

Kingdom Down #2 - God is in Control of Who is in Control

- All right, if you've got your bibles, go to Daniel chapter two. We gotta move really, really fast. We got 49 verses, I got five pages of notes. I usually use two pages of notes and we're gonna get through it all today. I'm talking about Jesus coming back and I need to finish before He does. So please go to Daniel chapter two. All right, here we go? All right, let me catch you up to speed. This is like binge watching on Netflix. We're gonna go 12 weeks in Daniel. Let me cover chapter one to get you caught up for chapter two. Daniel chapter one, the year is 605 B.C., that is Before Christ, there is a nation called Babylon. It is ruled by a godless man named Nebuchadnezzar. It's a counterfeit of God's kingdom and he is the counterfeit Jesus. Well, after 490 years of disobedience on behalf of God's people, God is very patient. Some people think that they're getting away with something. No one gets away with anything. All we are doing is storing up everything and they were storing up for a day of judgment and justice. So after 490 years of patience, God allowed Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon to invade and overtake the nation of Israel, to conquer the people of God, to plunder the temple, and to take them as slaves in exile. Today we'd call them human trafficking or we would call them prisoners of war. Against their will, they are taken, God's people are, to the place that, for them, would have literally been hell on earth. The 700 mile walk was made by the children of God including some young men who had high IQ, high EQ, raised in royal families. Their names include Daniel after whom the book is titled. They are chosen to serve in the king's royal palace. Well, they are then made eunuchs, they are castrated in addition and they are teenage boys so they are young with their whole life before them. Daniel then is tempted, tested, and tried. They tried to give him a new name that would cause him to convert to a new religion. He has to learn a new language. He's a citizen of a new country and they also want to change his diet and have him eat things that are sacrificed to demonic, false gods so he takes a diet of vegetarianism. So let me just summarize for you, every man who's here that says I don't like my life, you got it so good. He was a eunuch, vegetarian in Babylon working in a harem. True or false, that could not be your best case scenario, work employment vocational opportunity. That's where Daniel finds himself and he is surrounded with the spirit of Babylon and he is filled with the spirit of God and, ultimately, the battle is not just against flesh and blood, but powers, principalities, and spirits, those demonic counterfeits that are at work invisibly through those things that we see visibly and so surrounding Daniel is the spirit of Babylon working in and through all cultures and nations. The spirit of Babylon continues its counterfeit work all the way up until the last book of the bible, Revelation, in the closing chapters it reveals to us the end of history where Jesus returns and puts down the spirit of Babylon once and for all. The way that Daniel navigates 69 years of his life, the book opens as a teenager, ends with him in his 80's, is he does navigate life amidst the spirit of Babylon by the power of the spirit of God and it's ultimately a battle between the genuine real spirit of God and this counterfeit spirit of Babylon. How do you know that the spirit of Babylon is at work? The spirit of Babylon, we see in Daniel chapter one, seeks to overturn, disrupt, confuse gender, sexuality, marriage, does not want believers to have children, and overtakes education and universities to brainwash kids to think like Babylonians and not become believers. So they send him to basically the University of Babylon and there he is to be

brainwashed with a three year undergraduate program in how to become Babylonian. That's Daniel chapter one. Chapter two, there is a problem. We'll jump in and get moving. Daniel, one through three in chapter two. "In the second year in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar," so he's the counterfeit Jesus, he is the demonic king, "Nebuchadnezzar had dreams." Have you ever had a dream? You wondered, Lord, was that you or was that the burrito or what was that? Right, what was that? He's gonna have a dream. "His spirit was troubled," this one freaked him out, it's like a night terror. He's up all night. He's waking up in a cold sweat, "and his sleep left him." He can't stop thinking about it. He's up all night. "Then the king commanded that the," and then he gives these four categories and they are repeated throughout the book, "magicians, enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans," that also means Babylonians, "be summoned to tell the king his dreams. "So they came in, stood before the king, "and the king said to them, 'I had a dream, my spirit is troubled to know the dream.'" He has a dream, he's up all night, he is very anxious about what he has envisioned, he assembles the equivalent of his White House cabinet and he's going to tell them, you need to tell me what my dream means. Now let me explain a few things for you. In this chapter, you will hear about Nebuchadnezzar's dream and then it is interpreted by Daniel's vision. Both are seeing. That's why those who receive dreams and visions, they're oftentimes in the bible called seers. The difference is a dream is seeing while you're asleep, a vision is seeing while you're awake. In our day of screens, think of it like that, that God is showing you something and you're watching it. In their day, they didn't have screens but God would give them that same kind of supernatural capacity and opportunity and so Nebuchadnezzar gets a dream and then Daniel has a vision. Now when you get a dream or a vision, the origination is from one of three possible sources. It could be from God, it could be from Satan and the demonic realm counterfeiting you and/or it could be from your own imagination. So just because you have a dream or a vision doesn't mean you should automatically assume that it is true, that you need to test it to see which source it comes from, from the Lord, from the demonic, or from your imagination. I have had all three and Daniel is going to help discern by the spirit of God, through a vision, what ultimately the dream, in fact, meant. Some of you will ask, why does God use these kinds of ways to communicate? It's because people tend to find the Lord in one of two ways, persuasion and power. Those who find the Lord through persuasion, they have mental objections and questions to Christian faith so they need evidence and cumulative case reasoning and they need facts and they need their questions and objections answered. They come through persuasion. Others come through power. I got healed, an angel showed up, I had a vision, I had a dream, God spoke to me, he just did something supernatural broke through. Some people, they want to or they need to have their questions answered. Others, they need to have their problems solved. Either way, it's God's means of revealing himself to his people. Now, let me say this. When we get into dreams and visions, there is a category of Christian teaching called Cessationism and it essentially says that these kinds of supernatural, inexplicable ways that God works have ceased in this era. I do not believe that. I believe that is antithetical to the bible and I think that false teaching is a strong word but I would suggest it as a possibility for this kind of teaching because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, God works yesterday, today and forever, continuously and if they needed God's powerful presence, we do as well, and if they were only able to overcome the spirit of Babylon by the supernatural provision of God, the same is true of us as

