

A Kingdom That Shall Never Be Destroyed

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Date: 06 September 2026

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[0:00] Turn in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 41. Pastor Collins continuing his study in the book of Daniel tonight.

Our scripture reading is from Isaiah. And we will start at verse 21 and read through the end of chapter 41 and then continue through chapter 42 through verse 9.

Set forth your case, says the Lord. Bring your proofs, says the king of Jacob. Let them bring them and tell us what is to happen.

Tell us the former things, what they are that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome. Or declare to us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter that we may know that you are God's.

Do good or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified. Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing.

[1:13] An abomination is he who chooses you. I stirred up one from the north, and he has come from the rising sun that he shall call upon my name. He shall trample on rulers as on mortar, as the potter treads clay.

Who declared it from the beginning that we might know, and beforehand that we might say, He is right? There was no one who declared it, no one who proclaimed, none who heard your words. I was the first to say to Zion, Behold, here they are. And I give to Jerusalem a herald of good news. But when I look, there is no one.

Among these, there is no counselor who, when I ask, gives an answer. Behold, they are all a delusion. Their works are nothing. Their metal images are empty wind.

Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.

[2:22] He will not cry aloud, or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street. A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench.

He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint, or be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his law.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk in it.

I am the Lord. I have called you in righteousness. I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

I am the Lord. That is my name. My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare.

[3:37] Before they spring forth, I tell you of them. Turn over to Daniel chapter 2 in your copy of God's Word.

We left off last time that we were in the book of Daniel with a bit of a cliffhanger. Daniel is standing before King Nebuchadnezzar.

He's in his royal court, and he's prepared to tell the Babylonian king two things. The contents of his dream and the interpretation of it.

Something that no man in all the kingdom has been able to do. And because of that, all of the wise men were being rounded up to be put to death. But Daniel had put a pause on all of that, because Daniel is saying, the mystery of your dream, Nebuchadnezzar, has been revealed to me.

And now tonight, Daniel is about to share that revelation with Nebuchadnezzar. And of course, it's not a revelation that just popped into Daniel's head. No, it was given to him by the God of heaven.

[4:44] The God that Daniel had prayed to earlier in chapter 2. And in that prayer, Daniel gave us a glimpse of what the dream and the interpretation of it are about.

He said this, God changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. That line there about the sovereignty of God, how he controls all things, that line is a hint of what is to come now in our passage this evening.

It's a foretaste, you might say. Or even you could say that verse is an appetizer. And tonight, we get the full meal as Daniel unpacks Nebuchadnezzar's dream in all of its fullness.

And speaking of appetizers, you could also say that this chapter, chapter 2, is something of an appetizer of what is to come later in Daniel, in chapters 7 through the end.

And so we get that appetizer. Now, sometimes when I think of appetizers, I think like it's just kind of a little taste, but it's not very filling. We're going to get filled well tonight, I trust, as we consider the dream and its interpretation.

[5:52] And that is the very simple breakdown of our text tonight. Just two parts. First, the strange dream. And second, using Daniel's very words, its sure interpretation.

So we learn about the dream first in verses 31 to 35. You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold all together were broken in pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors.

And the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

[7:05] Now we'll pause here. Even though it would really make a lot of sense to continue reading to get to the interpretation, there's much that I won't say now that we can speak of later because Daniel himself will say it in just a moment.

But I still want to pause, in part, simply so we can better digest all that Daniel shares with us here in our passage. Now there's this clear shift in chapter 2 that's taking place from a pretty straightforward narrative to apocalyptic-style prophecy.

Now in Sunday school and in our Sunday school class with the junior high and the high schoolers, we just finished studying the different genres of Scripture and we studied the genre of apocalyptic literature.

It's a bit foreign to us. It's a foreign style of writing. I'm assuming that most of us aren't reading apocalyptic literature now and if you are, I have some other questions for you.

It's similar to prophecy in that it's telling the future, but it does so with an emphasis on revealing mysteries through vivid imagery and especially mysteries related to the end.

