

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 2

PPT Title

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Main Point: The Kingdom of God will last forever.

Key Verse: *In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. It will never be destroyed... it will last forever.* - Daniel 2:44

Optional Props: Four wooden blocks - one painted or wrapped in paper to represent gold, one silver, one bronze, one iron; One rock

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Last week we met the prophet Daniel. He was from the Southern kingdom of Judah. Because God's people had turned from God and gone their own way, God allowed the Babylonians to defeat the Israelites in battle. The Babylonians kidnapped the Israelite and took them to Babylon. **Ask:** Who can remember what the Babylonian King's name was? *Nebuchadnezzar.*



Say: King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to use the very best of the captured men to serve him. He chose the smartest, strongest, best looking Israelite young men. He put them through three years of training. He gave them food and drink from his own table. But Daniel and his three close friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, did not want to eat the king's food. The King ate food that God had told the Israelites not to eat. Daniel and his friends decided ahead of time that they would not do anything against God's laws. So they asked if they could skip the King's buffet and eat only vegetables. In the end, they were healthier than all the other young men who had eaten the King's food. Not only were these four men healthier, but also Nebuchadnezzar found that they were ten times wiser than all of his other advisors and magicians. They were so wise because their wisdom came from God!

Note to Teacher: The other young men in Nebuchadnezzar's training program were also Israelites (Daniel 1:3). They were under the same food-restricting laws that Daniel and his friends were under, yet they did not forgo the King's food. Though most of God's people followed the way of the world, there was a remnant that chose to obey their Lord. We see this repeated throughout Scripture in the examples of Noah (Genesis 6:5, 9), Moses (Exodus 14:12-14; 32:1, 19), Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:6-9), and others. Jesus clearly states this truth, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM (Daniel 2:1-16)

Say: Some time later, the King had a dream. Part of the dream seemed good, and part of it seemed bad. He could not figure out what the dream meant, so he wanted his advisors to explain it to him.



In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, he had a dream. His mind was troubled. He couldn't sleep.

So the king sent for those who claimed to get knowledge by using magic. He also sent for those who practiced evil magic and those who studied the heavens. He wanted them to tell him what he had dreamed. They came in and stood in front of the king. He said to them, "I had a dream. It troubles me. So I want to know what it means."



Then those who studied the heavens answered the king. They spoke in Aramaic. They said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, may you live forever! Tell us what you dreamed. Then we'll explain what it means."

The king replied to them, "I have made up my mind. You must tell me **what I dreamed**. And you must tell me what it means. - Daniel 2:1-5a

Now, Daniel and his three friends were **not** part of the advisors called in by the King. Nebuchadnezzar told his magicians and astrologers that they first had to tell him *what he dreamed*, and then explain the dream to him. Nebuchadnezzar was pretty smart. He knew that if he told someone what he dreamed, they could make up any explanation for what it meant. But it would take more than a human mind to know his exact dream. If someone was able to tell him his dream, then he could be sure that his explanation was true. He said that if they could not tell him his dream, then he would kill them!



These advisors did not believe in the one true God. They had no way of knowing what the King dreamed. Once again, they asked the King to tell them his dream so they could interpret it. Nebuchadnezzar said, "I want you to tell me what I dreamed. Then I'll know that you can tell me what it means." **Ask:** Do you think the men were getting a little nervous by now?

They told the king that no man could do what he was asking them to do. Nebuchadnezzar did not like their answer. In fact, it made him furious. He ordered that every wise man in Babylon be killed!

Application: The magicians and astrologers had spent their whole lives following after idols and false gods. Their "gods" were worthless - they could not speak, much less interpret a dream. Only the one true God is living and powerful and able to rescue His people. Are you following after something that is worthless? If you trust in anything other than the one true God, you are wasting your time and you are in danger.



Say: Nebuchadnezzar's order to kill all of the wise men included Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The King's commander went out to gather all the wise men in order to kill them. Daniel spoke to the commander wisely and carefully. Daniel asked why Nebuchadnezzar had given the terrible order, and the commander explained all that had happened. Daniel went to the King. He said he would be able to explain his dream if the King would give him a little time. The King agreed.

DANIEL PRAYS (Daniel 2:17-23)

Say: Daniel went home and explained everything to his three friends. Daniel asked Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to pray to God for mercy. He wanted God to tell him the King's dream and what it meant. He wanted God to save him and his friends from being killed.



Ask: Does God answer prayers? **Yes!** **Say:** That very night, God gave Daniel a vision. He showed Daniel the King's dream and explained it to him. And immediately when he awoke, Daniel began praising God!



