Daniel Chapter 2
Nebuchadnezzar's Troubling Dream &
The Promotion of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah

vv. 1-3 ➤ Nebuchadnezzar's Disturbing Dream

[1 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 2 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the enchanters/astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”]

Since Nebuchadnezzar begin his reign in 605 BC his second year would be 604 BC. Note that this occurs one year before the end of the three year training program prescribed by king Nebuchadnezzar {Daniel 1:5}. So it is that God sometimes supersedes the plans that the world has for us with His own.

Note that the Bible gives us many other examples where God uses dreams to reveal His actions and fulfill His purposes. Note the similarity to Pharaoh's two dreams {where the same word for troubled is used} and God giving Joseph the interpretation of it after he was in prison an additional full two years. {Genesis 41:1-32}.

Thus, during the very beginning of his rule Nebuchadnezzar had such an amazing dream that it troubled him and he could no longer sleep.

The word translated troubled (or anxious) in verses 1 and 3 literally means to tap or beat persistently in an irritating manner and refers to an agitated or disturbed state of mind. Evidently the subject matter of this dream convinced king Nebuchadnezzar that the dream contained a some extraordinary message but it bothered him that he did not know what that message was. The king became obsessed with finding out its meaning as soon as possible.

The king's first response to this dilemma was to call in the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans. During the time of Joseph, this was also the Pharaoh's first reaction to finding out the meaning of his dreams. The major difference is that the Pharaoh told Joseph his dream but we will come to see that Nebuchadnezzar asks for his dream to be described first and then deciphered. But none of the magicians or astrologers were able to interpret the dreams.

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1 It is interesting to note that the number דָּוִית in the Bible is the number for witness {ר...in the mouth of two or more witnesses shall a thing be established}.
2 A magician is an engraver of magical lines or circles and therefore one who draws out a horoscope to reveal the future. He was also one who used occultic practices to work wonders beyond the ordinary powers of man.
3 An enchanter [KJV = astrologer] is one who prophesied the future using charts of the stars and planetary positions, a divider of the heavens includes those who employ a formula of words spoken in the right order [incantations] for conjuring miraculous feats.
4 A sorcerer is one who whispers a spell and communicate with the dead or expel demons and utilized the power of evil spirits and used drugs to achieve desired results. Identified with witchcraft in Exodus and Deuteronomy.
5 A Chaldean was a special class of astrologer/magician. Primarily, Aramaic priests of northern Babylon who sought their greatest glory in the study of astrology and also possessed the knowledge of divination from omens, of expounding of dreams and wonders and of skillfully casting horoscopes.
The group Nebuchadnezzar turns to for help then represents a pretty motley crew of the brain trust residing in Babylon at the time. All of them were involved in pagan, demonic and occultic practices condemned by God \{Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26,31, 20:6,27; Deut. 18:10-12; Isa. 47:12,13; Mal. 3:5\}.

Note that we already have the testimony that, in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. \{Daniel 1:19,20\}.

Why then didn't Nebuchadnezzar call on the Jewish youths for the answers? Probably his pride. But this is typical of the world to try every possible method of resolving an issue or problem except using the wisdom of God's Word and the insight of God's people.

It is no different today. Doing a Google search on “horoscope” yields over 10 million Web sites. Each day millions of people turn to the horoscope to find answers to life’s troubling questions and find direction for their lives. There are even those professing to be Christians that dabble in horoscopes believing that it’s just innocent fun under the guise of entertainment. But this is direct opposition to trusting God for help and wisdom.

It is pride that keeps most people away from the truth – most people don’t or can’t handle it! After Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, wanted a genuine prophet to speak, it was the evil king of Israel, Ahab, that did not want Micaiah, God’s the prophet, to prophesy because “he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” \{1 Kings 22:8\}.

People simply need to break down {humble themselves, ONLY GOD CAN HELP ME}, agree with God about their condition {repent and confess, GOD IS RIGHT AND I AM WRONG} and ask God to forgive their sins and save them {receive the gift of salvation, GOD FORGIVE ME AND SAVE ME}.

It is interesting to note that the world, which at large is blinded by Satan and does not know the Savior {and therefore the grace, mercy, power, wisdom and peace available from Him} can only rely on its own very limited resources for answers to life’s troubling issues.

