

Daniel Chapter 2:29-49

A Tale of Two Kingdoms

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We are in Daniel chapter 2 this morning.
It is a continuation of a message I preached this past
June.

If you recall chapter 2 begins with King
Nebuchanezzar ...the king of Babylon.....having a
troubling dream.....and he does not know what it
means...but he is determined to find out.

The wisemen of Babylon are of no help...but Daniel
informs the king there is a God in heaven who can tell
him both dream and interpretation.

It seems the king was thinking about his future....in
**verse 29 he had *thoughts of what would be after
this*....even **verse 30** tells us this mystery revealed is in
response to *the thoughts of your mind*.**

Powerful leaders have this persona.....this public
perception.... of being strong and in control...it seems
they have it all together.... but no doubt they have their
moments of weakness....moments of insecurity...afterall
when you are are top of the world there is nowhere to
go but down.....so I don't think it strange that King

Nebuchadnezzar is contemplating his future here in Daniel 2

WellGod does indeed tell him **his** future..in fact God reveals so much more.....God not only reveals the king's future....but the future of **all mankind**.
God's plans are so much bigger than ours.

In 2 Samuel chapter 7 David wanted to build a house for God....David lived in a **palace** but the ark resided in a **tent**....David wanted to build a temple..a house for God.....but God moves on to a much bigger story....God informs David of the house he will build for him...I will build you're an eternal house...an everlasting kingdom.
God's plans are so much bigger than ours.

In Daniel chapter 9, Daniel is reading the prophet Jeremiah and learns that the exile in Babylon was to be 70 years....Daniel knows the time of the return from exile is now near and prays for restoration.
God responds by telling Daniel about a **far greater restoration that is coming**....God takes Daniel's 70 years inquiry and makes a prophecy about 70 x 7...this prophecy indicates the timing of Christ first coming...when Christ would die and make atonement for sin.....the ultimate return from exile.
God's plans are so much bigger than ours.

We read in Isaiah 55:8,9....*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD...for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

And what makes these grand plans of God so remarkable....is that they all find their fulfillment in none other than Jesus Christ.

The King wanted to know **his** future, God revealed to him **everyone's** future.

This is God doing*far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.*

Now.... if you remember from the first half of chapter 2....the kings' demand was two fold...tell me the **dream**...and also....tell me the **interpretation**.....so in verse 31 we see Daniel begins to tell the king his **dream**.

V31) "You saw, O King, and behold, a great image. The image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream begins with the appearance of a great image.....a statue in human form.

And verse 31 says.... **a**..... great image...it was singular..the dream contained only one statue

The title of my message is the *Tale of Two Kingdoms*....as you read this passage you might say...there looks to be more than **two** kingdoms.....even though four world empires are presented in the dream.....they are all somehow united.....the names may change but the common denominator is that they are **all kingdoms of man**...so it is fitting there is only one statue.

Verse 31 also says the image was of *exceeding brightness*.....this metal man of gold.... silver.... and bronze would dazzle the eyes.....a towering masterpiece that glitters....it is a wonder to behold.at least from a mere outward appearance

We all know the phrase...*Beauty is in the eye of the beholder*.....and who is the one gazing at this statue?...it is the King of Babylon

God is allowing a glimpse of coming world history to be seen **through his eyes**....he is seeing the future unfold from his **vantage point as a king**.....and from his perch on the throne...the statue is magnificent.

In contrast Daniel himself receives a vision in chapter 7.....this is years later.....Daniel is much older....and there is a new king of Babylon.

However Daniel does not see a statue in all it's glory...he sees ferocious beasts coming up out of a stormy sea.....Daniel is seeing the **same future**.... but God is revealing the true inward nature of these kingdoms to Daniel....they are beastly.

The next verse describes then..the statue of
V32) The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze,

V33) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

The statue not only consisted of different body parts...but each body part consisted of a different metal.

