



LESSON 33

God uses Daniel to interpret the king's dream

DANIEL 2:1-49



God alone has wisdom and power to rule over all.



“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” (Dan 2:44).

Supporting Truths

1. God rules over the kingdoms of earth.
2. God knows all things and all knowledge comes from Him.
3. God will establish His kingdom on the earth forever.
4. God uses people who remain faithful while waiting for His kingdom.
5. God’s future kingdom motivates Christians to live godly lives.

Objectives

1. List the kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
2. Define “omniscience,” and explain how God proved it in this story.
3. Identify the part of the dream that represented God’s coming kingdom.
4. Explain how Daniel and his friends were faithful to God in Babylon.
5. Discuss whether the coming kingdom is worth the struggle of living a godly life.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God uses Daniel to interpret the king's dream • Daniel 2:1–49



Lesson Summary

Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 reveals God's sovereign control over the kingdoms of earth. He alone knows all things. He alone establishes kings and removes kings. Through Daniel God revealed that four kingdoms would follow the Babylonian kingdom. After the rise of these kingdoms, God will establish His kingdom on earth at Christ's second coming. God the Son—Jesus Christ, will rule this kingdom, which will have no end.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Even now Christ and the Father rule from heaven over all the kingdoms of the earth, and one day Christ will return to establish His own glorious kingdom on earth. Let every unbeliever submit to Him as King before it is too late. Let every believer serve the King with a godly life, turn to God for wisdom and knowledge, and endure with hope, looking forward to living in His kingdom on earth forever.

LAST WEEK



God uses Esther to protect
His people
Esther 1:1–10:3

THIS WEEK



God uses Daniel to
interpret the king's
dream
Daniel 2:1–49

NEXT WEEK



God protects Daniel's
friends
Daniel 3:1–30

EXILE

Lesson Commentary

God alone has wisdom and power to rule over all.

Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in 605 BC (Dan 1:1). Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were taken to Babylon to be trained for the king's service (1:3–6). Yet they were determined to remain faithful to God (1:8). God honored Daniel's obedience by giving him favor with the official (1:9–14) and knowledge even of visions and dreams (1:17).

Even though Daniel was only fifteen years old when he was taken to Babylon, he rose to leadership and faithfully served God and human kings for over seventy years (1:21).

THINK ABOUT IT

Daniel's life shows that those who live holy lives are greatly used by God (2 Tim 2:21).



During this time, Daniel wrote the book of Daniel to the Jews living in exile. They had been torn out of the Promised Land because of their unrepentant sin, and now God's plan for Israel seemed ruined. But Daniel encouraged the Jews: have hope, because God is sovereign! He rules over Gentile nations (Daniel 2–7) and He is committed to restoring Israel (Daniel 8–12). This message begins spectacularly as God sent Nebuchadnezzar a frightening dream (2:1). This dream pictured God's reign in the present and His eternal kingdom in the future, and it also proved His sovereignty by showing that He alone has the wisdom and power to rule over all.

God gave Nebuchadnezzar a troubling dream (2:1–13)

The Babylonians believed that dreams were messages from the gods, and the ancient astrologers and sorcerers had devised ways of interpreting dreams. However, the king wanted the men not only to interpret the dream, but also to tell him what the dream was (2:5). He was suspicious of these so-called wise men. How could he trust their interpretation if they could not tell him the dream (2:9)? When the magicians failed, Nebuchadnezzar angrily commanded that all the wise men be put to death, including Daniel and his friends (2:12).

The magicians' failure shows how futile their magic was (2:10). They complained that only a god could know the king's dream, and they were right! (2:11). Apart from the true God, human wisdom is foolish (1 Cor 1:20), lacks understanding (1 Cor 2:14), and is spiritually blind (2 Cor 4:4). They were also right that their gods did not communicate with humans, because their gods were worthless idols, unable to reveal anything about the past or the future (Isa 41:22–24; 44:12–20). Those who worship such idols are fools (Isa 44:19). On the other hand, there is a God unlike any idol, who both knows and speaks to man (Isa 42:8–9).

God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel (2:14–30)

Daniel stopped Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, before the executions began. Daniel knew that only the God of Israel could reveal the dream, because He gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream (cf. Gen 41:25; Job 7:14). So Daniel and his friends did what godly people do when faced with an impossible task: they prayed, trusting God's power and depending on God's mercy (Dan 2:18).

