Sunday Morning Message

September 20, 2026

There Is a God in Heaven

Doors of Opportunity in a Dark Kingdom

Series — The Book of Daniel

Text — Daniel Chapter 2

Congregational Reading — Daniel 2:26–28

Last Week, and This Week

Last Sunday we met four young Hebrew men who purposed in their hearts that Babylon would not defile them. God gave them favor, wisdom, and a place before the king. Chapter 1 was a quiet test in a dining hall. Chapter 2 is a public test in a throne room. The door is bigger. The danger is greater. The opportunity to glorify God is greater still.

> *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." (Luke 16:10)*

That is how God often works. If you will walk through the small doors — faithfulness in your daily walk with God, being gracious with someone when they are being ugly to you, being faithful to your church and a consistent testimony in your community, quietly refusing to defile yourself with the many sinful temptations offered in our culture — He is able to set a larger door in front of you. Daniel had already been found ten times better than the magicians of Babylon (Daniel 1:19–20). Now the whole empire is about to learn that there is a God in heaven.

Have you ever been going about your business when you suddenly knew the Lord had opened a door? Someone asked about your faith. A neighbor was in trouble and you could help. A crisis landed in your lap that you could not fix but could not ignore. That is what Daniel 2 is all about. A pagan king cannot sleep. The experts have no answer. A death sentence is hanging over the wise men of Babylon — including Daniel and his friends. What looks like a disaster is a door.

I. A Dream That Human Wisdom Cannot Solve (vv. 1–13)

> *"And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." (Daniel 2:1)*

The most powerful man on earth has a dream and then cannot get back to sleep. God has gotten into the king's bedroom. Nebuchadnezzar calls the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans — the wisest men of Babylon. He will not even tell them what he dreamed. He says "the thing is gone from me" (vv. 5, 8). They must tell him the dream and the interpretation, or they will be cut in pieces and their houses made a dunghill (vv. 2–5).

That sounds harsh to our ears, but it exposes those who would attempt to make something up. These men made their living claiming access to secret things. As long as the king supplied the dream, they could manufacture an interpretation. When he demands the dream itself, the whole system collapses.

> *"The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter… and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." (Daniel 2:10–11)*

They told the truth without meaning to. No mortal man can do this. Only a God whose dwelling is not with flesh can reveal it. They were better theologians in their panic than they had been in their profession. The king is furious. The decree goes out: destroy all the wise men of Babylon. Arioch, the captain of the guard, begins to gather them for the slaughter — and that search reaches Daniel (vv. 12–13).

What this says to us

When you are staring at a problem that is beyond your ability to solve and will not go away, remember what Babylon's experts finally admitted: men cannot save you. The government cannot save you. The church staff cannot save you. God may use people, but ultimately He is the source of all wisdom. A culture that trusts credentials, platforms, and "the science" more than the Lord will eventually meet a question none of its experts can answer.

Nebuchadnezzar had everything the world chases — power, gold, servants, a reputation — but he could not buy peace of mind. Some sitting here have a troubled spirit and broken sleep for the same reason. You have been asking the wrong counselors. There is a God in heaven.

> *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)*

II. A Prayer Meeting in the Dark (vv. 14–23)

Daniel does not panic, and he does not grandstand. He answers Arioch "with counsel and wisdom" (v. 14). He asks for time. Then he does the most important thing in the chapter: he goes home and tells his friends.

> *"Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." (Daniel 2:17–18)*

Four young men get on their knees in a pagan capital and ask the God of heaven for mercies. They do not have a strategy session first. They have a prayer meeting first. God answers.

> *"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven." (Daniel 2:19)*

Before Daniel ever walks into the throne room, he stops to praise. Verses 20–23 are a hymn. God is blessed. Wisdom and might are His. He changes the times and the seasons. He removeth kings, and setteth up kings. He giveth wisdom unto the wise. He revealeth the deep and secret things — the things we cannot understand or solve. Daniel even thanks God that He has made known "the king's matter." The answer has not yet been delivered to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel is already giving thanks.

Problems, prayer, a plan, and praise

Here is the pattern worth carrying out with you today: problems lead to prayer. Prayer leads to a plan. The plan, when God owns it, produces praise. Too many of us reverse the order. We make a plan, then ask God to bless the plan, and if the plan works, we quietly accept the credit. Daniel started on his face and ended on his feet blessing God.

> *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)*

A royal death sentence is not "good." The fear in that house that night was not good. But God worked the whole crisis together for good — for the king who needed the truth, for Daniel who needed a door, for the three friends who would stand with him, and above all for the glory of God among people who did not yet know Him. That is still how He works through a believer's troubles, if we will take those troubles to Him.

III. A Testimony That Gives God the Glory (vv. 24–35)

Daniel goes back to Arioch and says, *"Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king"* (v. 24). He is not only saving his own neck. He is interceding for men who do not share his faith. Then Arioch hurries Daniel in and tries to take a little of the credit: *"I have found a man…"* (v. 25). The court is already playing politics. Daniel will not.