Then something happens...and no doubt this is the reason the dream troubled him.....a stone destroys the statue. We see this in verse 34

V34) As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

This majestic statue crumbles before his eyes

A stone was cut out by no human hand.....if no human hand chiseled out this stone...then who did?....you are left with the only possible conclusion...this stone is of divine origin...it is none other than Christ

We know from scripture how we are related to this stone ...this rock...is vitally important...many passages speak of the Lord as their *rock of their salvation*.

However.... others like Peter describe the stone as *a living stone rejected by men ...a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*

This rock is a source of safety to those who **trust** Christ..or a source of judgement ...to those who **reject** him.

We see the stone here in verse 34 striking the image....this is Christ coming in judgement.

V35) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

After the stone strikes the feetthis results in the entire statue toppling.....the statue went from colossal to nothing.....it started as gold and eventually becomes dust.....it is blown away by the wind

There is a stark contrast here...this verse depicts two different destinies....the kingdom of man is erased...**but** the kingdom of God is established.....it becomes a great mountain and fills the earth.

V36) “This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

V37) You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,

V38) and into whose hand He has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all - you are the head of gold.

Verses 37 describes just how powerful King Nebuchadnezzar is.....he is the king of kings....he has power and might and glory.....he has absolute dominion over everyone and everything

Verse 38 mentions the *beasts of the field* and *birds of the heaven*...this phrase find its roots in the creation account ...it is found in Gen 2:19 where Adam names the animals....it reminds us of God giving Adam the right to rule over creation.

Therefore verse 38 explains why Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom of Babylon is the head of gold.....the metal is in reference to the king's power to rule....he is an absolute monarch with total autonomy

So it seems the metals describe the political makeup of each kingdom.....as we travel down the statue ...the metals become less valuable...perhaps the governing power and control of these kingdoms become less

centralized and more diluted over time ...perhaps more corrupt as well.

These verses also tell us **why** he is so **powerful**.....verse 37 says **God has given** you the kingdom....verse 38 **God has given** you the dominion.....Nebuchadnezzar's glory and greatness exists ...only because God ordained it.

This would be a bold statement for Daniel to make in the presence of king Nebuchadnezzar.

V39) Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

Verse 39 is incredibly brief.....it describes two world empires to follow...it spans hundreds of years...yet it also seems like just a footnote.

This second kingdom is Medo Persia.....in fact Daniel himself witnessed the very night that Babylon fell to the Medo Persian empire.

Daniel chapter 5 is the account of Belshazzar's drunken feast and the hand writing on the wall ...that night Belshazzar the king was killed and Babylon was overthrown by Medo Persia.

Verse 39 says *another kingdom inferior to you* shall arise....so how was Medo Persia inferior to Babylon? They were not inferior in military power..medo persia conquered babylon

Medo Persia became a larger kingdom than Babylon...and existed longer than Babylon....but just as silver is inferior to gold....Medo Persia was inferior to Babylon in the absolute power of its leaders

This was evident in Daniel chapter 6 when King Daruis of Medo Persia desperatley tried to save Daniel from the lions....but even the king could not altar or rescind **his own law.**

It is interesting that the two qualities of the metals ...**value and strength**are moving in opposite directions on the statue...like the up elevator passing the down elevator

.... the **value decreases**...gold to silver to bronze to iron.....but the **strength** of the metals **increases** as you move down the statue...iron being the strongest. Perhaps this is telling us the governing power weakens and corrupts over time.....but the military might strengthens.....armies have certainly become much more lethal and efficient in killing one another over the course of history.

The third kingdom is not identiifed by name here...but later in Daniel chapter 8Greece is named as the third beast...this kingdom of bronze certainly did *rule over the whole earth* under Alexander the Great and his armies.

V40) And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all

things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

The most attention and detail is given to the fourth kingdom...almost all conservative bible scholars identify this as Rome....even secular history books tell us Rome conquered Greece...and a kingdom that *breaks and shatters* is spot on in describing Rome.

V41) And you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

Verse 41 indicates that there is a distinction between the legs and feet...the **legs** are made of iron....but the **feet and toes** are made of iron and clay.....this distinction has led many to interpret the final kingdom as having two stages....and earlier and later stage.....in fact the term is used of the feet and toes stage as a **revived Roman empire**....a nation that resurfaces in some form in the last days.