When God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel, Daniel praised God (2:19). He praised Him for being the **sovereign** God. He alone is in absolute control of all things, at all times, in all places. We see God's sovereignty in His wisdom and power (2:20). First, in His wisdom He revealed the dream to Daniel, showing that God is **omniscient**. He knows everything at all times, even matters that are beyond human knowledge (1 John 3:20), including every thought (Ps 139:2) and every secret thing (Heb 4:13). He alone gives knowledge to whomever He wishes (Dan 2:21–22). Second, His power was clear from the dream itself, which showed, as we will see, that God rules over history and governments (2:21). Daniel knew this, so he took no credit for himself and made it clear that no human could do what Nebuchadnezzar asked (2:27). He magnified the "God in heaven who reveals mysteries," not himself (2:28). God is King, and Daniel was content simply to be His servant.

THINK ABOUT IT

The prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much (Jas 5:16).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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God revealed His future eternal kingdom (2:31–49)

Nebuchadnezzar's dream had two parts, a statue (2:31–33) and a rock (2:34–35). But before explaining the details, Daniel emphasized the main point: the God of heaven is sovereign over the affairs of earth, and the kingdom, power, strength, and glory that Nebuchadnezzar enjoyed were given by God (2:37).

Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, but he would be wise to humbly bow in allegiance to the King of kings.

After the Babylonian kingdom an inferior kingdom would arise, represented by the silver chest and arms (2:38). This was the Medo-Persian kingdom led

by Cyrus the Great. The Medo-Persian Empire would dominate the Middle East for 208 years (539–331 BC). Then in 332 BC the armies of Alexander the Great attacked and defeated the Medo-Persian Empire. The Greek Empire, represented by the bronze belly and thighs (2:39), would dominate for the next 185 years (331–146 BC). The fourth kingdom was represented by the iron legs. Like iron, the powerful Roman kingdom would “break and crush” all the others (2:40).

The toes of clay and iron represented a version of Rome that is still future. The toes were composed of clay and iron because the kingdom will not be unified (2:41). This revived Roman Empire will consist of 10 kingdoms or nations (7:24), which will reign until God establishes His kingdom on the earth (2:44). At Christ's second coming, this confederation of kings will be destroyed and Christ will reign forever (2:44). God will establish His kingdom to be ruled by God the Son—Jesus Christ (2:45). Like the stone in the vision, Christ's kingdom will have its source in heaven (John 18:36) but will be located on earth, filling the whole world (Ps 2:6–9; Dan 7:13–27; Rev 21:1–22:5).

Nebuchadnezzar responded by honoring Daniel and acknowledging God's sovereignty (2:46–47). That is why God gave Nebuchadnezzar this dream—to show that there is a God who is sovereign over all. Even now He is ruling over all human kings and over everything that happens on the earth. That is good news and brings great peace to those who love Him (Rom 8:28). It encourages believers to live godly lives even when they are ruled by wicked human governments (1 Pet 2:13–19).

But there is even better news: the world will not always be this way. One day Christ will establish His own glorious kingdom. This is a fearful day for those who do not believe, for He will first destroy all the wicked earthly kingdoms (Rev 19:15). But it is a day of joy for all who believe, for they will live in His presence and reign with Him upon an earth that has been renewed and set free from the curse, free from all tears and pain forever and ever (Rev 21:1; 22:3–5).

This should drive us to holiness, evangelism, and a longing for Jesus' return (1 Pet 1:13–21; Rev 22:6–21). Every person must acknowledge that there is a God in heaven who rules over the kingdoms of earth. The day is quickly approaching when every knee will bow to Him (Rom 14:11). In light of this future reality, let every unbeliever bow before God now and seek Him while He may be found (Isa 55:6–7; 2 Cor 6:2). As for the believer, may he live a holy life useful to His Master (2 Tim 2:21). May he endure with hope, looking forward to living forever with Christ the King on the new earth.



THINK ABOUT IT

Those who believe seek to honor God rather than be honored by men (John 5:44).



THINK ABOUT IT

Our final destiny is to live and reign with Christ on a perfect earth.

Lesson Outline

God alone has wisdom and power to rule over all.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



God showed His sovereignty by:

1. Giving Nebuchadnezzar a scary dream (2:1–13).
2. Telling Daniel about Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:14–35).
3. Ruling over human kingdoms and promising His eternal kingdom (2:36–2:49).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God gave Nebuchadnezzar a troubling dream (2:1–13).

- Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly troubled him (2:1).
- Nebuchadnezzar told the wise men to tell him the dream and its meaning (2:2–11).
- The wise men could not tell him the dream and were sentenced to death (2:12–13).

