

**Metal Man****Daniel 2****Gary DeMar**

- I. **Chapter Summary:** Daniel 2 describes a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Babylonian empire, which Daniel the prophet interpreted. Nebuchadnezzar had seen an enormous statue that had a head of gold, arms and chest of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron—with feet of iron mixed with clay (2:31–33). A “stone was cut out without hands” (2:34–35) struck the statue on its feet and caused it to fall down into a broken heap. The wind swept away the debris and the rock that struck the statue “became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth” (2:34–35). Daniel's first great test came when he was required not only to interpret the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, but to do so without the king even telling him what the dream was (2:1–23). With the help of God, Daniel successfully interpreted the dream which represented the great future empires of history, from the time then of Babylonian supremacy (2:37), to the Medes and Persians who conquered them, to the Greeks who in turn conquered them, to the successive revivals of the Roman Empire.
- II. Reversing the Curse
- A. Daniel’s test in chapter 1 prepares him for an upcoming ideological battle where the stakes will be much higher than they were when he first entered Babylon.
1. Daniel’s decision over food is reminiscent of Adam and Eve’s test in the garden (Gen. 2:16–17).

2. Adam and Eve’s failure sends them into the wilderness (Gen. 3:23) and makes them subject to the created order. They lose dominion as rulers (Gen. 1:27–30) and will be ruled by their environment (3:17–19).
3. Daniel’s obedience results in him becoming a ruler (Dan. 2:48) in Babylon and bringing the faithful with him: “Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face [see Gen. 3:14] and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. The king answered Daniel and said, ‘Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery’ Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he **made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.** And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, **while Daniel was at the king’s court [lit. gate]**” (Dan. 2:46–49).
  - a. Notice the reference to the “king’s court,” which is literally, the “king’s gate,” a reference to rulership (Gen. 19:1; 22:17 [“possess the gate of your enemies”]).
  - b. Faithfulness to God’s Word matters.
  - c. Should not be afraid to engage the culture without compromise.
  - d. Dominion does not come by means of revolution but by faithful service over time: bottom-up rather than top-down. Daniel did not seize the “robe of authority”; it was placed on him (see Dan. 5:29).

### III. The Cult of the Experts

- A. Babylon is not much different from our own day. People still look to the stars (astrology and horoscopes), psychics, mediums, gurus, the famous, social theorists, political pundits,

and scientific professions (e.g., Global Warming non-debate) for “expert advice” that can be acted upon.

B. When men reject God’s Word, they seek another sure Word. There is no neutrality.

#### IV. The Rise and Fall of the Intellectuals/The Expert Class

A. The Secular Prophets—We know better! Follow us!

1. “Over the past two hundred years the influence of intellectuals has grown steadily.

Indeed, the rise of the secular intellectual has been a key factor in shaping the modern world. . . . [I]n their earlier incarnations as priests, scribes and soothsayers, intellectuals have laid claim to guide society from the very beginning. . . . With the decline of the clerical power in the eighteenth century, a new kind of mentor emerged to fill the vacuum and capture the ear of society. The secular intellectual might be deist, skeptic or atheist. But he was just as read as any pontiff or presbyter to tell mankind how to conduct its affairs. . . . He felt himself bound by no corpus of revealed religion. . . . For the first time in human history, and with growing confidence and audacity, men arose to assert that they could diagnose the ills of society and cure them with their own unaided intellects. . . . Unlike their sacerdotal predecessors, they were not servants and interpreters of the gods but substitutes.”<sup>1</sup>

2. A secular prophet speaks (Ernest Hemingway): “It was Hemingway’s belief that he had inherited a false world, symbolized by his parents’ religion and moral culture, and that it must be replaced by a truthful one. What did he mean by truth? Not the inherited, revealed truth of his parents’ Christianity—that he rejected as irrelevant—or the truth of any other creed or ideology derived from the past and reflecting the

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 1–2.

minds of others, however great, but the truth as he himself saw it, felt it, heard, smelt and tasted it. . . .—‘scrupulous fidelity to the truth of my own sensations.’”<sup>2</sup>

B. The Religious Prophets—We know better! Follow us!

1. “But, ‘Ah, Lord God!’ I said, ‘Look, the prophets are telling them, “You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.”’ Then the Lord said to me, ‘The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.’ Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who are prophesying in My name, although it was not I who sent them—yet they keep saying, “There will be no sword or famine in this land”—by sword and famine those prophets shall meet their end!’” (Jer. 14:14).
2. “Your prophets have seen for you False and foolish visions; and they have not exposed your iniquity so as to restore you from captivity, But they have seen for you false and misleading oracles” (Lam. 2:14).
3. “Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy from their own inspiration, “Listen to the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God, ‘Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing’”’” (Ezek. 13:1–3; the entire chapter).

