

# Daniel, Joseph, and Jesus

## Typology in Daniel 2

ESV **Daniel 2:1** In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

<sup>2</sup> Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

<sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream."

<sup>4</sup> Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."

<sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.

<sup>6</sup> But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."

<sup>7</sup> They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation."

<sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm--

<sup>9</sup> if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation."

<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

<sup>11</sup> The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

<sup>12</sup> Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

<sup>13</sup> So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

<sup>14</sup> Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

<sup>15</sup> He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.

<sup>16</sup> And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

<sup>18</sup> and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

<sup>19</sup> Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

<sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

<sup>22</sup> he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

<sup>23</sup> To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for 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 matter."

<sup>24</sup> Therefore Daniel went in 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; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

<sup>25</sup> Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."

<sup>26</sup> The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"

<sup>27</sup> Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,

<sup>28</sup> but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days ...

(Daniel 2:1-28a)

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## Bible and Canon

A lot of people have this idea that **the Bible is one book**. You could actually get this from the word "**bible**" which came from the word Greek word *biblion* and literally meant "paper" or "scroll" and was an ordinary word for "**book**." Of course, we bind the modern Bible in a single binding making it in that sense a single book. Furthermore, given that God is the supernatural author of the whole thing, it is good and right to think of it in this sense as a single book.

However, Hellenistic Jews before Christ referred to the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the OT, as *ta biblia*, the **plural** form which means "**little papyrus books**." Christians began to refer to the OT and NT as early as 223 A.D. with the same phrase ("**the books**"). In this way, the Bible is not one book, but many books, 66 in the Protestant canon.

But what is a **canon**? It isn't a **war machine** used to blow holes in castle walls (cannon). Nor is it a **camera** used to take pictures (Canon). Rather, a canon is **a collection of books that were assembled over a period of time that are regarded as authoritative in a religious community**. I'm not interested today in the question of *how* we got our canon. I'm interested in a question less explored. I want to talk for a moment about *the order* of our OT canon of books.

You are familiar with the Protestant order of the books. These fall into **five** main categories: Pentateuch/Law, History, Wisdom/Poetry, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets. In this order, Malachi is the last book of the OT. However, the order of the canon is a human logical convention. There's nothing anywhere that says you have to have one order over another. In this way, it is a lot like chapter and verse additions. When you look at the Hebrew OT, for example, you find only **three** main divisions: Law, Prophets, Wisdom/Psalms. The LXX on the other hand has **four** divisions: Law, History, Wisdom, Prophets.

While all three canons begin with **Genesis**, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, what I'm interested in today is **the placement of the book of Daniel** in these three canons. In our canon, it is **the last book of the Major**

**Prophets** (named because of their length, not importance). This makes it the 13<sup>th</sup> book from the end of the OT. The Hebrew OT doesn't place Daniel in the Prophets, but in the Writings.<sup>1</sup> It becomes the **third from last** book of their canon. Meanwhile, the LXX places it in the Prophets, but it has Daniel as **the very last book** of the OT canon.

Three OT Canons Compared		
Protestant OT	Hebrew Bible	Septuagint
<b>Pentateuch</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<b>Torah/Pentateuch</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<b>Law</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
<b>History</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1, 2 Samuel 1, 2 Kings 1, 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	<b>Prophets</b> (Former Prophets) Joshua Judges Samuel Kings (Latter Prophets) Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel	<b>History</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1, 2 Samuel 1, 2 Kings 1, 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther
<b>Poetry/Wisdom</b> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	(Minor Prophets) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah	<b>Wisdom</b> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon
<b>Major Prophets</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel <b>Daniel</b>	Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	<b>Prophets</b> Hosea Amos Micah Joel Obadiah Jonah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zachariah Malachi Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel <b>Daniel</b> <sup>1</sup>
<b>Minor Prophets</b> Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	<b>Writings</b> Psalms Proverbs Job Song of Songs Ruth Lamentations Ecclesiastes Esther <b>Daniel</b> Ezra/Nehemiah Chronicles	
<small><sup>1</sup> The LXX adds 1 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, additions of Esther, 1, 2, 3 Maccabees to History; Ps 151, Prayer of Manasseh, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, and Psalms of Solomon in the Wisdom grouping; Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, and additions of Daniel to the Prophets; it places 4 Maccabees as an appendix.</small>		

<sup>1</sup> The question of why is explored in **Thomas J. Finley**, “The Book of Daniel in the Canon of Scripture,” *BibSac* 165 (2008): 195-208.

