

DANIEL: The True Kingdom Daniel 2ⁱ

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! For those of you that are guests, we want to say a special welcome to you. My name is Chris Wigley, and I serve as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. And whether you are in the room or you are joining us online, we are excited to have you today. And on behalf of our church family, and our staff team, we say welcome you today.

I would love the opportunity to connect with you. You can simply text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. You will then be prompted to click on a link that will provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you. And here's my promise to you... we will not bombard your inbox. Again, we would love the opportunity to connect with you and to pray for you.

We are in the middle of a teaching series working our way through the Old Testament book of Daniel. So far, we have looked at the way Daniel chose to live and comparing that to the culture of his day. Then we took a look at what it meant to live as a person of conviction. Today, we are going to examine chapter 2 as we look at "The True Kingdom."

I want to invite you to turn with me in your copy of God's Word to the book of Daniel. Daniel is in the Old Testament between the books of Ezekiel and Hosea. If you do not have a bible with you this morning, there is a bible located on the seat rack in front of you. If you need a bible, feel free to take that as a gift to you today. For the vast majority of those bibles, Daniel is located on page 620.

A couple weeks ago, I mentioned that Daniel can be divided into two major parts. There are the historical events that take place and are recorded and there are prophecies. I also mentioned that the prophecies can be further subdivided into those that have been fulfilled and those yet to be fulfilled. Today, in Daniel chapter 2, we are going to see all three of those categories. We are going to examine an event, king Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we are going to see that his dream revealed a prophecy in which some of that prophecy has been fulfill and some of it is yet to be fulfilled.

OPENING ILLUSTRSTION: Dreams

How many of you have ever had a dream that woke you up in the middle of the night? That happened to me this week. I won't bore you with the details, but I woke up completely freaked out. It was one of those dreams where you wake up and you are in go mode. Anyone know what I'm talking about?

According to an article published by Advanced Sleep Medicine Services, "Everyone dreams anywhere from 3 to 6 times each night."ⁱⁱ Perhaps you often have one or more of the most common dreams. Healthline published a list of the most common dreams people have. We all have probably had a dream about being chased or falling.ⁱⁱⁱ What about showing up to school or work naked? Anyone had that dream?! Don't look Ethel! Like how would that ever happen?!

Well, in our study this morning, King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream, and it is one of those wake you up in the middle of the night and can't go back to sleep kind of dreams. But in this dream, God is trying to let Nebuchadnezzar know that He is really in control and that there is a true kingdom greater than the kingdom of Babylon.

BACKGROUND:

So, let's pick up the story. Daniel 2. *In the **second year** of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was **troubled**, and his sleep left him.*

A couple things here. You might say, "Wait a minute. The second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar? Didn't Daniel enter into a 3-year training period? Where is this dream in the timeline of Daniel 1?" Well, it was common in Judah and Babylon in those days to have an accession year of a king. A year in which a new king established their reign and rule. If that were the case, 605 B.C., the year Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem captive, would have been his accession year and therefore would not have been counted as year one. Year one would have, therefore, would have been his second year on the throne and year two his third year. So, Daniel has just completed his training.

We also see in verse 1 how worrisome the king's dream was. *"His spirit was **troubled**, and his sleep left him."* That is that he was struck by the contents of the dream in such a way that he could not sleep.

MESSAGE:

So, this sets the stage for the first point I want us to consider today.

1) The True Kingdom Is God's Kingdom.

Continue reading with me. Verse 2 *² Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams.* [In other words, the king assembled all of the earthly scholars, resources, his cabinet if you will] *So they came in and stood before the king.* ³*And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream."* ⁴*Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."* ⁵*The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, your houses shall be laid in ruins.* ⁶*But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."*

The king throws a curve ball here. He doesn't want to say what the dream is. He wants them to be able to recite to him. Anyone can give an interpretation of a dream, but Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know that the interpretation was authentic. If you have the ability to know what the dream was without being told, then you for sure would know the correct interpretation.

For the sake of time, I'll sum up what happens next. The king's cabinet tries to stall, hoping the king would either change his mind or they could pull information from him. Instead, he doubled down. This is where we see that God is the one truly in charge here. Men think they are ruling, but God is overruling.

Look at verse 10. ¹⁰*The 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.* ¹¹*The 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."*

These men were right. No man on earth could fulfill the king's demand. An impossible task for a human. This is a task that can only be met by God.

Look at verses 12 and 13. ¹²*Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.* ¹³*So*

the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

You see the loss of control here in this situation. The king is so bothered by what he cannot control that he takes control of what he can. He orders all wise men to be killed. This included Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But God is working here. King Nebuchadnezzar lays down the law, but God is working to give Daniel a stage. Make no mistake, God is ruling here. That's because the True Kingdom is God's Kingdom.

The second thing I want to point out here is...

2) The True Kingdom is Our Focus.

Of all the things that vie for our attention, God's Kingdom should be our focus. The example that Daniel sets communicates that. Look at verses 14-29.

¹⁴*Then 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.* ¹⁵*He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent? Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.* ¹⁶*And **Daniel went in and requested** the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.* ¹⁷*Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,* ¹⁸*and told them to **seek mercy from the God of heaven** concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.* ¹⁹*Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in **a vision** of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

Daniel's focus was not on the earthly kingdom of Babylon. His focus was on the Heavenly Kingdom of God. And because that was his focus, we see a few things that Daniel displayed. 3 things that are vital to us as we seek to be culture influencers. First, ...

A) A Peace that Transcends Understanding.

Daniel had a sense of calm, a sense of peace that is inexplicable here. The king had just declared that all wise men were to die. They came knocking on Daniel's door to kill him. And while there was concern on Daniel's part, there was a sense of peace amidst the chaos. Daniel essentially says, "Hold on. Everything's fine. I bet there is a solution. Why so urgent?" Sense of calm.

Listen, beloved, in a world that is chaotic, and has lost their mind, there is an opportunity for us as believers to demonstrate a peace and calm because our God is on the throne, He is in control. We often fall prey to the chaos of culture when we choose to focus on the earthly instead of the heavenly. Daniel's focus was on God's Kingdom, the True Kingdom, and that focus allowed him to have a peace that transcends understanding. And that peace afforded him the ability to reply with quote, "*prudence and discretion.*" Panic is the opposite of prudence and discretion.

Now, I don't know what it is in your life that is causing you angst. In this passage it is a dream that has Nebuchadnezzar all worked up. It is concerning news that has all the wise men panicked. And the same news that could have caused panic in Daniel's heart was simply an opportunity to exercise faith that God was in control. In times of anxiety, shift your focus. There is a calm available when you know God is in charge. And when we realize that fear will not rule our heart, but rather a peace that is supernatural will reign in us.

The Apostle Paul spoke of this peace in Philippians 4:7. "*7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" Jesus is on the throne. God is in control. Don't panic.

The second thing we see from Daniel when we focus on the True Kingdom of God, is that it gives us...

B) An Initiative to do God's Work.

In other words, Daniel didn't just accept what was said, throw up his arms, and say, "Oh well. It was a good run." No! He took initiative. He got in the game! Verse 16. *16 And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.*

This was a smart move. "Everything's fine. I'll just request to talk with the king." The very person that decreed to kill him! But the reason this was a smart move is that Daniel wasn't a part of the cabinet that was originally called in. This might be because he is wrapping up his course of study. Or it could be that the new recruits were not on the king's radar yet. Either way, Daniel took the initiative to say, "Let me help. Give me a chance." I think for this reason the king was willing to entertain the idea. "Oh yeah. This Daniel kid is 10 times better than all the other guys, let me give him a shot."

When our focus is on the True Kingdom of God we have a peace and we can take initiative in the circumstances in which God has placed us. Thirdly, ...

C) A Dedication to Prayer.

Daniel demonstrated a Kingdom of God focus when the first thing he did was to pray. Verses 17-19. *17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

Truth be told, prayer is often our last resort. We come to the end of our own wisdom and ability and then we pray. Prayer is where Daniel began. "Fellas, we need to seek the mercy from heaven. We need to get on our knees and pray."

Daniel knew that God was present and available. The same is true for us! Romans 5:1 and 2 says, "*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" If you are in Christ, you have access to God!

Another thing of note here is that God answered prayer by way of a vision of the night, verse 19. The difference between a dream and a vision is a dream occurs when you are not awake, and a vision occurs when you are awake. We are left to assume that Daniel and company spent the bulk of the day, into the night, Scriptures say, in prayer before they received an answer from God.

So, we see that the True Kingdom is God's Kingdom, and the True Kingdom should be our focus. Thirdly, ...

3) The True Kingdom Lasts Forever.

Now, for the sake of time, we are going to skip down to Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the meaning of the dream. Quick rundown of the dream.

Nebuchadnezzar sees a man-like statue. The head of the statue was gold, the chest and arms were silver, the mid-section and thighs were bronze, the legs were iron, and the feet of the statue was part iron and part clay. Then a stone,

verse 34 describes, “[was] a stone cut out by no human hand,” struck and destroyed the statue. The stone mountain was then fixated permanently.

That’s the dream. Daniel then interprets the dream. He says the dream is a prophecy outlining the things to come. Now, this prophecy has in it, things that have already happened and things yet to happen. Since this specific dream is closely associated to the prophecy in chapter 7, I am only going to give an overview today. We’ll come back. But allow me to bullet point the interpretation.

The gold head represented king Nebuchadnezzar and the reign and rule of Babylon. The silver represented another, inferior, kingdom that would rule the earth. And as you work your way down the statue, each material stood for different world power that would rule the earth.

