

Daniel Chapter 2

The narrative flow of Daniel 2 is chiastic.

- A. King has dream, which he keeps secret, offering rewards and threats, vv. 1–6
- B. The first scene before the king: failure of the wise men:
 - a. Four-fold wise men cannot answer the king; only the gods can, vv. 7–11.
 - b. King's emotional response of anger, v. 12
 - c. King orders all wise men to be killed, vv. 13
- C. Daniel and Arioch, "who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; Daniel brought in to the king, vv. 14–16.
- D. Four men: Daniel and his friends pray, vv. 17–18.
 - E. God answers Daniel, v. 19a.**
 - D' Four men: Daniel (and his friends) praise, vv. 19b–23.
- C' Daniel and Arioch, "appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon"; Daniel brought in to the king, vv. 24–25.
- B' The second scene before the king: success of Daniel:
 - a' Four-fold wise men cannot answer the king; only The God can, vv. 26–30.
 - a" The answer given, vv. 31–45.
 - b' King's emotional response: falls down, v. 46a.
 - c' King orders Daniel be honored, v. 46b.
- A' King praises the God who reveals secrets, and honors Daniel, vv. 47–48

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-2:13)

2:1 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.

The first thing we as we read chapter 2:1 is that Nebuchadnezzar had his dreams in the second year of his reign. "Nebuchadnezzar's *second* year would be that which began in March/April 603 B.C.."¹

But the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was also the year he brought the children of Israel to Babylon. And—Daniel was in school for three years after that. Do we have an error here? Should this not be the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign or at least the last part of the third year?

There are at least two possibilities here. One, Nebuchadnezzar had his dream while Daniel was in school. Two, the issue is explained by the difference of record-keeping by Jews and Chaldeans. The first year of Daniel would be Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, which was not counted. The second year of Daniel was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar reign. And the third year of Daniel was Nebuchadnezzar's second year and the year of the dream. In which case, there is no problem.

"As we read Daniel 2, the Joseph narrative in Genesis 41, which closely parallels this chapter, quickly comes to mind. In Genesis, a pagan king, the Egyptian pharaoh, has an anxiety-producing dream (concerning seven lean and seven fat cows). When the wise men of Egypt cannot interpret the dream for him, his cupbearer (paralleling the role of Arioch in Dan. 2) helps him discover a dream-interpreter, who turns out to be the

¹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 95.

imprisoned Joseph. Through God’s help, Joseph reveals the interpretation of the dream to the pharaoh, resulting in his rise in status in the foreign court.”²

Notice that the text says that **Nebuchadnezzar had dreams**, apparently several dreams. It is likely that **Nebuchadnezzar** had the one dream several times. “Important dreams were often repeated two or three times (notice that v. 1 suggests more than one dream by the use of the plural).”³

2:2 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. ³ And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”

Nebuchadnezzar was seriously disturbed by his dreams, so he called the experts, the ancient equivalents of our modern psychologists, **the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers**. These professionals had the interpretation of dreams as a part of their responsibilities—as do psychologists today. “...these people were the political consultants, trend spotters, and religious gurus of the day.”⁴

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and **his spirit was so troubled [2:1]**. “In the ancient Near East dreams were considered one of the ways in which the gods communicated with humans.”⁵ The king demands that **the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans [2:2]** tell him the dream and its interpretation.

2:4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

We note that at this point, Daniel begins to write in **Aramaic**, the primary language in the Near East at this time. The HCSB translates it this way: “*The Chaldeans spoke to the king (Aramaic begins here).*” The point is, it is not certain that anyone spoke Aramaic, just that Daniel wrote in Aramaic. But, we are not sure that he didn’t either for we read: “Aramaic became the lingua franca of the Near East from the eighth century, although Akkadian long remained in use in the contexts of ritual and learning.”⁶

Before we go further, let’s take a moment to refer to the Outline of Daniel: The Introduction, chapter 1, and the Conclusion, chapters 11:36-12:13, are written in Hebrew. The Babylonian part, chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic, and the Greek part, chapters 8-11:35, are written in Hebrew. So, we are now in the Aramaic part. This Aramaic section begins with a prophecy of four kingdoms in chapter 2 and then ends

² Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 73–74.

³ Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 2:5–9.

⁴ Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 76–77.

⁵ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 532.

⁶ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 156.

with another prophecy of four kingdoms in chapter 7. So, we have a four-kingdom inclusio around the Aramaic section.

The court advisors respond **O king, live forever!** They didn't actually expect the king to live forever, of course. This is what we might call court etiquette. It was common to the Near East.

