

# DANGEROUS DREAMS

DATE: SUNDAY, 21ST OF JUNE 2020 | SERIES: DANIEL - PART 2

## DANIEL 2:31-35

*"Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth."*

## START TALKING

1. Was there anything in Sunday's message that challenged you?
2. Have you ever had a dream that that was so real it almost seemed true? How did you feel when you woke up from that dream?

## START THINKING

1. Read Daniel 2:12-23.
  - a). What can we learn from Daniel's example about how we should react to a personal crisis?
  - b). What do verses 19-23 tell you about how to respond to answered prayer?
  - c). Verses 20-23 have often been called "Daniel's psalm." What aspects of God's character are emphasized in these verses?
2. Read Daniel 2:31-35.
  - a). Who or what does the rock in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream represent? What does the statue represent in our lives?
  - b). If the "Rock of ages" had to roll into your life, what statues (idols) would it topple?

## START SHARING

1. Three aspects of Daniel's spiritual maturity stand out in this chapter: his wisdom in response to a crisis, his prayer in response to a problem and his praise in response to God's work in his life. How can Daniel's example help you grow in one of these areas?
1. Daniel received prophetic insight for Nebuchadnezzar. Have you ever sensed that God gave you wisdom or insight to share with another individual? Did you have the courage to share it? How were you blessed through this?

## START PRAYING

Heavenly Father, thank You that You are the Rock on which we stand. Keep us looking to You and trusting You in every area of our lives. May Your kingdom come, and Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## START DOING

Daniel heard from God in the midst of prayer and praise. What is one thing you would like to start doing to increase prayer and praise in your daily life? Put that into practice this week.

# SUMMARY

## OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, we found ourselves in chapter 2 of Daniel for part two of our Daniel series. There are two key characters where we pick up the story: the emperor and the exile.

The emperor, Nebuchadnezzar, was arguably the most powerful man in the world. He ruled the Babylonian empire, and according to historical records, he was a dynamic and able monarch, a powerful military leader. But he was also arrogant and had a violent temper (with severe consequences - often death - for those on the receiving end of his wrath).

The exile, Daniel, was forcibly removed from Jerusalem as a teenage boy.

In Daniel 2:1-2 we read that king Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream: *In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed.*

The king summons all the wise men, magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers; and asks them to tell him what he dreamed and the interpretation of the dream. The response from the magicians is that if Nebuchadnezzar doesn't tell them his dream, they will be unable to interpret it. This angers the king, and he threatens to tear them to pieces and turn their houses into rubble. But if you tell me - great rewards and riches and honour. The magicians are horrified: "no other king on earth has ever asked his magicians to do this!"

Nebuchadnezzar gives an order for all the wise men, magicians and astrologers in the whole of Babylon to be put to death. The guards start rounding them up, including Daniel and his three friends who weren't present at the time that the king asked for an interpretation of his dream. Daniel asks what happened and then speaks wisely to the guard and to the king, asking for more time to interpret the dream. The king grants his request, giving him one night. Daniel goes home and urges his friends to "plead for mercy from the God of heaven". Miraculously that night, the dream, as well as the interpretation, are made known to Daniel by God. He prays a beautiful prayer of praise and thanks! (Daniel 2:20-24) and goes back to the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar to tell him of the dream: "God in heaven - the revealer of mysteries gave you the dream - and he wants you to know its meaning".

Then Daniel shares with Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation of the dream:

- The head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom
- The chest of silver, another kingdom that will come after Nebuchadnezzar
- The belly and thighs of bronze represent a third kingdom
- And the legs of iron a fourth kingdom
- Finally, the feet of clay and iron means that this fourth kingdom will be divided.

We can look back on this interpretation with the benefit of hindsight and knowledge of history: The statue in this dream represented the next 600-1000 years of human history!

- Gold - Babylonian Empire
- Silver - Medes & Persians
- Iron - Roman Empire
- Feet of clay and iron - divided Roman Empire

### Lessons from Daniel 2:

#### 1. God knows the future

He knows the future of the world, and He knows our future. He is interested in our day-to-day needs, but He also sees the end from the beginning. "...he knows everything." 1 John 3:20. This should bring us inspiration and comfort. We make plans, but we don't know the future; however, we have a God that sees all of human history. Many of us are so caught up in our current reality, that we may lose sight of the God that see it all.

Daniel 2 helps us see beyond the horizontal of our lives, to the vertical of the Ruler of the world - the God that sees it all. We may not be able to see the future, but we see the One who knows the future and our lives are complete in His hands.

When Daniel was taken captive, imagine how he felt about the future, there's no doubt he would have had some questions. Although Daniel couldn't see God in his hardships, God could see Daniel. It's beautifully encouraging for us that while we can't see our future but only our current pain, God knows our current pain, and He knows the future. Faith is knowing that God knows our future, and He holds us in His hand.

Daniel had no idea that God was going to use him in this way. At the end of this story, we learn that "... King Nebuchadnezzar prostrate before Daniel and paid him honour... He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men." Daniel 2:46,47

#### 2. Jesus is building the ultimate Kingdom.

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock, cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. Daniel 2:44-45.

The interpretation of this part of the dream relates to Jesus. In a small corner of the Roman Empire, in the town of Bethlehem, (600 years after this dream) the King of glory was born in a stable. He laid in a manger with no trumpets, no fanfare, and almost certainly lived and died without the Roman Emperor knowing Who He was. And yet the King of Glory born in obscurity preaches this message: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near" Matthew 4:17.

Jesus led no armies and conquered no new lands. He died an ignoble death – hung on a cross between two thieves. And yet 2,000 years later, His kingdom continues to grow and expand and fill the whole earth. The Babylonian empire is long forgotten as are the empires of the Medes and Persians, Greeks and Romans. But the Kingdom of God continues to expand. The angel in Revelation declares: *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever.”* Revelation 11:15.

Amazingly God announces the Gospel in advance to the pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar! That He is “King of kings!” and that Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom will soon disappear, but God’s is everlasting!

### **3. Whose kingdom am I building?**

From the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 through to Revelation 17-18 we see that Babylon is used as a metaphor for all future kingdoms that set themselves up against God and are built on greed and military power. But all of them are toppled by the KING – Jesus!

Essentially the dream of Nebuchadnezzar poses us this question: What are our dreams? Do we dream of building our own mini-empire? Or are we invested in building His kingdom? There’s a vast difference between the two:

#### **Our kingdom**

I do what I want  
Make a name for myself  
What do I get out of it?

#### **His kingdom**

I do what He wants  
Make His name known  
How can I glorify the King?

This is not a question we ask ourselves just once! Throughout our lives, we should be reminding ourselves that our aim is to build His kingdom!