V42) And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

Many believe that the final form of Gentile world power in the last days will be made up of a 10 nation confederation....the ten toes of the statue's feet

It is also supported from Daniel's vision of the four beasts in Daniel chapter 7:24...the vision is interpreted for Daniel and he is told that the 10 horns on the final beast are ten kings.....and in Revelation 17:10 John is told the 10 horns are ten kings.

V43) As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

The interpretation dwells on the fact that this final kingdom will be different than all the other kingdoms...we are told 3 times that it will be mixture of iron and clay...two substances they do not mix...it is a paradoxical kingdom....firm yet brittle...in fact clay seems out of place on a metal statue...

What could this unstable mixture mean....if we follow the train of thought that the materials represent the political structure of each empire....then perhaps this is indicating some unbalanced political power....or....perhaps a multinational empire...

Why would such an empire exist?....perhaps this confederation of 10 kings will come together out of desperate economic conditions...a forced union.....a superficial union...

But the scripture never explicitly informs us....

I think we do well when we study passages like these....to focus on what we are told...and not try to fill in the details of what we are not told...concentrate on what is **revealed**..and not speculate on what is **concealed**.

How can something strong and something brittle exist together.....perhaps ..the best answer is ...we cannot be certain....but one thing is certain ...this final kingdom is a strange...odd union....that will not last.

V44) And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

In the days of those kings...which kings?...most would agree that this refers to the 10 kings represented by the 10 toes...who form one final kingdom...I believe this is the kingdom headed by the anti christ in the last days.

What happens in those days?

This is when God will set up his kingdom. ..*set up* implies putting in place something that did not previously exist... And I believe the kingdom of God that is being *set up* is the Millennial kingdom...a physical reign of Christ on earth.

V45) just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in

pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure”.

Although there is agreement that this stone is Christ and His kingdom...there is considerable disagreement as to **when** this smashing of the feet of the statue takes place.

There are very godly and wise believers who hold the position that this striking of the statue is the first coming of Christ.....this idea holds that Christ brought the kingdom with Him in his first coming...and hold the position that we are in the kingdom now.....this kingdom of God is spiritual in nature...not a literal kingdom

But I believe if you follow the evidence.... the literal reading of the text supports the position that this stone smashing the statue at it feet represents the **second coming** of Christ

Notice it is **catastrophic**.....the stone smashes the feet and the entire statue topples....it is not a gradual chipping away that wears down the statue...it speaks of sudden and final judgement...this would be consistent with Daniel 7 and Rev 19...when the beast is destroyed quickly and finally.

Notice the statue is **completely destroyed**.....the stone smashing the statue leads to the entire structure being pulverized and blown away as dust..as if it never

existed....this does not allow for any **co existence** of the kingdom of man and the kingdom of God...the kingdoms of man completely give way to the kingdom of God

And notice these are **literal kingdoms**

...Babylon...Persia.... Greece and Rome...had actual physical historical existence...with kings and capital cities....there is no reason to assume that the kingdom of God then is only a spiritual kingdom. You would be changing from a literal interpretation to a spiritual or figurative interpretation mid stream....it seems like an inconsistent approach to understand this text.

Daniel 7 which also describes this vision of the future...depicts the stone as the *son of man coming on the clouds of heaven*.....this is clearly Christ's second coming.....in Acts 1 when Christ ascends to heaven in the clouds....disciples are told that Christ would return again in the same manner...Rev 1:7 says.. *behold He is coming with the clouds and every eye shall see Him*

So this stone smashing the feet of the statue...is best understood as a future event...the second coming of Christ.

Notice the king's response here in verse 46

V46) Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

This is such an improbable scene...perhaps the most powerful king the earth has ever seen...bowing before a teenage POW from Judah.

