

Daniel 2:24-49

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Date: 27 June 2021

Preacher: Zac Skilling

[0 : 00] If you will go ahead and open up to Daniel chapter 2. We're going to be starting in verse 24. Daniel is in bondage for their sins as a punishment by God.

In chapter 1, we saw Daniel and his three friends taken to the king's palace to be indoctrinated with Babylonian philosophy and religion. Daniel and his friends proved faithful to God by abstaining from pagan worship, yet all the while prove their wisdom, intellect, competency, their faithfulness. And this gains them access to the king because of their usefulness to him. In the first half of chapter 2, we saw God's sovereign control over the affairs of man, including powerful kings like Nebuchadnezzar.

We saw the Babylonian king losing control in his rage. He's prepared to kill all the wise men in Babylon, since no one can tell him the interpretation of his dream.

Nebuchadnezzar dreams many dreams. Daniel chapter 2, verse 1, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. His spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. Notice the plural.

[1 : 33] He's having many dreams, and these dreams are bothering him. In response, Nebuchadnezzar gathers all the wise men of Babylon. And we have documents about these wise men.

Apparently, they were very interested in dreams. So much so that they had libraries in which they kept track of people's dreams. And then they had other libraries as reference tools to interpret those dreams.

So they were obsessed with dreams. Once these men were gathered, the most interesting thing happens. Nebuchadnezzar tells them, verse 3, I had a dream.

Singular. That's interesting because verse 1, it's plural. I had many dreams. But now he's saying, I had a dream. There's one dream. One dream that really troubled him.

One dream that troubled him to the point that his sleep left him. So much so that he is willing to massacre a large number of people to express his bitter disappointment.

[2 : 33] But Daniel enters the scene again, along with his three friends, and prays to God to reveal the dream and its interpretation to him, so that he may save the wise men of Babylon, including himself.

The mystery of the dream was revealed to Daniel in chapter 2, verse 19. And Daniel acknowledged God's sovereignty, wisdom, and might in response to such grace.

So Chad's sermon ended with verse 23. We never got to see that mystery revealed. We were left with a cliffhanger. But this takes us to our text this morning, beginning in verse 24, reading it together.

Therefore, so in response to God revealing the mystery, in response to praising to God. Therefore, Daniel went into Arioch, Babylon's chief executioner.

He went to him 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. Bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.

[3 : 38] Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him, I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.

The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation? And Daniel answered the king and said, No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers, Can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked.

But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, And he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay

in your bed are these.

To you, O king, as you lay in bed, came thoughts of what would be after this, And he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, Not because of any wisdom that I might have, more than all the living, But in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, And that you may know the thoughts of your mind. So before we continue on in our text, I have two foundational points to make here. And once these are understood, We'll then be able to see the rest of the passage as it relates. But point number one, God is working to fill his covenants.

[5 : 03] So again, more preparation, but before we even dissect that, We have to remind ourselves of these covenants. So just three briefly that I want to remind you of. First, there is the Abrahamic covenant.

This covenant was progressively revealed through chapters 12, 15, and 17 of Genesis. And it essentially boils down to three things. First, God promised offspring, land, and universal blessing, meaning blessing over all the earth, to Abraham.

Genesis 22, 18 says, And in your offspring, this is God speaking to Abraham, In your offspring, referring to Israel and ultimately Christ one day, Your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

So that's the Abrahamic covenant. Second, there is the Mosaic covenant. And this is established in Exodus chapters 19 through 24. The Mosaic covenant promises Israel will be God's people. And they will be a kingdom of priests mediating God's grace upon the earth. So you kind of see that Abrahamic covenant language coming back in. They're going to be a blessing to the earth. And you recall Moses functioning this way at Mount Sinai when the people were in sin.

[6 : 14] And God's ready to destroy them. But Moses intercedes as a priest and prays that God would spare them. So again, a picture of the kingdom of priests. And further, the Mosaic covenant included the freedom of Israel from the bondage that they suffered under to Egypt.

