# Daniel 2

## *The Statue and the Stone: The God Who Reveals*

**OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION**

*"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."*
**Acts 17:11**

CHAPTER THEME

Kings rule because God gives them the kingdom, and every human empire is temporary. The God of heaven reveals what no man can know, answers four praying young men, and will one day set up a kingdom that crushes all the others and lasts forever.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

# 00 The Text

DANIEL 2 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning | Violet Promise / blessing | Amber Time / place / contrast

1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be ⚠ cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, ⚠ except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to ⚠ destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and ⇄ wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever : for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter : and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

31 Thou, O king, sawest , and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for ▲ the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

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

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

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

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter : and ▲ the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and ⚠ worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a ▲ God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of ⇄ secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this ⇄ secret.

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

## Marked in the text

- **v1** ◷ in the second year
- **v5** ⚠ cut in pieces
- **v11** ⚠ except the gods
- **v12** ⚠ destroy all the wise men
- **v14** ⇄ wisdom *(every occurrence)*
- **v18** ▮▮ desire mercies of the God of heaven
- **v18** ⇄ secret *(every occurrence)*
- **v20** ▲ Blessed be the name of God
- **v21** ▲ he removeth kings, and setteth up kings
- **v22** ▲ the light dwelleth with him
- **v28** ▲ there is a God in heaven
- **v28** ◷ the latter days
- **v32** ◷ head was of fine gold
- **v32** ◷ breast and his arms of silver
- **v32** ◷ belly and his thighs of brass
- **v33** ◷ legs of iron

- **v33** part of iron and part of clay
- **v34** ★ a stone was cut out without hands
- **v35** ★ a great mountain
- **v37** ▲ the God of heaven hath given thee
- **v44** ★ a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed
- **v45** ▲ the dream is certain
- **v46** ⚠ worshipped Daniel
- **v47** ▲ God of gods, and a Lord of kings

*Marks are drawn on the KJV text. KJV "secret" is the NASB95's "mystery"; "brass" is "bronze"; "in Syriack" (v4) means in Aramaic — from here through 7:28 Daniel is written in Aramaic.*

# 01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 2:27–28 (KJV)

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The ⇄ secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; 28 But ▲ there is a God in heaven that revealeth ⇄ secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in ◷ the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

## Setting

"Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him" (v1). Daniel is still a young man, newly out of training (1:5, 18). At v4 the text switches from Hebrew to Aramaic, the language of Babylon, and stays in Aramaic through 7:28.

## Structure

- vv1–13 — **the impossible demand:** the king summons the magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and Chaldeans (v2). He won't tell them the dream; they must tell him the dream *and* its meaning, or "you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap" (v5). They protest: "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king" — only "gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh" (vv10–11). The king orders all the wise men of Babylon destroyed, and they look for Daniel and his friends too (vv12–13).
- vv14–23 — **Daniel prays:** Daniel replies "with discretion and discernment" to Arioch (v14), asks the king for time (v16), and gathers his three friends "so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery" (v18). "Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (v19). His song: "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings … It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things" (vv20–22). "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise" (v23).
- vv24–30 — **Daniel before the king:** "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon" (v24). Arioch: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah" (v25). Daniel: no wise man can do this, "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will

take place in the latter days" (vv27–28). "As for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man" (v30).

- vv31–35 — **the dream:** a great statue, bright and awesome (v31). Head of fine gold; breast and arms of silver; belly and thighs of bronze; legs of iron; feet partly iron and partly clay (vv32–33). "A stone was cut out without hands" and struck the feet; the whole statue became like chaff the wind carried away; "the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (vv34–35).
- vv36–45 — **the interpretation:** "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom" (v37). "You are the head of gold" (v38). Another inferior kingdom, a third of bronze ruling all the earth, a fourth "as strong as iron" that crushes everything (vv39–40). The feet and toes: a divided kingdom, partly strong and partly brittle, mixing but not holding together (vv41–43). "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed … it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever" (v44). "The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy" (v45).
- vv46–49 — **the response:** the king falls on his face before Daniel and orders offerings (v46). "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries" (v47). Daniel is made ruler over the province of Babylon and chief prefect over all its wise men; at Daniel's request his three friends are appointed too (vv48–49).

### Repeated words

dream(s) (throughout); interpretation (throughout); mystery / secret (vv18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47); reveal(s) (vv19, 22, 28, 29, 30, 47); wisdom (vv20, 21, 23, 30); the God of heaven (vv18, 19, 37, 44; "a God in heaven," v28); kingdom (vv37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44); king(s) (throughout); crush / break in pieces (vv34, 35, 40, 44, 45).

