



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Daniel 2: 1-49

Daniel

“Babylonian Dreaming”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you, Mark, and good morning. We’re continuing our studies in the Book of Daniel. We’re in chapter 2 and we’re going to take the entire chapter, which is a lengthy chapter, it’s 49 verses and I typically read through the entire passage, but this is such a long chapter I think we need to leave a little time for teaching. So I’m not going to read the entire chapter, but I am going to read verses 20 through 23 because that I think is the real heart of the text. It gives us the real lesson that Daniel has for us.

Nebuchadnezzar has some dreams. No one can interpret them, but God can. And so we read in verse 20, “Daniel said, ‘Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; he removes kings and establishes kings; he gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with Him.

To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and power; even now you have made known to me what we requested of you for you have made known to us the king’s matter,” meaning He revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel. And that will be our lesson. Well, let’s bow together in a word of prayer and ask the Lord to bless our time of study in it.

[Prayer] Lord, we do that, we come before you and ask you to bless us with an understanding of the passage that we will consider, Daniel chapter 2. It’s a great passage, a passage that gives us the sweep of history from the time of Daniel to the

kingdom to come. And it is a reminder to us that you're sovereign over the nations of this world, that you are the one that establishes rulers and removes them.

You are the one that is guiding time and history to its goal, which is your glorious kingdom and that is a great encouragement to us as we think about life, about circumstances of our own lives, the development of nations and what's going on in this day in which we live. You are in complete control and you're guiding everything. And we may not understand it, we certainly don't in many ways. We seem to grope for understanding of events and all that you are complete control and we certainly know that and we should rest in that.

And this text of scripture gives us that wonderful assurance. So Lord, teach us the encouragement of this passage. And there's much in here beyond that, but we pray that you would bless us and build us up in the faith as we consider the life of Daniel, this incident in his life and what was revealed to this great king, Nebuchadnezzar.

And so, Lord, teach us, build us up in the faith, encourage us and encourage those who have a particular need of encouragement. Some go through times in their life, as we all do to some degree of discouragement, the pressures of life can get to us. I pray for them, I pray that you would encourage your people who are struggling for whatever the reason may be. I pray for the businessmen here and that you would bless them through difficult times and give them diligence in their work and enable them to continue to look to you and know that the day is coming when you will take care of them.

You are the God who feeds us every day and we need to remember that and trust you. Have reason to trust you. You're our sovereign God as we learn from Daniel. I pray for those that are sick and pray that you'd give them encouragement and give them healing. We pray for ourselves and for family and friends that you would give encouragement and bless.

And bless the service that will take place on Wednesday that we will be honoring to you. Now, Lord, bless us as we turn our attention to the scriptures. And as we sing our next hymn, use it to prepare our heart for time of study and worship today. Pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] Some time ago I read a review on two books about Alexander the Great and the breakup of his empire. He died of fever or poisoning in Babylon. But

we'll consider that in a future lesson, but I mention it because the title of the review was Babylonian Dreaming and I thought, now that's not a bad title for Daniel 2.

It's about dreams in Babylon and empires falling. That passage begins, “Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams.” They were strange, mystifying dreams to Nebuchadnezzar, dreams that robbed him of sleep. We've all had dreams like that, I think. Perhaps not quite like Nebuchadnezzar's but we've certainly had dreams where we woke up in the morning and we thought, aw, it's just a dream.

You're glad you weren't in that place that you were dreaming of because they can seem real, very real and to some people even very important. They did to Sigmund Freud. He thought he could get into people's psyche by interpreting their dreams. Even wrote a book titled *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which is very risky. What we learn from our passage is the only dreams worth interpreting can only be interpreted by God.