we likewise combat against that same spirit of Babylon. I believe in the supernatural, I believe in healing, I believe that God answers prayer, I believe in revelation and some of you will say, well, what about the bible? I am a bible guy. I came to all these conclusions teaching verse by verse nearly half of the books of the entire bible and God speaks and God lives and God acts and God heals and God delivers and when he does, he is to be praised and I'll give you, I'll give you, you can clap for God if you want. I'll give you one example. I've had visions that have come true. I've had dreams that have come true. The most recent vision and dream that I had was a few months ago. I had a, I saw that I was preaching, finishing the book of Philippians on January 5th. I was planning on taking that Sunday off because on Friday, January 3rd, our oldest daughter got married, so I assumed that I would be a basket case on January 5th and I would need to recover and so I thought, I'm gonna take that day off but God showed me that I was in the pulpit finishing Philippians that day and the theme is partnership in ministry. So I prayed and I asked the Lord, okay, Lord, am I supposed to be in pulpit on January 5th? I was planning on taking it off and, but if, Lord, you want me to finish Philippians, I'll do that, and God said, "I'm gonna send a first time guest "and I'm gonna move in their heart and they're gonna give "a very generous gift and they're gonna improve "all of the technology in the main room so that more people "can worship me and hear my preached word." I was like, okay, so I told Grace and I told some of the pastors. Hey, pray, I think January 5th's gonna be a big day. I will be in the pulpit and guess what happened? Exactly what God said. First time visitor took care of everything, everything is God declared, okay? All of this is to say that God's people should not chase signs and wonders, they should chase God, but as we chase God, signs and wonders might follow us as we follow him and that's the storyline of Daniel and we believe that God still lives and God still acts and God still speaks. So, here we go, the rest of the problem. Then the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, said to the king in Aramaic, from this point through the end of chapter seven, the book is in the language originally of Aramaic, the remainder of the book is in Hebrew, why? Because it is Hebrew people who are living in Babylon and God is functioning here as a bi-lingual missionary speaking to both groups. It's like our recent mission trip to Mexico. We bring bi-lingual people to bridge the gap between cultures. That's what he's doing. Daniel, ultimately, is a missionary to Babylon. "Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, 'Oh king, live forever!' Which, just so you know, we're all gonna live somewhere forever. You need to know that. It says in Daniel 12:2, the multitudes that sleep in the dust will arise, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting death. We're all gonna live forever. It's just a difference if we're going to heaven or hell. That's the only difference, not how long we live, but where we live forever. King, you will live forever. You gotta get ready for that last day, that's your most important day. Tell your servants the dream and we will show you the interpretation. So he brings together his cabinet and he says, okay, guys, I had a dream and they're like, great, tell us the dream and we'll interpret it and he tells them, no, you tell me the dream and the interpretation. You ever tried to read somebody's mind? First of all, you don't want to do that, it's crazy in there but also only God can do that, amen? I mean, only God knows what's in our mind. So they're giving, he is giving them an impossible task. It goes on, "Tell your servants the dream, "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.'" That's a rough performance

review right there. I don't know if, how, your boss may be rough, that's a real rough boss. He's like, okay, do the impossible or I'm gonna dismember you and burn your house to the ground and he had the authority to do so. There were no human rights in this day. You couldn't call the police, he ruled as God. It goes on, "But if you show me the dream," "and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, "rewards, great honor," it's gonna go really good for you, "Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation." Next slide, please. "They answered a second time and said, 'Let the king tell his servants the dream and we will show its interpretation.'" Hey, tell me the dream and the interpretation. Oh, how 'bout we just give you the interpretation, you give us the dream? They're trying to negotiate the deal. They're trying to negotiate the deal. "The king answered and said, 'I know with certainty that you're trying to gain time," you're stalling. You guys can't do the job and you just want to waste my time "because you see that the word for 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." Next slide. "The Chaldeans answered the king and said, 'There is not a man on earth 'who can meet the king's demand," What they're saying is, you got a problem that's beyond our solution. You have a God sized problem and we're not God. "And no great and powerful king has asked such a thing "of any enchanter or magician or Chaldean." They're like, look, we did our undergrad work and our graduate work in dream interpretation. We never took a class on figuring out the dream, like we got nothing. We're not prepared for this. This is impossible and this is the point. It goes on, "The thing that the king asks is difficult, "and no one can show it to the king except the gods, "whose dwelling is not with the flesh." Oh, certainly God wouldn't come down and become a man! If he did, that would really help! There you go, kids. That's what happened. "Because of this, the king was angry, very furious, "commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed." So he's gonna kill 'em all. "So the decree went out and the wise men "were about to be killed, "and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them." So they took Daniel as an exile, made him a slave, made him walk 700 miles, turned him into a eunuch, sent him to the University of Babylon. He's getting good grades, studying all the demonology and counterfeit, and then the king says, I'm sick of all of these people. Let's kill them all. Daniel and his friends haven't done anything, they just showed up and now they're gonna be sentenced to death. It's a crisis. Next slide. "Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion," he does this in chapter one, he does this in chapter two, here's the point, when you're under pressure, you need prudence, okay? When you're under pressure, you need prudence. Freaking out never helped, okay? Screaming, yelling, having a nervous breakdown, throwing a fit, self-medicating, you need prudence. His life is on the line and the lives of many others, including his friends, are on the line. "Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, "the captain of the king's guard, "who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. "He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, 'Why is the decree of the king so urgent?'" What's the hurry? "Then Arioch made these matters 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." Daniel says, Oh, just give me a little time, I'm sure I can figure this out. He just punished or was seeking to execute everyone who asked for more time. He is asking for the thing that the king would not give anyone else. Here's the point. If you belong to the Lord and you are serving the Lord, you may get grace where other people only get

