

### Daniel 2:44–49 (ESV)

**44 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, 45 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.”**

**46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. 47 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.” 48 Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 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.**

Last week we looked at the human governments that happened during history, just like Daniel prophesied. It would have been impossible for Daniel to know or predict just how history would unfold. But **God** knows, because it is all in His hands. God is not limited by time.

How would Daniel know that the Babylonian empire would fail? It was in its **peak of strength** with Nebuchadnezzar. There was no sign of weakening. And how would he know there were **4 more to come** before the coming of the seeds of the destruction of all nations?

Daniel is giving the king the interpretation of the last part of the king’s dream. He is going to tell Nebuchadnezzar what the end of the governments of the world would look like.

**44 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.**

In the days of the kingdom of the feet, the one with 10 toes mixed with iron and clay or pottery, something dramatic was going to happen.

You could say human history was going to get **rocked**.

Most scholars believe this kingdom to be the Roman government.

Now what happened during the time of the Roman government?

Christ was born died and rose again.

Verse 45 says this.

**45 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.**

We are talking about a stone that did not come about through **human** intervention. In other words, it is not an **earthly** kingdom. It did not come about through the **normal** human processes. It is supernatural.

Colossians 2:11 (NKJV) says this

**11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,**

This is the same idea. It is a process that is normally accomplished by human efforts. But in this case, it was accomplished through a spiritual process, a supernatural process. This cannot be explained through human means.

So we see a stone that broke all the kingdoms of men to powder. What is this talking about?

Well where have we heard this imagery before. When you think of a **stone**, what do you think of in scripture?

Luke 20:17–18 (ESV)

**17 But Christ looked directly at them and said, “What then is this that is written: “ ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? 18**

**Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”**

**1 Peter 2:4–8 (ESV)**

**4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.**

**Christ** was referred to using the imagery of a **stone** in scripture. The church of Christ was also referred to as **stones**. In Daniel we have kingdoms of men being destroyed by some other kind of kingdom, some kind of supernatural stone.

I think what this is saying is the stone of Christ, and by extension His Church will be the kingdom that replaces all other kingdoms. It will be Christ Himself who will destroy all political kingdoms when He comes to judge the earth.

It is vital that we see this. This Christ who is **so loving** to His children will be **devastating** to the kingdoms of men. There will be no remnants left of the **political parties**. There will be no nations left. There will be no political wrangling left. Those who think they are so powerful **now** will have their influence blown away like **dust**. All their **power** is a huge **illusion**. It is God who is **ultimately** and **always** in absolute power. They were all on a short leash, but they did not know it. They were all fulfilling a plan that **God** has. And they were all headed toward the day that the **Kingdom of God** will replace all the **kingdoms of men**. They thought they were free to pursue their selfish gains. They may have **relished** their perceived power. But it was a pipe dream. They were **never** in power. They were only serving their owners. Most were serving their father the devil. And the devil is on the same **short leash** of an **almighty God**.

There is no sign of a struggle in this imagery. A boulder does not struggle to smash the car it falls on. It is just an **inevitable event** when all the parts are in place. That is how we are to think about it.

It is interesting to note that the stone that crashed on the feet of 10 toes destroys **all the previous world governments** as well. There are probably pieces of all prior world empires still existing in the current ones. The US certainly borrowed heavily from **Rome**. We still have **Greek** influences. And there are probably still remnants we are not aware of. Well, in the end, there will be nothing left of any of them. Because none were divinely inspired. They were divinely **empowered** when they served God's purposes. They were made with human hands. But they never wielded the ultimate **direct authority** of King Jesus. Only the church does that. And for now, that is a spiritual kingdom. One day it will be an ultimate kingdom that all redeemed people will live under.

I think it is interesting how Jesus is so often presented to audiences in our day. He is presented as a **needy Savior powerless to save** those who are **resistant** to Him. He is pictured as some kind of **rejected lover** who is heart sick over His loss. You get none of that in our text's imagery. Here you get the idea that God truly is **angry** toward those who have loved living in the **kingdom of rebels**. His wrath is about to be poured out on those living in the prior kingdoms that rejected the rule of God. We do well to adapt our **view of God** to what scripture tells us. He is loving enough to send His Son to seek and to save lost people. But He has not changed His attitude toward **sin**. If we will not receive the forgiveness provided by Christ when He took upon Himself the wrath of God for our sin, we will need to pay that cost ourselves. And the wrath of God is bound to grind rebellious

humanity into powder. That is the imagery. Kingdoms are always made up of people. Lots of people.

This week we still have a need for people to man the fair booth on Friday and Saturday. You can have an opportunity to warn some people about their condition if you like. Let Carla know if you are interested.

Now back to the stone imagery.

