

# ***THE ONLY THING THAT LASTS, DANIEL 2:1-24***

Unshakable Faith #2

◆**Intro:** Ok today is going to a shorter study because we have two special things in addition: 1) Troy Clements is going to share his testimony of what God has done in his life! 2) we're going to dismiss a tad early so you can get coffee and attend our Ministry Fair in the gym! There will be several tables with ministry labels on them and people at them that can tell you the kind of things that ministry does. Some are brand new, or hoping to start. Others have been going on for a long time. So ask the Lord where he wants you as you mill around and read the flyers and sign up.

◆OK, to our text. Daniel 2. Real quick: there's a lot there but we will only touch one piece today. The first half of the chapter is about the fact that Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and wants it interpreted. The second half is the interpretation through Daniel. We'll look at that only in passing now, because we will visit it again in Daniel 7 with a parallel vision.

◆**1. Bad news:** No earthly kingdom lasts. So look for the something more.

◆A. In 2013 all across the Ukraine over 100 statues of Lenin were toppled and craned away like a frozen steel bodies ready for burial. In 2003 Saddam Husseins reign ended and his statues toppled in Iraq. People erect statues to memorialize the greatness or contributions of individuals, but people and/or their popularity never lasts whether for good or bad reasons. Greatness is fleeting. There is always another view that gains ground, or someone new who breaks your record. Likewise kingdoms are fleeting. There is always another contender of a later time in the future waiting to knock the aging champ down

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for the count and take his title. History shows this to be true, and so wisdom suggests we look at the big picture of history to evaluate what is worth building on. God shows this to King Nebuchadnezzar (Neb. for short) in chapter two.

◆**B.** Now, the evidence points to the fact that Daniel wrote his book around 530BC during the reign of Cyrus of Persia. Nine years before that Cyrus had defeated Babylon. So Daniel lived that history. But he goes on to tell of history neither he nor Neb would ever see. And if you know your history, what Neb saw in a dream clearly takes place. Neb sees a statue with a gold head, a silver chest/arms, bronze belly and thighs, and legs/feet of an iron/clay mix. Daniel tells him it represents four kingdoms that will follow one another, starting with Babylon which is the gold. History bears out that those four kingdoms were in succession Babylon (gold), Medio-Peria (silver), Greece (bronze), and Rome (iron/clay).

◆For now notice that none of these great world powers exist today! All we have of any of them is ruins of stone and artifacts. And so all nations go. So too will go the USA eventually.

◆Great Britain colonized the globe, mostly because they invented the chronograph that could maintain time on the sea and therefore for a long time controlled the seas.

◆The French General Napoleon conquered most of Europe but he's gone.

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◆Hitler did almost the exact same thing, but his empire toppled too.

◆Pause a moment to consider what kingdom are you building? Is it a corporate kingdom? An agricultural kingdom you long for? A portfolio? A shelf full of awards can represent your kingdom. Becoming a big shot in your profession can be the kingdom you serve. Your school volleyball record can be your kingdom. But think about it. 99% of the high school sports champs will never play it again after they graduate! Does it make sense that it's a kingdom for you? (Preachers do it too, right? I was at a Saddleback conference where Rick Warren is the lead pastor, and got a chance to talk to him on the sidewalk for a moment as he stepped out of a door. Someone commented on the size of the place (20,000 on a weekend). Warren said something like, "Yeah, the preachers are the ones impressed by the numbers." I told him I was a lowly Sunday School volunteer captivated by the theology depth being shared.)

◆*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt16:24-26*

◆Whatever your kingdom is, it won't last. If it doesn't crumble during your life it will when you die. If you're building anything not anchored in heaven, you'll lose it in the end. Only one

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kingdom really rules and lasts into eternity, that of Jesus Christ!

Time to talk about that!

◆**2. Good news:** There is a lasting kingdom. So become a citizen there! Everything you do and live for in a lasting kingdom continues to last forever! What would have happened if a Jew had had Neb's dream? Everyone would say, "Of course you dreamed that the empire enslaving you would fall!" But Neb. had the dream. And only Daniel, the Israelite could tell him both what it was and what it meant. That way God was showing Israel that his Kingdom was the real kingdom. Hang in there Israel.

◆**A.** God's Kingdom is clearly a supernatural kingdom that extends beyond all others! In Neb's dream a rock, of seeming divine origin, destroys the statue of the four kingdoms. Let's read v44-45

◆"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

◆Verse 35 told us the rock that crushed the statue became a huge mountain that filled the whole earth! It's God's kingdom!

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And what happened in history during the time of the Roman rulers (4th kingdom)? Jesus, not made by human hands (divine), but also of the earth (human) (the Babylonian name for earth is "mountain house") was born, and set into motion God's kingdom. Contrary to what the magi of Babylon say (v11) there is a god who does live among men!

◆ *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 1:14*

◆ B. Daniels story verifies that the spiritual realm does indeed intersect the human realm. The supernatural God reveals himself to natural humans. Do we grasp the significance of this.

◆ Things you don't know, can be revealed to you. Hope you don't have, can become yours. Someone greater than anything on earth can guide your life and straighten out your future!

◆ **Conclusion.** Neb's dream was an invitation for Babylon and Israel to hope in the True God. And it's an invitation to you too. You can align yourself with the revealer of mysteries. You can interact with God because of Jesus Christ. This is such encouragement in a world where so much breaks down, or goes wrong; where sin is heralded as equality and health; where good appears bad, and bad appears good. All that we see are human kingdoms. But there is another. It's the one we all need. Bow yourself to Gods kingdom!