

**Daniel 2: 24-49; “The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar”, Sermon # 3 in the series –  
“The God Who Reveals Secrets”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Why is the book of Daniel in the Bible? It is because God wanted His people, both Old Testament and New, to understand something of the history of the kingdom of God and Christ. The way that He communicates to His people the general overview of the History of Christ’s kingdom is by means of prophecy. Although the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, it has been ordained by our Lord to be in this world, and to become very great among all the kingdoms of this world. It is His treasure in the field; it is His mustard seed which He has sown in the field of the world, which will grow up in time to be greater than all the herbs and become a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. And in due time, we are told, in the book of Revelation chapter 11, verse 15, “the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ”.

The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are complementary books of prophecy. Indeed, the time of 4th World Monarchy, the Roman Empire’s domination, that is mentioned in the book of Daniel, is mentioned in the book of Revelation in chapters 11, 12, and 13. The history of the World Monarchies which are mentioned prophetically in this chapter are those which have dominated, oppressed, and warred against the people of God, the Jews, in Old Testament times. And when we come to study the history of the Church in New Testament times, we find that the Roman Empire, both the Eastern and the Western sections of it, have persecuted and warred against the unbelieving Jews, first, and it has also persecuted and warred against the believing Jews and Gentiles who have made up the Church, down through history.

This afternoon I would like us to take a closer look at this dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its interpretation; for in doing so, we shall find revealed to us, the triumph of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ over all the kingdoms of the earth; His Church coming to spiritually reign upon the earth in a coming day. I believe that it is this chapter, and the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of this book, which form the basis for correctly understanding the prophetic history of the Church. It is the book of Daniel which gives us the information that we need, to understand that the eschatological view that we hold to, should be guided by this thought: that prophecy in the word of God consists of the predictions of the major oppositions to Christ’s cause and kingdom in both Old Testament times and New, and it also relates, to a certain degree, the historic fulfillments of how Christ comes to judgment upon them, and establishes His own people as victorious over those oppositions, to the glory of God and Christ. This is what is revealed to us in a grand overview in this particular chapter. With that in mind, I would like to show you, 1<sup>st</sup> of all, that God is sovereign over the lives of kings. (verses 24-30) 2<sup>nd</sup> – that God sovereignly sets up kings and takes them down. (verses 31-33 and 36-43) And 3<sup>rd</sup> – that God will be sovereign over the setting up of Christ’s kingdom. (verses 34, 35, and 44-49)

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – God is sovereign over the lives of kings.** (verses 24-30)

When I say that God is sovereign over the lives of kings I hope that you will understand what the word sovereign means. It means that God rules with wisdom and power over kings and kingdoms, and over all the people in all the world, over which He governs, at all times. Actually, if you do a study, the word sovereignty is not found in the Bible. But just because this is so, is no reason that we cannot rightfully use the words sovereign and sovereignty. The concept that those words represents is clearly found in the Bible. In Psalm 103, verse 19 it says: “The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.” In Proverbs 21, verse 1 it says: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.” That’s sovereignty.

Certainly Nebuchadnezzar's heart was in the Lord's hand, and he did not know it; at least not yet. But he soon would. For Daniel had been given the particulars of the dream which he had, and he was now in a position to come into the presence of the king and to relate it to him. You will recall that the king had ordered Arioch to kill all of the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, because they could not tell him his dream. They bargained for time, but they had no idea what the dream was. But Daniel and his three friends prayed together, and they sought mercies from the God of heaven so that they might not perish; and God showed them this mercy, and revealed the secret. Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and he said – "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation." Now, Arioch had really only sought out Daniel in order to kill him, but God had other very great plans. Let us understand that God is certainly able to bring whom He wants before kings and governors in order that His good purposes will be fulfilled.

