



Daniel 2

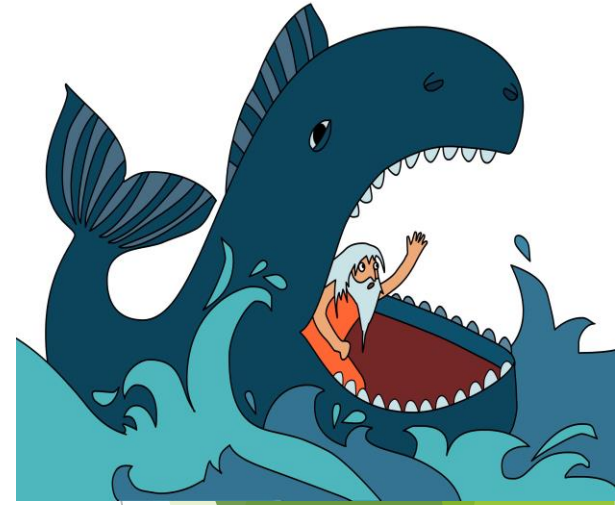
Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Quick Review...

In Jonah, we were introduced to a young reluctant prophet who had survived the ordeal of the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Tribes of Israel (~722 BC). His hatred and fear of his enemy made it difficult for him to hear the word of God and to follow God's Command.

And yet, the will of God prevailed.

The greatness of YHWH was revealed both to Nineveh and to the sailors on Jonah's ship. Nineveh repents and prays!



Last week..

In Daniel 1 we met a man, Daniel, who had been a prophet to the king of Judah, Jehoiakim, just before the Babylonians conquered Judah and Jerusalem (~603 BC).

As Chapter 1 begins, Daniel and his three companions are exiles in Babylon (~585), and we read that Daniel would stay there for two years after Babylon was conquered by Persia's King Cyrus (~539-537 BC).



Daniel 1

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are chosen to be of service to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

They have been taken from the “Promised Land”. The Temple in Jerusalem has been sacked and pillaged of valuables left there.

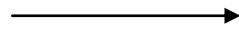
Yet these four young men cling to God’s commands and refuse to succumb to the lures of this pagan community. They refuse, in chapter 1 to eat forbidden or “unclean” foods offered by the king.

The Men Are Given New Names-

Hebrew Name

Babylonian Name

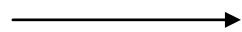
Daniel = God is my judge



Belteshazzar =

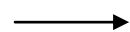
The treasure of Bel

**Hananiah = The LORD is
gracious**



**Shadrach = Command of Aku
(Moon God)**

Mishael = Who is like God



Meshach = Who is like Aku

Azariah = The LORD helps



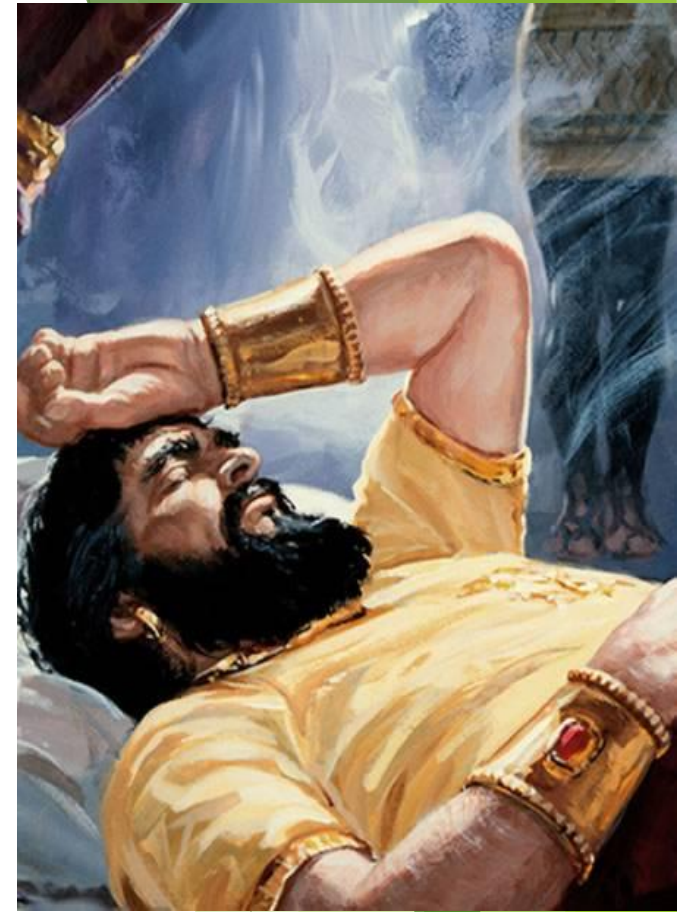
**Abed-Nego = Servant of Nego
(or Nabu, god of wisdom and
writing)**

God blessed Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

Dan 1:17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and proficiency in all literature and wisdom, and to Daniel the understanding of all visions and dreams.

