

BUT THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN

“Daniel: Living for God | Living in Babylon” | Daniel 2 | Dave Geldart | October 25, 2026 |

1. [1] OPENING – BAD DREAMS

- a. As a parent of young kids, it’s pretty common for them to come into your room in the middle of the night, stand freakishly close to your face, and then wake you up in the dark trying to tell you they had a bad dream.
 - i. Hands up if you’ve been startled awake in this scenario before
- b. Our boys are out of this stage now, but Annie still does.
 - i. I always ask what the dream was about. Sometimes they’re too scared to say, but if they can, getting it out usually helps them move on and go back to sleep.
- c. I’ve got another scenario for you. Imagine your boss (or teacher) walks in tomorrow morning and says,
 - i. “I had a dream last night. I won’t tell you what it was. Tell me what I dreamed, and what it means, or you’re all dead.”
- d. That is Daniel 2!
- e. Last week we heard one line: *You are not what Babylon calls you.*
 - i. Babylon is more than a city.
 - ii. Scripture uses it as a pattern: A culture that renames you, redefines you, and runs the world as if God were not in it.
 - iii. We watched Daniel and his three friends, young men likely still in their teens, live inside that system.
 - iv. They didn’t run from it and they didn’t attack it. They faithfully navigated it.
- f. Daniel 1 asked, *Who are you in Babylon?*
- g. Today, Daniel 2 asks something bigger. *What is real in Babylon?*
 - i. Is there anything beyond what we can see, measure, and control?
 - ii. And if there is, does that God ever speak?

2. THE TEST (Daniel 2:1–6)

- a. Daniel 2 opens with King Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man on earth, who cannot sleep.
- b. [2] “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.” (2:1–2)
- c. In the ancient world, a dream like this was no leftover from bad pizza.
 - i. People believed dreams could be a doorway, a “thin space” where the divine could break into the human realm.

- ii. So Neb isn't merely looking for a therapist. He wants to know what is real.
- d. His experts are the best Babylon has.
 - i. Their top think tank dudes.
 - ii. Astrologers -- Reaching for stars and spiritual energy when you need answers isn't new; it's as old as Babylon
 - iii. Magicians – kind of like a mix of scholar scientist priests
 - 1. Men who were trained and paid well to stay in touch with the gods.
 - 2. THEY CLAIMED TO KNOW THESE KIND OF THINGS – spiritual knowledge
- e. [3] ⁴Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it." ⁵The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor." (2:4–6)
- f. Smart king. Anyone can spin a flattering meaning out of a vague dream.
 - i. BUT Nobody can fake a dream they never heard.
 - ii. It's a test of whether these men have any real connection to the gods they serve.
- g. One detail in v 4 that we miss in our English bibles:
 - i. The text switches from Hebrew to Aramaic, the common language of the empire, and stays there through chapter 7.
 - ii. This is intentional! God, through Daniel, is speaking especially here to Gentiles – non-Jews – speaking in the language of the nations, about the kings of the nations.

3. PRACTICAL NATURALISM (2:10–13)

- a. Listen to how the experts answer.
- b. [4] The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans." (2:10–11)
- c. *The gods do not live among humans.*
- d. Those men had temples, rituals, and job titles built around spiritual expertise.
 - i. Access to divine knowledge
 - ii. But when the pressure was on, they confessed that their gods don't talk to people.

- iii. Their gods were close enough to build temples for, but too far away to answer.
- e. John Lennox, author of *Against the Flow*, the main companion book for this study, calls it practical naturalism.
 - i. You can say you believe in something beyond this world and still live as though nothing beyond it can reach you, guide you, or speak to you.
- f. **PERSONAL STORY – My Practical Naturalism:**
 - i. I studied electrical engineering at K-State, that only reinforced my existing proclivity to trust primarily what can be measured and proven.
 - 1. That's a good instinct, until it quietly takes over parts of life it was never meant to run.
 - ii. I believed in God.
 - 1. But when provision was on the line, my first move often wasn't prayer.
 - 2. It was the spreadsheet. Run the numbers, build the plan, work harder - because if anything was going to come through, it was going to have to be me.
 - iii. Some of you know that 2 a.m. feeling, wide awake in the dark with your own bad dream.
 - 1. Head full of God, heart run by fear.
 - iv. I really did believe in God.
 - 1. I just didn't expect Him to do or say anything in my actual life.
 - a. Sometimes I still don't.
- g. Nebuchadnezzar caught his magi doing the same thing, and he is furious.
- h. [5] "This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death." (2:12–13)
- i. Daniel and his friends were on the list as newly graduated members of Babylon University. They hadn't even been in the room.

