

Kingdom Never Be Destroyed

Daniel 2:31-45, "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which 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 were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 'This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kinds. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all- you are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold- the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.'"

Gracious heavenly Father, the One who rules over all things, the One who raises up kingdoms and casts them down, the One who promotes men and casts them down, the One who kills and makes alive, You have given us Your word. We thank You for Your word, we thank You for bringing us through the book of Daniel. We ask that You would help us to retain the things that You have taught us, that You would help us to be faithful, that You would give us ears to hear now as we go back over the book and recap some of the things that You have taught us. Lord, we ask that You would help us not to be the people who look in the mirror and then go away and forget what we saw. Please help us to continue in the perfect law of liberty, please cause Your kingdom to increase even in this church, cause it to increase in this country. We ask that You would cause it to increase in Nigeria as well, that You would cause it to continue consuming all the kingdoms of the earth. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

As we think of the lessons to learn from Daniel, I think it's important for us to first understand how this

fits with the rest of Scripture. When we think of the special revelation, there are phases and a sequence of those revelations. It's very clear that the first revelation is about just revealing what God says is righteous, it's about the giving of the law and saying this is what is expected of man. This goes on for a considerable length of time, the declaration, then the next phase of this special revelation is about how the kingdom is conquered, about the conquering of the Promised Land through 1 and 2 Samuel. Then you get into the next phase, which is how they have wandered away from what they were established to be, they were established to be a holy people to God. You have the book of Isaiah, it's warning them that they must repent and turn, that they must turn from their sin because otherwise God will pour out His wrath upon them. Then you reach the period where Daniel is writing and he is writing at the same time as Ezekiel is writing about how the spirit will be poured out. You have the giving of the law and all these warnings and threatening and in the end they're not going to do anything because man doesn't have the power to walk in the righteousness of God, it requires the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it requires God to give us His Spirit. That is how we are able to walk in righteousness. In Ezekiel and Jeremiah where it talks about how He is going to divorce Judah, that He is going to make a new covenant that replaces the old covenant. The thrust of this time of prophecy, whether Zachariah or others, what this section of prophesy is about is the destruction of Judah and the establishment of the church. He is like the land owner who had the prophets come and they beat the prophets, he sends his son and they beat his son, so he takes the vineyard and gives it to others. That's what Ezekiel is talking about and Jeremiah is talking about and that's where Daniel fits into revelation. It's about Judah being the people of God and being replaced by the church of Christ the people of God. The theme of Daniel is not about considering the new bride like Jeremiah, it's not even considering the Spirit of God being poured out, it's about this thing that we don't talk about that much, it's about the establishment of a new kingdom. We don't talk about it very much, but that's all that John the Baptist talked about and Jesus Christ mostly talked about. He talked about how He was coming to establish a new kingdom and that's the focus of Daniel. I think it's 53 times in Matthew alone that it references the establishment of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. This is a serious aspect of why Jesus Christ came and in Daniel is when that idea is established, when that revelation is given that there would be a kingdom that was different than all the other kingdoms of the earth, this kingdom that's not made like all the kingdoms of the earth were made kingdoms by the power of man's hand. It would become a kingdom because it was the stone that was cut out without hands, not by the strength of man's hands, but by the will of God by the preaching of the Word of God. It is a kingdom that is conquered by preaching rather than by the sword. That's what Daniel is about, Daniel is about trusting that there will be a new kingdom. As we think of the theme of Daniel, I think you can break it into two parts. The first part is establishing why you can believe it and trust it and the second part is what the revelation is. The first half of the book of Daniel is establishing that God is indeed in control of all the affairs of men and that God will use it to cause His glory to spread. Then it switches and becomes about how the kingdom will be established, the kingdom that is this rock that was cut out without hands that will fill the whole earth and become the mountain. So God established His credentials, not just to the Jews. I think that's important to note because He establishes His credentials in such a way that the declaration of who He is goes to the ends of the earth, to all people and languages. It's not just a side thing so the people of God can know it, He causes it to be declared to the whole world. The book starts with a simple story of a young man who won't defile himself by eating the king's dainties. It's not even necessarily that they are

