

## Daniel 2 – Parts 1-5 STUDY GUIDE

### DANIEL 2 - PART 1

#### Daniel 2:1-12

God had humbled Himself before the nations and now He is about to be exalted above the nations through a dream. Not with chariots and horsemen, but with a simple revelation of the thoughts that a man was dreaming upon his bed while he slept. The absolute failure of the wise men of Babylon to help the king with his trouble opens the eyes of the king. This mirrors our own present-day troubles in this modern world, troubles that require the help that only God can give. This world will eventually fail all of us in the most essential elements of our lives. This failure of the world to help us in our troubles is the opportunity for us to do what Nebuchadnezzar did: let God step in with the help only He can provide. Too often, we go to anyone and everyone except for the omnipotent, omniscient God of Heaven. Many of us have not truly tested God's ability to take care of our troubles. God can help us, God cares for us, and God will hear our humble, sincere prayers for help, and not deny them. We see the truth of this in the experience of Nebuchadnezzar.

What lies ahead in our lives? What is the future all about? There is a God in heaven who loves us enough to show us what's ahead. Prophecy is all about a God who cares enough about us to show us the future of our lives and our world.

#### Daniel 2:4

Daniel 2:4 through Daniel 7 is written in Aramaic. This was the language of many of the nations at this time and even became the official language of the Medo-Persians. The fact that

God's message in Daniel chapters 2 through 7 was written in the language of these nations illustrates God's desire to reach the whole known world at that time. This same desire is repeated for all ages in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world ..." Not until we get to Daniel 8 do we find the prophetic message is more specifically for Daniel's people.

God's love is in pursuit of Nebuchadnezzar. God's message is communicated in a language that he can understand. In God's pursuit of a non-believing king, we see a picture of God's pursuit of the Hindu, Buddhist, Agnostic, Atheist, Spiritualist, and even the Satanist. God is in earnest with all people, and not content with the few that have responded and believed. God desires all to be saved and restored to His kingdom of love and grace. God is pictured as the Shepherd, seeking to find and save all His lost sheep.



“Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams...”

#### DANIEL 2:1

Daniel 2:13-18; Daniel 1:17-21

Daniel and his friends are apparently in their second year of training when King Nebuchadnezzar has his dream. At first, they are not consulted to help the king, as they are expected to be in training for a full three years. Because of this, they are not aware of what is happening until

Arioch tells them all about it. This explains why Daniel and his friends are excluded from the initial request to explain the dream but included with the decree to kill the wise men. It also makes sense of the fact that at the end of the three years, when Daniel and his friends are brought before the king for their “finals,” they are found to be ten times wiser and understand visions and dreams. This reminds us not to be overwhelmed by trials. God's timing is perfect. He knows when to deliver His people at the right time in a way that glorifies Himself.

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**Daniel 2:3** I HAVE HAD A DREAM

**John 3:16** FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

**Daniel 2:15** WHY IS THE DECREE...SO URGENT?

**Daniel 2:19** THEN THE SECRET WAS REVEALED

## DANIEL 2 - PART 2

### Daniel 2:14-24

Prayer is powerful. Prayer brings us deliverance from evil and selfishness. Even Daniel is transformed through his own prayers. Daniel goes into prayer petitioning that he and his three friends would not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Daniel comes out of prayer requesting that the king not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Would Babylon's wise men have done the same for Daniel? Not likely. In this instance, Daniel is a type of Christ who stands between the dead and the living and mediates for our lives from the death decree of sin (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 53:6, 12).

Nebuchadnezzar realized that the wise men of this world could not take care of his dreams, only God could. God wants us, like Nebuchadnezzar, to realize, that only He can take care of our dreams. He wants us to spiritually slay all the foolishness of this world that is masquerading as wisdom and trust in Him to take care of our dreams and our troubles. Daniel's first reaction to receiving an understanding of the king's dream was to give glory, honor, and praise to God. We praise men too much and God too little, and look to men for wisdom when we ought to look to God.

Another key to Daniel's experience is his willingness to tell King Nebuchadnezzar the truth about his kingdom. Rulers don't necessarily like to be told that their rule is going to end, that they are going down, yet Daniel was faithful to God in telling Nebuchadnezzar the truth.

### Daniel 2:26-28

In these Bible verses, Daniel is asked a question that he answers with heavenly tact and humility. First, Daniel points out to the king that none of the wise men of Babylon have been able to answer the king's request and make known both the dream and the interpretation. Then Daniel does something that is completely other-centered: he bypasses himself and directs Nebuchadnezzar to the God of Heaven. It would have been so easy for Daniel to take a bit of credit for himself at this moment but he refuses. Daniel does something that all believers need to do: he gives God all the glory. Not half of the glory, not most of the glory, but one hundred percent of the glory. Nothing for himself, but all for God. God steps in when we step out, and works His best when we continually direct people to Him.