Is it so surprising that the world’s best scientists, educators, doctors, psychologists, politicians, military or religious leaders could never answer or solve life’s three most pressing issues and their associated questions?

1.) REASON FOR LIFE: How did we get here?
2.) REALITY OF LIFE: What went wrong?
3.) RESTORATION OF LIFE: How can it be fixed?

Only God’s Word can answer all three of these basic questions HONESTLY and SATISFACTORILY:

1.) God created all things for His pleasure and man for fellowship. \{Genesis 1:1-31, 2:7,21-25; Colossians 1:15-17; Revelation 4:11\}
2.) Man rebelled and sin ruined the relationship, breaking man’s fellowship with God and affected all creation negatively. \{Genesis 3:7-19; Romans 1:18-32; 8:20-22\}

\[Daniel Chapter 2\]

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3.) God’s unmerited favor provided a Savior, Jesus Christ, to reconcile man to Himself eternally. Forgiveness of sin & eternal salvation is a gift given to all that accept the sacrificial death of Christ by faith. Through the salvation that God provides man is restored to God and has a blessed hope of an eternal future. [John 3:16; Romans 3:21-26, 5:8-11, 6:23, 8:28-39; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 2:11-14; Revelation 5:9,10].

King Nebuchadnezzar tells the Babylonian brain trust “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream”. In other words, you boys tell me what I dreamed and then tell me what it means! Let see what happens ē ē ē

**v. 4-13 ➤ Nebuchadnezzar’s Impossible Request & Dreadful Decree**

[4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.” 5 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. 6 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.” 7 They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.” 8 The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9 “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.” 10 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. 11 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”. 12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.”]

Evidently, the normal procedure was that the king would tell his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans his dream and then they would interpret it [yeah, right]. They come to him promptly and the Chaldeans, perhaps the spokesmen for the group, begin by saying⁶, ŒO king live forever!Œ

They speak to the king in their native tongue; Aramaic also called Chaldee the ancient language of a geographic region known as Aram, which includes Syria and most of Mesopotamia. Aramaic is a dialect of ancient Hebrew and uses the same character set. With these words the Aramaic part of Daniel begins and continues to the end of Daniel chapter 7.

But Nebuchadnezzar confounds the Chaldeans Ė he wants them to first TELL him his dream then interpret it! If they cannot a horrible fate awaits them.

⁶ These kinds of compliments are still in use in parts of the Middle East. A superior gives a blessing to an inferior by saying to him, when the latter is in the act of doing him reverence, “Long life to you.”
The phrase in verse 5, "you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap" is an indication of the rage and fury that king Nebuchadnezzar was known for. (See also Daniel 3:13,19). Ironically, in Daniel 3:29 the king uses the same expression against anyone who would speak evil of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego after the LORD saves them from the fiery furnace.

That is, if the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers or Chaldeans cannot tell him the dream, the king will have their bodies dismembered and the homes they live in broken up and turned into a garbage dump. This is one grim fairy tale that may come true!

On the other hand, the king entices them by telling them that "if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor." That is, the king would put them in a rewards program—they would get wealth, perks and prestige.

Perhaps this is the first time Nebuchadnezzar had made such a demanding request along with offering these kinds of rewards. The king probably considered this dream too great and important for any uncertainty to be left in its interpretation.

But the Chaldeans wouldn’t touch the king’s offer with a ten-cubit pole. At the risk of infuriating the king, they persist in having him tell them the dream so they can interpret it.

It is plausible that Nebuchadnezzar had actually forgotten his dream but once told what it was he thought he would remember it. Or the king considers that his wise men may not be so wise and simply puts them to the test.

In either case, the king knew for certain that the Chaldeans were stalling for time {v. 8}.

[My decision is firm; lit. gone forth] So, despite the pleas of the Chaldeans, king Nebuchadnezzar is firm in his decision because the decree had actually already gone forth and could not be rescinded. Now king Nebuchadnezzar is having a fit that his brain trust cannot tell him the dream.

Why? The answer lies in vv. 8, 9. Nebuchadnezzar believed that the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and Chaldeans conspired to lie and offer a faulty interpretation hoping that the king would calm down. I think the king was correct!

