

Daniel 2:24-49
November 8, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Dry Erase Board: Draw in left hand column a separated funnel showing the estimated 2015 population of the world, then USA, then TX, then Austin/RR, then me.

In right hand column, draw the statue described in today's text, which is a large body with head, chest and two arms, belly and thighs, legs, feet (mix iron/clay).

Q: After drawing the funnel of population, ask "How small do you feel in this world?"

When I look at this funnel, I too feel so small that I wonder how much of a difference I can really make. It's real easy to look at this and feel defeated before beginning any efforts to change the world I live in.

If you will recall last week's lesson, we learned that the king had a disturbing dream that created many sleepless nights. The king needed someone to not only recall the dream, but interpret it for him. The king sought the magicians, sorcerers, enchanters and the like first, but they couldn't produce the dream. The king got so angry that he put a death sentence on all wise men, including Daniel and his three friends.

It was Arioch, the man in charge of executing all the wise men, who informed Daniel of this death sentence. There's a good chance that he initially felt small. He was human just like us. Upon learning his predicament, he requested an opportunity to talk to the king and ask for time so that he might interpret the dream. King N granted him that time.

We admired Daniel's faith in God to reveal this dream. He invited his three friends to pray boldly with him! Of course, he was highly motivated to pray because there was a death sentence on his head! God responded to the bold prayer requests, and now Daniel has the opportunity to go before the king to give the interpretation of the dream.

Transition: [Go to DEB and point at "me."] Most of us feel small in this world. It's hard to read about all of the evil happening in the world today and feel like we can make a meaningful difference. It's hard to read how many people are starving to death every day. It can be so easy to feel helpless and powerless as we hear about these occurrences. However, I want to change our thinking on that. Daniel was just one person in a big kingdom too. Yet, Daniel knew God could make him larger than life in the spirit world by coming boldly before His throne asking God to reveal the mysterious dream of the king. He wanted to be used by God to make a difference in his world. When God revealed the mystery, *Daniel ultimately brought salvation to all the wise men! One large, bold act of FAITH by Daniel led to the salvation of many!!*

Q: What has been the great mystery revealed to us? [X-REF Col 2:2-3 Christ and his gospel message]

Here is the paradigm shift I'm inviting you to consider. *Regardless of where we live, every one of us CAN impact the world BY sharing God's revealed mystery to us (Christ and the gospel message), with the TOOLS God has given us.* Let's get back into the storyline.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Dan 2:24-49]

V.24:

- 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."

V.25:

- 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."

V.26:

- The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

V.27:

- Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

V.28:

- but **there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries**. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

V.29:

- "As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.

V.30:

- As for me, **this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men**, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

V.31:

- "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.

V.32:

- The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

V.33:

- its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.

V.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.

V.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.

V.36:

- “This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king.

V.37:

- You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;

V.38:

- in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

V.39:

- “After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.

V.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.

V.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.

V.42:

- As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle.

V.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.

V.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.”

V.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.”

V.46:

- Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him.

V.47:

- 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.”

V.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.

V.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.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q v.25: Who takes credit for finding a man who can interpret dreams? [Arioch!]

Q v.26: Do you think the king remembered who Daniel was? The way it reads, it appears that Arioch is introducing Daniel to the king for the first time.

Q v.27-28: What does Daniel make sure the king understands in terms of where he got the interpretation of the king's dream? [There is no wise man or anyone who can explain the dream unless the God of heaven reveals the mysteries. Notice that he didn't take credit for himself.]

Q v.34-35: What description(s) catch your attention in these verses? [One rock can take down the statue. The statue was so shattered and obliterated that the remainder was like chaff. Once the wind came along, there was *not even a trace* that the statue ever existed!]

