



# God Uses Daniel to Interpret the King's Dream

*Daniel 2*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will be either warned or comforted by God's sovereign plan for human history.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- Nebuchadnezzar wanted the wise men of Babylon to reveal his dream.
- Through God's power, Daniel revealed and interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
- Nebuchadnezzar's dream revealed God's plan for human history.

## KEY VERSE

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44).

## APPLICATION

- Trust that God controls human history.
- Repent before God's kingdom comes.
- Rejoice that God's kingdom is coming.

## NEXT WEEK

God Protects Daniel's Friends  
Read Daniel 3.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group



## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul....You shall teach them to your children" (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

#### **Nebuchadnezzar Demands an Explanation (Daniel 2:1–13)**

Daniel's first three years in Babylon had been intense. Because he was "good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand" (Dan. 1:4), Daniel, along with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, was chosen for three years of training in "the language and literature of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 1:4). While they were being trained for the king's service, these young men were given food and wine from the king's table. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" with the food (1:8), probably because the meat had come from unclean animals. Daniel chose to disobey the king rather than disobey God. God honored Daniel's obedience by giving him favor with the chief of the eunuchs. After 10 days of eating vegetables and drinking water, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than the men who were eating from the king's table (1:15). No longer required to eat the meat, Daniel and his friends were also blessed by God with "knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom" (1:17). At the end of the training period, Nebuchadnezzar was more impressed by Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah than by the others who had been trained. The king chose these four men to serve before him (1:19).

Before this time of training had ended, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah faced another crisis. King Nebuchadnezzar had commanded their execution! King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream that prevented his falling back asleep (Dan. 2:1). He called for "the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams" (2:2). The king wanted not only an interpretation of the dream, but also for the men to tell the dream to him (2:5). The king knew that if they could tell him the dream, then he could trust their interpretation of it (2:9). Showing how futile their magic was, the magicians and sorcerers protested the king's request. They complained that only a god could know the king's dream (2:10–11). Nebuchadnezzar became furious and commanded that all the wise men be destroyed (2:12). This death sentence included Daniel and his companions.

#### **God Reveals the Explanation (Daniel 2:14–23)**

Daniel never doubted God could reveal Nebuchadnezzar's dream. After finding out the reason for the death sentence and asking the king to grant them some more time, Daniel and his friends prayed for "mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (Dan. 2:18). When God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel, Daniel praised God (2:19). He praised Him for being the sovereign God who "changes the times and the seasons" and who "removes kings and raises up kings" (2:21). He also praised God for knowing what is

unknowable and revealing it to man (2:22). In verse 23, Daniel specifically thanked God for answering their prayer. God had glorified Himself by answering the request of His faithful servants.

### **Daniel Shares the Explanation (Daniel 2:24–45)**

When he went to tell the king his dream, Daniel took no credit for himself. Daniel said, “The wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king [his dream]....But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets” (Dan. 2:27). The God who reveals secrets had given Nebuchadnezzar the initial dream (2:29) and then revealed the secret to Daniel (2:30). Daniel humbly made clear that it was not because he was wiser than anyone else that the dream and its meaning were revealed to him (2:30).

The dream consisted of two parts. The first involved a statue (Dan. 2:31–33), and the second involved a rock (2:34–35). The impressive statue was made from various materials: the head was gold, the arms and torso were silver, the belly and thighs were bronze, the legs were iron, and the feet were of iron and clay. The materials decreased in value from top to bottom. The rock was more impressive than the statue. The rock, which had a supernatural origin (having been “cut out without hands”; 2:34), smashed the clay and iron feet, leading to the disintegration of the entire statue. The rock “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (2:35).

Having told the king the dream, Daniel next explained what it meant (Dan. 2:36). Before revealing that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, Daniel emphasized that the God of heaven had given to Nebuchadnezzar his “kingdom, power, strength, and glory” (2:37). Daniel explained that after the Babylonian kingdom, an inferior kingdom (represented by the silver) would arise (2:38). History reveals that this was the Medo-Persian kingdom led by Cyrus the Great. The bronze belly and thighs represented the third kingdom, Greece, which would rule over the civilized world (2:39). The fourth kingdom was represented by the iron legs. Like iron, this powerful kingdom “shatters everything” and “will break in pieces and crush all the others” (2:40). This fourth kingdom was Rome. The toes of clay and iron represented a future, still unrealized, manifestation of Rome. The toes were composed of clay and iron because the “kingdom shall be divided” (2:41). Although the kingdom will be as strong as iron, it will be as fragile as clay (2:42). This revived Roman empire will consist of 10 kingdoms (7:24), which will exist until “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (2:44). At Christ’s second coming, the confederation of kings will be destroyed and Christ will reign forever (2:44). Having finished his interpretation of the dream, Daniel emphasized the certainty of the future fulfillment: “The great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure” (2:45).