Daniel said that and Nebuchadnezzar learned it and appreciated it. He was grateful for what Daniel said and gave to him. Now there's more to this chapter than dreams. It's about the faith and the courage of an 18-year-old boy who risked his life to stand before the world's greatest monarch and speak truth. But the dreams and their meaning is the lesson. They reveal the whole span of world history from Daniel's day to the Lord's day and the kingdom to come. And what we learned most of all is God is sovereign. We see that all through this book as we explained last week, but that's certainly the lesson that Daniel gives us here. God governs the nations. He has a plan for this world and He is presently guiding time to a triumphant end.

All of that came to the king of Babylon in dreams. One night Nebuchadnezzar was lying on his bed and he was thinking about the future of his kingdom. And Nebuchadnezzar knew history. And he knew that nations rise and they fall. Ancient Egypt lay in defeat. He had defeated it. Mighty Assyria was gone. The great Hittite empire was no more. What would be the fate of Babylon, this great empire that this king Nebuchadnezzar had established?

He was wondering that, he was thinking about these things when he finally fell asleep and then God answered his question in dreams. They were a mystery to him, but they were so vivid and so disturbing that he woke up in a cold sweat. Something

in those dreams foretold catastrophe and he worried that it might be his catastrophe. Tried to get back to sleep, but it was impossible. His sleep left him we're told.

So he called for the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell them what he had dreamed and what the dream meant. Now these were the king's advisors. These were the men who were considered the wise men of the kingdom. They studied the stars to calculate the coming events. They opened up pigs to examine them and learn what the right decision was that they were to make.

And the interpreted dreams. That was their profession. These were the wisest men in the realm. These were the magicians and the Chaldeans and they stood before the king the next morning and they addressed him with official courtesy. “O king, live forever!” Then they said in verse 4, “Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation.” And they would have done that had Nebuchadnezzar told them the dream. Like Freud they had their books on the interpretation of dreams. They had their formulas for explaining dreams and they would have done that. They wouldn't have been so foolish as to give a response that perhaps Freud would have and said, “O king, live forever, you have a neurosis. You have an Oedipus Complex.”

They wouldn't have done anything like that. Rather, they would have given an interpretation that would have been very pleasant for the king, one that would have been something he would have been pleased to hear or they would have given a general ambiguous type of interpretation that could mean any number of things. That's the way those things work and Nebuchadnezzar knew that. He had a lot of experience with these Chaldeans and he was no fool.

In fact, I think as you study Nebuchadnezzar and consider all that he accomplished and just what's told about him in this book, he was a remarkable man. He was a man of great intelligence and insight and he knew anyone could give an interpretation, anyone can give a prophecy, the question is is the prophecy going to come to pass and is the interpretation correct? And what he was looking for was not an interpretation of the dream, he was looking for the right interpretation.

And so knowing that anyone can give an interpretation, anyone can give a prophesy, anyone can do that, he put them to the test. Did they know what he dreamed? Did they know what had not been revealed to them? And that's really what he says. They say, “Tell us the dream.” And he said, “No, no, you tell me the dream. Tell me what I dreamed and then I'll have confidence in your interpretation.”

And then he gave them some incentive to do that. He said that if you can do that, if you'll tell me the dream and give me the interpretation, I'll give you great honor in the kingdom. But if you can't, if you can't tell me what the dream was, then you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.

Well, that's incentive to answer the king, and they knew that this king was not a king who gave idle threats. He was a strong king who did what he wanted and kept his word. And so they tried to reason with him, but he was in no mood for that. He accused them of trying to buy time for themselves which they were doing. They protested that the king was asking for the impossible. “There is no one on earth who could declare the matter for the king. Only the gods can do that and the gods don't dwell among men.”

In other words, no one but a deity can give you the answer you're looking for. Now that's quite a statement for them to make because Babylon was the seat of human wisdom and these wise men confessed their total inability, their total lack of wisdom, their inability to do that very thing. No one can tell the future, only a deity can explain hidden things. And that's true. That's very true.

