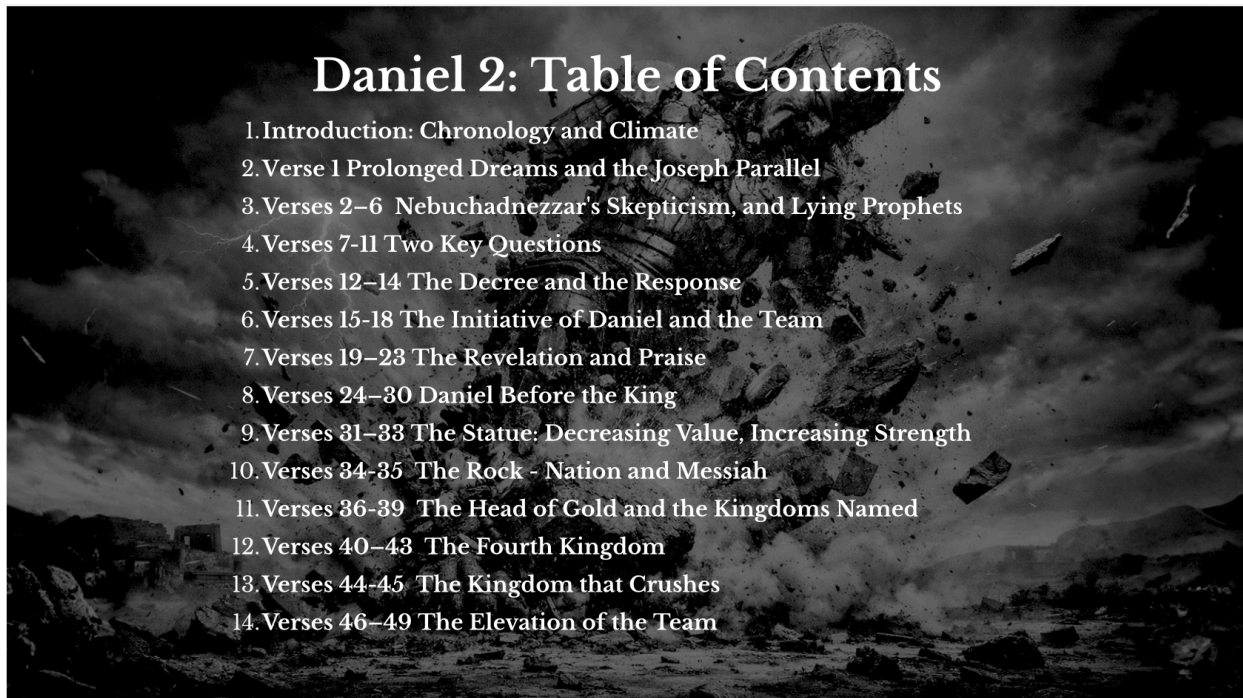
Later in **Persia**, Haman will issue an edict of annihilation—God will raise up Mordecai and Esther...

The solution to the dark dilemma always arises from the nation that God chose for Himself...

When reading Daniel, we often focus on Daniel as an individual. But Daniel is not standing alone. He is part of a faithful remnant. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah represent exactly what God intended Israel to become—a people formed by Torah, devoted to the Lord, and able to stand faithfully among the nations.

And remember: Daniel is still a young man. He has just completed his Babylonian training. Humanly speaking, he possesses neither position, authority, nor

influence. Yet God is about to use this teenage exile to reveal Himself before the most powerful king on earth.



14 When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

Put yourself in Daniel's shoes: the commander of the king's guard arrives at your doorstep to kill you. What do you do? Daniel responded with wisdom and tact. The word of God was living and active inside of him, and that is what came out under pressure.

Daniel had obviously been a student of the Tanakh, and his grace under pressure shows that the words of Psalm 19 are true in his life:

- o **Psalm 19:7–11 (NIV)**

7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
9 The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
11 By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

The crisis revealed the character that the Word of God had been forming in Daniel and his brothers. The word of God allows you to have grace in these situations where there is tremendous pressure and you must act righteously.

- o **Isaiah 50:4 (NIV)**

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

Daniel had the word of God living and active inside of him, so when there was a tremendous amount of pressure in his life in this situation, the word of God is what came out, the wisdom that was produced from the word, the tact that was a product of the word living inside of him. It's what came out in these times of tremendous treasure.

- o **Ecclesiastes 12:10 (NIV)**

10 The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

Notice the progression: he sought out the right words, and what he produced was upright and true. **What you cultivate in practice is what you produce in pressure.** Daniel had been living faithfully up to this point, and when pressure came, what came out of him was wisdom and tact.

- o **Proverbs 15:23–24 (NIV)**

23 A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—
and how good is a timely word!

24 The path of life leads upward for the prudent
to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

- o **Proverbs 25:11 (NIV)**

11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver
is a ruling rightly given.

When you consider that Daniel's response saved the lives of thousands, how could we not see those words as apples of gold in settings of silver?

This also highlights one of the great connections between Daniel 1 and Daniel 2. In chapter 1, Daniel and his friends chose faithfulness when the test seemed small. In chapter 2, they face a crisis where everything is at stake. What if they had not honored God in chapter 1? Would they even be alive now? Faithfulness in chapter 1 prepared them for faithfulness in chapter 2.

The courage displayed before Arioch was not created overnight. It was built through a thousand prior acts of obedience. The life Daniel and his brothers lived before the crisis prepared them for the crisis itself.

Success builds success. Faithfulness builds faithfulness. And when the moment comes that demands wisdom and courage, we rarely rise above our habits—we draw from them. Daniel's response in Babylon was simply the fruit of a life already rooted in God.

Verses 15–18 — The Initiative of Daniel and the Team

15 He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. 16 At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

Think about the initiative and confidence Daniel displays here. He is only about seventeen years old. He is either in the final stages of his three-year training or has just completed it. Furthermore, Scripture has not recorded him interpreting a single dream up to this point. Yet Daniel refuses to be intimidated by his apparent disadvantages. Instead, he boldly goes before the king and presents a solution.

What produced such remarkable confidence? Perhaps it began when he resolved to stand firm over something as seemingly ordinary as his diet in chapter 1. Because every word of God mattered to him, he obeyed even in a small matter—and God proved Himself faithful, causing Daniel and his friends to be found ten times better than all the others. Maybe that experience strengthened his faith and emboldened him to trust God for something far greater. Whatever the reason, Daniel demonstrates the kind of courageous confidence that every servant of God is called to display.

Notice something else as well. Daniel does not merely ask Arioch to relay a request to the king on his behalf. He goes before the king himself and asks for more time. Consider his request in light of the king's earlier words in this chapter:

- o **Daniel 2:8 (ESV)**

8 The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—

The king furiously accuses the wise men of trying to buy time and yet when Daniel approaches the king, he immediately asks for more time! Truly Daniel was a fearless man of God.

Daniel did not wait for someone else to step forward—he volunteered to save the situation. At only about seventeen years old, he took initiative when no one else was willing, and his courageous act ultimately spared countless lives.

Interestingly, many scholars believe David was about the same age when he stepped onto the battlefield to confront Goliath. While seasoned warriors stood

paralyzed by fear, David acted in faith and delivered Israel from a threat that no one else was willing to face.

The Bible consistently presents young people as capable of extraordinary faith and leadership. Yet our culture curses teenagers by treating them as perpetual children, encouraging them to spend their most formative years focused almost exclusively on sports, entertainment, and video games. Scripture sets a far higher expectation. It portrays young men and women who trust God, accept responsibility, and change the course of history through courageous obedience. If we expect our teenagers to walk in faith like Daniel and David, we may witness them impact thousands of lives for the kingdom!

