

## **The Dream-Chaser**

*Daniel 2*

Series: Unshakable | A Study in the Book of Daniel

Pastor Jarrett Stephens

**Illus. I Have a Dream** – This past Wednesday marked 61 years since the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom”. This is where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his historic and memorable speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial entitled: *I Have a Dream*.

Most are familiar with this speech. It was actually a culmination of speeches and sermons that Dr. King had given through the years, as he helped lead the Civil Rights Movement.

It’s only 17 minutes long, but it is packed with historical and biblical references that shed light upon and gives hope to a dream...a dream that included Dr. King stating his “four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

It was the power of this dream that moved an entire nation in many ways to progress and move forward from a Civil Rights standpoint...and while we still have work to do and always will, the power of this dream given on Aug. 28, 1963, is still encouraging and challenging people today.

Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream was a good dream. It’s one that you want to come true. Today we are going to read about a dream that was really more of a nightmare. It’s a dream that the King of Babylon had and it was a major disruption in his life...it was a dream that we was deeply disturbed by.

I thought about calling the message today, *Nightmare on Babylon Street*, but I settled for something a bit more tame. I’m calling it simply: **The Dream-Chaser**

I’m calling it this because this is what we see Daniel doing in chapter two of the book that bears his name. He’s chasing down dreams for Babylon’s king.

Now, this is a lengthy chapter and time will not permit us to read the whole chapter in its entirety, but we will for sure cover our bases and hit the high points of all that takes place.

Make sure to go back and read this for yourself this week in your own time alone with the Lord because it is riveting reading AND go back and listen to the last two weeks messages that precede this one...they build on one another.

Remember who we are dealing with here. King Nebuchadnezzar is a bad man...and I don’t mean “bad” in the good sense, I mean “bad” in the really bad sense.

- He’s evil to the core – violence is NOTHING to him...

- He's maniacal and pathological – at one place in scripture, he slaughters a dad's sons in front of him and then puts out the eyes of the dad just to make it the last thing he sees...
- He's powerful – there's no reigning him in once he gets something on his mind and decides he wants to do it...there's no checks and balances of power. He's it! What he says, goes.

As we have noted previously and will outline even more today, the demonic is behind him and his activity and yet it's God who has placed him in authority, allowed him to overtake Judah and become a world power, and it is God that has placed Daniel and his friends under this leadership – figure that one out!

We get to chapter 2 and Nebo (that's what we call him for short) has had a nightmare and it's messing him up! Let's pick up in:

**Daniel 2:1 – “In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.”**

These dreams...most likely a recurring dream was so bad, it leaves him sleepless...it's giving him insomnia...he can't get it out of his mind.

Now, it was a common belief in that day and time especially in a pagan place like Babylon that the gods would send messages via dreams. This is not unfamiliar to us who read scripture – consider Jacob's ladder in the Old Testament or Peter in Acts 10 with his dream and vision of what is “clean or unclean”.

What I want you to note here is that this dream certainly has Nebo's attention – and it's not the Babylonian's gods sending the dream his way, but Israel's God – i.e. Yahweh is behind these dreams.

Just a quick point of application and I'll share some bullet points of insight as we make our way through this text today and then we'll end with one major idea I believe this text is communicating.

Write this down and think on it through the week: **God knows how to get our attention.**

The lesson here is NOT that God speaks to us through dreams...although I suppose he can and may from time to time. Be careful with that though! I had some pizza and ice cream on Friday and it was speaking to me all night long...no way that was God!

The lesson here is that God was in the process of sending Nebo and Daniel and us for that matter, a message...and when he wants to send a message, he knows how to get our attention!

And just from a pastor standpoint, you want to know the major way I've seen God get people's attention through the years? One word: Trials.

He can get our attention through blessing, but more often than not, what really wakes us up is brokenness. It's when we're on our backs that we are finally forced to look up and see God.