### **Nebuchadnezzar Responds to the Explanation (Daniel 2:46–49)**

Nebuchadnezzar was shocked by Daniel’s telling and explaining his dream. He responded by honoring Daniel by falling down before him. He also presented “an offering and incense” to Daniel, most likely indicating that he viewed him as the representative of God (Dan. 2:46). Nebuchadnezzar then verbally acknowledged the greatness of God. Only Daniel’s God had been able to reveal the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (2:47). The king rewarded Daniel with many gifts and made him the ruler of the province of Babylon and administrator over the wise men (2:48). Nebuchadnezzar also granted Daniel’s request to give positions to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (2:49).

## Conclusion

In Daniel 2, God's plan for human history is seen from Babylon to the return of Christ and His rule upon the earth. All human history is controlled by God. Nebuchadnezzar was awed by the dream and its meaning but did not change his heart in response to it. If men are lost, they should respond to the knowledge of God's future kingdom with repentance, lest they too are smashed at the return of Christ. But the saved can rejoice that God not only controls human history, but also is bringing the world to the triumphal return and reign of Christ. Until Christ returns, we must wait for His kingdom and trust Him to sustain us.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth"*  
(Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Conceal and Reveal

Before class time, hide various objects that the students will search for. They can be specifically tagged so that the students know when they've found something that was intentionally concealed. These items will be used later in the lesson. The items that should be hidden are: a crown; a rock; the separate parts of the statue enlarged and put on blocks (see "Destroying the Statue" in the Proclaim section); gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay-looking materials; and some dust in a bag.



### Mystery Bag

Put several familiar items (a pencil, book, eraser, etc.) in a bag. Have each student reach into the bag and, by touch, name as many objects as he can. Discuss the fact that trying to know something without seeing it can be difficult. But God knows everything, and so we can and must trust Him.



### Animal Riddles

Bring to class some pictures of common animals (a cat, a dog, a horse, a rabbit, etc.). Do not let the students see the pictures. Select one student to be "it," and attach a picture to his back so that the rest of the class can see it but he cannot. Have the other students give clues to the animal's identity (without naming the animal). For instance: "It is soft and furry." "It does not like dogs." "It says 'meow.'" Once the student can name the animal on his back, he can choose the next student to be "it," and so on, until every student has had a turn. Tell the students that in today's lesson, Daniel has to find out from God what King Nebuchadnezzar's dream is. Daniel prays to God instead of trying to guess what the dream might have been.



### Musical Chairs Review

Place chairs in a circle, facing outward, with one chair for each student. Number the chairs according to the number of review questions you will ask. (If you have more students than review questions, some questions may be repeated.) Start playing music, and have the student march around the circle. When the music

stops, they should sit. Whichever student is sitting in the chair corresponding to the question you ask must answer. (So, the first time, the student who sits in the chair numbered 1 will answer.) Continue until you have asked all the questions or every student has had a chance to answer.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

### Bible Lesson

The book of Daniel was written by Daniel himself. He was an Israelite and was born during King Josiah's reign. During this reign, Israel was struggling to protect themselves from three other empires: the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians. When Daniel was a child, King Josiah was killed by the Egyptians. The Israelites were so weak that they were unable to fight back and were overtaken. Then a new Egyptian king was named to rule over the Israelites, but he was not in power for long before the Babylonians overthrew him. The Israelites then came under the dominance of the Babylonians and their ruler, King Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar came to the land of Judah, where the Israelites lived, and he took many of the Israelites captive and brought them back with him to his palace in Babylon. Among those taken captive were Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abed-Nego). Daniel was very busy during his first three years in Babylon. Because he was very good-looking, very wise, and a good student, he was chosen, along with his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, for a special school. They studied the language and literature of the Chaldeans so they could serve the king with their knowledge. They were also given the privilege of eating the same fancy food that was served to the king. But Daniel knew that it was wrong for him to eat the king's food because it came from unclean animals. God's law said that it was wrong for the Israelites to eat food from these animals. So Daniel and his friends decided to obey God instead of the king. They knew that the king might get angry and punish them, but they still refused to eat the king's meat. They showed their loyalty to God by eating only vegetables and drinking only water. God honored them for their obedience, and after 10 days, they looked healthier than everyone who had eaten the king's fancy food. God also blessed them in their studies at school. They became even smarter and wiser than they had been before. When their schooling was finished, King Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed by Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah that he gave them a special job serving him. During the three years of schooling, Daniel and his friends also faced other problems. One night, King Nebuchadnezzar had a bad dream, and he could not go back to sleep. He called for his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to help him. They were among the people whom he thought to be the wisest and most powerful. The king wanted to know what his dream meant, but he did not want them to make up a