### Contrasts

the king's wise men: "There is not a man on earth who could" (vv10–11, 27) ⟷ "there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries" (v28). The king's fury (v12) ⟷ Daniel's "discretion and discernment" (v14). Gold at the top ⟷ clay at the feet — each kingdom less precious than the one before (vv32–33). A statue made by human glory ⟷ a stone "cut out without hands" (v34). Kingdoms that become chaff (v35) ⟷ a kingdom "which will never be destroyed" (v44). The king worships Daniel (v46) ⟷ Daniel had already pointed him to God (vv28, 30).

### Chapter theme (my words)

Kings rule because God gives them the kingdom, and every human empire is temporary. The God of heaven reveals what no man can know, answers four praying young men, and will one day set up a kingdom that crushes all the others and lasts forever.

# 02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 2:44 (KJV)

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

### An impossible demand (vv1–13)

Guzik argues the king's demand was fair: these men claimed access to the gods, so let them prove it. If they could only explain a dream he described, they could simply invent an answer — "you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me" (v9). Their confession is the turning point of the chapter: no man can do this; only gods "whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh" (v11). They were right — and the God who does dwell with flesh is about to answer (John 1:14). The punishment, dismemberment, was a real practice in that world. Guzik notes the king may also have welcomed the excuse to replace his father's advisors.

### The switch to Aramaic (v4)

From 2:4 to 7:28, Daniel is written in Aramaic, the international language of the empire. Guzik notes it is one of three major Aramaic sections in the Old Testament (with Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26). Fittingly, the chapters about the Gentile kingdoms are written in the Gentiles' language; the chapters about Israel's future (8–12) return to Hebrew.

### A prayer meeting changes history (vv14–23)

Daniel doesn't panic. He speaks with tact to the executioner, asks for time, and calls a prayer meeting with three friends. Strauss, in Guzik: "In prayer meetings such as this history has been made." The answer comes as revelation, not research (v19). Then Daniel worships *before* he goes to the king (vv20–23). His song is the theology of the whole book:

- **God changes times and epochs** — history is not random (Acts 17:26).
- **He removes and establishes kings** — no ruler is in charge on his own (Rom 13:1; Prov 21:1).
- **He gives wisdom** — it is a gift (James 1:5).
- **He reveals hidden things** — nothing is dark to Him (Ps 139:12).

Notice "we" and "us" in v23 — Daniel credits the answer to the four of them praying together.

### Not for any wisdom in me (vv24–30)

Arioch rushes in to take credit: "I have found a man" (v25). Daniel deflects all of it. Before he says a word about the dream, he tells the most powerful man in the world that there is "a God in heaven" (v28) — and that the dream is about "the latter days," the long sweep of the future. Guzik: true humility doesn't deny the gift, it points to the Giver (1 Cor 4:7).

### The statue: four kingdoms (vv31–43)

Daniel names only the first: "You are the head of gold" (v38). The rest are identified by history and by Daniel's later visions (8:20–21). Guzik gives the classic view:

- **Gold — Babylon** (605–539 BC): an absolute monarchy under one man.
- **Silver — Medo-Persia** (539–331 BC): larger but "inferior," its king bound by his own laws (6:8, 15; see 5:28; 8:20).
- **Bronze — Greece** (331 BC onward): Alexander's empire, the kingdom that "will rule over all the earth" (2:39; see 8:21).
- **Iron — Rome**: strong, crushing everything in its path, lasting centuries.
- **Iron and clay — a final divided form of the fourth kingdom**: partly strong, partly brittle, mixing but never truly united.

Guzik notes that critical scholars make the four Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece, to avoid a prophecy that reaches Rome, but Daniel himself treats Medo-Persia as one kingdom (5:28; 8:20). The metals decline in value but grow in hardness — Guzik calls it "devolution," not evolution: human government does not climb toward utopia.

### The ten toes

The toes (v42) parallel the ten horns of the fourth beast (7:7, 24) and the ten kings of Revelation 17:12. Guzik: nothing in Rome's history matches ten kings ruling together when God's kingdom crushed them, so he sees a future, revived form of the fourth kingdom — a federation under the final world ruler. Some faithful interpreters see the stone's blow as Christ's first coming; Guzik answers that the church has not yet crushed the world's kingdoms in one decisive blow. Heslop, in Guzik: "Smashing is not salvation."

