Daniel 2 2023

[PPT 1] Chapter 2 may be the most important chapter in the book of Daniel since all of the prophecies of Daniel are related to one another. As such, especially chapters 7- 11 will build on the foundation established in chapter 2 and Nebuchadnezzar's dream. How you approach every other prophecy in Scripture depends basically on how you handle Daniel 2. Come up with the wrong answer here and you're going to misinterpret Matthew 24 & 25, the book of Revelation and other passages of prophecy in Scripture. When interpreting the prophecies of Daniel 2 the words of Deuteronomy 29:29 should serve as our guide.

[PPT 2] "*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed, belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law*."

[PPT 3] Principles for the Interpretation of Daniel 2

1) <u>Until all of these prophecies are completely fulfilled, we will not completely understand them.</u>

[PPT 4] Unfulfilled prophecies always cause us confusion, just as they confused the prophets who wrote them.

[PPT 5] 1 Peter 1:10-12 *Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours <u>searched and inquired carefully</u>, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were <u>serving not themselves but you</u>, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

I believe that there are some parts of prophecy we are not supposed to understand. They are meant for a time and people yet to come.

[PPT 6] Our main responsibility is to focus on what God has made clear to us, to believe it, and to act upon it in faith.

[PPT 7] 2) Daniel's words to the king are critical to the interpretation of the dream. We should try to understand the dream and its interpretation in light of the way Daniel and the king understood it.

[PPT 8] 3) The major actor in chapter 2 is not Daniel nor King Nebuchadnezzar but God "*who reveals the deep and secret things*" (Ch2:22).

Because they possessed almost unlimited power and authority, Oriental kings were very temperamental and unpredictable and we will see this in Nebuchadnezzar. However, the main actor is not king Nebuchadnezzar, but according to Vs 22 the Lord God who "*reveals deep and secret things*". The inconsistency of king Nebuchadnezzar is the dark background that makes the consistence of Daniel's God stand out. The earthly king is out of control while the real king remains in control of all.

As we read this chapter, we will see the God of Israel in complete control of every situation and accomplishing His purposes even by way of superstitious Gentile unbelievers. If God does not control our lives, then we are victims of circumstances, and everything in life is uncertain. But if God is sovereign, as the Bible declares him to be, and if he is our God, then we can be confident of the future and know that we will be able to live our lives in a way that will please God.

Vs 1-2) Because the word *dreams* are plural it may refer to a single dream with many details or a segmented dream extending over a period of time or that the dream as a whole occurred on repeated occasions so as to become an obsession with the king. Since Daniel will recalled and interpreted only a single dream in vs 24–26, the use of the plural seems to indicate a recurrence of the same dream.

King Nebuchadnezzar was in a bad mood when he called his wise men. His dream troubled him so much he had lost a lot of sleep. Two things caused the king such distress over his dream. First, he believed his dream was very important. In his culture and religion, dreams were a means of revelation from the gods. He wanted to know what the gods were trying to tell him. Secondly, there was an ominous sense that something was wrong. Because he lacked the interpretation of his dream, he did not know what was wrong, or what he should do about it. The reason for the calling of all four classes of wise men is that the king hoped, through their combined inputs, they would be able to interpret his dream.

Vs 3-4) In verse 4 the Book of Daniel changes from being written in Hebrew to Aramaic, which continues to the end of chapter 7 making it the longest passage using Aramaic in the Old Testament. Aramaic was the language commonly used by the Jews in Babylon instead of Hebrew.

[PPT 9] Why, since chapters 2–7, deals with things that happened to Daniel and his friends in Babylon, it was recorded in a language that would be understandable to the Jews in that land. Chapters 8–12, which concerns the future of the Jewish people, was written in their native Hebrew language.

Vs 5) Some Bible teachers believe Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream. The Authorized Version implies this by translating verses 5 and 8: "*The thing is gone from me*." However, the NASB's, "*The command from me is firm*," suggests that Nebuchadnezzar was referring to his command rather than his dream. I find it difficult to believe that such an intense dream would be forgotten by Nebuchadnezzar, especially if the dream occurred more than once. It is true that we do forget most of our dreams, but in this case, God was communicating His truth to the king.