meaning. He wanted to know for sure that they knew what the dream meant. So he told them that since they were all so smart, they should first tell him what he had dreamed about, and then tell him what it meant. Of course, they could not read the king's mind and know what he had dreamed about, and they argued that only a god could do that. King Nebuchadnezzar became so angry that he commanded that all the wise men in his kingdom be killed. That order included Daniel and his friends. But Daniel knew that he could reveal the king's dream through God's power if that was what God wanted him to do. Daniel asked the king for time, and he and his friends prayed for mercy from God, asking that God would reveal the secret of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him. They prayed that they would not be killed with the rest of the wise men. God answered their prayer and revealed the dream to Daniel. Daniel praised God for graciously answering his prayer. He praised Him for being sovereign over everything in the world and for knowing things that man cannot know. God was glorified because He answered the prayer of His faithful servants. Daniel was given time with the king, and he made sure to give all the credit to God for what he would reveal. Daniel said that all the king's wise men had been unable to tell him about his dream, but that the God in heaven reveals secrets and had revealed the king's secret to him. Daniel told the king that it was God who had given him the dream in the first place. He also told the king that it was not because Daniel was wiser than anyone else that he had this knowledge, but because God had given him the knowledge. Daniel revealed the dream. It had two parts. The first part involved a statue, and the second part involved a rock. The impressive statue in the king's dream was made from various materials: the head was gold, the arms and middle were silver, the belly and thighs were bronze, the legs were iron, and the feet were iron and clay. The rock was even more impressive than the statue. The rock, which was supernatural, smashed the clay and iron feet, and this made the rest of the statue fall down and crumble to dust. The rock then "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Next, Daniel explained what the dream meant. He made sure that King Nebuchadnezzar knew that he had a kingdom only because God had given it to him in the first place. He explained that the silver in the statue represented a weaker kingdom that would take over the Babylonian kingdom and become the next great power. The bronze belly of the statue represented a third kingdom that would take over and rule the world. A fourth kingdom was represented by the iron legs of the statue. Like iron, this powerful kingdom "shatters everything" and it "will break in pieces and crush all the others." The toes on the statue were made of clay and iron, and they represented the future of the last kingdom. The last empire would have 10 kingdoms, just like the statue had 10 toes. Daniel said that this kingdom will exist until God comes and sets up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. That kingdom that will last forever is the kingdom that Jesus Christ will set up when He returns! Daniel finished his interpretation of the dream for King Nebuchadnezzar, and he made sure the king knew that the dream most certainly would come true. Daniel said, "The great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." King Nebuchadnezzar was shocked by Daniel's telling and explaining his dream. He fell down before Daniel and presented him with an offering and incense, probably because he saw Daniel as a representative of God. He acknowledged the greatness of God, because only Daniel's God had been able to reveal the mystery of his dream. Nebuchadnezzar rewarded Daniel with many gifts and made him the ruler of the province of Babylon and put him in charge of all the wise men. He also granted Daniel's request to give positions to his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. In Daniel 2, God reveals his plan for human history. Everything that has happened in the past was controlled by God, and so is everything in the



future. When people who are not saved hear of God's future plans, they should respond by repenting of their sins. Those who are saved can rejoice that God controls the past and the future because He is working out His plan to bring about the return of Jesus Christ to reign on earth.

