

Daniel 2

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[0 : 00] Again, the passage is Daniel chapter 2, or page 737. Please remain seated for the reading of God's word.

In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. His spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams.

So they came in and stood before the king, and the king said to them, I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream. Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever. Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The word from me is firm. If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.

But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation. They answered a second time and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.

[1 : 14] The king answered and said, I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm. If you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you.

You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation. The Chaldeans answered the king and said, There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one could show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. Because of this, the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed, and they sought Daniel and his companions to kill them. Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Ariok, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

He declared to Ariok, the king's captain, Why is the decree of the king so urgent? Then Ariok made the matter known to Daniel. And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time that he might show the interpretation to the king.

[2 : 32] Then Daniel went to the house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things.

He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter.

Therefore Daniel went in to Ariok, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him, Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.

[3 : 45] Then Ariok brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him, I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king and the interpretation.

The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Beotashatzar, Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation? Daniel answered the king and said, No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked. But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these.

To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries has made known to you what is to be. But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind. You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

[5 : 13] As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found.

But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all, you are the head of gold.

Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks into pieces and shatters all things.

And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron is not mixed with clay.

[6 : 50] And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.

Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this.

The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

The king answered and said to Daniel, Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery. Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Avednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but Daniel remained at the king's court.

[8 : 04] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Well, is there any doubt that we are reading a great story?

Great storytellers pay close attention to character development. With nothing but words at their disposal, they possess a power to create and reveal a person's interior world.

And the reader, meanwhile, without any conscious sense that this is actually going on, suddenly finds their own heart commitments exposed and pulled along in ways that were subtly committed to characters, or not, depending upon the author's aim.

The author of Daniel stands among this exceptional band of writers. In fact, his portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel in the first half of this chapter, and you'll notice, 1 through 30 is a portrayal of those two characters.

We find men whose internal makeup couldn't be more different one from the other, yet communicated by the writer in such a way that we're committed to both and longing to know more.

[9 : 46] The heart condition of Nebuchadnezzar comes first. Take a look. Chapter 2, verses 1 through 13.

A troubled king. Verses 1 to 4 reveal his restless state. On two occasions, he's called troubled. And on another, sleepless. And unlike being sleepless in Seattle, this is an unrest that is troubling to him.

He can't sleep. And the reason for it is because a word has been given to him, yet it has not been made known to him.

His restlessness comes as a surprise when you consider his rule. From what we know of Nebuchadnezzar by other sources, he's about 30 years old at this time.

[10 : 56] About eight years previously, his father had annihilated Assyria, razed its capital city of Nineveh, and closer in proximity to the timing of our own text.

Nebuchadnezzar himself, as a young man, had made successful military explorations into Egypt and along the Euphrates. By this time, Palestine and Syria were completely committed to him. Tyre, Sidon, Damascus, Jerusalem, they've all acquiesced and paid tribute to him. And it's this man who's troubled.

He runs the world's most powerful empire and in every respect is just getting ready to hit stride. He's on top of the world. But can't sleep at night.

I suppose the fact that he's troubled, if it doesn't stem from his rule, might stem from the fact that he is a religious man.

[12 : 08] We know from texts outside the Bible that Nebuchadnezzar was very religious. The British Library, in fact, today houses an inscription from this period of time that contains the prayer this Nebuchadnezzar prays to Marduk, the great Babylonian god, just before he ascended his throne.

Perhaps on the day of his coronation. He's a praying man and a religious man. And on that day, this is what he actually prayed according to the inscription to Marduk.

O eternal ruler, Lord of everything that exists, to the king whom thou lovest and whose name thou hast mentioned, grant that his name may flourish as seems good to thee.

Guide him on the right path. I am thy prince, thy favorite, a creation of thy hand. Thou didst create me and thou hast entrusted me to rule over everything.