So it promised freedom. The third covenant I want to mention is the Davidic covenant. And this covenant can be found in 2 Samuel 7. And the Davidic covenant essentially boils down to this. It promises a king from the line of David who will rule a kingdom that will last forever.

It will never end. And furthermore, the other covenants will all find their fulfillment through the Davidic covenant. So these covenants are all building on one another. They're three distinct things, and yet they're working together.

They're all leading to something. So that leads me to this question. Does anyone see a problem in Daniel 2 with all this covenant stuff going on?

It would seem the Abrahamic covenant is not getting fulfilled because Israel is in exile. They have no land. It would seem that the Mosaic covenant is not being fulfilled because the so-called kingdom of priests who are meant to mediate God's grace to the earth are themselves being punished for their sins.

[7 : 33] God used Babylon to punish them for their sins. Isaiah 47.6. God says concerning Babylon and Israel, he says, I was angry with my people Israel.

I profaned my heritage. I, God, gave them into Babylon's hand, and you showed them no mercy. So how on earth can priests mediate before the judge if the priests themselves are worthy of judgment?

And isn't it awfully sad to consider that while Israel was freed from bondage to Egypt, here they are. They've returned to bondage under Babylon. And finally, it would also seem that the Davidic covenant is not being fulfilled.

Not only do they not have a land, but they have a country no longer in existence. This land that was supposed to exist forever did not exist anymore. Babylon conquered it.

And Israel was not bowing before the son of David, who was meant to be their king at this time, but rather they're bowing to this pagan, Gentile, faithless man named Nebuchadnezzar.

[8 : 43] So then how is God bringing his covenants to fulfillment in Daniel 2? And I don't want to mislead you. Daniel 2 is not the climactic moment where all of this comes to fruition.

But what we want to know is how is God bringing fulfillment of these covenants to be, even in the midst of this, even in the midst of exile, even in the midst of punishment. And in verse 24, Daniel chapter 2, we see a whisper of this covenant work still happening.

The king had appointed the wise men to die, but Daniel intervenes or mediates. Similar to a priest, Daniel is making a way for these wise men, including himself, to be spared by the king.

Verse 24, he pleads, do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. And I cannot imagine the number of men that make up these wise men. All the enchanters, all the magicians, all the astrologers would be slaughtered and add in their families.

And we're talking about a massive massacre. But here comes the grace. God is partially fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant in that he's using Daniel as a blessing to the nations.

[9 : 57] Daniel is stepping up to save Gentiles. And that blessing is a picture of the salvific priestly work that the Mosaic covenant promises.

Again, God is partially fulfilling the Mosaic covenant. And also catch this, the wisdom, righteousness, and faithfulness of holy God, and that he's faithful to his covenants, even in the midst of punishing Israel for their sins.

The very exile is a means by which Israel is blessing the nations. Now, we're going to revisit the Davidic covenant in a moment shortly.

It plays a major role in the dream that we are wanting to see revealed. I'm going to table that for now and get through our second point, which is also going to set us up for the dream. And that's this, point two.

God alone gives and reveals the dreams to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel. We know that God is sovereign over all things.

[10 : 57] Paul tells us, King Solomon put it this way.

He said, The lot, the dice, right? The lot is cast into the lap, but it's every decision is from the Lord. Proverbs 16, 33. God's sovereignty includes the dreams of kings like Nebuchadnezzar.

Proverbs 21, 1 says, The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord. God turns it wherever he will. So he uses kings to do what he will.

So clearly, when considering the whole counsel of scripture, God gave Nebuchadnezzar his dreams. Further, God gave the dream in its interpretation to Daniel.

Daniel did not do anything to receive this. He did not do anything to earn this knowledge. He simply received it from God by grace. This is why you will not hear me dare you to be a Daniel this morning at any point.