punishment, that God may give you an opportunity that he did not give them. Daniel is asking for the same thing that the godless did and God granted his request. Let me unpack a little bit here about Nebuchadnezzar. Number one, people who are never under authority or told no are impossible to deal with. From his young age, he had caretakers, servants, and slaves, but he wasn't under any authority because he was being groomed to be king and, as a result, anything he wanted, he got. He was never told no. If you are a person that refuses to be under authority or told no, you will end up being a tyrant. If you are raising a child, there is a parenting lesson here. You are the parent and no is something really important for the child to learn otherwise they're gonna grow up and kill everyone else. That's the story of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. Number two on Nebuchadnezzar, every one of us is Nebuchadnezzar with varying degrees of success. So we look at Nebuchadnezzar and we say, I can't believe that a man wanted to assemble a harem and live in a nice house and eat good food and just have everybody wait on him while he lived in luxury and comfort. Welcome to Scottsdale. This is the thing that we are all pursuing with varying degrees of success. His house was bigger, his harem was actual, and not just digital but we're all pursuing the same thing.

- [Male] So true!

- So true! Number three, a man who can conquer anyone or anything is easily conquered by God. His nation expanded by might and force and he would conquer peoples and nations and God just takes him down in an instant. God doesn't even need to show up. He doesn't even send an angel. He literally just flicks a dream from heaven, hits Nebuchadnezzar and he's done. You're not a big deal when God deals with you. That's the point of Nebuchadnezzar. You're not a big deal when God deals with you and some people, some interpreters will say the reason he's asking them to tell him the dream is because he forgot. I don't think he did. He seems a little worried about this, amen? He seems a little freaked out. He's up all night. He's calling a council meeting. He is putting out a death sentence. This is not a guy who's like, what was that thing again? I believe he saw the dream and he had a sense of its meaning and he was scared and he wanted confirmation because it determined his future and here's the big idea. Everyone needs God's help. Nebuchadnezzar doesn't need food, he doesn't need shelter, he doesn't need comfort, he doesn't need wealth, he needs God. The poor need God, the rich need God, the powerless need God, the powerful need God. Those who don't seem to have any need truly have a need for God and that's the story of Nebuchadnezzar. In addition, let me talk a little bit about how God creates and Satan counterfeits. The backdrop of the book is spiritual warfare. God has a kingdom, Babylon is the counterfeit. God has a king, Jesus. Nebuchadnezzar is the counterfeit. God has spirit filled servants, the counterfeit are demonized magicians, enchanters, and Chaldeans and what he says here is, a couple of things I just want to stress. Number one, counterfeit religion and spirituality do not work when you need it the most. Everything at work, most powerful nation and empire and then it doesn't work. Here's the point, you may say, and people say this all the time, I'm not a Christian, I don't believe the bible, I don't follow Jesus. I have my own religion, I have my own spirituality, I have my own philosophy and it works for me. Let me tell you, it won't work! You will die and it won't work! You will stand before Jesus to give an account and anything other than faith in Jesus does not work! Okay, and what he's doing

here, he's showing them, ultimately, you need God today because if it's not working today, it's not going to work into eternity. In addition, the demonic can only interpret the demonic. If a demon gives a revelation, a demon can interpret that revelation. If a revelation comes from God, a demon cannot interpret it, only the spirit of God can interpret it because it comes from the spirit of God. Don't be surprised when people don't understand the bible, don't like the bible, don't make sense of the bible, that it sounds absolutely confusing to them because the demonic cannot interpret that which is from the holy spirit. That's where you need the spirit of God in you to interpret the scriptures that he has written because the demonic can only interpret the demonic and only the holy spirit can interpret that which is from the spirit and so ultimately he gets a divine revelation but he cannot interpret it. He needs the son of God to bring the spirit of God and the interpretation of God and, ultimately, we see here that the demonic rules until God shows up. The demonic is in power until God arrives and he arrives first and foremost in the heart and life of a teenage boy who is a slave. He has no power but he has the power of God and that begins to transform, undermine, and topple the entirety of the counterfeit kingdom of Babylon. In addition, this reveals to us this narrative, the total complete failure of human wisdom to help people understand God and eternity. They, here's this, here's the most powerful man on the earth who brings in the most educated people, philosophers, theologians, self-help gurus, people educated beyond their intelligence with more degrees than Fahrenheit and they got nothing, that's what they've got because, ultimately, human reasoning apart from the spirit of God and the word of God, it is absolutely nontenable and unhelpful and let me say this, this reveals not just how God worked but how God always works. I'll prove it to you. So Babylon is today Iraq. Chapter one, verse 21, we looked at the end, it was gonna be conquered by a neighboring nation that today is called Iran. Any of you noticed we still have some things going on there with Iran and Iraq? It's because the spirit of Babylon is at work. There is he, or she, or it is here, and what we see here is that Nebuchadnezzar is unreachable, can't get a missionary to him but God can get to him. People ask this all the time. How could God not take to heaven but instead send to hell those that have never heard about Jesus? And my question is always how do you know they haven't heard about Jesus? My God can send an angel. My God can send a dream. My God can set a bush on fire and have a conversation with you. He can get some stuff done, amen? He's very, he can send a donkey and talk to you. That's what he's doing right now. He can do all these crazy things. He can do all these things.

- [Male] Thank you, Lord.