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<sup>2</sup>Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 148.

4. “Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ when the Lord has not spoken” (Ezek. 22:28).
5. “Beware of the **false prophets**, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?” (Matt. 7:15; also see 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1).
6. “Richard Cizik, the longtime Washington lobbyist for the National Association of Evangelicals—the largest evangelical umbrella organization in the country, representing roughly 45,000 churches—resigned Thursday after igniting a firestorm in the evangelical world by vowing support for gay civil unions in an interview with National Public Radio. . . . In an interview with National Public Radio host Terry Gross that aired on December 2, [2008], Cizik responded to question about gay marriage by saying, ‘I’m shifting, I have to admit. In other words, I would willingly say I believe in civil unions. I don’t officially support redefining marriage from its traditional definition, I don’t think.’”<sup>3</sup>

### C. The Experts Put to the Test

1. There were “magicians, conjurers, and sorcerers” in Babylon who served under Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1).
2. They were good at “profiling” people. This is a learned skill,<sup>4</sup> and coupled with people’s superstitions can be very useful to someone in power.

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<sup>3</sup>Dan Gilgoff, “Moderate Evangelical Richard Cizik’s Resignation May Not Stop Broadening of the Evangelical Agenda,” *U.S. News & World Report* (December 12, 2008): <http://tinyurl.com/5j6nce>

<sup>4</sup>Dan Korem, *The Art of Profiling*.

3. These so-called wise men were the Jeanne Dixons of their day.
    - i. They got enough right to be a benefit to the king.
    - ii. The king may have had food and wine tasters (Gen. 40) to protect him from physical threats. These court “magicians” screened the king’s potential enemies through some clever profiling.
  7. It’s obvious that Nebechadnezzar understood their abilities and limitations.
  8. But this dream was different.
1. If they truly had supernatural powers, they would have been able to tell the king what he had dreamed. This they could not do (2:4–14). In fact, they admitted that it was impossible: “The Chaldeans answered the king and said, ‘There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh’” (2:10–11).
  2. Daniel tells us that only God has the power to reveal “the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness” (Dan 2:22).
  3. Daniel not only was able to interpret the king’s dream, he also told the king what he dreamed in great and exact detail (2:27–49).
  4. If the “magicians, conjurers, and sorcerers” had paranormal abilities, then how could Daniel have distinguished himself as a true prophet? Their demonic powers would have been equal to his. There was no contest. Nebuchadnezzar did the right thing by testing the spirits. Christians need to follow his example and do the same.

#### D. Paranormal Powers and the Bible

1. The “mediums and spiritists” are ridiculed by God because all they can do is “whisper and mutter” (Isa. 8:19). Those who call on the “ghosts of the dead” through “mediums and spiritists” receive no answer (19:3).
2. “Stand fast now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. You are wearied with your many counsels, let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. . . . There is none to save you” (Isa. 47:12–15).
3. Competing Powers in the Bible
  - a. The Magicians of Egypt (Ex. 7:11, 19–22).
  - b. Simon the Magician (Acts 8).
  - c. Speaking Statue (Rev. 13:15).<sup>5</sup>
  - d. Hero of Alexandria (A.D. 10–70).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Verity Platt, “‘Shattered Visages’: Speaking statues from the ancient world” (July 2003): [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0PAL/is\\_497\\_158/ai\\_106732098](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PAL/is_497_158/ai_106732098)

<sup>6</sup>Heron (or Hero) of Alexandria: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero\\_of\\_Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero_of_Alexandria) and [www.iihr.uiowa.edu/products/history/hoh/hero.html](http://www.iihr.uiowa.edu/products/history/hoh/hero.html)