4. RESPONDING TO THREAT (2:14–23)

- a. Now watch what Daniel does:
- b. [6] "When Arioch, commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king's officer, 'Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?' At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him." (2:14–16)

- c. A soldier is on his way to kill him, and rather than hide or freak out or fight, Daniel asks a question. Just like he did last chapter!
 - i. And the soldier stops to listen. So does the king!
 - ii. That says something about the reputation Daniel had earned.
 - iii. Ask yourself honestly whether people would stop and listen to you based on your patterns of relating.
- d. [7] “Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.” (2:17–18)
- e. Think about how alone those four young men were.
 - i. Exiles, far from home, facing execution -- begging the God who seemed to have abandoned their city and their temple.
 - ii. If there is no such thing as divine revelation, they die that night.
- f. [8] “During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said: ‘Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.’” (2:19–22)
- g. God spoke. And look who lived: not only these four praying friends,
 - i. But every magician in Babylon and their families
- h. [9] ²⁴ “Then Daniel went to Arioch” and said “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon”
- i. Daniel could have let his rivals die while saving himself. Probably would have been the smart choice too.
 - i. Some of these men or their successors would one day want him dead.
 - ii. He saved them anyway.
 - iii. That is real tolerance. Grace and mercy befitting the children of our God.
 - 1. You can disagree deeply with someone and still fight for their life.
- j. Before Daniel ever stepped into the throne room, a small prayer meeting turned the history of an empire.

5. “BUT THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN” (2:25–30)

- a. [10] ²⁵ Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.” ...

- i. Arioch tried to grab credit
- b. But when the King asks Daniel if he can do this,
- c. “Daniel replied, ‘No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.’ He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come” (2:27–28a)
- d. A teenage Hebrew captive stands before the most powerful man alive.
- e. Notice what Daniel does not say. He doesn’t say, “Those guys are frauds and I’m better.”
 - i. He agrees with the Babylonian experts on the first half.
 - 1. No human system can do this.
 - ii. Then he says something different in kind.
 - 1. The question is whether there actually is a God who speaks.
- f. A Bible-reading tip for life: train your eye to catch contrast words.
 - i. *But. However. Yet.*
 - ii. The center of a passage often hides there.
 - 1. Everything before this “but” is the diagnosis.
 - 2. Everything after it is the answer.
- g. And hear how Daniel finishes.
- h. [11] “As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that you, Your Majesty, may know the interpretation.” (2:30)
- i. He had every reason to take a bow. Get ahead. Solidify his position.
 - i. But Daniel gave the credit back to God on the spot.
 - 1. Arioch said “I found him”
 - 2. Daniel says “God showed me”
- j. Success in Babylon is dangerous for exactly that reason.
 - i. Success whispers, *I did this.*
 - ii. Believe it long enough and you effectively become your own god.
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar falls into that trap two chapters from now.
 - 2. Daniel refuses the credit before it can take root in his heart.
- k. **The underlying claim for them and for us:**
 - i. [12] **REVELATION IS REAL AND REASONABLE**
 - ii. Our culture hears ‘faith’ and thinks ‘switch off your brain.’
 - 1. That is not Daniel 2.
 - iii. Daniel doesn’t say ‘just trust me, Neb.’
 - 1. He claims God revealed this, and the claim is about to be tested.

iv. [13] Biblical faith is a reasoned response based on evidence.