[12 : 13] Daniel is not the hero of this story. God is the hero of this story. Verse 26, the king asked Daniel, Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen in its interpretation?

That's a question about Daniel's ability, Daniel's competency. And Daniel's response makes it painfully clear that he has no ability to do this.

He says in verse 27, No wise men, no enchanters, no magicians, nor astrologers. In other words, nobody can show the king the mystery that the king has asked.

But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. So this is one of the many famous but God moments in the Bible.

By Daniel's own admission, it is entirely a work of God alone. He adds later on in verse 30, This mystery has been revealed to me not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living.

[13 : 14] It has nothing to do with Daniel. Again, it is clearly the work of God alone. And I'm stressing sovereignty because I want you all to see something wondrous in this text.

God is sovereign over Daniel, the righteous, obedient Israelite, a man of faith. But God is also sovereign over Nebuchadnezzar, the unrighteous, disobedient, pagan Gentile, a man of wickedness.

And God is using both to bring about his glory and his kingdom. So symbolically, we know from the Apostle John that the world is divided in two, the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Still here, we see God sovereignly and meticulously controlling both, and yet without sin. Some of you are perhaps uncomfortable with that language, but Scripture does not hesitate to claim this truth over and over again.

Hear God in his own words. He says, I, this is God talking, I, form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things.

[14 : 27] Shower, O heavens, from above and let the clouds rain down righteousness. Let the earth open that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit. Let the earth cause them both to sprout.

I am the Lord, and I have created it. Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots. Does the clay say to him who forms it, what are you making, or your work has no handles?

Isaiah 47, 7 through 9. The most famous instance recorded in the Bible of God using both the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light is the cross.

Peter preached this at Pentecost and said in reference to Christ and the cross. He said, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

So he's saying, God planned this. God brought this crucifixion about. God did this. And then in the same breath, he doesn't hesitate. He says, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

[15:27] Kingdom of darkness. So hear that. Peter is saying, God planned and brought it. And then he used lawless men to do it. Thus exercising authority over kingdom of light, kingdom of darkness.

All to bring about his plans and his purposes. We see clearly that God is using Nebuchadnezzar just as much as he is using Daniel to bring about his purposes.

And this sets us up nicely for a third point. We're looking at verses 31 through 45. We are finally going to see the dream. The text so far has been building to this moment.

You've been anticipating it. And here we are. What was this dream that kept Nebuchadnezzar up at night? So picking back up in verse 31. Daniel says, you saw, O king, and behold, a great image.

This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you. And its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of gold. Its chest and arms of silver.

[16:30] Its middle and thighs of bronze. Its legs of iron. Its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand.

And it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold all together were broken in pieces.

And became like the shaft of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

This was the dream. And now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and glory.

And into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

[17:33] Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you. And yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things.

And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and the toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom.

But some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage. But they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

[18:48] A great God has made known to the king, but shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation true. This brings us to our third point.

Point number three. The world, in all its kingdoms, will fall before Christ establishing his kingdom. So as Christ brings about his kingdom, he will destroy all other kingdoms.

So who is this multi-metaled man that Nebuchadnezzar is dreaming about? The text makes it plain that each metal piece on the one body is a different kingdom.

Many have asked, what kingdoms? And if you ever investigate this, there are all kinds of answers. Some say they represent different kings in Babylon. Some say different kingdoms throughout world history, and all those lists disagree with one another.

The first kingdom is clearly Babylon, verse 38. Daniel says of Nebuchadnezzar, you are the head of gold. So we get a clear answer on that one. The second kingdom is most certainly Meadow Persia, which we're going to read about later on in Daniel.

[19 : 57] And the last three kingdoms are the ones that are really disputed. I'll tell you quickly what I think they are. I think they're Greece, Rome, and a revived Rome, which is yet to occur. But ultimately, I think we're missing the point of this passage if we get lost in the weeds with this.