17 Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 18 He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel's immediate actions were not withdrawing to a mountain alone to pray — but rather to involve his friends. This book is not only about Daniel, it is about the "good figs" in the exile, the Hebrew team that God Himself chose and formed. This is always what the nation of Israel was destined to be, a witness to God's glory in every situation! God's glory was not displayed by Daniel alone, but by a team of faithful Hebrew youths.

(READ SLIDE)

Daniel Worked In A Team

“You have made known to **US** the king’s matter. -
Daniel 2:23b

“This was the dream. Now **WE** will tell the king its
interpretation” - Daniel 2:36

Every part of this chapter suggests through the pronouns that all of them were present and working together although Daniel is the one credited with the words. This same principle is seen in the book of Acts when the text says that Peter and John spoke but only one sentence comes out.

- o **Acts 4:1 (NIV)**

4 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.

In the same way, in our text tonight, it seems likely that although Daniel is the one speaking, Hananiah Mishael, and Abednego are all there as well for the duration of the chapter.

1 Corinthians 2 shows us this same principle:

- o **1 Corinthians 2:15–16 (NIV)**

15 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 16 for,

“Who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?”

But we have the mind of Christ.

The scripture does not say, "I have the mind of Christ", it says, "we have the mind of Christ". We have been reading these passages in the singular for too long. Daniel did not seek God for this interpretation alone, and he did not interpret the dream alone. He put himself forward in faith, then ran to his brothers and said: "I believe God will answer **us**. Let **us** pray together." They collectively have the mind of Christ.

o **1 Timothy 4:15–16 (NIV)**

15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

There has never been a better time to be diligent as Daniel was, to devote yourself wholly to the Scriptures as Daniel did, and to watch your life and doctrine closely, persevering in them as Daniel did. Daniel's life—and the lives of his companions—hung in the balance. But aren't our lives on the line as well? And beyond that, you never know how much may be hanging on your obedience. If you did, you would want to work in a team.

The repeating pattern throughout the Word is that an unspeakable horror is befalling a situation, but there is one nation on earth that God has given revelation to that will save the situation. You Gentiles have come to share in that revelation — and now you must share in that responsibility as well.

Pop Quiz #3

How old is Daniel approximately in tonight's chapter?

- A.** 14
- B.** 17
- C.** 30
- D.** 20

Daniel 2: Table of Contents

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Verse 19–23 — The Revelation and the Praise

19 During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven **20** and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. 21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. 22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. 23 I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Something incredible happens here. Daniel put himself forward without knowing the answer, gathered his brothers to pray, went to sleep, and the Revealer of Mysteries showed him the very thing that would save their lives. That is exemplary faith — and he was a teenager. The words of Moses frame what is happening here:

- o **Deuteronomy 29:29 (NIV)**

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Adonai is about to reveal to Daniel and his friends the entire scope of Gentile history and its ultimate outcome under the dominion of God's Kingdom. Prior to this moment, a faithful Israelite could reasonably have expected the Kingdom to simply be restored after 70 years of exile — much as it had flourished under David and Solomon. What Daniel is about to learn is that far more lies ahead. Israel will pass through successive Gentile kingdoms before emerging victorious. This is a good passage to sit with if you have postmillennialist friends who expect the world to gradually improve until Christ returns — Daniel reveals something altogether different.

The first line of Daniel's praise is telling: *"He changes times and seasons."* Daniel has just been shown the Times of the Gentiles in advance, and his first response is to worship God for sovereign control over history itself.

Verse 23 returns us to the two key questions raised earlier in the chapter. *"You have made known to us the dream of the king"* — who is the "us"? Daniel and his friends. There is a people on earth that can hear from God. They are the same people given the Tanakh, the same people who honored it right down to their diet

in chapter 1 at the risk of their lives. This is the kind of people God was always after in the creation of Israel.

Verses 24–30 — Daniel Before the King

Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him." Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means." The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries..."

Notice in verse 24, Daniel went to Arioch. By the time they reach the king in verse 25, Arioch is already taking credit — "I have found a man." Anyone who has worked in a bureaucratic environment will be familiar with this kind of behavior.

What is so ironic about this is the juxtaposition between how careful Daniel is not to take credit for the revelation and Arioch's eagerness to claim credit for something he did not do. That contrast becomes important as we continue.

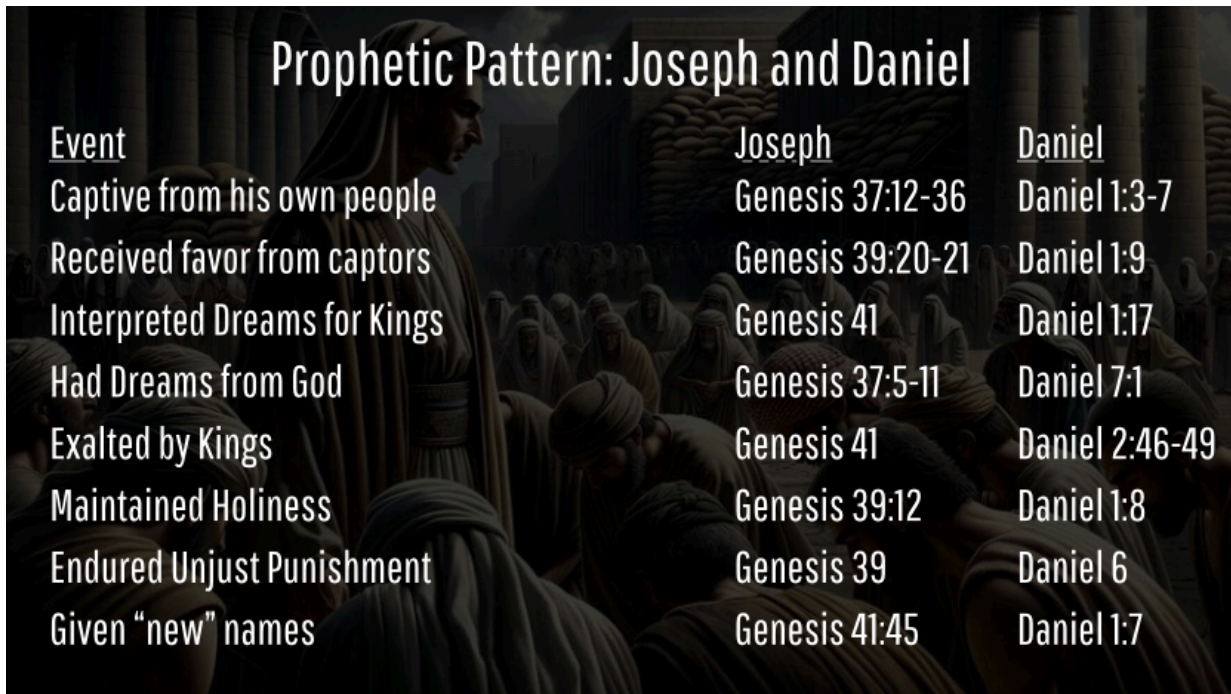
What was Daniel's very first word? "No." According to the Babylonians, Daniel's job description is "wise man" — and the first thing he does is deny that any wise man can do this. Then he immediately redirects to God. There is something special about men who study the Torah, draw near to the heart of God, and give what they have received as if they received it on behalf of the person standing in front of them.

Additionally, do you see another similarity with Joseph here?