He said, "May God be praised for ever and ever! He is wise and powerful. He changes times and seasons. He sets up kings. He removes them from power. The wisdom of those who are wise comes from him. He gives knowledge to those who have understanding. He explains deep and hidden things. He knows what happens in the darkest places. And where He is, everything is light. God of my people, I thank and praise You. You

have given me wisdom and power. You have made known to me what we asked You for. You have shown us the King's dream." - Daniel 2:20-23

Daniel did not forget about God when he got what he needed. He praised God. The original language tells us that Daniel was on his knees blessing and praising God. He was overwhelmed with gratitude. He fell to his knees in humility because God did what ONLY He could do.

Application: Daniel did EXACTLY what he should have done. He went to God. When you are in a situation that seems impossible, you can be glad! That is the perfect time for God to show you and others just how mighty He is. God says, "My power is strongest when you are weak." (2 Corinthians 12:9)



Daniel's friends were the best kind of friends - friends who pray for each other. They did not hesitate to ask God for the help that only He could give. A praying friend is a gift from God. Ask God for friends who will pray for you. And, be a friend who prays. Each week we share prayer requests in our huddle groups. Do you pray for each other during the week? Prayer is also a wonderful way to show God's love to a friend who is not a believer. When your friend is having a problem, simply tell him or her. "I'll pray for you." Then remember to pray! It is such a blessing to hear how God has answered a prayer that you have been praying! And, just as Daniel did, praise God for His mighty answers to your prayers.

DANIEL SPEAKS TO THE KING (Daniel 2:24-49)



Daniel went to the King's commander and told him not to kill the wise men because he could tell the King all about his dream. Daniel was taken to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel said:

"You have asked us to explain a mystery to you. But no wise man can do that. And those who try to figure things out by using magic can't do it either. But there is a God in heaven who can explain mysteries. Nebuchadnezzar, He has shown you what is going to happen. Here is what you dreamed. And here are the visions that passed through your mind while you were lying on your bed." - Daniel 2:27-28

Ask: Did Daniel take credit for knowing the King's dream? **No. Say:** Daniel gave all the credit to the Lord. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that God wanted him to understand his dream. **Ask:** Are you curious about what the dream was? **Optional:** As you describe the dream, stack the colored blocks with the gold piece on top. Use the rock to demonstrate how the rock hit the feet and toppled the statue. **Say:** Daniel began:



"King Nebuchadnezzar, you looked up and saw a large statue standing in front of you. It was huge. It shone brightly. And it terrified you. The head of the statue was made out of pure gold. Its chest and arms were made of silver. Its stomach and thighs were bronze. Its legs were made out of iron. And its feet were partly iron and partly baked clay.

"While you were watching, a rock was cut out. But human hands didn't do it. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay. It smashed them. Then the iron and clay were broken to pieces. So were the bronze, silver and gold. All of them were broken to pieces at the same time. They became like straw on a threshing floor at harvest time. The wind blew them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain. It filled the whole earth." - Daniel 2:31-35

Say: Wow! God showed the dream to Daniel, and Daniel was able to tell the King what his dream was. By God's prompting, Nebuchadnezzar knew that the dream was very important. He was probably on the edge of his seat as Daniel explained what it meant:

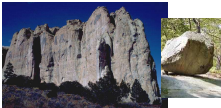
"That was your dream. Now I will tell you what it means. Nebuchadnezzar, you are

the greatest king of all. The God of heaven has given you authority and power. He has given you might and glory. He has put everyone under your control. He has also given you authority over the wild animals and the birds of the air. It doesn't matter where they live. He has made you ruler over all of them. You are that head of gold.

"After you, another kingdom will take over. It won't be as powerful as yours. Next, a third kingdom will rule over the whole earth. The bronze part of the statue stands for that kingdom.

"Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom. It will be as strong as iron... And the fourth kingdom will crush and break all of the others. You saw that the feet and toes were made out of iron and baked clay... the fourth kingdom will be partly strong and partly weak. You saw the iron mixed with baked clay. And the fourth kingdom will be made up of all kinds of people. They won't hold together any more than iron mixes with clay."
- Daniel 2:36-43

Say: Each piece of the statue was a symbol of an earthly, human kingdom. The gold head stood for the Babylonian kingdom led by Nebuchadnezzar, and there were three kingdoms after it. Each of those kingdoms would take the place of the kingdom before it. Many people have tried to figure out exactly which kingdoms are represented in the dream. They have really great ideas about this. (**Teacher Note:** They probably stand for the Persian, Greek, and Roman kingdoms.) But God did not give that specific information to Daniel, so we should concentrate on the information that God *did* reveal. By far, the most important part of the dream was this:



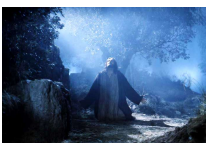
"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. It will never be destroyed. And no other nation will ever take it over. It will crush all of those other kingdoms. It will bring them to an end. But it will last forever. That's what the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain means. Human hands didn't cut the rock out. It broke the statue to pieces. It smashed the iron, bronze, clay, silver and gold.

