

Series: The Book of Daniel
Title: Moving from Dream to Destiny
Chapter 2

Introduction

Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel to honor God as the Sovereign Ruler over all things. In Chapter 2, he writes about the vision of Nebuchadnezzar and the interpretation that Daniel received from God. Daniel's goal is to reveal a dream of destiny to encourage Israel and prepare them for the future. He also wanted to encourage the Jews to remember and pray for the conditions in Jerusalem. Daniel emphasizes that God's revelations are always reliable and accurate.

Chapter 2 begins with a dream, "Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was *so* troubled that his sleep left him. (Daniel 2:1 NKJV)

One of Daniel's first tests as an advisor to the king turns out to be a life-and-death challenge. The dream was very disturbing, and Nebuchadnezzar knew it was unusually significant.

In verse 2, Nebuchadnezzar demands to know the dream and its interpretation from his advisors. "Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation." They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation." (Daniel 2:2-9 NKJV)

Since the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans were supposedly experts, the king called upon them to perform what they boasted they could do. The advisors, however, objected to the king's request thinking it was unreasonable. The king felt that if they were actually what they claimed to be, they would have no problem discerning the dream and its interpretation. The king also tells them if they fail, execution by dismemberment awaits them. That may seem odd to us, but it was perfectly consistent with the behavior of ancient eastern kings.

Gleason Archer describes their method of dismemberment as "four trees were bent inward and tied together at the top. The victim was tied to these four trees with a rope at each limb. Then the top rope was cut, and the body snapped into four pieces.

From Daniel 2:4 to 7:28, the text is in Aramaic - not Hebrew. This passage is one of only a few sections of the Bible written in Aramaic, the official language of the Babylonian Empire.

In verse 10, the advisors again attempt to explain the impossibility of the king's request. "The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore, no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." (Daniel 2:10-11 NKJV)

Despite all their wisdom, the king's advisors had no answer for Nebuchadnezzar and confessed that only a god could reveal the dream. The strategy of the wise men was to convince the king that his request was unreasonable, not that they were incompetent.

In verse 12, a furious Nebuchadnezzar sentences all his wise men to death. "For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men*; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill *them*." (Daniel 2:12-13 NKJV)

As a new king, Nebuchadnezzar could use the situation to test his father's old advisors. The dream provided him with an excellent reason to clean house.

In verse 14, Daniel reacts to Nebuchadnezzar's decree by asking for a short extension. "Then with counsel and wisdom, Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon; he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation." (Daniel 2:14-16 NKJV)

Daniel calmly deals with the crisis. He knew it takes time to listen to the Lord and wait upon Him. Someone once said, "Crises don't *make* the person; they *reveal* the person. So, the first thing Daniel does is ask his companions for prayer.

"Then Daniel went to his house and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon." (Daniel 2:17-18 NKJV)

Only God could meet this need, and Daniel knew how important it was for him and his companions to pray. In verse 19, God reveals the dream to Daniel.

"Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what *is* in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; 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 demand." (Daniel 2:19-23 NKJV)

Christian faith begins with the principle of revelation. What we know about God is what He reveals to us. Daniel did not discover the dream's meaning; God revealed it to him. Daniel has no doubts that God is greater and mightier than King Nebuchadnezzar. He praises God and says, He changes, He removes, He knows, He gives, He reveals! All of God's power and might were of little help to Daniel if God stayed silent.

But Daniel had the certainty of faith to believe that God would give him the answer. One writer says, "Our level of faith is often indicated by how long it takes us to start praising God. Great faith praises God when the *promise* is given and received."

In verse 24, Daniel goes before the king and gives God the glory for revealing the dream. "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." 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." 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?" 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. 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: 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. 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." (Daniel 2:24-30 NKJV)

Arioch tries to glorify himself and Daniel for the answer to the king's dream. But Daniel refuses to take credit and recognizes that all the glory belongs to God, who revealed the dream to him. Nebuchadnezzar's dream spanned the whole future.

In verse 31, Daniel describes Nebuchadnezzar's dream. "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. This image's head *was* of fine 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 clay. 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. 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." (Daniel 2:31-35 NKJV)

Daniel's description is clear. He describes a massive and spectacular image made of fine gold, silver, bronze, iron, and partly of iron and clay. The metals descend in value from top to bottom, with gold at the top and iron mixed with clay, at the bottom. As Nebuchadnezzar views this spectacular image, a stone made without hands is hurled at the statue and destroys it. And what remains of it is blown away like worthless chaff, while the stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

In verse 36, Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream. "This *is* the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, *are* a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 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. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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."

(Daniel 2:36-45 NKJV)

Daniel first accurately tells Nebuchadnezzar the dream. It gives Daniel the believability to explain what the dream means. Nebuchadnezzar is clearly the head of gold. After Babylon will come three other kingdoms, each represented by the different materials Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. The succession of these kingdoms leads to the final kingdom set up by God.

Three dominating empires came after Babylon: Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The nature of the empires succeeding Babylon were inferior to Nebuchadnezzar's head of gold. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarchy. The succeeding empires were more extensive and lasted longer than Babylon, but none held as much centralized power as Nebuchadnezzar did.

- Babylon was a monarchy depicted as the head of gold.
- The shoulders and breast of silver represented Medo-Persia. It was a monarchical oligarchy with nobles equal to the king except in office.
- The belly and thighs of brass represent Greece. Greece was an aristocracy of mind and influence. Alexander's Grecian Empire was the largest among those compared in the image.
- The legs of Iron represent the Roman Empire. Rome was a democratic imperialism, with military dominion dependent upon the choice of army and Senate and administered in the spirit of martial law.
- The toes of Iron and Clay represent a future world empire.