### The stone cut without hands (vv34–35, 44–45)

No human hand makes it — it is God's work. Guzik identifies the stone as the Messiah Himself: the stone the builders rejected (Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42–44), the stumbling stone (Isa 8:14), the tested cornerstone (Isa 28:16). It strikes the statue at its feet — at the end of human history — grinds every kingdom to chaff, and grows into a mountain that fills the earth (Isa 2:2–3; 11:9). "In the days of those kings" (v44): God's kingdom doesn't evolve out of the others; it replaces them (Rev 11:15).

### The king's response (vv46–49)

Nebuchadnezzar falls on his face — and worships the wrong one. His confession is true but shallow: "your God is a God of gods" (v47). Chapter 3 will show he hasn't bowed his own heart yet. Daniel is promoted, and he remembers his friends who prayed with him (v49).

### Word study (Aramaic)

- **dream — *chelem* (H2493):** a dream (Aramaic form of Hebrew *chalom*).
- **interpretation — *peshar* (H6591):** an explanation, solution.
- **magicians — *chartom* (H2749):** occult scribe, sacred-writing expert.
- **Chaldeans — *Kasday* (H3779):** here the class of astrologer-priests.
- **torn limb from limb — *haddam* (H1917):** a member, a piece — "made into pieces."

- **discretion — *ʿeta* (H5843):** counsel, prudence.
- **compassion — *rachamin* (H7359, plural of *rechem*):** mercy, tender compassion.
- **mystery — *raz* (H7328):** a secret, a hidden thing — later Greek *mystērion*.
- **reveal — *gela* (H1541):** to uncover, reveal.
- **times — *ʿiddan* (H5732):** time, a set period.
- **epochs — *zeman* (H2166):** appointed time, season.
- **image / statue — *tselem* (H6755):** an image, idol.
- **stone — *ʾeben* (H69):** a stone.
- **without hands — *dî-lāʾ bîdayin*:** "not by hands" — by no human agency.
- **kingdom — *malku* (H4437):** kingdom, reign, sovereignty.
- **forever — *ʿalam* (H5957):** perpetuity, everlasting.

### Cross-references

Gen 41:8, 16, 25; Ps 2:1–12; Ps 118:22; Ps 139:11–12; Prov 21:1; Isa 2:2–4; Isa 8:14; Isa 28:16; Isa 44:24–45:7; Dan 4:17, 25, 34–35; Dan 5:28; Dan 7:1–27; Dan 8:20–22; Amos 3:7; Matt 6:10; Matt 21:42–44; Luke 1:32–33; Luke 20:17–18; Acts 4:11; Acts 17:26; Rom 13:1; 1 Cor 1:26–31; 1 Cor 4:7; 1 Pet 2:4–8; Rev 11:15; Rev 17:12–14.

# 03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 2:20–22 (KJV)

20 Daniel answered and said, ▲ Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever : for ⇄ wisdom and might are his: 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: ▲ he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth ⇄ wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He revealeth the deep and ⇄ secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and ▲ the light dwelleth with him.

### Command to obey — call a prayer meeting

When Daniel's life was on the line, his first move was to gather three friends and pray (vv17–18). I need that kind of brotherhood — men who will pray with me when it's life or death, and men I'll pray for. This week I'll ask the men in my group for specific requests and pray *with* them, not just *for* them. For a man in recovery, that's often the difference: you don't face the crisis alone.

### Sin to confess — taking credit

Arioch said "I have found a man" (v25); Daniel said "not for any wisdom residing in me" (v30). Whenever God uses me — a study, a website, a conversation that helps a man — I'm tempted to take a little of the glory. I'll confess it and practice pointing past myself: "there is a God in heaven."

### Warning to heed — the statue falls

Every kingdom in the dream looked permanent, and every one became chaff the wind blew away (v35). That includes the kingdoms I'm tempted to trust: a nation, a party, a company, a bank account, my own reputation. None of them is the rock. Only God's kingdom "will never be destroyed" (v44).

### Promise to trust — "He removes kings and establishes kings."

The news, the courts and the powerful are not out of His control (v21). For the man facing a parole board, a judge or a boss, this is solid ground: God changes the times and gives wisdom to those who ask Him (James 1:5).

### Example to follow — worship before the meeting

Daniel had the answer and the king was waiting, but he stopped to praise God first (vv19–23). I want to thank God before I see how things turn out, not only after.

### Worship

"Wisdom and power belong to Him" (v20). The stone cut without hands is Jesus, and His kingdom is coming. Every throne will crumble before Him, and His kingdom will fill the whole earth. Thy kingdom come.

### Prayer

God of heaven, You change the times and the epochs; You remove kings and establish kings. Thank You that You reveal what is hidden and answer when Your people pray together. Keep me from trusting kingdoms that will become chaff. Let me point every man to You and not to me. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done. Amen.

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