2. God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel (2:14–30).

- Daniel requested time to pray and ask God to reveal the dream (2:14–16).
- God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel (2:17–19).
- Daniel praised God for revealing the dream to him (2:20–23).
- Daniel went to Nebuchadnezzar to reveal his dream (2:24–30).

3. God revealed His future eternal kingdom (2:31–49).

- The dream was about the great statue and the great rock (2:31–35).
- The statue represented the five kingdoms of the earth (2:36–43).
- The rock represented the kingdom of God (2:44–45).
- Nebuchadnezzar praised God and honored Daniel (2:46–49).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God uses Daniel to interpret the king's dream • Daniel 2:1–49



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did Nebuchadnezzar order that all the wise men in Babylon be killed?**
They could not reveal his dream.
- 2. What did Daniel do when he heard Nebuchadnezzar wanted to kill him?**
He asked for more time because he believed that God would reveal the dream to him.
- 3. What did Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar before he interpreted the dream?**
Daniel told the king that God had revealed the dream to him. He wanted to make sure that the king knew that God deserved the praise for what Daniel was able to do.
- 4. What can we learn about God from the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream?**
We learn that God rules over the kingdoms of the earth.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did the king call all his wise men?**
The king had a dream, and he wanted the wise men to tell him what the dream was before telling him what it meant.
- 2. Could any of the king's wise men tell the king what his dream was about?**
No. None of them could tell him about the dream.
- 3. What did the king do because no one could tell him his dream?**
He sent out the captain of his guard to execute all the wise men.
- 4. What did Daniel do when he heard the news of the death sentence?**
Daniel asked the king for some time before all the wise men were killed. Daniel and his friends prayed, asking God to have mercy and to reveal the dream so that they would not die.
- 5. How did God answer Daniel?**
God revealed the king's dream and its interpretation to Daniel.
- 6. What did Daniel tell the king?**
Daniel said that the God of heaven revealed the dream and its meaning. He then revealed the dream and its interpretation to the king.
- 7. What did the king's dream mean?**
That God had given Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom, power, strength, and glory. Each of the levels in the statue represented a kingdom that would come to power after Babylon.
- 8. What did the stone represent?**
The stone represented God's kingdom that He will establish on the earth when Jesus returns.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

CONCEAL AND REVEAL, PART 1

Before class time, hide various objects that the children will search for. These items will be used later in the lesson. The items that could be hidden are: a crown; a rock; gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay-looking materials; and some dust in a bag. Remind them that in today's lesson, the king had a problem that he couldn't solve. He needed God's help to find the answer to his problem. God used Daniel to give the solution to the king's dream.

SOVEREIGNTY

Ask the children who is in charge of the class. Who plans what happens in the class and who controls what happens? The teacher does. Ask them who is in charge of the world and universe. God is in charge. Ask them whether God plans what happens to everything in the universe. Then ask whether everything happens according to His plans. The children should begin to realize that God is sovereign over all that happens in life—that nothing is outside His control, including their lives and all that happens. Ask the children how they should respond knowing that God is sovereign over all that happens.



ILLUSTRATE

CONCEAL AND REVEAL, PART 2

During the lesson, utilize the items found during "Conceal and Reveal, Part 1" as visual aids.

DESTROYING THE STATUE

Materials: Five shoeboxes of the same size, enlarged picture of the statue, glue, markers.

Directions: Place the shoeboxes on top of each other and draw an enlarged the statue to be the same height. Cut out the statue so that each part fits on one of the shoeboxes. As you come to the portion of the lesson where Nebuchadnezzar's dream is explained, you can use this visual to illustrate each portion of the statue.



APPLY

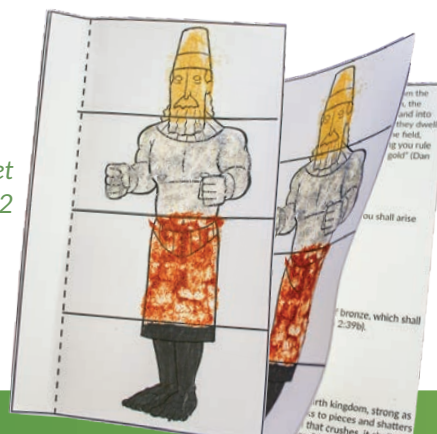
GOD REVEALS A SECRET

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheets, gold, silver, bronze, and black glitter or crayons, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Pre-cut around the box containing the idol. Using crayons or glitter, children should decorate each part of the idol with the appropriate color (head: gold; chest/arms: silver; waist/thighs: bronze; feet: black or gray). Cut along the dark lines to form flaps, leaving a tab on the left side. They should glue the tab onto the template page and fold back the pieces along the dotted line. When they lift the flaps, they will be able to read what each part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream meant.