[8:16] So it's not just telling the future, but it's telling the future using pictures. And that's exactly what we see this evening in our passage. A dream that deals in picture language.

In fact, Daniel emphasizes that for us in this verse, verse 31. He says, You saw, O king, and behold a great image.

You see how Daniel, he's intentionally drawing our attention to what is visual. You saw and behold. And what is it that King Nebuchadnezzar beheld with his eyes in his dream?

It's a great image. It's a statue. As the NIV says, an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. Kids, that's another way of saying it's super duper huge.

And yet it wasn't just huge, it was impressive. It was frighteningly impressive. Disturbingly, perhaps, impressive. Like when you see something so awe-inspiring that it gives you goosebumps.

[9:20] It makes the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. There's some fear mixed with wonder. Remember how the chapter began. Nebuchadnezzar's spirit was troubled.

Well, now we know why. This great statue in his dream stood before him and its appearance was, in fact, frightening. Now, I don't want to get ahead of myself, but surely it's no coincidence that chapter 3 begins with Nebuchadnezzar building what?

A statue. A great image. And again, we'll see soon enough that here in his dream, the kingdom of Babylon is represented by gold. Just the head of this image here in chapter 2.

But what does Nebuchadnezzar go and do in chapter 3? Builds a whole statue of gold. It's as though Nebuchadnezzar drew inspiration from this dream to then construct a real-life statue in

chapter 3.

And as we'll see in chapter 3, it's pretty clear that Nebuchadnezzar hopes to top the statue from his dream. He hopes that the statue that he has built in chapter 3 will be even greater than the statue represented here in chapter 2.

[10 : 33] Now, I say all of this, I draw our attention to this, because at the end of chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar is going to have a pretty positive response to Daniel being able to do what no one else could do, to tell the contents of the dream and its interpretation.

King Nebuchadnezzar is going to shower Daniel with gifts. He's going to shower him with praise. He's even going to shower his God with praise.

He's going to speak very highly of Daniel's God. Let me actually read those verses now. Verses 46-49. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel and commanded that an offering, an incense, be offered up to him.

The king answered and said to Daniel, Truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

[11 : 41] Daniel made a request of the king and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

Now that response from Nebuchadnezzar might surprise us. We might think, Wow!

Nebuchadnezzar became a true worshiper of God. I mean, he calls God the God of gods.

The Lord of kings. But we can't forget, even as the dream is relayed to him now, this dream about this great statue, Nebuchadnezzar will soon be conspiring as to how to build his own image, his own statue, even greater than the one in this dream.

Whatever praise he gives to God will be short-lived, as Nebuchadnezzar will soon be seeking to draw praise for himself. He will soon be exalting himself yet again.

Now let's turn our attention to the actual substance of the statue here in chapter 2. We see that it's constructed of various materials. We can divide it into four parts.

[12 : 48] The head, which is gold. The arms and chest, which are silver. The middle, or the belly and thighs, which are bronze. And then finally, this last part, we should take all together.

The legs, which are iron. And the feet, which are part iron and part clay. What's clear, even before the interpretation of the dream is revealed and meaning is assigned to these four parts, what's clear is that the statue moves from what is most valuable, what is most precious, to what is least valuable or precious.

From the head down to the feet. Gold, of course, at that time, being the most valuable or most precious, down to iron and especially the clay being the least. But at the same time, the statue also moves from the weakest material at the top to the strongest material at the bottom.

From gold being the weakest to the iron in particular being the strongest. So we kind of have two scales that are operating here. One going top down from the most precious to least and then one going from the bottom up from the most strong to the least.

Yet none of these materials, not even the strongest of them being iron, can withstand the coming wrecking ball. And this wrecking ball is this stone, or as the NIV says, this rock.

[14 : 17] Now we need to see what this stone is not. This stone is not described as great. And Daniel loves the word great.

He uses it repeatedly in his book. Just to put this into perspective for you. In the ESV, the word great, it is found 42 times in the book of Genesis.