Daniel 2

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream.
He has doubts about the ability of his usual group of sorcerers and magicians to interpret the meaning of his dream.
He comes up with an **impossible challenge**.
His people must discern both what the dream is *as well as its meaning*.



Grave consequences for those who fail to interpret the dream!

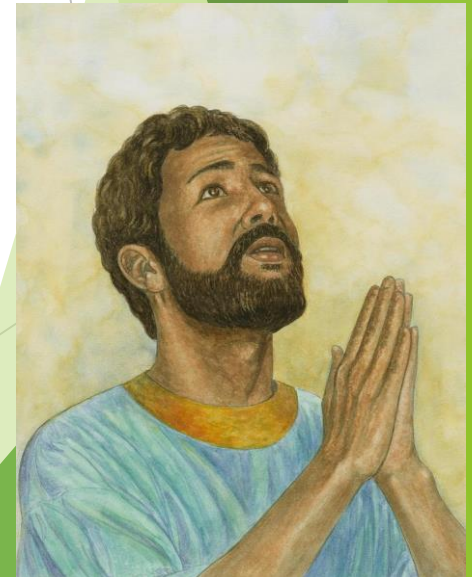
Daniel 2: 5-6 The king answered the Chaldeans, “This is what I have decided: unless you tell me the dream and its meaning, you shall be cut to pieces and your houses made into a refuse heap. ⁶ But if you tell me the dream *and* its meaning, you shall receive from me gifts and presents and great honors. Therefore tell me the dream and its meaning.”

Daniel is a wise and thoughtful man

When Daniel learns of the fate that is to fall on the wise sorcerers and magicians, he pleads with the king for more time to ponder the dream and its interpretation.

Daniel then goes home and prays with his friends, that they might be spared this terrible fate.

God then reveals the mystery in a vision. Daniel offers a prayer of Thanksgiving.



Daniel pleads for the lives of the wise men of Babylon.

So Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not put the wise men of Babylon to death. Bring me before the king, and I will tell him the interpretation of the dream.”

Dan 2:24

Daniel gives credit to God

Dan 2:27-28

“The mystery about which the king has inquired, the wise men, enchanters, magicians, and diviners could not explain to the king. ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what is to happen in the last days; this was your dream, the visions you saw as you lay in bed.

A Dream and a prophecy are revealed:

- ▶ Dan 2:32-35 “In your vision, O king, you saw a statue, very large and exceedingly bright, terrifying in appearance as it stood before you. ³² Its head was pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs bronze, ³³ its legs iron, its feet partly iron and partly clay. ³⁴ While you watched, a stone was hewn from a mountain **without a hand being put to it**, and it struck its iron and clay feet, breaking them in pieces. ³⁵ The iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold all crumbled at once, fine as the chaff on the threshing floor in summer, and the wind blew them away **without leaving a trace**. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.



Babylonian
Empire
606 BC

Media
550 BC

Persia
538BC

Greece
333 BC

A Divided
Kingdom

***You* are the head of *gold*. Vs 38**

**Another kingdom (silver) shall take
your place, inferior to yours, (vs 39)**

**then a third kingdom, of bronze,
which shall rule over the whole earth.**

**There shall be a fourth kingdom,
strong as iron; it shall break in pieces
and subdue all these others,**

Feet of iron and clay Greece, Rome or Europe?



- ▶ The feet and toes you saw, partly of clay and partly of iron, mean that it shall be a **divided kingdom**, but yet have some of the hardness of iron. As you saw the iron mixed with clay tile, ⁴² and the toes partly iron and partly clay, the kingdom shall be **partly strong and partly fragile**. ⁴³ The iron mixed with clay means that they shall *seal their alliances by intermarriage*, but they shall not stay united, any more than iron mixes with clay. (Dan 2:41-43)

