

Dani'el Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Dani'el 2: 24-49

DIG: How did Dani'el save the lives of all the magi and astrologers in Babylon? About six hundred years later, what would be the ramifications of this "salvation?" Who gets the glory in this scene? What does Dani'el picture the large statue? How do the different parts of the statue relate to five kingdoms? What is the rock not cut by human hands? How does Dani'el testify to ADONAI by name? How does King Nebuchadnezzar honor Dani'el and his God?

REFLECT: With the state of the world today, how does the promise of the messianic Kingdom encourage you (see the commentary on Revelation Fh - The Dispensation of the Messianic Kingdom)? How does it make you feel to know that the LORD of heaven's angelic armies is in total control of human destiny and has everything planned out for the good of His children?

601 BC during the eleven-year reign of Jehoiakim

There is an impressive sunken garden in front of the Beinicke Rare Book Library on the campus of Yale University in Massachusetts. It is meant to simulate the universe. A large marble pyramid stands in one corner, symbolizing time. Another corner sports a huge doughnut shaped structure lying on its side. It signifies energy. In a third corner is a huge die perched on one tip as if ready to topple any which way. It is the symbol of chance. This is the world of modern mankind, a self-existing universe consisting of energy, time and chance. And those in Babylon, ancient or modern, don't know which way the die will fall. Chance is opaque. It's the world of whatever.

Believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob think the Yale garden is a lie. We trust that ADONAI knows and orders the course of history down through the rise and rubble of nations until the day when He sets up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed (Dani'el 2:44a). This is no brilliant insight; we only have faith in this because of the God of heaven who reveals mysteries.

To have a God who reveals mysteries, however, does not mean we have a God who unveils everything. He doesn't show us which stocks will profit or whether you can avoid cancer till you're eighty-nine, or whether one's nation will still exist twenty years from now. Therefore, He only reveals what we need to know. And yet Dani'el's praise helps us here, because he assures us that even what YHVH doesn't tell us He knows; He knows what lies in the

darkness (Dani'el 2:22). You can walk into the future with a **God** like that, who shows you that history is going toward **His** unshakable **Kingdom** and who assures you that even though you have many personal uncertainties you follow a **God** who wrote the end of the book! Therefore, you can keep going with hope and without fear.²³²

The Dream and It's Interpretation: Then Dani'el went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the magi of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the magi of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him." Arioch took Dani'el 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" (Dani'el 2:24-25).

The king asked Dani'el (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" Dani'el replied: No magi, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a **God** in heaven who reveals mysteries. Dani'el **emphasizes the unity of YHVH against the plurality of the Babylonian deities**. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. This phrase, in days to come, is a prophetic term. It will be a **near historical prophecy** or a **far eschatological prophecy**, depending on the context. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these (Dani'el 2:26-28):

As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and YHVH, the revealer of mysteries, showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind and who is **God** indeed. Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue - an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance (Dani'el 2:29-31).

This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The **God** of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands He has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, He has made you ruler over them all (2:36-38a).

1. **You are the head of gold** (Dani'el 2:32a; 2:38b). The head of the statue was made of pure gold (see the commentary on **Revelation Ao - The First Beast of Daniel: A Lion with a Head of Gold**):

2. After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours (Daniel 2:32b; 2:39a). **Its chest and arms of silver** (see the commentary on **Revelation Ap - The Second Beast of Daniel: A Bear with a Chest and Arms of Silver**):

3. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth (Daniel 2:32c; 2:39b). **Its belly and thighs of bronze** (see the commentary on **Revelation Aq - The Third Beast of Daniel: A Leopard with Thighs of Bronze**):

4. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, or beast, 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 (Daniel 2:33a; 2:40). **Its legs of iron** (see the commentary on **Revelation Ar - The Fourth Beast of Daniel: Finally, There will be a Fourth Beast, That Breaks and Smashes Everything**):

- a. The Fourth Beast: Daniel 2:40 and 7:23a (see the commentary on **Revelation As - The Fourth Beast: The Roman Empire State**): The fourth beast is the fourth kingdom that will appear on the earth.
- b. The Fourth Beast: Daniel 2:33b. **Its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay** (see the commentary on **Revelation At - The Fourth Beast: The Balance of Power Stage**): 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. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. 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 (Daniel 2:41-43).
- c. The Fourth Beast: Daniel 7:23b and c (see the commentary on **Revelation Au - The Fourth Beast: The One World Government State**): It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.
- d. The Fourth Beast: Daniel 2:42-43, 7:24a, and also see 11:40-45 (see the commentary on **Revelation Av - The Fourth Beast: The Ten Kingdoms Stage**): The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. 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.

- e. **The Fourth Beast: Dani'el 7:24b-26** (see the commentary on **Revelation Aw - The Fourth Beast: The Antichrist Stage**): After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress His holy people and try to change the set times and laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

5. **The Fifth Kingdom will not be Gentile, but Jewish** (see the commentary on **Revelation Ax - The Messianic Kingdom: A Rock Not Cut by Human Hands**). 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. So the smashing of the image comes only in the last stage of the image. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The smashing was so complete that 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 (Dani'el 2:34-35). When the Bible uses images, it uses them consistently. When a mountain is used symbolically, it always points to a nation or a kingdom. In this case, the huge mountain gives us a picture of the messianic, or millennial Kingdom.

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. 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 its interpretation is trustworthy (Dani'el 2:44-45).

Isaiah says: Trust in ADONAI forever, for the LORD, the LORD (again a doubling to emphasize the point), is **the Rock** (Isaiah 26:4a). Many times in the TaNaKh, the use of the word **the Rock** is a picture of **the Messiah** (Genesis 49:24; Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:8; Deuteronomy 32:4 and 13; Second Samuel 22:2; Psalm 18:2, 10:14, 40:2, 61:2, 92:15; Isaiah 8:14). And **the Rock** is eternal (Isaiah 26:4b).

The king's response: Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Dani'el and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Dani'el, "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 (Dani'el 2:46-47). **The**

climax of the episode is reached in this verse where the God of Isra'el is acclaimed by the greatest ruler on earth as the supreme God of the universe.

Then the king placed Dani'el 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 magi (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Av - The Visit of the Magi](#)). Moreover, at Dani'el's request the king appointed Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah administrators over the province of Babylon, while Dani'el himself remained at the royal court (Dani'el 2:48-49).

This solid assurance of the victory of **God's Kingdom** is meant to bring a contagious certainty to the people of **God**, people who are so often squashed under the arrogant heels of the earth's kingdoms and rulers. Such an immovable belief puts iron in their veins and nerve in their spirits as they walk through the disappointments of life and the reverses of history. They never totally despair because they know that **Jesus Christ** is not only the **faithful witness** and the **firstborn of the dead**, but the **ruler of the kings of the earth** (see the commentary on [Revelation Ai - Look, He is Coming With the Clouds](#)).

The Roman and Christian-hating Emperor Julian (332-363 AD) was mortally wounded in a war with the Persians. While the battle was in progress, one of Julian's followers asked a Christian in far away Antioch what **the carpenter's son** was doing. The Christian replied, "**The Maker of the world**, whom you call **the carpenter's son**, is employed in making a coffin for the emperor." Within days news came back to Antioch of Julian's death. That is where **Dani'el 2** leaves us. **Yeshua** has a coffin for every empire and every emperor; the only true security in this world is in **the carpenter's Son**.

Nebuchadnezzar did not forget **his dream**. And you must not forget it either; don't forget what **the God of heaven** reveals to you through this **dream**, for this is a **dream** that will come true.²³³