Point of Interest: The remainder of this chapter focuses on the actual dream and the interpretation of what would happen in king Nebuchadnezzar's future. Nebuchadnezzar's dream covered the prophetic panorama of Gentile history from his time till the forthcoming subjugation of Gentile powers to Israel's Messiah. This time period is called "the times of the Gentiles"

v.28-45 [Go to DEB to identify parts of the summary version of the statue] tells us that the full meaning is for the "latter days." Each metal represented a different kingdom: **Babylon was the head of gold (v. 38)**; it would be followed by the **Medo-Persian kingdom, the breast and arms of silver**; then would come **Greece, the belly and thigh of bronze**; **Rome would follow as the two legs of iron** (and the Roman Empire did divide into Eastern and Western parts). **The feet of iron and clay (a brittle mixture) represented the kingdoms at the end times, a continuation of the Roman Empire divided into ten kingdoms (the ten toes).** Of course, the final "human kingdom" on earth will be that of the Antichrist during the last part of the Tribulation. How will it all end? Christ, the Stone (Matt. 21:44), will suddenly appear and smite the nations of the world, setting up His own worldwide kingdom of power and glory.

More Detailed Version of Dream

2:36–38. Daniel's interpretation makes it clear that the image revealed the course of Gentile kingdoms which in turn would rule over the land of Palestine and the people of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, head of the Babylonian Empire, was represented by the **head of gold** (v. 38). His father had come to power in Babylon by military conquest, but Nebuchadnezzar received his **dominion and power and might and glory** from God (who sets up kings and deposes them, v. 21). (On **the God of heaven** see comments on v. 18.)

Nebuchadnezzar's rule was viewed as a worldwide empire, in which he ruled over all **mankind** as well as over **beasts** and **birds**. At the time of Creation the right to rule over the earth

was given man who was to have dominion over it and all the creatures in it (Gen. 1:26). Here Nebuchadnezzar by divine appointment was helping fulfill what God had planned for man.

2:39. The second portion of the statue, the chest and arms of silver, represented the rise of the Medes and Persians (cf. 5:28; 6:8; also cf. 5:31). The Medo-Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C. The arms of silver evidently represent the two nations of Media and Persia that together defeated Babylon. Though that **kingdom** lasted over 200 years (539–330 B.C.), longer than the Neo-Babylonian Empire of 87 years (626–539), the Medo-Persian Empire was **inferior to it**, as silver compared with gold.

The belly and thighs **of bronze** represented the third kingdom to arise. This was the Grecian Empire (cf. 8:20–21). Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persians between 334 and 330 B.C. and assumed authority over its peoples and territory. By Alexander's conquests he extended the Greek Empire as far east as the northwestern portion of India—an extensive empire that seemingly was **over the whole earth**.

2:40. The legs of **iron** represent the Roman Empire. This fourth kingdom conquered the Greek Empire in 63 B.C. Though the Roman Empire was divided into two legs and culminated in a mixture of iron and clay, it was one empire. This empire was characterized by its strength, as **iron** is stronger than bronze, silver, and gold. The Roman Empire was stronger than any of the previous empires. It crushed **all the** empires that had preceded it. Rome in its cruel conquest swallowed up the lands and peoples that had been parts of the three previous empires and assimilated those lands and peoples into itself.

2:41–43. The empire that began as **iron** regressed to a state of **clay** mixed with **iron**. This mixture speaks of progressive weakness and deterioration. Two metals together form an alloy which may be stronger than either of the metals individually. But **iron** and **clay** cannot be mixed. If iron and clay are put into a crucible, heated to the melting point, and poured into a mold, when the pour has cooled the iron and clay remain separate. The clay can be broken out which leaves a weak casting.

The Roman Empire was characterized by division (it was **a divided kingdom**) and deterioration (it was **partly strong and partly brittle**). Though Rome succeeded in conquering the territories that came under its influence, it never could unite the peoples to form a united empire. In that sense **the people** were **a mixture** and were not **united**. (Other views of this mixture of strength and weakness are suggested: [a] the empire was strong organizationally but weak morally; [b] imperialism and democracy were united unsuccessfully; [c] government was intruded by the masses, i.e., mob rule; [d] the empire was a mixture of numerous races and cultures.)