- o **Genesis 41:15–16 (NIV)**

¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

As we stated earlier, the similarities between Daniel and Joseph are many:



Prophetic Pattern: Joseph and Daniel

<u>Event</u>	<u>Joseph</u>	<u>Daniel</u>
Captive from his own people	Genesis 37:12-36	Daniel 1:3-7
Received favor from captors	Genesis 39:20-21	Daniel 1:9
Interpreted Dreams for Kings	Genesis 41	Daniel 1:17
Had Dreams from God	Genesis 37:5-11	Daniel 7:1
Exalted by Kings	Genesis 41	Daniel 2:46-49
Maintained Holiness	Genesis 39:12	Daniel 1:8
Endured Unjust Punishment	Genesis 39	Daniel 6
Given "new" names	Genesis 41:45	Daniel 1:7

1. Captive from his own people — Joseph is sold by his brothers (Gen 37:12–36); Daniel is taken by Babylon in the first deportation (Dan 1:3–7). Same outcome, different cause (betrayal vs. conquest).
2. Received favor from captors — Joseph with the prison keeper (Gen 39:20–21), Daniel with the chief eunuch (Dan 1:9).
3. Interpreted dreams for kings — Joseph for Pharaoh (Gen 41) and Daniel for Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2).
4. Had dreams from God — Joseph's sheaves/stars dreams (Gen 37:5–11) and Daniel's four-beasts vision (Dan 7:1) — both their own God-given dreams.
5. Exalted by kings — Pharaoh elevates Joseph to second-in-command (Gen 41:39–43); Nebuchadnezzar bows to Daniel and makes him ruler (Dan 2:46–49).
6. Maintained holiness — Joseph refuses Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:12); Daniel refuses defiling food (Dan 1:8).
7. Endured unjust punishment — Joseph imprisoned on false charges (Gen 39); Daniel thrown to the lions over a political trap (Dan 6). Both innocent, both suffering for their integrity.

8. Given new names — Pharaoh renames Joseph Zaphenath-paneah (Gen 41:45); Babylon renames Daniel and his friends (Dan 1:7). Both empire-imposed.

It is not hard to imagine that Daniel is responding the way he is out of reverence for Adonai and also in reflection of Joseph — in faith that he too will receive favor from God in the courts of a Gentile king.

Verse 28 makes it clear that the vision is concerning "latter days" — *Acharit HaYamim* — and was given to Nebuchadnezzar for Nebuchadnezzar. This is a critical and often missed point: **God did not give the dream to Daniel. God gave the dream to Nebuchadnezzar**, presumably because He wanted Nebuchadnezzar to know it. The vision is Babylonian-centric rather than Jerusalem-centric — given to the king of Babylon while he was in Babylon.

This is similar to Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream in Egypt, about Egypt, not Jerusalem. This becomes particularly important as you interpret the rest of Daniel: chapter 2 is dealing with Babylon and the kingdoms that succeed it from Babylon's vantage point. It is not dealing with kingdoms that never ruled Babylon.

It would be easy to hear that perspective and quickly move on. But this perspective is essential to properly exegeting eschatological texts. This will be a topic discussed throughout Daniel — but considering the series on Exodus we have also done, it's worth drawing your attention to something easily conflated.



We have discussed in other studies the seven-headed beast that represents Gentile Powers. Tonight we are learning about a statue that represents Gentile Powers. So what is the difference — are they the same? This is where the matter of perspective comes into play. These are different visions from different vantage points.

The seven-headed beast described in Revelation 13 is from the vantage point of Israel and represents nations that have ruled over Israel. That is why in times past we have discussed it alongside Egypt, Assyria, and Rome.

The statue from Daniel 2 is from the vantage point of Babylon, and the criteria is different — only nations that have ruled over Babylon are in view. This will become more clear momentarily, but it is essential to our study that this principle of perspective be top of mind.



Pop Quiz #4

Which of the following is NOT a commonality between Joseph and Daniel?

- A. Both taken from their homes to Gentile lands during famine
- B. Given new names from Kings
- C. Had dreams with fulfillments in their lifetimes
- D. Suffered unjust punishment

Verses 31–33— The Statue: Decreasing Value, Increasing Strength

"You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue — an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay."

There is much to discuss as it relates to the dream and its interpretation. We are going to walk through this topic in light of PaRDeS.

PaRDeS: Levels of Interpretation



Peshat: plain, straightforward, simple meaning of the text. For Peshat remember the word **PLAIN**.



Remez: hints, symbolic meaning beyond just the literal sense of the text. For Remez remember the word **HINTS**.



Derash: compare, developing an understanding or concept from a study or comparison of similar occurrences. For Derash, remember the words **INQUIRE** through **COMPARISON**.



Sod: hidden, meanings that are understood through divine revelation or inspiration. For Sod, remember the word **HIDDEN**.



INTERPRETIVE CAUTION LEVEL

Ministry Training vol. 1 page 52-23

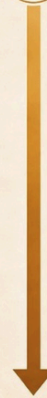
We will start with the plain and simple observations from the text, move to things hinted, then make comparisons to eventually discuss things hidden. Remember, as we move from Peshat to Sod, interpretive caution increases, since each level sits further from what the text plainly says — which is why Peshat should always anchor our findings.

STATUE OF DANIEL 2

1 ST		1 st Kingdom: Head of Gold
2 ND		2 nd Kingdom: Chest and Arms of Silver
3 RD		3 rd Kingdom: Belly and Thighs of Bronze
4 TH		4 th Kingdom: Legs of Iron; Feet of Iron and Clay



DECREASING
IN VALUE



INCREASING
IN STRENGTH



"The most obvious detail in the description of the metals — and yet the one most often overlooked — is the relationship between their intrinsic value and their earthly strength." As the metals descend from the head to the feet, their intrinsic value goes down while their earthly strength goes up.

STATUE OF DANIEL 2

1 ST		Gold ~Price per troy oz: \$4,000+
2 ND		Silver ~Price per troy oz: ~\$59
3 RD		Bronze (via copper) ~Price per troy oz: ~\$0.41
4 TH		Iron (ore) ~Price per troy oz: ~\$0.003



DECREASING
IN VALUE



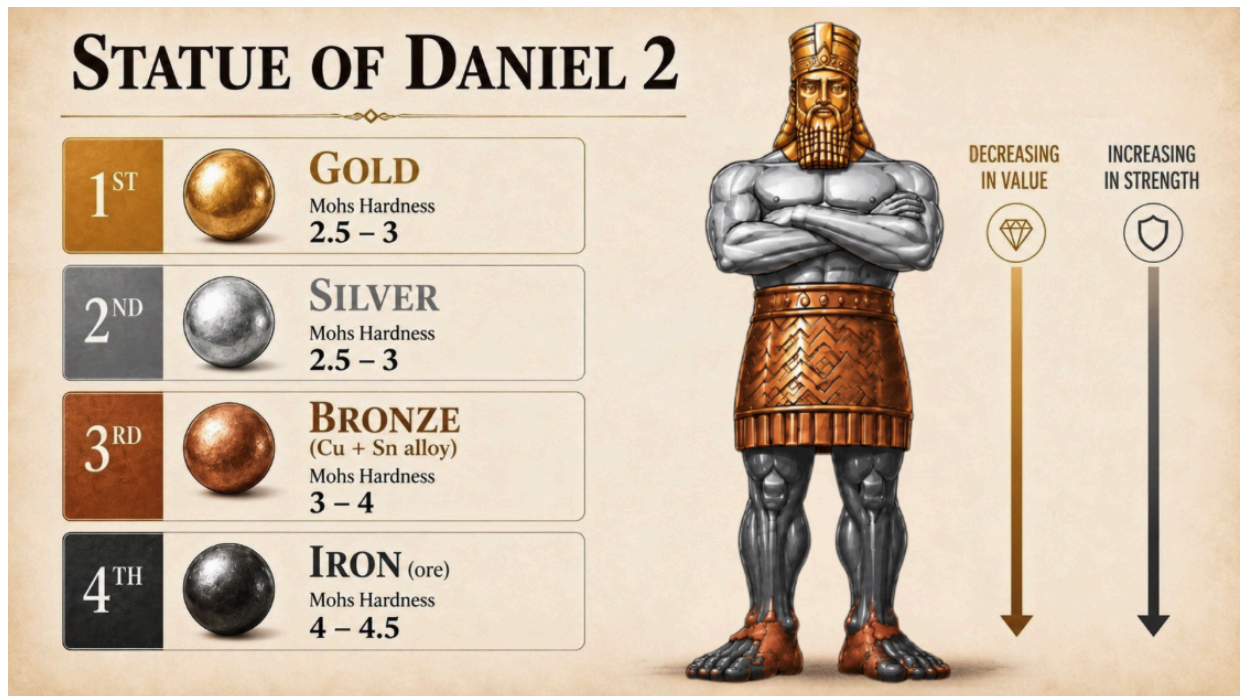
INCREASING
IN STRENGTH



Gold is the most valuable of the four materials. Here's where their value stands as of June 30, 2026:

