DISCOVERING DANIEL

2
LESSON

WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 2

The Impossible *Dream*

DANIEL 2

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

PREPARED FOR ED & PAUL SMITH · BIBLE STUDY

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 2 verse by verse.

1 When King Nebuchadnezzar first asked the wise men to interpret his dream, what was their response (Daniel 2:4)?

P. 39

Daniel 2:3-4 NASB95

The king said to them, “I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.” Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: “O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation.”

IN MY WORDS

They flattered him—“O king, live forever!”—and asked him to tell them the dream first, promising they could then give the interpretation.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:11** Their own later admission: “there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.”

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes this is where the Aramaic section of Daniel begins and runs to the end of chapter 7—the language of the Gentile world, for the section about Gentile kingdoms.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that the request was perfectly reasonable by their trade’s standards. Give them the raw material and they could always produce something. What they could not do was work with nothing.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice the order they wanted: information first, then interpretation. That is the whole business model of every counterfeit—it needs you to supply the content before it can sound authoritative about it. God works the other direction; He supplies the content Himself.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I taking counsel from someone who only ever tells me back what I already told them?

2 What did the king say he would do if the wise men couldn’t interpret the dream (verse 5)?

P. 39

Daniel 2:5 NASB95

The king replied to the Chaldeans, “The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.”

IN MY WORDS

He said they would be torn limb from limb and their houses would be made a rubbish heap.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 3:6** The same absolute cruelty a chapter later: “whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.”

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the punishment reaches past the men to their households—an ancient way of ensuring that no one could weigh the cost as a personal risk only.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out the king raised the stakes precisely because he suspected the whole enterprise was fraudulent. Fear was his test for honesty.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar demanded the impossible on purpose. He was not trying to learn the dream; he was trying to learn whether his advisers were real. The threat was the experiment, and the wise men's panic was the result he was looking for.

KEY QUESTION

What in my life would collapse if someone raised the stakes and asked me to prove it?

3 What accusation did the king make in verses 8-9?

P. 39

Daniel 2:8-9 NASB95

The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."

IN MY WORDS

He accused them of stalling for time and of having agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words to him until the situation changed.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 44:25** God is "Causing the omens of boasters to fail, Making fools out of diviners, Causing wise men to draw back And turning their knowledge into foolishness."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the king had them exactly right. He had watched these men work for years and knew their answers were vague enough to fit any outcome.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that the pagan king saw through his own religious establishment—an indictment of the entire Babylonian system delivered by its chief patron.

CRITICAL THINKING

The most damning phrase is "until the situation is changed." Their strategy was not to answer but to outlast—to talk long enough for the problem to move on. That is a temptation far beyond Babylon: waiting out a hard question instead of answering it.

KEY QUESTION

What question have I been running out the clock on instead of facing?

4 When the wise men said it would be impossible to interpret the dream, how did the king react (verses 12-13)? P. 40

Daniel 2:12-13 NASB95

Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

IN MY WORDS

He became indignant and furious and ordered every wise man in Babylon killed—which put Daniel and his three friends on the execution list too.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:14** "The fury of a king is like messengers of death, But a wise man will appease it."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes Daniel and his friends had done nothing wrong and were not even in the room. They were condemned by association with a profession they had been drafted into.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the king's rage was disproportionate but not irrational—he had concluded the entire class was useless, and he acted on it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel's crisis arrived through no fault of his own, generated entirely by other men's failure. Some of the hardest seasons a believer faces are like this—not consequences, not discipline, just the fallout of somebody else's collapse landing on your calendar.

KEY QUESTION

Am I carrying a trouble that is not mine, and have I let bitterness set in over that?

5 When Daniel found out about the king's decree to kill the wise men of Babylon, what did he do (verses 14-16)? P. 40

Daniel 2:14-16 NASB95

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?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

IN MY WORDS

He answered Arioch with discretion and discernment, asked why the decree was so urgent, and then went to the king and requested time so he could give the interpretation.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:19** "But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger…"

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that Daniel asked a question before he made a request—he got the facts before he acted, even with a sword already on the way.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik contrasts Daniel's request for time with the wise men's: they wanted delay to escape, he wanted delay to pray. The same ask, opposite motives.

CRITICAL THINKING

The words "discretion and discernment" describe how Daniel spoke to the man sent to kill him. Under a death sentence he was neither panicked nor combative. Composure like that is not a personality trait; it is what settled convictions look like from the outside.

KEY QUESTION

How do I speak to people when I am frightened—and what does that reveal?