*God Reveals a Secret
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



ANIMAL RIDDLES

Bring to class some pictures of common animals. Do not let the children see the pictures. Select one child to be “it,” and attach a picture to his back so that the rest of the class can see it but he cannot. Have the other children give clues to the animal’s identity (without naming the animal). Tell the children that in today’s lesson, Daniel has to find out from God what King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is. Daniel prays to God instead of trying to guess what the dream might have been.

SIGNS FROM GOD

Bring in several symbols (or logos) to show the children. Ask if they can identify what each symbol (logo) stands for. For example, a heart symbolizes love, and a wedding ring symbolizes marriage. Explain that a symbol is an object that stands for something else. An example the children may remember is Joseph’s dream of the sheaves and stars (Gen 37:1–11). Instruct the children to listen to today’s lesson and to note what each portion of the symbol stood for. God used this symbol to teach Nebuchadnezzar about the future.



DANIEL REVEALS THE KING’S DREAM

Use this activity to illustrate the fact that the revelation of the king’s dream was by God’s power. During the teaching time, have one of the children, designated as King Nebuchadnezzar, go into another room to view a picture. The picture represents the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. Next, ask the class to reveal the king’s “dream,” which they will not be able to do since they have not seen the picture. Designate a child to be Daniel. Daniel should go into the other room and also see the picture. He can then return to the classroom and reveal the dream.

FIVE CROWNS

Create five crowns of increasing sizes. They should fit inside one another. Several times throughout the lesson, show a larger crown that will cover up the preceding crown. The final crown will represent Christ’s reign.



ACCORDION BOOK: “DANIEL PRAISES GOD”

See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Craft sheets, scissors, glue, brads, double-sided tape, and crayons.

Directions: Have students cut around the outside edge of each set of three square frames (not cutting the squares apart). Tape these sets together on the back of the square that has the crowns and on the one that has the gift. Cut 2 slits along the black lines on the crown page. Cut out the various pieces from the other craft sheet. Connect the bicep and the forearm with a brad to the first square. Slide the crown strip into place on the third square. Glue the remaining pieces to the appropriate squares.



Rightly Reflecting on Creation
See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*.

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

PUZZLING

Give the children a difficult puzzle to solve. You could jumble the letters of a word from the memory verse, or even the entire memory verse, and have the children unscramble it. Or you could give them a riddle to solve. Explain that in today's lesson, God gives King Nebuchadnezzar a difficult problem to solve. The king receives a message that he cannot understand. In fact, God gives only one man the ability to solve the king's riddle. Today we will find out who that man is.

THE KINGDOMS

Before the lesson, as you explain each kingdom that is represented by the statue, have different children come in dressed as kings. On entering, each king should talk about his particular section of the statue. The first could come in as Cyrus the Great and could briefly talk about the Medo-Persian kingdom, and so on.



ILLUSTRATE

MYSTERY BAG

Put several familiar items in a bag. Have each child reach into the bag and, by touch, name as many objects as he can. Discuss the fact that trying to know something without seeing it can be difficult. But God knows everything, and so we can and must trust Him.

ANTICIPATION

We anticipate lots of things: holidays, birthdays, trips to the doctor, a vacation—even a parent's discipline after we disobey. However, there is one event that we must all anticipate. It can either bring us great joy or incredible fear. It will determine whether we will live forever with God in heaven or away from Him in hell. We must anticipate God's return, which could happen at any moment. Knowing that, how should each of us respond to God and His grace before He comes? For those who are not saved, this is a time to come to know Christ as Savior. For those who are saved, it is an opportunity to share the gospel with as many people as possible before Christ returns.



APPLY

IMMINENCE

Ask the children what will happen as the day goes on (the church service will end, they will go home, it will get dark, and tomorrow morning the sun will rise again). When we say that something is imminent, we mean that it is close in time or about to occur. It could happen at any time. Help the children understand that Jesus' return could happen at any time. It is imminent! Ask the children what needs to be done around their house before family or friends come over. They may need to clean up or prepare food. What do they need to do before Christmas? They have to purchase all their Christmas gifts. Ask them what needs to be done before Christ comes for all believers. They should respond that people should be saved and doing God's work while they wait for His return.