

Daniel Chapter Two

- King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed multiple dreams [2:1-2] and yet asks about a single dream and interpretation [2:3-6] indicating that he was having the same troubling dream over and over again.
- The king had insomnia as a result [2:1] and called for his “cabinet” of advisors [2:2] who were...
 - Magicians (חַטְמוֹת chartom) – men with knowledge of the sacred arts and sciences of the Egyptians and were involved with astrology, the foretelling of events, magic, the interpretation of dreams, etc.
 - Conjurers (אַשְׁשַׁפִּימֵי ashshaph) – men who called upon “spirits” through works of magic, a practice which was strictly prohibited by the Law [Deut 18:11].
 - Sorcerers (קַשְׁפֵּי kashaph) – men who practiced magic by using occult formulas, incantations, and mystic mutterings.
 - Chaldeans (כַּשְׂדֵּי kasediyim) – here referring to men of the educated class, skilled in interpretation.
- King Nebuchadnezzar told his advisors about his dream [2:3] and they responded by asking to know what the dream was so they could interpret [2:4].
- The king made an incredible demand of his advisors asking them to tell him both the dream itself and the interpretation with very high stakes [2:5-6].
- The king’s advisors pushed back, once again asking to know what the dream was [2:7].
- Nebuchadnezzar suspected that they were buying for time and reiterated his initial demand [2:8-9].
- The advisors responded that only the “gods” could accomplish the king’s demand [2:10-11].
 - Marduk was the patron deity of Babylon and the head of the Babylonian pantheon.
 - This pantheon included Anu (the god of heaven), Enlil (the god of wind and earth), Ea (the god of the underworld), Sin (the moon-god), Shamash (the sun-god), and Ishtar (the goddess of love and war who is like Ashtoreth and Aphrodite), Nabu (the god of writing) and Nergal (the god of war and famine).

- Nebuchadnezzar had heard enough excuses and issued an order to kill all the wise men of Babylon, not just his advisors who stood before him [2:12].
- Daniel and his friends were included among the wise men, so they were sought after and were to be killed even though they were not present [2:13].
- When approached by the captain of the bodyguard, Daniel responded with discretion and discernment asking for a meeting with the king so he would have a chance to declare the interpretation [2:14-16].
- Daniel immediately met with Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to let them know what was happening and to petition the Lord in prayer as a group [2:17-18].
 - They asked for compassion from God.
 - They asked for the answer to the king's challenge so that they might be spared from this judgment by association with the other so-called wise men.
- God revealed the answer to Daniel who responded by praising God, giving Him the glory for answering their request [2:19-23].
- Daniel then made an even bolder request for a meeting with the king and this request was quickly honored by Arioch [2:24-25].
- When Nebuchadnezzar inquired of Daniel he began his response by proclaiming the existence of God and informed the king that God had made known the king's dream and its interpretation [2:26-28].
- Daniel then explained that the king's dream was about the future and that God had given the answer to inform the king about these things [2:29-30].
- Daniel then began to describe the king's dream...
 - The king had seen an extraordinary statue [2:31].
 - The head was made of gold [2:32].
 - The breast and arms were made of silver [2:32].
 - The belly and thighs were made of bronze [2:32].
 - The legs were made of iron [2:33].
 - The feet were made of iron and clay [2:33].
 - Then a stone cut without hands struck the feet, crushing them and destroying the statue [2:34-35].
 - This stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth [2:35].
- Daniel then told Nebuchadnezzar that he would explain the interpretation of the dream [2:36].

- This dream was prophetic in nature, outlining “The Times of the Gentiles” [Luke 21:24].
 - This should not be confused with the Church which was never revealed in the Old Testament.
 - This period encompasses the Dispensation of Israel (Law, Incarnation, Tribulation, Millennial Reign) and involves the rise and fall of nations having dominion over Israel (we now know that it spans the Church).
- Daniel then began to describe the interpretation...
 - The kingdom of Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar are the head of gold [2:37-38].
 - Another kingdom (Persia), inferior to Babylon, is signified by the breast and arms of silver [2:39a].
 - A third kingdom (Greece) which is subsequent to the first two is represented by the belly and thighs of bronze [2:39b] – it will rule over the whole earth.
 - A fourth kingdom (Rome) which is very strong is denoted by the legs of silver [2:40] – it will destroy what had become of the first three kingdoms.
 - A divided condition (post-Roman), springing out of the fourth kingdom, is described by the feet and toes of iron and clay [2:41].
 - A fragile and fragmented condition resulting from the legacy of the fourth kingdom of iron (Rome) is symbolized by the toes of iron and clay [2:42-43].
 - A divine kingdom (the Millennial Kingdom with Christ conquering and reigning as King) is denoted by the stone cut without hands [2: 44-45].

