

The Dream Explained

Daniel 2:24-49

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Daniel 2:1-23 Summary: King Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream causing him to demand that his wise men reveal the meaning to him. He tested them in them having to reveal the dream to him as well or be killed.

- He knew that on the correct interpretation could only come from one who was close enough to the Dream Giver that he'd know the dream without being told.
- Daniel & his compatriots prayed that God would help them in this impossible situation. And He did!

What applications can be made to the here and now?

- God works best in humanly impossible situations
- Crises do not make the man, they reveal the man
- Getting others involved is part of earnest intercessory prayer.

Daniel 2:24-30 – Daniel Gives Glory to God

²⁴ Therefore Daniel went 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; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation." ²⁵ Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation." ²⁶ The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" ²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ²⁹ As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. ³⁰ But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

What did Daniel do with this "secret" knowledge God revealed to him?

He went to the executioner Arioch to tell him not to destroy the wise men because he knew the dream and its interpretation. And Arioch took him before the king.

Do you think the court magicians and astrologers ever thanked Daniel for saving their lives?

Probably not, jealousy is a powerful emotion.

How did Daniel respond to the king when he questioned whether he was "able" to describe the dream along with interpret it?

Daniel acknowledged that to do this was impossible for men no matter how wise they were, but there is a God in heaven who could.

What do we learn of Daniel's character in his comments about God revealing secrets to him?

Daniel demonstrated honesty and integrity by not taking credit for knowing what God revealed to him.

- He made clear that God revealed it to him in a vision, not for his own sake but for the sake of his brethren and companions, who by their prayers helped him know the dream and its interpretation, so their lives might be saved from death.

Daniel 2:31-35 – The Dream

³¹ "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. ³² This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

So, what was the dream?

What Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was a giant Statue of a man representing five kingdoms which would become the future world empires.

- The "Head" was of Gold (the richest metal)
- The "Chest and Arms" were of silver (the next to gold in worth)
- The "Belly and Thighs" were of brass (still baser metal)
- The "Legs" were of iron (strongest of all the metals)
- The "Feet" were part Iron and Clay (Last Empire to be weakened by a mixture of strong iron and weak clay)

Daniel also saw a stone, not cut out by human hands, strike the statue on the feet and destroy them, thus causing the statue to fall and be totally destroyed

- The image became like chaff and was blown away!
- The “stone” however became like a giant mountain and filled the earth... the mountain symbolizes a kingdom

Why was it important that Daniel accurately reveal the dream?

It was necessary to Daniel to accurately report the content of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in order for him to have credibility when explaining the dream’s interpretation.

Daniel 2:36-45 – The Interpretation of the Dream

³⁶ “This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. ³⁷ You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸ and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. ³⁹ But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. ⁴¹ Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. ⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. ⁴³ As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. ⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

What was the interpretation of the dream?

The image represented the kingdoms of the earth that would successively rule the nations of the world (from Israel’s perspective)

What does the gold head represent?

Babylon

- represents absolute power with great wealth
- The Babylonian dynasty was from 626 – 539 BC King Nebuchadnezzar reigned 43 years, His son served as regent during his father’s seven years of madness. King

Nabonidus was ruling from Arabia when Babylon was captured in 539 BC (Total of 87 years)

What does the silver chest and arms represent?

Medo-Persia

- “Inferior” meaning that the successor would not be so rich, powerful, or victorious as the Babylonian Empire
- The kingdom was founded by Darius the Mede and by Cyrus the Persian
- This monarchy lasted 208 years (538 – 330 BC)
- Cyrus was named in prophecy by Isaiah more than a century and a half before he was born (Isaiah 44:28)
- Cyrus authorized the return of the Jewish captives to Israel (Ezra 1:1-4)

What does the bronze belly and thighs represent?