Human wisdom can take us so far. And really not very far. It can't show us the future. It can't answer the most important questions of life or give the solution to man's problem. They were right. But they only infuriated Nebuchadnezzar and he sentenced all of them to death. All the wise men of Babylon were sentenced to death and that included Daniel and his three friends.

And they were young. They probably just graduated from college, from the University of Babylon. They were only junior wise men. They didn't have any influence. Still, they were being swept up in the king's purge. But as Arioch the executioner came to them, Daniel acted to intervene. He asked Arioch the reason for this and why it was so urgent. And Arioch explained to Daniel what had taken place between the king and his wise men and Daniel in a very tactful way asked for a brief reprieve.

Remember, he's only 18, 19 years of age, but he showed complete calm in the situation and maturity that's well beyond his years. We saw that last week in chapter 1 that this was a mature young man. But then he was a mature young man because he was well-grounded in God's truth and he was prepared because of that for every moment that came.

I think there's a lesson in that for us. We will all face a crisis in our life. We will all face crises in our life and they usually don't come at a predicted moment. They come at an unexpected time and you don't prepare for that at the moment, you prepare for that long ahead of time. And the only way to prepare for the vicissitudes of life, for the changing moments of life, for the crises that come upon us is by grounding yourself in the word of God day by day knowing that when things do come that will overwhelm us, we have the perspective from God's word to deal with it.

And that was true of Daniel. He was a young man, but he had learned at a young age from his parents and from his own diligent study the things of God, the word of God and he knew the sovereignty of God and knew that the sovereignty of God not only touched the heavens, it's not only something cosmic, it's not only that God is in control of the planets and the stars and the galaxies, he certainly is all of that. He calls them out by name. He numbers them all. God is in complete control of the heavens but also the earth and the nations. And more than that, He is in control of a person's life individually.

He was sovereign over Daniel's life. He was sovereign over Daniel's life that very day that He met Arioch. He is sovereign over every moment of our lives in whatever moment we're living. He is God. He is sovereign. And so Daniel, knowing that, knew that he could trust Him. And he did that. And based upon his conviction of God's complete, absolute control of the matter, he acted boldly. He asked the king for more time to learn the dream and the request was granted.

Daniel knew God's in complete control. God is omnipotent. He's all-powerful and God is omniscient. He's all-knowing. And if He's all-knowing, He knows what the dream is and He can divulge it, He can give it to Daniel. And Daniel had complete confidence that He would because he also knows that this sovereign God is a gracious God who answers prayer. And so that's what we read of in verses 17 and 18.

Daniel gathered his three friends for prayer. They had a prayer meeting. They asked God for compassion and deliverance for themselves and interestingly for the wise men of Babylon. Now those wise men were not truly wise. They didn't know the things of God. They were called wise men. They had a place of influence and power and you might think what they would say and the providence of God is going

to eliminate the Chaldeans and those pagans won't have any influence anymore and perhaps we can move in and have good influence on the king and the kingdom.

But they didn't pray that way. They prayed for the welfare of these pagans, these unbelievers. They sought their welfare, as I think we should too, seek the welfare of those around us whoever they may be. And so they prayed. Daniel took decisive action and wise action which shows that a belief in the sovereignty of God doesn't lead to indolence or resignation and inaction.

That's the accusation that's often made, isn't it, about the sovereignty of God. People don't like that doctrine, they think that it prevents certain things. I mean if election is true, if it's true what you say about unconditional election, then why evangelize? There's no point in doing evangelism. And if predestination is true, why pray?

Well, that's the sovereignty of God and yet it didn't lead to inaction with these young men. They certainly believed that Daniel expresses the sovereignty of God in just a moment and it was based on that that he took action and took the right action. They prayed. Didn't keep them from praying. It galvanized them in praying. Don't miss that lesson here. And don't miss this, that we need to be praying.