If we think about [the last book in each canon](#), each makes for its own interesting conclusion to the OT. In ours, [Malachi](#) is probably the last book written and it ends with these amazing prophecies about Christ and John the Baptist, thus making a very nice transition to the Gospels. In the Jewish canon, Chronicles (sometimes Ezra) is the last book. For them, they end with God bringing the people back into the land of Israel after the captivity, a very hopeful note. But as they officially do not believe Messiah came, this is the end of their Bible.

But the LXX ends with Daniel, and today I want to give you what may have been a reason for this. It has to do with the way [the Daniel stories](#) in chs. 1-6, but especially in ch. 2, [deliberately remind us of someone found in the first book](#).<sup>2</sup> Hence, first book, last book. That someone is [Joseph](#), [who serves as a type of Daniel](#);<sup>3</sup> who in turn will serve later on as a type of Jesus Christ himself.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example, [Joshua M. Philpot](#), “Was Joseph a Type of Daniel? Typological Correspondence in Genesis 37-50 and Daniel 1-6,” *JETS* 61.4 (2018): 681-96, [https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/61/61-4/JETS\\_61.4\\_681-696\\_Philpot.pdf](https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/61/61-4/JETS_61.4_681-696_Philpot.pdf); [Matthew S. Rindge](#), “Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41,” *JBL* 129:1 (Spring 2010): 85-104, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27821006?seq=1>; [Wendy L. Widder](#), “The Court Stories of Joseph (Gen 41) and Daniel (Dan 2) in Canonical Context: A Theological Paradigm for God’s Work Among the Nations,” *Old Testament Essays* 27.3 (2014), 1112-1128, <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/ote/v27n3/18.pdf>; [John E. Goldingay](#), *Daniel*, vol. 30, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 42-43.

<sup>3</sup> Goldingay says, “[Dan 2] is like Gen 41, only more so” and then suggests “that Joseph could be seen as a type of Daniel.” [Goldingay](#), 43.

Recall broadly what [Genesis](#) is about. It is the book of [origins](#). The first two chapters are about the [origins](#) of the heaven and earth, then of things God fills them with, and finally of humanity. Chapters 3-4 are about the [origin](#) of sin and evil. Chapters 5-11 deal with the [origins](#) of the nations. Once we come to chapter 12, we start to discover the [origin](#) of the nation of Israel and how they came to be the chosen people of God.

This in turn takes us to [Abraham](#), the father of all Jews because it was through him that God covenanted and made the promises that he would have children as numerous as the sands of the sea and the stars of heaven. This covenant promise was then renewed with his miracle-son [Isaac](#), the younger of two brothers, and then with his son [Jacob](#), the youngest of twins.

It is with Jacob that we learn the [origin](#) of the twelve tribes of Israel, for from this man came twelve sons. For many years, the youngest of these sons was Joseph, the eleventh born. Joseph was his father's favorite, and this annoyed his brothers so much that they decided to kill him. They would have succeeded if not for the intervention of their oldest brother who convinced them to sell him into slavery. It is at this moment that we get [the final origin of](#)

the book: the origin of Israel going into the land of Egypt where they were eventually become slaves of the Pharaoh. Think here about how Daniel is similar. In the first chapter we learned about how Nebuchadnezzar took many Jews captive and brought them into Babylon.

There are other similarities. Joseph is described as, “Handsome in form and appearance” (Gen 39:6). Daniel is, “Handsome and of good appearance” (Dan 1:4). Both refuse to compromise on God’s law. Both refuse temptation. Joseph won’t sleep with Potiphar’s wife (Gen 39:7-18); Daniel refuses to eat the king’s food and drink his wine (Dan 1:8-16). Both are said to be given exceptional wisdom by God which is recognized by the pagan rulers (Gen 41:39; Dan 1:4, 17). Both are given new names (Gen 41:45; Dan 1:7). Both find favor with their superiors (Gen 39:4, 21; Dan 1:9). Finally, as we will see later, both become the only two people in the entire OT given the ability to interpret dreams.<sup>4</sup>

