

## Daniel 2

**SABBATH—JULY 8****READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Daniel 2.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “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” (Daniel 2:44 NIV).

**A YOUNG MAN WAS STRUGGLING WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD.** He said to a Christian, “I will give you an hour to prove to me that God is real!” Without wasting any time, the Christian took him through Daniel 2. When the Christian finished, the young man said, “Now I know there is a God!”

Daniel was written in the sixth century B.C. It shows the history of the world from Daniel’s time through our time. It also shows beyond our time. How could any thinking person refuse to accept the prophecy in Daniel 2, and the God who has shown Himself to be the true God? Daniel 2 is a powerful witness<sup>1</sup> for the Christian faith. In early centuries of the church, many people argued wrongly that Daniel was written in the middle of the second century B.C. They claimed it was written after the events<sup>2</sup> it talked about. Many still believe this today. But there is no proof that Daniel was written in the middle of the second century. And these people cannot explain how Daniel foretells events that happened many hundred years after their second-century B.C. date.

This week, we will study the wonderful prophecy in Daniel 2. This prophecy is the foundation (basis) for our study on the judgment and the gospel.

<sup>1</sup>witness—something that gives powerful proof that something is real.

<sup>2</sup>events—things that happen.

**SUNDAY—JULY 9****THE BIG PICTURE (Daniel 2:1-25)**

**Read Daniel 2:1-25. Then answer the following questions:**

1. Why did the servants want the king to tell them the dream?
2. What were the only two possible ends of all the wise men under the king's command?
3. How did Daniel's actions show he was helpless without God?
4. Why was Daniel so sure he could show the king this secret?

Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving shows the main message of his book: The Lord is King. He even can remove or set up kings. With our human limits (1 Corinthians 12:12), we may feel overwhelmed by events. But we have the assurance<sup>3</sup> that God is in total control.

Even more important, Daniel 2:1-25 shows that He is also close to each one of us. Look at how He came to Daniel in a "night vision" and showed him what he needed to know. Talk about a close connection! Daniel was a prisoner in a large world empire. But the God of all the earth (Joshua 3:11) showed His power and His care to this simple Hebrew man. This is the same God

whom we worship and serve today.

**When was the last time you were in a "hopeless" situation? How did God show His power and care to you at that time? Share your answer with the class.**



**Jesus is our King.**

**MONDAY—JULY 10****SECRET SHOWN (Daniel 2:26-45)**

**Read Daniel 2:26-45. Then write a summary of the dream and its interpretation. To the best of your knowledge, what are the four earthly kingdoms represented in these verses?**

<sup>3</sup>assurance—a promise that gives hope to people.



Daniel lived six hundred years before Jesus was born. Daniel is showing the history of the world. The head of gold is Babylon. The chest and arms of silver was the Medo-Persian Empire. The belly and thighs of brass was Greece. And the iron in the legs was the Roman Empire. This empire later became the nations of modern Europe. These nations are the feet of iron and clay.

This is not an Adventist invention. Jewish and Christian Bible students for many hundreds of years have interpreted Daniel 2 this same way.

**How does the prophecy end? What kingdom is finally established? What does the answer show about Daniel 2?**

Daniel 2 shows a large picture of history. One world power succeeded

another beginning more than five hundred years before Christ and ending sometime in the future. Then God's eternal<sup>4</sup> kingdom will be established after Christ's return. So, Daniel 2 is taking us to the end of the world. People who limit Daniel 2 to the first coming of Christ are seriously twisting the truth about an important teaching in the chapter. This is the same with the whole book of Daniel. Without question, Daniel is a book that shows events right up to the Second Coming and afterwards. Daniel is truly dealing with the time of "the end" (Daniel 8:17, 19; Daniel 12:4, 9, 13).

## TUESDAY—JULY 11

### THE ROMAN EMPIRE (Daniel 2:33, 34)

If you read Daniel 2, you will notice something interesting.

What metal was used for Babylon? \_\_\_\_\_ What metal was used for Media-Persia? \_\_\_\_\_ What metal was used for Greece? \_\_\_\_\_ What metal was used for Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

Babylon was replaced by a new metal. Media-Persia was replaced by a new metal. And Greece was replaced by a new metal. But, in Daniel 2:33, 34, the iron (Rome) stays until the stone cut out "without

<sup>4</sup>eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

hands" (Daniel 2:34) destroys everything. The iron that comes after Greece remains until the end. But in the feet, the iron mixes with clay. This shows that the metal of the fourth kingdom (iron) remains until the end, even though it is mixed with clay (Daniel 2:40-44). The point is clear: The fourth kingdom (power) arises after Greece and remains until the end in a different form. In Daniel, the fourth power, the power coming after Greece, stays the same power. It is iron all the way through, unlike the past powers whose metal disappeared when a whole new power arose. But at some point, the fourth power did change form. So, it is Rome from the time of Greece until the end of the world. Rome continues today as a world power. But its form is very different from when it first arose after Greece.

