



## SESSION 2 **THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES, PART 1**

Daniel 2:1-45

*Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The 21st century boasts of great technological advances, the most sophisticated health care capabilities in all of human history and the ability to communicate with anyone in the world, anywhere in the world at any time with the simple push of a button. We can build things bigger, faster and stronger, and we can make them last longer.

While society appears to be advancing and constantly bettering itself, history proves that this is not the case. The story of man has always been one of steady moral decline. Man likes to talk about how civilization is getting better, but every night the news reminds us that we live in a world ravished with injustice, catastrophe and perversion.

The study of eschatology sheds light on the desperate state of our fallen world and offers hope.

It shows that all of history has been working itself towards an end that has already been determined. Kingdoms have risen and eventually fallen. Rulers have reigned and ultimately been dethroned. But there is a King coming who will reign for all eternity, and His Kingdom will never be destroyed. Man's attempts to usurp God and establish his own kingdom based upon his own moral code will finally cease.

In this session we will focus on Daniel chapter 2 and see through Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream what nations will rise and fall and how the Kingdom of God will ultimately reign victorious.

- 1 Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.
- 2 Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.
- 3 The king said to them, "I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."
- 4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation."
- 5 The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.
- 6 "But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation."
- 7 They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation."
- 8 The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm,
- 9 that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."

- 10 The Chaldeans answered the king and said,  
“There is not a man on earth who could  
declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as  
no great king or ruler has ever asked anything  
like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean.
- 11 “Moreover, the thing which the king demands  
is difficult, and there is no one else who could  
declare it to the king except gods, whose  
dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.”
- 12 Because of this the king became indignant and  
very furious and gave orders to destroy all the  
wise men of Babylon.
- 13 So the decree went forth that the wise men  
should be slain; and they looked for Daniel  
and his friends to kill them.
- 14 Then Daniel replied with discretion and  
discernment to Arioch, the captain of the  
king’s bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay  
the wise men of Babylon;
- 15 He said to Arioch, the king’s commander, “For  
what reason is the decree from the king so  
urgent?” Then Arioch informed Daniel about  
the matter.
- 16 So Daniel went in and requested of the king  
that he would give him time, in order that he  
might declare the interpretation to the king.
- 17 Then Daniel went to his house and informed  
his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,  
about the matter;
- 18 so that they might request compassion from  
the God of heaven concerning this mystery,  
so that Daniel and his friends would not be  
destroyed with the rest of the wise men of  
Babylon.

### The Secret Is Revealed to Daniel

- 19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven;
- 20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him.
- 21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.
- 22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.
- 23 "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power; even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter."
- 24 Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."
- 25 Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!"
- 26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?"
- 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king.

- 28 “However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.
- 29 “As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place.
- 30 “But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

### **The King’s Dream**

- 31 “You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome.
- 32 “The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze,
- 33 Its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.
- 34 “You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.
- 35 “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

### **The Interpretation--Babylon the First Kingdom**

- 36 "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king.
- 37 "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory;
- 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

### **Medo-Persia and Greece**

- 39 "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

### **Rome**

- 40 "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.
- 41 "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay.
- 42 "As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.
- 43 "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

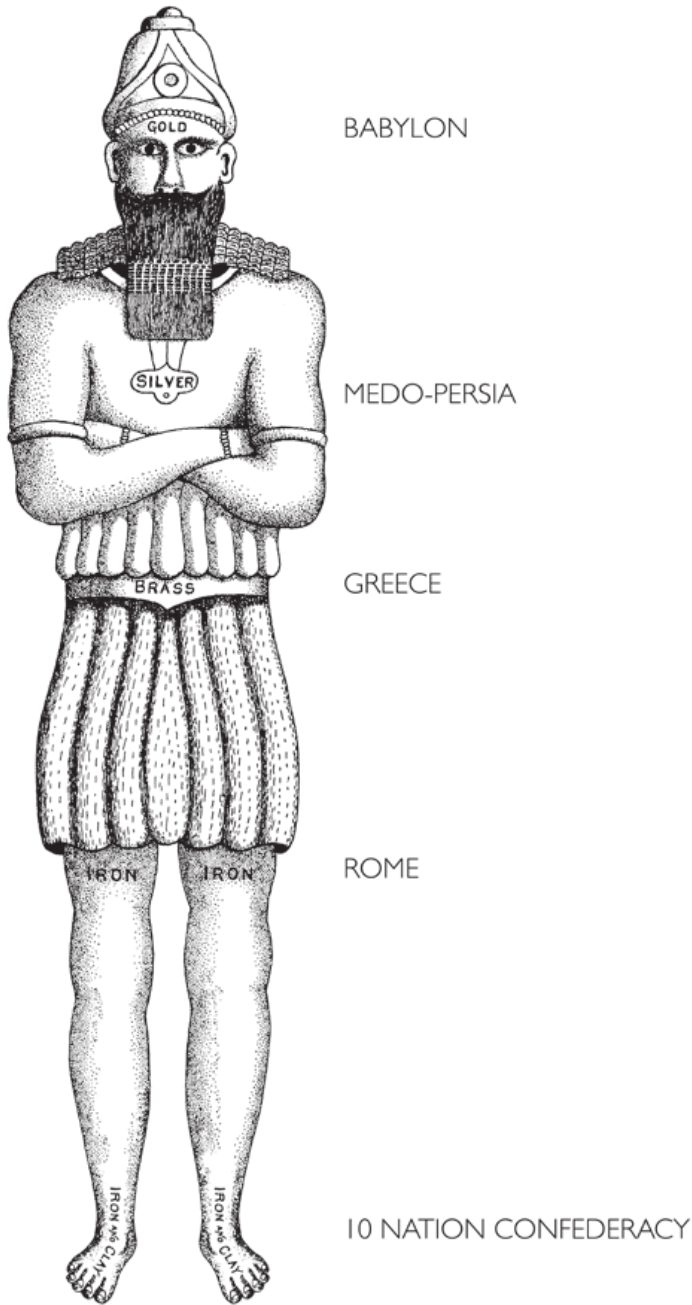
## The Divine Kingdom

44 “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

45 “Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

**NOTES**

Statue from Nebuchadnezzar's Dreams  
The Times of the Gentiles





1. *The nation of Israel was in exile, held captive by the Babylonians. They wondered if God had abandoned them. Daniel's prophecy put their hearts to rest and answered the question of what the future would hold. Have you ever felt abandoned by God or found yourself in a hopeless state? How did the certainty of God's promises help you through that time?*

**“Man always talks of history as getting better every day in every way. And of course, we go up in technology, we go up in a lot of things, but morally, does civilization ascend? It does not. It descends.”**

**-Tommy Nelson**

2. *The Messiah came while Israel found itself at its lowest point in history under the dominion of the Roman Empire. In light of their history, why is Israel's rejection of the Messiah so shocking?*

3. *In this session Tommy Nelson said, “One of the greatest external proofs of the inspiration of Scripture is that of prophecy.” How does prophecy prove that the Word of God is divinely inspired?*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4. *How is Daniel 2:34 a prophecy foretelling the coming Messiah? What earthly kingdom will be established when Christ returns?*

5. *What hope do you find through your study of Daniel chapter 2? How does your understanding of The Times of the Gentiles affect your life today?*

### UNPACKING THE TEXT:

#### Daniel 2:44

This is one of the clearest verses in all of Scripture that speaks to when Christ will return.

**“One of the greatest external proofs of the inspiration of Scripture is that of prophecy.” - Tommy Nelson**