"The great God has shown you what will take place in days to come. The dream is true. And you can trust the meaning I have given you for it." - Daniel 2:44-45

Say: Through this dream, God was teaching Nebuchadnezzar about the Kingdom of God. What exactly is the Kingdom of God? A Kingdom is wherever the will of the King is done. So, the Kingdom of God is wherever God's will is done. We know that God's will is done in heaven (Matthew 6:10). For a short time, God's will was done on earth. When God created the earth, everything was good and Adam and Eve did the will of God. But when Adam and Eve chose to sin, the Kingdom was no longer on earth. Their sin separated them from God, their King. They were no longer able to do His will. Every person after Adam and Eve has sinned. We have each chose not to do God's perfect will.



But God longed to restore the Kingdom. Throughout the Old Testament, God gave promises about the coming Kingdom (Jeremiah 31:33-34). He gave His people glimpses of what the Kingdom would be like (Hebrews 8:5). When John the Baptist came to announce that Jesus, the Messiah, had come, he said, "The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near." (Mark 1:15) Jesus prayed for the Kingdom to come, for God's will to be done on earth as it is already was heaven (Matthew 6:10). The Kingdom of God was set up for good on earth when Jesus laid down His life for our sin, and was raised to give us new life. John came to announce that entering into God's Kingdom was possible for everyone who would place his or her faith in Jesus. When we put our trust in Jesus, our sin is taken away, we are given Jesus' righteousness, and we can once again do God's will. God's Kingdom is a spiritual kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:50), though one day we will be able to see it with our eyes (Revelation 21:1).



God's Kingdom is far, far greater than any Kingdom that is ruled by men. Through the dream, God showed that His Kingdom is not created by human hands. Human kingdoms will all pass away, but the Kingdom of God will stand forever (Luke 1:33).



Nebuchadnezzar was the very powerful king of a very powerful kingdom. When he spoke, people listened. When he gave an order, it happened (Daniel 5:19). It was very easy for him to focus on himself and think that he did not need God. But God wanted him to see that Babylon, like every earthly kingdom, would one day crumble. God really wanted Nebuchadnezzar to focus on God's Kingdom instead of his own kingdom. After all, it was God who gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream in the first place, and it was God who brought the prophet Daniel into Nebuchadnezzar's captivity (Daniel 2:28; 1:2). Let's read in Daniel 2:47 to see how Nebuchadnezzar reacted to Daniel's explanation:

*The King said to Daniel,
"I'm sure your God is the greatest
God of all. He is the Lord of kings.
He explains mysteries. That's why
you were able to explain the
mystery of my dream."*

- Daniel 2:47

The King said to Daniel, "I'm sure your God is the greatest God of all. He is the Lord of kings. He explains mysteries. That's why you were able to explain the mystery of my dream."

Nebuchadnezzar bowed down in front of Daniel, and he gave Daniel many gifts. He put Daniel in charge of all the wise men, and gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego very important jobs also. And don't forget all the other wise men that were about to be killed. God saved their lives by giving the vision to Daniel. Those men were not godly, but they were blessed just by working near Daniel and his friends.

Application: It's very important that we do not focus on ourselves or the world around us. Everything you can see around you will pass away one day. But the Kingdom of God will never end! When we are focused on the Kingdom of God, we will spend our time on things that will last instead of things that will fade away. Some of the things that fade away are houses, cars, toys, and video games. But some of the things that last forever are God, the souls of people, and the good things that we do to build God's Kingdom. Knowing God and pointing others to Jesus is the best possible way to spend your time on the things that will last forever (Matthew 6:19-21).

PPT Key Verse

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PPT Main Point

Main Point: The Kingdom of God will last forever.

Note to Teacher: God revealed that the Kingdom of God would be established by a rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands (Daniel 2:47).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. - John 1:1-2, 14

1 Corinthians 10:4 calls Jesus the Rock (also, Isaiah 28:16, Romans 9:33). This Rock was not created by human hands. As Gabriel explained to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." (Luke 1:35) So, the Son of God was divinely "carved out" of the Father. He was sent from heaven to Earth to make the Kingdom of God available to all who would believe.