The Chaldeans now ask the king to tell them the dream. They are more than willing to tell the King the meaning of the dream, but he must first tell them the dream.

But Nebuchadnezzar refuses to tell them the dream. There are three possible reasons why he demands that they tell him the dream instead. One, he may not have remembered it. "There is every likelihood that Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten the details of the dreams that had been haunting him."⁷ He knows he had a dream and is troubled by it, but he does not recall it. He needs the Chaldeans to tell him the dream.

Two, he remembers the dream, but he knows how these men work. Nebuchadnezzar is well aware of what they are doing. They can say anything they like about the dream, and he would not know if they were telling the truth or not. But, if they first tell him his dream, then he would know they have supernatural power and could thereby be trusted. "He realizes how easy it is to provide an interpretation of a symbolic dream and wants to assure himself of their authenticity by demanding that they also tell him something that only he himself knows, the actual contents of the dream."⁸ They can't do it.

Three, the dream might be subversive to the throne. To be safe, it would be best to keep this information out of the public domain.

There were dream manuals that these experts had access to that would allow them to research the dream and answer the king. "The dream manuals, of which several examples have come to light, consist accordingly of historical dreams and the events that followed them, arranged systematically for easy reference."⁹ They were helpful only if one knew the dream.

2:5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap."

Nebuchadnezzar is in a panic will not compromise. It appears that he is concerned that this dream reveals terrible things for his reign. So, if they do not tell him the dream and the interpretation ***you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap*** [2:5]. They are threatened with dismembering, having their body cut up in pieces, a not uncommon punishment at that time. This suggests dread of mind on his part; he is terrified.

⁷ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 98.

⁸ Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 78.

⁹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 97.

2:6 However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

But with the stick comes the carrot, **if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor** [2:6]. “The combination of promise and threat is pervasive in Near Eastern law (cf. the curses and blessings of the covenant).”¹⁰ The whole story is designed to show the lack of power these eastern arts provided leaving the story of Daniel to demonstrate the real power in the universe, the God of Israel.

2:7 They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.”

They have no other option; they again attempt to get the king to tell them the dream. Without this information, their hands are tied. They have no supernatural power.

2:8 The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm:

But the king will not compromise, “If they can relate the dream this will authenticate their claim to be able to interpret it.”¹¹ He can then trust their explanation.

2:9 if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

The king recognizes that they are stalling. Their attempts to negotiate fail; they receive nothing but additional threats.

...tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation. The king cannot be sure that they are not just making up an interpretation—how would he know? However, if he refuses to tell them the dream, but they prove able to recount the dream through “magic,” then he can know for sure that the interpretation is correct.

2:10 The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean.

“It was part of the diviners’ art to interpret dreams by either deductive or inductive means, but they had no means for discovering what the dream itself had been.”¹²

¹⁰ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 157.

¹¹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 98.

¹² John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 532.

2:11 It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

The Chaldeans understand that this is impossible, that only the gods can do such a thing—and they have no direct access to the gods.

2:12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

“The excuse of the Chaldeans (vs. 11) does not influence the king favorably, for he sees in it a confession of impotence and orders the destruction of those who had made it.”¹³ If they are no more capable than this, then what value are they? They cost a lot of money in upkeep but cannot do anything useful.

2:13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

The delaying tactics fail, **the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon** is issued and implemented for **they began killing the wise men.**

So, Daniel and his friends are now sought **to kill them.**

One might note that Daniel was not in the first meeting, why? Probably because he was young, maybe not much more than 18 years old, and not part of the crucial Chaldean leadership that would be called to such a meeting.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream (2:14-23)

2:14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵ he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

Daniel answers with **counsel and wisdom** or perhaps **tact and discretion....** Clearly, Daniel was unaware of the dream or of the King’s decision to kill the Chaldeans.

Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard.... “The title used here of Arioch is used in 2 Kings 25:8 and Jeremiah 39:9; 52:12 of Nebuzaradan, who carried out the destruction of Jerusalem. It is the title of an important Babylonian official. Its literal meaning is something like “chief butcher,” which has ironic relevance here!”¹⁴

2:16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.

Going before the king and asking for **time** was gutsy but a necessary thing to do. Esther knew that she could die for doing the same thing, “*All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner*

¹³ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 63.

¹⁴ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 533.

court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. ..." (Esther 4:11, NKJV). Yet, Daniel had little to lose, he was going to die anyway. But he must have been convincing for Nebuchadnezzar gave him the time.