sinful to eat them, we don't hear that they are unclean, we just hear that they are the good things of life. Daniel said he was going to restrain from eating those because if he ate them he would become a Babylonian. Notice that's how Daniel starts to be this great prophet of God so Ezekiel says that even if Noah, Job, and Daniel were alive, they could only deliver themselves a testimony of righteousness, even while he lived beyond almost every other many in Scripture. It starts with him saying he doesn't want to be conformed to this world, he didn't want the good things of the world to distract him and take him from the things that he was supposed to be about. We've been studying through the book of Proverbs on Sunday evenings and one of the things in Proverbs is that you are supposed to see the street the harlot lives on and you're not supposed to walk down that street. That's what Daniel did, he saw the opportunities, he saw that things that could make him like all the other Babylonians and said he was going to be separate. This is a lesson to us, let's make sure that we are not compromising with the ways of this world, pretending to be holy when the reality is we just want to eat, drink, and be merry and forget there is indeed a resurrection. Even as a young man, probably around 16, he recognized that he needed to be separate. A lot of us are a lot older than that that profess belief in Jesus Christ, do we recognize that we need to be separate from the world? Then we see God's power. He controls the heart of the keeper of the eunuchs. Daniel 1:9, "Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs." It was God who showed mercy and changed the heart of the eunuch, so when he hears Daniel's plea, he acquiesces. God is declaring and establishing and controlling all things. He can turn the heart of the eunuch to be a blessing to Daniel, this is not outside of His power, this is completely within the power of God. Throughout this book you see the declaration of His power, how He causes empires to rise and fall, how He causes war and death and destruction, you see how God is controlling all this, but it starts with Him controlling the heart of a man. Just because He controls all the big things doesn't mean He can't control all the little things; He controls it all. The book also testifies that God is in control of health. The difference of eating vegetable and the king's delicacies is not one that is going to have an effect in a week, but in this case it does. The reality is that most people, unless you have grown up in a culture that eats vegetarian, their health declines when they start to eat vegetarian because it's hard to eat the diet of a vegetarian unless you have been trained in that culture. Instead, it says in Daniel 1:15, "And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies." Health is in the hands of God, He's the One who makes our digestive tract work, He is the One who causes the food to cause destruction or causes the food to give us strength and blessing. The book starts with the testimony that God is in charge of health, He can sustain us without food and water like He did with Moses for forty days when he was on Mt. Sinai. That doesn't mean we don't have an obligation to be good stewards, we do, but to be good stewards of food there are two things; you don't be a glutton and you don't be thankless. As He is testifying to Daniel, He is the One who kills and makes alive, God is the One who makes Daniel eat vegetables for ten days and he looks healthier in ten days. Young men can eat anything and still look healthy in ten days. In Daniel's case the head of the eunuch could look at Daniel and say him, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego looked healthier in those ten days than all the people around them. The other thing that's very clear in chapter 1 of Daniel is that God gives understanding, He opens the mind and opens us to be able to understand the world around us. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had greater understanding than all the others. They had the advantage of coming from a culture that had a revival with Josiah where they found the lost book of the law, they understood the things of Scripture. That's a real advantage when looking at