**44 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,**

There is one more thing I would like to mention. Some have a view of the end times that the church will grow and grow in power over human governments and will hand the control of the reigns over to Christ when he returns. That is how they think the Kingdom of God will destroy the other kingdoms. They get that from passages like we are in this morning. I think they are terribly mistaken. There is too much other scripture that lets us know that things will continue to worsen until Christ returns and makes it right.

Then Daniel finishes his interpretation.

**A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”**

Now keep in mind that Daniel was speaking to the most powerful human on the planet. The king could demand that **Daniel be killed** and his people would **give it their best** to see it happen. How would we speak about our God in that environment? We have got to admire Daniel here.

Daniel basically said there is no chance that I am wrong about this because the **God** that **gave the dream to you** gave **the interpretation to me**. Your kingdom was not the first and it will not be the last. And your influence will not live forever. At some point it will be crushed into dust.

Not exactly what you want to tell an egomaniac like King Nebuchadnezzar. But Daniel does not care. He is speaking for a higher authority whose kingdom **WILL** last forever.

It is important that we note this too. It is nonsense to think that history is ultimately cyclical. There may be cycles, just like in your washing machine, but it is heading to a destination. The tub stops at some point.

God revealed to the **king**, and to **us**, the destination of human history. And it will consist of **dust** of world kingdoms and **citizens** of the eternal kingdom. Now I

suppose we can make a bet that the God who foretold all the kingdoms from **Babylon to Rome** might make a mistake about the **final** destination. But I think that is a fool's bet.

The dream is certain. It's interpretation is sure.

Ok. Now we have not seen the king's reaction to Daniel's explanation. How is he going to take this? He has been told his kingdom is **not going to last**. He does not have a time table. But he now knows that his contributions to the world's history will not be as significant as he would like.

How does he respond?

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

Remember how we talked about how **cynical** the king was toward his Mystical Division in his corporation? Remember how we talked about his **sour attitude** toward the whole idea of supernatural?

Here is human reasoning at its best. It can change its mind when presented with logical verifiable proof.

Daniel told the king his dream. That is impossible. But Daniel did it anyway. That is **proof** of the **supernatural**. He met the king's criteria for proof. It was simple.

Tell me a dream that you cannot possibly know and then tell me the interpretation. Then I will believe. And to his credit, the King did.

But we are going to discover something next week. We are going to discover the **limits of human belief**. We will see how limited humans are when their belief in God is **human generated**. We find it is ultimately **powerless and fickle**.

And then we will see what happens when **God decides** to **change the heart** of a human by showing them their weakness. That is where repentance happens.

And not until then.

Next week this same King will demand that everyone bows in worship to a false God. Nebuchadnezzar's best efforts at becoming a true follower of God are powerless. But God is not done with him yet.

Now what we see in verse 46 looks like conversion. But the king had not yet come to the end of himself. He bowed to Daniel and **commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him**

When you are getting a job review by your boss, you cannot do better than this.

Here is the most powerful person on earth **bowing to Daniel**. Now I think that Daniel would have tried to stop him from doing this. But the next verse shows us why he does not stop the king.

**47 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.”**

It looks like Daniel accepted the honor that the King gave him as a tribute to His God. The King was not giving credit to Daniel. He is giving credit to God. He is recognizing Daniel as the vehicle. I think that is the only reason that Daniel did not correct him.

Now look at this statement of **reason**, of **logic**, of **human wisdom**. The king is essentially saying-

**“Your God revealed the impossible, that which I had no expectation could be done. I was ready to give up on the mystic religions. I was ready to get rid of everyone who said they had supernatural powers. But now I can see that you really have a God and He really is in control. He is in power. He is the real God. He is in charge of Kings and governments and everything. He proved it by revealing the impossible to reveal.”**

This was human logic. This was an emotional reaction to deep truth. This was a statement of a profession of faith. This truth had a powerful effect on the king. His reaction was a genuine one of worship initiated by a human experience. Look how dramatic it was.

And look how powerless it was. It did not change the king’s next prideful temptation. It did not change the King’s world view. It did not change the king’s deep-seated pride.

People can decide for **God** all day long. In our world they can decide for **Christ** all day long. But until **God grants us repentance**, none of our decisions and reactions for God will have a life saving supernatural effect. God truly must waken us and call us to Himself. **Regeneration** must **precede faith** because **human generated faith** is powerless to save us.

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

The king was a man of his word. He promised rewards. Now he delivers on them. Look what God did here.

First he gave the king a **mysterious troublesome dream**.

Then he put it in the king’s head to **implement a supernatural test**.

The king also placed a death sentence of failure.

**God** set that scene.

Who of us, if we were in that situation, would regard that as an incredible opportunity arranged by God? I would venture to guess that none of us would. But if God's promises are true, we should expect that **opportunities like this** are hidden behind the **veil of the apparent**. This story in Daniel should help us remember that our **life situations** are not often what they **appear to be**. And they are always opportunities to grow in our faith, no matter how potentially devastating they appear.