The situation they faced was clearly beyond them. They couldn't change it themselves. They had no influence of that kind. No one did. Nebuchadnezzar had made up his mind and they knew they personally could not fix it, so they looked to the one who could. They looked to the Lord. Why? Because He's sovereign. That's the reason that we pray. Why would we pray to a God who isn't sovereign? Why would we think we would get help and aid from a God who doesn't control everything? It's only because He does.

It's only because He knows everything that we can seek insight from Him. It's only because He controls everything that we can seek help from Him. Knowing that, they prayed. And it wasn't Daniel alone who prayed. The four men came together, they prayed. They prayed a united prayer and that too is a lesson for us because there is power when believers join together in prayer. We're all to prayer individually. We're to pray without ceasing the apostle tells us. We're to pray together. We're to be united in prayer.

The church gets power and answer through prayer. We need to be a praying people. And we see the results of it here. This is what the four did. They prayed,

they prayed until the answer was given. Verse 19, “Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.” In response, Daniel gave one of the most beautiful prayers of praise that’s recorded in the bible. It has been called Daniel’s Psalm.

Verse 20, “Daniel said, ‘Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; he removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is he who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and power; even now you have made known to me what we requested of you, for you have made known to us the king’s matter.’”

Now that is the absolute sovereignty of God. There’s no better expression of it in all of the bible. God is sovereign in politics. He is sovereign over history and over intelligence. He puts people and parties in power in government. He guides history. He changes the times and the epochs. Why did a barbaric little island like Britain become so influential that the sun never set on that empire? Why did the 20th Century become the American century?

God changes the epochs. And He alone gives understanding. He reveals hidden things. Why is it that scientists discover amazing things about this world and unlock the secrets of it? How is it that they discover some remedy, some cure for a dread disease? Because they’re so smart? Well, God raises up smart people, but the point is He makes them smart. He gives them wisdom. He opens up things for them. That’s what Daniel is saying. That’s what he recognized.

And it’s true for us personally. Why is it that you believe that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior? Why is that? The world doesn’t. It dismisses Him as at best a good teacher and if it gives any thought to us, it considers us to be fools, fools for believing in all of that, fools for believing this bible. Why, in spite of that, do we believe it? In fact, believe it with confidence? Have conviction about these things?

We believe because God has given us sight. Light is in Him and He enlightens us. That is the reason. It is all of Him. We were blind, but now we see. He’s opened our eyes to what were hidden things, truth that were inaccessible to us. And as we study the bible and as we pray, He continues to open our eyes to the truth.

Paul had a magnificent prayer for the Ephesians, one that as you read through the first chapter of the Book of Ephesians you can kind of brush over without thinking about it too much. But it's very significant and in Ephesians 1:18, he prayed for the Ephesians, that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened.

Now these were born again people. These were people who had a new heart, it had been regenerated, born again. They had faith. They knew Christ. They believed. But still, they needed more understanding. They needed the eyes of their heart enlightened and we all do. We're always in a state of growing and we need to grow more and learn more and have more insight.

And so we should pray for that. That's how we should pray. God enlighten me. Enlighten us, enlighten this church, help us to grow and develop. Daniel prayed and his eyes, the eyes of his heart were enlightened. God made known the king's dream to him and he thanked God for giving him that knowledge. Then he went to Arioch who went to Nebuchadnezzar and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king."

Once again Daniel stood before the king, a young Jewish boy before the greatest gentile ruler of the day, one of the greatest rulers of all history. And he gave witness to his faith. The king asked if he could make known the dream to him and Daniel answered, "No. No wise man, no conjurer, no magician or diviner on earth is able to declare it to the king." But he says in verse 28, "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to king Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the vision of your mind while on your bed."

And then Daniel reminds Nebuchadnezzar how he was lying on his bed wondering what would take place in the future. And God revealed it to him in dreams. Daniel would recall it and explain not, he says in verse 30, he was so smart, not because he had such wisdom, not because he had some book on the interpretation of dreams with all kinds of formulas for doing that. He would explain the dream to Nebuchadnezzar because God wanted it made known to the king. It's all of the Lord.