the world and trying to understand it, having the oracles of God is a huge advantage because it declares how God designed the world and the idea of sowing and reaping. Sowing and reaping is throughout Scripture. The pagans always think there is no cause and effect, that one thing doesn't flow to another. Those who reject God also do that, that's why in school's they don't teach history as an orderly thing, as a flow. That's opposite of how Daniel declares it to be because there is sowing and reaping, so you can understand as all these other young men from other cultures are being taught that this is the ways of Babylon, they wouldn't be able to make the connections. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel could understand it because they knew the cause of all things was God. They could understand their history better, even the history of the Babylonians. In Daniel 1:20, "And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm." It's one thing to be able to understand some things, but it's these young men that had ten times the understanding of these other people, even the elderly magicians and astrologers that had been leading in Babylon. They had been given wisdom and understanding. This is why it says in James that we are to cry out to God for wisdom, it testifies that God is sovereign over our learning, over wisdom and understanding. Then God also shows that He is omniscient and causes a testimony to go out through all the world through Nebuchadnezzar. He gives Nebuchadnezzar the dream that Marc just read and then He took it away so that he couldn't remember it, but He showed that He knew what the dream was and understood all the details. He chose not to give the dream back to Nebuchadnezzar, but to give it to Daniel, to show that Daniel even knew more than Nebuchadnezzar, but only because God knew more, God knew all things. God even knew what Nebuchadnezzar dreamed, He was more powerful than the most powerful man in the world, Nebuchadnezzar, and that God could control his thoughts and cause him to have a dream and cause him to forget the dream. I think as we go through this, remember, this is all just setting the stage so we can trust the prophecies of Daniel, so we can know these things are going to come to pass. Daniel 2:20-22, "Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what *is* in the darkness, And light dwells with Him." This is what God does, He is the source of all knowledge and all light, and He gives it to whosoever He chooses. God uses a dream to declare what's going to happen and we will come back to that because they are interweaved. Most of the first six chapters are not about what is going to happen, they are mostly about how you can trust these things will actually come to pass. He makes Nebuchadnezzar to say in Daniel 2:47, "The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." He causes this pagan man, this most powerful man in the world to acknowledge that God is greater than he is. God is building up the world, not just the Jews, but He is building up the world to understand the testimony of who God is. Then God shows that He controls the flames, He controls the thing of this world. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to prove that he could control everyone's worship, that if he created a god that everyone had to bow down and worship. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said no. Even though Nebuchadnezzar had seen that the true God knew more than he ever would, He was the revealer of secrets and knew all the secret things, it doesn't mean that Nebuchadnezzar doesn't think he can still control everyone. Nebuchadnezzar still wants to think of himself as the omnipotent ruler that can

determine who should be worshipped and when. When the three young men refuse to yield, testifying through their statements that God is more powerful than Nebuchadnezzar, there wasn't a guarantee that God would save them, but there is no question that He does have the ability to save them. They don't have the power to manipulate God, just like Nebuchadnezzar's wise men manipulate him. Instead of that, Nebuchadnezzar thinks he still has power, but they say they can't manipulate the truly powerful One. They are tossed in the fiery furnace, into this picture of hell, they are tossed in this hole in the ground where they burn lime that was raised to seven times hotter than it had ever been before so that someone walking up to toss them in, perish because of the heat. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was God and God proves that he is not as the four men, one like the Son of God joins them in the flames. Not only can He stop the fire from consuming their flesh, which is what He does in hell, but he also caused it so when they come out they don't even have the smell of fire upon them. Not just that their body isn't burned, but not even their clothes are burned. Nebuchadnezzar does all this to demonstrate how he is the most powerful being in the universe, but he finds out that he has no power at all. He can't put them to death as much as he would like to and God's name is glorified because of it. God causes His name to be made throughout the nations. Think about this, I do think this ties to when the magi come from the east at the birth of Christ, it's probably because of Daniel. Remember that Daniel was magi, these are the people that Daniel saved their lives and they descend because you have these kingdoms, but the same people continue in these kingdoms. When Cyrus takes over, Daniel was still magi in the kingdom. I think hundreds of years later, they come because they know the time frame, they have read the book of Daniel, it's because they had listened to this magi and it started because Nebuchadnezzar told them to. Daniel 3:28-29, "Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God!"²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." God is causing the magi to know and in the next chapter he causes the world to know. Where the Jews had failed to cause the world to know, God causes this pagan king to preach the gospel throughout all the world. Remember, all the magi were there surrounding this lime kiln when the three come out of the fire without their hair singed, without their garments burned, with no smell of fire on them and remember that God was proving that He is not subject to the laws of nature. The laws of nature are subject to Him. I think a lot of people in the church still get confused, they think that God is somehow subject to the laws of nature, He's not, He set them in place and He can overrule them whenever He wants. This is probably as shocking to the magi as it was when Jesus Christ demonstrates the same power in Mark 4:39-41, "Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'" The magi had to be saying, who is this that even the flames obey Him? That the flames cannot touch those who God decreed that they wouldn't touch, but yet they kill the mightiest men in Babylon that were trying to throw them into the fire. Where the Jews had failed to make God's name known throughout the world, God was causing it to happen Himself, He was demonstrating that He was the One who ruled over nature. Then we see a clear example that God is