According to thy mercy, O Lord, which thou bestowest on all, make me to love thy exalted rule. Cause the fear of thy divinity to exist in my heart. Grant to me whatever may seem good to me since thou created my life.

[13 : 29] The very words of Nebuchadnezzar a year before the telling of our tale. He was named after Nabu, which was the Babylonian god of wisdom, who was portrayed as a son of Marduk.

So here's the king, a religious man, named after a god of wisdom, finds himself in one day knowing that his god, according to his belief, is communicating with him and he doesn't know what to do.

He can't remember anything that's said. That's troubling, given what we know of dreams and visions. The Hebrew words used here for visions or dreams amount basically to one and the same thing.

And in the ancient world of Babylon and Israel, dreams, night visions, were considered to be a way that God communicated. Or that the gods broke through the barrier of the physical world to communicate metaphysical truths concerning the future.

We've got biblical examples of this. Jacob has just such a dream in Genesis 28. Joseph is said to have interpreted a dream about the future in Genesis 41.

[14 : 57] And now here is Nebuchadnezzar, the leader of the world, religious in every respect, believing that the God of the heavens has broken through to communicate to him something important concerning the future and he cannot remember what it is or what it might mean.

No wonder he's troubled. Because ignorance on that front could cost him everything. He's got to know the content of the dream.

Or he won't be able to take any action to prohibit what alarmed him concerning its content. He's restless. And now we know why.

The writer goes on, though, in revealing his interior world, he's also unrealistic. I mean, without the background that I've just laid out concerning the significance of dreams and the religiosity of Nebuchadnezzar, what you see in verses 5 through 11 would seem unrealistic.

I mean, in those verses, the king demands on the threat of life and limb that both the dream and the interpretation needs to be given to him by his most learned men, the wise men of Babylon.

[16:17] And he was dead serious. The world, the word, was hidden from him. Even him. And so they stall for time twice.

They remind me of somebody who enters the room and tries to jog your memory concerning where you left your keys. But to no avail.

He was asking the impossible. And these frantic wise men eventually at the end of that middle section rant in the presence of the king. Hey!

This is unrealistic! Nobody asks anybody to do this! You're asking us to climb out from under the sun, enter into the divine realm of the gods and bring word back to you.

It doesn't work that way! And he moves from being restless and unrealistic to being rash in his decision. Look at verses 11 and 12 or 12 and 13.

[17:22] He erupts. His heart is beyond repair. He says, Because of this the king was angry and very furious and he commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

So the decree went out and the wise men were about to be killed and they sought Daniel and his companions to kill them. I mean, there the narrator is at his storytelling best.

I mean, without any warning, we're suddenly reminded that the four men that we had really warmed up to last week in chapter 1, our men of resolve, are to be numbered among those deemed wise and therefore now killed.

I mean, where were they? And why were they not part of the prior proceedings? We're not told. All we know is that the writer has moved from demonstrating the internal characteristics of the king to bringing in the one that we've already gotten an affinity for and his life is on the line.

He's going to be torn limb from limb like all the other nameless ones that we never came to love. And so it shifts.

[18:48] You move from a troubled king, 1 to 13, to a man of understanding, 14 to 30.

Good storytellers often pivot the plot by drawing a contrast between characters. And the heart condition of Daniel is meant to stand out against that of Nebuchadnezzar.

I take the irony of 14 to 30 to be intended. I mean, here you've got this king. In theory, he's got the world by the tail. He's the troubled one.

He's the one that's restless. He's the one that's unrealistic. He's the one that's rash. And all the while, the writer now wants you to see that the conquered one, Daniel, probably at least 12 years his junior, comes off in a very different light.

Let's look at what the narrator reveals about Daniel. First of all, he's poised. You see that in 14 to 16 as you reread it while I speak. He's poised.

[20:01] The narrator reveals that the lowly Hebrew slave, which should be cowering in fear, actually enters into the great hall, self-assured, and sleeping well.