6 What did Daniel then ask his three friends to do (verses 17-18)?

P. 40

Daniel 2:17-18 NASB95

Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

IN MY WORDS

He asked them to request compassion from the God of heaven concerning the mystery, so that they would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 18:19-20** "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes what Daniel asked for—compassion, not cleverness. He did not ask God to make him smart enough to solve it; he asked for mercy.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to the four young men praying together in a foreign city. Their circle was small, but it was united, and that is what carried them through every chapter that follows.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had already told the king he could deliver the interpretation before he had it. He committed first and prayed second—which sounds reckless until you notice he was not promising his own ability. He was promising God's, and then going to God about it.

KEY QUESTION

Who are the two or three people I would call tonight if everything were on the line—and have I called them lately?

7 When God revealed the details of the dream to Daniel, how did Daniel respond (verses 20-23)?

P. 41

Daniel 2:19-20 NASB95

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him."

Daniel 2:21-23 NASB95

"It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter."

IN MY WORDS

He stopped and worshiped—blessing God's name, praising Him as the one who changes times and removes and establishes kings, and thanking Him for revealing the mystery—before he went anywhere near the king.

CROSS REFERENCE **Luke 17:15-16** Of ten lepers healed, only one "turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice… giving thanks to Him."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Daniel praised before he published. The answer that would save his life did not send him running to the palace; it sent him to his knees.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that Daniel's prayer is theology, not just gratitude—he praises God for who He is over history before thanking Him for what He did in a night.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had every reason to hurry. Men were being rounded up and killed, and he was holding the one thing that could stop it. He worshiped anyway. Urgency is the most respectable excuse we have for skipping thanksgiving, and Daniel refused it with a sword already drawn.

KEY QUESTION

When the answer finally comes, do I stop to thank God—or do I immediately start spending it?

8 Before Daniel explained the dream to King Nebuchadnezzar, whom did he credit as the revealer of the dream's meaning (verse 28)?

P. 41

Daniel 2:27-28 NASB95

Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. 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. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed."

IN MY WORDS

He credited God—"there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries"—and made a point of saying first that no wise man, conjurer, magician, or diviner could have done it.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:30** "this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man…"

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati emphasizes that Daniel took the credit off himself twice—once from his profession and once from his own gifting—before he said a word about the statue.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that Daniel's disclaimer was not false modesty but accurate reporting. He genuinely had no ability the other men lacked; he had access they did not.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel was standing before a man who had just ordered mass executions and who was about to be told he was the head of gold. That is the moment most men would take the win. Daniel spent his first sentence making sure the king could not possibly credit him.

KEY QUESTION

In my last success, did I make it hard or easy for people to give me the credit?

9 Give a brief summary of what Nebuchadnezzar saw in the dream (verses 31-35).

P. 42

Daniel 2:31-33 NASB95

"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. The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay."

Daniel 2:34-35 NASB95

"You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

IN MY WORDS

He saw one enormous, splendid, terrifying statue—head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, feet part iron and part clay—struck on the feet by a stone cut out without hands, and the whole statue crushed to chaff and blown away while the stone became a mountain filling the whole earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:25** The same divine method: the final king "will be broken without human agency."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the metals descend in value and ascend in hardness—each kingdom is less glorious and more brutal than the one before it. That is history's actual direction, not upward.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out the stone strikes the feet, the last phase, not the head. God's kingdom does not arrive by gradually improving the statue; it arrives by demolishing it at the end.

CRITICAL THINKING

The whole statue collapses at once—iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold "crushed all at the same time." Babylon had been gone for centuries by the time Rome fell, yet the dream treats them as one structure with one ending. Human government is a single thing in God's accounting, and it has a single demolition date.

KEY QUESTION

Do I secretly believe the world is being slowly improved, when Scripture says it is being replaced?

10 What did Daniel say the dream revealed about Nebuchadnezzar himself (verses 37-38)?

P. 43

Daniel 2:37-38 NASB95

"You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold."

IN MY WORDS

That he was the king of kings and the head of gold—but that every bit of his kingdom, power, strength, and glory had been given to him by the God of heaven.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:17** "the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the phrase repeated three times in two verses—"has given," "has given," "has caused." Daniel let him keep the title and took away the ownership.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that Nebuchadnezzar heard only the gold. Two chapters later he is on the roof admiring "Babylon the great, which I myself have built," and God takes his mind for "seven periods of time."

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel gave the king the highest compliment in the chapter and the deepest correction in the chapter in the same breath. "You are the head of gold" and "the God of heaven has given" are not two messages; they are one. Every honest compliment has a giver behind it.

KEY QUESTION

What have I been given that I have started describing as something I built?

11 What did Daniel say about the kingdom that would rise after Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom (verse 39)?

P. 43

Daniel 2:39 NASB95

"After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth."

IN MY WORDS

That it would be another kingdom, inferior to his, followed by a third kingdom of bronze that would rule over all the earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 5:28** Medo-Persia named at Babylon's fall: "your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes "inferior" cannot mean smaller or weaker—Medo-Persia was both larger and longer-lasting. It means lesser in glory and in the absolute power of its king.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to "after you." Nebuchadnezzar was told, at the height of his reign, that there would be an after. Every ruler is told this eventually; few are told it to their face.