LOOK:

We are all “Daniels” who have a window of opportunity to share the revealed mystery of Christ and His gospel message. (X-Ref Col 4:2-6) Where God has placed us is intentional. We are right where He wants us to make an eternal difference in the lives around us. Again, we may “feel” small in this world, but God created us to be larger than life **in the spirit world** because of the power He's given us to change our world. Let's be reminded of the TOOLS He's given us, which Daniel had available to him:

- His Holy Spirit
- His Holy Word through the Bible
- Prayer

[Go to DEB and encircle the funnel] His Kingdom is eternal. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are eternal. His Word is eternal. And our spirit is eternal. We live an eternal kingdom now. Austin, TX, happens to be where we exist as “pilgrims in a foreign land.” Let’s make the most of every opportunity to reveal the gospel to as many as possible. That’s how we become larger than life in His kingdom. We need to obey the Great Commission.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Da 2)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

III. Daniel's Prophecy (2:24–45)

The prophet went to the chief executioner and told him not to slay the other wise men. They deserved death, of course, and it would have exalted Daniel's position had they been removed, but Daniel was not a man with hatred for his enemies. Only eternity will reveal how many lost people have been saved from physical harm by the presence and intercession of a believer. Then Daniel told the king the contents of his forgotten dream. The king had been worried about the future of his kingdom (v. 29), so God gave him a vision of the kingdoms to come. He saw a huge statue of a man: the head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thigh of copper or bronze (but not brass, which was not known at that time), the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay. He also saw a stone come down upon the feet and crush the entire image into powder. Then the stone grew and filled the whole earth like a great mountain.

Verse 28 tells us that the full meaning is for the "latter days." Each metal represented a different kingdom: Babylon was the head of gold (v. 38); it would be followed by the Medo-Persian kingdom, the breast and arms of silver; then would come Greece, the belly and thigh of bronze; Rome would follow as the two legs of iron (and the Roman Empire did divide into Eastern and Western parts). The feet of iron and clay (a brittle mixture) represented the kingdoms at the end times, a continuation of the Roman Empire divided into ten kingdoms (the ten toes). Of course, the final "human kingdom" on earth will be that of the Antichrist during the last part of the Tribulation. How will it all end? Christ, the Stone (Matt. 21:44), will suddenly appear and smite the nations of the world, setting up His own worldwide kingdom of power and glory.

This image, then, is a picture of world history. You can see that the materials in it decrease in *weight* (from gold to clay) so that the statue is top-heavy and easily pushed over. Men and women think that human civilization is so strong and enduring; really it is resting on brittle feet of clay. Note too that the *value* decreases: from gold to silver to bronze to iron to clay. Is mankind getting "better and better" as time goes on? No! Human civilization is actually getting cheaper and weaker. There is also a decrease in *beauty* and *glory* (gold is certainly more beautiful than iron mixed with clay); and there is a decrease in *strength* (from gold to clay) as we approach the end of human history. Each of the successive kingdoms had its own strengths, of course, and Rome exercised a tremendous military power, but through history civilization will become weaker and weaker. This explains why the Antichrist will be able to organize a worldwide dictatorship: nations will be so weak they will demand a dictator just to be able to survive.

Each of these kingdoms had a different form of government. Babylon was ruled by an absolute monarch, a dictator (see 5:19). The Medo-Persian empire had a king, but he worked through princes and established laws (see 6:1–3—and remember the "law of the Medes and the Persians" in Esther 1:19). Greece operated through a king and an army, and Rome was supposed to be a republic, but it was actually a rule of the military through laws. When you come to the iron and clay, you have our present governments: the iron represents law and justice, the clay represents mankind, and together they make up democracy. What is the strength of democracy? Law. What is its weakness? Human nature. We are seeing today that lawlessness comes when human nature refuses to be bound by God's order and laws.

This entire picture is not a very optimistic one. Nebuchadnezzar saw that his own kingdom would fall one day and be replaced by the Medes and Persians. This happened in 538 B.C. (Dan. 5:30–31). The Medes and Persians would be conquered by the Greeks about 330 B.C.; and Greece would give way to Rome. The Roman Empire outwardly would disappear, but its laws, philosophies, and institutions would continue until this very day, taking us down to the “feet of clay.” The only hope for this world is the return of Christ. When He comes to the earth, it will be to conquer the nations (Rev. 19:11ff) and to establish His own glorious kingdom.