No bags under his eyes. And this should come as no surprise. Earlier in chapter 1, verse 17, the writer gave this great little line of foreshadowing that Daniel was a man of understanding who knew how to interpret dreams and visions.

He's not only poised, verses 17 to 23, he's prayerful. It appears that after Daniel bought himself a day by speaking with the one who was going to carry out the task against all the wise men of Babylon, he simply went home, evidently texted his good friends, and asked them to join him in a prayer meeting.

and after that, he goes to bed. I mean, that's stunning. But that's what the narrator wants you to see.

He's prayerful, and in the retelling of what happened, the writer includes a prayer written down, evidently after the fact. You can see it there in 20 and following.

[21:32] In fact, it's a prayer that's going to come back throughout the book. That is, its content, because it almost serves as the melodic line of the whole book of Daniel. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever to whom belong wisdom and might.

He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things.

He knows what's in the darkness and the light dwells with him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise for you have given me wisdom and might and have now made known to me what we asked of you.

For you have made known to us the king's matter. His prayer gives way to praise because he serves a God who in his all powerful, all wise ways reveals mysteries to his own, even in this matter, the future concerning Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Poised, prayerful, and 24 to 30, this is a man that's willing to speak truth to power. From what I can tell of the phrase that is speaking truth to power, it was coined, I think, first by the Quakers in the mid-1950s in a pamphlet designed to provide a tactic for civil disobedience or leveraging the voice of the many to the powers that be to tell them that the action you're about to take, war or whatever, ought not to be done.

[23 : 20] It's a tactic of how does one speak truth to power? power. Henry Kissinger later invokes it as a characteristic of any individual who is a subordinate to one who actually calls the shots, and one of the most important characteristics they can have in that role is the ability to speak truth to power, so that you're not merely a yes man or a yes woman.

that the one thing the one in charge needs is someone who can say it the way it really is. Daniel seems to have this ability.

I mean, the exchange that takes place between the Hebrew slave and the Babylonian ruler is remarkable for this. God wanted an audience with the world.

Notice, he gave the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, not Daniel. God has a word for the world concerning the future.

Perhaps this is why at 2.4, even in the original text, the language goes from Hebrew to Aramaic.

[24 : 50] This universalizing of God's intention to communicate His plans in the world to the world. It's a striking feature in the first half of Daniel.

God's in the heavens and He has something to say even to those who are outside the promise. But they can't understand it. unless there's someone who is a follower of God having implanted the wisdom and word of God in a way that they can speak God's word to those in the world.

I mean, I just want to mention three things about Daniel's exchange. He is fearless in 24 to 30 in speaking truth to power. I mean, read it again this afternoon.

His speech is direct. It is clear. It is bold. And this is in front of a man who has at his disposal with the word Daniel's life in his own hand.

Second is his humility. When the king spoke words that lauded Daniel's own ability to understand dreams, Daniel pushes all that stuff aside and he gives honor to God instead.

[26 : 07] He says, no, you may have heard something but you've got it wrong. I don't have any special wisdom but there is a God who is all wise who reveals things and he has done so in this case for me.

Third, Daniel goes beyond self deprecation. He bore Witness before the king to the power of his God as being above all gods and he told the king that God in no uncertain terms had a message for the king concerning the future of the world.

So Daniel's response is nothing but bold, clear, humble declaration of truth to the one in power. And with that, you're at verse 30 and the writer's contrast of the leading characters is complete.

You've got a troubled king and a man of understanding. And the question is, what do you and I do at the first half of chapter two? Well, there's little doubt that the writer wants you to view Daniel as a wise man, as the wise man.

He places it even in the prayer of verse 23, for you have given me wisdom. He exemplifies that is Daniel as being the kind of man that the Psalms depict as blessed.

[27 : 35] All the wisdom literature is looking for the blessed man who has a relationship with God, understands the word of God, and can live life under that word.