A couple of things that is worthy of note regarding the specifics of the dream. One, the image is representative of a human. This highlights the difference between humanity’s kingdoms and God’s Kingdom.^{iv} Humanity’s kingdoms are ultimately destroyed, and God’s Kingdom stands forever. Secondly, as you work your way down the statue from gold to clay, there is a decrease in value.^v This portrayal, many scholars believe, points to the sinfulness of the world continuing to increase until the culmination of history.^{vi}

Ultimately, the mountain of rock destroying the image signifies the Kingdom of God that will one day be established once and forevermore. Look at verses 44 and 45 of Daniel 2. *44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that **shall never be destroyed**, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and **it shall stand forever**, 45 just 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.***

Now, most of the prophecy behind this dream has been fulfilled. And the unfilled portion presents an already, not yet, approach to understanding biblical prophecy. The aspects of the prophecy that have been fulfilled is that Babylon did come to an end. Babylon was conquered by Medo-Persia, which was captured by Alexander the Great and Greece. Ultimately, the Roman empire ruled after Greece. Then we get to the mountain of Rock, the Kingdom of God.

This is where the already, not yet, principle has been fulfilled and also yet to be fulfilled.

What is the portion that has been fulfilled? Well, we know Jesus to be the cornerstone, the chief cornerstone, and His coming established His Kingdom, The Church. There are many prophecies in Isaiah and even in Matthew that point to this. That is why the mountain is represented by a stone not cut by human hands. So, in Jesus’ incarnation, His birth, life, death and resurrection, the Kingdom of God has already been established.

But there is an unfulfilled aspect to this as well. While the Church represents the Kingdom of God, the final Kingdom of God, that will permanently be fixed, the new Heaven and new earth, has yet to occur. That will happen at Christ’s second coming. So, you see the already, not yet, approach. And here’s the truth. Daniel says to the king, **“The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”**

Now, you may feel like whiplash just happened or that someone threw a ball over your head. You’re like, “What did he just say?” I went fast but let me sum it up for you by saying this.

The best way to tell if a prophet is truly from God is to look to see if his predictions came true. Daniel’s prophecy did come true. But also rest assured, the part that is yet to be fulfilled, the same prophesized in the book of Revelation, will prove true. Daniel’s prophecy has been fulfilled, is being fulfilled and will come to pass.

Jesus will return again. Mark it down and take it to the bank. And when He returns, He will physically establish His Kingdom and all others will be destroyed. And the New Heaven and earth will be eternal, never-ending.

The True Kingdom is God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom is to be our focus. And God’s Kingdom will be established and last forever.

CONCLUSION:

As we conclude our study here today, **I want to invite the band to come back up.** As they are on their way, I want us to focus on a couple things.

First, are you a member of God's Kingdom? The only way by which you become a citizen of Heaven is by way of trusting Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Not a head nod, you see. But a surrendering of your will to Jesus as the boss of your life. It is only by way of faith in Jesus that our sins are forgiven. If you have not done that, or are unsure about that, you come this morning during a time of response and let's nail it down.

For others, if you are a member of the Kingdom of God, you've trusted Jesus as Lord, we are going to partake in the Lord's Supper in a moment. We believe the Bible to say a couple of things about this ordinance. First that is to be observed by believers only. So, if you have yet to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, we're so glad you are here today, but we would ask you to just watch and observe as we partake in something that is so very meaningful to us as believers in Jesus. But if you have trusted Jesus as Lord, regardless of your membership in this church, we invite you to partake with us.

The second thing that Scripture urges in the partaking of the Lord's Supper is we approach The Lord's Table with reverence, having examined our hearts. So, in this time of response, I want to ask you to examine your heart prior to taking communion.

If you are here today and you have a prayer concern, please allow us to pray with you and over you. We will have elders here at the front that would love nothing more than to pray with you and over you.

I'm going to pray, we are going to stand, we will respond and then we will partake in The Lord's Supper. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: Travis Agnew, "Daniel [Series Overview]", article published on travisagnew.org on August 13, 2020; Stephen R. Miller, *The New American Commentary: Daniel*, B&H Publishing, Nashville, 1994; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: OT Commentary on Daniel*, David C Cook Publishing, 2000; Precept Austin, "Daniel 1 Commentary," article written May 19, 2020, accessed at: https://www.preceptaustin.org/daniel_1_commentary, January 13, 2022; Troy Rackliffe, "Daniel 2," preached at Glade Community Church in Daniels, WV, September 2020; Mark Driscoll, "Kingdom Down #2: God is in Control of Who is in Control," accessed at: <https://realfaith.com/sermon-series/kingdom-down/> January 17, 2022; Skip Heitzig, "I Dare You: Step Up!" taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque on Sunday, January 13, 2013. Skip Heitzig, "I Dare You: Speak Out!," taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque on Sunday, January 20, 2013.

ⁱⁱ Advanced Sleep Medicine Services, Inc., "Do Dreams Affect Sleep Quality?," article published online at <https://www.sleepdr.com/the-sleep-blog/do-dreams-affect-sleep-quality>, accessed on January 20, 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ Timothy J. Legg, "Different Types of Dreams and What They May Mean About You," published on Healthline.com at <https://www.healthline.com/health/types-of-dreams>, accessed January 20, 2022.

^{iv} Idea pointed out by Skip Heitzig in his sermon, "I Dare You: Speak Out!"

^v This idea is presented by Warren Wiersbe. *Be Resolute: OT Commentary on Daniel*, David C Cook Publishing, 2000, pages 40-41.

^{vi} Stephen R. Miller, *The New American Commentary: Daniel*, B&H Publishing, Nashville, 1994, page 94.