1. So don't hand people a vibe; hand them a reason.
- v. Finish this sentence: 'One reason I believe the Bible is true is...'
 1. If you can't yet, that's your homework.
- vi. Daniel 9 will push this further.
 1. It's an incredible prophecy that predicts to the exact time of the Messiah's arrival, and we'll dig in when we get there.
 2. Daniel 2 is the downpayment!
- vii. Now watch the test...

6. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY (2:31–43)

- a. Now the dream itself.
- b. [14] "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." (2:31–33)
- c. Something just changed. We've been reading narrative genre. Now we're in symbolic, apocalyptic vision, and symbolic writing has its own rules.
 - i. As you read the Bible, you need to learn to pay attention to its different types of literature
 - ii. Because you don't read a statue of four metals the way you read "Daniel refused the king's food."
- d. So what's the code? God tells the king through Daniel.
- e. [15] "Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory... You are that head of gold." (2:37–38)
 - i. Neb surely liked that! Not just Babylon – but HIM!
 - ii. But notice who gave the gold. *The God of heaven has given you.*
 1. Nebuchadnezzar's power and glory was a gift FROM GOD
 - iii. Remember Daniel's prayer in v21: "He deposes kings and raises up others"?
 1. Here's that verse in metal.
 2. God is sovereign over history!
- f. [16] "After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours" (2:39).
 - i. Historically, and as we'll see later in Daniel, that's Medo-Persia, silver.
 - ii. Then Greece, Alexander the Great conquering the known world - bronze.
 - iii. Then Rome, iron, which "will crush and break all the others" (2:40).

1. There's a progression here: Gold is beautiful and soft; iron is comparatively ugly and yet significantly harder.
2. Each empire gave real gifts and carried the weakness that eventually brought it down.
3. Stop and notice what just happened.
 - a. Daniel told a king his own dream, then named the empires in order, and history followed.
 - b. Skeptics say it must have been written after the fact.
 - i. We'll take that on later in the series.
 - c. The claim stands either way: God revealed this.

iv. [17] Then the feet.

1. "This will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it... partly strong and partly brittle... the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay." (2:41–43)
2. Faithful readers disagree on this last kingdom.
3. John Lennox sees a future power rooted in Roman structures, strong in places, yet brittle in others, held together loosely by alliances that never fuse.
4. No matter what, hold that image in your mind:
 - a. an impressive statue on feet that can't carry the weight.
 - b. a progression of human kingdoms and empires that literally can't stand forever.
- g. Over a century ago, Christian writer and journalist GK Chesterton was famously asked what was wrong with the world. He answered, "Dear Sir, I am."
- h. Every government stands on clay because every government is made of people.
 - i. Our systems restrain a lot of human evil.
 - ii. Remove the restraints and many of us would do far worse than we'd admit.
 - iii. Even our newest statue stands on it: AI.
 1. We built it in our image and trained it on the collected works of humanity: the genius, the lies, the brokenness, all of it.
 2. It doesn't get out of the clay. It inherits it.
 - iv. That's why we don't need a better statue.
 1. We need a Savior from outside.
- i. And that's exactly what Nebuchadnezzar sees next.

7. THE STONE KINGDOM (2:34–35, 44–45)

- a. Daniel continues:
- b. [18] “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 ... 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.” (2:34–35)
- c. Look at everything the stone is not:
 - i. It’s not cut by human hands.
 - ii. It doesn’t start inside the system.
 - iii. It’s not an upgrade of the statue.
 - iv. It doesn’t grow out of the gold or the iron.
 - v. And it’s not gradual. It doesn’t erode the empire. It shatters it.
- d. The kingdom of God is not the next stage of human political evolution.
 - i. It’s not what we get if humanity tries a little harder, votes a little smarter, or builds a little more justly.
 - ii. It comes from outside.
 - iii. No human system can bring it in.
 - 1. Not the Crusades.
 - 2. Not Christendom (Christian culture).
 - 3. Not any nation that has ever claimed God’s blessing on its flag.
 - 4. Not even ours.
- e. [19] “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.” (2:44)
 - i. Nebuchadnezzar’s chief god Marduk had displaced an older god, Enlil, linked with the great mountain and with wind.
 - ii. Now the king watches a mountain fill the earth while the wind blows away the dust of every human kingdom.
 - iii. I think God was speaking in images Neb knew and giving them a new meaning, the way Paul did in Athens in Acts.
- f. The imagery of the stone runs all through the Bible.
 - i. And Jesus took the image for Himself.
 - ii. [20] “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone... Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.” (Luke 20:17–18)