Nebuchadnezzar had already denied the request of the Chaldeans and diviners, why does he acquiesce to Daniel? Perhaps because, one, Daniel was not present earlier, and two, Nebuchadnezzar remembers this impressive young man. Besides, Nebuchadnezzar may have made a standing offer for anyone to come if he could answer the king's question. This would have allowed Daniel quick access to the king. Notice that Daniel did not appear to need **Arioch** to get to the king. This again suggests a standing invitation to any of the wise men with an answer for the king.

he might tell the king the interpretation. It is interesting how sure Daniel is that he will receive an answer from God.

2:17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Sharing this information with **Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions**, they sought **mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret**. "...the four youths appear to have lived together."¹⁵ We are told that **the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision**, probably that very night. And then Daniel blesses God and prays again.

**2:20 Daniel answered and said:
"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.
2:21 And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.**

The first part of verse 21 "**He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings**" appears to address the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had; in this dream, Daniel became aware of what God was doing in removing kings and raising up other kings.

**2:22 He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.**

Unlike the Babylonian gods and their priest and wise men, God knows and deep, secret things.

**2:23 "I thank You and praise You,
O God of my fathers;**

¹⁵ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 65.

***You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,
For You have made known to us the king's demand."***

Daniel is quick to recognize that all this insight is solely from God.

Daniel Explains the Dream (2:24-45)

2:24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, 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; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

Having received an answer from God, Daniel informs **Arioch** that he will now, ***tell the king the interpretation.***

2:25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

Arioch may be attempting to take credit for "finding" ***a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.***

2:26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

Nebuchadnezzar gets right to the point, ***Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?***

2:27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.

Although Daniel has gone out of his way to save these men from death, he will not recognize that they had any role in determining the answer.

2:28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

there is a God in heaven.... Not the idols commonly seen displayed on earth. "He dwells in heaven, in opposition to the visible idols of Babylon, who cannot reveal secrets."¹⁶

in the latter days.... This would refer to the future or what will ***come to pass after this.*** "It thus has primary reference to that period which would begin to run its course with the appearance of God upon earth, i.e., the days of the Messiah. While it is true

¹⁶ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 70.

that the entire contents of the dream do not fall within the Messianic age, nevertheless, the principal point, the establishment of the Messiah's Kingdom, does fall therein."¹⁷

2:29 As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

thoughts came to your mind while on your bed.... The **thoughts** refer to what the king was thinking before he fell asleep. "Probably as the king lay upon his bed, he was moved by thoughts concerning the future of his kingdom."¹⁸ The actual dream was God's answer to these **thoughts**.

about what would come to pass after this.... Or about what will come to pass after King Nebuchadnezzar has died. The King was considering what would happen to Babylon after he had died. The dream is his answer.

2:30 But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

Again, Daniel takes no credit for this.

2:31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

a great image [or colossal statue].... We are not told the size of this image, just that it was great. It may have been the image later described in chapter 3, sixth cubits tall or about 90 feet high.

its form was awesome. "The appearance of the image was such as, because of its size and brightness, would inspire terror."¹⁹ This terror is the primary factor that caused Nebuchadnezzar such fear and resulted in such bazaar behavior in threatening the wise men of Babylon with a gruesome death for failure to explain it.

2:32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

Daniel describes the dream. It is of a colossal statue made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and iron and clay. Each metal forms a part of the figure starting with the head and moving to the feet and doing so in a descending order of value.

This image's head was of fine gold.... This proves to be King Nebuchadnezzar (2:38).

¹⁷ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 70.

¹⁸ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 70–71.

¹⁹ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 71.

its chest and arms of silver.... At this point, we are not told which kingdom this will be, but in chapter 7, we will conclude that this refers to the coming Medo-Persian empire.

its belly and thighs of bronze.... Again, we are not told which kingdom this part will be either, but later it appears to be Greece. "Macedonia-Greece was the Third Kingdom symbolized by brass on the giant statue shown to Nebuchadnezzar."²⁰

2:33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

"From the head of gold to the feet of clay there is steady deterioration."²¹ It is Rome that fills this description.

2:34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

A second figure is now mentioned, **a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.**

This is really the most crucial part of the dream but is not given much attention by Nebuchadnezzar. There is something in this world greater than the various kingdoms of men.

cut out.... Daniel 2:45 adds, *cut out of the mountain.*

"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." (Daniel 2:45, NKJV)

without hands.... Without the assistance or power of humanity. "...here the writer suggests the intervention of God without actually stating it."²²

broke them in pieces.... The power to destroy the prior figure is located in the stone. Empires rise and fall by all appearance by the power of man. In fact, their creation and destruction are through God's direction and by his power.