## Lesson Questions

Why did Nebuchadnezzar order that all the wise men in Babylon be killed?  
*They could not reveal his dream.*

What did Daniel do when he heard Nebuchadnezzar wanted to kill him?  
*He asked for more time because he believed that God would reveal the dream to him.*

Did God reveal the dream to Daniel?  
*Yes. Daniel and his friends prayed that God would reveal the dream to Daniel. God answered their prayer, and Daniel was able to tell Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation.*

What did Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar before he interpreted the dream?  
*Daniel told the king that God had revealed the secret to him. He wanted to make sure that the king knew that God deserved the praise for what Daniel was able to do.*

What can we learn about God from the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream?  
*We can learn that God is in control of all of human history.*

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### Conceal and Reveal, Part 2

During the lesson, have the students bring up the items they found during the "Conceal and Reveal" activity in the Point time. As you teach, use each item as a visual aid to represent a major point of the lesson.



### Hard to Explain

Bring to class some pictures of various scenes—people talking, people walking dogs, etc. Ask the students what is going on in each scene. Also show them some pictures that are harder to interpret. Ask them whether they can figure out what is going on. Tell them that in today's lesson, King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and needs someone to explain it. Only God knows the secret things, and so Daniel, a man of God, explains the dream to the king



### Destroying the Statue

Materials: five shoeboxes of the same size, enlarged picture of the statue (at back of lesson), glue, markers



Directions: Place the shoeboxes on top of each other, and enlarge the statue to be the same height. Cut out the statue so that each part fits on one of the shoeboxes. As you come to the portion of the lesson where Nebuchadnezzar's dream is explained, you can use this visual to illustrate each portion of the statue. (Note: This can also be used during the "Conceal and Reveal" activities.)

## Praise and Worship

*Create in Me a Clean Heart*

*He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*

*My God Is So Great*

*Rejoice in the Lord Always*

*This Is My Father's World*

*Trust and Obey*



## Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

One night the king dreamed something strange.

*(Place hands under head as though sleeping.)*

He called his wise men to explain,

*(Wave hand as though summoning someone.)*

But they could not describe the dream

*(Hold hands out at sides, palms up.)*

Nor tell the king what it might mean.

*(Shrug shoulders; shake head no.)*

But Daniel said, "O king, it's true

*(Hold up one finger; nod head.)*

That God has sent this dream to you.

*(Point upward.)*

And by His mercy He'll reveal

*(Hold hands close together in fists; open hands, palms up and fingers spread.)*

What up to now has been concealed.

*(Bring fists back together.)*

A statue with a head of gold

*(Raise hand to indicate tall statue; place hands on head.)*

You first in dreaming did behold,

*(Hold up one finger.)*

And then a rock not cut with hands

*(Make fist with one hand; cover with other.)*

That grew until it filled the land.

*(Spread hands out wide.)*

The meaning of this mystery  
(*Tap temple.*)

Is God's intent for history.  
(*Point up; holds hands like an open book.*)

The dream is sure, its meaning too.  
(*Place hands under head as though sleeping; nod head.*)

These are the things that God will do."  
(*Draw lines across palm with finger of other hand; point up.*)

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### "God Reveals a Secret"

Materials: copies of the "God Reveals a Secret" craft pages; gold, silver, bronze, and black or gray glitter or crayons; scissors; glue

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft pages. Have them cut around the box containing the idol. Using crayons or glitter, they should decorate each part of the idol with the appropriate color (head: gold; chest/arms: silver; waist/thighs: bronze; feet: black or gray). Then have them cut along the dark lines to form flaps, leaving a tab on the left side. They should glue the tab onto the template page and fold back the pieces along the dotted line. When they lift the flaps, they will be able to read what each part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream meant



### Make a Metal Statue

Materials: extra-wide aluminum foil, small sheets of gold foil (optional), paper

Directions: Crumple a sheet of paper into a ball and then place it in the middle of a large square of aluminum foil. Wrap the foil around the ball to form the statue's head, and twist the ends a little to form the neck. Then form arms by pinching some of the foil on either side below the neck. Spread and flatten the remaining foil to form a base that will allow the statue to stand. If you have gold foil, cover the head, and press the edges in around the neck. If times and materials allow, you may want to let the students make two or three statues. They will improve with practice.



### Crushed by the Stone

Materials: iron (red), clay (gray), bronze, silver, and gold glitter; "Crushed by the Stone" craft page (at back of lesson); scissors; glue; small stones (or wads of gray paper); cardstock half-sheets

Directions: Give each student the necessary materials. (For younger students, you may need to prepare the craft by cutting out the craft page.) Once the students have the materials, they can glue the statue to the middle of a half-sheet of card-



stock. They can then glue the verse cards to the top and bottom of the sheet. They should put glue on the various parts of the statue and cover the parts with the appropriate colors of glitter. A small rock or wad of gray paper can be glued to the side of the craft sheet. Be sure to allow time for the craft to dry.