So let me explain. As we already established, there are really only two kingdoms throughout all of Scripture. The kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. All the kingdoms throughout history fall into one or the other.

And there's only one on the kingdom of light, and that's God's kingdom. And the rest, whether it be Rome, Babylon, Russia, America, whoever, are actually all part of the one kingdom, the kingdom of darkness.

This is why in the dream it is not multiple men running around that represent multiple kingdoms.

Rather, we have one man, one body, one organism.

It is the world comprised of many kingdoms. And that somewhat sounds like its counterpart kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, which is one body, one spirit, and so on.

[21 : 02] These kingdoms of the multi-meddled man all follow Satan, Ephesians 2.2. And the other reason I think we miss the point of this text if we get in these weeds is because I do not think.

It is so much focusing on the various kingdoms' identities. Rather, it is focused on the conflict between those kingdoms and the stone that appears in verse 34.

We should be asking what or who is this stone? And the stone is Jesus Christ upon whom he is building his kingdom and destroying all other kingdoms.

Verse 34 describes the stone as one that was cut out by no human hand, meaning it must have been cut out by God. And I think this is a broad reference to everything miraculous about Christ, his virgin birth, his miraculous healings, his resurrection.

All these things could never be accomplished by mere man, but only by God, our Lord Jesus Christ. The stone has been long anticipated as the Messiah.

[22 : 06] Genesis 49.24 prophesies concerning Christ the stone. Genesis says, Yet his bow remained unmoved. His arms were made agile by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob.

From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. The psalmist writes, The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. Psalm 118.22.

It's Christ. Isaiah 8.14-15. And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken. They shall be snared and taken. Even the New Testament picks up this imagery. Luke 20.18.

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces. And when it falls on anyone, it will crush him. The stone in Daniel 2 is the stone we have just surveyed all throughout Scripture.

[23 : 10] Jesus. Who is prophesied to strike the image of the multi-metaled man. Verse 34. The stone struck the image on its feet. In light of what we've seen, this is massive.

Christ is destroying not a few kingdoms, not certain kingdoms, but all kingdoms. This is the language of judgment. Verse 35 depicts the wicked kingdoms being destroyed like shaft of the summer threshing floors.

And the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them could be found. Jesus references this passage when describing his judgment on the earth that is coming.

He says, John depicts this battle in his revelation.

Revelation 17.14. He says, They will make war on the Lamb. Lamb being Christ. And the Lamb will conquer them. For he is Lord of lords and King of kings.

[24 : 20] And those with him are called and chosen and faithful. Revelation 17.14.

Nebuchadnezzar is not the true king of kings, as verse 37 would lead you to believe.

But King Jesus will make that abundantly clear. He is clearing the way for his perfect heavenly and righteous kingdom to have dominion over the whole earth, fulfilling his covenant.

Verse 35. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The mountain referring to the kingdom. And it fills the whole earth.

Verses 44 through 45. And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, all the kingdoms.

[25 : 26] A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure. So recall the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants.

We see here Nebuchadnezzar's dream foretells the kingdom of God having dominion over all the earth. Talking about land. This kingdom will be comprised of the faithful, the chosen, the spiritual offspring of Abraham.

And this kingdom will be perfect as it is ruled by our perfect God. And since it covers the whole earth, it will be a universal blessing. Thus, the Abrahamic covenant will be fulfilled.

We also see that God's people will be freed from their bondage to any worldly power, be it Babylon, Egypt, whoever. A spiritual exodus from any influence or power of the kingdom of darkness.

And this kingdom will be in right relation to God as priests. Thus, the Mosaic covenant will be fulfilled. And so here we return to the Davidic covenant. What about it? How does it fit in?

[26 : 33] Jesus is the son of David, Matthew 1, 1. And the true king of kings. As the stone in Daniel 2, he will set up his kingdom that will stand forever.