CRITICAL THINKING

Each empire in turn ruled more people and more territory than the one before it, yet the metals get cheaper as they go. God measures kingdoms by something other than territory. By His scale, the empire that governs the most people can still be the poorest one yet.

KEY QUESTION

By what measure am I calling my own life successful—and is it God's measure or the world's?

12 What did Daniel say about Earth's final kingdom (verse 44)?

P. 44

Daniel 2:44 NASB95

"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 2:45 NASB95

"Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

IN MY WORDS

That the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, will never pass to another people, will crush and end all the other kingdoms, and will itself endure forever.

CROSS REFERENCE **Luke 1:32-33** "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati identifies the stone as Messiah and the timing as "in the days of those kings"—the final form of the fourth kingdom, still ahead of us.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the three negatives stacked in one verse: never destroyed, never handed to another people, never ending. Every human kingdom fails at all three.

CRITICAL THINKING

"It will not be left for another people." Every other kingdom in the dream ended by being inherited—handed off, taken over, absorbed. This one has no successor because it has no end. That is a category difference, not a size difference.

KEY QUESTION

Am I investing my life in something that will be handed off, or in the one thing that will not?

13 What was Nebuchadnezzar's response to Daniel? And what did he say about Daniel's God (verses 46-49)?

P. 45

Daniel 2:46-47 NASB95

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery."

Daniel 2:48-49 NASB95

Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court.

IN MY WORDS

He fell on his face before Daniel, ordered an offering presented to him, called Daniel's God "a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries," and then promoted Daniel to rule the whole province of Babylon and be chief prefect over all its wise men.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 3:1** One chapter later he builds a golden image ninety feet high—the confession of chapter 2 did not become conversion.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur cautions against reading verse 47 as saving faith. "A God of gods" is the language of a polytheist adding an impressive name to his collection, not of a man who has abandoned the others.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes what Daniel did with his promotion: his first recorded act was to request positions for his three friends. He used the top of the ladder to send it back down.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice what Daniel requested and what the king did. Daniel made the request; the king made the appointments. Daniel had just been handed a province and did not treat it as his to distribute—he asked. Power he had held for five minutes did not change how he related to authority.

KEY QUESTION

When I gain something, does anyone else gain with me—and do I still ask, or have I started assuming?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **Nebuchadnezzar's wise men included magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers. Interpreting dreams and divining the future was part of their job. But what did the king do to put them to the test (see page 41 of Discovering Daniel)?** P. 41

Daniel 2:5-6 NASB95

The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation."

IN MY WORDS

He refused to tell them the dream and demanded they produce both the dream itself and its meaning—removing the raw material they normally worked from and making bluffing impossible.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 47:13** "Let now the astrologers, Those who prophesy by the stars, Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati explains that Nebuchadnezzar designed a test no fraud could survive. Anyone can interpret; only someone with a real line to heaven can retrieve what was never told to him.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik adds that the king offered both extremes—dismemberment or "gifts and a reward and great honor." Neither the threat nor the bribe could manufacture an ability they did not have.

CRITICAL THINKING

This is one of the few times in Scripture a pagan king does exactly the right thing. He applied a falsifiable test to a religious claim. God did not rebuke him for it—God answered it. Genuine revelation has never been afraid of a real test.

KEY QUESTION

Would what I claim to know about God survive a test I could not prepare for?

2 **The wise men told Nebuchadnezzar they could not give the king the details and interpretation of his dream. What do you think God wanted Nebuchadnezzar to realize about his wise men?** P. 41

Daniel 2:10-11 NASB95

The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh."

IN MY WORDS

That the men he had trusted with his kingdom's future were empty—and that by their own confession the only one who could answer was a God who does not live with men, which set up the revelation that there is a God in heaven who does speak to men.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 44:25** God is the one "Making fools out of diviners, Causing wise men to draw back And turning their knowledge into foolishness."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes God emptied the room before He filled it. The wise men had to be publicly exhausted so that when Daniel spoke there was no competing explanation.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out the unintentional prophecy in verse 11: the Chaldeans said only a god not dwelling with flesh could answer—and the answer came through a man in whom that God dwelt.

CRITICAL THINKING

The wise men were right about everything except the conclusion. Their diagnosis was accurate—no man on earth can do this—and their despair was the correct response to their own religion. What they could not imagine was a God willing to close the distance.

KEY QUESTION

Where have I accepted a limit as final when the real answer was that I was asking the wrong source?