1. **Gold:** ~\$4,007–4,028 per troy ounce
2. **Silver:** ~\$58–60 per troy ounce
3. **Bronze:** not traded directly as a commodity since it's a copper-tin alloy, not a pure element — but using copper (about 90% of bronze by weight) as the stand-in: **copper** is running ~\$6.02/lb, which works out to roughly **\$0.41 per troy ounce**
4. **Iron:** also not commonly quoted per troy ounce — iron ore (raw, ~62% iron content, not refined metal) is trading around **\$100–105 per metric ton**, which works out to a tiny fraction of a cent per troy ounce (~\$0.003)

Additionally, the pattern continues as it pertains to their strength.



Gold and silver sit at the bottom of the scale, both running 2.5–3 on the Mohs scale — essentially tied, and soft enough that a fingernail can scratch either one. That softness is part of why both were shaped into jewelry and ornament rather than tools or weapons. Bronze climbs to 3–4: alloying copper with tin doesn't just change the color, it locks the metal's structure together and makes it noticeably tougher than the pure copper it started as. Iron tops out the group at 4–4.5 — the hardest of the four, strong enough to hold an edge or frame a structure. Each

metal genuinely outlasts the one before it, in the very order the statue lists them, head to feet.

Each metal in the statue carries not only a statement about military strength but also a statement about divine value — and the two move in opposite directions as you descend from head to foot. We will discuss that in vivid detail when we discuss the interpretation.

What all of this should be showing you is the necessity to start with what is plainly stated in the text. We are going to show you how the whole work of Daniel lays out three of the four kingdoms, but this dream only presents one. Yet, before attempting to name the Empires that are represented in the statue, it is of greater importance to understand how they connect and what the plain understanding would have been to Nebuchadnezzar in his climate and context. Remember what we taught you in our introduction: *"People like to dissect the book of Daniel; what we would like you to do is **connect** the book of Daniel."*

These comparisons and divisions are not merely interesting facts but actually interpretive keys to properly understanding the Scripture.

Verse 34-35 The Rock — Nation and Messiah

34 While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

Christians reading Daniel 2 tend to jump immediately to the conclusion that the "rock" refers to Jesus — and it in a sense it does, but that is not the full picture. In order to truly understand the rock, we must FIRST understand it in the way the first audience would have understood it. Grounding it in the Peshat of what the first audience would have thought will provide solid ground for us to understand the further depth.

The rock becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth. The Messiah is certainly present in the image, but throughout Scripture, the King and His Kingdom are inseparable. The Messiah does not reign apart from a people; He reigns through the nation and kingdom that God established for Himself.

Daniel's thoughts would have been shaped by Isaiah's words:

- o **Isaiah 51:1–2 (NIV)**

51 “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness
and who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock from which you were cut
and to the quarry from which you were hewn;
2 look to Abraham, your father,
and to Sarah, who gave you birth.
When I called him he was only one man,
and I blessed him and made him many.

In Isaiah, the "rock" points back to Abraham and the supernatural origin of Israel, not to a figure 600 years in the future. God called one man, opened barren wombs, and brought forth a nation that did not exist before. Israel was not merely another nation among the nations listed in Genesis 10. It was a nation brought into existence by the direct intervention of God.

This is remarkably similar to Daniel's description of a rock "cut out, but not by human hands."

The phrase applies perfectly to the Messiah. His birth was supernatural. He was conceived by the Spirit and born of a virgin.

But the phrase also applies to Israel. The nation itself exists because of God's supernatural activity. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes of Israel all testify that this people came into being through God's power rather than human strength.

For this reason, it may be unwise to separate the Rock from the nation that the Messiah represents and rules. The King and the Kingdom share the same supernatural origin and the same divine purpose.

Also, notice that the rock strikes actual Empires.

Babylon was not a metaphorical kingdom. Neither were Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome. They were real nations exercising real dominion upon the earth. The rock destroys them and takes their place. Daniel is describing the replacement of one world order by another.

The prophets repeatedly describe this future reality.

- o **Micah 4:11–13 (NIV)**

11 But now many nations
are gathered against you.
They say, “Let her be defiled,
let our eyes gloat over Zion!”
12 But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
that he has gathered them **like sheaves to the threshing floor.**
13 “Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion,
for I will give you horns of iron;
I will give you hooves of bronze,
and you will break to pieces many nations.”
You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD,
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Who is the subject of the prophecy? Daughter Zion. Israel.

The nations gather against her, but God transforms her into the instrument of their judgment. The language is very similar to Daniel's vision. Nations are reduced to chaff upon the threshing floor, while Zion is established by the Lord.

This theme appears throughout the prophets. Take a look at the following slide for more examples that you can read at your own time.

(Do not read)

Israel Will Physically CRUSH Their Enemies

Daniel 2:44



NUMBERS 24:8

God brings him out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows.



ISAIAH 41:14-16

Behold, I make of you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff;



MICAH 4:13

Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; and shall devote their gain to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth.



ZECHARIAH 10:5

They shall be like mighty men in battle, trampling the foe in the mud of the streets; they shall fight because the LORD is with them, and they shall put to shame the riders on horses.



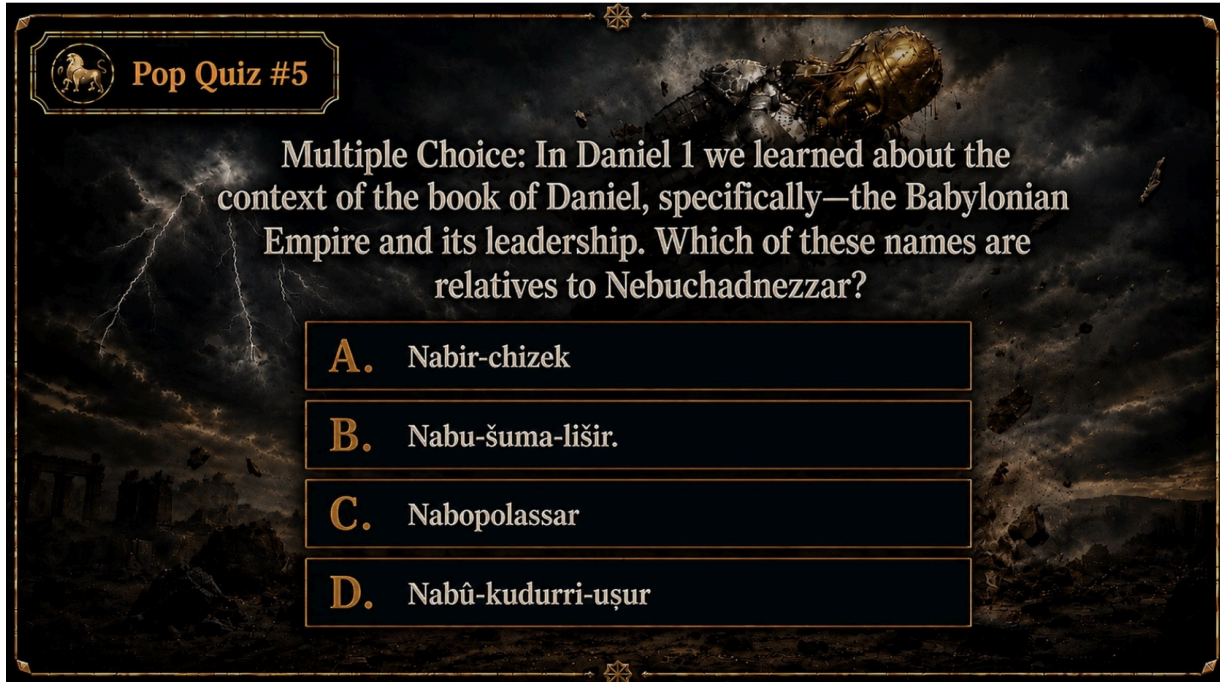
MALACHI 4:2-3

And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

All of the examples are about Israel physically crushing their enemies.