It's found 46 times in the book of 1 Chronicles. Those are large books, 50 chapters in Genesis, 29 chapters in 1 Chronicles. Those are much larger books than Daniel.

But Daniel uses the word translated great more than either of those books. He uses it 51 times in just 12 chapters. That word great carries great significance in Daniel.

Even just here in chapter 2, we find great repeatedly used. The statue is great. God is great.

[15 : 18] But do you know what isn't said to be great, at least in the beginning? The stone. It is not described to us as a great stone, though we obviously see it does great damage.

It is a wrecking ball that demolishes this great statue. But the stone itself isn't called great. Not at first, at least.

But did you notice what happens to this seemingly not so great stone? After demolishing the statue, pounding it to powder, like the chaff from the grain harvest, this stone becomes a great mountain. The not described as great stone that destroys the great statue becomes a great mountain and fills the earth. It's almost as though Daniel wants Nebuchadnezzar and us to see that this stone is different.

The kingdoms begin in the dream by looking impressive, frighteningly impressive, you might even say, and they get destroyed. The stone, though, is the opposite.

[16 : 24] It begins looking rather ordinary. It doesn't begin looking mighty and impressive. It's not of exceeding brightness. It's not made of precious metal, even, that would catch the eye.

It's just a stone. But it will eventually become a great mountain that fills the earth. Daniel is very careful to say this stone is not like the statue.

It was not cut by any human hand, meaning there was no human agency involved in this. In other words, don't think of this stone like the statue. The statue is of this world, but the stone is not.

The statue is constructed by the work of men, but the stone is not. So let's pay attention to this stone as we move from the strange dream to now the sure interpretation, beginning there in verse 36.

This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power and the might and the glory, and into whose hand he has given wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all.

[17 : 42] You are the head of gold. Another kingdom, inferior to you, shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks 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 and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom.

But some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so you will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

[19 : 03] A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain and its interpretation sure. That is a confident man.

Confident in what he has said because of who has supplied him with the contents of the dream and its interpretation. Remember those Babylonian wise men.

No one can know your dream, Nebuchadnezzar. And here Daniel says, the dream is certain and its interpretation sure. So let's talk about this sure interpretation.

First, generally speaking, we see now that each part of the body of this statue, that is the four parts, represent different kingdoms, four kingdoms.

And Daniel very directly identifies the first. It is the kingdom of Babylon. And Nebuchadnezzar himself is, of course, the king. Now this is, perhaps feels like something of an aside, but we still should notice how Daniel addresses Nebuchadnezzar.

[20 : 10] He's continuing to be a very prudent man. He's respectful, and yet he doesn't compromise his faith. He calls Nebuchadnezzar the king of kings. Meaning he's king over many other earthly kings as well.

Meaning his kingdom rules over lesser kingdoms, one that he's conquered. Babylon was, of course, one of the dominant kingdoms, the dominant kingdom for Daniel and his friends in their day, having conquered many others.

And so from an earthly human standpoint, from an earthly human kingdom standpoint, you might say, Nebuchadnezzar is king of kings. And yet, with great courage and boldness, Daniel says, God gave all of this to you.

God did. The God of heaven has put you in this position. You, you do, you rule over all these other peoples of the earth, animals of the earth, all of this dominion, because God has placed you over them.

But just as Daniel confessed earlier in his prayer, what does God do? Changes times and seasons, removes kings, and sets kings up.

[21 : 26] And so Babylon will one day fall, and another kingdom will arise, a second kingdom. That is the chest and the arms of silver. Now, who is this kingdom?

Daniel doesn't say. And some would ask the question, should we try to discern who this kingdom is? As some commentators would say, we shouldn't.

We should leave this kingdom and actually the next two unnamed because Daniel does. And you could make the case, well, if God left that mystery, at least for sure hidden from Nebuchadnezzar, perhaps, did he tell Daniel?

We don't know. Should we try to figure it out? We're not told here in chapter two, so should we dig in? And additionally, it certainly is true that people have come to some very bizarre conclusions about prophecy in the Bible.