- He's the God of the unexpected. And so what God does is he sends a dream and he reveals himself to Nebuchadnezzar. You know what's going on in the world today? The exact same thing. You may or may not know this. Many, many, many Muslims in closed countries that we are having trouble getting missionaries into are becoming Christians. How? They go to bed, they report the same thing, they go to bed, they have a dream that they die, and they stand before Jesus Christ to give an account. It fills them with dread, they repent of their sin, they put their faith in Christ and the church is doing very, very well right now today in Iran. The underground Iranian church is filled with a whole generation of young people who love Jesus and hate living under a demonic, counterfeit regime that is just the spirit of Babylon in 21st

century clothing and ultimately the uprising that you are seeing on the news this week, the protests in the street in Iran, seeking to topple that regime is in large part fueled by the church of Jesus Christ, Iranian brothers and sisters who met Jesus in a dream. So pray for them. Pray for them. The bible is not just about what happened. It's about what always happens. It's not just about what God did. It's about what God always does. There is a problem and Daniel responds with prayer. "Then Daniel went into his house and made the matter "known," to his buddies, "Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah," they were given demonic names by the king. These are their God given names. They only refer to themselves by their God given names. The point is, it doesn't matter what they call you, it only matters that he has called you. Don't let what they put on you get in you. Remind yourself who you are and Daniel's name literally means God is my Judge and what that means is no one else is. So they can judge him and he has not ears to hear because God is his judge but he gets his buddies, "and told them to seek mercy," God, we need help, "from the God of heaven," the God who rules over all times, nations, places, "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." So, again, Nebuchadnezzar gets a dream while he's asleep, they have a prayer meeting and Daniel gets a vision. Daniel gets a vision. This introduces the theme of prayer into the life of Daniel. You'll see it in chapter six, verse 10, that he prayed three times a day and he does so publicly and he gets in trouble for that. In chapter nine, it gives a lengthy prayer from Daniel and it shows that the angel Gabriel who also visited his mother, Jesus' mother, Mary, shows up to answer the dream very quickly by answering the prayer in chapter nine. So, again, what we see here, how does Daniel make it through Babylon? By praying. In any military combat, as you're down on the front lines, you can lose sight of what is happening, you're not sure of the entire battle plan, you call into headquarters, they have a bigger perspective, and they give you directives to navigate through your battle zone. Prayer is the communication line to the commander in chief. Prayer is how we ask God, okay, God, you see what I don't see. You know what I don't know. Tell me how to obey you and make it through my battle in Babylon and this is where urgency and crisis fuels prayer. I'm convinced that one of the reasons that we don't pray much is because we're not feeling much urgency. When there is a crisis, you pray differently. You need to know that there is always, for the children of God, there should be a sense of urgency. We need God desperately. We need God continually and so what we see here is he doesn't respond with panic, anxiety, nervousness, or fear. Whereas Nebuchadnezzar is up all night, he's going to go to bed. The Psalmist says that the Lord gives his beloved sleep. He doesn't rely on his intelligence, his experience, his education. He doesn't melt down. He doesn't just opinion poll everyone else. He just literally calls God, with his friends, they have church and they are invoking the God of heaven, please tell us what you want us to do. I'll just say that this was Daniel's life group. This is where I'm gonna sell life groups. Life groups are sermon based small groups. This is where I will preach and the groups will gather to discuss the word of God, have a meal, pray together, pray for one another. They meet on the campus, they meet all over the valley. I think 75% of the church is signed up for a life group. We've got record attendance. The people are really, really sweet and here's the point. You need your crew before your crisis. Daniel has his buddies to call and they come over and pray. Why? This is what they always do. This is not the first time that they got together to pray in a house but this was an urgent time for

them to pray together in a house. The problem that many of us have, we don't have a crew and then we have a crisis and then we get on the phone or we call the church or we run in the door, help, everything is falling apart! Okay, we love you but we can microwave burritos in a way that we can't microwave relationships, okay? And Daniel has deep, significant relationships that then he can invite to walk with him in prayer and to seek and beseech God with him in prayer. You need that. You need that. You need that before the crisis comes. The problem, the prayer, the praise. This is a long section. I, I'm gonna read it fast, like I'm auctioning verses. If you've gotta go to the restroom, come back. If I gotta go to the restroom, stay there, I'm coming back, all right? This is gonna take awhile. "Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven." Let me ask you this. Could he have complained to the God of heaven? Sure, I'm in Babylon, not Israel. I'm a eunuch, not what I was hoping. I'm going to the University of Babylon, I have a minor in witchcraft and a major in demon possession and now they want to kill me and I didn't do anything so here's what he does, he blesses God. It doesn't matter how bad you've got it, Daniel had it worse and if he can find something to praise God for, there is always something to praise God for. Always something to praise God for. "Daniel answered and said: 'Blessed be the name of God forever and ever.'" What he's saying is, what I'm going through will come to an end, the presence of God will endure forever. "To him whom belongs wisdom and might, "he changes times and seasons," here's craziness, "he removes kings and sets up kings," see there are kings and there are presidents and there are prime ministers and over them, who are in control, is the one who is in control, okay? This is the hope of the believer. It's not that this king doesn't matter, but there is a king above that king and our hope is in him and our help comes from him and he puts up and he takes down nations, rulers, and kingdoms. In an election year, I need you to remember this. To praise God, to pray, and to don't forget who our king is, okay? Don't forget who our king is. "He gives wisdom to the wise, "knowledge to those who have understanding; "he reveals deep and hidden things; "he knows what is in the darkness, "and the light dwells in him. "To you, O God of my fathers," men? This is you. Daniel is a faithful teenage boy in Babylon because he had a faithful dad and a faithful grandpa and a faithful great-grandpa. We like to say that we open our bibles to learn, we open our lives to love so that lives and legacies are transformed. They did that as a family and this is their legacy, consequently. You men need to know that you are the most influential human presence in your home and family. If you read the bible, if you pray, if you worship, the odds are, the rest of your family will and many times mom is trying to lead in the worship of God and dad is being the counterfeit resisting that because, after all, the Titans are playing or the Chiefs are playing or the Packers are playing or the 49ers are playing and dad's gotta decide I'm not gonna sit in the chair and worship the game, I'm gonna get out of the chair and worship the Lord. There are very practical decisions and I'm not against football. I'm not for the Raiders or the Steelers or the Cowboys. Okay and I prayed about it so don't judge me. I'm not against sports and football but, ultimately, God needs to be first priority for every man and he needs to establish that as first priority for his home, okay? So how do, we look at it, we're like, how does a teenage kid make it through Babylon? His dad, his grandpa, his great-grandpa, he's worshiping the God of his fathers. This faith has been handed on by generations. The greatest treasure your family has is not the heirlooms, it's the faith. Don't worry about just passing on the wealth, make sure you pass on the worship to the next generation. He removes kings, sets 'em down, "To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, "for you