### **A Problem to Solve**

Create a puzzle from the second coloring sheet. Give it to the students, and ask them to solve it. Remind them that in today's lesson, the king had a problem that he couldn't solve. He needed God's help to find the answer to his problem. God used Daniel to give the solution to the king's dream.

### **Coloring Pages**

Give each student a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



### **MEMORY VERSE**

"Daniel answered and said: 'Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His'" (Daniel 2:20).



# God Reveals a Secret

God helped Daniel to reveal and interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:14–45.

“You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold” (Dan. 2:37–38).

“But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours” (2:39a).

“then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth” (2:39b).

“And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others” (2:40).

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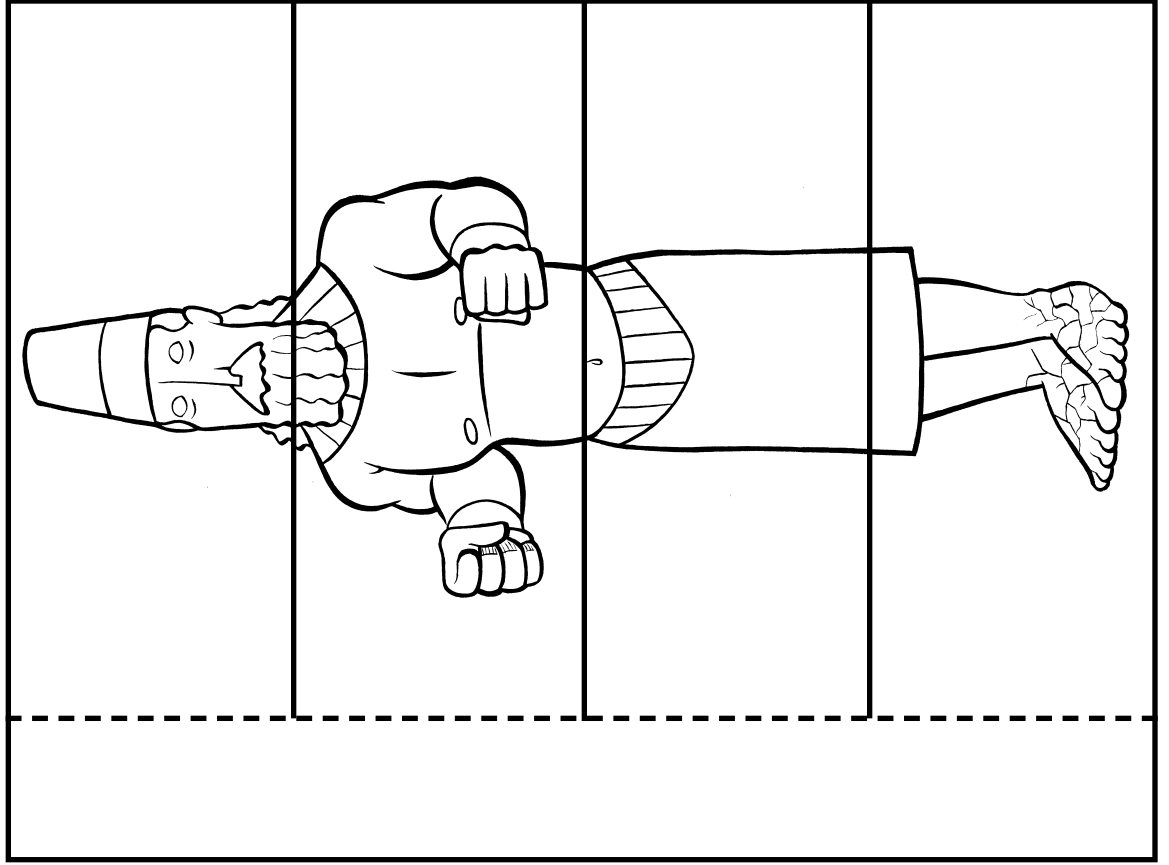
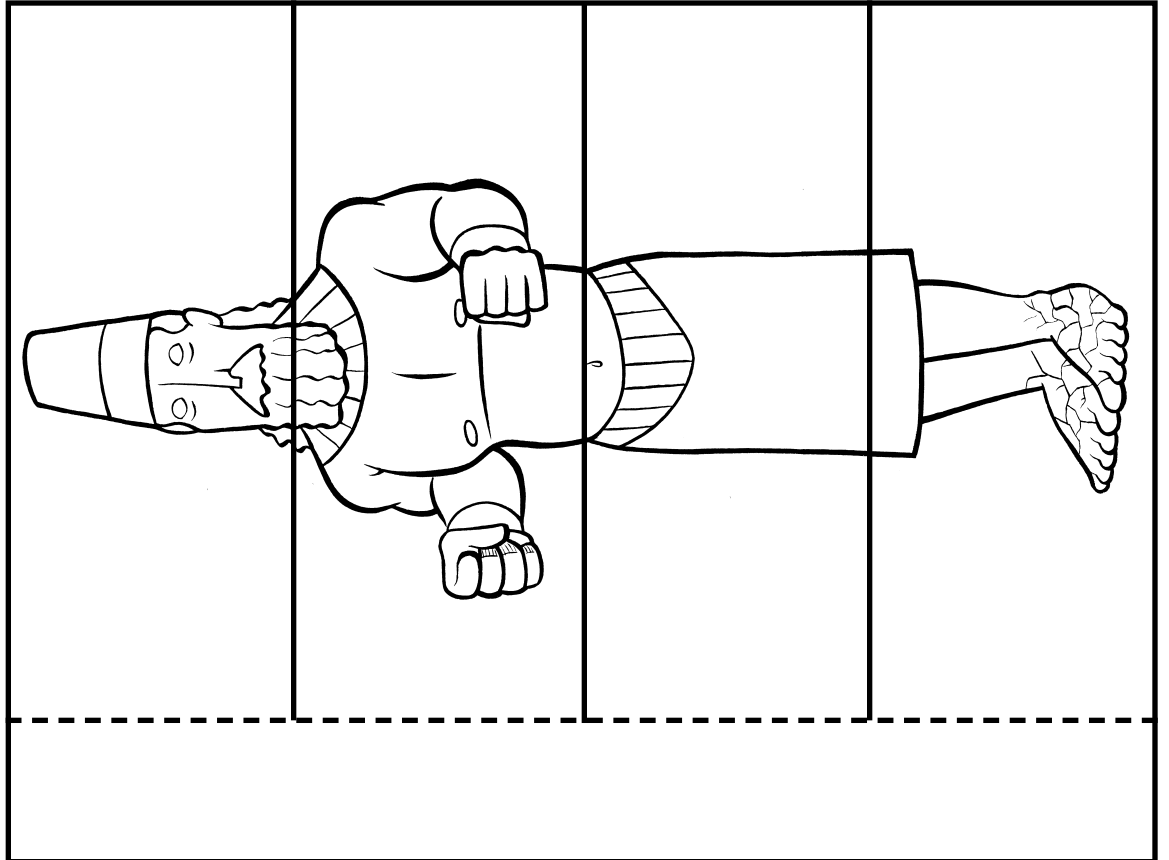
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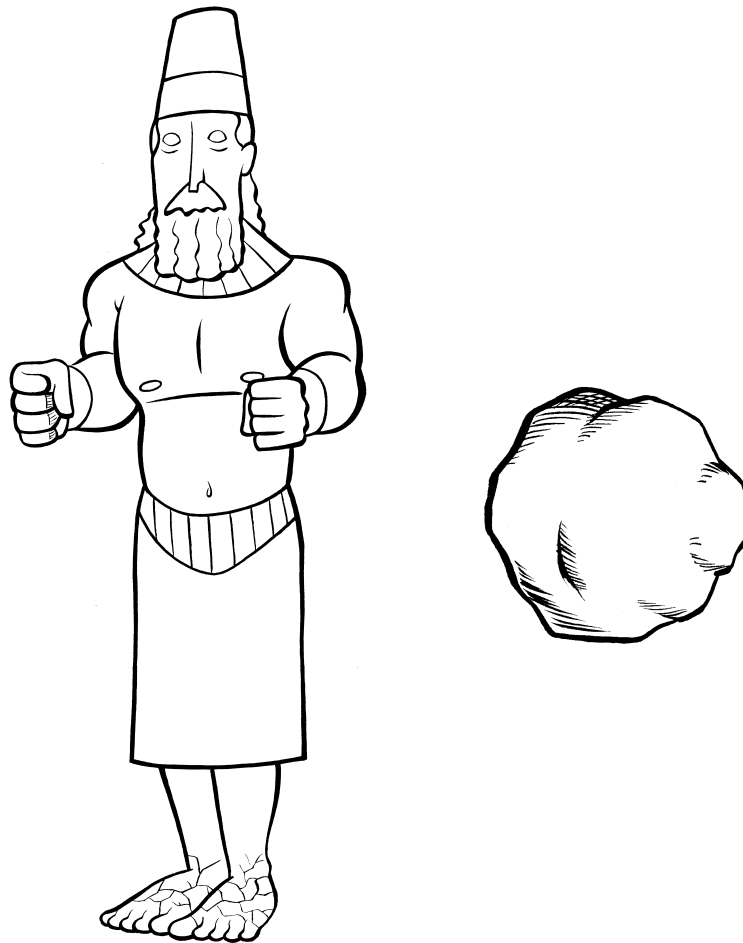