There's the danger of reading modern nations and individuals into the Bible in very specific ways. It's been done. Many of us are familiar with that.

[22 : 29] We could spend the rest of the evening talking about who's been associated in history with the number 666. And so are we in danger of doing something like that here in Daniel 2?

And so should we not seek to know what or who this kingdom is? No. And here's why. Let me very briefly give you four reasons why we should look to see how prophecy has been fulfilled.

Number one, we have the evidence of history behind us. I think this is an important distinction here. We aren't looking at our current day or even more challenging looking to the future and you could say speculating about what is to come.

We're looking back and we're seeing how these kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream line up with kingdoms in history and how this prophecy is fulfilled about those past kingdoms in history.

What was said to happen did happen. And we're not talking even about little events though certainly God has brought little events to pass or seemingly little events like a certain baby born in a certain place called Bethlehem.

[23 : 44] But even here in Daniel we're talking about these huge kingdoms. Kingdoms that were dominant in human history. Some of these kingdoms existed for centuries. So we're not just kind of guessing at how this prophecy might be fulfilled in our day or in the future in this very narrow fashion.

We're looking back at history and we're seeing yes on a grand scale even it was fulfilled through these kingdoms as Daniel said. Or even more importantly as God revealed to Daniel.

Number two. If we take the whole book of Daniel into account we're actually told of at least two future kingdoms very specifically in chapter 8.

They are named for us. The kingdom of the Medes and Persians and the kingdom of Greece. And so it's very reasonable to believe that these two kingdoms are included in the four given to us here in chapter 2 and as we'll also see later in chapter 7.

So we aren't just wildly guessing from this unlimited pool of options but we're taking what Daniel 8 gives us and seeing how those two kingdoms fit into chapter 2.

[24 : 59] Reason number three. We have the witness of church history to guide us. The church down through the ages has assigned names to these unnamed kingdoms and most of the church has agreed on these kingdoms with slight variation that I will soon address.

So again this isn't some wild speculation just kind of throwing darts at Daniel 2 and seeing what sticks were standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. And finally the fourth reason and I saved it for last because I think it packs the most powerful punch for us.

If we leave these kingdoms unnamed we really flatten prophecy. You could say it loses its punch. It becomes vague. It becomes loosely connected to human history when the whole point of prophecy is that it is predicting what will happen in human history in very specific ways.

So we end up just kind of painting broad brush strokes of generalities and in doing that we fail to give God the glory that He deserves.

Prophecies that have been fulfilled should lead us to praise God. Look at how incredible our God is. Look at what what precision He brings to pass what He says will happen.

[26:22] Wow, God, only You could do that. Only You could make known what is to be. Who could do this but the God of heaven?

So yes, we should seek to understand prophecy to see how prophecy has been fulfilled. In recent decades we could say there was an overemphasis on that. I'm not calling for prophecy conferences but as often happens the pendulum has perhaps swung too far in the other way and now some are saying well we can't see at all how prophecy has been fulfilled.

So let's not do that even as we have no plans for a prophecy conference in the works. And that brings us back to the text. Who then is this kingdom represented by the silver chest and the arms of the great statue?

It's Medo-Persia. Now some think this second kingdom is actually only the kingdom of the Medes and that the third kingdom that we'll see in just a moment is the kingdom of the Persians.

Basically they divide the Medes and the Persians into two kingdoms represented by two parts of the statue because Media was a separate kingdom before the Persians came and conquered slash joined forces with it.

[27:38] But this division of the two kingdoms into two parts of the statue I think it's highly unlikely considering the rest of the book of Daniel. When you get to chapter 8 as I said just a few minutes ago Medo-Persia is referenced by name there.

Not as two separate kingdoms represented by two separate beasts in chapter 8 but as one. One symbol that of a ram.

So it makes more sense to see the second kingdom here in Nebuchadnezzar's dream as Medo-Persia seeing as the book would then be consistent in its representation of that kingdom. Now this is the kingdom that would eventually conquer Babylon led by Cyrus the Great and this kingdom would become the dominant force in the world for over 200 years from the mid-6th century BC to the mid-4th century BC.