have given me wisdom, might, "and now have made known to me what we asked of you "for you have made known to us the king's matter." Next slide, please. "Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, "whom the king had appointed to destroy "the wise men of Babylon. "He went and said to him: 'Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; 'bring me in before the king," Daniel says, my God's got this. "'And I will show the king the interpretation.' "Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste," all right, you better hurry, he's gonna kill everybody, "and said thus to him: 'I have found among the exiles from Judah 'a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.' "The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar," Bel is a derivative of Baal, it's a demonic false God, that's what they called him but he didn't call himself that. "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen "and its interpretation?" Next slide. "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,'" What he says is, no, I can't do it. Dramatic pause. Nebuchadnezzar's wondering, then why are you here? "But there is a God in heaven," there's a God you don't know about. There's a God that rules over your kingdom. You need this God. You have a God sized problem. "There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries "and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar "what will be in the latter days." This king gave you the dream, my friend. "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,'" he's trying to figure out, how do I pass on my empire to my heirs? Same thing we're all trying to do. He goes on to say, "these are mysteries made known to you about 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 any 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." What he's saying is this: nobody can do this but God can and I happen to know him. I happen to know him. Daniel starts by giving God glory and he could have manipulated this circumstance. When he's gonna serve he could say, I'm really smart, I've been educated, I get good grades, you should really promote me. No, he's not promoting himself. He's promoting his God and, ultimately, God promotes him and what you need to see here as well is that he is brought into the throne room. This throne room is a demonic counterfeit. Everything God created, Satan counterfeits. The divine throne room is where the king would sit upon his throne. He'd be surrounded by his servants, slaves, and staff. He would be honored, he would be obeyed. He would give decrees and he would receive praise. God has a divine throne room. It's called the divine council in the bible. It is where Jesus Christ right now, the true king, is seated on a throne. He is surrounded by departed saints, angels, and other divine beings called the Sons of God. Sometimes we get a glimpse into that divine throne room to remind us of an unseen reality that exists and is as real as the world in which we live and what happens here, this is a demonic counterfeit. It is Nebuchadnezzar's divine throne room and in comes Daniel and in Daniel is the spirit of God. Daniel is walking right into enemy territory. Daniel is walking right into demonic stronghold and foothold and he does so fearlessly because he has faith in the God who has brought him to this moment and here's what we saw previously, Daniel was home with his friends having church and he was praying on his knees and now he is standing before a king. The reason that Daniel could stand before the king is because he knelt before the king of kings. Everyone comes into the divine throne room and they kneel down to worship the king. Daniel's already been in the real throne room so he's not

impressed with the counterfeit and he doesn't kneel to the counterfeit king, he stands because he's already knelt to the real king, King Jesus. This is where your prayer life sets up the rest of your life and let me say this, God speaks to Daniel and his friends amidst prayer and praise. Divine revelation from God, breakthroughs from God, come in the context of prayer and praise. This is why, if you wanna hear from God, you gotta spend some time in prayer and praise. It's where we visit the unseen realm, we invite the presence of God, we access the throne room of God and God gives revelation. This is my experience every Sunday. A significant portion of my sermon including a large percentage of what I've already shared, I don't even know until I stand here and then I learn things. Some of you come and you're like, man, I learned a lot. Me too! It's fun for us all. That God has to show up and reveal things and he does so in the context of prayer and praise and, ultimately, it's so that he gets glory and we get joy. So there is a problem, there is prayer, there is praise, now there is a prophecy and prophecy is God telling us the future so that we can prepare for it. That's the function of prophecy. 20% of the bible, when it was written, was prophetic, predicting the future that God rules over. Here's what he says, "You saw, O king," so he's gonna tell him his vision, his dream. "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. "This image mighty and of exceeding brightness, "stood before you and its appearance was frightening." It's bigger than you and scared you. So it's gonna talk about head, chest, arms, legs, it's the picture of a person, of a warrior. "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, partly of clay," which do not co-mingle and there's a weakness. "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 into pieces. "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, "and the gold altogether 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." He's prophesying here, human history, gold, silver, bronze, iron, clay. God's perspective is devolution, that we are getting worse, not better, that every generation is less like God intended and created us to be. The counterfeit of that is evolution, that we are getting better and becoming more like God or gods. The truth is that we're devolving, that the way human beings treat one another is only increasing in evil and what he is doing here, he is telling us about human history. So today there are about 200 sovereign states in the world and they have fixed boundaries. In the ancient world, these boundaries were flexible. If this king could conquer this king, he could take all of the land, enslave all of the people, and take all of the plunder. So it was constant war and seeking for your kingdom to conquer their kingdom. There were no fixed boundaries and what he is prophesying here is human history and how God would work even through political upheaval and also social and political crisis. Now what I'm going to share with you are four kingdoms and then I'm gonna share with you the kingdom of God and as I like to say here, we have certain issues that are in the open hand and certain that are in the closed. So in a minute, I'm gonna get with you, and a specific historical prophecy, it's in the open hand. At the very end, I'm gonna tell you about the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that's in the closed hand. This we can disagree on, this we're all excited about. So let me show you what this looks like, okay? So here is the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the vision and interpretation of Daniel and what he's talking about here is a succession of Empires, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman. He starts chapter two,