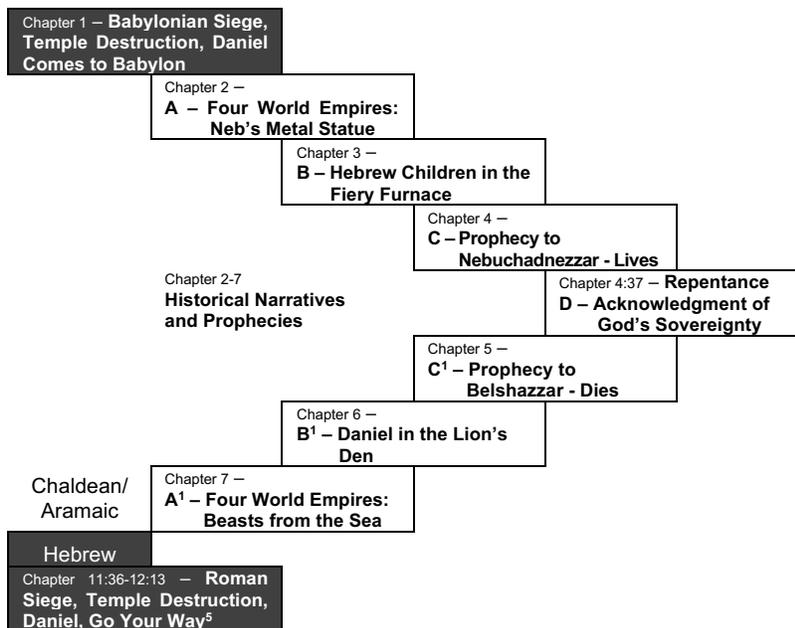
## Context and Structure of Daniel 2

Today we will look at the first half of Daniel 2, specifically vv. 1-28. Recall that our book is written half in

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<sup>4</sup> On these see Philpot, 685.

Hebrew and half in Aramaic. The **Aramaic** portion begins in **2:4b**, immediately after it says, “**Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic ...**” If it were a movie done by Hollywood, this is where the beginning, in a foreign language with subtitles, now turns to English. The context of chs. 2-7 form this interesting chiasm of dreams (2, 7), deliverances (3, 6), and prophecies to kings (4, 5) that end in two very different outcomes.



Daniel 2 centers on a dream that king Nebuchadnezzar had. My ESV Bible has three headings:

<sup>5</sup> Modified from **Rogers**, *In the Days of These Kings*, 25; which is in turn adapted from Frank B. Holbrook (editor). *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus & the Nature of Prophecy, Daniel & Revelation Committee Series, Vol. 3* (Review and Herald Publishing Committee, June, 1986). I also used “Daniel’s Double chiasm A Series on Daniel’s Prophecies and Fulfillment: Part 4,” [Helpmewithbiblestudy.org](http://helpmewithbiblestudy.org), <http://helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12End/DanielDoubleChiasm.aspx#sthash.9YEP19Ie.dpbs>

1. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-16)
2. God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:17-30)
3. Daniel Interprets the Dream (2:31-45)

What's interesting to me about this is that there are actually [four chiasms in the chapter](#), all quite deliberate, and none of them fall on these main heading breaks. These are:

1. 2:1-12
2. 2:13-28
3. 2:29-36
4. 2:36-45

We will look at [the first two of these today](#) and then the last two next time. With two chiasms, it means we will have [two central points](#), the first of which is a [massive threat](#) from the king, and the second focusing on [the God who saves Daniel](#).

- A.** Nebuchadnezzar is troubled (2:1).
- B.** "The Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king" (2:1-2).
- C.** "The king said ... know the dream" (2:3).
- D.** "The Chaldeans said ... tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation" (2:4).
- E.** "The word from me is firm" (2:5a).
- F.** **"If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation" or "you shall be torn limb from limb" (2:5b).**
- F'.** **"Show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor" (2:6).**
- E'.** "Therefore, show me the dream and its interpretation" (2:6b).
- D'.** "They answered ... Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation" (2:7).
- C'.** "The king answered and said ... if you do not make the dream known" (2:8-9).
- B'.** "The Chaldeans" ... "meet the king" ... "no one can show it to the king" (2:10-12).
- A'.** Nebuchadnezzar is angry and furious (2:12).
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- A.** "Wise men ... Arioch made the thing known" (2:13-15).
- B.** "Daniel ... that he might show the interpretation to the king" (2:16).
- C.** "Daniel ... the wise men of Babylon" (2:17-18).
- D.** "The mystery was revealed" (2:19a).
- E.** "Wisdom and might" (2:19b-20).
- F.** **God's sovereignty and omniscience (2:21-22)**
- E'.** "Wisdom and might" (2:23a).
- D'.** "You have made known to us the king's matter" (2:23b).
- C'.** "Daniel ... the wise men of Babylon" (2:24).
- B'.** "Bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation" (2:24b-25).
- A'.** "Are you able to make known to me ... now wise men" (2:26-28a).

This is, indeed, a book all about God’s sovereignty, especially [over the nations](#), which is one of the main reasons I want to highlight for you this parallel with Joseph. As we get into our passage today, I want you to know up front that there are at least 17 direct parallels in the stories, ten of which appear in vv. 1-30. We will look at each when we come to it as we go through the chapter.