indeed the One who sets up kingdoms and brings them down. We see the example of Nebuchadnezzar losing his kingdom by being changed into an animal. This proud man said that all the power he consolidated was about his greatness and in an instant God turns him into a beast that eats grass like an ox. Consider the extent that God is testifying that any kingdom is His to give, He takes it away in an instant. Here's a man who had conquered all the nations, here's a man who in Daniel 2, it said all authority over everything had been given to him, and in one instant it's taken away. Before the words leave his mouth, it is taken away. He takes away Nebuchadnezzar's understanding and gives him the mind of an ox. He takes away how his digestion works and makes it so he can eat grass. He causes his fingernails to become like claws and causes his hair to be like feathers. For seven years he turns Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man in the world into an animal. This is the God who you should fear, who you should serve, who you must believe in, and who sent His Son. At the end, after being turned into this thing that had a mind of a beast, the diet of an ox, hair like feathers, and fingernails like talons, this man repents and declares to the world who God is. Daniel 4:34-37, "And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom *is* from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?" At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down." This is the letter that went out into all the earth. The Jews had been commanded to declare who God was to the world and they had failed to do it as it says in Isaiah, but then He takes this pagan king and to show His power, He causes this pagan king to declare it through the whole world. It was declared in every language, in every nation, in every tribe. Not only did God demonstrate His power to bring him down, but He demonstrates His power by bringing him up again. Can you imagine this ruler who becomes an animal in a field for seven years and then all of a sudden he gets his mind back and everyone says he should be emperor again? This is not the ways of men, this is to demonstrate God is the One who brings men down, brings kingdoms down, and God is the One who raises up kingdom. Another would rise and another would fall and finally He would raise up an empire that would never fall, instead would conquer the whole earth. He is causing and proving it to be testified to the nations that this is true and this is what He is going to do, He has the ability to do that. He proves that through Nebuchadnezzar that He can save whoever He wants to save, even a pagan king who has everything in this world, who is trying to force the whole world into idolatry to the statue that he set up. God can change his heart and add him to the kingdom of God at His will. It doesn't require being a physical son of Abraham, but the same faith as Abraham. He doesn't testify that he knows His redeemer lives, he doesn't testify like Job, but he does testify there will be an everlasting kingdom, that there is a king that rules in heaven. He testifies to the kingdom of God, the kingdom that we need to understand the significance of, need to understand the significance of being part of. Those who are not part of the kingdom of God, they get cast out and they don't experience the fire like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did, they experience the fire that is an

everlasting fire where their flesh won't be consumed, but the pain will be there. Understand the importance of the kingdom of God. God also demonstrates that He is the Judge, He judges and removes Nebuchadnezzar as the ruler of the world, ruler of the nations, and He does it in an instant because He said you have exalted yourself against Me. In doing that, He can also show that He can dismiss the Jews as the people of God and He does it because He is just. He did it to Nebuchadnezzar because He is just, He looked at the Babylonians in chapter 5, when they are having their feast even though they are surrounded and talking about how great they are. When they are sitting in their impregnable fortress that they think there is no one that can lay a hand on them, they are destroyed that very night and Belshazzar dies. God demonstrates that He judges the wicked, God demonstrates that He judges those who raise themselves up against Him. The last chapter that's proving why we should take the prophecies of Daniel seriously and why they should have, it's really for us to take them seriously looking back because we can see all these fulfillment, but they are looking forward so God is setting a stake saying you can believe these prophecies. If I can cause a fire not to burn, you can believe when I say these kingdoms will come. In chapter 6, the head of gold has changed into the arms and breast of silver as you have Cyrus ruling, as the Medes and Persians have taken over from the Babylonians. Chapter 6 shows how easily Cyrus can be manipulated into passing a law because it makes him look like the only one with power, the only one to whom petitions are to be made. Even when he doesn't have the power to change his own laws God mocks. Cyrus says look at how powerful I am, but then doesn't even have the power to change his own laws. So when Daniel violates the law and is thrown into the lion's den, God again demonstrates His power, He shuts the mouths of the lions so they cannot attack Daniel. When those who conspired against Cyrus to manipulate him get tossed, their mouths are opened. This is testifying that you can believe in the prophecies that are given, you can believe that when God says these things are going to come to pass, they will come to pass, even as they were already coming to pass in the days of Daniel. King Cyrus or Darius, both being the same man, communicated to the world of the greatness of God in Daniel 6:25-27, "Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must* tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He *is* the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom *is the one* which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion *shall endure* to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." Again, God causes a declaration of who He is to be made throughout all the earth and all this is so we can know and so the Jews can know and so the Babylonians and so the magi can know, these things will come to pass, there will be this statue that is destroyed by the kingdom that is cut out of the rock without hands. It's clear that while we learn things about God in the first six chapters, they are really things we know from many other places in Scripture, they aren't new things, they are just a declaration and an enactment of them in a time and place so people could see who God was and see they could put their trust in God. What's really unique about Daniel is the specific declaration of how the kingdom of God will be established. Even as God is proving His bona fides to the world, He is also starting the declaration of what He is going to do. He's been saying ever since Moses in the song of Moses where He says their foot will slip in due time, He has been saying the Jews will be replaced by another people, Israel will be replaced by another people. He says it in Isaiah that this will happen to Judah as He causes Israel to be wiped out as a kingdom, He does it to the northern kingdom as He gives that kingdom to the Assyrians and later they mix with the Assyrians and the