The king asks Daniel – "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" Now, notice how Daniel answers him. Verse 27 – "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king." "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days." Let us remember, that when we are speaking to people about how God reveals Himself, we should tell them in no uncertain terms, that they must look for the answers to their greatest questions, not to those who are steeped in the occult, for they never do know the future in the way that God knows the future. Their view of the future is derived from the Devil and their attempting to communicate with him. If any person would really know the future, they must look to God and to His infallible, unchangeable, word. As it says in Isaiah 8: 19 – "And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter, should not a people seek their God?' 'Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?' 'To the law and to the testimony!' 'If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'"

If people would know what the future holds, let them read the Bible. Let them read it from cover to cover, and let them read it over and over again. In verse 28 Daniel tells the king plainly that there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and that He was the One who had given Nebuchadnezzar the dream. This God-given dream would concern what would take place in the latter days of his kingdom. And his kingdom of Babylon being typical of the spiritual New Testament kingdom of Babylon as seen in Papal Rome, the dream pertains to that latter days of the New Testament Babylonian time period as well. Nebuchadnezzar was to understand that God had revealed to him what would come to pass after these days when his kingdom was at its height, in earthly power and glory. All of this, we should understand was shown to him in order that he might be humbled to think that there was someone greater than himself that was guiding the affairs of his life and his kingdom. He was to know that there was only one true and living God, and all other gods were idols. Let us learn to confidently assert these truths with people who are looking for secret knowledge from God. The worship of other gods and participation in other religions than Christianity, is idolatry.

Daniel denies that the secret of the king's dream was revealed to him because he had more wisdom than anyone living; rather it was revealed, so that he and the other wise men might live, and he the king, would know the thoughts of his own heart. It is always good to give the glory to God for any knowledge and insight into the word of God which has been given to you, so that it would truly be a help to others. What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you had not received it? All the wisdom and knowledge and understanding, and the ability to communicate that effectively to people around you, is from God. See to it that when you are guiding others into the truth, that they understand that it was God who first opened your eyes to the truth, and taught you practically what you should do, having learned it

from Him. This is true Christianity; giving all the glory and honor to God for His ability to lead you into all the truth.

**2<sup>nd</sup> - God sovereignly sets up kings and takes them down.** (verses 31-33 and 36-43)

Verse 31 says: “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image!” “This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.” “This image’s head was of fine 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 clay.” And in verse 37 in the interpretation, Daniel says: “You, O king, are a king of kings.” “For the God heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all – you are this head of gold.” You will notice here, that it was God who had given Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom. He had given him all this power, and the strength and the glory related to his kingdom, and He was also the One who had given him the world dominion that he held over many nations. It was God who sovereignly did this. Let us remember that it is God who sets up kings, or rulers or Presidents of nations. He uses them as His instruments to accomplish His purposes and His purposes are not always obvious.

Nebuchadnezzar’s purpose was to further the greatness and glory of His own kingdom. God’s purpose was to humble him and show him how everything that he had accomplished depended upon God’s continuing to grant him his own ability to rule. God’s purpose for Daniel and his friends, and indeed all Christians in all generations, is that they know that He is the only One who rules well and rules lovingly, in regard to those who love Him. He proves this to all of His children; that He can faithfully lead them and guide them through this life, and teach them all that they will need to glorify Him and to enjoy Him forever, even in those situations where they find themselves being the servants of a despotic and cruel king. He would teach us that the worship of idols is vain, but worshipping Him is at all times good and right and honorable and profitable in every way to our souls; so that we should learn His ways, and glory in Him always. We should not pursue the vain glory of false gods and false religions, or even the glory of the kingdoms of this world.

The king in his dream saw this great image, and the splendor of the image was excellent, and its form was awesome. And he was taken with it, and He wanted an explanation of it. So Daniel described it for him, exactly as it had been in his dream. The image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze. Nebuchadnezzar did not know what all this meant; all the various parts of the body of this statue, and so this was where he needed the interpretation. A man so great as he was, he thought, ought to be able to rule for a considerable length of time. In the interpretation, Daniel tells him that he is a king of kings because the God of heaven had given him a kingdom, power, strength, and glory, and whenever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven dwell, He had given them into his hand. He had made him ruler over them all – he was the head of gold.