For Nebo, it's a dream that got his attention and you could say it was a trial for him because robbed him of sleep...he couldn't get his mind off it...he can't figure this one out! So, look at what he does in (v. 2):

**Daniel 2:2 – “Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams.** (Now, keep in mind, this group of people...don't think kooks and crazies. There may be a hint of that in some of them, but this is the group that included Daniel and his friends. You need to think about this group almost like they are college faculty – these are the professors and scientists of the day...these are the esteemed...the savants of the day!) **So they came in and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.”**

**<sup>4</sup>Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic...”**

Now, just a little history here. Daniel 1 and up to Daniel 2:3 is written in Hebrew...but from 2:4-7:28 there's a change in the text and it's written in Aramaic!

Scholars debate why this shift in the text occurs, but many argue that Daniel is communicating in a way that the wise men and scholars of Babylon could understand AS well as his Jewish audience that would be reading the portions in Hebrew. Aramaic was the international language of the day.

Daniel wants his Gentile audience to know what is taking place. In other words, there is almost an evangelistic undertone to this passage. It's as if Daniel is saying to an unbelieving, pagan world – listen up...read this...I want you to understand what's happening so much that I'll put it in your language!

**Daniel 2:4b-7 - “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” <sup>5</sup> 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. (talk about sleeping on the wrong side of the bed!) <sup>6</sup> But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.” <sup>7</sup> They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.”**

You see the predicament they're in, right? Usually, they get called in and the king tells them the dream and they go back and cook up some interpretation for it based on who knows what!

This dream has so shaken Nebo up, he's not playing games! He's not going to be tricked...he's not going to be just told something he wants to hear – after all, do you think anyone EVER gave

him bad news? Of course not! You don't give a loose cannon bad news. You tell them what they want to hear and choose to live another day in peace...and with your head connected to you!

Nebo knows this...and in his mind this dream has something to do with his life...his kingdom perhaps. He needs to know what's going on!

**Daniel 2:8-11 – “The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—<sup>9</sup> 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.”** (His staff is trying to stall and Nebo knows it!)<sup>10</sup> **The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> 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 flesh.”**

Now, that's a statement, isn't it? “no one can show this dream...reveal this dream except the gods and they don't dwell with flesh!”

I wonder if Daniel had a tough time staying on the narrative here...he knew the creation account! And he knew that at one time the “God of heaven” as he will refer to him in just a moment DID dwell with flesh...until sin came into the world and interrupted that fellowship!

We read this through the lens of our New Testament...and we KNOW our God...the God of the heavens came and dwelled with flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

We know it from: **John 1:14a – “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”**

We know it from: **Rev. 21:3 – “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”**

I don't know if Daniel had a hard time and thought, “I can't chase this rabbit here”, but from a future vision God would give him, he knew “The Ancient of Days” one like the “son of man” (Daniel 7:13-14) was coming and all peoples and nations and languages would serve him”.

The faculty and staff at the University of Babylon might not have thought that their gods dwelled with flesh, but Daniel knew his God did, for the prophet Isaiah spoke in:

**Isaiah 57:15a – “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit...”**

The magicians and enchanters and sorcerers are all in a frenzy...a decree goes out from the king to slaughter them all! Just read (v. 12-16).

Daniel hears about the decree, realizes his life as well as all his bud's life is in jeopardy, and he through a conversation with the head of the secret police if you will...a man by the name of Arioch – one commentary called him “the captain of the cutthroats”.

Daniel talks with him and convinces him to go to the king and tell the king that at the appointed time, call me in and I'll interpret this dream for the king.

Now, something I want to point out and make note of here concerning Daniel in this midst of this crisis...and it is a crisis! His life is at stake!

Notice in the crisis, Daniel's attitude AND the action he takes...and just contrast it to Nebo and the other wisemen.

### **Daniel's attitude in crisis is to trust God.**

Look at **Daniel 2:14a** – (they are being sought out to be killed – 2x in v. 13) **“Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion...”**

How is this Daniel's attitude? He seems to be cool, calm and collected – this is completely different than Nebo, who's losing his mind over a dream he has had AND these other Chaldeans who are lying, deceiving and buying time because they know they can't do what the king has asked.

Daniel seems to be totally different and responds as the scripture states here with “prudence and discretion”. I read this verse and look at Daniel's attitude here and it just seems to me that he's someone living with a great amount of trust in God.