The Meaning of the Statue

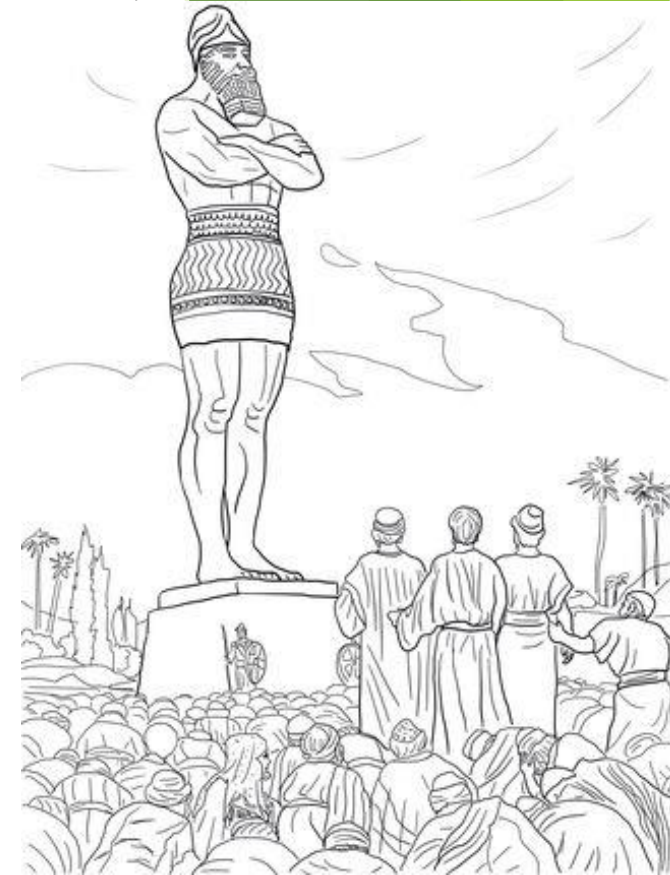
- ▶ Notice that when describing the statue, the building materials used began as precious gold for the head. Each new element is stronger *but less valuable* until you get to the feet. The feet are made of clay mixed with iron. They are weaker still and easily defeated.

The Nations

The parts of the statue represent various Empires that ruled the near east from the sixth century through the 2nd century BC.

Nebuchadnezzar was called the “king of kings” by the Persians, his kingdom is gold. After Babylon comes Media, then Persia and Greece is the Fourth.

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire was divided between the Seleucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt.



It only takes a little stone to overthrow the last “divided” empire, the feet.

The stone itself is indestructible, it is not formed by human hands. (2:34)

In rabbinic literature and in some of the patristic writings, the stone is the Messiah. The stone becomes a mountain and crushes the empires beneath it.

Mountains are symbolic for the presence of God.

The Stone is Jesus.

The Stone

⁴⁴ In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever. 2:44

This is the Kingdom of God or the Messianic Age.

What does this all mean?

God is greater than all the kings and nations of the world.

God ultimately is in control.

All things, nations, and peoples of this world are *temporary and destructible*.

The only eternal, everlasting, being or power is God.

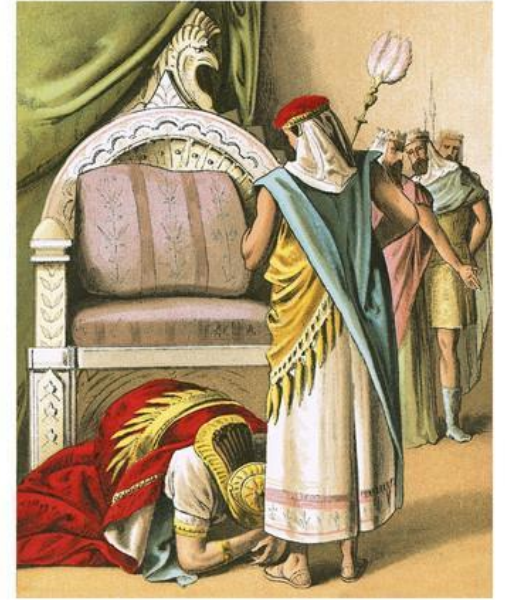
For a Babylonian king, this was truly a revelation.

How did this affect Nebuchadnezzar?

He bows down and worships Daniel. Daniel is elevated to a high government post.

Daniel asks that this position be offered to his three friends instead. This is done. They become administrators of the province of Babylon. Daniel remains in the king's court.

The King acknowledged the power of God. He calls Daniel's God, "God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries". (2:47)



What do we learn from Daniel's example?

Daniel is a model of empathy and concern for others, friends and strangers alike.

He prays for help, and again for thanksgiving.

He is a true model of humility;

he gives credit to God for his gifts and talents.

More on the Messianic Age to Come...

Isaiah 11:6-9

⁶ Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat;
The calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze,
together their young shall lie down;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.

⁸ The baby shall play by the viper's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.

⁹ They shall not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.



The Messianic Age/Kingdom of God

Psalm 110:5-6

- ⁵ At your right hand is the Lord,
who crushes kings on the day of his wrath,
- ⁶ Who judges nations, heaps up corpses,
crushes heads across the wide earth,

The Kingdom of God in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.



- ▶ **550** The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."²⁷⁷ Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world".²⁷⁸ The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood."²⁷⁹

The stone is Jesus who brings about the Kingdom of God.

567 The kingdom of heaven was inaugurated on earth by Christ. "This kingdom shone out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ" (*LG 5*). The Church is the seed and beginning of this kingdom. Its keys are entrusted to Peter.

Let us pray- Daniel's prayer

▶ ²⁰ “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and power are his.

²¹ He causes the changes of the times and seasons, establishes kings and deposes them.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who understand.

²² He reveals deep and hidden things and knows what is in the darkness, for the light dwells with him. ²³ To you, God of my ancestors, I give thanks and praise, because you have given me wisdom and power. Now you have shown me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the king's dream.”