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3 When Daniel and his friends heard the troubling news that a kill order had gone out on the wise men—including them—how did they respond, and who did they turn to for help (see page 42 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 42

Daniel 2:17-18 NASB95

Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

IN MY WORDS

They did not run, negotiate, or panic—they gathered and prayed, turning to the God of heaven and asking Him for compassion.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Chronicles 20:12** Jehoshaphat's prayer: "we are powerless before this great multitude… nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati emphasizes that prayer was their first move and not their last resort. That order is what separates Daniel from almost everyone else in the chapter.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes they asked for "compassion" from God rather than for an outcome—they left the shape of the rescue to Him.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had already been to Arioch and already been to the king before he went to his house to pray. He was not passive; he moved fast and acted wisely. But every action he took was aimed at buying room for the prayer, not at replacing it.

KEY QUESTION

Is prayer where I start, or where I end up after my own options run out?

4 In Daniel's prayer in Daniel 2:20-23, what do we learn about God?

P. 42

Daniel 2:20-22 NASB95

Daniel said, "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; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him."

IN MY WORDS

That wisdom and power belong to Him, that He controls history by changing times and removing and establishing kings, that every bit of human wisdom is a gift from Him, that He reveals what is hidden, and that He sees into the darkness because light dwells with Him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 12:22** "He reveals mysteries from the darkness And brings the deep darkness into light."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the pairing of wisdom and power. God knows what should be done and is able to do it—two things that almost never occur together in human government.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Daniel praises God for removing kings while standing inside a kingdom about to be removed. He worshiped the truth that put his own address on notice.

CRITICAL THINKING

"The light dwells with Him." Daniel does not say God shines a light into the darkness from a distance; he says light lives where God lives. There is no dark corner God has to travel to in order to see. He never learns anything.

KEY QUESTION

What am I keeping in the dark, as if there were somewhere God has not already been?

5 In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue. What did the first kingdom—the head of gold—represent (see page 49 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 49

Daniel 2:37-38 NASB95

"You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold."

a. What was the good news about the head of gold (see page 50)?

IN MY WORDS

The good news was that he was the head of gold—the most valuable metal on the statue, an empire of genuine splendor, and God said so to his face.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 27:6** God calls him "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant"—his authority was real because it was granted.

b. What was the bad news (see page 50)?

IN MY WORDS

The bad news was that he was only the head—his empire had an expiration date, another kingdom was coming after him, and gold is the softest metal on the statue.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 5:26** "God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it."—spoken to Babylon's last king.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes Babylon was gold in the way that mattered to Nebuchadnezzar—splendor, wealth, absolute rule concentrated in one man. No later empire ever matched that concentration.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that gold sits at the top precisely because everything after it is a decline. The dream is a downward staircase, and the king was standing on the highest step.

CRITICAL THINKING

Being told you are the best is only good news if you assume there is no "after you." Nebuchadnezzar was handed the highest compliment and the shortest lease in the same sentence, and the record shows he only heard one of them.

KEY QUESTION

Which half of what God has told me about myself do I actually repeat back?

6 What did the next three kingdoms represent (see page 51 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 51

Daniel 2:39-40 NASB95

"After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces."

IN MY WORDS

The silver was Medo-Persia, the bronze was Greece, and the iron was Rome—each one ruling in turn exactly as Daniel said, and each less glorious but more brutal than the one before.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:20-21** Gabriel names two of them outright: the ram is "the kings of Media and Persia," the goat is "the kingdom of Greece."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that Daniel later names Medo-Persia and Greece explicitly in chapters 5 and 8, which removes the guesswork from the middle of the statue.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the fourth kingdom gets more description than the other three combined—iron, then iron mixed with clay, then toes. The dream slows down where history is still running.

CRITICAL THINKING

Two chest-and-arms, one belly, two legs, ten toes—the statue keeps dividing as it descends. Power starts concentrated in one head and ends scattered across ten toes that will not hold together. Every empire's trajectory is toward fragmentation, and the dream drew that before Persia even existed.

KEY QUESTION

Where is something in my own life dividing that I have been telling myself is still whole?

7 What did the fifth or final kingdom represent (see page 52 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 52

Daniel 2:44 NASB95

"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."

IN MY WORDS

The stone cut out without hands is the kingdom of God—Messiah's kingdom—which does not evolve out of the fourth kingdom but breaks in from outside it and replaces all of them permanently.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 9:7** "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom…"

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur stresses "cut out without hands." The fifth kingdom is not built by human effort, reform, or evangelistic success; it is quarried by God and arrives as an act of God.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the stone becomes a mountain filling the whole earth—not a spiritual influence but a literal, global, physical reign.

CRITICAL THINKING

The stone does not sit alongside the statue and slowly win converts. It strikes, and the statue is gone. Whatever else the millennium involves, the transition in this dream is a demolition and not a merger — the kingdom arrives by replacing, not by improving.

KEY QUESTION

Do I live like Christ's kingdom is coming, or like it is my job to build it?

8 Who will rule this final kingdom (see Isaiah 11:10 and page 53 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 53

Isaiah 11:10 NASB95

Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Daniel 2:45 NASB95

"Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

IN MY WORDS

Jesus Christ—the root of Jesse, the promised Son of David—will rule it, and the nations will come to Him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 5:5** "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati connects the root of Jesse to the covenant with David—the final kingdom is not a new idea but the keeping of a promise God made a thousand years before Daniel.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes "the nations will resort to" Him. The kingdom Daniel saw crush the nations is the same kingdom the nations end up seeking.

CRITICAL THINKING

Isaiah calls Him the root of Jesse, not the branch of Jesse. A descendant who is also the source. The one who arrives at the end of the line turns out to be where the line came from, which is why His kingdom cannot be inherited by anyone else.

KEY QUESTION

Is Christ actually my king right now, or mainly my rescuer?

9 How long will this final kingdom endure (see Revelation 20:4-6 and page 54 in Discovering Daniel)? P. 54

Revelation 20:4 NASB95

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Revelation 20:6 NASB95

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

IN MY WORDS

Christ will reign on the earth a thousand years, and then the kingdom continues forever—Daniel says it "will itself endure forever," so the millennium is the beginning of it and not the length of it.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Corinthians 15:24-25** "then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father… For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes Revelation states the thousand years six times in six verses. Repetition that specific is not the language of symbol.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that believers do not merely live in that kingdom—they reign in it, as priests of God and of Christ.

CRITICAL THINKING

Hold Daniel 2:44 and Revelation 20 together and the arithmetic will not close: one says forever, the other says a thousand years. They are not in conflict — the millennium is the visible, earthly phase of a reign that does not end when it does. A thousand years is how it starts, not how long it lasts.

KEY QUESTION

Am I living now like someone being trained to reign later?

10 **Daniel went from being on the king's kill list to being "ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:48). Why do you think God honored and protected Daniel, and put him in this position in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom?** P. 55

Daniel 2:48 NASB95

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

IN MY WORDS

Because Daniel had already proved faithful in private—refusing the king's food in chapter 1, praying instead of panicking here, and giving God the credit publicly—and because God needed a man inside that palace for the next seventy years.

CROSS REFERENCE **Luke 16:10** "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much…"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the promotion was not a reward Daniel sought. He asked for compassion and time; God gave him a province.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that this position is why Daniel is present for every chapter that follows—God was not decorating a faithful man, He was placing him.

CRITICAL THINKING

The promotion put Daniel over the very men he had just saved—magicians and astrologers whose entire craft he had publicly discredited. God's honoring of him was also an assignment to spend decades among people who had reason to resent him. Elevation and difficulty arrived in the same envelope.

KEY QUESTION

Am I asking God to move me somewhere, or asking Him what He put me here to do?

11 **What three character traits do we see exhibited by Daniel in this account (see pages 56-57 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 56

Daniel 2:14 NASB95

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;

Daniel 2:30 NASB95

“But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.”

IN MY WORDS

Composure under pressure—he answered the executioner with discretion and discernment; dependence on God—he prayed before he acted and asked for compassion, not cleverness; and humility—he refused the credit twice and handed it to God in front of the king.

CROSS REFERENCE **Micah 6:8** “to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes these traits were not produced by the crisis; they were revealed by it. Daniel had been building them since he turned down the king’s table as a teenager.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that Daniel’s humility was specific, not general. He did not say “I’m nothing”—he said the revelation was not owing to any wisdom in him more than in any other living man. Accurate, not self-deprecating.

CRITICAL THINKING

Every one of these traits cost Daniel something in the moment. Composure meant not defending himself. Dependence meant delay while men were dying. Humility meant handing away the credit for the greatest professional achievement in Babylon’s history. Character is only visible when it is expensive.

KEY QUESTION

Which of these three would the people closest to me say I am weakest in?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 **Read Genesis 41:39-41. How had the Pharaoh of Egypt responded when Joseph interpreted his dream?** P. 57

Genesis 41:39-41 NASB95

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

IN MY WORDS

He acknowledged that God had informed Joseph, declared no one as discerning and wise as he was, and set him over all the land of Egypt—second only to the throne.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 41:16** Joseph’s own disclaimer first: “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes both Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar credited God with the interpretation and then promoted the interpreter—pagan kings can recognize the hand of God without submitting to Him.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that in both accounts the promotion came from the throne and the revelation came from heaven. God used a foreign king’s gratitude to position His man.

CRITICAL THINKING

Both Joseph and Daniel disclaimed the credit before they gave the interpretation, and both were promoted anyway. The pattern is worth noticing: neither man’s advancement was slowed by refusing to take credit for it. Handing glory to God has never cost anyone the position God intended them to have.

KEY QUESTION

Do I believe deferring credit will cost me—and is that belief why I sometimes keep it?

