



Applied Faith Men's Bible Study

South Hills Baptist Church

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Daniel, Prophecy

Lesson #2

Daniel 2:1-30

Overall lesson #42

This chapter is in some ways the most important prophetic chapter in the Bible as it contains what has been called the ABC of prophecy. It should be read in conjunction with Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation chapters 13 and 17. Chapter 2 centers around the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the greater part of the known civilized world; he was a mighty monarch and lived in great splendor in Babylon. In this chapter, however, we find that he was terribly disturbed by a dream. Notice:

1. THREE THINGS ABOUT THE KING

His dream (verse 1). This was a nightmare, and in these superstitious days dreams and apparitions were regarded as portentous. What shook him was that he knew that this dream had to do with the future – see verse 29 (first part).

His dilemma (verses 2-8; 10-11). He was in a dilemma, first, because he could not remember the dream, and then because his wise men were incapable of recalling its details and giving their interpretation of it. Neither the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers nor the astrologers could help him - and they said so (verse 10).

His decree (verses 9, 12, 13a). The infuriated monarch ordered the destruction of all the wise men of Babylon. They were a crafty lot of imposters and they, including Daniel and his friends, must die - see verse 13(b).

2. THREE THINGS ABOUT DANIEL

His desire (verses 14-16). He requested the king's permission to have time to find out the dream and its meaning. What faith he had! He sincerely believed that God could and would reveal the forgotten dream and give the interpretation of it.

His devotion (verses 17-23). Daniel shared his problem with his three friends (verse 17), held a prayer meeting (verse 18), received the answer to their prayer (verse 19), and gave all the glory and praise to God (verses 20-23). What a foursome this was, what a speedy answer God gave them, and what praise filled their hearts and lips!

His declaration (verses 24-30). Daniel must have been very excited as he went in to Arioch (verse 24); then see him before the king (verses

25-28). In verse 29 we notice that he is very careful to give God all the glory.

3. THREE THINGS ABOUT THE DREAM

It was divine in its origin (verse 28). That is, it was the Lord who had caused Nebuchadnezzar to have the dream. In those days, before the canon of scripture was completed, God often spoke to people through dreams - compare Job 33:15-16; Joel 2:28.

It was clear in its details (verses 31-35). Its two main features were a statue (verses 31-33), and a rock (verses 34-35). The statue was the figure of a Babylonian man (verse 31). The head was made of gold (verse 32); the chest and arms were of silver (verse 32); the belly and thighs were of bronze (verse 32); the legs were of iron (verse 33); and the feet and toes were partly iron and partly clay (verse 33). In his dream the king saw a great rock that smote the statue on the feet (verses 34-35).

It was prophetic in its significance. In his dream the king was given a panorama of the history of the times “of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), covering a period of at least 2500 years, which will conclude at the Second Coming of Christ. When Daniel had told the king what the dream was he then gave the meaning of it (verses 36-45).

4. THREE THINGS ABOUT THE INTERPRETATION

It was, and is, comprehensive in its scope. The various parts of the statue represent kingdoms. The prophecy in chapter 2 is all about kingdoms - see verses 36-44. The golden head = the Babylonian Empire (verses 36-38); the chest and arms = the Medo-Persian Empire

(verse 39a); the belly and thighs = the Grecian Empire (verse 39b); the legs of iron = the Roman Empire (verse 40); the feet and toes of iron and clay (verses 41-43) - what do these represent? The usual interpretation is that the feet and toes stand for a revived Roman Empire under Antichrist. Notice, however, that the feet and toes represent the last Gentile kingdom or form of government before the Lord comes; for what happened to the statue? - read 44-45. The rock is Christ. He is the Rock of ages on whom believers are built for stability and from whom believers derive satisfaction (Exodus 17:3-6). Christ is the "stone cut without hands". He will deal a mortal blow to all human governments, and at His coming He will set up His own glorious kingdom.