<b>Genesis 41: Joseph</b>		<b>Daniel 2: Daniel</b>	
<b>1</b>	“Pharaoh had a dream” (41:1)	“Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams” (2:1)	
<b>2</b>	Pharaoh’s spirit was troubled (41:8)	Nebuchadnezzar’s spirit was troubled (2:1, 3)	
<b>3</b>	Pharaoh calls for his magicians (41:8) and Egypt’s wise men to interpret his dream	Nebuchadnezzar calls for his magicians (2:2) —satraps, and enchanters, who are later called “wise ones of Babel (2:12) to interpret his dream	
<b>4</b>	“Pharaoh recounted to them his dreams” (41:8)	“The king gave orders ... to tell the king his dreams” (2:2)	
<b>5</b>	Professionals are unable to interpret Pharaoh’s dream (41:8)	Professionals are unable to both declare and interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (2:4–11)	
<b>6</b>	Captain of the guard is aware of a captive Jew with dream interpreting abilities (41:10–12)	Captain of the guard is aware of a captive Jew with dream-interpreting abilities (2:14)	
<b>7</b>	“Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph” (41:14)	“Daniel went in and requested of the king” (2:16)	
<b>8</b>	“They hurriedly brought [Joseph]” (41:14)	“Arioeh, in haste brought Daniel” (2:25)	
<b>9</b>	Joseph is asked if he can interpret the dream (41:15)	Daniel is asked if he can declare and interpret the dream (2:26)	
<b>10</b>	Joseph downplays his abilities and attributes dream interpretations to God (41:16)	Daniel downplays his abilities and attributes dream interpretations to God (2:28–30)	
<b>11</b>	The dream is recounted by Pharaoh to Joseph (41:17–24)	The dream is recounted by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar (2:31–35)	
<b>12</b>	The interpretation is recounted by Joseph to Pharaoh (41:26–31)	The interpretation is recounted by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar (2:37–44)	
<b>13</b>	Joseph tells Pharaoh that his dream is about what God will do in the future (41:25)	Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that his dream is about what God will do in the future (2:45)	
<b>14</b>	The dream is “determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about” (41:32)	“The dream is true; and its interpretation is trustworthy” (2:45)	
<b>15</b>	Joseph is worshiped as a result of his dream reporting (Gen. 41:40, 43), receiving homage (“Kneel!”) from the people (41:40)	Daniel is worshiped as a result of his dream reporting (Dan. 2:46), receiving homage from Nebuchadnezzar (2:46)	
<b>16</b>	Joseph is given gifts (41:42)	Daniel is given gifts (2:48; cf. 5:16, 29)	
<b>17</b>	Joseph is promoted to a ruler in a foreign land (41:40–41)	Daniel is promoted to a ruler in a foreign land (2:48; cf. 5:16, 29) <sup>6</sup>	

<sup>6</sup> Chart in [Philpot](#), 688-69. He adds several words that are parallel in the two stories.

The chapter begins “in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar” (Dan 2:1). This would put us in the year 604-603 B.C., a year to three years after Daniel came to Babylon, depending on the calendar that is being used.<sup>7</sup> Daniel may be in the first year of his studies (see note 7), which could be important because would will show that even though Daniel is studying the Babylonian arts, these are not the source of his power in this chapter.

“Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him” (2). This is very similar to what we find going on in Egypt. “After two whole years [note the same number as Neb], Pharaoh dreamed ...in the morning his spirit was troubled” (Gen 41:1, 8). If we are meant to see a parallel here, we have to see that between his dream and being troubled we are told all about Pharaoh’s dream. We are given no such information in Daniel. This is part of what will make the Daniel story bigger and better—the challenge is much greater, the king is more powerful, the danger is far

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<sup>7</sup> The difficulty with Daniel being in his first year of studies is that at the end of the dream, he is promoted, whereas it seems that his promotion in ch. 1 doesn’t occur until the end of the three years. A solution is that the Babylonians had more than one calendar and way of reckoning a king coming to rule, thus Daniel is in fact done with his training. See **Tremper Longman III**, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 43-44, 76.

worse, the hero does greater things, and it is all because God is showing vastly more power than he did even in the absolutely amazing Joseph parallel.

“Then the king commanded the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams” (Dan 2:2a). These are four terms referring to the wisest men of the land. Some would undoubtedly use witchcraft. “Magicians” and its Aramaic equivalent is a word we find only in the Pharaoh-Joseph story, the Moses-Pharaoh story, and now the Daniel-Nebuchadnezzar story. Some of these people did astrology. Others would interpret signs in the sky or in bones. Some did astronomy. Some did witchcraft. And so on. All of it is related to the unseen realm, as we will become clear shortly.

They come in and stand before the king (2b). He said, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream” (3). At this point, the movie moves to the official language of Babylon. “Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic ...” (4a). For the next six chapters, everything is in this dialect.

“O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation” (4b). Seems reasonable. But it is at this point that one of the most remarkable things in

all the Bible is said. We get the first divergence from the Joseph story. Pharaoh “told them his dreams” (Gen 41:8). But here we read, in what will be the first half of the center of the first chiasm, “The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, ‘The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.’” (Dan 2:5).

This is like the curses of the covenant. Break this law and die. But, the blessings are there also. “But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation” (6). There is foreshadowing here, but there is something else that this reminds me of.

Can you imagine being one of these magicians? He’s literally asking the impossible, and if they don’t do what he says, they are all going to die, them and all of their families! You know what it reminds me of? It reminds me of the covenant of works. In my understanding, this covenant is best expressed in Romans 2, “There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for

everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality” (Rom 2:9-11).

Many people try to soften the language here to make it say what it clearly does not say. They will paraphrase it this way. “If you do more good things than bad, then God will give you glory and honor. If you do more bad things than good, you will get payback.” But this isn’t what it says. It literally says that everyone who does evil will receive tribulation and distress. Nor merely in this life, but in the life to come, for it says just before this, “Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (5). What is Paul’s conclusion of this “doing evil” and “doing good?” He says, “No one does good, not even one” (Rom 3:12). In other words, my reading of ch. 2 is that God is offering eternal life, but only if you are perfect. No one is perfect, and therefore by the standard of the law, everyone will perish in hell. Put another way, this standard of “doing good” is simply impossible for us.

Someone will say, “That’s totally unfair!” It isn’t, actually. It’s actually the definition of fair, because doing evil requires justice and punishment if we are talking about

“fair.” But I want you to see that **this is precisely how the magicians were feeling about Nebuchadnezzar’s decree**. It’s obvious that this king is no fan of magicians and sorcerers. It seems to me that he basically wanted to get rid of the entire system (and start over with himself as god, as we will learn about in chapter 4). **Can you imagine** being one of them after being summoned to his court and told this by the most powerful man in the world?

What happens next takes us out of the chiasm and it is a perfectly reasonable response to the impossible. **“They answered a second time and said, ‘Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation’” (7)**. The king is resolute. He answered, **“I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm” (8)**. What word? **“I’m going to kill you all in a very brutal manner. It’s not going to be pretty.”** He concludes by reinforcing the point. **“If you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation” (9)**.

This verse adds a bit of **background information**. Clearly, Nebuchadnezzar has had it with lying prophets and

sages. Tremper Longman explains, “His reaction to the diviners’ request to supply them with the content of the dream indicates that Nebuchadnezzar is testing their integrity. 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.”<sup>8</sup> The king is disturbed to the core. He will either get a right interpretation, or those who pretend to be able to do so will pay with their lives.

It uses “Chaldeans” as a catch-all in vs. 10. This is the word we learn about way back in the days of Abraham, who was called out of this very place. “The Chaldeans answered the king and said, ‘There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean’” (Dan 2:10).

In the next breath, we get a taste for the battle that is truly being waged here. It is a supernatural battle. “The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king,” that is, no mortal like them. It is an absolutely impossible request. In this way, we return to Pharaoh. It says

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<sup>8</sup> Longman III, 77–78.

that his wise men were not able to interpret Pharaoh's dream either (**Gen 41:8**), but this, again, ups it, for these wise men can't tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream.

Only "the gods" can divine such a thing, but their dwelling "is not with flesh" (11). This is deeply ironic, because the Babylonians in fact believed that the gods dwelt someone near to us and that they had access to them. Their impotence is glaring. This is the end of the first chiasm and it leaves us in a hopeless state for the magicians. These are men who are supposed to be the greatest experts in the world in understanding the unseen realm. They have gods for everything, and we saw how the names of the Jewish boys were all changed to reflect those deities.

But they make an excuse. They do not dwell with human flesh. What an interesting statement. For in the very next chapter we will see that this is in fact not true. That story itself foreshadows the greatest contradiction to this statement in human history. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (**John 1:14**). There is, in fact, a God who does dwell with us, Immanuel, and he did so openly as one of us. I wonder, are you taking the view of the astrologers that God doesn't dwell with flesh and therefore you are not a Christian? If so, hearing the rest of this chapter, let alone

reading the New Testament, will go a long way to contradicting such a belief.