2 **What parallels do you see between Joseph and Daniel?** P. 57

Daniel 2:28 NASB95

“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. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.”

IN MY WORDS

Both were young Hebrews taken far from home against their will, both stayed pure in a pagan court, both refused the credit and pointed to God, both interpreted a foreign king’s troubling dream that no one else could explain, and both were raised to second-in-command of the empire that had taken them.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 50:20** "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes both men were placed in a Gentile empire at exactly the moment their people needed a protector inside it—Joseph before the famine, Daniel through the exile.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the deeper parallel: neither man was rescued out of his captivity. God's deliverance came through the captivity, not around it.

CRITICAL THINKING

Both stories begin with a betrayal that looks like the end of a calling. Joseph's brothers and Nebuchadnezzar's army were the means God used to get each man to the exact place he needed to be. The disaster was the transportation.

KEY QUESTION

What am I still calling a detour that may turn out to have been the route?

3 **Nebuchadnezzar's wise men were sorcerers and astrologers. What does God say about such practices and those who do them, according to the following passages?** P. 58

Leviticus 19:31 NASB95

'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.'

Leviticus 20:6 NASB95

'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.'

Isaiah 44:24-25 NASB95

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone, Causing the omens of boasters to fail, Making fools out of diviners, Causing wise men to draw back And turning their knowledge into foolishness,"

Jeremiah 27:9-10 NASB95

"But as for you, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers or your sorcerers who speak to you, saying, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' For they prophesy a lie to you in order to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out and you will perish."

a. **Leviticus 19:31**

IN MY WORDS

God forbids turning to mediums or spiritists at all, and says seeking them out defiles the person who does it.

CROSS REFERENCE **Deuteronomy 18:10-12** "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD…"

b. **Leviticus 20:6**

IN MY WORDS

God calls it playing the harlot, and says He will set His face against that person and cut him off from among his people.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Chronicles 10:13** "So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD… and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it…"

c. **Isaiah 44:24-25**

IN MY WORDS

God, who made everything by Himself, is the one who makes the omens fail and turns the diviners' knowledge into foolishness—He personally defeats them.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 47:14** "Behold, they have become like stubble, Fire burns them; They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame…"

d. **Jeremiah 27:9-10**

IN MY WORDS

He tells His people not to listen to diviners and sorcerers at all, because they prophesy a lie that leads to ruin.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 29:8-9** "Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you… For they prophesy falsely to you in My name…"

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes God's objection is not that the occult is powerless but that it is a rival—He calls it spiritual adultery, which is the language of a betrayed covenant, not of a debunked trick.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Daniel served in a court full of these men and neither joined them nor tried to reform them. He simply had access to something they did not.

CRITICAL THINKING

In Daniel 2 God did not merely forbid the diviners—He humiliated them publicly and then spared their lives through the man they could not match. Judgment and mercy landed on the same group in the same afternoon. Being exposed by God is not the same as being abandoned by Him.

KEY QUESTION

What am I consulting—horoscopes, feeds, gurus, my own gut—before I consult God?

4 **Daniel and his friends trusted God to protect and deliver them. How do the following passages increase your confidence in God's care for His own, including you?** P. 58

Psalm 4:3, 8 NASB95

But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him. … In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.

Psalm 23:4, 6 NASB95

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. … Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 27:5, 13-14 NASB95

For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. … I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.

Psalm 37:15-18 NASB95

Their sword will enter their own heart, And their bows will be broken. Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked will be broken, But the LORD sustains the righteous. The LORD knows the days of the blameless, And their inheritance will be forever.

a. **Psalm 4:3, 8**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> God has set me apart for Himself and He hears me when I call—which is why I can lie down and actually sleep with the thing unresolved.

CROSS REFERENCE **Mark 4:38** Jesus asleep in the stern of the boat during the storm—the same peace, in a body.

b. **Psalm 23:4, 6**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> He does not keep me out of the valley; He walks through it with me, and goodness and lovingkindness follow me all the way to His house.

CROSS REFERENCE **Hebrews 13:6** "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

c. **Psalm 27:5, 13-14**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> In the day of trouble He hides me and lifts me up on a rock, and I am told plainly to wait for Him and let my heart take courage.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 40:31** "Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength…"

d. **Psalm 37:15-18**

> **IN MY WORDS**
>
> The sword of the wicked ends up entering their own heart, the LORD sustains the righteous, He knows my days by name, and my inheritance is forever.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 37:16** "Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes Daniel and his friends slept that night on nothing but a promise. The mystery was revealed "in a night vision," which means they had gone to bed with the sentence still standing.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that every one of these psalms was written by a man in actual danger. This is not theoretical comfort; it is field-tested.