verses 36 through 38, he's starting with the Babylonian Empire. He says, "This was the dream. "Now we will tell the king its interpretation. "You, O king, the king of kings," it's a counterfeit title, "to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom," God gave you this job, you should thank him. Don't get arrogant, "the power, the might and the glory, "and into whose hands he has given, wherever they dwell, "children of men, the beasts of the field, "the birds of heaven, making you rule over them all," here's the key, "for you are the head of Gold." So his dream and Daniel's vision was this massive, towering, powerful person. Nebuchadnezzar looked and he saw his head at the top. He says what does this mean? Daniel says, "You are the kingdom of God." That is the Babylonian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar is the most frequently mentioned pagan king in the bible, some 90 times. God calls him my servant in the lowest of men. This man lived in absolute security. He had a massive army. He was the superpower in his day. He had a massive wall surrounding his fortified city. It was 90 feet high. You could run a four horse chariot around the top of it and turn it around. He had a moat. He had guards. He feared no one, he feared nothing and then God shows up and he's terrified. He's terrified and he was called, and his kingdom, he was called the King of Gold and his kingdom was called the Kingdom of Gold. It was opulent, it was rich, it was wealthy. As they would conquer other nations, they would plunder them. What we saw in the storyline of Daniel, when they plundered Israel, they took all of the objects out of the temple so now you've got all of God's gold in Babylon with all of Satan's gold, this is the gold headquarters for the world. After him though, his empire wouldn't exist forever. Every one of us is trying to establish a kingdom that never ends. He was trying to establish a kingdom that never ends. After him comes the Medo-Persian Empire. This is the chest and arms of silver. Daniel, chapter two, verse 39, he says, "Another kingdom inferior to you shall rise up after you." You're stronger than these guys but God's gonna let them win. He's going to allow them to conquer you. These events of the conquering of Babylon and the Babylonian Empire, they are recorded in Esther, another book of the bible and these two arms, many students of prophecy seem to think that these two arms represent the Medo-Persian Empire but it was two kingdoms that came together as one kingdom and that's the Medo-Persian Empire. After that comes the Greek Empire. This nation goes down, this nation goes down, this nation rises up. It says in chapter two, verse 39, "And yet a third kingdom of bronze, "which shall rule over all the earth." This Greek Empire was brought into existence historically by Alexander the Great. When he would march into war, the breast plates for his soldiers, their swords, their shields and their helmets, what do you think they were made out of? Bronze. His was called the Kingdom of Bronze and he was the King of Bronze. God specifically controls the events of human history. What happens after that is the Roman Empire comes into existence. The Roman Empire was the most powerful nation on the Earth in its day as well. Daniel, two, verse 40 through 43, "And there shall be a fourth kingdom." One, two, three, four, fourth kingdom just like Daniel says, strong as iron, not as valuable but powerful because iron breaks to 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, 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 soft clay and the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay so that the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle as you saw the iron mixed with clay that is soft so they will mix with one another in marriage but they will not hold together just as iron does not mix with clay. History

records that this is exactly what happened to the Roman Empire. It kept expanding by conquering through force but eventually it had such a wide geographic dominion, so many disparate languages, nationalities, ethnicities, people groups, that ultimately, it was a divided group and Rome could not control the Roman Empire and so it fell apart as people were more loyal to their local region or to their family of origins, to their religion, or their ethnic traditions. So eventually the mighty Roman Empire crumbled and fell. The point is this, the nation that conquered the earth could not control itself. What is true of the Roman Empire is true of you and I, that you can conquer people and things but controlling yourself is the hardest mission that you have during the course of your life. The Roman Empire ruled and then it ultimately declined. Now the whole point of the Roman Empire was to bring forth Jesus Christ. The whole point of prophecy, the whole point of history, is Jesus Christ and it was the Roman Empire that was ruling and reigning at the time at the birth of Jesus. It was the Roman Empire that called for a census that compelled and caused Jesus' parents to leave their hometown of Nazareth and ultimately go to Bethlehem, which was their family of origins, because the Roman government forced a census that ultimately was the Roman government that brought charges against Jesus, arrested Jesus, executed through crucifixion, Jesus, buried, Jesus put in front of his burial tomb a stone with the inscription and the insignia of the Roman Empire and Jesus Christ rose from death under the rule of the Roman Empire and Jesus Christ came, in what the bible calls the fullness of time. Up until the Roman Empire, these various nations and clans and tribes were always at war and were disconnected and disparate. What the Roman government brought is Pax Romana. It's called the Roman Peace. Furthermore, it brought into existence a road system not unlike our modern highways that connected all of these people groups so that when Jesus lived and Jesus died and Jesus rose, the news of the resurrection of our king, Jesus Christ, could be sent to the nations of the earth under the auspices of Roman Peace and the Roman road system. None of that was possible in the history of the world until that day. Had Jesus died and risen previously, the news would've been contained, it would've not been released to the nations. You and I are here because Jesus lived, died, and rose during the Roman Empire and the message has made it all the way to Arizona. Some of, here's what some of you are thinking. Pow! God is not bigger than you think. He's bigger than you can think. Some of you say, I don't understand all this. Okay, trust the one who does. Trust the one who does and let me say this, the God who wrote the word rules the world. The God who wrote the word rules the world. We teach little kids this song, he's got the whole world in his hands. It's true. In the hands of Jesus is all of human history. The promise. "And in the days of those kings, "the God of heaven," his name is Jesus, "will set up a," what? "a kingdom," it's all about a king and a kingdom. He's talking about the first coming of Jesus during the Roman Empire. Here he is transitioning to the second coming of Jesus Christ. It seems to indicate that there will be some sort of reconnecting and recollecting of that disparate, ancient Roman Empire in the latter days at the end of time. It may be that the spirit of Babylon is seeking to reassemble a counterfeit kingdom and Jesus says, I've had enough. I'm coming down now. "And the days of those kings, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom "that shall never be destroyed," every other king, kingdom, nation comes and goes and the kingdom of God endures forever. "Nor shall the kingdom be left to another people," nobody's gonna conquer king Jesus. "It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms "and bring them to an end and it shall stand forever," you're gonna see this is Daniel seven, you're