Also, if the king had forgotten the dream, how would he be able to verify it even if the wise men could come up with the right answer?

More likely, he has not forgotten the dream, but suspects his advisors have previously misled him concerning their occult knowledge in order to deceive him since he accuses them of speaking "*lying words*" in verse 9. The king reasons that if they can truly predict the future by interpreting dreams, then they should also be able to recall the past and reveal his dream.

Vs 6-7) The advisors are like those today who claim to be fortune tellers. They were skilled in drawing out sufficient information to form a prediction given in such a vague manner that it would appear to be correct no matter how it turned out.

Vs 8-11) This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for them to receive wealth, prestige, and promotion. This was a major confession on the part of these men, their admitting that they cannot do what they claimed they could do. Their statement completely wipes out today's astrology which is based on the Babylonian's.

God uses Nebuchadnezzar's impossible request to set the stage for Daniels advancement and to God's glory. As the counselors said "*only God knows*" and they are about to find out he does!

The Chaldeans say to Nebuchadnezzar in Vs11, "*except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh*." While this was true, they did not at that time, in the N.T. this is changed.

[PPT 11] John 1:14. *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The God/Man walked among us, sacrificed Himself for us and is coming back for us. In the meantime, He has sent us His Spirit to gives both wisdom and guidance for this life.

Vs 12-13) [PPT 10] Wiersbe = "*Satan had lost one battle but now he would try to pull victory out of defeat by having Daniel and his three friends killed. The Evil One is willing to sacrifice all his false prophets in the city of Babylon if he can destroy four of God's faithful servants. Satan's servants are expendable, but the Lord cares for His people*."

Vs 14-19a) Yahweh is sovereign and in complete control! These four Hebrew young men have no power apart from Him.

[PPT 12] Yet, this is one of several passages in the book of Daniel highlighting the Biblical balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

[PPT 13] I agree with the way D.A. Carson put it = "*God is absolutely sovereign, but His sovereignty never mitigates human responsibility*."

If Daniel and his companions had not intensely sought the Lord things would not have turned out as they did. God is sovereign yet allows His children to move His hand through the power of prayer. The sovereign God of history is not a fatalistic God; He interacts with prayer.

What does this say to you and I today about how we ought to respond to difficult circumstances in our lives?

Whatever your understanding about God's sovereignty is, if you've gotten to the point where you think there's no use of praying because God knows what I'm going to pray before I pray, you're way off in your understanding of sovereignty and it is unbiblical. Both divine sovereignty and man's volition are true.

Vs 19) At this point Daniel goes to prayer which I will break down into three parts.

[PPT 14] Three parts of Daniel's prayer: (1) Daniel's praise focuses on the superiority of God to the "gods" of Babylon.

Vs 20-21a = *Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs".* He removes kings and establishes kings; God intervenes and alters His own creation; He changes the times and God changes the seasons. He's not bound by his own natural laws, if He wants to change them he does. This is opposite to the Babylonian gods, whose purposes and plans were determined by the stars and seasons.

[PPT 15] (2) Daniel's prayer gains him insight into the message which God was giving to Nebuchadnezzar through his dream.

Vs 21b-22). "*He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him."*

As Nebuchadnezzar thought about the future, God informed him through his dream that the future is in God's hands and is not determined by kings. So, the king, who was looking to men, should have been looking to the God of Israel for wisdom as Daniel did.

[PPT 16] (3) The dream demonstrated God's care for Israel.

[PPT 17] Vs 23). "*To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power; even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter*."

[PPT 18] The four young Hebrew prisoners were about to be put to death and they prayed for mercy and deliverance and their request was granted. Even in the judgement of captivity, God continues to care for His own people.

Vs 24-25) The statement "*I have found a man*" is not exactly true since it was Daniel who found Arioch; but Daniel was not the kind of person that was concerned with who gets the credit so long as God got the glory.