We mentioned this a little last week, but I think that initial decision that Daniel made to live by courage and conviction and NOT defile himself with the king's food...and seeing how God honored that decision of faith fueled future decision making for him – it built his “trust in God” muscle if you will.

**Illus. Time alone** - As part of my time alone each morning, I read several psalms. In reading and thinking about Daniel in this situation a verse in the Psalms that I've read on numerous occasions came to mind.

**Psalm 112:7** – **“He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.”**

This is the attitude of Daniel...only someone who is rooted in their faith...wholeheartedly trusting the Lord can be cool, calm, and collected and act with prudence and discretion when their life is on the line!

But, it's not just his attitude, look at the action Daniel takes!

**Daniel 2:17-18** – **“Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,<sup>18</sup> and told them to seek mercy from**

**the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. “**

He calls FOR prayer! He gets his friends together...they know they are in a crisis, and what do they do? They don't panic, they pray!

**Daniel's action in crisis is to pray to God.**

I love this! Again, just a practical principle in life for us to emulate here. When confronted with circumstances that are outside our control, the very best thing we can do is call on God in prayer and get a group of people to call on God in prayer!

**Illus. Prayer group** – God has always blessed me to have a small group of people that pray for me through the years. And whenever I am headed into a big meeting or about to speak or walking through something that I just need God on, I know I can call or text John Regan, Bill Shepherd, Ron Kasik and Rebecca Patterson.

Do you have a Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in your life? A group of people you can call on to pray for you? You need it!

**Illus. First Sat Prayer (show slide)** – power when we come together and pray. We'll meet this next week in the chapel at 8:00.

Just look at what happens. God answers their prayer!

**Daniel 2:19-23** – “**Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.** (This is a fulfillment of what we saw last week. God gave Daniel the supernatural ability to understand visions and dreams! He was the dream-chaser! He gets an answer from God and...) **Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.** (And notice what happens. He prays. He receives an answer from the Lord. And he prays again...it's a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God) <sup>20</sup> **Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever** (and he lists out here seven characteristics and/or activities and behaviors of this God he serves!), **to whom belong wisdom and might.** <sup>21</sup> **He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;** <sup>22</sup> **he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.** <sup>23</sup> **To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter.”**

So, Daniel has the answer for King Nebo and makes his request to see him. He walks into the king's chamber, and we pick up in:

**Daniel 2:26-28a**– “**The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?”** <sup>27</sup> **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, <sup>28</sup> but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days...**"

Talk about speaking truth to power. Daniel gives credit to his God – the God of heaven revealed this to me, and he lays it out. He doesn't hold anything back.

Daniel...important lesson here that I wish we had time to unpack: **Daniel fears God more than he fears man!** I didn't bold this and make it a major point, perhaps I should have!

**Daniel 2:31-35** – (Here's the content of the dream – no one has been able to tell Nebo what his dream was, but Daniel the Dream-Chaser can!) **"You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. <sup>32</sup> The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> 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."**

I had our Comm team take a little liberty here and show an image of what this might have looked like...we used a little AI technology to get this!

It's just to give you an idea (**SHOW IMAGE**). And here is the interpretation of the dream:

**Daniel 2:37-43** – **"You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given** (Daniel acknowledges the earthly greatness of Nebo – you are the "king of kings" – BUT the God of heaven is the one that placed you where you are! It's God who gave you...) **the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, <sup>38</sup> 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—you are the head of gold. (Nebo must have loved that!) <sup>39</sup> Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. (Most scholars looking down through history see these kingdoms following Nebo as Persia and Greece...and this fourth kingdom that comes describe here in these next verses as "iron" will be that of the Roman Empire) <sup>40</sup> 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."** (We know from history, this is the case. The Roman Empire was the strongest and most lasting empire to ever exist. However, it didn't last forever! Daniel continues...this strong kingdom is going to splinter and break! Nebo saw this in his dream)

Here's the image of it starting to crumble! (**SHOW IMAGE**)

Now, think BIG picture with me on this...what's being communicated to Nebo here? It's the brevity of his life! It's the fact that his kingdom is not an eternal kingdom!