Before we get to what the king says...do you notice what the king doesn't say....the king does not **correct** Daniel's dream narrative or interpretation.....he does not say...well Daniel...I am really impressed...you got about 90% of the dream right.....no.... he says...*Daniel you have been able to reveal this mystery*....the king's silence reinforces the fact that the dream *was certain, and the interpretation sure*....this is why I believe the king knew the dream.....when Daniel gave him the details of the dream....the king could rely on the interpretation as trustworthy.

Is this important?.....absolutely yes....remember it is God that has revealed this mystery...if any part of it is inaccurate then theological dominos start falling.....can God be trusted?.....does He truly know all things?...if God is wrong about this, what else has He been wrong about?...the dream was **certain**...and the interpretation **sure**...and this is vitally important.

V47) The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."

But what **does** the king say?.....*your God is a god of gods*.....the king is simply adding Daniel's God to his

house of gods....in fact he is putting him on the top shelf....he recognizes him as the most high god....but he is not relinquishing his other gods...

.... the king was impressed by Daniel's God...but it did not change his heart...I like what Alistar Begg said about this....the king was **charmed**...but not **changed**....we know he did not change his heart...in Daniel chapter 3 we see king setting up his own image.....in clear opposition to what God has revealed....and chapter 4 we see a king dripping in self exaltation.....pride on steroids.

Yes the king was impressed with Daniel's God...charmed but not changed.

V48) Then the king gave Daniel high honours and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

V49) Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

In closing.....I ask you to consider.....What was the purpose of the dream?...

Well from our vantage point...as we look back on this dream and interpretation...it gives us great insight into

what God has done and will do in history...this dream is a key part in understanding the endtimes.

The statue has a beginning and an end....it serves as a clock....**a prophetic timepiece**..as you move down the statue we see the passage of time....It tells us there is a day of reckoning coming.....it culminates in the second coming of Christ.

We also see that the **kings and kingdoms have an expiring date**...they all had a beginning...and they all had an end.....each part assigned by God.

I am sure Nebuchadnezzar never thought his kingdom would end.....even the kings themselves...maybe thought they were immortal...on par with the gods. These kings were subject to the same frailties that impact all men....Alexander the Great...who led the Greek empire...perhaps the greatest conquerer this world has ever seen....died at the ripe old age of 32

Notice also....this statue also completely **contradicts the theory of evolution**.....man's kingdoms are not getting better...it is a downward spiral.....from gold to dust. We don't need Daniel chapter 2 to tell us this....just look at the evening news....man's kingdoms are becoming increasingly corrupt..in fact the last and final beast that Daniel sees in chapter 7 is so terrible he cannot even use an earthly animal to describe it.

Advancements in medicine..science and technology are truly amazing...but we have not solved the problem of sin...wars...violence..oppression..injustice are still with us....scripture is clear.....our hope is not in the kingdoms of man.

But what about the original recipient.....the one to whom the dream was given....the King of Babylon.

Was it to **provide information** only...here's the future king plan accordingly

No....God's gives us prophecies to instruct our heart...these glimpses into the future are prompting us to examine our lives...how are we living in the present?....what are we trusting in?.....they are not given for informational purposes only ...the are given to elicit a response

This dream was given for the king to see his pride and the path of destruction he was on....God **gave** him his kingdom...and God can **take it away**...he would see the futility of trusting in the kingdoms of men...they do not last....and to see impending judgement coming

We often get sidetracked with prophetic portions of scripture and miss the subtle simple meaning of the passage....before the dream...the king lay on his bed...thinking about his kingdom...thinking about the future.....but in reality the dream informed him he was worried about the **wrong kingdom**....it was the **kingdom of God** that he should have been concerned about.

This dream was given to a pagan king in grace...God was showing him the direction of not only world history...but the direction of his life.

In Daniel chapter 2 we see the **wisdom** of men and the **kingdoms** of men.... both failing

Who are you willing to go into the future with?...man or God?.....what kingdom are you trusting in?...the kingdom of man?...destined for destruction...a kingdom of dust...**or** the kingdom of God?...unending...unfading...and undefeated.....eternal...never to be conquered...never to be replaced.