

Daniel Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 2:24-45

The Overview of the Chapter:

- This, the longest chapter in Daniel, gives a Divine preview of Gentile world history while the Jews suffer **eclipse in prominence**.
 - For those who despise the Word of God, let it be known that **history verifies this chapter**.
 - There is also considerable **human drama** in the chapter which makes for **most interesting reading and studying**.

The Outline (Main points) of the Chapter:

1. The **Crisis** (Daniel 2:1–18)
2. The **Capability** (Daniel 2:19–23)
3. The **Colossus** (Daniel 2:24–45)
4. The **Compensation** (Daniel 2:46–49)

1. The Crisis (Daniel 2:1–18)

- This chapter begins with a great **human drama**.
 - It is a **life and death crisis** for all the wise counsellors of the king which **included Daniel and his three friends**.
- A. **The Dreaming for the Crisis (Daniel 2:1, 2)**
- The **dreaming of king Nebuchadnezzar precipitated** the crisis.
 - In those days dreams were **important**.
 - The **written Word** of God was **not in the hands of the populace** yet, so God **revealed His ways through dreams**.
 - We **do not need dreams today**, for we **have the written Word of God in our hands**.
 1. The **time** of the dreaming.

"In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (Daniel 2:1).

- The time **seems to contradict** the facts of chapter one **until you take into consideration** the fact that **Babylonian computing of a king's time in office did not count** the first partial year of his reign.
 - Thus according to our **computation** it was in **his third year of reign that he had this dream**.
 - Over **three years had passed** since he began to reign and **since the trainees were put in three years of training**.
 - It **appears that the dream came** shortly after he had **interviewed Daniel and his friends and discovered** their wisdom.

2. The **troubling** from the dreaming.

"Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him" (Daniel 2:1).

- The thing about the dream that produced the crisis was the fact that it really troubled Nebuchadnezzar. He had just become king and did not want any dreams that would oppose his reign.

B. The **Demands** for the Crisis (Daniel 2:2–9)

- Showing the character of a king in those days, he made what most would call an unreasonable demand.

1. The **calling** in the demands.

"The king commanded to call the magicians, and astrologers, and the sorcerers and the Chaldeans" (Daniel 2:2).

- The logical thing was for the king to call those who could interpret the dream.

2. The **character** of the demands.

"The king commanded ... to show the king his dreams" (Daniel 2:2).

- This was **different**.

- Normally the king would **tell his dream** and then the **counsellors would interpret** his dream (which left a lot of room for fraud).

3. The **consequences** in the demands.

"Tell thy servants the dream ... If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye show the dream ... interpretation ... rewards" (Daniel 2:4–6).

- The **consequences** were **plain**.

- Show and interpret the dream and many rewards, fail and you are done.

4. The **condemnation** in the demands.

"Ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me" (Daniel 2:9).

- Nebuchadnezzar was **getting wise** to his counselors, **most of whom** were **not above lying**.

5. The **complaint** about the demands.

"There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter ... no king ... asked such things at [of] any magician ... astrologer ... Chaldeans" (Daniel 2:10).

- They were **wrong about no one being able** to show and interpret the dream, for **Daniel would do both**.

C. The **Decree** for the Crisis (Daniel 2:12, 13)

- Nebuchadnezzar **ran out of patience** with his **stalling counsellors** and issued a **very cruel decree** for all of them which **included Daniel**.

1. The "**choler**" in the decree.

"The king was angry and very furious" (Daniel 2:12).

- **The king's fury** reflected the **unstrained passion of an orient king** of those days, but the king's fury **was also justified in that he had provided well** for these counsellors, **now they have let him down** and given occasion for him to see that they are a **bunch of frauds**.

2. The **crowd** in the decree.

"Destroy all the wise men" (Daniel 2:12).

- This is where **Daniel and his three friends come into** the crisis.
 - **All the wise men were not present** before the king.
 - Many were throughout the empire of Babylon, but **all were under the curse of death**.
 - Daniel and his three friends **were not called possibly** because of their just being **put in the group of wise men** or they were not called **because of spite**.

