

# The Kingdom of God will Fill the Earth

Last week Kirk introduced the book of Daniel.

- Written about 530 B.C. by the prophet Daniel.
- Daniel was taken as a young man into captivity along with many of the upper crust of the nation of Judah into Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar.
- In chapter one, we saw that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah humbly requested that they not defile themselves by eating the king's food.
- God granted them health and wisdom so that they outshone the others in the King's service.
- They were in Babylon, but Babylon was not in them.

Now, in chapter 2, we will see:

1. There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets.
  - a. There are things that natural intelligence and skill can't discern
  - b. God holds the future in his hands
  - c. God unveils these things at his discretion
2. God is sovereign over the kingdoms of the earth.
  - a. It is God who allows one kingdom to rise and another to fall
3. We must let the Kingdom of God grow in us, or it will crush us.
  - a. It starts small, but grows and fills the whole earth
  - b. God's wants to work in us to conquer the kingdom of our hearts.

The book of Daniel is written in a very entertaining way. There are amazing truths woven into a narrative that is both dramatic and memorable. I've asked Krysti to read the first half of Daniel chapter 2 for us.

Daniel 2:1-36

## 1. There is a God who Reveals Secrets

The scene is set and the great king of Babylon has had a troubling dream that left him shaken and wanting answers. So he calls those who he hoped could give him answers. The Babylonian wise men who consisted of:

- Magicians – those who had occult knowledge
- Chaldeans – wise men
- Sorcerers – use witchcraft or sorcery
- Astrologers – enchanters

These are the Babylonian “best of the best”. And Nebby asks these guys to tell him his dream and what it meant.

Now, some commentators think it might have been that the King was troubled by the dream, **but couldn't remember the details**. I know I've had dreams that I awoke from where I can't remember the dream. Sometimes I wake up laughing, and Janet will be like “what's so funny,” and I'm like “I can't remember”. Regardless, the King asks his fun squad – tell me the dream and what it means.

Of course, if the King told them the dream, they could spin a story of interpretation. Anyone with an imagination could do that, right? But to know WHAT he dreamed AND the interpretation, that's difficult. **The wise men basically admit only God can do that.**

So these guys are supposed to have special skills. To be able to use their black arts and magic and astrology and what have you to reveal this secret. **But they can't.**

So the king orders them all to be executed. Pretty harsh. Then Daniel enters the story. He asks King Nebuchadnezzar for time to interpret the dream. Then he goes back to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and

*Dan 2:18 He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of Babylon.*

And God comes through and gives the revelation to Daniel and his friends.

*Dan 2:21 He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars.*

*22 He reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies hidden in darkness, though he is surrounded by light.*

When Daniel goes to the king, he doesn't get puffed up about it. He simply tells the king:

*Dan 2:28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets...*

*Dan 2:30 And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart.*

As we wander through this life, probably your biggest concern isn't getting a dream interpreted. But how many times do we face difficulties that are beyond our ability to understand or work through? All the time, right?

There are many people out there today who claim to have secret knowledge that has been hidden. Some even claim to have received secrets in dreams.

We can scour the internet looking for the hidden secrets to be revealed. And yes, I use youtube all the time to figure out problems with my car, or an appliance and such forth. But some problems just can't be solved by purely human wisdom. But...

- There's a God in heaven.
- He controls the course of world events.
- He reveals secrets.

**My first point is this: In our confusion, in our struggles, let us seek Jesus rather than the Chaldeans of the world. Only God holds the wisdom and knowledge we truly need.**

## 2. God is Sovereign over the Kingdoms of the Earth

On to the dream.

- The dream is about a great statue.
- 4 different parts, made of 4 different materials
- A rock is cut out, **but not by human hands**. It struck the statue on its feet and smashed the statue to pieces. The wind swept them away without a trace.
- But the rock becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth.

How many of you like ancient history? I know as a kid I hated it. Seemed so completely irrelevant and uninteresting. **But when you see it in the context of God being the author and architect of it all, it is pretty cool!**

The dream is about 4 kingdoms of the earth. The first, the head of gold is Babylon with Nebby as its king. The other 3 are future kingdoms, and there are some different ways scholars look at this. Most interpret the 4 kingdoms this way:

1. Babylonian (626 – 539 BC)
2. Medes and Persians (539 – 336 BC)
3. Greece (336 BC to 31 BC)
4. Roman (31 BC to 323 AD)

What is the rock that is cut out, but not by human hands?

