

Daniel Chapter 2: The Final Four + 1 (Part 1)

Daniel 2:31-49

Before we start

- Remember that God often used dreams to communicate in ancient times, even to pagans like Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh. But today we have His sure Word, the Bible.
- There is much overlap between Nebuchadnezzar's vision and Daniel's later visions (8-12). This vision is foundational to understanding the other prophecies in Daniel.
- Tonight we will only introduce the dream, examine the broad interpretation, and look in detail at the first kingdom, the head of gold, Babylon.

The Basics

- Daniel reveals the dream and its interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar (31-45).
- Nebuchadnezzar pays homage to Daniel and gives him an awesome promotion (46-48).
- Daniel gave awesome promotions to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (49).

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (31-36a)

- Nebuchadnezzar saw a huge statue, bright and frightening.
- The statue was composed of different materials.
- The statue was demolished by a mysterious stone.
- The mysterious stone grew into an unimaginably large mountain.

The Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (36b-45)

- The four different materials represent four successive kingdoms.
- The four materials are of decreasing worth and increasing strength.
- The final kingdom will not come from this earth and it will endure forever.

The First Kingdom

Symbol	Meaning	Fulfillment / Interpretation
Head	Command center; authority; first	Babylon would be the first great world power from Nebuchadnezzar's day onward.

Gold	High value; associated with royalty, majesty, splendor; “king of kings” (37)	Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom would be the highest quality of the four kingdoms. He would be the most majestic of the kings prophesied.
Lion	King of beasts (Proverbs 30:30) Strength (Judges 14:18) Courage (2 Samuel 17:10) Boldness (Proverbs 28:1)	The winged lion was an intense symbol of royal majesty and splendor. And this was true of Babylon! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walls • Ishtar Gate • Hanging gardens • Etemenanki Ziggurat
Eagle	King of birds, recognized for its power (Psalm 103:5); Swift (Jeremiah 48:40); Fierce (Deuteronomy 28:49; Job 9:26)	
Wings plucked	Loss of ability; weakening	Weakening of the Babylonian kingdom
Made to stand like a man	Humanization of the animal	Nebuchadnezzar was made like an animal, and then remade into a true human who follows God.

The Splendor of Babylon

- General
 - Herodotus (450 BC) – “In addition to its size, Babylon surpasses in splendor any city in the known world.”
 - Largest city in the world from 1770 BC – 1670 BC & from 612 BC – 320 BC. Probably the first city to reach a population of 200k.
- The Walls (according to Herodotus)
 - 56 miles in length
 - 80 feet thick. They held chariot races on top of the wall!
 - 320 feet high
- Ishtar Gate
 -
- The Hanging Gardens
 - Built by Nebuchadnezzar for his homesick wife, Amyitis, the Median princess. She was from a lush, mountainous area. So Nebuchadnezzar built an artificial mountain, a large building with “hanging gardens.”
 - Not “hanging” as in suspended, but “overhanging” as on a balcony or terrace.
 - Strabo (Greek geographer, ca. 1 BC) - "It consists of vaulted terraces raised one above another, and resting upon cube-shaped pillars. These are hollow and filled with earth to allow trees of the largest size to be planted. The pillars, the vaults, and terraces are constructed of baked brick and asphalt. The ascent to the highest story is by stairs, and at their side are water engines, by means of which persons, appointed expressly for the purpose, are continually employed in raising water from the Euphrates into the garden."
 - All of this with no modern engines, pressure pumps, etc.!

So What?

- We learn about God...
 - He is completely SOVEREIGN. He announces His plan and then accomplishes it. No one – not chance, the most powerful man, or even the Devil – can thwart God’s holy will.
 - He is JUST. He told Habakkuk he would punish Babylon, and *God always keeps His promises.*^{TM =)} *The remains of the city are in present-day Hillah, Babil Governorate, Iraq, about 85 kilometres (53 mi) south of Baghdad, comprising a large tell of broken mud-brick buildings and debris.*ⁱ
 - He is COMPASSIONATE. The mercy He showed to Nebuchadnezzar is amazing and should give us hope for our unsaved loved ones.
- We learn about man...
 - Man is completely under the dominion of God.
 - Evil people will be held accountable.
 - Evil people can be converted by the grace of God.
 - The kingdoms of this world cannot thwart the plans of God.

Next Week: The Final Four + 1 (Part 2): The Last 3 Kingdoms

ⁱ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon>