

The Stone cut without Hands

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- [0 : 00] Good morning. Good morning. I have been blessed this morning already.
- And it is always good to be together as the family of God. He always blesses. We, downstairs in Sunday school, we talked about being led by the Spirit.
- And then we come upstairs and we sing. And so the Lord fits this together. This morning we want to continue in our series on eschatology, end times teaching.
- And the message this morning I've titled, The Stone Cut Without Hands. The Stone Cut Without Hands.
- Now what is the proper title for Jesus? Is He Savior?
- [1 : 15] Is He Lord? Is He a prophet? Or a judge? Or a king?
- Who is He? All of the above. All of the above. And as we look at Easter time, as He went like a lamb, was He a king?
- He was. He was. And we have the definition of meekness displayed there.
- Controlled power. As He allowed Himself to be crucified. Our king.
- And yet, we've been focusing on the coming kingdom. Where Jesus will rule with a rod of iron.
- [2 : 27] We look ahead to that. And truly, He will come primarily as king. As judge as well. Also as our friend.
- And so, all the titles belong to Him. And continue to belong to Him. But the significance of them come out at different points in His life.
- This morning, as we're going to focus on Daniel. And likely the next several messages will be in the book of Daniel.
- And I marvel that God reveals His plans to mankind. And as we study Scripture, more and more we understand that God talks to us.
- He reveals to us what He is going to be doing. In the last message that I did two weeks ago, we did an overview of history very briefly.
- [3 : 36] And looked ultimately at the return of Christ where the Jews will turn to Him and embrace Him as their Messiah.
- And so, God is going to bring that about. Here in Daniel, we have the first of a series of events in the life of Daniel.
- And we want to look at this morning to bring out the first aspect of God's plan for the end.
- What's coming? So that we understand it more clearly. And so, thank you, Eric, for the Scriptures for us. And you stopped right at the most crucial point.
- That's where the dream is about to be revealed, right? And so, Lord willing, we're going to go there. But we needed to have some background. So, who is Daniel?
- [4 : 39] Who is Daniel? Who is Daniel? Who has read the book of Daniel? Quite a few. I would encourage all of you to read the book of Daniel.

But who is he? He was a slave. Where did he come from? Israel. And he was royalty.

He was a Hebrew. He was a descendant from kings. And not that he was in line to become a king.

But he was an offspring. And so, he was, in a sense, we would say, royalty. And so, in the year 605 before Christ, things started to shake for Israel as God led Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians, to first of all, to go and attack Egypt, whom Israel had allied themselves with.

They went to Egypt to support, or Egypt to support Israel as backup. Well, God sent the Babylonians to Egypt to subdue them, to conquer them.

[6 : 14] And on the way home, on the way home, he stops in Israel. And Israel's, Israel's strength is gone.

They are no longer turning to God for their strength. They turned to Egypt. And God destroyed and showed his hand.

And on the way home, Israel has nothing to fight with now. They besiege and take the first wave of captives back to Babylon.

And Daniel and his three friends, which were introduced in the book of Daniel, were in the first wave in 605 B.C. before Christ.

We have the climax where King David ruling at the year 1000 to 970, in a kingdom which is blooming, which is prospering under God's blessings as David follows God.

[7 : 25] Now, in the year 600, God says, I'm going to punish. I'm going to turn you around.

I'm going to do what it takes to bring you back to me. And Deuteronomy had forecasted, if you forsake me, this will happen.

And so, you know, Daniel was one of the first, and we could maybe say victims, one of the first people to go.

And so Daniel being, to our understanding, likely still in his teenage years. An interesting book, the book of Daniel.

And it's during this difficult time that God reveals to Nebuchadnezzar, to Daniel, and to the Jewish people, his plan, to set up his kingdom.

[8 : 41] In the time of despair, rock bottom. They're rock bottom. And we know that in two more waves, attacks, the last one in 586, 14, 13 years later, Jerusalem was destroyed.

And more people were taken captive, but most were killed. There was few that actually went to Babylon. The majority lost their lives.

And so under this, God chose to reveal himself. And so remember, last time we talked about Revelations, the book of Revelations, the revealing of his Son.

Here in Daniel, we have the beginning of this prophecy. And so I marvel at God's timing. that he would do it in this way.

And as we look, as we look at Daniel's life, by the way, of all the Bible characters, Daniel is one of the only ones where the Bible does not display any faults.

[10 : 11] You ever notice that? Daniel was not perfect. He was human. But not once in the book of Daniel do we read where he failed.

King David, King Solomon, Abraham, Moses, everybody. Daniel was faithful. and under threat.

He was under threat in chapter 2. He was under threat later and he went into the lion's den, but he was faithful. To this man, God chose to reveal some of the secrets of God to mankind.

You know, as a teenager, to be made a eunuch and not become bitter.

As a servant of the king, he was made a eunuch. Right away, the king identified these four men, Daniel and his friends, as potential servants to him.

[11 : 35] And he put them under this program to enhance their well-being physically, I guess, with foods and so on.

And right away, Daniel set a standard. And he says, I will not, I will not defile myself against my God.

And he petitioned. He petitioned his commander to give him a trial. And he, and we know the story in chapter 1.

But this is Daniel. Just an introduction to him. In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, this, Nebuchadnezzar had this dream. And Daniel is there very likely in his second year.

He may still be shy of 20. We don't know his age bang on, but he was somewhere there. And Nebuchadnezzar is in his second year of reign and he has a dream and the dream troubles him.

[12 : 49] And he calls for his wise men and his magicians and, and so on. And he wants them to do something that is unrealistic.

And what was it? Eat food off of? Yeah, I didn't quite get it.

Sorry. Oh yeah. Thank you. Yeah. So no, with his dream, there was, there was something more he requested here. And so yeah, that happened just before or even during.

But then he, Nebuchadnezzar had the dream and what did he request of the wise men? No, what did the king request? He says, I want you not only to tell me the meaning, you're going to tell me what did I dream.

what did I dream? Is this of God? God was controlling a pagan king.

[14 : 01] And so the wise men are scrambling, our king, we, we have never, this is not right. We can't tell you what you dreamt. Tell us what you dreamt and we'll tell you what it means.

And the king says, not so. No, you're all going to be put to death if you cannot tell me my dream. You're all ganging up on me. You're out to deceive me. And, and they beg him and he said, and he's relentless.

He says, no, you are going to tell me the dream. And literally, in scripture, it tells us, and they started to kill the wise men. And then, Daniel hears about this and he, and, Ariok, his, his, the chief of the wise men, Daniel approaches him.

What is the urgency? What's going on here? Remember, Daniel and his friends are young. They're just into the program. And, and, and chapter one, it was a three-year program to fatten up their feet with the king's delicacies.

It was a three-year trial and they're still in that. And, but yet, they're not exempt. And Daniel goes, what is the urgency? And, and then he is told.

[15 : 17] And if we cannot tell the king what he dreamed, we're done. In fact, they have started to kill the wise men. And Daniel goes in to the king and he says, can you give me a better time?

The God of heaven will perhaps reveal to me. And, chapter two, after he makes that request in verse 16, so Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time that he might tell the, the king, the interpretation.

And then Daniel went to his house and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret.

So, Daniel asks for time and then goes to his companions, his fellow Hebrews, captives, and says, let us seek God.

Perhaps God will have mercy on us. Why are they seeking God? To spare their lives. They too will be killed.

[16 : 38] Perhaps God will have mercy on us and reveal his secrets. And, and he says, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

And so, these young men do that. Our, our youth, our, our older youth are gone on a camp out this weekend. There's, there's a few here, I see. But, but as teenagers, what an example Daniel has set for not only teenagers, but for all of us to rely on God.

To have him as our standard. Unwavering. Unwavering. Unwavering. And so often we think or we assume or we allow our teenagers, yeah, they need to go through this and this, but they'll find their way.

It's okay if, if, if they're lukewarm for a while. Not in Scripture. Not in God.

calls us to be faithful. To trust him. To live for him even through those years. I'm not denying that there are not sometimes some difficult years, some trials.

[18 : 17] Absolutely. But God does not exempt us. He calls us to be faithful. Daniel. And the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.