- History of the kingdoms (empires) in the prophecy



- The Babylonian Empire (626-539 B.C. – 87 years)
 - Also known as Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean Empire.
 - Babylonia, a province of Assyria, was frequently under attack by the inhabitants of Chaldea.
 - The Chaldeans warred against various Assyrian kings, but the last of these (Ashurbanipal) died in 627 B.C.
 - In 626 B.C. Nabopolassar (a Chaldean) revolted and established the Chaldean dynasty in Babylonia.
 - His son was Nebuchadnezzar (reigned 605-562 B.C.).
 - In 539 B.C. Persian conquest ended Chaldean rule.



- The Medo-Persian Empire (539-330 B.C. – 209 years)
 - Also known as Persian or Achaemenid Empire.
 - Around 700 B.C. the Medes were an association of tribes in western Iran.
 - The Medes were held down for years due to invasions by various groups including the Scythians.
 - Around 625 B.C. the Medes under Cyaxares defeated the Scythians and turned their attention to Assyria.
 - The Medes formed an alliance with Babylonia and in 612 B.C. they sacked the Assyrian capital of Nineveh.
 - The Medes controlled many groups in the region including the Persians, but in 549 B.C. Cyrus the Great of Persia defeated the last Median king (Astyages).
 - Cyrus the Great ruled from 549-530 B.C. and oversaw the expansion of the empire (conquest of Babylonia).
 - His son, Cambyses II, ruled from 530-522 B.C. and further extended the empire by invading Egypt.
 - Darius I took over and firmly established the empire which eventually extended from Egypt to India.
 - He ruled from 521-486 B.C. and instituted a system of satraps (local governors) under strong central rule.
 - This efficient system of government allowed a series of future kings (including his own son Xerxes I who ruled from 486-465 B.C.) to remain in power.
 - The last Achaemenid king, Darius III Codomannus, was defeated by Alexander the Great and killed in 330 B.C.
 - Although this empire covered more area and lasted longer, it never attained to the greatness of Babylonia.



- The Greek Empire (330-63 B.C. – 267 years)
 - Phillip II, a skilled statesman and warrior, became regent of Macedonia in 359 B.C. and king in 356 B.C.
 - Under his leadership the kingdom gradually took control of the divided region.
 - Phillip II made himself commander-in-chief over the Greeks and made plans to wage war against Persia, but was assassinated in 336 B.C. before the war began.
 - Alexander the Great (Phillip II's son) took over and moved forward with his father's plans to attack Persia.
 - Alexander the Great led a strong Macedonian army, fortified by a formidable cavalry, in conquering the Persian Empire over a ten year period (334-325 B.C.).
 - The empire expanded under his rule until it covered a large area reaching east into India and Pakistan, but the effects of this empire reached beyond its borders.
 - At Alexander's death in 323 B.C. this huge empire broke apart and his generals (known as the Diadochi) claimed his legacy.
 - By 275 B.C. three distinct Macedonian dynasties had formed from the vast Alexandrian empire.
 - The successors of Antigonus I (the Antigonids) ruled Macedonia.
 - The successors of Seleucus I (the Seleucids) ruled the Asian Provinces.
 - The successors of Ptolemy I (the Ptolemies) ruled Egypt.
 - Rome became the dominant factor in Greek history after 200 B.C.
 - In 200-196 B.C. Rome conquered Macedonia which later became a Roman province in 148 B.C.
 - The Seleucid ruler Antiochus III was defeated by the Romans in 189 B.C.
 - The Roman conquests continued until the last vestiges of Greek autonomy were taken in 63 B.C.