And then he told it. Nebuchadnezzar had seen a great plain and on that vast plain there should a colossal statue in human form. It consisted of metal that was simmering in the sun. And Daniel says in verse 31 that it was of extraordinary

splendor and awesome appearance. Its size was so immense that it made this great king feel small and afraid.

He describes in verses 32 and 33, the head was fine gold, the arms and chest were silver, the middle portion was bronze and the legs were iron. But its feet were curious. Its feet were of iron and clay. Then while Nebuchadnezzar was looking, a stone suddenly appeared. It was cut out of a mountain supernaturally without hands and hurled against the statue striking it on the feet. The massive statue collapsed, it broke into pieces and disintegrated into powder. Then it all vanished.

Daniel says, “The wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found, but the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. That was the dream and you can just imagine as Daniel’s unfolding this, Nebuchadnezzar’s eyes get big and he says, “Yes, that is exactly what I dreamed.” But what does it mean?

That’s what Daniel explains in verses 37 through 45. Without hesitation he says, “Now we will tell its interpretation before the king.” What he had seen in his dream was the future. There would be a succession of great gentile empires, four of them. Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest of the kings. “You, O king, are the king of kings, but only by God’s decree.” Daniel says that. He says the God of heaven had given him, had given Nebuchadnezzar the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory. God is sovereign. Nebuchadnezzar, you’re a great king, but you’re only a great king because God has made you so.

He had given to Nebuchadnezzar vast dominion over the earth. Man and animals were given into his hand. “You,” Daniel said, “are the head of gold.” As glorious as it was, Babylon would not last. There would be a second great empire symbolized by the silver chest and arms, two arms that suggest two parts of this kingdom. It is the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel describes it as inferior to you.

All of the succeeding empires would show a diminished or diminishing glory, as indicated by the decreasing value of the metal that represented them, but all would be empires. Persia was larger than Babylon and lasted longer, but nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar was more glorious. And the reason for that I think is this: that Nebuchadnezzar was the law. What he said was law.

The kings of Persia lived under the rule, the law of the Medo-Persians. They couldn’t violate the law. Nebuchadnezzar was the law. He was the state. He was

everything. And so in that sense, he was more glorious than everything that followed. But the Persians were more glorious than what followed them. And after a little over 200 years a new empire appeared. They were followed the third empire, the kingdom of bronze which will rule over all the earth.

It's the kingdom of Greece established by Alexander the Great who crossed over from Greece into Asia Minor in 332 B.C. and defeated the Persians in a series of three battles. He conquered the kingdoms around the Mediterranean and as far east as India and the Indus River where according to legend he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. The Greek dominance lasted about 185 years.

The fourth part of the statue is iron. It represents the Roman Empire, the rise of Rome was still centuries in the future, but Daniel described it accurately in verse 40. He says, “It is as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.”

The Roman Empire dominated the world for nearly 500 years from the defeat of Carthage in the year 146 B.C. until A.D. 395 when it was divided into the eastern part of the empire and the western part of the empire. The last Roman Empire in the west ruled until A.D. 476, but the eastern part of the empire continued on in what came to be known as the Byzantine Empire. And it continued until the 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Turks. That is the last empire.

But what about these feet of the statue made of clay and iron? Daniel gives an explanation of that in verses 41 through 43. It represents a divided kingdom he said. It has the toughness of iron, but because the toes are partly iron and partly clay, it will also be brittle. That's how describes it, brittle. Clay and iron will not adhere to one another.

So what he's describing here is a weak alliance. This is what the stone struck and caused the statue to fall over. So the meaning of the stone is the key to understanding the clay feet and the meaning of the king's dream. And Daniel explains the stone in verse 44. It is a kingdom, a kingdom that God will set up. It is the kingdom of God that is established by Jesus Christ.