The destiny of the **metals** described is that they become worthless as chaff, leaving no trace of their former glory. The destiny of the **rock** is to be a mountain that fills the whole earth — better than the Solomonic age, not lesser than it.

This is not a diminished kingdom. It is not a spiritualized kingdom hidden away in the hearts of believers. It is the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, David, and Israel—a kingdom established by the Messiah that ultimately fills the earth with the knowledge of the Lord.



Pop Quiz #5

Multiple Choice: In Daniel 1 we learned about the context of the book of Daniel, specifically—the Babylonian Empire and its leadership. Which of these names are relatives to Nebuchadnezzar?

- A. Nabir-chizek
- B. Nabu-šuma-lišir.
- C. Nabopolassar
- D. Nabû-kudurri-ušur

Verses 36–39 — The Head of Gold and the Kingdoms Named

³⁶ “This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. ³⁷ Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; ³⁸ in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.

Daniel wants us to feel the shocking height of Nebuchadnezzar’s authority. This pagan Gentile king is called **“the king of kings,”** and Daniel says that **the God of heaven** gave him **dominion, power, might, and glory**. His authority was so vast that Scripture says mankind, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air were placed into his hand. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar did not merely rule Babylon; he was the head of gold. This was divinely initiated and announced through Jeremiah and Isaiah:

- o **Jeremiah 27:4–7 (NIV)**

- 4 Give them a message for their masters and say, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Tell this to your masters: 5 With my

great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. 6 Now I will give all your countries into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. 7 All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.

God Himself decided to make the biblical world subject to Nebuchadnezzar, initiating the "Time of the Gentiles" — in a similar fashion to the way God made the nations subject to David and Solomon in former times. This is the changing of seasons and times Daniel prayed about in verse 21.

- o **Luke 21:20–24 (NIV)**

20 “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. 23 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

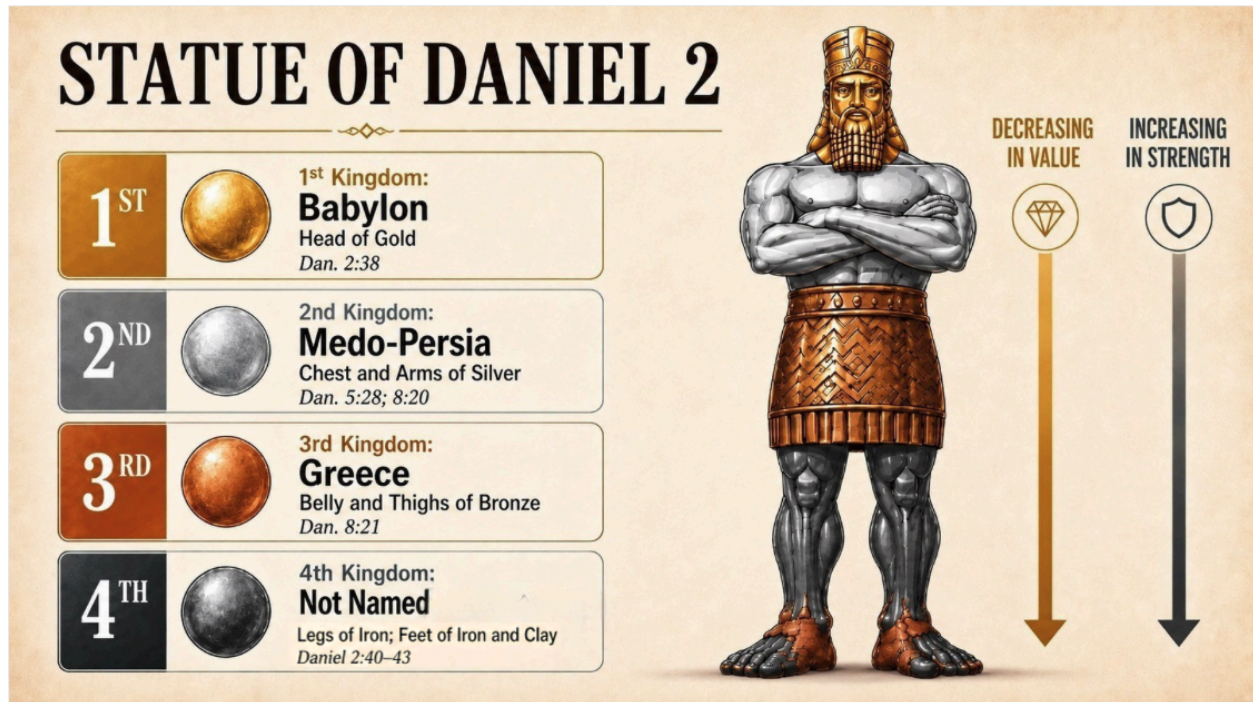
Jesus referred to this time period as "times of the Gentiles" and spoke of it as having a definite fulfillment in the future — meaning it would come to an end. Paul also spoke of it:

- o **Romans 11:25–27 (NIV)**

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
27 And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

The times of the Gentiles involves both their reigning in the world and their trampling of the people of God — but it is not binary. It also allows for Gentiles to be saved during the same period, much like Nebuchadnezzar will be in coming chapters. At the closing of this period, the prophets and apostles all point to the salvation and restoration of Israel. The first, second, and third kingdoms are identified by name within Daniel itself.



The first three kingdoms are identified within Daniel itself. The first kingdom, represented by the head of gold, is Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. Daniel says plainly to Nebuchadnezzar, “You are that head of gold” (Daniel 2:38). The second kingdom is Medo-Persia. This is made clear later in Daniel when Belshazzar is told, “Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians” (Daniel 5:28), and when Daniel 8 identifies the two-horned ram as “the kings of Media and Persia” (Daniel 8:20). The third kingdom is Greece, which Daniel 8 identifies through the shaggy goat: “The shaggy goat is the king of Greece” (Daniel 8:21).

This means that the first, second, and third kingdoms are not left to speculation. Daniel himself gives us the framework. Babylon is the head of gold, Medo-Persia follows Babylon, and Greece follows Medo-Persia. Each kingdom inherits the

dominion of the previous kingdom and rules the biblical world from the perspective of Babylon. For that reason, we should be careful not to read unrelated nations or empires into the image, especially if they never ruled Babylon. This prophecy was given to a Babylonian king, and each successive kingdom takes over the dominion represented by his kingdom.

Daniel then says, "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth" (Daniel 2:39). As the statue moves from gold to silver to bronze, the metals decrease in intrinsic value while the empires increase in outward strength and expansion. The pattern is not merely political; it is theological.