Vs 26-33) [PPT 19]

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM STATUE						
Head	Gold	Valuable	Soft	Self-contained unit	Heavy	Smallest
Chest & arms	Silver	Less valuable	Harder	1 unit & 2 parts	Lighter	Larger
Abdomen & thighs	Bronze	Even less valuable	Even harder	1 unit & 2 different parts	Even lighter	Even larger
Lower legs	Iron	Still less valuable	Still harder	2 parts	Still lighter	Still larger
Feet & toes	Iron & clay	Least valuable	Very hard and very soft	2 parts & 10 segments	Lightest	Largest

Both the weight and the value of the metal deteriorates from the top or gold downward to the clay of the feet. While the materials decrease in weight, they increase in brittleness. The image is top heavy and weak in its feet.

The descending scale of value of the four metals suggests the degeneration of the human race through the ages, as implied in Genesis 4. This concept contradicts the evolutionist's interpretation of human history which they say began poorly and continues to get better.

Over time the kingdoms of the world seem to be trading glory for strength, which they must do if the succeeding empires are each to be strong enough to destroy the one before it. Is the United States not morally and spiritually weaker today, though physically stronger, than it was in your parents' generation? The lesson seems to be that the longer man would attempt to rule the earth apart from God, the more degenerated that rule would become and the more that rule would be characterized by a stronger military.

Vs 34-35) [PPT 20] The stone and its origin (cut without hands) are a work of God alone, undefiled by the will and works of man. The Babylonians believed that their gods came from the sacred mountain of the earth. The temples of Babylon were intended to be imitations of mountains. To the Babylonian way of thinking, mountains were associated with what is divine. Because of this Babylonian mind set, God purposely portrayed His future kingdom first as a stone cut out of a mountain and second as a stone that becomes a great mountain. This was to cause Nebuchadnezzar to understand that the fifth and last kingdom would be divine rather than human in origin.

To get this lesson into the time limits I am not going to go into why each metal represents a certain kingdom. You can get that information from almost any commentary or I can send you my notes from a lesson on this I did many years ago.

Vs 36-44) [PPT 21] *Why would God give Nebuchadnezzar this dream of four successive empires, rather than to some other king?*

It was Nebuchadnezzar who terminated the Israelite theocracy and began the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). The gentile world-power is to learn in its first representative, who had put an end temporarily to the theocracy, what its own final destiny would be, that, in its turn overthrown, it would be forever subject to the kingdom of God.

Vs 45) *So, who or what does the stone symbolize?* The description of the stone as being cut out "of the mountain without hands" symbolically makes this originate in God rather than in men. The fifth kingdom can only be fulfilled in any literal sense by a reign of Christ on the earth.

Vs 46-49) [PPT] *Does verse 47 indicate that Nebuchadnezzar became a worshiper of Yahweh as the one true God?*

Raised within a polytheistic culture, Nebuchadnezzar may just be stating that Daniel's God is the greatest among the pantheon of Babylonian deities. Considering Nebuchadnezzar's actions in the next chapter it does not appear he had come to a true understanding of the uniqueness of the God of Israel at this time.

Also, notice what Nebuchadnezzar did not do. He asked no questions either about the future or about Daniel's great God. Relieved that he was the head of gold and that his fears were groundless, he concerned himself with the present, and with the man who had met his need.

Nebuchadnezzar has not yet come to the place where he believes in the one true God, but this was a first step. However, the goal of revelation is praise, adoration and worship of God which we see in Vs 20-23 and in part in Nebuchadnezzar's response in Vs46-47.

I am sure Daniel face the temptation to pride when Nebuchadnezzar paid him so much honor. And I am sure the same temptation is in front of respected pastors today. If you have ever been given praise for you service for you Lord by others, how did it make you feel? How can you remain humble when God uses you in such a way that gets the recognition of others? (The Nebuchadnezzar good things God has granted you to accomplish?)