# Crushed by the Stone

“Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35).

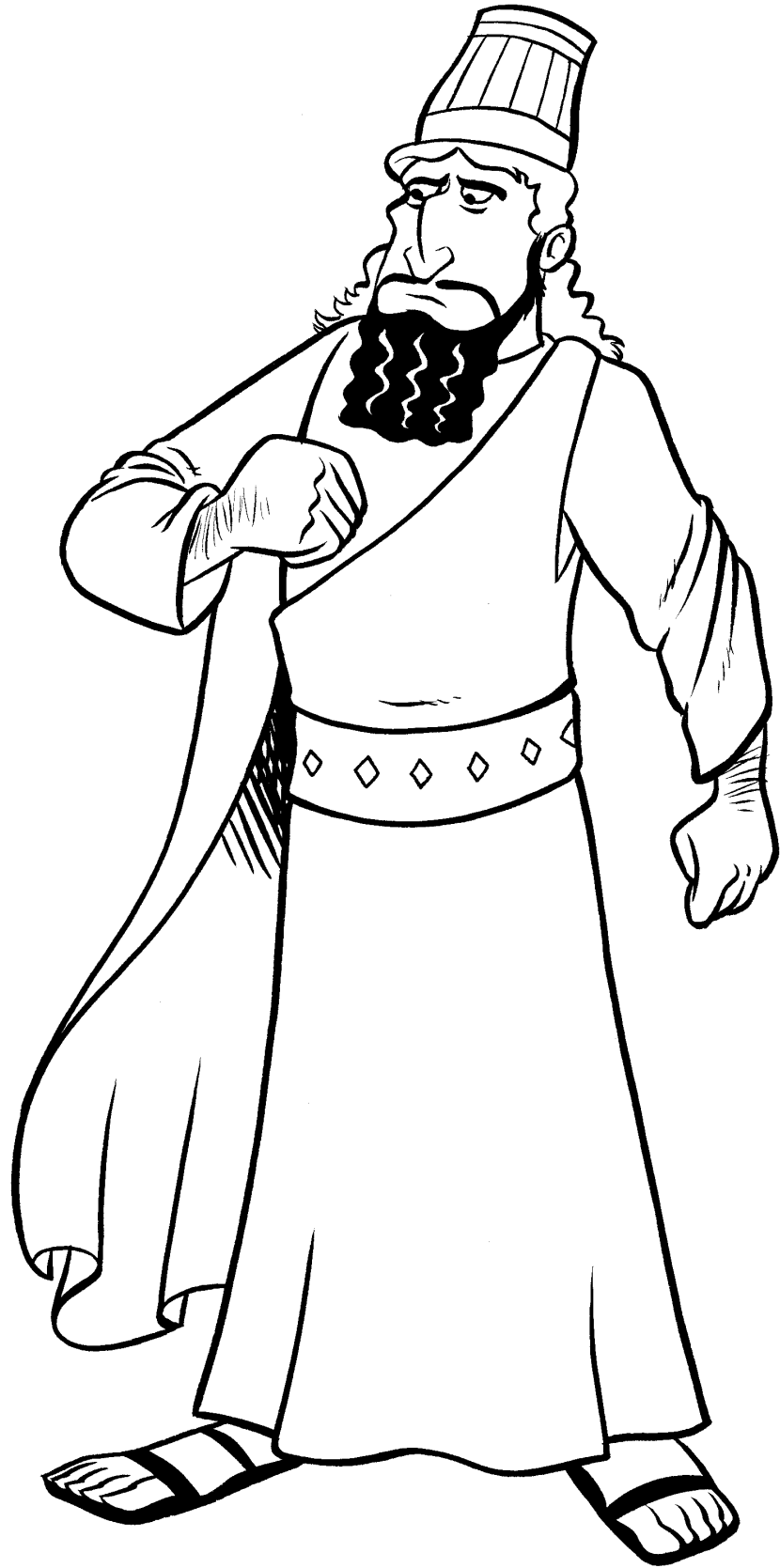


“And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Daniel 2:44).