Babylon, represented by gold, stands at the apex of both. Nebuchadnezzar is the only Gentile ruler in the entire canon whom God explicitly calls "my servant" — three times in Jeremiah alone. He also received direct supernatural revelation through dreams, was personally interpreted to by God's own people, and ultimately came to genuine faith, publishing his testimony to the known world. Whatever his failures, there was something of divine investment and purpose in Nebuchadnezzar that no subsequent ruler would receive in the same measure. God was, in a real sense, working *with* him.

Medo-Persia, represented by silver, retains some of that divine dimension. Cyrus of Persia was named by Isaiah 150 years before his birth, and it was under Persian authority that the Jewish people were permitted to return to the land and rebuild. There is still something God is doing *through* this kingdom for His people, even if the kingdom itself is inferior in value to its predecessor.

Greece, represented by bronze, is further still from that divine engagement. Its contribution to God's redemptive purposes is more indirect — the Septuagint, the spread of a common language that would eventually carry the gospel — but there is no Gentile king of Greece who comes to faith, no edict of restoration, no letter sent to the world acknowledging the God of Israel.

By the time we reach the fourth kingdom, represented by iron, there is nothing left that came from God. No divine commission, no redemptive purpose served, no ruler who acknowledges the Most High. It is pure earthly power — stronger than anything that preceded it, and utterly without intrinsic value before God. The

progression is deliberate and sobering: as the kingdoms of men grow stronger, they grow emptier of God. The statue is most glorious at the top and most brutal at the bottom, which is precisely where the rock strikes it.

Verses 40–43 — The Fourth Kingdom

40 Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron — for iron breaks and smashes everything — and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. 41 Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. 42 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. 43 And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

This fourth kingdom has sparked debate and controversy for generations of Bible students. The temptation, as we mentioned earlier, is to immediately dissect and guess which historical entity is in view. This misses the actual point of the text. Now, our position is no mystery if you have been around for previous Foundation teachings and sermons. We certainly have opinions on who this is and believe they will play a vital role as a central antagonist in the coming conflict of nations and Israel. Yet to begin there would be a detriment to our study. Let's begin with what is plain.

STATUE OF DANIEL 2

1 ST		GOLD Mohs Hardness 2.5 – 3
2 ND		SILVER Mohs Hardness 2.5 – 3
3 RD		BRONZE (Cu + Sn alloy) Mohs Hardness 3 – 4
4 TH		IRON (ore) Mohs Hardness 4 – 4.5



DECREASING
IN VALUE



INCREASING
IN STRENGTH



The defining characteristic of the fourth unnamed empire: it will crush and break all others. This aligns with our earlier discussions about all the empires and their respective materials. This fourth empire is represented by iron, which does crush the other materials — as seen above on our slide. We also discussed how iron is far less valuable than the other metals.

STATUE OF DANIEL 2

1 ST		Gold ~Price per troy oz: \$4,000+
2 ND		Silver ~Price per troy oz: ~\$59
3 RD		Bronze (via copper) ~Price per troy oz: ~\$0.41
4 TH		Iron (ore) ~Price per troy oz: ~\$0.003



DECREASING
IN VALUE



INCREASING
IN STRENGTH



*As of: June 30, 2026

Thus, the first thing that should be on the reader's mind is that this fourth kingdom will have no value compared to the others and yet will be exceedingly stronger. This brings us to another simple Peshat observation — the feet are iron mixed with clay. What makes this so intriguing is that iron is incredibly strong, yet clay is brittle as the text describes. Thus, we should expect this empire to be exceedingly strong, yet also contain aspects that are very brittle.

Now, most commentaries and Bible students identify this as the Roman Empire. There are a myriad of issues with that conclusion, but what is most interesting is this — Daniel and the Holy Spirit intentionally obscured the identity of this empire.

Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and most every other prophet had no issue calling out specific details of future events as they were carried along by the Spirit. The Spirit knows exactly who this empire is, and yet the Word of God deliberately keeps it a secret — all the others are revealed plainly later in Daniel. Thus it is worth considering that if the Holy Spirit did not put special emphasis on this empire's identity, perhaps He is helping us focus on what He did tell us instead of what He chose not to. We will share our thoughts on this enigmatic kingdom in coming weeks, but for now we are cautioning you against making assumptions not delineated in the text. For now, let's simply walk through PaRDeS.

Here is what we know in the Peshat about this fourth empire:

- It comes after the other three
- It is of much less intrinsic value than the others
- It is much stronger than the others
- It is mixed with something brittle
- Its people will not be united
- It will crush and break the others

Let's explore some possible hints or Remez details of the fourth empire. The original language contains a verbal cue that could be speaking to the identity of this Empire.



The word translated "mixed" in Aramaic is *erav* — and the designation for the mixed peoples of Arabia is *Arab*. If you follow that verbal hint, Daniel 2:43 could be read:

"As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will be Arab and will thus not remain united, just as iron does not mix with clay."

We are not asserting this is definitely the correct reading, but it is a legitimate possible reading. This use of suggestive phrasing is not foreign to Daniel as the writing on the wall is interpreted using such wordplay; *mene mene tekel parshin*.

While that may seem to crack the code on the identity of this kingdom, it also brings in a whole host of additional questions:

- If they are Arab, is it predominantly Arab or do the Arabs mix with another people?
- What Arab peoples have conquered Babylon?
- Who are actual Arab peoples? Certainly not Romans, not Turks, not Russians.

What we hope to be showing you is how quickly a detail that is not plain can lead a well-meaning student to difficult-to-prove Sod interpretations and most likely

erroneous conclusions. But the exciting part for us all is that it always leads to more study.

Despite the numerous questions still unanswered, the word for "mixed" is certainly a Remez worth considering in our studies. And yet there is another possible rendering of what "mixed" is hinting at. Let's read verse 43 in a few more translations.



The King James says:

- o **Daniel 2:43 (KJV)**

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

The LSB says it similarly:

- o **Daniel 2:43 (LSB)**

And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay; they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not cling to one another, even as iron does not combine with clay.

The most striking is the LXX rendering:

- o **Daniel 2:43 (LES2)**

And as you saw the iron mixed up together with the clay of an earthen vessel, they will be comingled into the offspring of humans, and they will not be comingled in harmony nor will they be favorably inclined toward one another, even just as the iron is not able to be mixed with the clay of an earthen vessel.

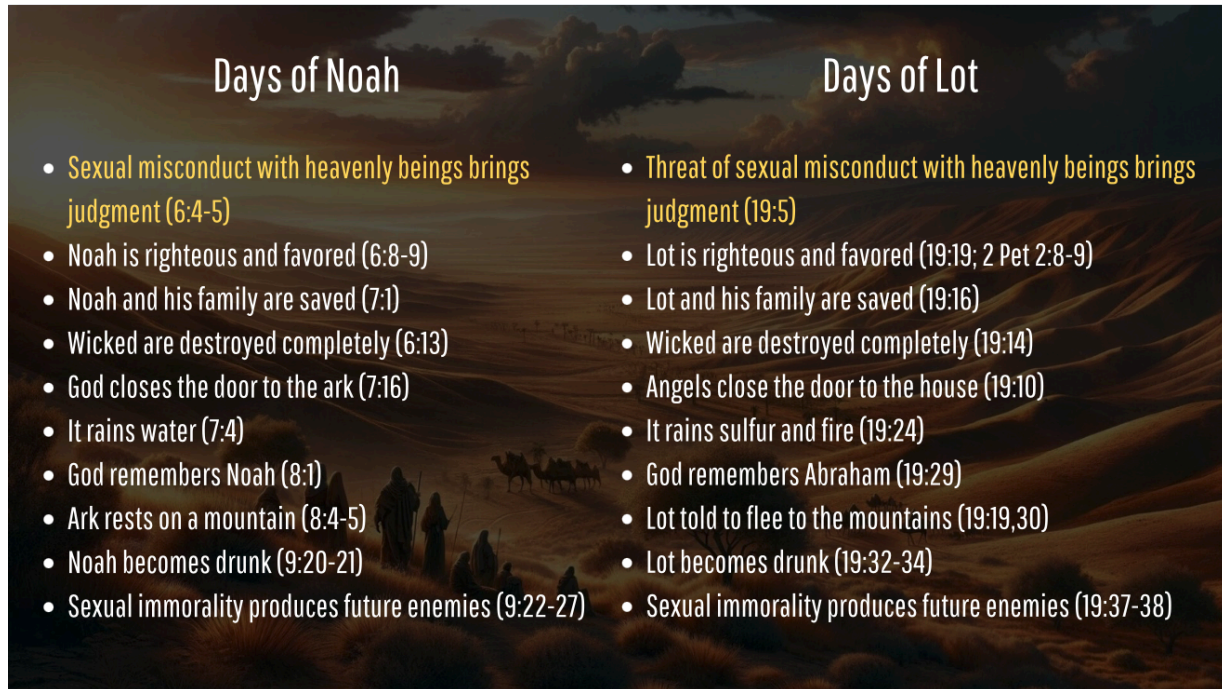
As these translations help us see — the phrase "the people will be a mixture" may in the original Aramaic allow for reading the fourth kingdom as involving a mixing of the seed of man with something that is not the seed of man.