Israelites and that becomes the Samaritans. He is warning that their foot will slip, that this was going to happen to Judah just like it happened to Israel. Now God has moved on and starts to say what the new kingdom will look like. Through Jeremiah there will be a new covenant, through Ezekiel there will be a new Spirit poured out, and then He proves that you can believe what He is covering in Daniel. He keeps revisiting the same events that are in the first dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, the dream of this statue that has a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, belly of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. That's not the significant part of the revelation, the significant part is what comes next. What comes next is the stone that is cut without hands, crushes that statue, and destroys it and grinds it to powder. That's the significant part of Daniel's revelation, that in the fullness of time He is going to cut out a rock without hands, the God that has the power to control flames, the mouths of lions, to take a ruler and make him into an animal then bring him back up to be the ruler again, this God is going to establish a kingdom that will destroy all the kingdoms of the earth. He is very specific about when this is going to happen. God makes it very clear in Daniel who those four kingdoms are. It seems to me that it's pretty clear that the legs of iron and the feet of iron mixed with clay are the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. Even if you want to split it differently, you're still forced into a very tight time frame. There's no question that the silver is the Medes and Persians any more than there is a question that Babylon is the golden head. There is no question that the belly of bronze is the Greek empire. They are called the Greek empire in the book of Daniel and there is no question there is an empire that comes after them, that is the Roman empire. We have very specific time frames that are given that cannot be denied, that the kingdom has been established and it will destroy all the kingdoms of the earth. Do you believe the rest of Daniel? If you believe all these other things that happened, if you believe the lion's den and these other things, it's so you can believe that Christ's kingdom will destroy all the kingdoms of the earth. That's what the book of Daniel is about. God gave the vision to Nebuchadnezzar, but it was Daniel who declared it. Starting in chapter 7, Daniel starts to receive the visions directly and the visions keep adding more and more about the same thing: the establishment of the kingdom of God. The first vision he has, the four kingdoms, instead of being this one statue, they are now each separate, they are four beasts. That shows that there is a continuity between the earthly kingdoms. The Medes conquer Babylon and that's how they start the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. Greece comes in and he destroys the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, which is how he has the Greek empire. The Romans conquer them all which is how the Roman empire becomes the Roman empire. Then there is this great discontinuity between how the empires were won, how they flow through 500 hundred years of history and there is this one that is established in a completely different way. The kingdom of God is not established by destroying other kingdoms or by keeping the same rulers that were there before like Cyrus kept Daniel. This is the normal way that the earthly kingdoms are conquered. You come in, knock off the top layer, then hire all the same people so you can inherit their hierarchy. But for God's kingdom it is established completely different, it is not part of the statue, it's the rock that is cut without hands. In Daniel's first vision he sees the other kingdoms, but even there the focus is on the fifth kingdom. God was judging the earth, He had greater power than any other earthly king and when He is seated, the fifth kingdom is established. Daniel 7:13-14, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then 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