- g. Notice the timing: 'in the time of those kings.'
 - i. Jesus has come, and His eternal kingdom has broken in.
 - 1. But the statue's feet are still standing, and the stone hasn't yet landed.
 - ii. So we live in between: His kingdom already here, not yet complete.
 - 1. That's why we pray 'Your kingdom come.'

8. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESPONSE (2:46–49)

- a. "Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and gave orders that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, 'Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.'" (2:46–47)
- b. Neb is really beginning to change!
 - i. He believes Daniel, and promotes him and his friends to high positions
 - ii. He still gets it partly wrong, of course. He worships the messenger.
 - iii. But listen to what he says: *Your God is real.*
- c. A man who thought he controlled the world just learned he controlled none of it.
 - i. God is pursuing Nebuchadnezzar, and He isn't finished.
- d. In fact, He's still pursuing people today!
 - i. For decades the dominant current in America, especially among the highly educated, was practical naturalism.
 - ii. The New Atheism of the 2000s said that matter is all there is and the rest is superstition.
 - iii. That current hasn't vanished, but something has shifted. You may have felt it.
 - 1. There's a growing openness today, especially among younger people, to the idea that reality isn't limited to the physical world.
 - iv. But just like with Babylon, openness to something out there is not the same as knowing the God who is actually there.
 - 1. The open door is a real opportunity.

9. [22] APPLICATIONS

a. [23] Reflect personally:

- i. **Where are you a practical naturalist?**
 - 1. You'd say you believe in God. Check how you actually operate.
 - 2. I do this. I run the numbers first and pray second.
 - 3. Anxiety gets managed by control.
 - 4. Prayer comes after every human option is used up.

5. Do you actually expect God to speak, guide, and act in your life?
 - a. Or is He a category on a shelf that you'd defend if asked?
6. Same for us as a church: budgets, plans, programs, all good.
 - a. But do we really expect God to show up?
7. *Take twenty seconds of silence with me. Ask God one question:*
 - a. ***"Where have I been living as if You won't speak?"***
 - b. *Write down the first thing that comes to mind.*
 - i. *Then pick one decision on your plate this week and take it to Him in prayer before you take it to anyone else.*
 - ii. *Then open the Bible and ask what He's already said.*

ii. [24] What statue are you building your life on?

1. Career. Reputation. The house. The retirement number.
2. Real gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and every bit of it stands on feet of clay.
3. Only one kingdom in this chapter is still standing at the end.
4. ***Name your statue -- what you look to for your sense of safety and control.***
 - a. ***What you fear.***
 - b. Maybe the statue you're afraid of is where the world is headed, whether that's technology, politics, or the economy
5. *Whatever your statue is, write it down.*
 - a. *Then ask what it would look like this week to loosen your grip on it.*

b. [25] Pray Together

- i. Four scared young men, alone in a foreign city and facing execution, prayed together.
- ii. That prayer meeting became the pivot point of an empire.
- iii. If their prayer could move Babylon, then our small groups and prayer gatherings are where God's work in our world gets done.
- iv. So, gather this week with a few others, in your small group, your family, some friends,
 1. and pray for your city -- St. George, MHK, Wamego -- by name.
 2. Pray for your street, the school, the courthouse, the businesses along Highway 24.
 3. Ask God to do in this town what He did in Babylon. Reveal himself.

- v. Our LIFE Group this week is breaking into mens and women's groups for sharing and prayer – you'd be welcome to join us.

c. [26] Remember that we belong to the Stone Kingdom.

- i. That stone, cut without human hands and filling the earth
- ii. It's the kingdom we've been invited into.
 - 1. In every discipling relationship.
 - 2. Every small group.
- iii. And especially our work with the Wesleyan Church Planting effort in Hays KS
 - 1. Planting a new church in a small, deliberate act of faith that Babylon is not the last word.
 - 2. And the Stone Kingdom of our God continues to grow and fill the earth

10. CLOSING

a. [27] Come back to the sentence at the center of this chapter:

- i. *But there is a God in heaven.***
- b. When the experts run out of answers. When the systems fail.
 - i. When the culture can't decide whether it believes in anything beyond what it can measure.
 - ii. That sentence still stands.
 - 1. He reveals. He rules.
 - 2. And His kingdom will outlast the one you're standing in, whatever it's made of.
- c. So carry one question out the door this week:
 - i. Will you live like that is true?
 - ii. In your thinking, your decisions, your fears, your prayers?
- d. The magicians said the gods don't live among humans.
 - i. Daniel said there is a God in heaven who speaks.
 - ii. Six hundred years later, God's Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (John 1:14)
 - iii. In these last days, Hebrews 1:1-2 says, God has spoken to us by his Son.
 - 1. The mystery finally had a face.
- e. Babylon says this world, and whatever you can prove about it, is all there is.
 - i. Daniel says no. There is more.
 - ii. And the One who rules it has never stopped speaking.
- f. Let's pray.**