*Dan 2:34 As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain, but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits. 35 The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the*

*rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth.*

It is the kingdom of God. Some suggest that this coming is not the first appearance of Jesus, but the second. I think it encompasses both.

The Kingdom of God came upon the earth with the incarnation of God in the flesh.

When Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor he said:

*Luke 4:21 "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

*Mark 1:14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

The important aspect about this prophetic vision is that **the kingdom of God will one day rule the earth**. It will replace them all. Grind them to dust. And leave not a trace behind. Jesus refers to himself as the stone that the builders rejected.

*Mat 21:42 Then Jesus asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures?"*

*'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'*

That is the foundation of the church, which will prevail until the end of time when Jesus returns to establish the New Heaven and New Earth.

So we see this statue representing the 4 great kingdoms of the earth prior to the coming of Christ. Then comes the rock. **Consider how unimpressive this all is from a world stage.**

- A King born and raised in the backwaters of Israel.
- In a nation occupied and controlled by the mighty Roman Empire.
- Who gathers a small band of followers.
- Teaches them that the Kingdom of God is not of this world.
- Then dies a brutal execution at the hands of Romans, instigated by the leaders of his own people.

This is not the look of a rising empire that comes and wipes the others off the face of the earth. But this is a hallmark of the Kingdom of God. Both in the world and in our lives.

My second point is this:

**The kingdom of God starts small, but then fills the earth.**

Recall a verse we hear often at Christmas time. Written hundreds of years before Jesus came.

*Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*

**Of the INCREASE of his government and peace, there will be no end.**

**Ever heard this one?**

Would you rather I give you \$1 Million now, or 1 cent today that doubles every day for 30 days? Do you know that the 1cent would become \$5,368,709.12 in 30 days?

It can be discouraging at times when we think God's kingdom is losing. But we must remember that this is the way it is supposed to work.

***Matt 13:31** Here is another illustration Jesus used: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches."*

*33 Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough."*

So this rock – it started as small as you can even imagine. A single cell inside his mother Mary. He was born a tiny, helpless infant. He grew to be a man. He lived to be our sacrifice for sin upon that cross. He rose again, proving he was sinless, and the Messiah, and God himself!

The government shall be upon his shoulder. What government? The church.

*Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

*Col 2:9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*

The Kingdom of God, spread through the Church Jesus established is spreading throughout the earth.

Now you might say, “the church has little influence on current events”. That’s not the point. The church is growing all over the world. Consider the work going on to translate the Bible...

The church is growing in number worldwide. This prophecy from Daniel, 2600 years ago is coming true in our day!

### 3. We must fall upon the Rock, or it will fall upon us.

We must recognize that the Kingdom of God will replace all other kingdoms, and so we should put His Kingdom above our own. There is nothing worth going after in this life other than the Kingdom of God. It is the only thing that will last forever and it will crush us if we’re not a part of it.

*Mat 6:33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

This rock that was cut out, is either the cornerstone of our lives, or the stumbling stone that will crush us.

*Luke 20:17 Jesus looked at them and said, “Then what does this Scripture mean? ‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’*

*18 Everyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.”*

I think Jesus is making the connection between the verse in Psalms 118 and Nebuchadnezzar’s dream!

*1 Pet 2:8 “He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they do not obey God’s word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them.*

If we recognize the inevitability of the Kingdom of God, we will gladly submit to His will and receive his blessing. Otherwise, we get crushed.

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## Let’s apply this in our lives.

### 1. Remember that there is a God in Heaven who reveals secrets

Seek wisdom from God first. How do you do that?

- Read and learn his Word.
- Pray and seek God’s wisdom trusting that God wants to reveal himself to you

- Put into practice what God reveals

## **2. Realize that God's Kingdom will one day be the only Kingdom**

All of the kingdoms of this earth are passing away.

- Nothing you build on this earth will last.
- Only the word of God and the people of God will continue
- Seek First His Kingdom, live for Jesus

## **3. Let the Kingdom of God grow in you.**

As you submit your life to Jesus, you might not always see the effects. Your marriage might still struggle. You might have family difficulties, health issues, financial issues.

But what I have seen in my life is that over time, the work of God in my life increases. My life changes and my hope for the future increases. I know that Jesus is the Lord of all creation and he will bring about his future kingdom in time. And that Kingdom will last forever.