This also points out that the king suspected that the powers of the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers or Chaldeans were fallible. A dream of such magnitude demanded the utmost certainty and the only way to get that is to have the Chaldeans describe the dream. The king of course this would be impossible unless genuine supernatural power was at work.

Note also that the persistence of the Chaldeans’ request to have the king tell them the dream demonstrates that occultic powers are NOT supreme and Satan and his demons are NOT all-powerful or all-knowing and therefore do not know what we are thinking or dreaming—only God does.

Note that this was a threat commonly used in the Middle East. Expressions of all sorts of indignities on the objects disdain are spoken and it is not uncommon filth to be smeared over what is the object of contempt. Thus when the caliph Omar took Jerusalem, after ravaging the greater part of the city, he caused dung to be spread over the site of the sanctuary, in token abhorrence of all Muslims and of its being regarded as refuse and filth.

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Again, pleading with the king to be reasonable, they declare that, “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”.

Well they had that right. However, this shows that even the testimony of non-believers acknowledges the necessity of the God coming to earth in the flesh (John 1:14) to both reveal and accomplish His plan of salvation in seeking and saving that which was lost. John ends his gospel narrative by saying,

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”. – John 20:30,31.

Note that in Daniel 4:4-10 the king has another troubling dream with identical results the magicians, astrologers/mediums, sorcerers and Chaldeans cannot interpret his dream, only Daniel can.

[Therefore the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men…Ø] It looks as though the wise guys have uttered their last words.

[And they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill themØ] Meanwhile, back at the ranch since Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were numbered among the Chaldeans, their lives were also in danger. What to become of them?

vv. 14-18 ➢ DANIEL’S REQUEST & GOD’S RESPONSE

[14 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; 15 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. 16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 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.]

Although just a teenager, Daniel speaks with authority and prudence to the captain of Nebuchadnezzar’s royal guard. The words used here mean that Daniel used his position with discretion and tact in talking with the man who would organize and carry out the king's order to kill all the wise men of Babylon (including Daniel and his three companions!). This tells us that Daniel, even at a young age, was mature in his thinking and had confidence in where the LORD had placed him.

8 ṢAnd the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.Ø
9 guard [2876,2877 tabbach (tab-bawkh', Hebrew/Aramaic] Properly, a butcher (as one who slaughters an animal to cook); hence, a bodyguard, an executioner (because he was acting as an executioner to protect his superior). This word is found nowhere else in the Old Testament.
The Bible puts great value on spiritual maturity, wisdom and discernment and describes its true source. See for example Psalms 119:97-106.

A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.....The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction — Proverbs 1:5,7.

Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. — Proverbs 9:9,10.

Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard rather than the shout of a ruler of fools. — Ecclesiastes 9:17.

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool shall swallow him up; — Ecclesiastes 10:12.

Our words as Christians are also to be spoken with prudence, wisdom and discernment. This comes from an abiding trust in the LORD.

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. — Colossians 4:5,6.

["Why is the decree from the king so urgent?"] Daniel starts by asking a question: why is the king's command so pressing? [lit. 'cut close']. When discussing difficult or sensitive issues, asking questions is a good pattern to follow. We need to listen more and ask more questions.

The captain of the royal guard then tells Daniel what is going on.

Daniel now armed with an understanding of the situation and since he already held some special favor with king Nebuchadnezzar he goes to him and personally asks for some time to find out the dream.

Perhaps it was because the king had found the Jewish youths "ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom" (Daniel 1:20). Maybe the king saw this as his last hope to find out about his dream. Perhaps the king was feeling a little remorse that Daniel and his three companions would be destroyed also.

So, despite his wrath, the king evidently grants Daniel his request. This was obviously divinely orchestrated.

Daniel goes back to his house and communicates the entire affair to his three companions. They then go into a time of prayer calling out to God to spare them from the same fate as the rest of the wise men in Babylon. Thus, they seek the tender compassion of the God of heaven, knowing He is the LORD of lords and King of kings and that He is the only one that can make known to them the king's dream.
Jeremiah, a contemporary of Daniel and his companions, wrote the following during the 1 ½ year Babylonian siege against Jerusalem:

And I said, “My strength and my hope have perished from the LORD.” Remember my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall. My soul still remembers and sinks within me. This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the LORD’S mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” — Lamentations 3:18-24.