CRITICAL THINKING

Read what these four passages promise and what they do not. They promise His presence, His hearing, His sustaining, and an inheritance that outlasts the trouble. Not one of them promises the valley will be shortened. Daniel’s deliverance came the night before the deadline—not a day early.

KEY QUESTION

Can I sleep tonight on something God has said but has not yet done?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Taking Daniel 2 off the page and into the week.

1 Can you think of two or three other individuals in the Old or New Testaments who immediately turned to God for help in a crisis? What lessons can we learn from their examples?

P. 58

2 Chronicles 20:12 NASB95

"O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You."

2 Kings 19:14 NASB95

Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD.

IN MY WORDS

Jehoshaphat prayed when an army was already marching on Judah, Hezekiah carried Sennacherib's threatening letter straight into the house of the LORD and spread it out before Him, and Peter cried "Lord, save me!" the instant he began to sink—and the lesson in all three is that they went to God first, with the crisis still unsolved, and told Him the truth about their helplessness.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 14:30** "But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'"

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes Hezekiah did not summarize the letter or pray about it in general—he physically spread the threat out in God's presence. Specific prayer takes the problem seriously enough to name it.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Jehoshaphat's prayer ends by admitting he has no plan. "Nor do we know what to do" is not a failure of leadership; it is the most honest thing in the chapter.

CRITICAL THINKING

None of these men prayed after trying everything else. That is the pattern, and it is the opposite of ours. We tend to treat prayer as the thing we do once our own competence runs out, which quietly says that our competence is the primary resource and God is the reserve.

KEY QUESTION

What is the actual sequence when trouble hits my week—and what does that sequence say about who I am trusting?

2 Why do you think prayer is a vital first step when it comes to facing life's problems?

P. 59

Philippians 4:6-7 NASB95

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NASB95

Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

IN MY WORDS

Because prayer puts the problem in front of the only one who actually knows the whole situation and can change it, and because it changes me first—it kills the panic, guards my heart, and stops me leaning on my own understanding before I act.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:5** "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the promise in Philippians 4 is not that the circumstance changes but that peace guards the heart and mind—prayer secures the perimeter while the situation is still in play.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that Daniel prayed before he had any idea what the dream was. Prayer that waits until we understand the problem has already stopped being trust.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice that Paul includes thanksgiving in the middle of an anxious request. Gratitude inside the asking is what keeps prayer from becoming a worry list read aloud. It forces me to remember what He has already done while I am asking Him to do something more.

KEY QUESTION

When I pray about a problem, do I ever thank Him in the same breath—or only ask?

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3 **According to Nebuchadnezzar's dream, there will someday come a kingdom that wipes out all human kingdoms. The accomplishments of men will turn to mere dust. How should this truth shape the way we view our human accomplishments?** P. 59

Daniel 2:35 NASB95

"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

IN MY WORDS

It should keep me working hard without holding tightly—doing my work well as unto the Lord, but refusing to build my identity on anything that will end up as chaff with not a trace of it found.

CROSS REFERENCE **Colossians 3:23-24** "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the phrase "not a trace of them was found." Not diminished, not reduced—gone. That is the final status of every empire, monument, and résumé.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes that the same wind that carries away the chaff leaves the stone standing. What is built on Christ is not swept up in the demolition.

CRITICAL THINKING

The dream does not say human achievement is worthless; it says it is temporary, which is a different claim. Gold was still gold. Babylon really was magnificent. The error is not admiring the statue — it is not noticing that everything from the head to the toes goes at the same moment.

KEY QUESTION

If everything I have built were chaff tomorrow, what would be left of me?

4 In light of the previous question, read Matthew 6:19-20. What are some ways you can grow in terms of laying up treasures in heaven?

P. 59

Matthew 6:19-20 NASB95

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;"

IN MY WORDS

By giving generously and quietly, investing my time in people rather than only in projects, discipling my family, telling somebody about Christ, serving where no one is keeping score, and holding my possessions loosely enough that I could actually let them go.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 6:21** "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."—the reason the command matters.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes Jesus does not condemn storing up; He redirects where. The instinct to accumulate is not the problem—the address is.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out the three destroyers Jesus names—moth, rust, and thieves—cover decay from within, decay from without, and loss by force. Earthly treasure has no defense against any of them.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 21 says the heart follows the treasure, not the other way around. That reverses how most of us think about giving. We wait to feel generous before we give, but Jesus says put the treasure there and the heart will move to where you sent it.

KEY QUESTION

What is one specific, costly thing I could send ahead this month?

5 Daniel was quick to give credit to God for doing what only He could do. What are some things God has done in your life that you can credit Him for?

P. 59

Daniel 2:23 NASB95

"To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter."