His was the first World Monarchy. And the city state of Babylon was called “the golden city” in Isaiah 14: 4. It was, “full of gold, drawn there from the various parts of the world.” (Gill) It was called a golden cup in the hand of the Lord in Jeremiah 51: 7. There would be a grandeur and splendor and great riches in the Babylonian empire. But what Nebuchadnezzar little knew or understood, was that all this was earthly glory of his kingdom was in the hand of the Lord to give to him or to take away; it was all under His direction, as He alone is the great God and King over all the earth. And God is the great King over all the earth and the Judge of all mankind. But a man like Nebuchadnezzar will act according to his own corrupt and proud nature. He loved having power over other people. He loved being able to rule over them harshly and haughtily, and command them to worship what he wanted them to worship. And in that false worship, everything related to himself and the glory of his own kingdom was placed to the forefront. In this he is a type of the Antichrist in the New Testament times, the New Testament Babylon of Rome Pagan and Rome Papal. Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest promoter of idolatry and false worship that the

world had ever seen. In this regard he exceeded all the heads of all the World Monarchies that would follow him.

Because, after him, we read in verse 39, of another kingdom which would arise which would be inferior to him. This would be the chest and arms of silver; the kingdom of the Medo-Persians under Cyrus. And after that, a third kingdom would arise which would rule over all the earth; the Macedonian or Greek kingdom, headed by Alexander the Great. This would be the kingdom of bronze. And after that would come a kingdom which would be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom would break in pieces and crush all the others. (verse 40) This would be the Roman Empire. The kingdom would be divided, just as the two legs in the image represented, into Eastern and Western sections, and further division in the Western section would take political precedence and be divided into the feet and the toes. This kingdom would have ten toes which would represent the 10 kingdoms of the beast in New Testament Babylon of Papal Rome. But what we need to see is that it was in the days of those kings, the days of Pagan Rome, that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed. This is the kingdom of Christ. And His kingdom would break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and stand forever. Idolatry, in other words, will be forever destroyed by this 5<sup>th</sup> World Monarchy which is yet to be completely established upon the earth. For –

**3<sup>rd</sup> – We need to see that God will be sovereign over the setting up of Christ's kingdom.** (verses 34, 35, and 44-49)

Verse 34 says – “You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them all in pieces.” “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” The stone cut without hands represents a kingdom as well, but not a kingdom of this world, but a kingdom which is eminently spiritual because its Head and King is Jesus. He was the foundation Stone; the stone which the builders rejected which became the chief and cornerstone of His kingdom. His is a kingdom entirely different and separate from all the kingdoms of this world in its essence, but it's destiny, through Christ, is to literally and spiritually impact all the kingdoms of the earth. This stone struck the feet of the image, the feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. In verse 44 it says that “it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” And verse 35 it says that the stone struck the image and it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

This should show us that the kingdom of Christ which was first set up in the days when the Lord Jesus walked the earth, will become the greatest of all the kingdoms on the face of the earth someday. It will be set up to the highest position, over all the kingdoms of the earth, in generations to come. The spiritual influence of this kingdom will be so very great that it will permeate every nation on earth. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2: 14) It will be through this knowledge of the glory of the Lord that the Antichristian powers of Papal Rome in the West and Mohammedanism in the East shall eventually be taken down, and all evil political rule which oppresses and persecutes Christians shall come to an end. Christ's kingdom shall conquer spiritually. False Babylon will finally come to an end. But for Christ's kingdom that time period spoken of in Revelation chapter 20 as “the thousand years” shall be very glorious indeed! So, shall we not then labor for our Master joyfully, knowing that such a great prospect lies ahead for the Church? Psalm 22, verses 27 and 28 say this – “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.” “For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations.” Glorious days yet remain for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us live rejoicing in the anticipation of them.