Saint of God, are you ever troubled by the dreams of life? Do you ever get bothered or annoyed because you are going through a difficult situation and you know that God's Spirit is at work in your life but you just cannot quite figure out what it is? We wonder why God tests us in the way He does and we oftentimes question His timing.

We should be thankful that with God we have peace and comfort and the strength of His wisdom and might. No matter how difficult or impossible a situation may appear, when we put our trust in the LORD we have hope and the assurance that God's love will cast out all fear.

As a Christian when we go through trials and difficulties, on the one hand we know that we are one of God's children but on the other hand we wonder just what exactly is going on? We get anxious and troubled.

It's during those times that we as Christians need to do what Daniel did — maintain our trust and confidence in the LORD and seek mercies from the God of heaven.

Most often Christians pray as the last resort, but we need to do that as the first thing.

That old hymn 10, *What a Friend we have in Jesus*, has it right. The first two verses are:

| What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  |
| What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! |
| O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  |
| All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. |

| Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? |
| We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer. |
| Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share? |
| Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer. |

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10 Words by Joseph M. Scriven [1855]. Scriven wrote this hymn to comfort his mother, who was across the sea from him in Ireland. It was originally published anonymously and Scriven did not receive full credit for almost 30 years. Music by Charles C. Converse [1868]. In World War I, the tune was paired with the words to *When This Bloody War is Over.*
vv. 19-23  \textbf{The Dream is Revealed – The Lord Receives Praise & Worship}

[19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. 21 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. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. 23 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.”]

The nature and meaning of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is referred to as a ‘secret’ throughout this chapter. The meaning of the Aramaic word here is a ‘mystery’ hidden from man’s common knowledge and wisdom but revealed through supernatural communication.

Just as the king dreamed this at night, so now too the secret is revealed\textsuperscript{11} to Daniel in a night vision (cp. Daniel 7:2). In other words during the night God gave him a visions in a dream to show him both the dream and the interpretation. Note Job 33:14,15:

\textbf{Job 33:14,15:}

 forbid God may speak once, or twice, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds. 

This concept of a divine mystery or secret is carried over into the New Covenant. Jesus referred to the kingdom of God as a mystery known through parables {Mark 4:11,12}. Heavenly mysteries can only be understood by faith in God.

It is interesting to note that the apostle Paul refers to the resurrection as a mystery {1 Corinthians 15:51-53} and the last chapter of Daniel refers to the resurrection of both the unsaved and saved {Compare Daniel 12:2,3 with John 5:24-29}.

The LORD has revealed another ‘mystery’ which is the greatest of all – the mystery of salvation of the Gentiles. The apostle Paul talked about the fact that Gentiles have been grafted into God’s olive tree because of Israel’s disobedience [i.e., a relationship with Him through faith and salvation] as a mystery {Rom. 11:24-32; Eph. 3:3-6; Col. 1:26,27}. The blood atonement of God in the flesh was a ‘secret’ now revealed by the revelation of Jesus Christ and the preaching of the Gospel {Rom. 16:25-27; Col. 4:3}.

There is also the \textit{mystery of iniquity} of this present age that Paul describes as a spirit of lawlessness culminating in the \textit{man of sin} [anti-Christ] in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

Finally, there are the \textit{mysteries of the last days} revealed in the book of Revelation {Revelation 1:20, 10:7, and 17:7}.

\footnote{\textbf{11} This was actually a fairly common way that God spoke to men \{e.g., Genesis 20:3; 28:10-16; 31:22-24; 46:1-4; Numbers 22:18-21; Job 4:12-21; Daniel 4:4-17; 7:2\} and, since His power is not limited by time, can do so today.}
Daniel now offers up a prayer of thanksgiving to the LORD, the God of Heaven, in praise, blessing and worship for revealing the secret and sparing their lives. It gives us great insight into the heart of this exceptional young man whom God used to influence an empire.\footnote{Daniel’s prayer is a model for us to follow similar to the model prayer Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13.}

20 Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever [ETERNAL NATURE], for wisdom and might are His [KNOWLEDGE AND POWERFUL ABILITY]. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons [MANAGES HISTORY]; He removes kings and raises up kings [IS SOVEREIGN IN THE AFFAIRS OF MAN]; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding [GIVES WISDOM & KNOWLEDGE TO THOSE WHO WORSHIP HIM]. 22 He reveals deep and secret things [IS ALL KNOWING]; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him [NOTHING IS HIDDEN FROM HIM, HE DWELLS IN THE LIGHT]. 23 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.”

In Christ, we have the same source of wisdom and might than Daniel had available to us \cite{1 Corinthians 2:7-16; Colossians 2:2,3}. Like Daniel, we have had a great secret revealed to us, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and we are to proclaim it to a dark and dying world!

vv. 24-30 ➤ **Daniel’s Intercession & Testimony**

[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.]

After God gave Daniel an understanding of the dream he did not delay but goes back to the captain of the king’s guard \cite{the executioner}. He asks for two things; (1) do not destroy the wise men yet and (2) to be taken before king Nebuchadnezzar so he can tell the king his dream and its interpretation. We can only imagine with what excitement Daniel did this.

\footnote{Proverbs 9:10: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”}
One gets the impression that Arioch, the king’s executioner, was not eager on destroying so many lives on the orders of such an impulsive king. So with the hope of deliverance Daniel gives him, Arioch quickly escorts Daniel to the king. He explains that there is a Jewish captive (one who is being trained in the language and knowledge of the Chaldeans) who can reveal the secret, the dream and its interpretation to the king.

Nebuchadnezzar then asks Daniel to confirm that he can indeed reveal both the dream and its interpretation. But Daniel first prefaces his answer with spiritual insight and gives the glory and honor to the LORD. Are we doing the same?

After a sensational Superbowl XXXIV Kurt Warner, a replacement quarterback for the Rams football team, was asked how he won the game. After a Cinderella season and being voted the Most Valuable Player one would think he would have waxed eloquent over the accomplishments of his team and himself. But his first response was: First things first. I want to give the glory to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! It was obvious he meant it and that was thrilling to hear!

Daniel answers the king by affirming something the king already knew and confirming what the Chaldeans had already told him. Namely, that all the wise men, magicians, enchanter/astrologers and soothsayers could never reveal this dream to the king.

Can anyone reveal such a secret? Or will Nebuchadnezzar go to the grave with no wise men and aggranated never knowing what his dream meant? Fortunately for the king the answer to this question is a definite No! Daniel next declares that only the God in heaven can reveal these kinds of secrets. This puts God in stark contrast with Babylon’s brain trust. Nebuchadnezzar should consider himself honored that the one true God had chosen to reveal to him what will happen in the last days of human history! And it is this God that intends to make known the king’s dream.

Daniel now has been given a unique privilege to introduce the darkened mind of this pagan king to the living and true God. Then Daniel humbly adds that this revelation did not come to him because he is more special or has more intrinsic wisdom than anyone else.

No, there were two reasons God chose to reveal the dream. (1) For the sakes of Daniel, his companions and all the others who were to have been killed and (2) so that king Nebuchadnezzar would know the thoughts of his heart.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.” – Jeremiah 17:9,10.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”. – Hebrews 4:12.

The revelation and its timing were totally God’s sovereign prerogative. Later, Nebuchadnezzar comes to complete acknowledgment of God’s sovereignty {Daniel 4:1-3, 34-37}. The Word of God is coming to Nebuchadnezzar.
In my job I sometimes deal with documents containing secrets of national security. There is a strict protocol as to what a person with a particular clearance level can see, i.e., know about. There are several levels of classification and a person with a higher level of clearance automatically has authority to access all material below that classification. But, and this is a major but this is only true if the need to know is established. You see, I may have the proper clearance but I am not allowed to have access unless I have a need to know.

Guess what, God did not think that the Chaldeans, who engage in occultic practices, had a need to know. Matter of fact, God hides His secrets from the prideful {Matthew 11:25} but all things of God are ours and He freely gives them to us {Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16}.

When Jesus asked His disciples who men were saying He was there were a variety of answers. Some said John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asked His disciples, But who do you say that I am? Only Peter answered correctly, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. To which Jesus said, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven {Matthew 16:14-17}.

The LORD gives salvation freely to all who would ask {Revelation 21:6; 22:17}.

vv. 31-35 The Nature of the Dream is Revealed

[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.”]

The subject of the dream is a great image, that is a statue of a person. It was a large and extraordinary statue whose brightness was overwhelming and its form was amazing. It was made up of five major sections represented by metals that occur in decreasing value but increasing strength. The table below summarizes the materials comprising the statue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>pure gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest &amp; Arms</td>
<td>silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach &amp; Hips</td>
<td>bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legs</td>
<td>iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>iron-clay mixture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The king saw in his dream a stone that was supernaturally cut without human hands from a mountain. This supernatural stone hit the statue on its feet and shattered them. Without support, the entire image made of clay, iron, bronze, silver and gold broke into pieces and came crashing down, crushed together in a heap.

Perhaps the closest modern day illustration of this is what happens when a building is demolished using strategically located explosive charges. Another tragic illustration is the Twin Towers that stood at the New York Trade Center. On September 11, 2001 Islamic terrorists commandeered two commercial airliners and slammed them into the upper part of each tower. The burning aircraft, loaded with full tanks of fuel, so damaged and weakened the buildings that they each in turn collapsed upon themselves from their own weight.

The pieces were crushed so fine that wind blew the dust away and no trace of them was found – it was as if the statue never existed!

Then the stone that was cut in supernatural fashion grew and became a mountain so large it filled the entire earth.

That is the dream, half of the secret has now been revealed. How this must have excited the king for this was his dream!

It is interesting to note that the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is made out of 'neutral' materials. The world kingdoms are as man sees them. However, later in Daniel 7:1-8, Daniel has a dream about the same world kingdoms only in his dream they are represented by wild beasts. These represent a true description of the world kingdoms from God's perspective!

**vv. 36-45 ➔ THE MEANING OF THE DREAM IS EXPLAINED**

[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.”]
Now Daniel will explain the meaning of the dream as given to him by God. We will come to see that the dream prophetically depicts four great Gentile world empires culminating with the coming of the Christ and His kingdom.

Just as each successive metal is less valuable, it appears that each successive kingdom is inferior to the one previous to it\(^\text{14}\). But the outer qualities of these kingdoms actually become stronger and more powerful, so inferior must refer to their inner qualities — their integrity & righteousness.

The head also has more honor than the feet relative to height. Although Nebuchadnezzar was a stern and impulsive ruler, we find that he was also reasonable and teachable and a man of his word. We will see in chapter 4 that he was also willing to repent and turn to the LORD. This was less so with the leadership of other kingdoms.

Nebuchadnezzar is addressed as ÓA king of kingsÓ but Jesus Christ is ÓTHE King of kingsÓ. Note that Daniel is careful to tell the king that it is by God’s grace that he has just a powerful and glorious kingdom:

“...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.”

The LORD is the God of order, the sovereign King of all creation. As such, He coordinates His purposes and activities with His servants and ministers by communicating the same truth to all. Amos 3:7 says,

“Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”

Jeremiah was a contemporary prophet who ministered back in Jerusalem while Daniel was in Babylon. Like Daniel he was also young when God called him {Jeremiah 1:4-10}. Note that God reveals the same truth about Nebuchadnezzar to Jeremiah and has him proclaim it also. Namely, that God has ordained Nebuchadnezzar’s family to bear supreme rule over many nations:

“I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son’s son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them”. – Jeremiah 27:5-7.

Not only that, but God is going to use Nebuchadnezzar as His servant to be an instrument of His judgment. Refer to Jeremiah 21:8-10; 25:8-14 and 38:2-4.

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\(^\text{14}\) The idea of the Aramaic word used here for inferior[‘ara’] means closer to the earth as opposed to closer to heaven.
Relating to the statue Nebuchadnezzar, representing Babylon, is the head of gold.

Next will come a 2nd kingdom {the silver} relatively inferior to Babylon, then another 3rd kingdom {the bronze} that will also rule over all the kingdoms of earth. Babylon itself will become subject to the kingdoms after it. {Refer to Jeremiah 25:8-11 and 29:10-14}.

The fourth kingdom will be the strongest of all, as iron is stronger than bronze, silver or gold. This 4th kingdom will break into pieces and crush the other kingdoms.