DANIEL

LIVING FOR GOD | LIVING IN BABYLON



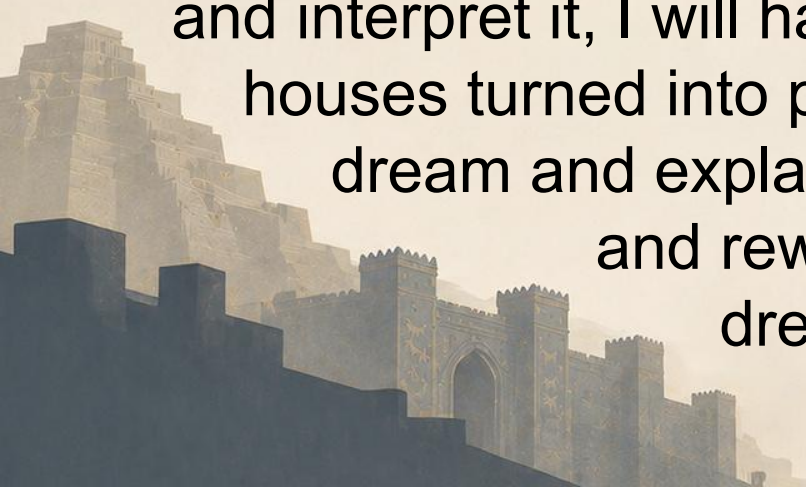
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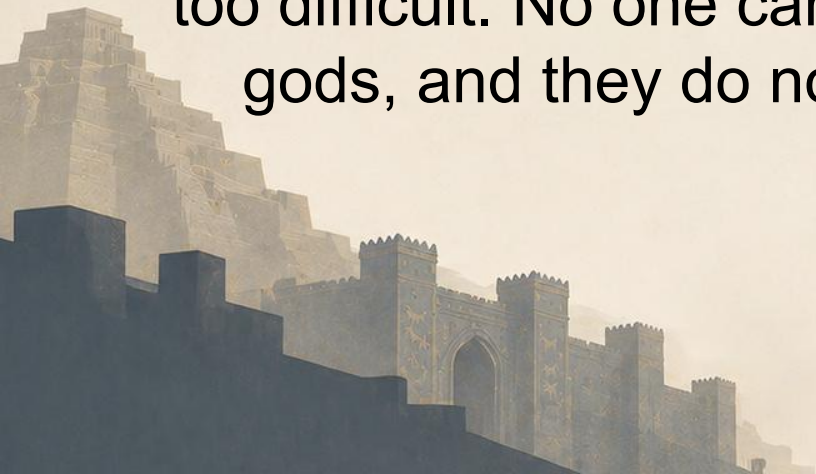
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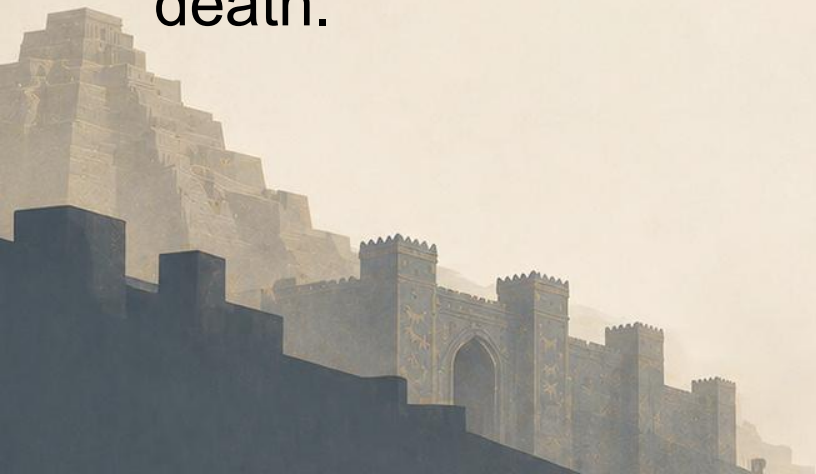
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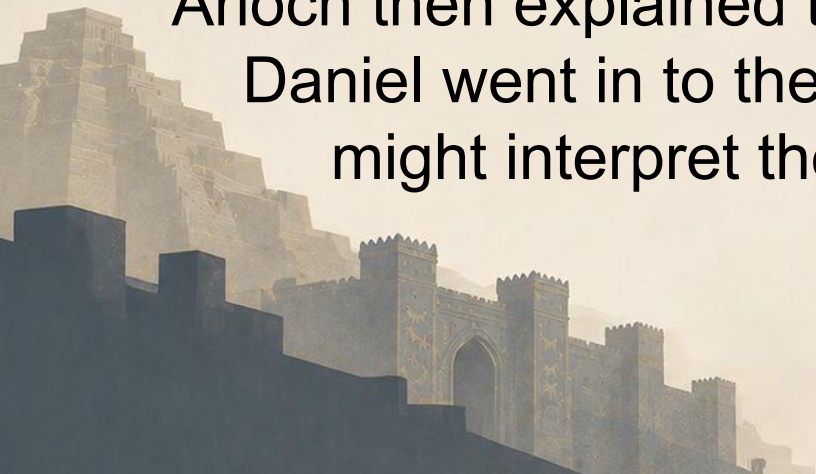
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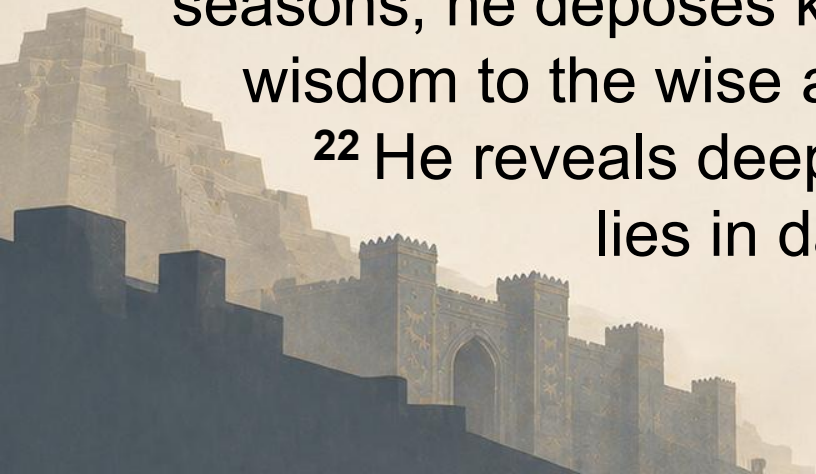
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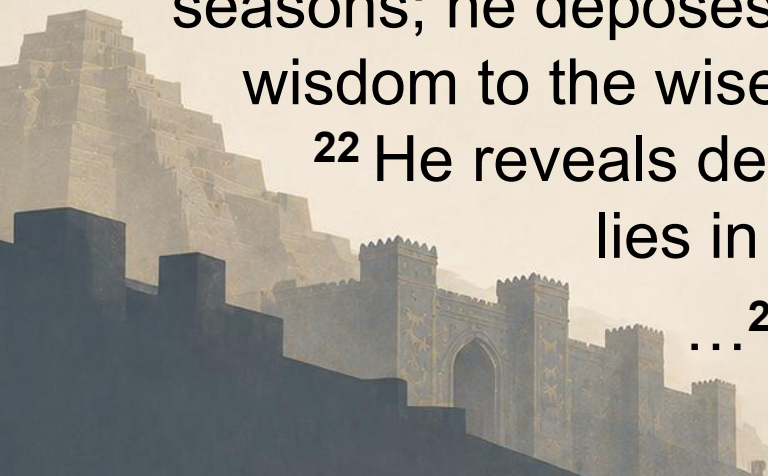