the one which shall not be destroyed." It's so easy to start focusing on all these other prophecies, but let's remember what God is focusing on. He is focusing on that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will approach the King of Kings, the Ancient of Days, and He will receive a kingdom. That's the promise, that's the fifth kingdom, that's what we can look at all these prophecies and see how they were fulfilled. Let's not forget the kingdom that we are living in because it's the most important kingdom, the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He is ruling and reigning in heaven. Just as He called for all the other kingdoms to happen before, He will cause the fifth one to fill the whole earth, to be the mountain that grows and fills the whole earth. Just to make sure we understand the vision, God gives great detail, very different than any prophets of Babylon or the Medes and Persians. They give these vague references; Daniel gives clear description on what is going to happen. We don't hear many details about the Babylonian empire because it's going on when Daniel is alive. We learn things about it through the judgement of Nebuchadnezzar and the drunken revelry of Belshazzar, but it's complete before the book of Daniel is given and God is telling Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. We do hear that the Babylonian empire was like a lion with eagle's wings, but that it would have the wings plucked and it would be lifted from the earth and made to stand like a man, exactly what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. God lowered him to be like a beast then He took him from being a carnal man to a spiritual man. The next kingdom, the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, that's explicitly declared to be the Medes and Persians, even where their capital will be. We don't need to go to secular history, we know that kingdom as established because we have the book of Esther where that kingdom is ruling, where there are these sub-kings that gather together at Shushan, the same place Daniel said the capital would be. We know other things about it, that it's like a bear that's gnawing on three ribs and that it will devour much flesh. It's also like a ram with two horns, where one is greater than the other. Daniel didn't know it because Darius the Mede seemed to be the powerful one, but his Persian name ends up winning, the name Cyrus, because the Persians became greater than the Medes. We know that they would expand the empire from the Babylonian empire to the west, north, and the south, which is exactly what secular history says. No one would be able to withstand their power, but another kingdom would come which would be the Greek empire. We hear the description of that kingdom being like that of a leopard, which would come in swiftly and the dominion was given to it. The Greeks were like a goat that moved like it was not touching the ground. Again, it's explicit in Scripture that this is the Greek empire, they will come from Greece and that noble horn is Alexander the Great, who in an incredibly short time conquered the civilized world. Way before that, God had declared through Daniel that Alexander the Great, with great speed, would conquer the world then die, the horn would be broken and four kingdoms would come out of its place. Even as you read chapters 10-11, which goes into great detail about how after these four split up, that you have the king of Egypt, Babylon, and Syria, two of the four kingdoms that came from Alexander the Great, how they would war for years and keep trampling through Judah as they went to war one to another. God reveals to Daniel that there would be much death and destruction, much judgement of the Jews and God had proven already in the book of Daniel that His will would be done and He gives great detail so we can look back and know that God's will would be done. Again, we don't need secular history books to know this. You just have to pick up the actual New Testament and see that it was written in Greek to know the Greek empire came. That's why it was written in Greek, because Greek was the language of the Roman empire. Then the last empire before the kingdom of God was established was the Roman empire, or I believe the Roman Republic,

then the Roman Empire, which Daniel saw as a monstrous beast. It wasn't like the other ones that were led by one man at a time like Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom, or Cyrus and the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, or Alexander and the Greek empire. The power struggles last for years which led to internal wars and strife, the death and destruction of many including Judea. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar who brought peace to the world because he conquered the nations and caused them to stop warring with one another, when the Roman empire comes, it increases the war. It's that iron nation that grinds in pieces, scatters, breaks, and destroys. It was a kingdom unlike the ones that were trying to build up because one man was trying to exalt himself. It's mingled with weakness when a little horn arises and overthrew the three horns which I think are the Triumvirate, which spoke pompous words as they said anyone who descended from Julius Caesar was a god. They set themselves up against Jesus Christ. Much about what we hear about the fourth kingdom is what it will do to the saints of the Most High. After the little horn arises in Daniel 7:25, it says, "He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time." For three and a half years, about the time between the invasion of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, until they conquered Jerusalem. Daniel 8:24-25, "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people. "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt *himself* in his heart. He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without *human* means." In the end, the descendants of Julius Caesar lose power because Nero commits suicide without an heir, and that ends the reign right before Jerusalem falls. Again, we know the Roman empire came to pass, we can read about it in Acts and Matthew. We know who was ruling at the time Christ came, we know the time frames so we know when the kingdom of God that will fill the whole earth was established. Just to make sure we get it, that God causes these things to happen. The most significant time frame is the length of time before the establishment of the kingdom that is cut without hands, which is declared in Daniel 9:24-27, "'Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. "Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, *there shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate." Sixty-nine weeks of years after the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, that decree was given to Ezra when Ezra returns and it's 483 years between that and when Jesus Christ starts His public ministry. He ministers for three and a half years and then is put to death. When He is put to death all sacrifices and offering is brought to an end. For three and a half more years He is confirming the covenant with many from the time of His public ministry when He comes to His own there are some who believe in Him. After His death, burial, and resurrection how many more does He confirm in the covenant, where He causes 3,000 to be saved