IV. Daniel’s Promotion (2:46–49)

The king kept his promise (v. 6) and gave honors and gifts to Daniel, who did not want to receive them since he was anxious that God alone receive the glory. Daniel was honored and promoted because he was faithful to God, and not because he compromised his convictions. He sat in the gate, which was the place of authority. Lot also sat in the gate (Gen. 19:1), but this was because he had compromised and moved out of God’s will—and he lost everything! Note that Daniel did not keep the honors for himself, but asked that his three friends also share the promotion (v. 49). The more we see of this man, the more we love him for his unselfishness and humility.

We shall meet these same kingdoms again in chapter 7. There they will be pictured as wild beasts, because that is what God sees when he looks at human history. God is not impressed with gold, silver, and bronze. He sees the human heart, and he knows that the kingdoms of the world are full of violence and sin. From humanity’s point of view, earthly kingdoms are like metal—durable and strong; from God’s point of view, they are ferocious beasts that must be slain. Daniel had perfect confidence and peace because he knew God’s plan for the future. The Christian today who knows God’s Word and believes it will also have peace.

Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1334–1337). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. THE DREAM EXPLAINED TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR (2:24–45a)

a. *The explanation by Daniel (2:24–30)*

2:24–25. Receiving from God the knowledge of the **dream** and its interpretation (v. 19) **Daniel went to Arioch**, the king’s executioner (cf. v. 14), and informed him that he was ready to **interpret** the king’s **dream**. Evidently the royal court knew of the king’s agitation for **Arioch took Daniel ... at once to the king**. Officer Arioch wrongly claimed credit for having **found** an interpreter for the king’s dream. Actually it was Daniel who “went to Arioch.” Arioch evidently expected to be highly rewardly for finding someone who could alleviate the king’s agitation.

2:26–28. **The king** inquired whether **Daniel** was **able to tell him what** he had dreamed and then to **interpret it**. Daniel was subjected to the same test of his veracity the king had demanded of the wise men. They had previously said that only the gods could reveal the future to man (v. 11). Now **Daniel** asserted that what the wise men of Babylon could not do (v. 27) by consorting with their false deities, Daniel was able to do because **there is a God in heaven** (cf. comments on v. 18) **who reveals mysteries** (v. 28; cf. v. 47). Daniel took no credit to himself (cf. v. 23).

2:29–30. Daniel asserted at the outset that the king’s dream was prophetic (cf. v. 45, “what will take place in the future”), about **things to come** and **what was going to happen**. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream covered the prophetic panorama of Gentile history from his time till the forthcoming subjugation of Gentile powers to Israel’s Messiah. This time period is called “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). This dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar, the first of many Gentile rulers who would exert power by divine appointment during the times of the Gentiles. God was not revealing spiritual truth to Nebuchadnezzar but facts concerning the political dominion that Gentiles would exercise. Everything in the dream would be readily understandable to Nebuchadnezzar.

Again Daniel humbly affirmed that the **mystery** was not **revealed to him because** he was wiser than others (cf. Dan. 2:27–28).

b. The recitation of the dream (2:31–35)

2:31–33. The king’s dream was relatively simple. Daniel reported that the **king** had seen an enormously **large statue**. Its size and **appearance** were **awesome**. It made the king appear insignificant when he stood before it. The **statue** was **dazzling** because of the metals of which it was made. **The head of the image** was fashioned **of pure gold**, the **chest and arms** were **of silver**, the **belly and thighs** of **bronze**, and the **legs** were **of iron**, with **its feet partly ... iron and partly ... baked clay**. A casual glance would reveal the various parts of the statue.

2:34–35. **The statue** was not permanent; it was **struck on the feet** by **a rock (cut ... not by human hands)** which reduced the whole statue **like chaff** that was blown away. Chaff was the light, unedible portion of grain stalks which blew away when the broken stalks were winnowed (tossed up in the air) on a windy **summer** day. **The rock that** destroyed **the statue** grew into a **huge mountain** that **filled the whole earth**. The dream itself was simple. It was the meaning of the dream that agitated the king.

c. The interpretation of the dream (2:36–45a)

2:36–38. Daniel’s interpretation makes it clear that the image revealed the course of Gentile kingdoms which in turn would rule over the land of Palestine and the people of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, head of the Babylonian Empire, was represented by the **head of gold** (v. 38). His father had come to power in Babylon by military conquest, but Nebuchadnezzar received his **dominion and power and might and glory** from God (who sets up kings and deposes them, v. 21). (On **the God of heaven** see comments on v. 18.)