He's the one that the Proverbs actually attempt to build. You know, that phrase, whatever you do, my son, get wisdom. Well, Daniel's got it. He's the one Proverbs attempts to build.

He's the one that the writer to the Ecclesiastes longs to be like. He wishes he could get out from under the sun, penetrate into the presence of heavens, know the word, know God's plans, and lay it straight in the world.

He's all of these things. And the writer is trying to convey this to you. Much later in time, there will be one by the name of Saul of Tarsus, who then becomes the apostle, Paul, who himself indicates a moment of being pulled up into the third heavens.

But he points to one who's even wiser, calling Jesus the wisdom and power of God. That for Paul, Jesus is the righteous man who mediates relationship between the world and heaven, who exercises God's ways.

[28 : 57] So then, if you're a Christian here today, Daniel is both an exemplar of the wise man who finds his fulfillment in Christ, as well as being an example for you to follow in the way of Christ.

Now, when you lay it out like that, pay attention. There's something about Daniel's poise that should encourage you in the way of Christ. You should be marked out in contrast to others, knowing that God can take a conquered Hebrew slave, stand him in the presence of the most powerful person in the world, facing death itself, and send him on his way.

God can do that. In other words, you have nothing to fear. And yet, we cower in our carols at work, or in our hallways at school, as if we're incapable of living confident, mature lives without fear.

Hey, says the book of Daniel, get out from under the rock! I'm reminded of two officers who served in the Civil War.

All hell was breaking loose on the battlefield. Soldiers were in fear of death. They were running for cover. Enemy fire was coming overhead. Cannonballs were resting at their feet.

[30 : 30] And two men were walking through the camp erect toward one another. The one nodded to the other in passing. All this fury flying around them.

They'd gotten a few steps by, and they both looked back at the other man at the same time. And one said to the other, what is the chief end of man? And the other said, to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

And the first said, I knew you were a Westminster catechism kind of man. Hey, they're just ordinary men who kept their head when all the world was losing theirs.

we need that, no less than that from you. May Daniel be an encouragement.

Faith-filled, confident men and women in any corridor in the country. There's also something more than encouragement in that first half for you.

[31 : 41] there's evangelistic boldness that's required from you. Don't let this be lost on you. God wants an audience with the world. He has a word for it.

And He has a commitment to making it known. And He makes it known through ordinary means of those men and women and children who follow and know Him.

In other words, Daniel's example here should be multiplied thousands of times over every day around the globe. Hundreds of times this week by those who are assembled here this morning.

By next Sunday. Boldness in witness concerning God's plan for the future.

Lord, you should be boldly proclaiming news of the kingdom to people you see for indeed many will receive it.

[32 : 41] I remember when we began Holy Trinity Church 15 years ago. I made a lot of mistakes. One of them was I was so fearful of the bold proclamation of gospel witness that at times I kind of wanted to just fly under the radar.

Had this sense that if you're not careful you're going to be tossed. Well, I'm not flying like a graphite Boeing warplane that can't be detected anymore.

Bold, clear, gospel, witness. That's what Daniel does. I remember a gentleman James Seward by name, first year undergraduate student, founding member of this church on campus, bold witness, dozens and dozens coming under the hearing of the gospel and some, some even here today in our midst at this hour who receive the word of the gospel planted in those days and continue on in Christ.

Don't just do something, say something and do it this week.

The chapter moves from a troubled king and a man of understanding to 31 to 45 a future kingdom. In other words, this contrast in characters gives way to Daniel's proclamation on the content of the dream.

[34 : 27] If he needed a sermon title, he just could have called it the statue and the stone. You know, a little window out on the front of the church, walkers by, maybe I'll go to that service this week.

Well, what are they doing there? They're doing the statue and the stone. That's what we've got. 31 to 43 is the statue.

