DANIEL 2

The Impossible Dream

Daniel 2 — A Deep Dive

> *"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.*
> DANIEL 2:44

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · THREE VOICES: TSARFATI · MACARTHUR · GUZIK

Where the story stands

1. Chapter 1 ended with four Hebrew teenagers standing before Nebuchadnezzar and found ten times better than all his magicians and conjurers.

2. Chapter 2 opens “in the second year” of his reign, about 603 B.C., with Daniel still in his teens or barely out of them, and the king cannot sleep.

3. He has dreamed something that has shaken him, and he demands of his whole establishment not only the interpretation but the dream itself.



The Impossible Demand

DANIEL 2:1

Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati sets the scene inside the book's timeline: Daniel is barely out of his training, the king is barely into his reign, and God speaks to the most powerful man alive about the end of the age before He…

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur notes the two things the king wants: the dream and the interpretation. He will not be fooled by a clever story.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik argues the demand was fair: the Chaldeans claimed supernatural access and the king called the bluff. He supplies the practice of dismemberment, the possibility that the young king welcomed an excuse to…

THE ORIGINAL **CHELMIN · "DREAMS"**

A Prayer Meeting That Changed History

DANIEL 2:14

Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?"

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati draws attention to the order: Daniel speaks with wisdom to Arioch, gains time, and then prays. The first move of the man of God under a death sentence is not strategy but intercession, and not alone.

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur notes what Daniel did not do: he did not run, lie, bargain, or despair. He acted with discernment, he asked for time, and he asked God.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik quotes Strauss, "In prayer meetings such as this history has been made", and walks Daniel's composure: tact, information, time, prayer. He stresses that the mystery was revealed, not figured out.

THE ORIGINAL **ETA U-TE'EM · "DISCRETION AND DISCERNMENT"**

A Prayer Meeting That Changed History

WHAT DANIEL DID UNDER A DEATH SENTENCE · DANIEL 2:14–23

No panic, no protest, no bargain, no despair — and a prayer meeting with three friends. "In prayer meetings such as this history has been made."

TACT	INFORMATION	TIME	PRAYER	REVELATION	WORSHIP
v. 14	v. 15	v. 16	vv. 17–18	v. 19	vv. 20–23
"discretion and discernment" to the executioner — a question, not a protest	Arioch tells him the facts; Daniel learns before he acts	He asks the king for the one thing the Chaldeans were refused — and gets it	Four men asking compassion from the God of heaven "concerning this mystery"	"revealed … in a night vision" — not research; nothing to study, only to ask	Blessed God before he went to the king — and in the plural: "we," "us"

DANIEL'S SONG · vv. 20–23 — THE THEOLOGY OF THE WHOLE BOOK

He changes the times and the epochs
history is not random · Acts 17:26

He gives wisdom to wise men
wisdom is a gift · James 1:5

He removes kings and establishes kings
no ruler rules on his own · Romans 13:1; Proverbs 21:1

He reveals the profound and hidden things
nothing is dark to Him · Psalm 139:12

The Statue and the Stone

DANIEL 2:31

You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati reads the statue as the times of the Gentiles in one image: the empires that rule the world from Nebuchadnezzar until Messiah, seen as one man because they are one system. He draws attention to where…

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur notes the obvious thing first: the statue is a man, and the kingdoms of the world are man's glory as man sees it, splendid, awesome, and about to be dust. He reads the descent of the metals as the…

DAVID GUZIK

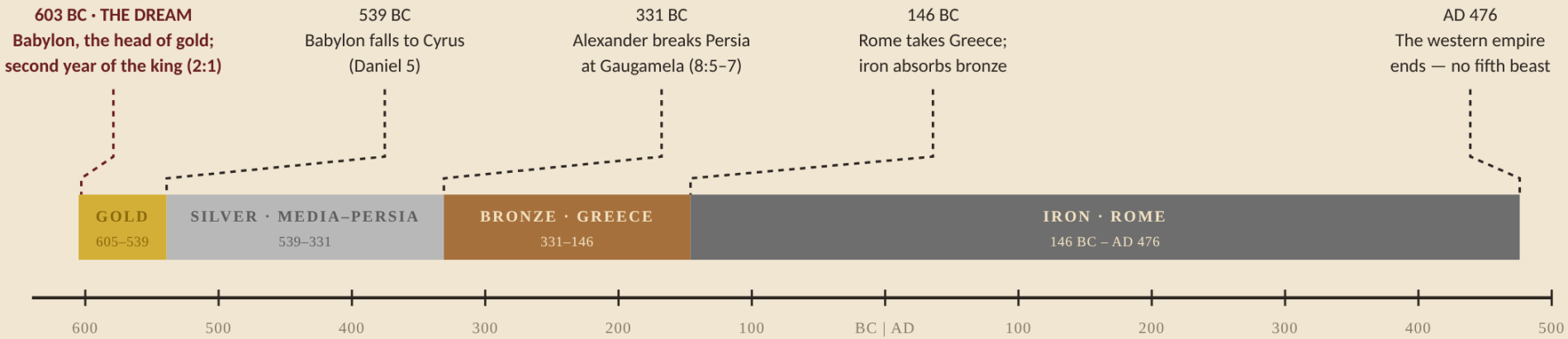
Guzik calls the sequence devolution, not evolution: gold to silver to bronze to iron to clay. He also notes the physics, the statue is heaviest at the top and weakest at the bottom, and a stone to the feet is enough.