Verse 44. Thus, the Davidic covenant will be filled. The son of David will sit on the throne and rule forever. So even in a moment as dark as exile in Babylon, God is not thwarted, slowed, or stalled in any way when it comes to carrying out his plans, his purposes, and his promises.

Because he is sovereign. You know, unlike secular historians, we study history as Christians both with the beginning and the end in mind.

We know what was before and what is to come. And in the rest of this text, we are going to see the purpose for such an ending. So picking back up in verse 46.

Verse 46. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

[27 : 44] So in response to this dream being revealed, in response to the gifting that Daniel is exercising in front of the king, Nebuchadnezzar is falling on his face. He's paying homage. In verse 47, the king answered and said to Daniel, Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel made a request of the king and appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

This leads me to point four. All will recognize Christ's lordship and glorify him. We see this chapter wrap up with Nebuchadnezzar, the pagan, Gentile, wicked man, recognizing God's glory.

He says, Truly, Daniel's God is a God of gods and Lord of kings. Long before Nebuchadnezzar does this, Daniel praised God with his faithful friends, which Chad preached on, verses 20 through 23.

[29 : 02] Though Nebuchadnezzar is an unbeliever and Daniel a believer, both recognize God rightly. And the day is coming when all will recognize him rightly, either joyously as believers or begrudgingly as unbelievers.

Paul writes, Therefore God has exalted him, Christ, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2, 9 through 11. That is the purpose for all of history. It is all pointing toward the worship of Christ and his exaltation to the glory of God the Father.

And in light of such judgment that we know is coming, in light of the end of days when Christ will return to set up his kingdom and destroy all other kingdoms, judging them, sending them to eternal torment as a righteous judgment of their sin, there's only one thing that can be done in response, and that is repent and believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's no other way to become a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of light. There's no other way to gain admittance. There's no other way to please God, other than to be found in our high priest, Jesus.

[30 : 28] So there's just a couple closing applications. In the midst of so much turmoil regarding our state, the state of our nation, we should recall that God is sovereign, and he controls the hearts

of our nation's leaders, whether they be good or evil.

Every senator, every governor, every president, vice president, whoever, he controls their hearts. He directs them as he will. We are sinful to be anxious about these matters or any other matter. Anxiety is merely us expressing our doubt and disbelief in the sovereignty of God. And we would do well to put off anxiousness and put on faith, trusting in the character and power of God, for this pleases him.

And we have every reason to be confident. He comes through on his promises every time, even in dark moments like in exile, we see he is working. He's staying true to his word.

A second application is to strive to improve the world around us. And I do not mean this in a post-millennial sense, but as salt and light of the earth, we are to preserve the earth as best we can.

[31 : 39] And we do that chiefly through sharing the gospel, by saving souls. There's no better preservation than salvation. But secondary to that, improving the earth. Right?

This means doing things like mowing your yard, taking out the trash, being a good steward of all that God has given you, cleaning the laundry, everything. Verses 48 through 49, we get a picture of this salt and light work happening.

We see Daniel being put in charge of all the wise men as a ruler of the province of Babylon. It also shows his friends receiving promotions to oversee the affairs of Babylon.

They were government workers seeking the welfare of the state. And it is tempting to think that because God is going to destroy this world, we should neglect it. But that is not the biblical teaching.

Rather, as servants of the Most High, we are to still carry out the great dominion and cultural mandates from Genesis to worship God. And then one final application, and there are many more you can draw from this text, but for the sake of time, one final application, is to give God the glory in everything that you do.

[32 : 52] In contemporary terms, give credit where credit is due. If you do something that is excellent, something that is good, righteous, or honorable this week, it is not because of anything inherent in you or anything that you've brought to the table.

It's not the work of your hands. It is purely a work of God in you, despite yourself. Just as Daniel recognized that it was entirely God's doing that allowed Daniel to know and interpret the dream, so we too should confess our complete and utter dependence on God's work in and through us.

Let's pray.