Daniel told the king that his troubling vision was of an image, one that ended up being obliterated by a stone. And when the interpretation was given, I imagine that Nebuchadnezzar breathed a big sigh of relief.

for the destruction of the image by the stone didn't portend the downfall of his own kingdom. In other words, that which troubled him and he wondered if he needed to navigate around that God was trying to tell him how to make sure he didn't come to a bad end, didn't relate to him at all. the smashing of the statue stuff made for TV was reserved for another time.

[35 : 40] This is great! The only thing the dream conveys to Nebuchadnezzar is it confirms the notion that he rules by divine right over a glorious kingdom.

And it showed that one day it would be replaced, but that was only to be expected.

Nebuchadnezzar knew now that his reign and the strength of his kingdom would indeed be one for the ages.

In fact, the change of metals moving as they do from greater to lesser indicate that with each successive transition, there's almost this downgrade attached. And that even the one of iron, which has strength, is only partially so.

That what followed him was going to be inferior in quality in every respect. That he was the apex. That is, until God, who dwells in the heavens, decides to replace all earthly kingdoms with an eternal one.

And from our vantage point in time, it's relatively easy to identify the kingdoms represented. I mean, grade school children can go on Google today and learn information that the kingdom of Babylon eventually gives way to the Medo-Persians who themselves are replaced by ancient Greece who in turn bend the knee to the irrepressible rise of Rome.

[37 : 05] That's a matter of record. What Nebuchadnezzar would have marveled at was that he was one blessed man.

He may have been and thought himself to be, rightly, the most fortunate person to have lived until that time in human history. Which kind of intrigues me when I think about the conventional way Christian preachers often treat this text.

You've probably heard sermons, you know, oh, Daniel 2, there's a God in the heavens who's sovereign, and he wants Nebuchadnezzar to know that he stands ready to smash him for all his sins.

I don't know how you get it that way. In actual fact, the dream announces the good news of the coming of God's kingdom. Only Christian preachers can take a dream that actually in the text says it's about the coming kingdom of God and relegate this to world smashing.

As opposed to the good news that God wants the world to know he's saving. How do we do this? Yet it's done all the time.

[38 : 37] The stone, 44 and 45, the climax of the dream. How one interprets that as a matter of history alters everything.

Are we still waiting for it? Has it already come? Clearly, as a matter of simple chronology, we should be expecting God's everlasting kingdom to arrive on the scene, sometimes subsequent to the ancient rise of Rome.

Prior to the writing of Daniel, the stone is used to speak of one who would arise from the tribe of Jacob and save God's people.

I want you to listen to me on this. The prophecy is put forward in Genesis 49, 24, where Israel is promised that the blessings of the everlasting hills will come by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob.

From there is a shepherd, the stone of Israel. First time we have the stone referenced in that way. Later in Psalm 118, 22, we find that while the stone will be rejected, he will nevertheless become a chief cornerstone.

[39 : 58] And again, in Isaiah 8, there is a prophecy put down in writing that the stone will become a sanctuary for some and a rock of offense for others, indeed that it will cause some to stumble and be broken.

And then, a most amazing turn of events happens in the first century, in Palestine. An itinerant preacher by the name of Jesus of Nazareth suddenly appears on the scene announcing the

summation of his message that the kingdom of God is at hand.

The new proclamation attracts seekers, as you can imagine, and skeptics alike. But when he begins doing signs that replace the impoverished marks of the conditions of our lives with something that would be new, everything begins to heat up.

And then he even goes so far in theory as to claim for himself the identity of the wise man, the son of man even, that is capable of explaining God's plan for the world, and that he had come from God for that very reason.

eventually, the religious leaders dismiss him and his teaching. And when they do, it perturbs him no end. And he speaks a parable against them.

[41 : 25] You can find all this for yourself. Just look at Luke 20, 9 through 18. He likens their rejection of him to the killing of a divinely sent messenger from God.

And he predicts that they will kill him. And they do. And then he gathers up in Luke 20 all these Old Testament stone references and he applies them to himself.