> *"Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." (Daniel 2:27–28)*

That is the title of this message, and it is the heart of the book. Daniel will not let the king look at Daniel. Joseph did the same thing in Pharaoh's court: *"It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace"* (Genesis 41:16). Before the dream is even rehearsed, the living God has been named in Babylon.

Then Daniel tells the king what he saw — not the meaning yet, just the dream. A great image. Head of gold. Breast and arms of silver. Belly and thighs of brass. Legs of iron. Feet of iron mixed with clay. Then a stone, cut out without hands, smites the image upon its feet, breaks it to pieces, and the stone becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth (vv. 31–35).

The king knows this is his dream. Every false counselor in the room has just been exposed. The young Hebrew who would not eat the king's meat is now standing in the king's presence with the king's secret, and he still will not steal the glory.

IV. A Prophecy That Outlasts Every Empire (vv. 36–45)

Now the meaning. This is not a puzzle for scholars only. This is God prophetically sketching the rest of world history.

The head of gold — Babylon

> *"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory… Thou art this head of gold." (Daniel 2:37–38)*

Even Nebuchadnezzar's crown is a gift. *"The God of heaven hath given thee."* Last week we saw the same sovereignty in 1:2: *"the Lord gave Jehoiakim… into his hand."* Empires do not rise by accident.

The breast and arms of silver — Medo-Persia

"After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (v. 39). Two arms, one chest — two peoples joined in one empire. That kingdom will walk into this book in chapter 5, on the night Babylon falls.

The belly and thighs of brass — Greece

A third kingdom *"which shall bear rule over all the earth"* (v. 39). We will meet that empire in more detail in chapter 8, when a male goat comes from the west and does not touch the ground.

The legs of iron — Rome

"The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron" (v. 40). Iron breaks and bruises. Rome crushed the nations the way iron crushes ore. Two legs — the later division of the empire is already hinted at in the image.

The feet of iron mixed with clay — the last form of Gentile power

The feet and toes are part iron and part clay. Strong and brittle at the same time. *"They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay"* (v. 43). This is the final stage of the same Gentile system — what many of us have called a revived Roman Empire, the kingdom out of which Antichrist will rise. It has the old iron of Rome in it, but it will not hold together. We will see that "little horn" representing Antichrist more clearly in chapter 7.

The stone cut out without hands — the kingdom of Christ

> *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed… it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Daniel 2:44)*

The stone is not the church. The church does not smash the nations and fill the earth as a mountain in this age. The stone is cut out "without hands" — this is God's work, not man's. It strikes the image on the feet, not on the head. That matters. Christ's kingdom does not gradually replace Babylon in Daniel's day, or Rome in Caesar's day. It strikes the last form of Gentile power at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then it fills the whole earth. That is the kingdom we pray toward when we say, "Thy kingdom come."

Every headline about unstable nations, fragile alliances, and proud rulers is already on this statue. Gold gives way to silver. Silver gives way to brass. Brass gives way to iron. Iron mixes with clay. And then the Stone comes. If your confidence is in the image, you will live with anxiety. If your confidence is in the Stone, you can live with a purpose in Babylon.

Conclusion — Walk Through the Door and Give Him the Glory (vv. 46–49)

Nebuchadnezzar falls on his face. He commands an offering for Daniel. Then he says the sentence heaven had been waiting for:

> *"Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret." (Daniel 2:47)*

The king is not converted yet. Chapter 4 is still ahead. But the name of the true God has been spoken in the palace, and a door that started as a death sentence has become a testimony. Daniel is made ruler over the province of Babylon and chief of the governors over all the wise men. He asks for places for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The four who would not defile themselves in chapter 1 are now planted in the government of the empire in chapter 2.

No one walked through that door by accident. Daniel purposed. Daniel prayed. Daniel pointed to God. God opened what no man could open.

1. Look for doors. Not every door is a big opportunity — they often start out small. Pray over a meal. Let your children catch you with an open Bible. Come to church when it would be easier to stay home. Answer softly when the other person does not. Offer to pray for a co-worker. Help the person who cannot pay you back. Little doors are still doors.
2. Walk through them. You may be afraid. You may be inconvenienced. Daniel could have kept his head down and hoped the captain of the guard missed him. Faith walks through the door God opens, not the one we would choose.
3. Give Him the glory. If God uses you and something good comes of it, do not take the credit. Herod later died under the judgment of God for receiving praise that belonged to the Lord (Acts 12:21–23). Daniel's first sentence in the throne room was not "I have a gift." It was "there is a God in heaven."

Some here have never walked through the first door that matters. The Stone who will smash every proud kingdom has already come once — not yet to crush the image, but to bear your sin

on the cross and rise again. The same Jesus who will fill the earth with His kingdom will save any sinner who will call upon Him.

> *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)*

Do not trust an image made by men. Trust the Stone. And this week, when a door opens in this dark place, walk through it and make sure the glory goes to the God of heaven.