gonna see this in Daniel 12. This is now the theme of the book and why we live kingdom down. "Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain "by no human hand and that it broke into pieces the iron, "the bronze, clay, the silver, and the gold. "a great God has made known to the king what shall be after this." And king? "The dream is certain," and don't ask me if I'm sure, I'm real sure. Once Daniel gets a word from God, he is fearless. He is not going to negotiate or edit the word of God for Nebuchadnezzar. Do you think Nebuchadnezzar liked this interpretation? No, but it's the truth. It's the truth and what he's talking about here is a kingdom will come when a stone comes and crushes all the other nations. It's a stone not cut by human hands. Who is that stone? Jesus. It says in Psalms, it says it in the Gospel, says it in the Epistles that Jesus Christ is our cornerstone. The stone the builders have rejected has become the capstone. All the other nations rejected Jesus and the cornerstone is where you would begin, it was small, but it was significant because if the cornerstone was wrongly set, then everything built upon it would be crooked and eventually tumble. And the prophecy that was given to Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted by God through Daniel was this, anything that isn't founded on Jesus comes down and doesn't work. Ultimately, it collapses and crumbles. So the point is this, start your day with Jesus. Start your year with Jesus. Start your family with Jesus. Start your marriage with Jesus. Start your parenting with Jesus. Start your business with Jesus. Start your schedule with Jesus. Start your finances with Jesus. Lay the cornerstone first and lay everything else on him. Apart from Jesus, nothing works, everything crumbles. That's the moral of the story, okay? And it says that this stone is not cut by human hands meaning he's not just one of us. He's like us, he's like the son of man, Daniel 7 says. Some say this refers to his virgin birth. Others would say that it refers to his eternal kingdom. I believe that both are true. I believe that both are, in fact, true. I want you to see history focuses on Jesus. Daniel's prophecy goes from the first coming to the second coming. We are a few thousand years in the middle and people will wonder, why is God not speaking about what is happening today? Because the center of history is Jesus so the focus is on the first and the second coming. It's not that what happens today doesn't matter but, ultimately, we need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He is the one who truly matters and then Daniel gets a promotion. Daniel gets a promotion. "Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face," what does he do? He falls down to what? To worship Daniel. This is what we do. If you don't know God, you worship people. We call it the fear of man, that ultimately you live for their approval. You live for their pleasure. You live for their provision. You change who you are, what you think, what you do, so that they will approve of you. Social media doubles down on the fear of man which is the counterfeit to the fear of the Lord. Here he doesn't understand God. God comes with Daniel so he worships Daniel. He's still confused. It's interesting. Daniel kneels before the King of Kings, stands before the king, and the king kneels before the one who kneeled before the King. You need to know that this is the history of the children of God, that if you will kneel before your King Jesus today, you will stand with your King Jesus forever and others will kneel down as you rule and reign in the kingdom of God alongside Jesus Christ. The bible says to those who overcome, he has thrones appointed for them. He has a place from which you will exercise dominion and authority over a kingdom just as Daniel did. "The king fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel "and commanded an offering "and incense be offered up to him." He's like we're gonna start the church of Daniel. All right, here's what we're gonna do. Give me a guy with an acoustic guitar. Everybody needs to accept Daniel in their heart. Kids

are gonna pray prayers to Daniel. We're gonna put Daniel's picture up. We're gonna put bracelets, What Would Daniel Do? He's rolling out the whole marketing campaign. This could've been a real opportunity for Daniel. How many of you, if you were Daniel, you're like, I'll roll with that? I think my face is pretty. I'd make a good t-shirt and I kind of like this song about me. He doesn't allow himself to be worshiped. He keeps bringing the glory back to God even when those who are present don't understand this fact. "The king answered and said to Daniel, 'Truly your God is God of gods,' I just met the varsity God. "And the Lord of kings and the revealer of mysteries, "for you have been able to reveal this mystery. "Then the king gave Daniel high honors, "great and many gifts, "made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon "and the chief prefect." That means he's at the top of the org chart over all the wise men of Babylon. He is now the bible teacher in Babylon. He is running the University of Babylon. Wouldn't that be awesome if all the universities were run by a bible teacher? Lord, make it so. "Daniel made a request of the king and he appointed," Radshach and Bennie, if you're a Veggie Tales fan, "over the affairs of the province of Babylon. "But Daniel remained at the king's court." A couple of things about Nebuchadnezzar, a couple of things about Daniel, number one, here's what we learned from Nebuchadnezzar. You can, you can ultimately revere God in your mind without receiving God in your heart. Nebuchadnezzar, he reveres God but he doesn't receive God. Both Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar revere God but only Daniel receives God. My question to you today would be, have you received Jesus Christ as your God? It's not just enough to revere him, you need to receive him for a life changing and eternity altering relationship. In addition, anyone can admire God's power but only God's children can experience God's power. Nebuchadnezzar is just like, that's incredible! And Daniel's like, this is the spirit filled life. This is the spirit filled life. God doesn't want you to just admire, he wants you to experience his presence and power. In addition, we learn a few things about Daniel. I'll share a few with you. Be a good citizen until the point that you can no longer be a good Christian. He faithfully, lovingly, dutifully serves Babylon up until the point where it makes him more Babylonian and less believer. Be a good citizen up until the point that you can no longer be a good Christian. In addition, your faith is to be public and not just private. People say well, you know, faith is a private matter, not a public matter. No, our God rules over all and so all is under his jurisdiction and dominion and Daniel is very public with his faith. He praises, he prays, he prophesies publicly. It is a public and not a private faith. In addition, the Lord Jesus tell us that we should not seek after signs and wonders. Daniel is not seeking signs and wonders and miracles and that which is supernatural and inexplicable, he is pursuing God and here's what I want you to know. For those who follow God, don't be surprised when signs and wonders follow you. We are not to chase signs and wonders. We're to chase the living God and signs and wonders follow those who chase the living God. Supernatural things happen in Daniel's life. Supernatural things happen in our life as we pursue our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith is ultimately building your life on God's character and control even when you don't see what he's doing, you don't like what is happening, and you don't agree with his timing. And here is the summum bonum of this text and it is this, that God knows, rules, reigns, the future and it is fixed and unchangeable and that it ultimately is going to culminate with the second coming of Jesus Christ and as a result this is to give us clarity, comfort, and courage in the midst of our life here in our Babylon. I'll give you an example of where I'm going with all of this. Some time ago, Grace and I were sitting on the couch and we had two shows.