This naturally leads us to a Derash — since this rendering would have dramatic implications for several New Testament passages, such as Jesus' statement in Matthew:

- o **Matthew 24:36–37 (NIV)**

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

This is not unlike the words of the Apostle Peter, who also compares the last days to the times of Noah and Lot. You should remember from Genesis what both of those times have in common — sexual immorality, or said another way, mixing with angelic beings.



This quickly becomes a Sod when you begin to compare these passages and consider the ramifications of what it could mean for the end days. We raise this as a minority position and do not assert it as definitive — but the text does allow it grammatically.

These revelations are not meant to be simple or easy to find. Once again, the Holy Spirit intentionally obscured the details. We are all standing on the shoulders of much prayer and study from men such as Pastor Eric and the whole of LCM, along with others like Joel Richardson. The reality is that no single passage can wholly decipher the mysteries of the future. After all, there are many other details about this last empire that must be considered when surveying all of the Bible, such as:

- The Northern Army in Joel 2, Ezekiel 38, and many more places
- Gog and Magog leading a coalition of nations in Ezekiel 38–39
- A great prostitute sitting on a beast in Revelation 17
- False prophets in Ezekiel 13
- The Assyrian in Micah 5 and Isaiah 1

These are just a few popular eschatological themes, but when you put them all together you can appreciate the complexity any interpreter and student must wrestle with. These topics bring greater light to the often-cited proverb:

o **Proverbs 25:2 (NIV)**

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;
to search out a matter is the glory of kings.



Verses 44–45 — The Kingdom that Crushes

44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

45 This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands — a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

This is where the vision switches from talking about the gentile beastly powers and begins discussing the kingdom of God! It is important to understand the Peshat of what this verse is saying.

(Do Not Read)

Four Peshat Truths From Daniel 2:44

- The Kingdom that the God of heaven sets up crushes and brings to an end the Gentile Powers
- The Kingdom is "In the time of those kings" meaning existent during their reign
- The Kingdom will never be destroyed, or given to another people. It will endure forever
- Every Kingdom discussed is real, physical, and tangible including God's Kingdom

1. The Kingdom that the God of heaven sets up crushes and brings to an end the Gentile Powers.

The kingdom does not gradually "win over" the gentile powers. The kingdom does not just sing gospel songs and hand out tracts until the gentile powers are destroyed. The kingdom that is coming will crush these gentile powers!

2. The Kingdom is "In the time of those kings" meaning existent during their reign.

This means that the kingdom is present and existent during the gentile powers, but its triumph comes later. The kingdom is present but not yet in its full crushing manifestation.

3. The Kingdom will never be destroyed, or given to another people. It will endure forever.

Notice how this will not be given to another people! What people is being spoken of here? Israel. This means that Israel will never be overcome by another people group.

Consider this when thinking about who the fourth empire is, because after the fourth empire, Israel will never be given to another!

4. Every kingdom discussed is real, physical, and tangible including God's kingdom.

Even Babylon, which is often spoken of in a mystical way, is being spoken of in a very tangible way in this passage. Nebuchadnezzar himself is called the head of gold, this cannot be spiritualized. If the four kingdoms in the statue are physical kingdoms, what grounds do we have to suggest the kingdom represented by the stone is not physical?

This prophecy about a physical kingdom being established for Israel could be the background for the apostles question in Acts 1:6-7.

- o **Acts 1:6–7 (ESV)**

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

Notice what Jesus does not say: he does not say "the kingdom is in your hearts, stop thinking about a physical kingdom." He says it is not for them to know the *timing*. They were reading the book of Daniel and looking for a tangible kingdom to appear and crush the gentile kingdoms surrounding them — namely Rome — and Jesus did not say they were wrong to expect it. He said the timing was not theirs to know.

What we are missing as Christians through over-allegorizing is that we think the kingdom is here in some mystical sense. The apostles did not think that. They were waiting for its actual physical establishment.

Consider these tangible physical kingdom scriptures:

- o **Isaiah 60:18–22 (ESV)**

18 Violence shall no more be heard in your land,
devastation or destruction within your borders;

you shall call your walls Salvation,
and your gates Praise.

19 The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give you light;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

20 Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.

21 Your people shall all be righteous;
they shall possess the land forever,
the branch of my planting, the work of my hands,
that I might be glorified.

22 The least one shall become a clan,
and the smallest one a mighty nation;
I am the LORD;
in its time I will hasten it.

God tells Israel that violence will no more be in their LAND or destruction within their BORDERS. Endless glamorization of these verses eventually just makes the promises not true at all. God is a faithful God who keeps his promises and will give Israel safety within their own physical land!

- o **Jeremiah 31:38–40 (ESV)**

38 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. 40 The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever.”

If someone argues that the restoration promises of the Tanakh are fulfilled exclusively in a "spiritual Israel," consider asking why Jeremiah includes such precise geographical details. Where is the "spiritual Horse Gate"? Why identify the restoration as extending from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate? What purpose is served by describing specific landmarks, valleys, gates, and boundaries if none of them are intended to refer to a real place?

The natural reading of the text is that God is promising the restoration of an actual city with identifiable locations. The precision of the prophecy invites us to expect a physical fulfillment, not merely a symbolic one. The kingdom of God will not be an abstract spiritual reality alone; it will be manifested on the earth. The Messiah will reign from Jerusalem, and the covenant promises God made concerning Israel will be fulfilled just as He declared.

- o **Ezekiel 37:25–28 (ESV)**

25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."

This prophecy was given only a short time after Daniel 2 and helps clarify what the establishment of God's kingdom will actually look like. Israel will dwell securely in her own land, together with her children and grandchildren, forever. God's dwelling place will be in her midst, His covenant promises will be fulfilled, and His holy name will be fully vindicated before the nations.

This is the kingdom represented by the Stone in Daniel 2—the kingdom that crushes the kingdoms of the world, fills the whole earth, and endures forever.

- o **Amos 9:14–15 (ESV)**

14 I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel,

and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine,
and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit.

15 I will plant them on their land,
and they shall never again be uprooted
out of the land that I have given them,"
says the LORD your God.

The truth is that we could go on with scriptures about this very topic for hours. The scriptural witness is abundantly clear, the kingdom of God will be the kingdom of Israel established in the last day, along with the gentile graft ins. This is how the first audience would have thought of this verse.