3. The **cruelty** in the decree.

"Destroy all the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:12).

- There **was no justice in including** all the wise men of the kingdom. Destroying the frauds **we can understand**, but destroying all is **despicable injustice**.

4. The **communicating** of the decree.

"The decree went forth" (Daniel 2:13).

- This **decree went forth differently** than the call to interpret his dreams.
 - Daniel is **informed of the decree** this time,

"They sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain" (Daniel 2:13).

- But he was **not sought in the call**, **possibly because** he was a Jew and the **Babylonian counsellors did not like his intruding** in the honors of their position.

D. The Delay in the Crisis (Daniel 2:14–18)

- The decree to slay all the wise men of Babylon was **put on hold**, thanks to Daniel.

1. *The inquiry for the delay*

- Daniel **wisely inquired** about the details of the decree.
 - We note **three things about this inquiry**.

a. *First, the DISCRETION in the inquiry.*

“Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom” (Daniel 2:14).

- Daniel was **a gentlemen in his conduct**.
 - Daniel **handled this matter wisely**.

b. *Second, the DISAPPROVAL in the inquiry.*

“Why is the decree so hasty from the king” (Daniel 2:14).

- Daniel **gives a subtle rebuke** to the king for **acting without thinking**.

c. *Third, the DECLARING from the inquiry.*

“Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel” (Daniel 2:15).

- Arioch was **captain of the guard** which meant he was **the one to do the slaying**, but Daniel’s wise approach in the matter got Arioch **to DECLARE** (explain) and **DELAY** the execution order and **give Daniel time to speak with the king about the matter**.

2. *The intervening for the delay.*

“Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time” (Daniel 2:16).

- After being informed **about the details** behind the decree, Daniel **went to the king to intervene**.
 - It **took great courage** and wisdom for Daniel to approach Nebuchadnezzar and **plead for time**.
 - The king **obviously had cooled off a bit** and evidently granted Daniel some time.
 - Nebuchadnezzar may have been **reluctant to dispatch Daniel and his three friends** so quickly **after learning how good** they were when he interviewed them (Daniel 1:18–20).

3. *The intercession during the delay.*

“That they would desire the mercies of God of heaven” (Daniel 2:18).

- Daniel told his three friends the problem and asked them to pray that God would show mercy about this secret of the king's dream.
 - They were virtually shut up to prayer as all other avenues of help were closed.
 - God sometimes allows us to get in a jam where the only way out is up—that is to pray to the God of heaven for deliverance.

2. *The Capability (Daniel 2:19–23)*

- Now we come to the section of this chapter that tells us of the capability of Daniel in recalling and interpreting the dream.

A. *The Receiving of the Capability (Daniel 2:19)*

- God answered the prayer of Daniel and his friends.
 1. *The period of the receiving.*
 - Though God answered the prayer of Daniel and his three friends, He did not answer it right away.
 - Revealing it at night after a period of time had passed teaches two lessons.
 - a. *First, the PATIENCE in the period.*

"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision" (Daniel 2:19).

- This indicates that Daniel and his friends had to go to bed without an answer from God yet.
 - Faith often requires much patience.
 - We not only need faith in God's ability to do something but we need faith in God's wisdom to know the right time for doing something.

b. *Second, the PROVIDENCE in the period.*

- The answer to the prayer said God will provide the solution in time to solve the problem
 - There was not much time (Scripture does not say how long Daniel was given by Nebuchadnezzar to gain an answer about the dream) in the king's delay so they needed an answer quickly.

2. *The praise for the receiving.*

"Then Daniel blessed the God of Heaven ... Blessed be the name of God ... he changed the times ... revealed the deep and secret things ... I thank thee and praise thee" (Daniel 2:19–23).

- Daniel did what we need to do more, that is, praise God for answered prayers.
 - Habitually we are very DEDICATED about our requests but very DELINQUENT about thanking and praising God for answers to our requests.

