

vv20-23 This prayer certainly sets the stage for the rest of the book. In fact this prayer may be viewed as the theme of the book. Daniel already knows what the reader will find out in the course of the book: God is sovereign over history as he raises and deposes kings.

“Thus, on the one hand, the empires give way in a sequence of decreasing splendor though increasing strength (gold to silver to brass to iron). On the other hand, the image-composite and, thus, a human fabrication and unstable as to its base-is destroyed as one whole. Perhaps the four kingdoms represent a picture of the totality of human government, symbolic of the human power structure, of the power of the human image” (Dumbrell 2002: 305).

The “kingdom of heaven” in the NT is referring to the “rock not cut by human hands” (Dan 2:44-45). It’s not that the kingdom is in heaven but that it comes from heaven.

v46 It is amazing to see that the king would “fall prostrate” before another! He is the “king of kings” and yet he recognizes that there is another greater (and Daniel is his representative). This, of course, should be a model for all other kings (and we see it again in chapter 4 but not in chapter 5 or with little horns).

### APPLICATION

“Here is a comforting message for believers today. There is a God in heaven, and this God may be called upon to supply sustenance and wisdom far beyond what is available from human resources. Although circumstances sometimes may look impossible from an earthly standpoint, there is a God in heaven who can do all things. He can solve seemingly insoluble problems, supply needs, and provide strength for impossible tasks. He is a God who is there and who is able” (Miller 1994: 89).

### SOURCES CITED

William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, 2nd ed., 2002.  
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John F. Walvoord, *Daniel*, 1971.

## DANIEL 2: THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### THE MESSAGE OF DANIEL 2

The Lord reveals through a faithful exile that God’s kingdom will destroy all earthly kingdoms (2:1-49).

### OUTLINE OF DANIEL 2

- I. Nebuchadnezzar orders to death all the wise men who cannot reveal his dream and its interpretation (2:1-13).
- II. The Lord reveals the dream to Daniel in response to the prayers of the exiles (2:14-23).
- III. Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar that his ability to reveal dreams comes from God in heaven (2:24-28).
- IV. Daniel reveals the dream of the large statue to Nebuchadnezzar (2:29-35).
- V. Daniel interprets the dream as revealing the future of earthly kingdoms culminating in the coming of God’s kingdom (2:36-45).
- VI. Nebuchadnezzar honors Daniel, his God, and his friends (2:46-49).

### THE PURPOSES OF DANIEL 2

Chapter 2 demonstrates that/how:

Only God can reveal the dreams of a man (2:11, 28).

The Lord hears the prayers of the faithful exiles (2:17-19).

The Lord protects the lives of the exiles from the king’s decree that they be killed (2:18).

God is able to reveal the future and he does reveal the future (2:22, 28).

God is sovereign over kings and nations (2:37-38).

The Lord rewards his faithful servants (2:48-49).

The chapter explains how Daniel and his three friends rose to the prominent positions that they hold in later chapters.

## CONNECTIONS TO SCRIPTURE

There are many similarities between the story of Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream (Gen 41) and that of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The author undoubtedly was familiar with the story of Joseph and perhaps he intentionally helped his readers to see the parallels. One might also wonder if the Joseph story was going through Daniel's head as he sought the Lord in prayer and came before the king.

Daniel seems to quote Psalm 8:6-8 when he tells Nebuchadnezzar that "he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air" in his hands, making him "ruler over them all" (2:37-38). Nebuchadnezzar however failed to act faithfully and it was Jesus who will ultimately fulfill this role (Heb 2:5-9).

The Lord had previously challenged the wise men to save Babylon by means of their spells and sorceries (Isa 47:12-13). Here their impotence is revealed. The Lord had previously declared that only he could predict the future and that the Babylonian gods were worthless (Isa 41:21-29; 48:3-11).

Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah had already predicted that the Lord would use Babylon to punish Israel. In Daniel we see that God has an inside man on the job and that Babylon is clearly subservient to the Lord.

Ezekiel calls Nebuchadnezzar the "king of kings" (26:7). Perhaps he was aware of this story in Daniel's life (Dan 2:37).

Jesus identifies himself as the "stone the builders rejected has become the capstone" and equates this with the stone in Daniel 2: "Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed" (Luke 20:17-18).

## NOTES

"Nowhere else in Scripture, except in Daniel 7, is a more comprehensive picture given of world history as it stretched from the time of Daniel, 600 years before Christ, to the consummation at

the second advent of Christ. It is most remarkable that Daniel was not only given this broad revelation of the course of what Christ called "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk 21:24), but also the chronological prophecy of Israel's history stretching from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the second advent of Christ. These two major foci of the book of Daniel justify the general description of the book as world history in outline with special reference to the nation of Israel" (Walvoord 1971).

"Among those who regard this chapter as genuine Scripture, there is a further subdivision into two classes: (1) those who interpret the vision from the amillennial or postmillennial point of view; (2) those who interpret the vision from a premillennial perspective. The difference here resolves itself largely in differing views of how the image is destroyed, and how the revelation relates to the present age and the two advents of Christ. Few chapters of the Bible are more determinative in establishing both principle and content of prophecy than this chapter; and its study, accordingly, is crucial to any system of prophetic interpretation" (Walvoord 1971).

"The God who offered a covenant with Israel is the same one who determines history, even when a defeated and exiled Israel might have reason to believe otherwise" (Pace 2008: 63).

Daniel is "a model of Israelite wisdom (v. 14) and a model of Israelite piety, in his prayer (v. 18), his vision (v. 19), his praise (vv. 19-23), his witness (vv. 27-28), his self-effacement (v. 30), his conviction (v. 45); the fruit of his work is not merely rewards and promotion (v. 48) but obeisance and recognition of his God (vv. 46-47)" (Goldingay, cited in Longman 1999: 74).

vv17-18 "Here is a beautiful picture of four young men, possibly still in their teens, united in prayer. This was a life-and-death crisis, and they pleaded with God to have mercy on them and to preserve their lives. Yahweh was addressed as "the God of heaven" because the information they needed could only come from heaven, as even the pagan wise men of Babylon acknowledged" (Miller 1994: 85).