These are not ethereal descriptions. They are tangible, physical, geographical realities — a city with real gates and walls, a land with real vineyards, a people ruling forever. No Hebrew prophet ever described the kingdom as flying away to the clouds. That is an invention of a much later period.

Notice also that Daniel's interpretation calls the rock a kingdom, not an individual. This rock is first and foremost the Kingdom of Israel. Just as the head of gold represents Babylon, but Daniel says it is also Nebuchadnezzar, so too, the crushing rock is the kingdom of Israel AND its Messiah, Jesus.

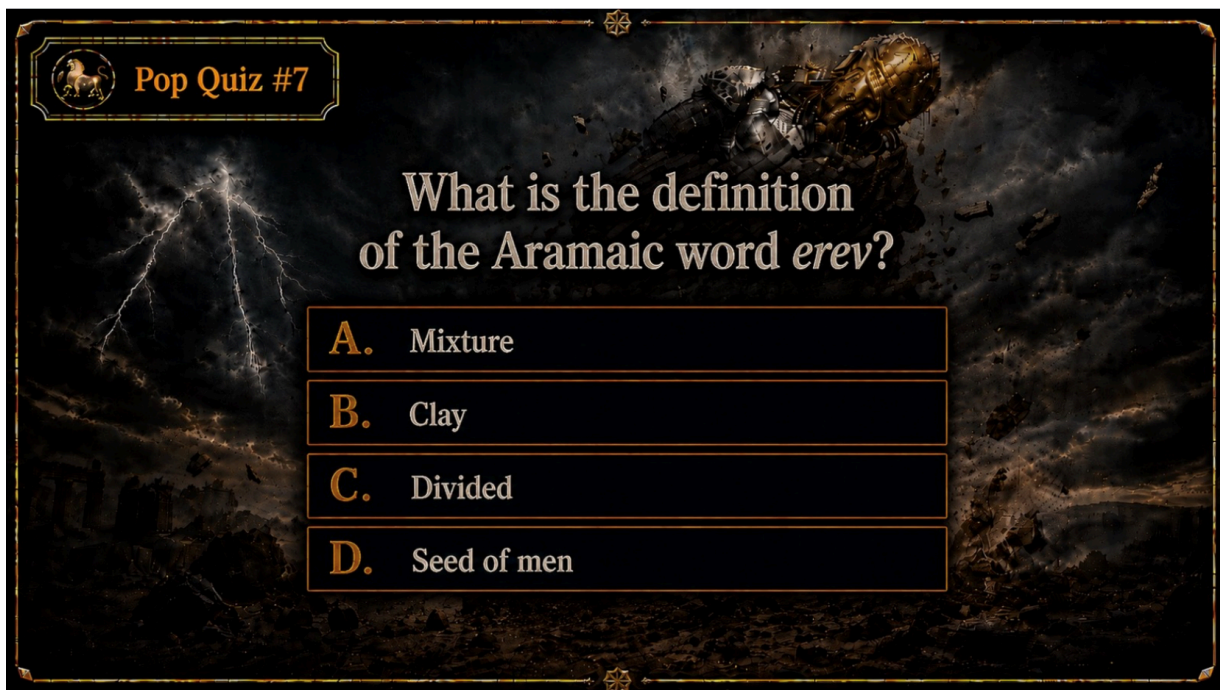
This Stone is "cut out without hands"—it is God's work, not man's. That is true of Jesus, who was miraculously conceived and born of a virgin. It is also true of Israel, whom God supernaturally brought forth as a nation out of Egypt. Both the King and the kingdom owe their origin to the sovereign work of God rather than to human effort.

Before moving on, it is important to make a few observations:

- The stone becomes a mountain suddenly, not gradually. Christianity did not suddenly fill the whole earth at Christ's first advent.
- Although Christ came during the days of the Roman Empire, He did not destroy it.

- During Christ's earthly ministry, the Roman Empire was not ruled by ten kings simultaneously. Yet Nebuchadnezzar's statue indicates that when the Messiah comes to establish His kingdom, ten rulers will be in existence and will be overthrown together.
- Christ is presently the chief cornerstone of the church (Ephesians 2:20) and the stone over which unbelievers stumble (1 Peter 2:8). He has not yet appeared as the crushing Stone of Daniel 2—a role He will fulfill at His second coming.

The Stone of Daniel 2 does not merely influence the kingdoms of this world—it crushes them, bringing them to an end before filling the whole earth. That has not yet occurred. Likewise, the church is never described as conquering the kingdoms of the world through political dominion. Rather, the Messiah Himself will establish His kingdom, and His people will reign with Him. The Israel of God will triumph because of the victory of her King, and that triumph will be expressed in a real, earthly kingdom. This is precisely what the millennial reign describes.



Verses 46–49 — Nebuchadnezzar's Response and the Elevation of the Team

Daniel 2:46–47

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

People have made too much of this passage in negative directions.

But verse 47 interprets verse 46: out of Nebuchadnezzar's own mouth comes *"Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries."* Daniel's earlier refusal to take credit for the interpretation, combined with Nebuchadnezzar's words here, leaves no doubt about what is happening. Whatever Nebuchadnezzar brought as an offering — whether to Daniel or through Daniel to his God — the heart of the scene is a Gentile king acknowledging the God of Israel.

For the first time in the book, the greatest king on earth publicly confesses the greatness of the God of Israel and Isaiah predicted this:

- o **Isaiah 49:7 (ESV)**

7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, **and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD**, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

These Jews — these four good figs living in captivity — are foreshadowing what will happen with the whole nation. They are righteous Israel, standing on the word of God and obeying His will. It is a small picture of what will happen in the end, when many kings will acknowledge that the God of the Jews is indeed God over all.

The exile had not nullified God's promises. Israel may have fallen, but God's purposes had not.

One of the great themes of Daniel is that Gentile kings repeatedly discover that the God of Israel remains King over them.

48 Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. 49 Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

Jews in a terrible position are elevated to prominence for doing nothing other than honoring and revering their God. And Daniel alone was not elevated — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were also elevated, placed in two specifically different localities.

That becomes important as we move forward into chapter 3. The standout star of this chapter is not merely Daniel the individual, but the Hebrew team that God formed — the good figs, the true Israelites. When you honor the Tanakh of God and long for Messiah, you will rise to positions of prominence in the land, because the kingdom that is taking over the whole world is not any Gentile power. It is the kingdom of the God who reveals mysteries to those who seek Him.

The chapter closes with an image that points beyond Daniel himself. Daniel serves a king, yet ultimately proves wiser than the king. Daniel stands before earthly power, yet possesses knowledge that earthly power cannot obtain. Daniel appears to be the servant, yet by the end of the chapter the ruler of the world is lying prostrate before him.

This reminds us of the words of Jesus:

- **Luke 22:24–30 (NIV)**

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one

on me, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus taught His disciples that greatness in the Kingdom does not look like greatness among the nations. The kings of the Gentiles rule through power and position. God's Kingdom advances through faithful service.

Daniel is a perfect representation of what Christ is talking about. Nebuchadnezzar is the man at the table...and Daniel is the one who serves...and clearly he is the one who is ruling and has all the information at the moment. At the end of this chapter the man who was at the head of the table is laying prostrate before the one who serves.

Daniel did not stand alone. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah stood with him. They prayed together, sought mercy together, and faced death together. Because they shared in the trial, they also shared in being exalted. The same principle remains true for YOU today. Those who remain faithful through trial will share in the kingdom that God has promised. The God who reveals mysteries will ultimately exalt the faithful and establish His Kingdom over all the kingdoms of the earth.

This chapter began with a troubled king and the Hebrew people in exile. It ends with the God of heaven acknowledged by the nations and His faithful servants elevated in the kingdom of men.