But like Babylon before it God makes kings rise up and he removes kings and so Medo-Persia would be conquered. Conquered by Alexander the Great and his Greek empire.

[28:48] That's the third kingdom in Babylon or in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The kingdom of bronze. Now Alexander the Great's empire in some form survived until the middle of the first century BC so about 300 years at which point the empire of Rome arose.

And Rome is the fourth and the final kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. That kingdom with legs of iron and with feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

Now Daniel devotes the most time to talking about Rome that fourth empire in his dream. It's clearly the strongest of them all. It breaks and it crushes to pieces all the other kingdoms.

Is not this attested to in history? Rome proved to be stronger, to last longer, 500 years as a whole empire and it certainly had a pervasive lasting influence.

More you could argue than any of the others before it. And yet Daniel draws our attention to the feet, to the toes that represent Rome on this great statue. And he shows there this lack of unity that would lead to fragmentation and eventually its demise.

[30:03] So this is the great statue made up of these four earthly temporal kingdoms. Each kingdom conquering the one that came before, taking its place as the dominant empire of its time.

Now while we've emphasized each of the separate parts of the statue, it's also important to see the statue as a whole. Nebuchadnezzar didn't dream about four different statues.

He dreamed about one. One statue comprised of these different materials, and that's important. There's a cohesiveness to these kingdoms.

There's a sense of unity to them. Though they are different kingdoms, and they follow each other in world history, they are one in their ambition to rule as much of the world as they can.

They are one in their origin, as it's implied that they are made with human hands. These kingdoms were built by the effort of man. And most importantly, these kingdoms are one in their destruction, all broken to pieces by the seemingly not so great stone made not by human hands.

[31:20] So let's turn our attention then to that stone, that rock again, as we now understand what it represents. Daniel says very intentionally, this stone is unique from the statue.

It has no relation to the statue. In fact, it comes rather out of nowhere as it smashes the statue to pieces, it pulverizes it to dust. This shows us the heavenly nature of this stone.

It is not of this world. It is not like the earthly kingdoms made by the hands of men, because this kingdom is not a kingdom of man. The stone is the kingdom of God, and it's the kingdom of the God

of heaven, and its king is Jesus Christ.

This kingdom came. This kingdom was set up, as verse 44 says, in the days of those kings. Jesus Christ, who was born of flesh, who took on flesh, he came into this world, born in the Roman Empire, and what did God become man, come proclaiming.

The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. And when Jesus sent out the disciples, the 72, to do ministry, what instructions did he give to them?

[32 : 46] Whenever you enter a town, and they receive you, eat what is set before you, heal the sick in it, and say to them, the kingdom of God has come near to you. But whenever you enter a town, and they do not receive you, go into its streets, and say, even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you.

Now, you might think that the next words would be the kingdom of God is far from that town. The kingdom of God is nowhere near that town that rejected Jesus.

That's not what Jesus says next. Jesus tells his disciples about that town that rejects them and ultimately him. He says, nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.

You see, the king has come, setting up his kingdom, and all who receive him, they are received into his kingdom, but all of those who reject him are ultimately destroyed.

For Daniel 2 shows us this kingdom of the God of heaven, it is a kingdom that destroys all other kingdoms. It's a kingdom that itself will never be destroyed.

[33 : 57] The kingdom of God will stand forever. And when King Jesus came into this world, he brought that kingdom with him. But not in any kind of way that from a human perspective we would consider as great.

Just like that stone there in Daniel 2. King Jesus came in humility. He came despised, rejected by men. They mocked him.

They mocked his kingdom. They said, if you are the king of the Jews, save yourself as he hung upon the cross. And yet he didn't. The king died, bearing our sins and shame, bearing the wrath of God in our place that we might be forgiven, transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved son in whom we have forgiveness.

The king of heaven came. He came during the days of those kings from Daniel chapter 2 when the Roman Empire was in power. And he set up the kingdom of God, just not as anyone expected.