It is interesting to think about **Nebuchadnezzar's response**. Previously he was **troubled** (vs. 1). Now, his emotions are very different. “**Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed**” (12). In his eyes, they are without excuse. This is supposed to be their job. If it is a real thing, then why can't they contact the deities they say have all knowledge and power and get the answer?

## **Daniel 2:12-28—Divine Knowledge and the God of Daniel and Joseph**

**Vs. 13** begins **the second chiasm**. It begins with Nebuchadnezzar's decree going out and the wise men are about to be killed. Suddenly, we are thrown for a loop. **Daniel and his companions are among those to be put to death** (13). This is the hinge for the story to turn to Daniel.

“**The Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon**” (14). This is similar to what we saw in Chapter 1 where he goes first to the Chief of the

Eunuchs to **present his case**, and then to his warden. Prudence and discretion are used here because he 1. **Doesn't keep silent** in the face of a holocaust and could get into big trouble, and 2. He goes to the **proper chain of command** to someone who can possibly get something done.

But it is also fascinating that it is **another captain of the guard** that appears at just the right moment in the Joseph story. In Genesis, you will recall that Joseph had made his way up in the prisons of Egypt so that he was the servant of the captain of the guard (**Gen 41:12**). While under his roof, Joseph interpreted two dreams, one of which caused Pharaoh's cupbearer to be restored, but the cupbearer forgot all about Joseph. This is just another detail that connects the two stories.

Daniel wants to know from “**The Mighty Lion**” (this is the meaning of Arioch), “**Why is the decree of the king so urgent?**” (15). **Daniel isn't begging for his life** because he is innocent. He is using a line of questioning to understand what is happening in hopes of **gaining an audience** with Nebuchadnezzar himself. Daniel plans on doing something if it be within his power.

The guard told Daniel all that had happened, about the dream, about the king's distress, about the impossible

demand, about the reactions of the Chaldeans, and about the immediacy of the decree in light of all this Tom Foolery that Nebuchadnezzar believes is going on around him.

So it says that, “Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king” (16). This is a fascinating response. It could sound like Daniel is supremely confident that he can explain it all to the king. But that would be to **profoundly confuse courage for pride**. The reality is, Daniel is a mortal, just like the magicians. In and of himself, he is no more capable of meeting the king’s request than they are. But this is not really a story about Daniel ...

The next verses show us **the heart of the man of God**. “Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions” (17; note that they are once more given their Jewish names). Daniel isn’t trying to do it all himself. **He seeks counsel** and the wisdom of his brothers. They are all in a fine mess, and if Daniel is unable to interpret the dream, they will all be dead very soon.

But Daniel wasn’t just seeking their advice or trying to unload his burden upon them. **He was soliciting their help**. Not help in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm.

Daniel “told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon” (18). Daniel is asking them to pray and to seek God that he might hear and come to their aid. He knows that only a supernatural intervention will stay the hand of the mighty king of Babylon. He knows that they need an interpretation. And even with all the skills they are learning, they all know that God has to come to them, to dwell with them if you will, if they are to have an answer.

This is an incredibly bold thing to do. These aren't priests of Israel. These are not old wise men of many years. These are young nobility related not just to David but to all those wicked kings of Judah. But they understand the kind of God Yahweh claims to be and more than that, they believe that he is who he says that he is. Their faith drives them to action. Their knowledge of his omniscience drives them to prayer. This God can answer. Will he?

Vs. 19 reveals that “The mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night” (19). Daniel is in a way seeing his own dream, although my understanding of a vision is that it is not an unconscious state like a dream, but a conscious state where the person is fully awake. In this way, Daniel begins

to be seen as a prophet, for it is the prophets of God who see visions of the otherworld.

Daniel's response is the opposite of a prideful, arrogant man secure in his own self-importance and greatness. "Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (19b). This God of heaven is One God in Three Persons, but often refers to the Father, which is what I think is in mind here.

How did he do it? With a prayer of worship. "Blessed be the Name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might" (20). This is an amazing thing, not only because Daniel is getting an answer, but because of where his answer is received—in Babylon.

In most of the OT, the prophets are in the "turf" of the God of Israel. Canaan is his land. But God the Father had given the earth to the other created heavenly sons of God. They got their own territories. While we've seen God doing things in Babylon throughout the first chapter, this point is more relevant now than ever. For in blessing the Name of God, Daniel is consciously giving praise to the Son of the Father, who is the Name. You see, it is the job of the Son of God, in both Testaments, to "manifest [God the Father's] name to the people" (Ex 23:21; John 17:6). Furthermore, the Son of God is the Wisdom and Might of God. Both of

these come together in a unique way, perhaps even alluding to this very verse, in **1Co 1:24** where Paul calls “**Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**” Thus, it appears that **the Son of God is coming to *Babylon*** to answer their prayers. As the Egypt story also proves, the God of Israel, that is the Son, **is not confined to one geographical territory** as say Marduk or Baal were. He goes into any of them and does whatever he wants.