Greece

- The Grecian monarchy was founded by Alexander the Great, who conquered Darius, the last of the Persian Emperors
- This kingdom of brass was inferior to the Persian monarchy in wealth and extent of dominion
- Alexander boasted that he had conquered the world, and then he sat down and wept because he had not another world to conquer. He was 33 years old when he died.
- Alexander’s Empire was divided between his four Generals
- The Grecian Empire lasted 185 years (330 - 146 BC)
- The Hebrew Bible was translated into “koine” (everyday) Greek, known as the Septuagint (for 70 translators) was completed in 165 BC.

What does the iron legs represent?

Rome

- The Roman kingdom was strong as iron, defending itself against many enemies for ages
- In 364 A.D., Roman Emperor Constantine split the Roman Empire into East and West divisions with Rome the Western capital. The Goths defeated Rome in 476 AD.
- Constantinople (Turkey) became capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and morphed into the Byzantine Empire which was defeated by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 AD

What is significant about the metals in the stature?

The metals depreciate in value as does the power:

- Gold: Babylon was an absolute autocracy.
- Silver: Persia, a monarchical oligarchy with the nobles equal to the king in all but office

- Brass: Greece had still lower value of its aristocracy of mind and influence...
- Iron: Rome, a democratic imperialism, with military dominion dependent upon the army and citizenry and administered in the spirit of martial law.

What does the iron & clay feet represent?

The “Western Christian” and Eastern Muslim” nation-states that exist today

- Formed from the break-up of the Western Roman & Eastern Ottoman legs of the original Roman empire

What does the iron & clay toes represent?

The future empire of the Antichrist

- The “toes” correspond to the 10 horns of the “fourth beast” in Dan 7:23-24

What does the continuity of the iron in the feet and toes represent?

The Roman empire did not completely go away; it just fragmented into nation states that alternately cooperates and clashes with each other.

How is it that the iron and clay is mixed?

- Westerners have enclaves in Eastern nations as Easterners (Muslims) have enclaves in Western nations
- In general, Easterners and Westerners do not assimilate into each other’s cultures, they do not mix despite there being plenty of mixed marriages where one spouse has to essentially convert to the culture of the other for the marriage to work.

What does it mean, “they will mingle with the seed of men”?

- Another way to ask this question is, who is the “they”? This points back to the iron and clay kingdoms; while individual members of these kingdoms intermarry, their cultures will not mix.
- Some say that the “they” refers to demons mixing it up with mankind as what happened during Noah’s day and expected to happen again in the end times, “*as it were in the days of Noah.*” Yes, demons will mix it up with mankind but this isn’t a reference to that...
- It is a category error to consider the clay to represent anything other than a Gentile kingdom that ruled over Jerusalem. (Same as all the other materials in the statue.)

What is this kingdom that will never be destroyed?

It is the Kingdom of Christ that will begin when Jesus returns to establish His Millennial Kingdom. This Kingdom will be superseded with the Eternal State when the 1,000 years are complete.

What is the significance of the stone not cut with human hands?

It represents a government that is of God, it is not of men.

Daniel 2:46-49 – Daniel and His Friends Promoted

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” ⁴⁸ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

How did King Nebuchadnezzar respond to Daniel’s interpretation of his dream?

- Nebuchadnezzar believed the interpretation because Daniel correctly described what the King dreamed
- Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that Daniel’s God is the God of gods and Lord of lords.
- Nebuchadnezzar was so moved that he fell on his face and worshiped Daniel!

What reward did Daniel receive for interpreting the king’s dream?

- The king promoted Daniel to a high position in the government and lavished him with gifts.
- Daniel was the leader over the entire province of Babylon and in charge of all the “wise” men
- Daniel’s companions were also promoted
- The positions of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego allowed them to help and support their fellow captives and perhaps even help those Hebrews still in Israel

What impact do you think that Daniel ruling over the “wise” men have on them?

Some no-doubt were converted as seen by the wise men from Persia who sought out the Messiah when Jesus was born. But most likely doubled down on their occultic idolatry... pride is a powerful emotion that leads to destruction.

What applications do we see in this story today?

- Only God can declare the end from the beginning
- Today’s geopolitical situation sets the stage for the coming iron & clay toe global government.