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2:39. The second portion of the statue, the chest and arms of silver, represented the rise of the Medes and Persians (cf. 5:28; 6:8; also cf. 5:31). The Medo-Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C. The arms of silver evidently represent the two nations of Media and Persia that together defeated Babylon. Though that **kingdom** lasted over 200 years (539–330 B.C.), longer than the Neo-Babylonian Empire of 87 years (626–539), the Medo-Persian Empire was **inferior to it**, as silver compared with gold.

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2:44–45a. Daniel then focused on the overthrow of those kingdoms. **The time of those kings** may refer to the four empires or, more likely, it refers to the time of the 10 toes (v. 42) since the first four kingdoms were not in existence at the same time as apparently the toes will be (cf. comments on the 10 horns of the fourth beast, 7:24). Nebuchadnezzar had seen a **rock** hit and smash the image (2:34). The statue was destroyed by the rock, **not by human hands**. In Scripture a rock often refers to Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah (e.g., Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6–8). God, who had enthroned Nebuchadnezzar and would transfer authority from Babylon to Medo-Persia, then to Greece, and ultimately to Rome, will one day invest political power in a King who will rule over the earth, subduing it to His authority, thus culminating God's original destiny for man (Gen. 1:27).

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream the smiting rock became **a mountain** that filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). In Scripture a mountain is often a symbol for a kingdom. So Daniel explained that the four empires which would rule over the land and the people of Israel would not be destroyed by human means, but rather by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the striking Stone. When He comes He will establish the messianic kingdom promised to Israel through David (2 Sam. 7:16). At His return He will subjugate **all ... kingdoms** to Himself, thus bringing **them to an end** (cf. Rev. 11:15; 19:11–20). Then He will rule **forever** in the Millennium and in the eternal state.

Amillennialists hold that this kingdom was established by Christ at His *First* Advent and that now the church is that kingdom. They argue that: (a) Christianity, like the growing mountain, began to grow and spread geographically and is still doing so; (b) Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire; (c) the Roman Empire fell into the hands of 10 kingdoms (10 toes); (d) Christ is the chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

Premillenarians, however, hold that the kingdom to be established by Christ on earth is yet future. At least six points favor that view: (1) The stone will become a mountain suddenly, not gradually. Christianity did not suddenly fill “the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35) at Christ’s First Advent. (2) Though Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire, He did not destroy it. (3) During Christ’s time on earth the Roman Empire did not have 10 kings at once. Yet Nebuchadnezzar’s statue suggests that when Christ comes to establish His kingdom, 10 rulers will be in existence and will be destroyed by Him. (4) Though Christ is now the chief Cornerstone to the church (Eph. 2:20) and “a stone that causes [unbelievers] to stumble” (1 Peter 2:8), He is not yet a smiting Stone as He will be when He comes again. (5) The Stone (Messiah) will crush and end all the kingdoms of the world. But the church has not and will not conquer the world’s kingdoms. (6) The church is not a kingdom with a political realm, but the future Millennium will be. Thus Nebuchadnezzar’s dream clearly teaches premillennialism, that Christ will return to earth to establish His rule on the earth, thereby subduing all nations. The church is not that kingdom.

4. DANIEL HONORED (2:45b–49)

2:45b. Daniel had validated his interpretation by first recalling **the dream** (vv. 31–35) and had certified that **the interpretation** (vv. 36–45a) was **trustworthy** because it had come from **God** (cf. vv. 19, 23, 28, 30), who holds the destiny of nations in His own power. He knows **what will take place in the future** (cf. vv. 28–29).

2:46–47. The **king** was so moved at Daniel’s interpretation that he prostrated himself **before Daniel** and **ordered that an offering** be made to **Daniel**, an honor that would normally have been given only to the gods of Babylon. Such was Nebuchadnezzar’s recognition of Daniel’s divine authority. Through Daniel’s revelation and interpretation of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar was led to confess that Daniel’s **God** is superior to all the **gods** of Babylon and that He is **Lord** over the earth’s **kings**. Daniel’s **God** was exalted in the eyes of **Nebuchadnezzar** because He through Daniel revealed the course of forthcoming history. God is, the king said, **a Revealer of mysteries**, as Daniel had said (cf. v. 28). Nebuchadnezzar apparently accepted the fact of his own appointment to power by Daniel’s God (cf. vv. 37–38) and recognized His authority.

