



EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



From My Window

Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a best-selling book in 1981 to absolve what he calls the most important theological question in this world: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" This was deeply personal to him given his 3-year-old son was diagnosed with a degenerative disease that eventually took his life. Kushner's conclusion is this: God is good and kind, but he is unable to give all people the same attention; therefore, my son was overlooked by God. While the book is heartfelt, it is flawed. Psalm 113 properly teaches us that our God "sits high above all nations," and he not only "sees" but "acts" to "raise the poor from the dust and lift the needy from the ash heap." No one falls through cracks. The point of Ps. 113 is not to defend God, but bless him as do we today!



Over these years of ministry, we have found that when God's people pray, amazing things happen! So thank you for praying with us! We certainly do not want to ask God to do anything contrary to his will, but we desire to pray in accord with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6 that his will be done. Because of the world crisis with COVID-19 and the mandates from the Governor of Virginia, we have moved all our courses online for the final weeks of this semester and have cancelled all VBTS functions for the rest of the Spring. Therefore, I ask that you pray for our **board** and the many decisions they have to make, which includes our income shortfall. In addition, the **faculty** needs prayer as they teach/mentor our students during this time of crisis. Also, pray for our **students and their spouses** who are in need of work. Also, life is much different for them without the personal interaction of classmates and professors. We want them to stay encouraged! Finally, we are excited about the major uptick of **new students** for this Fall, and they are beginning to move into the area. They need God's protection and help finding a place to live and jobs. *We believe that God is in control, and we thank you for lifting up these burdens to our Father!*



Reflections from Daniel 2: The Sovereign God of Heaven

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Angst about tomorrow is nothing new. People often wonder, What does the future hold for me and my country? In 602 BC a young leader was lying in bed one night when his “thoughts turned to what would take place in the future” (Dan 2:29). This leader, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, would come to learn that the God of heaven orchestrates the lives of individuals and countries. Not even Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful ruler in the world, could thwart God’s sovereignty—his controlling influence over creation.

According to Daniel 2, the sovereign God of heaven determines the destinies of nations. In the second year of his reign, King Nebuchadnezzar received a supernatural dream of an enormous statue made of four metals and ceramic. In the vision, a stone descended from the sky and pulverized the colossus.

The prophet Daniel gave the interpretation: four world empires eventually succumb to the indestructible empire (vv. 44–45). Of the four empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and another empire—the fourth overwhelmingly garners the most attention in the account (vv. 37–45; cf. 5:28; 8:20–22). Moreover, the four kingdoms are physical and earthly in nature; therefore, we can expect the kingdom that supersedes them to be physical and earthly. After receiving the interpretation of the dream, Daniel confesses that the God of heaven “changes the times and the epochs; he removes kings and establishes kings” (2:21). In the end, “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed” (v. 44).

Without warning, Daniel and his friends faced an ultimatum from the king: reveal the dream or die. With his life hanging in the balance, Daniel did not worry about his own physical harm or death. He and his companions simply did what they always do—pray to the God of heaven and leave the results to him. God answered their prayers. The four Hebrew friends had a track record of trusting God when facing danger and defilement (Dan 1:8; 2:18; 3:16–18; 6:13).

God was sovereign in bringing Daniel and the Israelites to Babylon, a foreign land 880 miles from Jerusalem (1:2). God delivered the youths from Nebuchadnezzar’s wrath, blessed their efforts, and gave them favor with the king. Amazingly, Daniel was even placed as “ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon” (2:48). As it turns out, the sovereign God of heaven accomplished his purposes through circumstances unanticipated by Daniel and his comrades. These faithful teenagers trusted God and so can we.

Brief Prayers

- We bless your name, O God, because your wisdom and power prevails (vv. 20–23).
- May I rest secure and not fret, knowing that you control the future (vv. 18, 21).
- Help me to cherish your special revelation just as Daniel did (vv. 20–23).
- God of heaven, your kingdom come (v. 44).

Personal Applications

- Pray in times of need, involve your friends, and praise God for the answers (vv. 17–23).
- Understand that our God “removes kings and establishes kings” (v. 21).
- Rely on the God of heaven because he knows the future (vv. 28–29, 45).
- Give God the credit for his works in the presence of unbelievers (v. 28).
- Eagerly anticipate God’s indestructible kingdom (v. 44).