IN MY WORDS

He kept me when I had no business being kept, put people in my path I could never have arranged, opened doors I did not knock on and closed ones I was pounding on, provided when the math did not work, and gave me work and a family I did not earn.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 103:2** "Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits…"

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes Daniel addresses God as "God of my fathers"—he credits God not only for the answer that night but for a faithfulness that started generations before him.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that Daniel's praise is specific: he names the actual thing God did. Vague gratitude is easy to feel and easy to forget.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel thanked God for wisdom and power before he mentioned the dream. He credited the capacity before he credited the outcome. Most of my gratitude attaches to results, which means when the results are thin I have nothing to say — but the capacity was a gift on the ordinary days too.

KEY QUESTION

Can I name three specific things from this past year, out loud, tonight?

6 Why do you think it's important for us to have a regular habit of giving God credit for all that He does for us?

P. 59

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 NASB95

"Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."

IN MY WORDS

Because credit drifts—if I do not deliberately return it to God, I will quietly start keeping it, and a habit of thanksgiving is the only thing that keeps my memory honest about where everything came from.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:30** Nebuchadnezzar on his roof: "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built…by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?"

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that ingratitude is listed in Romans 1 as one of the first steps in a downward spiral—"they did not honor Him as God or give thanks…" It is not a small failing.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to Nebuchadnezzar as the case study: he confessed God's greatness in chapter 2 and claimed the glory himself in chapter 4. A confession is not a habit.

CRITICAL THINKING

Deuteronomy 8 does not warn about a decision to steal God's glory; it warns about something you "say in your heart." The theft is not announced. It happens slowly, in private, in the way I describe my own life to myself — which is exactly why it takes a regular habit and not a one-time confession to stop.

KEY QUESTION

How do I narrate my own successes when no one is listening?

7 **What conclusion do you think Nebuchadnezzar would have come to if Daniel had failed to give credit to God? How do we hurt ourselves—and others—when we fail to make it clear that it's God who enables us in everything we do?** P. 59

Daniel 2:47 NASB95

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

Daniel 2:30 NASB95

"But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind."

IN MY WORDS

He would have concluded that Daniel was simply the best of the magicians—a better wizard, not evidence of a living God—and when I take credit I do the same thing: I rob God of glory He is owed, I take on a weight of expectation I cannot carry, and I leave the people watching me admiring a man instead of meeting a Savior.

CROSS REFERENCE **Acts 14:14-15** Barnabas and Paul tore their robes when the crowd tried to worship them: "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you…"

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes verse 47 traces directly back to verse 28. The king's confession is the harvest of Daniel's disclaimer—he could only credit God because Daniel refused to be credited.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that stolen glory is not merely dishonest; it is evangelistically fatal. The watching world can only see God through us if we get out of the way.

CRITICAL THINKING

Nebuchadnezzar still bowed to Daniel and ordered an offering presented to him. Even after Daniel gave God every ounce of the credit, the king's first instinct was to worship the messenger. If that is what happens when a man does it right, consider what happens when he says nothing at all.

KEY QUESTION

Is there someone in my life who admires me for something God did?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Daniel 2 opens with a man who cannot sleep and closes with the obituary of every empire that would ever rule, written before the first one had fallen. In between, the wisest men in Babylon are exposed as frauds, four young Hebrews pray through a night under a death sentence, and a pagan king ends up on his face confessing that there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

The dream itself is the most compact prophecy of world history anywhere in Scripture. Babylon the head of gold. Medo-Persia the chest and arms of silver. Greece the belly and thighs of bronze. Rome the legs of iron. And then the feet — iron mixed with clay, a divided thing that will not hold together, waiting for the stone. Four of those five have already happened, exactly in order, exactly as described — and Daniel named them before the first handover, while Babylon still looked permanent.

That precision is the whole argument. If the head, the chest, the belly, and the legs all landed, the feet are not speculation. Daniel says the stone strikes "in the days of those kings," and the God who was right about Persia and Greece and Rome does not become unreliable at the ankles.

But notice what the chapter spends most of its space on. Not the statue — the man standing in front of it. Daniel answered his executioner with discretion. He asked for compassion rather than cleverness. He worshiped before he went to the palace, and when he got there he spent his first breath making sure the king could not credit him. The prophecy is the famous part of this chapter. The character is the part we are supposed to copy.

And the stone is still cut out without hands. It was not quarried by an army, an election, a movement, or a reformation. It comes from outside the statue entirely, and when it lands, the gold goes the same moment as the clay. Nebuchadnezzar was told he was the head of gold and he heard only the compliment. We have the whole dream in front of us. We have no such excuse.

However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

DANIEL 2:28

Four young men went to bed one night in Babylon with an execution order standing against them and nothing in hand but a request for compassion. The answer came in the dark, before the deadline, and not one minute early. That is usually how it comes. The kingdoms in that dream have risen and fallen exactly as He said, and the last one is still standing on feet of iron and clay — which means the God who answered Daniel that night is the same God holding the calendar we are living on. He has never once been late, and He has never once been wrong.

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