And so Christ rules and reigns in the hearts of men even as the kingdoms of men still rule and reign upon this earth.

[35 : 17] But that won't last forever. the king who came in humility will return as the king of glory.

Just as 1 Corinthians 15 tells us of that future day, then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and every power, for he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for God has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when it says all things are put in subjection, it is plain that he is accepted who put all things in subjection under him.

When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

And so all of this revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, it will come to pass. from the setting up of God's kingdom at Christ's first coming to the destruction of every earthly kingdom at Christ's return, a day is coming when every enemy is under the feet of King Jesus.

The kingdom and surely his king, the king of the kingdom, came as a not so great stone in Jesus' first coming. But his kingdom will grow into a great mountain.

[36 : 46] We are living in that age as the mountain is growing, as the kingdom of God is advancing, and when Christ returns, his kingdom will indeed be a great mountain that will fill the whole earth.

Sounds a whole lot like God's glory, doesn't it? It will fill the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. On that final day, God will be all in all, and his glory and his kingdom will be over all.

His kingdom and no other kingdom will stand. That's what verse 44 says. It shall stand forever. That Aramaic word translated stand in the ESV has a wide range of meanings.

It could be translated as endure, which is how the NIV translates it. Obviously, the word here conveys this sense that something will last, that it won't be quickly destroyed but will endure, as here the kingdom of God will endure forever.

And yet, there's something very visual about this word as well. We'll see this later in chapter 7, that the four beasts in that vision, they arise from the earth.

[38:03] When we hear that the beasts arise, we're clearly to picture them coming up. We're to see this vertical dimension in our mind's eye. That statue in chapter 2 here, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, how did it first appear?

It stood before Nebuchadnezzar, as verse 31 says. And you know what? That's the same word there. That's used to describe the statue is what's used to describe God's kingdom.

So there's a clear wordplay going on here. The kingdoms of this world, which were standing at the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, they will not stand. They will be dashed to pieces by the rock.

None will be left standing. Only God's kingdom, in the end, will remain, and it will endure for all of eternity. It's not just the kingdoms of sinful man that will fail to stand on the final day, but sinful man himself, each sinner in rebellion against God, who belongs ultimately to the kingdom of darkness, each sinner will not stand either.

Like the kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream that became as chaff that the wind carries away, so too does Psalm 1 say, the wicked are like chaff that the wind drives away.

[39:26] Psalm 1 goes on to say, the wicked will not stand at the judgment. Only those clothed in the righteousness of Christ, who belong to the kingdom of Christ, only they will stand.

Whose kingdom are you in tonight? The kingdom of darkness that rules over the kingdoms of this world, or the kingdom of God's beloved Son? Only those who bow the knee to King Jesus, only those who trust in Him for the forgiveness of their sins will be welcomed into the eternal kingdom of the God of heaven.

And why would you spurn such a king as Him? a king who laid down His life for His beloved subjects. A king who died so that His people could enjoy eternal life in His everlasting kingdom. If you're outside of Christ tonight, hear the good news of the gospel. Turn away from your sins. Turn towards Christ and find a Savior that is ready to receive you and to reign over you in love as your king.

king. The king whose kingdom rules over all others. We've seen that in Daniel chapter 2 tonight. This has been something of a, you could say, a brief, very brief history lesson for us.

[40:48] A history of the kingdoms of the world. But for Daniel, for Nebuchadnezzar, this was all in the future for them. And it all lined up perfectly.

What Daniel predicts to happen, happens. These four kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. They rose up. They dominated world history between the 6th and the 1st century B.C.

Now, there are some scholars, you could hear university professors, perhaps, who say the book of Daniel was written not in the 6th century B.C.

when these events are unfolding. As Daniel is saying, I, Daniel, prayed, or I, Daniel, something else. No, they say it wasn't written then, but later. In the 2nd century B.C.

And what's more, many will also argue that this is a work of fiction and not true history. Why would they say that? What reasons do they have for that?