He quotes from Psalm 118 directly. He goes on to allude to Isaiah 8 and even Daniel 2. and in doing so he connects his own death to the stone which comes from heaven not made by human hands which ushers in an eternal kingdom of God with the cross comes the kingdom according to Jesus the Nazarene.

Luke goes on in the book of Acts to show how that kingdom expands. It's not a geopolitical temporal earthly reign but the kingdoms of this world are replaced with the kingdoms of our Christ and of his God which is eternal and spiritual and takes up residence in the hearts of men and women through the power of the Holy Spirit so that the spirit of the living gods I should say God dwells in you if you hold fast to the work of Christ on the cross as that which brings you back to relationship with the one you've been at war with that's the simple teaching of the Christian message I've come to believe that it's true that that's the correct interpretation of Daniel 2 that the center of gravity of Daniel 2 is not in some distant future wherein he will return although that's true and his kingdom will have no end but the center of gravity of Daniel 2 is at the cross where the stone undoes all authorities on earth and replaces them with

Jesus as king the kingdoms of the world go by in purple and in gold they rise they flourish and they die and all their tale is told one kingdom only is divine one banner triumphs still it's king a servant and it's sign a gibbet on a hill that's the mystery that's the word hidden now fully made known let me tell you something with all of Nebuchadnezzar's wealth all his power all his resources you have an advantage over him today on this most important truth it's one of perspective because you live on this side of the arrival of

[44 : 52] God's forever kingdom for him it was a distant horizon and if this chapter has emphasized anything it's that God wants an audience with the world let me put it differently that God wants to talk to you about his plan for the future and what he is setting up and what he is pulling down and who and how you are to live you can see that emphasis throughout the chapter he has something to make known now let me conclude at the outset I told you that great storytellers pay close attention to character development and that with nothing but words at their disposal they possess the ability the power to create and reveal a person's interior world and the reader meanwhile without so much as an awareness of what's happening finds their own heart commitments exposed and so

I come to you in this moment in your life today what will you do with the word of Christ how has this message messed with your cherished heart commitments of ruling a world of your own making does it trouble you to think that you might be broken by Christ if you fail to submit to him in repentance and faith if you can walk away from this this morning and live your life for your own glory and your own kingdom then you have heard nothing and you should be warned for I have told you today what God is doing in the world and he expects you to enter into it with him by following the king he has set up

Jesus I don't want you to end up like the person that Shelley exposes in poetic form in his poem Osmandias he describes a traveler coming across an ancient desert who comes across two vast trunkless legs of stone rising from the desert sand nearby a menacing stone face partially protrudes from the sand it's evidently been broken and on the pedestal is the inscription my name is Osmandias king of kings look on my works ye mighty and despair then Shelley comments round the decay of that colossal wreck boundless and bare the one and level sands stretch far away hey build yourself a monument to the sky and you make the biggest mistake of your life perhaps today is the

day of your salvation for the kingdom of

God is at hand repent and believe the gospel by all appearances from the text Nebuchadnezzar while impressed was not ready to surrender completely that said it didn't stop him from protecting the religious freedom of Daniel and others to make their way in the world in fact while on his coronation day he feared Marduk and prayed to his name he here gives praises to Daniel's God and asks all people to live in fear of him wow that's pluralism at its best he was a religious man but now he's in his own interior world Marduk's got competition maybe you've got it too Yahweh now shares the stage with

Marduk and not only that you have the praises of the king but you have a promotion from the king for the man of understanding for the one who remained poised prayerful willing to speak truth to power well for him in this instance life in Babylon just got a little better who would have thought a humble bold proclamation of truth would bring about good things in the life of the saint in fact he was able to get jobs for a couple of his friends proof that your clear and bold gospel witness won't always won't always put you in a bad way in the world our heavenly father we pray that even today in this hour some would decide declare for you and your kingdom that

[51 : 06] Jesus would be followed and for those who have already set out with him we pray that they would be marked by boldness in the coming week in Christ's name amen amen to