B. The Reporting of the Capability (Daniel 2:24, 25)

- When Daniel learned the secret of the dream he reported the good news to Arioch

“...whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon”
(Daniel 2:24)

- and who **had also given Daniel a reprieve** of time to talk to the king and delay the execution order.
- This was **the right man to report to first**, for he had taken dangerous action of delaying an angry king’s decree.
- The **report of Daniel’s capability** was **given by these two men**.

1. *The precept in the report.*

“Destroy not the wise men of Babylon” (Daniel 2:24).

- This was **needed first**.

- Arioch **must act soon** or he imperiled his own life.
- Daniel’s intervention** on behalf of the wise men **shows the value of righteous people in society**.
- They help preserve it.
 - Our country owes more** to godly people than to any other crowd.

2. *The palace in the report.*

“Bring me to the king” (Daniel 2:24).

- And Arioch **did so with “haste”** (Daniel 2:25 - quickly), for Arioch was **on the spot and needed justification for delaying** execution orders.

3. *The promise in the report.*

“I will show the king the interpretation” (Daniel 2:24).

- Without this promise** Arioch would not move.
 - This promise was like **God who gives promises** in our precepts to encourage obeying the precepts.

C. The Reaffirming of the Capability (Daniel 2:25–28)

- Daniel and Arioch reaffirmed before King Nebuchadnezzar the **capability of Daniel to do for the king what Daniel had earlier said he would do** (Daniel 2:16).

1. *The introduction for the reaffirming.*

“I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation” (Daniel 2:25)

- This was Arioch's way of reaffirming the capability of Daniel.
 - a. *First, the PREVARICATION in the introduction.*
- The part about finding a man was a lie.
 - However, Arioch wanted credit to help his own status before the king.
 - His report **made it sound like he had searched** the kingdom for someone to interpret the king's dreams **and had been successful.**
- Arioch had to have much confidence in Daniel, for Arioch was placing his life on the line in bringing Daniel to the king.

2. *The inquiry for the reaffirming.*

"Art thou able to make known unto me the dream I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" (Daniel 2:26).

- This said Nebuchadnezzar was not backing off his requirements one iota.
 - He let Daniel know in no uncertain terms that the requirements **had not changed.**

3. *The indicting in the reaffirming.*

"Daniel answered ... cannot the wise man ... astrologers ... magicians ... soothsayers, show unto the king" (Daniel 2:27).

- Before Daniel told the dream and its interpretation, he wanted Nebuchadnezzar to know the worldly wise men **did not have the wisdom they boasted they had.**
- Daniel informed the king of two things.
 - a. *First, the informing of the REVEALER of the dream.*

"There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets" (Daniel 2:28).

- Daniel is not going to take credit for the revelation.
 - He wants God to have the praise.
 - Daniel would **give praise to God in public.**
 - This also took a poke at idolatry and its utter failure.

b. *Second, the informing of the REVELATION in the dream.*

"thou ... sawest ... a great image" (Daniel 2:31).

- Daniel informed the king what his dream was and then informed him of the interpretation.
 - Our next main point looks at this in detail.

3. **The Colossus (Daniel 2:24–45)**

- That which Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar about was a dream and its interpretation of a great colossus.
 - The dream of Nebuchadnezzar was a very important dream in regards to Gentile world history during the Jews demise.
 - Israel is the nation of nations as far as God is concerned but their sin caused God to chasten them in some very harsh but justified judgment.
 - Daniel reveals to Nebuchadnezzar this plan of God for Gentile world rule during the interim of Israel's chastening and demise.

A. The Informing of the Colossus (Daniel 2:31–35)

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image ... head of fine gold ... breast and arms of silver ... belly ... thighs of brass ... legs of iron ... feet part iron ... part clay ... a stone was cut out without hands which smote the image ... then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together ... the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth"
(Daniel 2:31–35).

- Daniel first told the king his dream which was of the colossus.
 1. *The description of the colossus.*

“Sawest ... a great image” (Daniel 2:31).
 - b. *Second, the SPLENDOR.*

“Whose brightness was excellent” (Daniel 2:31).
 - c. *Third, SCARY.*

“The form thereof was terrible” (Daniel 2:31).
- The image was huge. it was a colossus.
- The statute was not dull and tarnished, but bright and shiny.
- It was a terrifying image which would cause Nebuchadnezzar to be “troubled” (Daniel 2:1).

d. Fourth, the SUBSTANCE.