- The Roman Empire (63 B.C. – 476 A.D. – 539 years)
 - According to tradition Rome was founded on Apr. 21, 753 B.C. – a date still celebrated in Italy.
 - The Roman republic was founded in 509 B.C. and it was led by the Senate and the Consuls (magistrates).
 - The early republic saw quite a bit of expansion which eventually lead to some conflict with rival forces.
 - Rome and Carthage battled over the island of Sicily because it was such a great producer of grain.
 - The Romans then found themselves having to contend with another foreign enemy – the Macedonians.
 - Roman legions routed the Macedonians and assumed the protectorate of the Greek states.
 - In 148 B.C. Macedonia was annexed by Rome.
 - In 146 B.C. the Achaean League was crushed and Corinth was destroyed.
 - Soon all of the Greek world was under Roman control.
 - Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar became rivals for power in Rome.
 - Both were highly ambitious and great warriors.
 - In 60 B.C. Pompey and Caesar joined Marcus Licinius Crassus, the richest man in Rome, forming an unofficial compact known as the First Triumvirate.
 - They were successful in ruling in spite of opposition from the Senate.
 - While Caesar was away fighting (and winning) the Gallic Wars, Pompey consolidated his power by forming an alliance with the Senate.
 - This, along with the death of Crassus in 53 B.C., served to dissolve the triumvirate.
 - In 52 B.C. the Senate declared Pompey the sole Consul and ordered Caesar to disband his army which had now successfully defeated the Gauls.

- Caesar refused and marched against Rome in 49 B.C.
- After a series of battles his army defeated Pompey who fled to the east.
- Caesar secured Spain, then pursued Pompey to Greece and defeated him at Pharsalus in 48 B.C.
- Pompey escaped to Egypt where he was murdered.
- Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt and became involved in a civil war there.
- Caesar took Cleopatra as his mistress and established her as queen of Egypt.
- Under Caesar, Rome controlled all of Italy, Gaul, Spain, Macedonia, Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and virtually all of the Mediterranean islands.
- Greek art and philosophy had permeated Roman culture and Rome considered itself to be the “civilizer” of the barbarians they conquered.
- Caesar was made ruler for life in 44 B.C. and it seemed that he would rule as a Roman monarch.
- His potential monarchy was preempted on March 15th when republican conspirators, led by Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus, stabbed Caesar to death in the Senate.
- Caesar’s followers came together under Mark Antony and Octavian (Augustus), Caesar’s grandnephew.
- Antony, Octavian and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus formed what is known as the Second Triumvirate and forced the Senate to accept their authority.
- By 31 B.C. Octavian had defeated Antony and established himself and the “first citizen” of Rome.
- The Senate granted Octavian many honors including the military command (imperium) effectively making him the emperor of Rome, thus ending the republic.
- Octavian established the principate (rule by the first citizen) which was nothing more than a monarchy disguised as a republic.
- He assumed the title Emperor Caesar Augustus and put his form of government into place in 27 B.C.
- He carried forth many of the reforms of Julius Caesar, became a great patron of the arts, and during his reign the Roman Empire was at its absolute peak.
- Since Rome had no rivals, this began a 200 year period of peace known as Pax Romana.
- Under the rule of Augustus a system of Roman roads were built and a sophisticated postal system was put into place which helped to unify the empire.
- Constantine I (who ruled from 306-337 A.D.) is often considered to be the second founder of the empire.
- He moved the capital city to Byzantium, which he later had rebuilt and renamed Constantinople in 330 A.D.
- Constantine I put reforms into effect to try to bolster the empire, but they were not able to prevent the gradual slide of the empire into weakness.
- From 395 A.D. the empire split in two – the Byzantine Empire in the east and the Latin Empire in the west.
- The Byzantine Empire lasted until 1453 A.D. when the Turks conquered Constantinople.

- The Western Empire was overrun by Germanic tribes.
 - These Germanic tribes gradually dismantled the Western Empire over time.
 - In 410 A.D. the Visigoths plundered the city of Rome.
 - In 455 A.D. the Vandals plundered the city of Rome.
 - Finally in 476 A.D. the German Odoacer toppled the last emperor of the west, Romulus Augustulus.
 - Rome, with all its history and greatness, had come to its end.
- The Post-Roman Empire (476 A.D. – present)
 - The heritage of Rome survived its fall.
 - Out of the combination of Roman and Germanic elements arose the new states and societies of medieval Europe (part iron and part clay toes).
 - This heritage continues to this day in the descendant nation-states of medieval Europe (the seed of men).
 - This series of “empires” will come to an end when God Himself establishes His Messianic Empire.
- Epilogue
 - Nebuchadnezzar is not saved at this point, but he gives honor to Daniel’s God [2:46-47].
 - Daniel is promoted to rule over the province of Babylon and is made the chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon [2:48].
 - Daniel made a request that his friends also be promoted and the king honored his request and gave them positions of leadership [2:49].