Look at what God did with this situation.

God placed **one of His own** as the **second in command** over the very wicked and worldly province of Babylon. This was the most important province in the kingdom. And Daniel was made **prefect** over the Mystical division. It is likely that the wise men were scattered throughout the kingdom in various territories. They were working remote, as it were. Now the **Chaldeans** are under him, as well as all the rest of the people he saved.

This will become important to the story as we continue in the book of Daniel. Playing politics is nothing new.

This is an aside. If God wanted America to have a genuine Christian person as president, we need not fear that the democratic process would **limit Him**. He makes moves in our world as easily as a child moves a checker on a checker board. We are not victims of **random idiocy**, as it might appear. Our God is calling the shots. The leaders America is getting might be a sign of His judgment over us as a nation. But even in that, God can and will protect his people from ultimate harm. Those things that look like **threats** could easily turn into **opportunities** in His hand. There is never any reason to fear when we rest in the hands of a loving and sovereign God. He knows what He is doing. Always. Now Daniel is sitting pretty. He just got a **promotion**, a **raise**, and a **bonus** beyond his wildest dreams. He went from obscure to front page. And now he is in a spot where he can make changes to **benefit God's people** and to benefit the running of a worldly government. It is not unusual for God to put his people into the running of governments. And we can thank God that is true.

So does Daniel just focus on himself and his good fortune?

No. Daniel has friends. Daniel has a family of faith. And Daniel immediately uses that which he has been blessed with to **most bless** his friends. There, too, is an example for us to follow.

**49 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.**

Friends like Daniel are the best kind. They **share** their blessings and things aren't as good to them if they cannot have them **with you**. Daniel probably knew this opportunity might not come again. And he knows the worst the king is likely to do is to say no. So he takes a risk to share his blessings with his friends.

Daniel's reasoning may have gone like this...

**"King- how about my friends. They are like me. They serve the same God. They prayed for us to know your dream. They will serve you well king. And your kingdom is likely to be blessed by our God."**

So the king appointed them as administrators in the province of Babylon. Maybe one was in charge of public works, one was in charge of finance, one was in charge of the police. It would be those types of things that they administrated. This gave Daniel an awesome amount of control and power in Babylon.

Now let's think about this a little bit. Here were **God's people** in a **secular world**. Shouldn't these men be **separating themselves** from this world? Shouldn't they be focusing on the **Hebrew** communities? What attitude did God want them to have as they were living outside of the promised land? As Francis Schaeffer would say, **how should they then live?**

Well God spoke through Jeremiah about **exactly** how they should live. And we know that Daniel, at some point, had read Jeremiah's prophecies. This is what Jeremiah told to the Jewish people regarding the Babylonian Captivity. The question is, how should these Jewish people live when they enter captivity? This is the answer.

### **Jeremiah 29:5–7 (NKJV)**

**5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished.**

OK, we might expect this. Keep the bloodline going. Keep the population growing. Live your lives in the environment you were placed in. This is God's will for you now.

But what he says next is surprising. He says this:

**7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.**

Pray for the wicked Babylon that forcefully took you out of the promised land. Pray for the peace of your enemy that has you there against your will. What?



It is God's will that the Judeans seek to prosper the heathen kingdom of their enemy. The reasoning is that the better Babylon has it, the better you have it. If it prospers, you prosper. If it has peace, you have peace. Which is a much better environment to raise families.

Think about the implications here.

We Christians, as we work for secular companies and governments, we should do our best to **see them prosper** by all moral means. We should work diligently to see that the workplace **thrives** as a result of us being there. Naturally this will mean we must not compromise our walk with Christ to do it. But every company should be **better off** for hiring Christians. They should outshine their coworkers in their **work ethic** and **quality of work**. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Those who call themselves Christians often do not apply the biblical teachings to this area of their lives. But it should be true that Christians are the best people to hire.

At my prior company I was able to hire 3 Christians and our department had a comradery that other managers were jealous of. And the work got done well and on time. That is how it should be. I never made it to the king's gate, but in the meager corner of the company I was in charge of, I had no doubt what the will of God was. My team and I were to make the company better.

So when you go to your secular work place, realize that **God has a purpose** for you to be there. And it is to **represent Christ** spiritually to your coworkers and supervisors by **how you approach improving the productivity and environment** that you work in.

So at the end, Daniel remained at the King's gate or the king's court. Essentially he became the King's right hand man and would **make decisions on behalf of** the king so he did not need to be bothered with them. Daniel had enormous political power to do good to all of the Hebrew captives. But we will see in the next chapter that his power did have **limitations**.

I think the overarching application from all this is for us to factor God into every life event as the one whose purposes are always being carried out. Evil is not something that God struggles against. We do. But He does not. He's got this. We can trust Him, deeply and totally, no matter what our circumstance. And another might be, work hard to represent Christ well, even in the godless environment you work in.