

III. What's the meaning of the rock?

"But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth."
Daniel 2:35

The rock which grows into a mountain is the kingdom of God.

Two things we learn about God's Kingdom here:

1. The kingdom of God is a completely supernatural thing.
...a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. Daniel 2:34

2. We learn the kingdom grows.

But the rock... became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. vs. 35

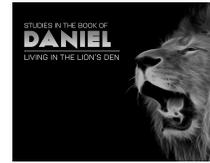
It does not come in and suddenly wipe out everything that's wrong. The kingdom of God comes in two stages. It came in when Jesus Christ first came, but it came in weakness and in service, and it didn't wipe away all the evil in the world, did it? Then at his second coming, the kingdom of God will come in total power and fill the whole earth. The kingdom of God *is* here but it's not yet finished.

So it's important for Christians to live in a secular, pluralistic society, because God has ordained it this way. But we also live with the certainty of God's kingdom come; and God's kingdom forever.

...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. vs. 44

Therefore three practical things:

- Immerse yourself in a church, it's your best shot at living with God's integrity in a fallen world governed by other kingdom's values.
- Nobody has all of their teachings right. *Nobody*.
So you also have to believe other Christians and other churches are doing God's work as well.
- Some congregations clearly assimilate into culture without a sense whatsoever of having left the scriptures, and other congregations separate themselves so far from culture as to be of no value to the place God has placed them.



How to Live as a Believer in a Hostile Culture? Daniel 2:26-35; 44-46

²⁶The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" ²⁷Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

²⁹As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. ³⁰As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind. ³¹You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.

The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. ³⁴While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

...⁴⁴In 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. ⁴⁵This 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." ⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him.

I. What's the meaning of the two names?

The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), ... vs. 26

Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem twice. In 587 he destroyed Jerusalem, took captives and left it desolate. But ten years before in 597 BC he defeated them, but did not raze them to the ground, but he did take about 10,000 Jews back to Babylon with him. Daniel was in that first group of exiles.

After the initial exile, Jeremiah, an OT prophet of God, was still back in Judah, and he outlined a blueprint for how the exiles should live while in Babylon.

"This is what the LORD [says to the exiles in Babylon]: 5 'Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage ... Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper ...

Jeremiah 29:4-9

Jeremiah said:

1. It's part of God's plan that you lose your cultural power .

¹⁰This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. (Jerusalem)

¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:10,11

2. It's not either I assimilate or I stay separate from Babylon

"Build houses. Settle down. Plant gardens. Eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters and seek the prosperity of the city. Increase in number there; do not decrease."

Jeremiah 29:5,6

3. God is calling the people to be spiritually bicultural.

"Pray for the city. Seek the peace or the *shalom* of the city, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Jeremiah 29:7

II. What's the meaning of the dream?

In Daniel 3 Nebuchadnezzar has a plan to build a huge statue of himself. Clearly the dream of Daniel 2 unsettled him about that plan

Daniel's Interpretation: Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory,³⁸ in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. **You are that head of gold.**³⁹ "After you, **another kingdom** will arise, inferior to yours. Next, **a third kingdom**, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.⁴⁰ Finally, there will be **a fourth kingdom**, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Daniel 2:37-40

The Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, and Romans.

And during their time God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. **That's the meaning of the dream.**

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. Daniel 2:44

So the questions are:

Whose kingdom are you building?
Whose glory are you working for?

Why I am doing what I do in life?
Who and what kingdom do I serve?

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. Matthew 6:24 & Luke 16:13