THE ORIGINAL **TSELEM CHA.D. SAGGI · "A SINGLE GREAT STATUE"**

The Statue and the Stone

THE FOUR KINGDOMS ON ONE LINE · FROM THE DREAM TO THE FALL OF ROME

Daniel dreamed it in 603 BC under the first kingdom; three of the four did not yet exist. The toes are not on this line.



THE FEET AND TOES · vv. 41–43 — OFF THE END OF THIS LINE

Rome was never replaced by a fifth empire; it broke up and lives on in the nations of the old Roman world — iron and clay, strong and brittle, combining and never adhering.

The ten toes parallel the ten horns of 7:7, 24 and the ten kings of Revelation 17:12 — a confederation that has not yet stood together. The stone strikes there (v. 34).

Critics shorten the four to Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece to keep the prophecy short of Rome; Daniel himself counts Medo-Persia as one (5:28; 8:20).

A Kingdom That Will Never Be Destroyed

DANIEL 2:44

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati reads verse 44 as the promise the whole book of Daniel is built to deliver: a literal kingdom, set up by God, in the days of a literal confederation of kings, on this earth, under Israel's Messiah,…

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur hears in verse 44 the certainty of the kingdom and the sovereignty of the One who sets it up: not left to another people, not succeeded, not improved upon, forever. He reads the stone as Christ at…

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik puts verse 44 beside Revelation 11, verse 15, "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ", and Matthew 6, verse 10, "Your kingdom come," and observes that the prayer…

THE ORIGINAL **MALKHU DI LE-ALMIN LA TITCHABBAL · "A KINGDOM WHICH WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED"**

A Kingdom That Will Never Be Destroyed

THE STONE CUT WITHOUT HANDS · WHO THE STONE IS, ACROSS SCRIPTURE

Jesus quoted the rejected-stone psalm the week He was crucified and added Daniel's crushing to it — which settles who the stone is

THE STONE	THE FULFILLMENT
Cut out without hands DANIEL 2:34, 45 · no human agency — God's work, not man's	*a virgin shall conceive* **Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35**
The stone the builders rejected PSALM 118:22 · Israel's leaders refused Him	*"this became the chief corner stone"* **Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11**
A stone to strike, a rock to stumble over ISAIAH 8:14 · to both houses of Israel	*"they stumbled over the stumbling stone"* **Romans 9:32–33**
A tested stone, a costly cornerstone ISAIAH 28:16 · laid in Zion for a foundation	*"he who believes in Him will not be disappointed"* **1 Peter 2:6**
On whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust MATTHEW 21:44 · Jesus adds Daniel's crushing to the psalm	*the statue "like chaff … the wind carried them away"* **Daniel 2:35**
A great mountain that filled the whole earth DANIEL 2:35 · the kingdom that replaces every kingdom	*"the kingdom of the world has become …"* **Revelation 11:15**

"Smashing is not salvation" (Heslop, in Guzik): the church has not yet crushed the world's kingdoms in one blow — the stone's strike is still ahead.

A Kingdom That Will Never Be Destroyed

THE SAME STORY TWICE · THE STATUE OF DANIEL 2 AND THE BEASTS OF DANIEL 7

A pagan king sees the empires as a splendid man of metal; the prophet sees the same empires as animals out of the sea. Same four, same stone.

DANIEL 2 · AS THE KING SAW IT	DANIEL 7 · AS GOD SHOWED IT	THE EMPIRE
Head of gold	*A lion with eagle's wings*	**Babylon**
Breast and arms of silver	*A bear raised up on one side*	**Media–Persia**
Belly and thighs of bronze	*A leopard with four wings and four heads*	**Greece**
Legs of iron	*A fourth beast, dreadful, with iron teeth*	**Rome**
Feet and ten toes of iron and clay	*Ten horns, and a little horn among them*	**Its last form — the ten kings and the Antichrist**
A stone cut out without hands; a mountain	*One like a Son of Man, with the clouds; the saints possess the kingdom*	**The kingdom of God, forever**

Chapter 2 opens the Aramaic section with the statue; chapter 7 closes it with the beasts. Chapters 8 and 11 will name the middle kingdoms; Revelation will end the story.

What to carry from this chapter

1

The wise men were right.

“No one could declare it… except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh” (verse 11).

2

Mystery is the spine of the chapter.

Raz, the king wants it, the Chaldeans cannot give it, four men pray about it, God reveals it, Daniel announces the One who reveals it.

3

Daniel worshiped before he went to the king.

Verses 20–23 are the theology of the whole book, times, kings, wisdom, hidden things, sung before the outcome was safe, in the plural: “what we requested.”

4

The credit was refused twice.

“Not for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man” (verse 30).

More to carry

5

The metals decline.

Gold to silver to bronze to iron to clay: less value, more hardness, more division.

6

The stone strikes the feet.

Not the head, not the legs, the toes, the last divided form of the fourth kingdom.

7

The kingdom does not evolve; it replaces.

“It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms” and “will not be left for another people” (verse 44).

8

The king got everything right except the object.

God of gods, Lord of kings, revealer of mysteries, and he bowed to Daniel.

Talk it through

1. What crisis are you facing alone that God meant you to carry on your knees with others?

2. Daniel blessed God before he delivered the answer, “He removes kings and establishes kings.” Which ruler, boss or circumstance do you need to see tonight as established by God, and what would worship before the outcome sound like?

CLOSING

The king could not sleep and the wise men could not help; four young men prayed and a mystery was revealed in the night. A captive told the emperor there is a God in heaven, read him the whole of history from the head of gold to the toes of clay, and then the stone, cut without hands, that ends every kingdom and fills the earth.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study, reflection journal and film: see the Daniel study page.