It was, and is, certain in its fulfilment. The major part of the prophecy has been fulfilled literally. The Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, The Grecian Empire and the Roman Empire have come and gone; and the rule represented by the feet and toes of iron and clay - what will happen to that? It will be smashed by the coming of the great Rock. Then what will happen? The Lord Himself will rule upon the earth!

It was, and is, challenging in its demand. If God is sovereign in the affairs of men and nations, if He is working to a plan, if He has revealed that plan in His Word, if His Son is coming to put down human governments and to establish His own rule and reign of righteousness, if we are living in the last days, then surely those of us who love and serve the Lord should be very careful how we live - look up 2 Peter 3:11-14. Read Daniel 2:36-49 again as you conclude this study.

What can we learn from Daniel's prophesizing?

Pray with Friends

Daniel prayed by himself all the time. However, when faced with death by decree of the king in Chapter 2, Daniel requested time to answer the king's challenge. The first thing he did with his time was to go to his three companions, so they could pray together for help.

There are times to pray alone, but when the need is great, it's important to pray with others. The verses themselves, listed below, reveal two more important lessons; so many things we can learn are right there in a couple of short verses in Chapter 2.

Pray for Ends, not the Means

The prayer of the Jewish boys was done with more wisdom than most Christians and Jews have today. It's a shame that we don't get to read the actual prayer, but it's short description within two verses in Chapter 2 tell us what we need to know about them:

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 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 (KJV)

Most people, given the impossible challenge of knowing what a king dreamed and interpreting it for him in order to save their lives, would pray to know the dream and the interpretation so they would not perish. It seems straight forward, right? However, Daniel and his companions did not pray for this because this would be a

presumptuous prayer. Instead, they prayed for mercies concerning this secret, so they would not perish like the other wise men of the land.

Do you see the subtle difference? As it turned out, God gave Daniel the dream and its interpretation, but God could have easily answered the prayer any way He chose. His “mercies concerning the secret” could have been to change the king’s heart, to open a way for the Daniel and his companions to escape, to send a fireball down to devour the king... you get the point. They prayed with the goal in mind, that they would not be killed like the others. They left the methodology to God.

Be Humble, Thankful, and Full of Praise to the Father

It’s amazing that there are so many lessons in a few verses in Chapter 2. Another lesson was taught immediately after they prayed to God to not let them die. The lesson is one that we all need to hear more: Praise God as the wonderful Father that He is.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what

we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter. Daniel 2:19-23 (KJV)

Obviously, Daniel was extremely happy that he was not going to die thanks to the blessing he received from his Father and was quick to return that blessing in the best way he had available to him at that moment: praise. Then, once he was presenting to the king what the Lord had shown him, he gave us another important lesson...

Take No Credit for the Lord's Works

Daniel could have very easily told the king that he was given a vision by God because he was special. He could have told the king that he was the smartest man in the world and the king would have believed him once he revealed the dream. He could have said that he was holy and blessed and that's why God gave him the vision. He could have taken credit in any way that he chose. Instead, he chose to take no credit at all.

27 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;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; Daniel 2:27-28 (KJV)

Human ego is a hard thing to put down. When good things happen to us, when we're able to accomplish things that others cannot, or when we build things that are great, we often take credit. Sure, we might thank God for the blessing, the talent, the knowledge, the luck, the opportunity, or anything else, but we often do not realize or

acknowledge that all things happen by the Grace of God. King Nebuchadnezzar learned this lesson the hard way in Chapter 4.

Application/Activity

This week's application involves a partner. You will be assigned a partner within the class. You are to take turns calling each other each day. One calls on Wednesday, the other calls on Thursday and so on. You are to pray together, out loud, on the phone or in person. You should each voice a prayer during each conversation. They can be short, they can be long, it is your choice. Go where the Spirit leads you. Pray for God's Will to be done. Give thanks to God for all the blessings in your life. Thank God for all the works He has done in your life. Mention those works by name! Good luck and good praying!!!