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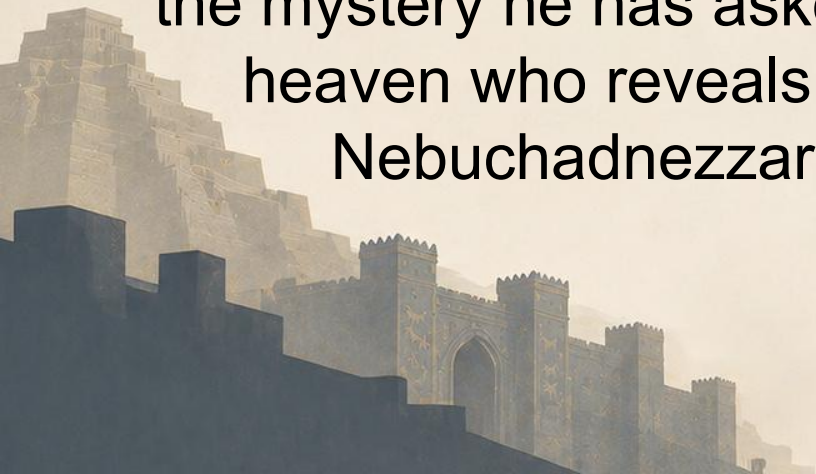
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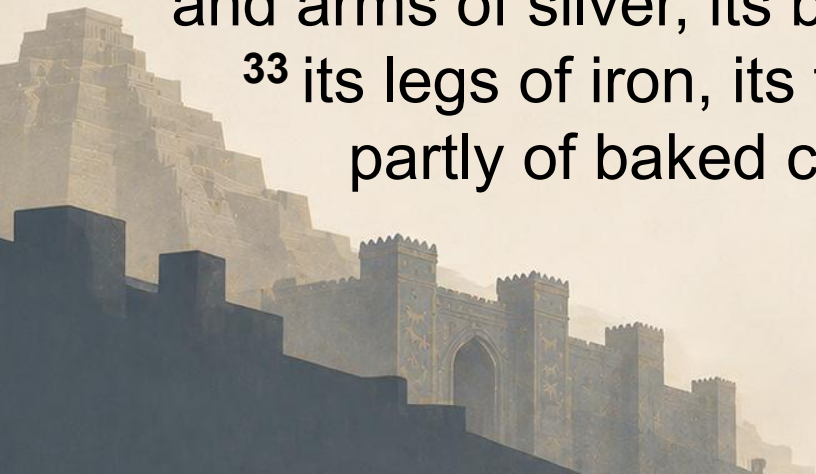
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GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY

DANIEL 2 ³¹ “Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. ³² The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.



GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY

DANIEL 2 ³⁷ Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory... You are that head of gold.



GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY

DANIEL 2 ³⁹ After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. ⁴⁰ Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.