[41:47] We could work through the list of reasons tonight. The problems that scholars find with the book of Daniel, they claim there are historical inaccuracies. They claim there are linguistic issues, primarily Greek words in the book that they say shouldn't be there or couldn't be there at the time that it was written.

So many other problems as well. Might I say, very, very compelling answers to those problems. We'll get into some of those at a future time, or we can talk after the sermon tonight.

But at the end of the day, the overarching reason for a late dating of the book of Daniel is pretty simple. The truth of the matter is this.

It's just too fantastical to secular humanistic scholars that Daniel could predict with such accuracy the kingdoms that would arise in world history.

That's just too impossible for them. It can't be. So they conclude, well, the story must have been invented by someone other than this man named Daniel in the second century B.C.

[42:52] Long after all of the predictions about the kingdoms from Nebuchadnezzar's dream came true. Miracles like that. Prophetic predictions of future kingdoms dominating the world, that couldn't happen.

So we have to explain it away, they say. In other words, these so-called scholars do not believe there is a God of heaven.

They don't believe there is a God in heaven who changes times and seasons, who removes kings and sets them up, who reveals mysteries about what is to be in the future.

They scoff when God says in his word, in Isaiah 46, I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

God and there are not and there are so they come to Daniel with their biases, their assumptions and they write off everything that God reveals, not because of hard historical evidence, but because of hard hearts.

[44 : 10] So they go on deceiving and being deceived. Satan would love for us to stop taking what God's word says at face value.

Satan would love for us to stop believing that there is a God in heaven. Satan would love for us to reason our way out of believing that God's word predicts the future and brings that future to pass just as he said.

And it's not just secular scholars in ivory towers that deceive and are being deceived. It's not just the so-called experts who scoff and say you can't possibly believe that.

It's neighbors. coworkers and classmates, family members as well. What I'm saying is we're not immune to hearing the lies and being tempted to believe them.

So we need to be reminded from the word right here. There is a God in heaven, a God who reveals mysteries about what will be in the latter days.

[45 : 13] And what will be in the latter days has already come to pass in part. The kingdom of God has come in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The kingdom has been set up and one day Jesus will return to bring the kingdom in all its fullness.

Daniel shows us this future, this sure future here in Daniel chapter 2. Not in plain language but in picture language.

Now apocalyptic prophecy isn't always easy to understand. it's only perhaps going to get a little more complex as we continue through Daniel. Remember this passage tonight was just an appetizer.

There's a full meal yet to come but apocalyptic prophecy like this is so good for us because it helps us keep perspective in this life.

In the midst of the daily realities of life there is an eternal perspective that we should have. There's an eternal perspective that we need to have. There is a great God of heaven who rules and who reigns over all of human history including my life, including your lives.

[46 : 25] Kingdoms rise, kingdoms fall but his eternal kingdom will remain. And by his grace we who are in Christ are citizens of that eternal kingdom.

That should color the lens through which we see all of life because our God rules in our hearts now and his rule will be made known in all its fullness over all things one day when his kingdom will bring every other kingdom to an end and his kingdom will stand forever and God will be all in all.

Let's pray together. Father we come to you tonight confessing that we can even be distracted in this life. The cares of this world can occupy our thoughts.

Even good responsibilities given to us we can become so focused upon that we can lose perspective that you rule and reign over all. So we thank you for the book of Daniel.

We thank you for Daniel chapter 2 that we can see that you are true to your promises that you're faithful to do as you say that you reveal mysteries that you bring to light what was once hidden in darkness.

[47 : 40] And so we thank you for revealing to us the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ. We thank you that you have brought us into your kingdom by grace through faith in Christ and we pray that you would help us to keep that eternal perspective as we move through this life.

That we would be looking to that day that we would be yearning for that day when Christ returns when he brings his kingdom in all its fullness and we get to enjoy you for all of eternity. So help us we pray.

Even as we go from here into this week help us to remember your kingdom. Help us to have our eyes fixed on Christ. Help us to have our minds set on things above where Christ is seated at your right hand.

We pray all of this in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.