### Daniel 2:30-35

Daniel has just given Nebuchadnezzar the very dream that he had forgotten. Now the king can trust that this young man—just a teenager—can also give him the interpretation of his dream. Daniel was used by God not because he had years of education and experience, but because Daniel made

himself available to God. God is looking for people who are available to Him, purposed to Him, and ready to reach the Nebuchadnezzars of this world for Him.

Nebuchadnezzar was the first person to attend a Daniel seminar. He had a front-row seat and listened intently to every word. He must have been amazed by what Daniel told him. The exact details of his dream were explained to him by Daniel, preparing the king to be receptive to the interpretation that was to follow.

## DANIEL 2 - PART 3

### Daniel 2:36-45

The dream of Daniel 2 is the beginning of a series of visions that cover the same prophetic history, adding more details to this first vision. This makes the vision and the interpretation even more sure.

Daniel 7 reveals even more details about the toes that are finally hit by the stone in Daniel 2. Then Daniel 8, 9, 11, and 12 add even more insight regarding the events taking place when the stone (representing the second coming of Jesus) hits the toes of the image of Daniel 2. Each successive vision that follows adds yet more details and gives us greater insight into the final events leading up to the return of Jesus.

### Isaiah 48:3, 4

God uses prophecy to gain credibility with humans because our hearts are so hard. Prophecy is a powerful way of helping us to have faith in God. He is using everything He can to help us to have faith in Him.

Bible prophecy, specifically the prophecies of Daniel, are so accurate that Bible critics have attempted to place its authorship in the 1st Century B.C. instead of in Daniel's day in the 6th Century B.C. Daniel predicts over 500 years of prophetic history in advance. No other religious book contains the predictions and history that the Bible contains. Daniel's visions predicted Babylon, followed by Medo Persia, followed by Greece, and finally, Rome divided into 10 parts with a little horn power coming up among the ruins of Pagan Rome and continuing its reign as a religio/political power identified as Papal Rome.

When we think about this, it is very practical because almost everything we do in life centers around us trying to predict the future. In our lives, whether in education, marriage and family, work, investment, home, or country, from little things to big things, we are continually faced with decisions that are predicated to some degree or other on the future. The planning of many outdoor events, like weddings, sports, or camping is based on an accurate prediction of what we hope the future will be like (e.g. the weather forecast). More often than not, we humans get it wrong, but God never does.

## DANIEL 2 - PART 4

### Summary of the four basic ways to interpret Bible prophecy and specifically Daniel and Revelation:

There are four leading systems of prophetic interpretation in the Christian religious world. Each of these systems has many eminent advocates, and of course, each group thinks they are correct! These four systems are as follows:

#### Preterist View

Preterism is a Christian eschatological (eh-skuh-tuh-laa-juh-kl) view that interprets Bible prophecy, especially Daniel and Revelation, as events that have already happened. Preterism teaches that either all (Full Preterism) or a majority (Partial Preterism) of Bible prophecies had come to pass by A.D. 70. In a nutshell, this system teaches that all Bible prophecies have already happened.

#### Historicist View

Historicism teaches that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are past, present, and future. The historical system, sometimes called the Protestant view, states that the visions given to Daniel were not only for Daniel's time but were a picture of what would happen down through the ages, up to the second coming of Christ and the world made new. In particular, these prophecies were especially for those at the end of time (1 Peter 1:10-12; Dan. 8:17, 26; 12:9). The evidence that the prophecies were true could be proven by looking to the pages of history to find accurate fulfillment. It also assumes that the symbolism of the visions was designed for us to understand.

#### Futurist View

Futurism, as its name implies, interprets the books of Daniel and Revelation as future events in history, mostly to be fulfilled at some end time. To counter the Protestant interpretation of historicism, Roman Catholic Jesuit Priest, Francisco Ribera, wrote a five-hundred-page commentary on the Book of Revelation that established the futurist interpretation of Bible prophecy.

#### Idealist View

Idealism in Christian eschatology is an interpretation of the Book of Revelation that sees all of the imagery of the book as non-literal symbols representing spiritual truths or conflicts, rather than understanding the symbols as representing specific history.

### Summary

In this series, we hold to the Historicist view of interpretation, understood correctly by Martin Luther and all of the great reformers and preachers from the 1600s to the 1800s.

We hold this view not out of a sense of pure traditionalism, but because it is in perfect harmony with itself, is verifiable in the pages of history, and reveals the work of Christ in its symbols, signs, and principles. It reflects the character of the author of Revelation "who is, and who was, and who is to come" (Revelation 1:4, 8, 19). Historicism is also more inclusive than the other three interpretive methods, as it accepts that some prophecy is already passed, some yet in the future, and that all prophecy represents timeless, spiritual principles of truth that can be of help in any generation.

### Daniel 2:41-43

#### Iron and Clay

Iron represents the iron power of Pagan Rome that followed Greece, as confirmed by history. The power of Rome is symbolized in the legs of iron. When we get down to the feet of the image, the iron is still present but it has an added element of clay. So what does the clay represent?