This takes us to **the center of our second chiasm**. It is all about glorifying this God for his **omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence**. “**He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him**” (**20-21**). This is the sovereignty of God coming out again.

This God does all he wants because he has **power** over the very seasons, over the kings of the whole earth, over all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that even the Babylonians are allowed some access to, though they pervert it. This God is the source of all **wisdom** and knowledge because he knows all things. This God is **everywhere**; not

even the darkness itself can hide something from him. For he is light and everywhere he goes he dispels the darkness.

This is who you are being told to believe in today. It is a **statement of worship** from a man who was given a miraculous answer to an impossible request. It is a statement that this God has come to him, a man of flesh, and that God has appeared to him in his realm of flesh. If the first chiasm's center gave threats and blessings to the one who can answer, this second center tells us who alone can answer! The God of Daniel; him and him alone.

I want to reinforce, through the chiasm, that **you are to be putting your trust in Christ**, like Daniel was. Daniel returns to Christ by saying, **“To you, O God of my fathers ...”** How is this Christ? Let's Joseph's father tell you. Jacob called him, **“The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil ...”** (**Gen 48:15-16**). Jacob's God was the Angel of the LORD, the one Daniel has just called the Name, the Wisdom, and the Might. He returns to these as he finishes up his prayer. **“... I give thanks and praise, for 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 matter" (23). Christ is not only the source of wisdom and knowledge, but his power is able to convey this to the heart and mind of anyone he so chooses. In this case, Daniel was already a believer. He prayed to his God to give him knowledge he did not yet possess but needed in order to be saved. His God heard his prayer and answered it in a way that no other god of Babylon could possibly match. What is being shown here is that the one who humbles himself before this God and cries out to him, God will surely hear your cry and meet you in your humility to prove to you who he is. He does this in a way that no other God can, for he is like no other God.

This part of the story concludes by Daniel returning to Arioch, the captain of the guard who was appointed to put all these people to death, with a message. "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation" (24). Here Daniel actually intercedes for his pagan teachers, some of who are hucksters, all of who come out of the most antichrist religious system that the Bible speaks about. He has mercy on them, because they are in darkness. This is the heart of this man of God.

Then we have another parallel with Joseph. In both stories, they “hurriedly brought” the Jew in to see the pagan king (**Gen 41:14; Dan 2:25**). Like the Joseph story, Arioch tells the king that he knows a Jewish man who can interpret the dream. So Daniel, like Joseph, is brought in. Both are then asked by the king if they can interpret the dream (**Gen 41:14; Dan 2:26**). Nebuchadnezzar declares to Daniel, “whose name is Belteshazzar...” a signal that perhaps the king thinks Bel is giving him the interpretation? “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?”

And Daniel answers the way Joseph does. “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days...” (**2:27-28**). This is like Joseph who said, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer” (**Gen 41:16**).

## Beginning and Ending

I want finish here at the end of this second chiasm first because there is way too much in the interpretation to talk

about here. Second, because there are plenty of things to think about in what we have just heard. But before that, I do want to first mention that these parallels with Joseph and Daniel do not end here. There are several more than I need to mention.

Both men **recount** the dream to the king (**Gen 41:17-24; Dan 2:31-35**). Both men **interpret** the dream (**Gen 41:26-31; Dan 2:37-44**). Both men tell **the king that their dream concerns the future** (**Gen 41:25; Gen 2:45**). Both men tell the king that **God has confirmed it and that it will happen** (**Gen 41:32; Dan 2:45**). Both men are **given great honor** and esteem for their powers (**Gen 41:40, 43; Dan 2:46**). Both men are **given gifts** (**Gen 41:42; Dan 2:48**). Finally, both men are **promoted to a ruler in a foreign land** (**Gen 41:40-41; Dan 2:48**). In adding these things, it allows me to better move into why I think this typology with Joseph matters, and at least one reason why Daniel could have been put as last book of the LXX canon.

## *The Greater Joseph*

A first reason is that even though there are so many comparisons made between the two men, **it is the differences**

between them that we really want to think about, especially because the two stories are so deliberately similar. Matthew Rindge<sup>9</sup> gives us several of them. First, Daniel's ability to interpret exceeds that of Joseph. Joseph can interpret the dream, but Daniel can tell the king *what* he dreamed. Furthermore, on two different occasions, Daniel promises to make the interpretation known; Joseph makes no such promise. And, Daniel initiates going before the king, but Joseph is called up from prison.