Daniel is saying, "You may be the "king of all earthly kings" now, but it's ONLY for a short time! There's coming a kingdom after you (v. 39) and one after that...and another after that! And guess what, Nebo, you're not going to be around for it!"

Now, he didn't say it this plainly to the king, but he didn't have to!

What he is saying is, "As big and strong and as powerful and influential as you are, Nebo...you're a vapor...here today and gone tomorrow! Anything you have has been given to you by the God of the heavens."

Daniel continues...and right here we get to the entire point of Daniel chapter two. We've gained some insight, no doubt:

- We've learned that God knows how to get our attention...
- We've learned from Daniel's attitude that he trusted God in the crisis and that his first action was to pray and get a group of people together to pray...
- We've learned that Daniel fears God more than he fears man...

But here...(v. 44-45) – THIS is THE entire point of this chapter being in the Bible!

**Daniel 2:44-45 – "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, <sup>45</sup> 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. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."**

Daniel tells Nebo, "There is coming a kingdom that will be eternal – it will "stand forever" and it will be MORE powerful...it will be STRONGER...it will "break into pieces" all of the other kingdoms."

? - Any guess at what kingdom this is that Daniel tells Nebo will never be destroyed?

If you're guessing "The Kingdom of God", you're guessing right!  
Daniel in a vision he receives in:

**Daniel 7:14 – "And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."**



The angel, Gabriel reported to Mary in: **Luke 1:31-33** – “**And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.** <sup>32</sup> **He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,** <sup>33</sup> **and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”**

? – Any guess at what the stone OR perhaps I should say WHO the stone represents that (v. 45) breaks the image or the kingdoms of this world into pieces?

If you’re guessing it’s Jesus that’s the stone (Sunday school answer), you’re guessing right!

- Jesus is the stone that the builders rejected  
(Psalm 118:22)
- Jesus is the living stone – (1 Peter 2:4)
- Jesus is the precious cornerstone – (1 Peter 2:6)
- Jesus is the stone over which people stumble  
(Rom. 9:33)
- Jesus is the rock from which we drink living water  
(1 Cor. 10:4)
- Jesus is the rock on which the Church was built  
(Matt. 16)

Jesus preaching in the Temple the last week of his life...he knew his physical life...the days of walking the earth were numbered.

He was teaching and MUCH of his teaching that week centered on the fact that he was being rejected by his own and even more specifically than that, he was being rejected by the spiritual leaders of the day.

He said after teaching a parable to this end in: **Matt. 21:42, 44** – “**Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:**

**“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?...<sup>44</sup> And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”**

See, the point of Daniel 2 is to show us exactly what Nebo’s dream showed him:

**There is an eternal Kingdom coming that will be greater than all earthly kingdoms.**

And the question becomes will we bow to the ruler of this future kingdom OR will we keep living for ourselves...building our own kingdom...being like Nebo – living for the “here and now” and living as if the world revolves around us!

Nebo – he didn't repent at this vision. He gave Daniel honor and position and even confessed that Daniel's God is the great "revealer of mysteries" (v. 46-49). But he didn't repent and bow the knee to Daniel's God.

- He didn't ask any follow up questions...
- He didn't seek any more answers about what the future holds...
- He was just glad he's the head of gold and relieved that his rule and reign wasn't ending anytime soon – the future didn't seem to bother him too much...

And that's the problem. Like many of us, what Nebo dreamed...and what Daniel saw in the future didn't shock him to life change.

Let's not allow that to be me and you! There is an eternal Kingdom coming. It belongs to the true king of kings and lord of lords.

For those in a circumstances not of your choosing – kind of like Daniel and his friends – let this be a comfort to you! One day the king is going to reign, and these tough times we are in...that are SO overwhelming now will be no more!

And if you are an unbeliever today...and hearing this message. Daniel wrote this so that you could hear and understand – there is coming a day when all of this is going to be over- live for what matters most now!

Live for the God of the heavens who loves you and in Christ has given himself for you...live for the eternal Kingdom coming that will be greater than all earthly kingdoms that have ever existed.

Will you pray with me?

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