2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Unexpectedly, the statue and their metals **became like chaff from the summer threshing floors.** Chaff is used to suggest the unimportance of man's kingdoms.

²⁰ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 364.

²¹ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 71.

²² René Péter-Contesse and John Ellington, *A Handbook on the Book of Daniel*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 57.

And then again, something unexpected happens, ***the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*** The background of the imagery is found in Micah and Isaiah.

*“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the Lord’s house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.
Many nations shall come and say,
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths.”
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:1–2, NKJV)*

*“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9, NKJV)*

2:36 “This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

Daniel has completed the first part of the King's request. Having recounted the vision, he has demonstrated that his interpretation will be as accurate as was his description of the dream. He has earned the right to be heard and believed.

“Historically, two main approaches have dominated the interpretation of this dream: the Greek view and the Roman view.”²³

The Roman View: The head is Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The arms and chest of silver are the Medo-Persia empire; the Belly and thighs of bronze are of the Greek empire. And last, the legs of iron are the Roman empire. This is the view historically held by conservative scholars. It is supported by the visions found in chapters 7 and 8 of Daniel.

The Greek View: Liberals view the third and fourth metals as the two parts of the Medo-Persian empire. So, their order is Babylon, the Median Empire, Persia, and last Greece. They do not include Rome in their explanation.

Liberals “believe Daniel 2 was written before Rome was a major player on the world scene. Since (in their view) predictive prophecy does not occur, they cannot believe that the fourth kingdom is Rome.”²⁴

The reason they do so is that in their view, supernatural predictive prophecy is not possible. Thus, the Liberals want to get all the vision accounted for by the Greek period of Alexander, and of his successors, the Ptolemies and Seleucids by 168 B.C. for

²³ Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 81.

²⁴ Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 81.

anything later than this cannot be explained as anything other than supernatural prophecy. And we cannot have that!

So, by completing the story with Greece, they do not need to take note of the startling prophecy about Rome.

Now we will tell.... In the use of *we*, Daniel is either being modest or he is giving credit to his prayer partners **Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah**. There is reason to believe that they may be at this meeting, standing in the background.

“Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.”
(Daniel 2:49, NKJV)

2:37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

For the God of heaven has given you.... Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that his status as a great king was from God, not from his own abilities.

Although, the other three kingdoms are not here identified. We can draw no certain conclusions as to who they are but do so based on later revelation. “Identification of the rest of the sequence depends on evidence drawn from Daniel 7–8.”²⁵

2:38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.

At this point in history, beyond the frontiers of Babylon, there are no great kingdoms. Of course, civilizations will grow and extend these borders in the centuries ahead.

Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that he is the **head of gold** [2:38]. “Nebuchadnezzar must have rejoiced at this news. After all, in the scheme of “*things to come*,” he was at the top, represented by the most precious of all metals.”²⁶

into your hand.... Or, into your power or authority.

2:39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

These kingdoms are mentioned here without detail; a fuller designation is reserved for chapters 7, 8, and 10.

Another kingdom inferior to yours refers to the Medes and the Persians.

Then another, a third kingdom of bronze “refers to the conquest of the world by Alexander the Great.

²⁵ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 535–536.

²⁶ Tremper Longman III, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 80–81.

2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

the fourth kingdom.... The Roman empire.

that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. In military terms, this is the strongest of the four empires.

2:41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

iron mixed with ceramic clay.... "This refers to the military might of the Roman Empire, which brought a forced union of all the nations of the world including Judea and Samaria."²⁷ But that union was also a source of weakness. It was hard to keep these various nations "in line." Along with several other countries, Judah would be an example of the difficulty of keeping the empire together.

42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

We should note that it is now some 2500 years since these prophecies were made, and fulfilled soon after that. At the time they were given and especially when they were being fulfilled, the details of the prophecy would be more current and, therefore, more likely be understood by believers—simply because their lives would be concurrent with the events. But today, these many years later, we find the details challenging and difficult to understand. However, that does not mean that we cannot understand the broad outline of the prophecies, for we can.

43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

they will mingle.... This appears to refer to the Roman occupation of Israel.

with the seed of men.... This phrase appears to be a reference to intermarriage between Rome and some in Israel. Historically, this is not well attested.

2:44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

And in the days of these kings.... "...the expression is vague, for no kings have been mentioned since Nebuchadrezzar, but it is natural to assume that the writer intends the kings of the last-mentioned kingdom."²⁸

²⁷ Jay Rogers, In the *Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 50.

²⁸ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 104.