And so Daniel blessed the God of heaven. And in verses 20 through 23, and so as the secret comes, the dream is revealed to Daniel, the first thing he does is lift his voice in praise to the Lord.

He praises God and he acknowledges God as the one who knows. as the one who is behind all of this.

And then he asks to be taken to the king. And so that's why Eric stopped reading for us. And in verse 27, and Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, the secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, 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. Your dream and the divisions of your head upon your bed were these.

[19 : 44] And so Daniel is about to declare to the king what he dreamt. So this is of God, a young man, a young man of faith.

And God chose to reveal this through this man. Let's look at the dream. As for you, in verse 29, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed about what would come to pass after this and he who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

But as for me, this secret has not been revealed because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation of the king that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

And so God is revealing this not only for Daniel but for King Nebuchadnezzar and for us that we understand. Verse 31, 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, the chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

[21 : 24] And you watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces.

And then the iron, the clay, and the bronze, the silver, and the gold were 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.

This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. And so this is the statue, and John, if you would bring up the statue, those who have taken this course have seen this before.

And so this first piece here, that's a kind of a picture maybe of what it might have looked like. And so he saw a figure, a statue, so to say, and an image, the scripture says, and so we have the head of gold, we have the chest and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, and the legs of iron.

This is what he saw. And so King Nebuchadnezzar has no idea what this means. And so God is using an image, in a vision, to reveal to mankind what will be.

[23 : 09] Okay, verse 36, you can just leave it up. This is the dream, now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings, for the God of 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.

Nebuchadnezzar, you are the head of gold. Your kingdom, Babylon, is represented by that head of gold.

And in Daniel chapter 7, we have a repeat vision, not of an image, but of four images.

And we won't go there today, but in chapter 7, it's not Nebuchadnezzar that sees a vision. He has died already. And it's actually almost 70 years later, Daniel has a vision, and in that vision, God repeats, and he sees four animals.

[24 : 30] Four animals. And the head of gold is likened to a line in that. And we will, next Sunday, Lord willing, we're going to dig into that and tie the two together.

For today, we're going to move on. So the first part, the first kingdom, is you, Nebuchadnezzar. Existing right then and there, as you see the timeline, we're in the 600 mark, and he reigned right to 539, Nebuchadnezzar.

So God is revealing human governments. Human governments. Let's continue to read in chapter 2, verse 39, but after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours, and then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth, so a second kingdom and a third kingdom shall come after you, and by the way, all these kingdoms are earthly kingdoms, so they rule over the earth, so to speak, and Babylon, his influence went far and wide, and they controlled the world at that time, and so after him, the chest and arms of silver was the second kingdom, and the belly and the thighs of bronze was the third kingdom, and so in chapter 8, and we're going to go there next

Sunday, it's revealed to us that it was the Medes and the Persians who conquered Babylon, Babylon, and they ruled from 539 to 330 BC, and the third kingdom, like a leopard, and in chapter 8 again, we're revealed that it's Greece, under Alexander the Great, and they conquered the Medes and the Persians, and they began rule and flee right till 63 BC, before Christ.

Now, not only does Scripture tell us who these first three are, history, history tells us that these kingdoms existed just like God said they would.

[27 : 05] Bang on. And next Sunday we'll talk a little bit about the lion, the bear, and the leopard, and the terrible beast, what that represents as well, because these two give evidence to the nature of the kingdom.

So we'll discuss that as well a little bit. And so those are the first three. And then verse 40, and the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, and as much as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything, and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

Whereas you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, yet the strength of iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

And as the toes of the feet were partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. and you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay, that they mingle with the seed of men, but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

This fourth kingdom is not identified in scripture by name. We are not told directly who or what this kingdom is.

[28 : 40] Again, from history, we believe and understand that it is the Roman Empire which was the fourth successive kingdom of the world.

The Roman Empire. And it has two parts. It has legs of iron and underneath, the words aren't there, feet of iron and clay.

And so we understand that phase one of this kingdom is the legs of iron and they started to rule in 63 and ruled for quite a few hundred years.

And so in the time of Jesus on earth, the kingdom of Rome was very present. Israel paid tribute to Rome as did all the other countries.