2:48–49. Nebuchadnezzar appointed **Daniel** to a **position** of responsibility in the government and rewarded him materially with royal **gifts**. Babylon was divided into many provinces, each one under the leadership of a satrap (3:2). Daniel was evidently made a satrap over the province in which the royal court was located (**the province of**[the city of] **Babylon**). Daniel did not forget his friends but asked that they be promoted too. So **the king** made **Shadrach** (Hananiah), **Meshach** (Mishael), and **Abednego** (Azariah) **administrators** to serve under Daniel in the same **province**. Daniel was able to remain in **the royal court**, perhaps as an adviser to Nebuchadnezzar.

In a remarkable way God elevated Daniel to a position in the royal court so that he could serve as a mediator between the king and the exiles from Judah who would shortly (in 597 and 586) be brought to Babylon.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 1272 – 1273). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

2:27 Astrology may be traced back to earliest antiquity and was highly regarded in Babylon. The Tower of Babel, “with its top in the sky” (Gn 11:4), may have been planned as an elevated map of the heavens for the purpose of seeking advice from the stars. The practice was implicitly condemned by the prophets’ ridicule of it (Is 47:13; Jr 10:2) and Daniel’s repeated emphasis on its failure to afford divine wisdom (2:27; 4:7; 5:7–8).

2:28 Daniel’s statement “But there is a God in heaven,” the overriding theme of the Bible, was a direct challenge to atheism and agnosticism. God’s reality is attested by His creation (e.g., Rm 1:19–20), His wondrous acts in history, His supernatural revelation—the Bible—and the Spirit’s witness in the hearts of those who know Him (e.g., 1 Co 2:9–10).

2:31–43 The different materials of the statue represent four world empires. Interpreters who view Dn as taking a long-range view have usually identified these kingdoms as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. Critical scholars who view Dn as a work from the second century B.C. generally consider the empires to be Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece—the empire of Alexander the Great of Macedonia, whose far-flung empire was divided into four major parts (cp. “a divided kingdom,” v. 41) after his death in 323 B.C. On this view the final kingdom, to be crushed and replaced by God’s eternal kingdom, would be the regime of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes. By this argument these critics assign the writing of Dn to the period of Antiochus’s persecution. To make the Greek Empire the last in the series, they claim that Daniel’s author artificially partitioned the Medo-Persian Empire into two consecutive world empires, the Median and the Persian. The traditional interpretation (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) conforms to the text of Daniel, which considers the Medo-Persian Empire as one (e.g., “law of the Medes and Persians” in 6:8, 12, 15; cp. 8:20). It is supported by other OT testimony (2 Ch 36:22–23; Ezr 1:1–4), the historical record, and more than two millennia of Jewish (Talmud, medieval Jewish commentators, etc.) and Christian (Church fathers, Jerome, Calvin, etc.) interpretation.

2:44 According to some critics, the author of Dn predicted that God’s kingdom “that will never be destroyed” would appear with the collapse of the Seleucid dynasty. As the record of history shows that did not occur, therefore these commentators assert that this prophecy was in error. But if the fourth kingdom referred to Rome, not Greece, the difficulty disappears. Jesus Christ set up His spiritual kingdom (e.g., Jn 18:36–37) in the Roman period and will establish a direct rule at His second coming (which some suggest will involve a later form of the Roman Empire).

2:46 Skeptics claim the king’s response is implausible, but Nebuchadnezzar had just witnessed a miracle (vv 10–11). No record exists from the ancient Near East of a wise man revealing the content of someone else’s dream.

Projected 2015 Population Statistics:

www.worldometers.info/world-population (World)

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/u-s-population-reach-320-09-million-start-2015-census-reports/> (USA)

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/popdat/ST2015.shtm> (Texas and Austin)

abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=90356 (265 million are “professing Christians”)