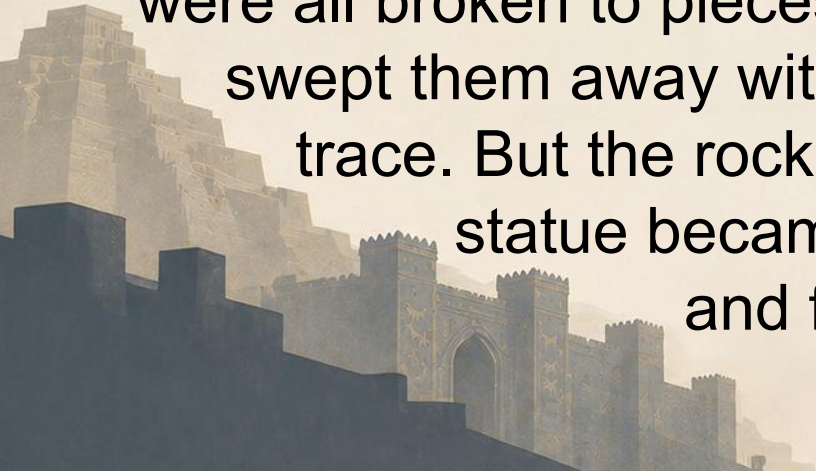
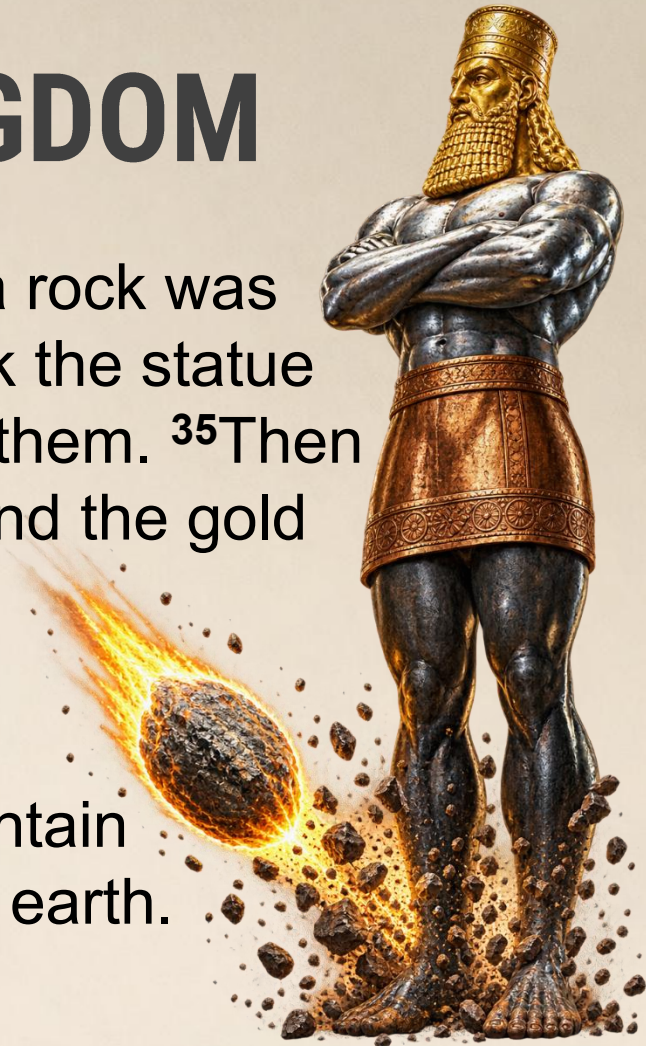
GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY

DANIEL 2 ⁴¹ Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so **this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it**, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. ⁴² As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be **partly strong and partly brittle**. ⁴³ And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so **the people will be a mixture and will not remain united...**



THE STONE KINGDOM

DANIEL 2 ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces 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.



THE STONE KINGDOM

DANIEL 2 ⁴⁴ 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.”



THE STONE KINGDOM

LUKE 20 ¹⁷ “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’...¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”



NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESPONSE

DANIEL 2 ⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."



APPLICATIONS



APPLICATIONS

REFLECT PERSONALLY

Where are you a practical naturalist?



APPLICATIONS

REFLECT PERSONALLY

Where are you a practical naturalist?

What statue are you building your life on?



APPLICATIONS

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PRAY TOGETHER



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PRAY TOGETHER

REMEMBER THAT WE BELONG TO THE STONE
KINGDOM



BUT THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN

DANIEL 2