"This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Daniel 2:32, 33).

- Daniel was **very detailed in his report of the dream.**
 - Nebuchadnezzar would know Daniel was **not faking** the report.
 2. *The destruction of the Colossus.*

"Thou sawest till ... a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet ... and break them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away ... the stone ... became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34, 35).

- The **end of the dream** came with the **devastating destruction of the image.**

B. The Interpretation of the Colossus (Daniel 2:36–44)

"We will tell the interpretation thereof before the king" (Daniel 2:36).

- After describing the dream Daniel **says he will interpret the dream.**
- The interpretation came after the king was **made certain of the details** of the dream.
 1. *The empires.*
- Various empires are represented by the image's different metals.
 - a. *First, GOLD.*

"Thou ... art a king of kings ... Thou art this head of gold" (Daniel 2:37, 38).

- Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar are represented by the head of gold.
 - b. *Second, SILVER.*

"After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (Daniel 2:39).

- History says Persia was the second great Gentile empire.
 - c. *Third. BRASS.*
- Greece (its beginnings under Alexander the Great) was the brass/bronze part

d. Fourth, IRON.

"The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron" (Daniel 2:40).

- This **speaks of Rome**.

e. Fifth, iron and clay.

"The feet and toes part of ... clay ... iron"

- This is the day in which we live.

- The image **will not encourage evolution thinking** for it **deteriorates** as the years **go by whereas evolution says we are supposed to improve** as the years go by.

2. The end.

"Thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountains without hands ... brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold"
(Daniel 2:44).

- The **kingdom to replace this image is God's kingdom**.

- We note **two important facts about the ending** of these kingdoms which is **portrayed by the stone that destroys the image**.

a. First, the COMING of the ending.

"God of heaven set up a kingdom ... consume all these kingdoms [of the image]" (Daniel 2:44).

- **Judgement is coming upon the kingdoms of the world.**

b. Second, the COMPLETENESS of the ending.

"Consume all these kingdoms" (Daniel 2:44).

- **Judgment will end the Gentile empires completely.**

C. The Reaffirming of the Dream (Daniel 2:45)

"The dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure" (Daniel 2:45).

- This is **like saying "Amen"** at the end of a sermon.

- Daniel **reaffirmed what he had said to drive home** the message with strong emphasis.

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4. The Compensation (Daniel 2:46–49)

- Daniel and his three friends benefited greatly in compensation because of Daniel's outstanding performance before Nebuchadnezzar.

A. The Prostration before Daniel (Daniel 2:46)

"Then ... Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him" (Daniel 2:46).

- Our **text does not say it**, but you **can be sure that Daniel refused the worship**.
 - What the **worship said was that Daniel was highly praised** for his great performance before the Babylonian king.
 - It would be very difficult for the wise men of Babylon to mock Daniel.

B. The Praise for Daniel's God (Daniel 2:47)

"Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret" (Daniel 2:47).

- Daniel in rejecting the praise (Daniel 2:30) and attributing the revelation to God brought much honor to God.
 - He could have basked in the honor for self but he preferred that the God of heaven be the one honored.
 - Would that all of us were more like Daniel in this matter.

C. The Promotion of Daniel (Daniel 2:48)

"The king made Daniel a great man ... made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:48).

- Daniel was **promoted to some high positions in the land**.

D. The Presents for Daniel (Daniel 2:48)

"Gave him many great gifts" (Daniel 2:48).

- Not only was Daniel **promoted** but he was **given many gifts** from the king and you can believe that these gifts were not of small value.
 - Daniel **would be the envy** of every wise man/counselor of Babylon.

E. The Petition of Daniel (Daniel 2:49)

"Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Baby; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king" (Daniel 2:49).

- Daniel did not forget his friends who surely prayed with him for deliverance from the king's death decree (Daniel 2:17, 18).
 - When we become successful, we often forget those who have helped us to become successful.