**Many centuries ago, one of England's greatest political thinkers wrote "first, a man thinks about the beginning of this great religious power. Then he will easily see that the Catholic Rome is the same one as the ghost of the fallen Roman Empire, sitting crowned on the fallen Rome's grace."—Adapted from Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. How does this quote help us understand what Daniel 2 teaches about the Roman Empire?**

**Think for a few minutes about how wonderful this prophecy is. Think about how such a perfect prophecy could be made so many hundreds of years ago. How**

**should this give you more faith to trust in the Bible and its promises?**

## **WEDNESDAY—JULY 12**

### **MULTIPLE (MANY) FULFILLMENTS? (Daniel 8:20, 21)**

Daniel 2 shows five kingdoms. But Daniel 2 names only two: (1) Babylon (Daniel 2:37, 38) and (2) God's kingdom (Daniel 2:44). Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 cover much of the same material as Daniel 2 with different viewpoints. Also Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 name two more of the five kingdoms.

**What two kingdoms do Daniel 8:20, 21 name?**

If we were to "map" the kingdoms named in Daniel, it would look like this:

Babylon (Daniel 2:37, 38)

Media-Persia (Daniel 8:20)

Greece (Daniel 8:21)

Fourth kingdom

God's eternal kingdom (Daniel 2:44)

**Read Daniel's own interpretation of the vision in Daniel 2:37-45. Do you see anything there showing that these prophecies can have different meanings in different times? Explain your answer.**

Daniel does not name the fourth kingdom. But it can be only one kingdom. We will learn more about this later. Of the five kingdoms shown, four

are named. The prophecy says nothing about their having different meanings. These are kingdoms so well known in world history that they could not have different meanings in different times.

**We live in a world where things are always changing. For example, ground can fall from under our feet. But the past does not change. Look at how solid a foundation (basis) God has given us with Daniel's prophecy. How can you use this foundation to make your faith stronger?**



The world is always changing.  
But the Bible never changes.

## THURSDAY—JULY 13

### ANTIQUITY (OLDEN TIMES) TO ETERNITY<sup>5</sup> (Daniel 2:37-45)

It is clear that Daniel 2 is an historical study. Some of Daniel 2 leads into our time and afterward. But Daniel 2 is based in history.

**Summarize the basic message of Daniel 2:37-45.**

This prophecy begins in antiquity (the olden times) and follows world history to “the time of the end” (Daniel 12:9). This means after our time and into God’s eternal kingdom.

Daniel 2:37-45 also shows the method for how we should interpret Daniel’s prophecies. Daniel 2:37-44 holds the key to understanding the prophecies, because these verses interpret the prophecies. This shows the historicist method of interpreting what the verses say. Adventists are almost alone of all religious groups in using this method. The historicist method teaches that these prophecies follow human history from the beginning to eternity. The historicist method shows that these prophecies are not focused alone on events in the far past or alone on events in the future. Instead, the prophecies cover the order of world history from the past into the future. So, in the first prophetic part of Daniel (Daniel 2), we have the key to understanding these prophecies.

**Read Daniel 2:34, 35 and its interpretation in Daniel 2:44, 45. What do these verses tell us about the future of this last kingdom? What do we find in these verses that proves this kingdom has not yet come?**

<sup>5</sup>eternity—life without end.



**Daniel 2:37-45 is the key to understanding other prophecies in his book.**

**Daniel was correct about the rise and fall of all the kingdoms in his prophecies. Daniel's prophecies about Europe have come true. How much reason do you have to trust him on the promise of the coming of God's final kingdom?**

#### FRIDAY—JULY 14

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “Some will take the truth for their time, and put it in the future. Events in the order of prophecy that had their fulfillment in the past are made future. In this way, these theories destroy the faith of some believers.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 102.

This week, we have seen that Daniel 2 presents a powerful argument for trusting that the Bible is God-inspired. How could someone six hundred years before Christ have outlined world history exactly as history has happened?

That is something we cannot give a natural explanation for! The point is so clearly seen that some people claim that the book of Daniel was written in the second hundred years before Christ’s birth and that Daniel’s prophecies had been fulfilled before they were written. But this argument will not hold for several reasons:

First of all, Christ’s words in Matthew 24:15 prove that He believed some of Daniel’s prophecies were still for the future.

Second, suppose a person refused to accept words about when he lived (Daniel 1:1; Daniel 2:1; Daniel 7:1; Daniel 9:1) and date the book in the second century before Christ. Then, how does this explain the wonderful fulfillment of prophecy showing both Rome’s control of the world (which had not happened yet) and Rome’s breakup into modern European nations? Also, the present condition of Rome is exactly as Daniel had written. Not bad for a man writing many hundred years before some of these events really happened! So, there is no reason for us to accept the second-century B.C. date for Daniel. This idea was started by people who wanted to make Christianity look bad. As Christians, we must take the Bible for what it says. We should not depend on what humans say about the Bible.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- As a class, talk about your answers to Sunday’s question.
- How can the prophecy of Daniel 2 be a powerful witnessing<sup>6</sup> tool?

<sup>6</sup>witnessing—showing that God is real.