Throughout the bible he is described as the stone or the rock. And the fact that the stone's appearance in the dream is sudden and violent makes it clear that this is not a prophecy about the Lord's first coming. This is a prophecy about the Lord's second coming. So the feet of clay and iron exist at that time in the future. They have

not existed in history. All of these other kingdoms are traced in ancient history, but this kingdom or this part of the last kingdom has not yet occurred. It's connected to the Lord's second coming.

And so this is the picture of a future kingdom or better, I think a revival of an ancient kingdom which is the old Roman Empire. The iron in this kingdom indicates its connection to the Roman Empire. The kingdom will involve people and nations that make up that empire, but the clay signifies that it will be a divided kingdom. Clay and iron don't mix.

So this final form of the Roman Empire will be a confederation of rulers rather than a single state, a single empire. These kingdoms will unite around the beast in order to raise up out of the ash heap of history the old Roman Empire. John refers to this in Revelation 13:1, “Feet have ten toes.” We assume this status has ten toes and John describes the beast coming out of the sea with ten horns and the horns have ten crowns. So they are kings that are described there in this beast who will be aligned with the antichrist in the last days.

And since Rome is part of Europe, it would seem that European states are the feet of iron and clay. Churchill, it's reported, said that the only hope for Europe is a United States of Europe. And what do we see going on today? We see the EU, we see the Euro Zone, we see what seems to be beginnings of that. Does it herald the revival of an ancient state? Well, we live in an unusual time. I think we all have to admit that, with the rebirth of Israel in 1948. We're seeing the rise of the Arabs.

These are unusual times unlike it seems many of the centuries that have precede it. But I have to say, and I say this with a great deal of caution, while I find this very significant and I don't dismiss it, I do find it all very significant, I have become wary of attaching current events to prophecy. I think that's dangerous and I've lived long enough to see that happen and come to nothing and see books ever written years and years ago that did that and came to nothing.

I think that's not a wise thing to do. We don't know the details or the timetable of God's plan. What is clear is this ten kingdom confederacy will rise in the future. There will be this kingdom in the future. Will it be the near future? Very possibly. Things that are going on today are, as I say, unusual. Very unusual and they could be setting the stage for that. But we don't know. It may be the distant future.

It will happen. This kingdom will arise and it will be hostile. In the Book of Revelation John describes these kings as opposing the lamb. They will oppose Christ. They will oppose the gospel. They will persecute the people of God. So the ancient persecutions of the Roman Empire will be revived by the revival of the Roman Empire. But it will be stopped. God will meet violence with violence when Christ returns. The stone will smash the feet of clay and crush this colossal statue. He will end gentile dominance. The time of the gentiles will be brought to a sudden end.

That’s what Daniel explains in verses 44 and 45. “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put to an end all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.” Now this vision reveals a lot about the kingdom to come, about Christ’s kingdom.

First, it is to come. It is future. It is not what many today describe as a spiritual reign of Christ, of Christ ruling in the heart of men. Christ is doing that, Christ is sitting at the throne of the right hand of the Father. He’s been enthroned. He is sovereign. He’s ruling in His people. He is calling out a church that He is presently building. He is ruling.

But this is a future kingdom that God, not man, will establish. It is of divine origin. The stone described in verse 45 was cut out of the mountain without hands. It is a supernatural thing. And it crushed the iron. It’s from heaven. It’s from God. The church isn’t going to conquer the world with the gospel. We’re to go out into the world. We’re to preach the gospel. We’re to make disciples. We’re to do all of that, but we’re not going to bring about the kingdom by doing that. We’re not going to usher in a golden age in the millennial kingdom through the preaching of the gospel.

Christ is going to conquer and He’s going to conquer with a sword. He will suddenly come, He will suddenly smash this world’s system. And He’ll replace it with a kingdom that is like those kingdoms, but different, one that is perfect and righteous. And that’s the second thing we learned from this dream. The kingdom will be an earthly kingdom.