Second, for all the things people point out about Joseph and how difficult it is to find anything wrong about the man, it is quite interesting that not even a single time in 14 chapters he is ever portrayed as someone who prays to God. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebekah, and Hagar all pray. So does Daniel. And what a magnificent acknowledgement of worship it is. In this way, Daniel is a humbler version of Joseph.

Third, though both end up serving in the court of the foreign king, Joseph is presented much more as assimilating to Egyptian culture, while Daniel is seen as resisting the empire in important regards. Think for example of how Joseph is so fully Egyptian when his brothers meet him that

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<sup>9</sup> Rindge, 90-98.

they can't even recognize him. On the other hand, Daniel is constantly identifying himself with his own people even though he becomes a ruler in Babylon. In these ways, we can say that **someone greater than Joseph is here**. Given that Joseph leads the people into a foreign land and Daniel is lead away into a foreign land, this nicely creates bookends at either side of the LXX.

### *The Greater Works of God*

More important than Joseph as a type of Daniel is the fact that **both men acknowledge their own inability** to have any powers at all were it not for their God. But in the two stories, God is presented as more powerful in the life of Daniel than in the life of Joseph, and this, too, makes for a great bookend. How can we see this?

A main way is by **contrasting what God does** for the two men. In both stories, Joseph and Daniel attribute the interpretation of the dream to God. But in the Daniel story, God not only interprets it for him, **he tells him what the dream was** in the first place. This is an absolutely astonishing thing. What kind of a God has the power to know what a man dreamt and then tell it to someone else?

Second, you must remember that these dreams were given to the kings by God. They were not accidents, but messages. This says several things. First, in revealing himself to Gentiles, he is showing that he is **the God over the nations**. The future of the nations will in fact be what the contents of the dream is about. This is in contrast to merely Egypt and the surrounding area in the Joseph story. Someone has said, “**What God revealed to Pharaoh in Gen 41 was, essentially, a fourteen-year regional weather forecast and his control over it ... By contrast, what God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2 was, essentially, the whole of human history and his sovereignty over it ... In the former dream, God made known his sovereignty over regional weather patterns and the corresponding fertility of the land. In the latter, he revealed his sovereignty over all kingdoms and powers forever.**”<sup>10</sup> We will see more of how this works out when we look at the second half of chapter 2, and the rest of the book will expire how God is not only sovereign over Israel and its history, but over all the earth and its history. That’s a great way to finish a canon!

Next, God does what the gods cannot do. He comes to men and talks to them so that he can be understood. He

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<sup>10</sup> Widder, 1124-25.

answers impossible riddles because he knows impossible things. He cares for his people who are in trouble. Thus, he is infinitely greater.

Finally, **there is the purpose of the dreams** that God has for them. With Joseph, his interpretation leads to his coming to rule in Egypt, to his brother's coming to Egypt to buy food, to their eventual happy reunion, and to Israel coming to live in Egypt where they will become enslaved and God will give them a mighty deliverance. **With Daniel**, we will learn in ch. 4, which is a remedial lesson for a king who didn't learn anything from his dream here, that his kingdom was temporary and his power was relative and bestowed by a much greater king.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, with Joseph, God's purposes are only with Egypt and Israel, with Israel being saved by God. But with Daniel, God's purposes reveal the coming kingdom of God **“which breaks into history, destroys all human kingdoms, and fills the earth forever.”** Here, God, specifically Christ, will reveal his own coming in his eternal kingdom where he is presented as the savior of the world!

This **spectacular future** promise is almost the opposite of the Joseph story which leads quickly to slavery. In Daniel,

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<sup>11</sup> **Widder**, 1125.

the last verses are about going your own way in freedom and then they end on the thought of resurrection, but only after telling us so much about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in human flesh. That's something we've seen hinted at here. All of this is set up here in ch. 2 with a story that deliberately echoes Joseph and the dream of Pharaoh. Thus ends, I think, a remarkable bookend to the LXX canon and a few reasons why perhaps they put it as the last book.

For us, it isn't our last book of the OT. But all of these things still remain true. See in Daniel a greater trial than Joseph. And see in Daniel the revelation of God as more powerful than Joseph could have ever dreamed. And most of all, give thanks and praise to this God who cares so much about his people, that he decided to come down here among flesh and do something about our sorry condition, by dying for our sins and raising to life that we might live together with him.

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