on this day and 5,000 to be saved on that day. This is what is happening and after He confirms His covenant with many and has been testifying to Jerusalem, they are scattered to the nations to declare the gospel to the nations. This is the book of acts, I think the three and a half years ends when Stephen is martyred, but I think it ends when the gospel gets scattered to the nations because that's what God says. Then there are forty years between that and the destruction of Jerusalem, between when He is cut off and when Jerusalem is destroyed. That was prophesied by Ezekiel. Ezekiel 4:4-6, "Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. *According* to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year." There were 390 years between the rebellion of the ten tribes, when they rejected their king appointed by God, which as Rehoboam, they formed the northern kingdom of Israel and 390 years later they are wiped out and are no more. Then Judah receives its king, He comes to His own and His own will not receive Him. They reject Him by putting Him to death on a cross and forty years later they are no more. He does the same thing to Judah that He did to Israel. We know the time frames; we know that this is the God that can cause the time frames to come to pass, it's clear in Scripture, He has told us all these things. We hear of other time frames as well. Three and a half years in Daniel 12:7 until the power of the holy people will be scattered. I think the NKJV translates it "shattered", but the KJV translates it as "scattered", which is what happens three and a half years after Jesus Christ is crucified. The gospel goes to the nations, the power of the holy people, the Spirit of God is scattered throughout the world as you see it fall upon city after city as Paul goes as a missionary. That's the second half of the seventieth week from Daniel 9, but later we also see the length of the time of judgement on Jerusalem, the 1,290 days between when the legions invade to the destruction and the 1,335 days between the fall of Jerusalem between when the Roman armies leave. God has revealed all these things and He has revealed these things so we can know the most important thing, which is the kingdom of God was established and it will become the mountain that fills the whole earth. This is not something we are waiting for; this is a promise that is happening. God has established the fifth kingdom, it was established 2,000 years ago and He promises as in Isaiah 9:7, "Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." This is the promise. The book of Daniel is saying that you can trust these things, He could cause these other four kingdoms to come to pass and be destroyed so we could remember the increase of His government and peace will have no end. His kingdom has been established. When John the Baptist comes and says the ax is laid at the root of the tree, the kingdom is at hand, it meant it was at hand. If it's at hand it means it will increase until it fills the whole earth. That's what we need to make sure we take away from Daniel.

Applications:

1. God will accomplish His purposes. The Jews were like Esther, the line that I remember most from Esther is where Mordecai confronts Esther when she is afraid to go before the king. Mordecai responds to her, Esther 4:14, "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet

who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?" The Jews were sent to earth to fulfill a purpose, their purpose was to make the glory of God known through the whole earth. They were set in that place and they didn't do it, they didn't fulfill their created purpose. Obviously, on another level it was God's purpose to judge them, but God set them in that place and they failed. Let's make sure we don't do the same thing. God set us in a place to expand the kingdom of God, to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. This is the purpose of the church of Jesus Christ. The earthly purpose of it is to expand the kingdom. Jews who are supposed to be declaring God to the nations failed to do it so God took them out of that place and put someone else in their stead, the church of Jesus Christ. If He did it to the people who He called the apple of His eye, make sure you don't think you can sit back and do nothing. He didn't do it before, and He will never replace His church because He says He won't, but that doesn't mean that He doesn't pour out wrath and judgment on people who claim to be part of the church of Jesus Christ. Are you fulfilling the purpose of the church? The purpose of the church is expressed in the Great Commission. It's not by our strength that we do it, it's because God said He saved us to walk in the good works that He prepared for us beforehand. As you read the book of Daniel, read it with the warning, are you being faithful to do the things God has appointed you to do?