The four kingdoms of the statue were all earthly, they’re all material, all of them political in nature. The kingdom that will replace them will be like that. It will be another kingdom. The four kingdoms of the statue were earthly, material and political in nature and we can expect that of what’s to come. Those kingdoms were

on the earth. They had spatial, geographic boundaries. The coming kingdom will be on the earth. It comes to the earth, but it will be boundless. It will fill the entire earth.

It will be spiritual but not only that. It will be on the earth like the four kingdoms. Each was followed by an earthly kingdom and this one that comes after the four will be an earthly kingdom as well. But this kingdom will be eternal. That’s the third thing that we learned. The four kingdoms were all replaced. This kingdom will not be left for another people. It is forever.

That’s the meaning of the dreams. Nebuchadnezzar had gone to bed the night before wondering what would take place in the future, what would happen to his great empire. And Daniel tells him in verse 45, “God has told you. He has revealed the future to you. And what it means is your kingdom won’t last, Nebuchadnezzar. Only God is eternal.”

Now that took courage on the part of Daniel, just a 18 or 19-year-old boy, he told this great king that all that he had built and took such pride in, this kingdom that was his identity, this kingdom that was him, that kingdom would end in dust. Now that’s the kind of thing that would anger a man like Nebuchadnezzar.

But Nebuchadnezzar thanked him. That’s how the chapter ends, the king got off his throne, bowed down to Daniel and rewarded him. Then he confessed, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and revealer of mysteries.” What a great confession that is. God and God alone reveals mysteries for Daniel and for you, for us. We don’t need Freud’s book on dreams to understand who we are. That will only confuse. We don’t need the speculations of scientists or philosophers to know the future. They don’t know.

Who we are, where we came from, where we’re going is revealed by God. It’s revealed in this book. It’s revealed in the bible. What we learn in this book, what we learn from this chapter of the Book of Daniel is time is not a meaningless succession of events. History is not circular. It’s not like a merry-go-round endlessly repeating itself but going nowhere.

History is linear. History is moving in a single at God’s speed, at His direction, according to His plan and it will culminate in a glorious kingdom. And all of that is for those who know Him, who have put their faith in His son as their savior. All of that is for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what God has

prepared for those who love Him, Paul tells us, “Eye has not seen and ear has not heard, it is glorious beyond our comprehension and it’s certain.”

Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* ends with Prospero saying, “We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with sleep.” Everything built on man is transient. It is as substantial as a dream. It doesn’t last. It will crumble. It will dissolve and it will vanish. Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom of gold was like a dream. And all empires are that way. All of them are fleeting. Only God’s kingdom will last.

Only the things of God are forever. A wise person knows that. Knows that that is true, knows that his or her life is really very little and rounded with sleep. It ends as sleep ends and we awake to reality. We awake to what is eternal. Now to what reality will you wake? To eternal life or eternal death? The lives of every one of us are rounded with sleep. We die and we will awake. Awake to what? Well, by God’s grace you will awake to heaven. You will wake up to Christ.

And if you’ve not believed in Him, we invite you to do so. Trust in Him. He’s the savior. And all who are in Him have eternal life. Receive in Him forgiveness and life everlasting with a glorious eternal future. It’s all by grace. It’s all God’s work. He offers it to the sinner come to Him. May God help you to do that and help all of us who have. I trust everyone in here has done that.

May we rest in that great hope that we have. May we rest in the fact that we have a sovereign God who is guiding every moment of life to a glorious end. And we will enjoy that someday. And we enjoy His sovereignty and protection now. That’s reason for a prayer of praise and confidence. So let’s end with that.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for your goodness. We thank you for the revelation you’ve given us here in this great passage of scripture. We are in your plan and purpose. And as your people, that’s glorious for us. We give you thanks for that because we are your people only by your grace.

Thank you for enlightening the eyes of our heart. Thank you for giving us understanding and bringing us to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. May we live for Him and live confident in this world. And we pray these things in Christ’s name. Amen.