And so we have that fulfillment. But there's an aspect of this last that is yet future and it's the feet, the ten toes, partly strong, partly fragile, as iron and clay.

[30 : 00] And we'll go into that, Lord willing, next Sunday as well. So that's the fourth kingdom. And in chapter 7, it's called a terrifying and frightening beast.

That's what Daniel describes it as. Terrifying. And so we'll look at that as well. Let's read on in verse 44 in Daniel 2.

chapter 4. And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the kingdom shall not be left to other people.

It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces, the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God known to the king, what will come to pass after this?

The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. Nebuchadnezzar, you have just been told what's going to take place.

[31 : 19] And in the days of the first four, God will set up a kingdom, the stone cut out without hands, and it's going to fill the earth.

And it's going to destroy all human government. It's going to bring an end to human reign. And God himself will rule on this earth.

phase one of that is the millennium, the thousand year reign, where Jesus will rule with a rod of iron.

The second part of God's reign is the eternal state in the new heavens and the new earth and the heavenly city. And God has revealed this to them.

The description, as we'll see next Sunday, of the feet, of the ten toes, of the ten kings, the ten horns, has never been filled yet. And the Roman Empire, the world governance of Rome, came to an end and they lost their grip over time and it was right around the fifth century after Christ that they lost it altogether.

[32 : 45] And history verifies that. even though the popes of Rome continue to meddle with politics throughout all history, but Rome ceased to govern the world.

Since that time till today, we have not had a one world or a one country government. It has not happened again.

And so, 1500 years, countries have been ruling themselves and there's been fighting and wars and so on, but there's no kingdom over the entire world.

Even though the U.S. might have thought that for a bit, but they were not a kingdom over the world. And so we have history coming yet, and it's the feet where there will be a revived Roman empire that will again come to power with ten kings and that is where in Revelations the Antichrist rule with that dominion.

And as we go through this teaching, we will be there a lot so that we can understand this. So that's God in one image showing Nebuchadnezzar what is to come.

[34 : 11] Is our God not awesome? He has this all planned and He's revealing it to us.

You know, this stone cut without hands is our rock, is our foundation, our sure foundation, is also a stumbling stone to those who refuse to believe.

And let's turn to one scripture to get that as we close. Let's pick Matthew 21.

It's in a number of places, but Matthew 21. Verse 43 and 45, 44, sorry, 43, 44.

Jesus is speaking. He says, therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

[35 : 37] Speaking to the Jews, the church age is going to begin because you rejected Christ. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken.

but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder. What is he saying?

If we do not become broken before Christ, Christ will crush us in judgment and grind us to powder.

destroy us. This is on a personal level for me, for each one of us.

When we meet Jesus, when we're exposed to Jesus, we either become broken before him, recognizing him as the stone cut without hands who will fill the earth.

[36 : 49] We can bow to him or we can refuse to believe and the stone will crush us. And when Jesus comes back as king, as judge, this is the very rock that operates on a personal level, but also on a global scale with nations.

God is the God that we serve. Brothers and sisters, let us ensure that our hearts are broken before him.

Without fail, God's promises are true. and every knee will bow if not here, but when we meet him in judgment and then we will be crushed.

Let us seek him. Let us pursue him as Savior and Lord. God. You can take the image off, Mark.

I am awed by our God. God sees fit to reveal to us so that we can understand and know what his plan is.

[38 : 35] And hence, that's why the decision to maybe work through this from the pulpit, this course. And so, I trust, I trust we will be blessed.

And not only blessed, that as we go through this, God will become bigger and bigger in our eyes, in our hearts. And we will become smaller.

Father, let's pray. Heavenly Father, Father, I thank you for your sovereignty, for being all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing, all-present.

And even as you chose to reveal through Daniel, this young man, Lord, we have benefited greatly from your word.

And we know and we take security, we take comfort in knowing, Father, that you have a plan to bring this world to a close. And not only that, Lord, but there is a kingdom waiting for us that is eternal, that is forever.

[40 : 06] And, Lord, where you will be king. Hallelujah. We praise you for that. And, Lord, may you grip our hearts this morning.

In Jesus' name, amen.