An important point: The question answered by this verse is *when* will God will set up **a kingdom** on this earth (Matthew 6:10)? The answer: He will set up His kingdom, “**in the days of these kings.**” Rome is the last kingdom in this prophecy.

the God of heaven will set up a kingdom.... Again, when will Christ and the kingdom of God *come on earth as it is in heaven*? It will be “**in the days of these kings**” (Daniel 2:44). This kingdom had its origin with Jesus.

which shall never be destroyed.... “Whereas the world-kings had been taken over by successive conquerors, none will take this kingdom by storm. The fact is rather that it will bring *all these kingdoms* to an end, but will itself endure forever.”²⁹

“*And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.*” (Luke 1:33, NKJV)

the kingdom shall not be left to other people.... “It will furthermore not be conquered by others, but will ever be in the hands of the same people, the true Israel of God, the Church.”³⁰ There have been many kingdoms since Rome, the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne, the Napoleonic Empire, the far-flung British Empire, the German empire of Hitler, the Russia Empire, and the America hegemony and now the growing power of China. There will be others. But the one, Christ’s reign over his people and his creation will never end.

2:45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

stone was cut out of the mountain without hands.... This stone was mentioned in Daniel 2:34 and 35 and now again at 2:45. “The NT writers apply the image of a stone to Christ: Mark 12:10–11; Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17; 1 Pet 2:7, with reference to Ps 118:22 and Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6, 8, with reference to Isa 8:14 and 28:16. The only NT passage that recalls this motif in Daniel 2 is Luke 20:18—“Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but when it falls on any one it will crush him”—and even there the allusion is uncertain.”³¹

The stone refers to the kingdom of God. “This does not refer to the Second Coming of Jesus as some have imagined. It refers to his first coming. This kingdom appeared in the days of the Roman Empire at the coming of Christ.”³²

without hands.... “From the viewpoint of the Jewish author, the gentile kingdoms constitute a unit, appropriately represented by the statue. While the statue is not an idol, it inevitably recalls idolatrous statues, such as we find in chap. 3. What is

²⁹ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 104.

³⁰ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 78.

³¹ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 171.

³² Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 51.

destroyed here is gentile power and the idolatry it implies.”³³ “The stone is represented as not being cut out of the mountain by hands in order to show that it is prepared, not by men, but by God.”³⁴

it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.... “The kingdom of God will completely triumph, and the kingdom of men (as represented by the image) will be completely destroyed.”³⁵ It will destroy all kingdoms but will not be destroyed by any.

“And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” (Matthew 21:44, NKJV)

Daniel and His Friends Promoted (2:46-49)

2:46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.

Nebuchadnezzar is both relieved and overwhelmed and, in behavior much out of character for him, he ***fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him.***

2:47 The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.”

“Despite the claim of Nebuchadnezzar that Daniel’s God was superior to all others because he revealed the dream, the king is not committing himself to the notion of one true God, as Daniel no doubt realized. As a polytheist, he can always add another to the deities he worships.”³⁶

a revealer of secrets (or mysteries)....

“The gods were believed to have revealed themselves when omens (such as dreams) were given, and they were believed to offer a revelation of the interpretation of the omens through the interpretive wisdom they provided to the sage as he used the resources and literature at his disposal. But Daniel had received the additional revelation of the contents of the dream, enhancing his reputation.”³⁷

³³ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 171.

³⁴ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 79.

³⁵ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 79.

³⁶ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 105–106.

³⁷ Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 2:47.

2:48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel gifts and made him a **ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.** Daniel then speaks for his friends, who may have been standing with him, and who were praying with Daniel for God's divine revelation concerning this dream and asked for promotions for them.

"As ruler over the *province of Babylon* Daniel would hold office in the capital of the empire, and so keep closely in touch with the king; his promotion to *chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon* would require his residence at court."³⁸

2:49 Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

"Like many a successful politician or bureaucrat, Daniel brings his friends into office. Their rank is evidently subordinate to his. The promotion of the three friends here sets the scene for chap. 3."³⁹

"Under Babylonian rule, there were administrative districts, such as Babylon and Sippar, governed by prefects."⁴⁰

A Summary of Daniels First Vision in 603 B.C.

"Daniel interprets the king's dream. The dream described four kingdoms that would rule over a vast empire.

Babylonian-Chaldean Empire from 605 to 539 B.C.
Medo-Persian Empire from 539 to 330 B.C.
Macedonia-Greece from 330 to 64 B.C.
Roman Empire from 64 B.C. to AD 70"⁴¹

³⁸ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 106.

³⁹ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 172–173.

⁴⁰ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 172.

⁴¹ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 47.

