

October 4, 2020

THE CRUSHING STONE

Daniel 2

Daniel 2:1-13 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. ²Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters (*soothsayers*), the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. ³And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.” ⁴Then the Chaldeans said to the king **IN ARAMAIC**, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” ⁵The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. ⁶But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.” ⁷They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.” ⁸The 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— ⁹if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.” ¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. ¹¹The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” ¹²Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. ¹³So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

v. 2 magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and Chaldeans- various pagan religious positions in their society

v. 10 “not a man on earth”- dramatic irony anticipates Daniel's God-given wisdom

v. 11 “the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh”- they believed they could not directly communicate with gods. They could only attempt to interpret the gods' intentions through various methods of divination, manipulation of “sacred” items, or interpretation of signs (like dreams or stars). Ezekiel 21:21 gives an example

The Main Point: The pagan clergy cannot reveal the king's dream or the interpretation because they have no access to their gods. Daniel and Israel have a God who dwelt with His people at the tabernacle (Ex. 29:45-46; 40:35; 2 Sam. 15:25; 1 Chr. 23:25) and later at the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:10-13; Pss 68:16, 18; etc.). Ultimately God came to dwell among us as the Word made Flesh (John 1:14; Col. 1:15-19). This God *does* communicate with His people and reveals to them great mysteries.

Daniel 2:14-23 ¹⁴Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁵He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. ¹⁶And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king. ¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

²¹He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings;

he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

²²he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

²³To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter."

v. 14 "captain of the king's guard"- the executioner in this scenario

v. 16 the dialogue is not included, but possibly the king gave Daniel the time he would not give the others because Daniel did not challenge the request to provide the dream's content as well as interpretation

v. 17 their faithful names are used!

v. 18 "God of heaven"- this phrase mainly used by Israelites when speaking to Gentiles or when Gentiles speak about Israel's God

vv. 20-23- This is a wonderful prayer of thanksgiving, blessing God for revealing this mystery

1) God has all the wisdom and might, thus He deserves our blessing and praise

2) God grants wisdom, knowledge, revelation, and power where He sees fit

3) God deserves thanks for this specific revelation to Daniel on behalf of the king

The Main Point: "God's grace in providing the revelation is so great that it rescues not only the four young Judean men, but also the wise men of Babylon." (A. Steinmann, *Daniel: Concordia Commentary*, p. 123)

Daniel 2:24-30 ²⁴Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.”

²⁵Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: “I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.” ²⁶The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?” ²⁷Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, ²⁸but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ²⁹To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. ³⁰But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

v. 25 “I have found”- Arioch tries to take credit for what will transpire

“among the exiles from Judah”- He refers to Daniel with his lowly status rather than with his position

v. 27 “wise men”- the general class which includes “enchanters, magicians, or astrologers”

“No...can show”- Daniel does here tell the king that the professionals cannot do what he asked

v. 28 “there is a God in heaven”- Daniel contradicts the wise men’s claim about God’s accessibility

“**in the latter days**” in the OT this phrase nearly always refers to the End Times, the Age of Christ

In the NT, the “latter days” phrase refers to the present age as the End Times. The End Times begins with the coming of Jesus Christ, His ministry, death, and resurrection. And the End Times continues until His return (Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; James 5:3; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 Jn 2:18; Jude 18)

v. 30 “has been revealed to me...” Daniel is not being humble so much as honest

“so that you may know” God’s revealed Word is given that Nebuchadnezzar may hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the King who will endure forever

Daniel 2:31-45 ³¹“You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³²The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶“This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. ³⁷You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, ³⁸and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. ³⁹Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. ⁴¹And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. ⁴²And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, (***by the seed of men***) but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. ⁴⁴And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

- v. 34 “cut out by no human hand”- this stone has divine origin- see Mark 14:58; 2 Cor 5:1; Col 2:11
- v. 35 “like the chaff...wind carried them away”- the mightiest of empires are blown away by God with ease
“the stone...became a great mountain” – Christ and His rule through the Church on Earth
“filled the whole earth”- the kingdoms claim this authority, God’s Stone/Mountain will have it!
- v. 37 “God... has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory”- God’s to give/take away
“making you rule over them all”- God establishes the earthly rulers (Romans 13:1-7)
- v. 43 the fourth kingdom is quite diverse in ethnicity through marriages
- v. 44 “a kingdom that shall never be destroyed”- unlike their mighty kingdoms which totter and fall
“it shall stand forever” – No worldly power, not even death can end this kingdom
- v. 45 “cut ***from the mountain***” the stone not only becomes a mountain, but was cut from it (***Micah 5:2!***)
Head of Gold → Babylonian Empire (Nebuchadnezzar and son)
Chest of Silver → Media-Persian Empire (Cyrus the Great)
Middle of Bronze → Greek Empire (Alexander the Great)
Mixed Clay/Iron → The Roman Empire (Mt 28:18-20)
Jesus identifies himself as this crushing rock, combining Isaiah 8:14-15; 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 with Daniel 2 (Luke 20:17-18)

Daniel 2:46- 49 ⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. ⁴⁷The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” ⁴⁸Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

- v. 47 “your God is God of gods”- Nebuchadnezzar is still a polytheist
“Lord of kings”- Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges this God’s authority (Rom. 13)
“a revealer of mysteries”- Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges Daniel’s confession of faith
- v. 48 This is one of the differences between Daniel and Joseph (from Genesis), Daniel has colleagues that he remembers and lifts up alongside him. Joseph was alone and abandoned for much of that story

The Main Point: “The one true God was reaching out to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians and calling them to repentance and faith in him. Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar does not fully grasp nor believe the Gospel told to him in this dream and in its interpretation by Daniel...The crushing of the statue symbolizes that the messianic kingdom will supersede all other ‘worldwide’ kingdoms. It will be the first and last truly universal or catholic kingdom. Unlike the pretensions of the other kingdoms, it will actually fill the entire earth.” (A. Steinmann, p. 138, 141)