2. Do you consider the importance of the kingdom? Jesus Christ came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, that's what it says He was preaching. It's so easy for us to think it's the gospel of salvation, but that's not what Christ was preaching and it doesn't mean He wasn't saying how you are saved. He was preaching repentance, but He was preaching the idea that He was establishing the new kingdom and this was the good news in the world, that the nations in this world are not the ones that have authority over all things. That's been given to Christ and He will destroy all the nations, He will grind them to powder. He's destroying His enemies now, He is ruling now with a rod of iron and He is ruling until He returns to destroy the last enemy, which is death. It's easy to think the church just has the call to worship Him or maybe preach people to come to salvation, which we do, but let's make sure we have the broader call to establish the kingdom of God. Not with hands, but through the preaching of the Word. We have the responsibility to establish a kingdom. We have a call to be the mountain that grows to fill the whole earth, to be the kingdom that influences everything, constrains evil everywhere, the kingdom that can't be broken or moved. Don't belittle what Jesus Christ said when He said to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Jesus Christ understood exactly what He meant by the kingdom, but I think we sometimes make it smaller than what it is. Let's make sure we are seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. That's the seriousness with which we are to take building His kingdom.

3. Do you believe these passages? Daniel 2:35, "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Do you believe that is what is happening now? That's the promise of Scripture, that is what's happening now, that's the revelation of Daniel. Daniel 2:44-45, "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and

that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” It’s really easy for us to look back and say we know what happens to the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Greeks, and the Romans. Do you believe that the kingdom of God is going to destroy all the kingdoms of this earth? That’s what is supposed to happen now, that’s what we are supposed to be participating in now, not through the sword, but through the preaching of the Word. For us, these are the important things in Daniel. Someone else at a different time, it could have been useful to know that when Alexander rises up, that you should respond in certain ways because He is going to be like a leopard that runs through, but now we look back and know that has been fulfilled. Do we look and say this is what is being fulfilled, the kingdom of God is destroying all the kingdoms of this earth? It’s easy to see the wickedness that is increasing in America and say it isn’t happening, but God gave us plenty of testimony in the book of Daniel, there is no question this is happening. The kingdom of God is filling the whole earth and that should cause you to change your life. Is this the focus of your life? Is your expectation that through the preaching of the word, cultures will change, people will change, and governments will fall? It’s so easy for us to think these things don’t have power, but the book of Daniel is testimony that these things have power, this is really how governments and nations fall. The way that abortion fails, the way that it is wiped out in America, the way homosexual marriages are wiped out in America is by the preaching of God and the expansion of His kingdom. Where do you put your energies? Do you put your energies in a defensive posture trying to protect yourself from the world? Or do you realize that you have the most powerful weapon in the world that will destroy all the nations of the world so you put your energy into using the weapon that God has given us, the weapon of the gospel, the sword of God? This is what we should walk away with in Daniel. Christ’s kingdom will expand to fill the whole earth; He will defeat all His enemies until He comes to defeat His last enemy which is death. This is the battle that His servants are to be engaged in. The victory is certain and the interpretation is sure. God has declared it. Daniel 7:27, “Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

O Lord God, we do thank You for this book. We pray that You use the book to strengthen us, give us a greater boldness, a greater willingness to speak to the culture and to those who are far off from You, those who are lost Recognizing You are the God who has the power to take the most wicked and most blatantly in violation of Your commandments and turn their heart. You could do it to Nebuchadnezzar, You can do it to anyone we choose to witness to. Lord, make us more faithful to declare Your righteousness to the nations, that You are the God who judges nations, You are the God who pours out His wrath upon them. As we go through the book of Isaiah and see over and over again how You will judge nations. Lord, let us be a people that are willing to declare this about our own nation, as we are a nation that does not desire to retain God in our knowledge. Lord, let us be a people who are seeking first Your kingdom. Give us a greater understanding of this, a greater boldness in this, and a greater desire to be faithful servants. We ask this in Your Son’s name, amen.