### Isaiah 64:8, 9

Clay here is a symbol of God's people. So why is the stone hitting the image at the feet of iron and clay if the clay represents God's people? Primarily because the clay, though it professes to believe in God, is mixed with the iron. The iron represents Rome, a civil power that did not believe in God, but worshiped many gods. So here we have in the last days a mingling of God's people with the secular world, a mixture of church and state. This mixture will not hold together, and it will eventually be crushed by the "Stone."

### Genesis 6:1, 2; John 1:12, 13

These verses clarify the difference between the sons of God and the seed of men. The mingling represents the uniting of the secular with the godly, the people of God with the people of the world. Daniel 2 is telling us that the last kingdom destroyed by the stone is a kingdom that mingles church and state, God's professed people mingled with the secular world. The iron and clay represent a compromise of God's Word with the world. It will neither cleave together nor last, for God is taking this final kingdom down with the rest of the image.

### Psalms 40:1-3

We see in these verses a connection between the miry clay of Daniel 2 and the experience of God's people who are pulled out of the miry clay (representing church and state). Here's an outline of the verses:

1. God's people who wait patiently for Him are pulled out of the miry clay.
2. They sing a new song to the Lord.
3. They are witnesses of God before the nations, causing many people who see it to fear God.

This is also very similar to the three angels' messages in Revelation 14 that call the world to fear God, have the patience of the saints, and sing a new song (Revelation 15:2-4). This message in Revelation 14 will be heralded just before the stone hits the feet of iron and miry clay.

## DANIEL 2 - PART 5

The image in Daniel 2 represents the nations that war against God. The image is in the form of a man, so in a sense, this image represents men who reject Christ. These men form nations that reject Christ. God shows us the ultimate consequences of that rejection in the imagery of Daniel 2.

Just as the image begins with a head of gold and then degenerates in value, so human beings who continue to reject God devalue their self-worth. The longer we reject our Creator God, the more we lose moral value and relational integrity. The image in Daniel 2 reflects the future of the man who rejects Jesus Christ. Each part of the image represents four kingdoms that align with man's nature and choices in life:

1. The kingdom of the head represents our intellect.
2. The kingdom of the chest represents our heart.
3. The kingdom of the belly represents our appetites.
4. The kingdom of the legs and feet represents our daily walk in life.

God calls us to serve Him with our intellect, heart, appetite, and daily walk in life. The most offensive part of the image is the feet of iron and clay. They look moldable. Clay is supposed to be shaped by God, but it's mingled with iron which makes it hard. When we are baptized into Christ, the image of Daniel 2 crumbles in our own lives. Our intellect, heart, appetites, and walk in life all fall under the "Stone," Jesus Christ.

Here are some practical insights into Daniel chapters 1-3 that illustrate a shadow of the three temptations of Christ:

1. Daniel 1: Reflects Christ's temptation upon the point of appetite (Matthew 4:3).
2. Daniel 2: Reflects the devil's temptation of Jesus to prove that He is the Son of God by tempting Him to throw Himself down saying, "...Lest you dash Your foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:6).
3. Daniel 3: Represents the third temptation of Christ to bow down and worship the devil (Matthew 4:9).

### Daniel 2:46-49

Nebuchadnezzar had a dramatic, intellectual conversion experience. He encountered the truth and he was convicted. He made a profession of faith in God, yet he still needed nurture and discipleship. This is another practical insight that applies

to all of us who accept the truth. We are to be nurtured and disciplined so that truth is not just intellectual but relational.

Consider also the experience of Daniel himself. When Daniel is promoted, he calls for a place for his friends. This brings him community and fellowship with like-minded people in this Babylonian government. Community is important, not just for Daniel but also for Nebuchadnezzar. We see this with Christ, who called the 12 disciples.

Yet another practical insight is how people are reached and grown in their knowledge and experience of God. God worked with Nebuchadnezzar—even though he seemed like a pretty bad person who might slay all of his wise men in a moment of rage. God works with us where we are, moving us along as we journey forward with Him, allowing Him to work out our issues. God knows about our issues, about our potential for bad, but He continues to work on our behalf for good.

Another important insight in the story of Daniel is that God's promises to us are not dependent on others. God wants to bless His people, His church, His community of faith. Yet if the corporate body is not faithful, the book of Daniel shows us that God's promises will still be fulfilled. God promised Israel that if they were faithful, they would be the head and not the tail. They were unfaithful but God still made the faithful Daniel and his friends the head of the nations, even while Daniel was in captivity: first to Babylon and then to Medo Persia.

### Summary

The miry clay mixed with iron represents the mingling of religion with the world. Too often in our own lives, we compromise with worldliness. God wants to pull us out of this miry clay and give us an experience of wholehearted devotion to Him. We often try to serve God and the world but it doesn't work, just like iron and clay do not cleave to each other. Christianity doesn't work without entirely surrendering to God every day. God can take us out of the miry clay and put a new song in our hearts to praise His name so that many will see it, fear God, and give glory to Him. God wants our intellect, our hearts, our passions and our walk in life to be directed by Him through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He has surrendered all heaven for us in the person of Jesus Christ and He asks us to do the same for Him. May that be our experience in Jesus' name, amen. ★