So we'd watch a show and then when the commercial would come on, we'd go to the other show. One of the shows was the nightly news and there was a lot of kind of concerning things happening and I found myself a little nervous and then flip over to the other show, it was the History Channel. And on the History Channel was also a concerning thing but I wasn't freaking out because I know the end. For God and the children of God, everything is the History Channel, nothing is the news. Nothing catches God by surprise. Nothing is out of God's control. If God isn't freaked out, you don't need to freak out. If God knows the future, you don't need to know the future, you just need to know the God who knows the future and know that he's got it figured out for you. That's the story of Daniel. Okay, rub your brain. If anyone of you leave and say I didn't learn anything, I don't even know what to do for you. I don't even know what to do for you. Rub your brain, take a deep breath. We're gonna go deeper for a moment. Did everything that Daniel prophesied six hundred years before the coming of Christ happen? Yes. Yes. And then the stone not cut by human hands, the king, shows up. He's born under the Roman Empire. The angel Gabriel who will appear in Daniel chapter nine to bring a message to Daniel shows up in Luke chapter one to similarly bring a message to Mary. Gabriel says, Luke, chapter one, "He," speaking of Jesus, "will be great and called the son of the most high "and the Lord God will give to him the throne "of his father David and the reign over the house of Jacob "forever and of his kingdom, there will be no end." Gabriel told Daniel, Jesus is coming to set up a kingdom. Gabriel comes to Mary and says, "The time has come." Both are young. Both are living under foreign empires. Both are battling against the spirit of Babylon. Jesus is born. The king has come. He starts as a stone, he ends as a mountain. He comes the first time in humility. He's coming the second time in glory. Now let me say this, this is rather curious. Some people show up to visit Jesus. He have this in our nativity every Christmas. Who are they? The wise men. They didn't show up to where Jesus was born, the bible says that they showed up at the house of Mary and Joseph. That means that Jesus was a couple years old. Jesus had been born and the news got out because of Pax Romana, Roman Peace, and road system, that a king had been born to a virgin in a town of Bethlehem fulfilling all of these prophecies in the old testament and it says that some men came from the east. We don't know how many. We know how many gifts they brought. They make a long journey. Here's what's curious: Daniel has to make the 700 mile journey to Babylon. From Babylon come the Magi which means magician. They make the 700 mile journey back to meet the real king. They were taught by their fathers' fathers' fathers. Daniel became the chief bible teacher in Babylon. He taught them the prophecies of the word of God. They believed in the word of God for 600 years. The descendants of the magicians that Jesus taught were the Magi who came from the east to see the fulfillment of prophecy and to welcome the real king. They kneeled down at his presence and they are the first worshipers of Jesus in the new testament. They are the direct descendants, I believe, of the Babylonian magicians, hence, Magi is short for magician. Furthermore, they bring three gifts. What are they? Gold, frankincense, myrrh. Gold from Babylon, the Kingdom of Gold. It struck me this morning as I was praying, I wonder if the plunder that was stolen from the temple and the gold vessels that were taken to Babylon were not kept by those who learned the bible from Daniel awaiting the coming of the king and wanted to return to him his rightful gold. In addition, gold, what's the second? Frankincense, that's for priests and worship, prayer and praise, the presence of God, myrrh. That's an embalming fluid

for a dead person. That's his burial preparation, shows that Jesus is king, gold, Jesus is priest, frankincense, Jesus' sacrifice, myrrh. That our king would come to die that we might live. Let me just tell you this: if you put yourself under bible teaching, it could affect 600 generations of your family, and when the king shows up again, I'd love to see people with your last name running to meet him. That's why we planted a church, that's why we open the word of God. That's why we planted a church, that's why we open the word of God. So let me close with this. Today, we live right on the precipice of history. We're on the edge. The prophecies have been fulfilled. We're waiting for what?

- [Male] Jesus.

- Jesus Christ to come again as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and to set up a kingdom that never ends and to raise you from the dead and to wipe every tear from your eyes and to provide for all of your needs and to bring healing into your body because our king is not like that king. You couldn't come into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar unless he invited you but the bible tells us that our King Jesus sits on a throne and he rules from a throne room and that he welcomes his children to come into his presence to receive grace and mercy in our time of need. That means that right now we have access to the throne room of Jesus and one day that king and that kingdom and that throne will overtake this world and you can go see Jesus whenever you want and Jesus will give you everything you need! Wow! That's all I got, that's all I got! Okay, I'll pray, that's all I got. Wow, Lord! We don't even have words. We don't even have words. Lord, our three pound fallen brains are exploding just getting a glimpse into what you have planned for eternity and all of history. Jesus, thank you, thank you that you tell us what's coming so that we can have faith and not fear. We can have hope and not horror. We can have gladness and not grief. Lord Jesus, thank you that you are in control of whoever is in control. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are coming again to establish a kingdom that never ends. Jesus, that could be today, that could be tomorrow. We don't know when it is but I pray that, like the Magi, we would cling fast and our children and our children's children would cling fast to the prophetic promises and prophecies of the word of God and when Jesus returns, kneel down and worship the king and we ask for this grace in his good name, amen.