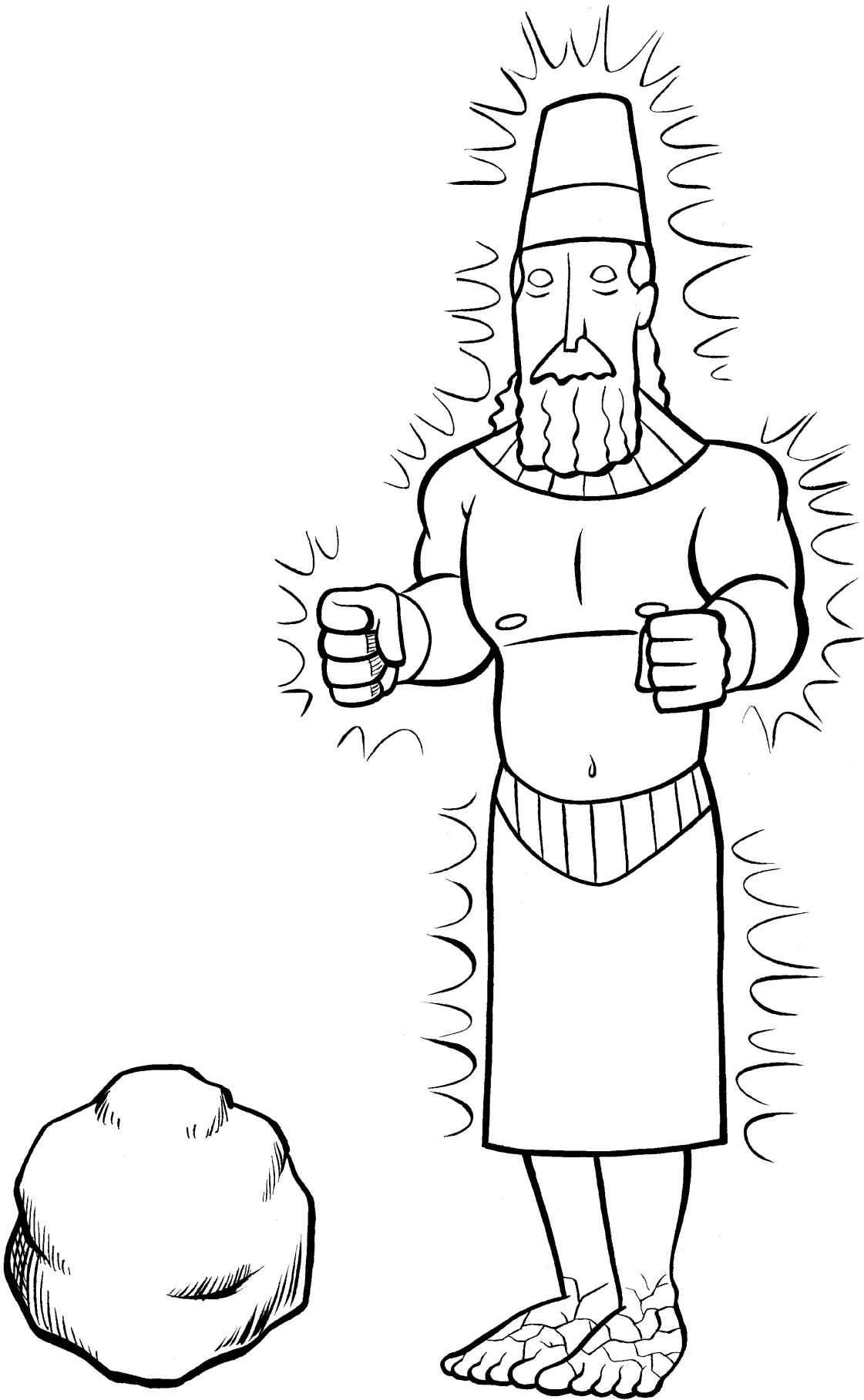


















**“You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay” (Daniel 2:31–33).**





**“Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure” (Daniel 2:45).**