The Babylonian Empire stood for 66 years; the Medo-Persian Empire for 208 years; the Grecian Empire for 185 years, and the Roman Empire stood for more than 500 years.

The stone cut without hands shatters a future confederation of kings, represented by the feet of the image, and then God's Kingdom dominates the earth. The stone cut without hands is the Messiah.

The final world empire is represented by the toes and feet of clay mixed with iron. It will have the appearance of true strength rather than the substance of strength. The image *seems* invincible but is actually unstable at its base. One blow to the foundation will topple the whole thing! Daniel says the dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.

In verse 46, we see Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to Daniel's report. "Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. 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." 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. 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." (Daniel 2:46-49 NKJV)

Nebuchadnezzar is notably impressed and bows before Daniel. He wasn't accustomed to showing respect to anyone, especially a foreign slave about to be executed with the rest of his advisors. But Nebuchadnezzar knew Daniel himself hadn't revealed these things, but Daniel's God. Daniel wanted the glory to go to God, and it did. Daniel's life was spared, he and his friends were promoted, and Nebuchadnezzar's dream revealed the destiny of all the world's empires.

What are some lessons we can learn from Daniel Chapter 2?

I. Reason Embraces God's Truth

The truth is sometimes hard to discover and maybe even harder to accept. As intelligent as we all are, it's incredible how quickly we can get off track and jump to conclusions without seriously thinking about things.

Wrongdoing starts with wrong thinking. Israel began embracing their pagan neighbors' beliefs, which led them to adopt their sinful ways. Their sin is what eventually led to God's judgment upon them and their deportation to Babylon. If they hoped to return to God's favor, they needed to break their sinful habits and return to biblical values and practices.

They needed to start believing what God says is true. Being mistaken is not necessarily a sin; it might be just an honest misunderstanding. But uncorrected, it can lead to sin, which is why having convictions based on truth is so important.

God is the determiner of truth and reality. Truth is rooted in His unchanging nature. Jesus said, "I am ... the truth." (John 14:6). Isaiah says, "the word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8) Israel's only hope was to put their trust in Yahweh and begin practicing their faith.

It's the same for us today. Jesus said in John 8 to those who believed Him, **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** (John 8:31-32 NKJV)

Our faith in Jesus gives us reasons to have convictions based on truth. God gives us guidance through the scriptures, so we know what is true. Before leaving this world, Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts and guide us into all truth. (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit guides us into truth by opening our minds and hearts to the truth revealed in His Word, the Bible.

Do you have good solid reasons for practicing your faith in Christ, or are you flirting with the world and its sinful practices?

II. Our God is the Greatest God

Regardless of what the Babylonians were saying, and maybe even some of the Jews, Daniel earnestly believed that Jehovah was the greatest God of all. Daniel acknowledged and praised God for His greatness. No doubt, he quoted Psalm 48:1, "Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised In the city of our God, *In* His holy mountain."(Psalms 48:1 NKJV)

Most of us believe that God is great! But do we believe God is greater than all else? For God to truly be your God, you must acknowledge that He is greater than everything else.

Daniel believed his God was greater than all other forces, natural or supernatural. He also believed that God was greater than all the forces of evil. Daniel also believed God was greater than anything put in place of Him and greater than all the nations of the world.

Daniel didn't turn on God or blame God for what was happening. He turned his attention to seeking God and praying that the people would return to faith in God. Daniel could say, "Who *is* so great a God as *our* God? You *are* the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples." ([Psalms 77:13-14 NKJV](#))

"For I know that the LORD *is* great, And our Lord *is* above all gods." ([Psalms 135:5 NKJV](#))

Acknowledging that God is greater than all of the forces in this world changes our whole perspective. People of faith rest in the confidence that our God triumphs over all in the end. We don't have to understand everything to trust Him. He is God, and there is none greater!

III. God Honors Authentic Faith

Daniel teaches us to remain faithful in all circumstances. Throughout his captivity in Babylon, Daniel faced many trying situations that could have caused him to lose faith or stray from his beliefs, but Daniel stayed strong.

There are always risks involved when you determine to walk by faith. Authentic faith is not blind faith; it is a well-reasoned faith in a God who has reasons for everything He does. Those who learn to live by faith are well rewarded for remaining undefiled by the world.

Holy people are incredible tools in the hands of God. When we stand firm in the face of trials, we give witness to the genuine faith we have in God. We also inspire and challenge others to stand firm for God's truth and righteousness. Daniel lived this kind of genuine holiness and chose to remain undefiled in a land that was utterly pagan.

Daniel didn't give up even when it looked like the bottom would fall out, and his life would end prematurely. What do you do when the bottom falls out of your career, your family's security, or your health? What do you do when things just go horribly wrong? We don't like to think about it, but we all know the unthinkable can happen. Believers are not insulated from life crises. We live in a fallen world, and like everyone else, Christians do face crippling disappointment and disaster.

Daniel's response to the collapse of his own circumstances teaches us what faithfulness to God looks like when the bottom does fall out. Do we turn to God and demonstrate authentic faith, or do we turn away from God with resentment or bitterness?

Conclusion

In ancient times dreams were considered a message from the gods. God used a dream to reveal his plan and establish His authority, and since God is all-knowing, he is always completely accurate.

Even great leaders sometimes can't see their requests as unreasonable, creating an intolerable burden for others. There are times when only Divine intervention can save us. In those times, we desperately need to seek the wisdom of God and learn the value of prayer support.

Some situations require us to put our complete trust in the wisdom of God. Wisdom and power belong to Him. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that God controls the times and seasons. He removes and sets up kings. He gives wisdom and knowledge to those who seek Him.

He reveals even the deepest secrets. He knows all about the evil, yet He dwells in light.

Daniel is a perfect example of a person who believed and practiced Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

[\(Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV\)](#)

May we have the courage to do the same.