Out of the 4th kingdom will come a revised kingdom {the iron mixed with a clay amalgamation} that will be comprised of a federation of 10 nations {i.e., the ten toes}. The idea here is that these nations will be not stick together firmly, just as iron does not mix with pottery clay, i.e., silicon. The picture is molten iron, which has clay mixed into it. This kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile.

[ień they will mingle with the seed of menę ḍ] The 4th kingdom will be global in reach and be comprised of a variety of different ethnic groups whereas Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations were not. But even though it will be global, there will be no loyalty between them, even as the iron does not do well mixed with clay.

Lastly, in the latter days of the kings of the 10-nation confederacy, another kingdom will arise. This kingdom will be established by the one true God of heaven and it will never be destroyed. This kingdom will not be left to other people but to God’s people. It will conquer and consume all the other kingdoms and endure eternally. Table 2-2 summarizes the Gentile world kingdoms and their association with the colossal image in the dream.

Table 2-2. Historical Identification of Gentile Kingdoms with the Great Image

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>World Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>pure gold</td>
<td>Babylonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest &amp; Arms</td>
<td>silver</td>
<td>Medo-Persian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach &amp; Hips</td>
<td>bronze</td>
<td>Grecian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legs</td>
<td>iron</td>
<td>Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feet</td>
<td>iron-clay mixture</td>
<td>Revived Roman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The stone that is cut from the mountain without human hands is Jesus Christ who is the eternal God, without beginning and without end. The One who was, and is and is to come. Other references to Christ as a rock can be found in Exodus 17:5,6, Numbers 20:7-12; Deuteronomy 32:1-5; 2 Samuel 22:1-3, 31-33; 23:1-5; Psalms 118:22; Matthew 7:24-29; Mark 2:7-12; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 and Peter 2:4-8.

This ḍstone smites the statue at its feet and breaks it into pieces. So the world kingdoms will all be destroyed and turned into powder. The resulting residue will be like chaff on a threshing room floor, which when the wind comes is blown away. So that no one would even know great and mighty kingdoms had been there! A picture of this process is described by King David in Psalms 2:1-12.
This imagery of a God’s kingdom as a mountain covering the earth is consistent with other prophecies found in *Isaiah 2:1-5* and *Micah 4:1-5* where it is referred to as “the LORD’s house”.

We see then that the stone cut out of the mountain without human hands (Jesus Christ) returns to the earth to subdue all worldly kingdoms (break into pieces and crush them) and establish His kingdom that will never end (the mountain that covers the earth). Jesus Christ will reign over all the earth as King of kings and LORD of lords. See also *Revelation 11:15-18* and *14:6-8*.

Daniel declares that the one living and true God has made known to the king what will happen after his kingdom ends.

The dream is certain and its interpretation is to be believed because God will personally make sure it is fulfilled. God Himself is the security for this dream—it is something that you can count on to happen.

All this brings out an important truth. That is, although men and women through the ages have ruled over kingdoms large and small, God was working “quietly” in the background bringing His plans to fulfillment. These were made kings and queens either by right of inheritance, ordained by the popular desire of people or established by bloody conquest, but God has been, is and will always remain ultimately the One in control.

Later in *Daniel 4:17* we will learn that God oftentimes overrules man’s purposes and ambitions:

> ré in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men."

The Aramaic word translated ‘’bassest’’ in the KJV of the Bible and here ‘’lowest’’ in the New KJV and ‘’lowliness’’ in the NIV can mean despised, humble or low in stature. This then refers to two kinds of individuals. First, to those who we would not ordinarily associate with leadership. But also those who are by nature unrighteous and evil if God decides that the people deserve such a leader because of their own sin and rejection of God.

Does this mean that God sets up people like Stalin, or Hitler (and all the evil that they wrought) or even an immoral President? I do not think the Bible teaches this but rather the responsibility lies with the people in what God allows them to have.

Here are some scriptures to contemplate as to what kind of leadership God wants to give us and what kind He ends up giving us because of our rejection of Him and His moral laws.

For example, when the people no longer wanted to follow the spiritual leadership of Samuel the prophet we find that {*1 Samuel 8:6-22*}

> But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.”

So God let them have Saul—a self-serving leader.
And He [God] gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. – *Psalms 106:15*.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;” – *Romans 1:28*.

Here is the type of leadership God **wants** us to have:

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people”. – *Proverbs 14:34*.

“It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness”. – *Proverbs 16:12*.

“**When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan**”. – *Proverbs 29:2*.

Although most Gentile kingdoms have been and are secular in nature, the Bible tells believers they are to respect authority since God has ordained the powers that be. The scriptures define what it is to be a **Christian citizen** Refer to *Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1,2* and *1 Peter 2:13-16*.

Note that the Bible does not qualify our submission to established authority based on a preference to any of the various forms of government [democratic republic, imperial monarchy, parliamentary, religious or fascist dictatorship]. Christians are to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey the laws and be ready to serve in the interest of the public good regardless of the form of government.

Are there any exceptions to this in God’s Word? Yes, but only one: when a government law is in direct opposition to a higher law of God. This action is given the term **civil disobedience**. See for example *Acts 4:17-20; 5:25-29; 16:16-23*.

Why can we be good citizens while here on earth? For the same reason that Daniel and his three companions could. Because a believer’s real citizenship is in heaven. Note what *Philippians 3:20* says

**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ**. 

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15 Interestingly this word in the Greek is “politeuma” from which we get the word “politics” or “conversation” as it is translated in the King James. And politics certainly does generate a lot of conversation. It refers to a manner of life within a commonwealth of people. It can also pertain to things we concern ourselves with most or to get involved in the “marketplace” of community discussion.
[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.]

Here again we see that king Nebuchadnezzar is very emotional. First, he is furious and raging against the Chaldeans. He as the king of the entire Babylonian realm, yet in his gratitude and excitement in having the dream revealed and explained he falls prostrate [lit., on his face] before Daniel and worships him!

Such is the awesome majesty of God, to get even pagan powers to acknowledge His power and authority!

Nebuchadnezzar is not yet converted for he addresses God in the third person, "Truly your God is..." But he is entirely correct in claiming Daniel’s God is the God of gods and the LORD of kings. We see a progression of the king’s understanding of God and he is eventually comes to repentance and salvation {see Daniel 3:28,29 and 4:1-3, 34-37}.  

The king acknowledges that God is the one who uncovers secrets. There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed {Matthew 10:26; Mark 4:22; Luke 12:2}. The greatest revelation is found in the last book of the New Testament – the unveiling of Jesus Christ. 

Because Nebuchadnezzar is overcome with emotion at the dream’s amazing interpretation, he misplaces his worship towards Daniel and not God. Twice in the book of Revelation the apostle John has a similar reaction in being overcome by emotion and falls down before an angle to worship. But each time the angle tells John to get up and "Worship God! Only the LORD of creation and redemption is to be worshipped. {See Revelation 19:9,10 and 22:8,9}.

Compare the Nebuchadnezzar’s emotional reaction with the people in Lystra {Asia Minor} to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:11-18. After Paul heals a man lame from birth the townspeople call him Hermes {Roman = Mercury} and Barnabas they call Zeus {Roman = Jupiter}. The priest of Zeus comes to help the people worship them by bringing sacrifices But Paul and Barnabas admonish the people to worship the living God.

Note that a relationship supersedes emotion when it comes to understanding God’s power and majesty. Once a true relationship with God is established then the emotions can appropriately flow.

When God does mighty and marvelous things we need to be careful to give Him the glory and honor since, like Nebuchadnezzar, an unbeliever needs to be made to understand that the power is of God not us. Only in this way can they come to true repentance and be saved.
To the faithful church at Philadelphia [which represents the church age during the latter days] Jesus says, “...you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie – indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you." {Refer to Revelation 3:7-13}.

And someday every knee shall bow before the LORD.

For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” – Romans 14:11.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – Philippians 2:9-11.

Then the king puts his money where is mouth is so to speak. He bestows upon Daniel all that he said he would to the wise man that could tell him the dream and interpret it. He makes Daniel the ruler over the jurisdiction of Babylon and, even at his young age, master over all the wise men in Babylon.

Daniel petitions the king to have his three companions promoted over the affairs in the jurisdiction of Babylon, but Daniel’s office is at the city hall of the city, at its gate.

References: