

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 2

Part 1

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of Daniel we have come to chapter 2. Before we step into this chapter there are several things we must consider. This chapter that is before us is the most important chapter in the Bible when it comes to interpreting prophecy. In this chapter we are going to see the image that appeared in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and understanding this image and what it means is going to determine how we understand Bible prophecy. Notice the words of Charles Clough.

"However you approach every other prophecy in Scripture depends basically on how you handle Daniel 2. This is the cornerstone of the whole thing. Come up with the wrong answer here and you're bound to misinterpret Matthew 24 and 25, the book of Revelation and other passages of prophecy in Scripture. This is a central point of prophecy."

Let me give you an example of how this chapter will set the stage for our understanding of Bible prophecy. In this chapter we shall see the image that appeared in the king's dream. The image will represent the "Times of the Gentiles" and it will therefore show us the Gentile nations that will rule over God's people, the Jews, and it will start with the Babylonians and end with the revised Roman Empire. As we study this image, we will see a Stone that comes from heaven and destroys the image. Now the question will arise, "Does the Stone (The Kingdom of our Lord) chip away slowly at the image, or does it destroy it all at once?" This does not seem like a very important question but the way we view the Stone destroying the image will determine how we are going to see the promise of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

This chapter is the foundational chapter for interpreting prophecy. If we consider any prophecy following this chapter and it does not fit with what we see here, then we can be sure that our interpretation is incorrect. This chapter contains the skeleton that all other prophecies are to be attached to. Notice the words of H. A. Ironside.

"This second chapter has well been called 'The A, B, C of prophecy.' I suppose it contains the most complete, and yet the most simple, prophetic picture that we have in all the word of God."

Notice the words of Isaac Newton.

"The prophecies of Daniel are all of them related to one another, as if they were but several parts of one general Prophecy, given at several times. The first is the easiest to be understood, and every following prophecy adds something new to the former."

With all of this said we can now enter Daniel 2 and as we approach this chapter, I want us to stop and think about how Daniel and his friends would have thought. There were many questions in their minds. They have just come through 3 years of training, they are still in captivity, there is no sign of them getting released and therefore as 17-year-old young men they had many questions. Notice the words of Oliver Greene.

"Facing their predicament in Babylon, surely Daniel and his companions must have asked themselves, 'Has God forgotten His promise? Has He forgotten His covenant? Has He forgotten US? Will the promises of God concerning the kingdom never be fulfilled? Has He put an end to the nation of Israel and the chosen people to whom He made such glorious promises? Was God mistaken—or did Israel misunderstand Him? Had He ever really intended to give them a literal kingdom?'"

This chapter will answer many of their questions through a strange means. The answers will come through a Gentile king's dream.

➤ The Dream

Notice Daniel 2:1

At first this looks like a Scriptural problem because we are told it is the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and Daniel, and his friends were to be trained for 3 years. But it is no problem because the first year of the king's reign was not counted. So technically it is the 3rd year.

This is not the first time in the Scriptures where God gave a dream to a Gentile king.

- ✓ It happened to Abimelech when Sarah was in his presence.

Genesis 20:3

³ *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.*

- ✓ It happened to the Pharoah when Joseph was in prison.

Genesis 41:1-7

And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

² And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow.

³ And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river.

⁴ And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

⁵ And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.

⁶ And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.

⁷ And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

Both of these dreams were used for warnings. Abimelech was warned that Sarah belonged to Abraham, Pharaoh was warned of a coming famine. The dream that Nebuchadnezzar had was for several purposes. One reason was to reveal the future of the Times of the Gentiles and the second reason was to elevate Daniel to a higher position in the Gentile kingdom in order to benefit the Jewish people. The third reason for the king's dream was also for a warning. It was to warn the Gentile king and those in his kingdom that one day they would be overthrown.

Notice Daniel 2:1 again.

In this verse we see that Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by the dream. There is more to consider here. We need to understand that it was God who gave him the dream, but it also came about because of the king's concern.

Notice Daniel 2:29

Here we see that the king was concerned about the future. The king had defeated the Assyrians and the Egyptians and as he looked back over his accomplishments he probably wondered if or when his kingdom would come to an end.

Application:

This was God causing the king to think about eternity. Let us notice what Solomon wrote.

Ecclesiastes 3:10-11

¹⁰ *I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.*

¹¹ *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world (eternity) in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*

On Wednesday evening in our study of John we looked at one verse.

John 1:9

⁹ *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

Every person that comes into the world has a time in their lives when they think about how death is coming and that life is more than what we see here. It is the moment that Jesus shines the Light into the sinner's heart to cause them to think about what is coming in the future. Notice the words of Robert Dean.

"Every single human being comes to God-consciousness at some point in their life. With some people its earlier, as early as maybe two or three years of age, with others it may be later, some of it is determined by various factors such as culture, background, family life, whatever it may be, but we all have this eternity set in our thinking so that at some point we begin to realize that there's something greater than us. At that point we can either be positive or negative, we can either say God I want to know more about this, I know that there's something greater, I know that I'm a creature, I'm finite, I'm limited, I can't make life work on my own, I can't be the source of happiness, the details of life can't give me happiness. Here's Nebuchadnezzar, he has everything, more than any of us can ever imagine and he doesn't have happiness."

Notice Daniel 2:2-3

The king calls for the "wise men" of his palace court. Let me just point out that these groups are where the Magi came from. The wise men that came when Jesus was young would have come from among these groups. Daniel will interpret the dream, and the records of the prophecy will be kept in Babylon. That is how the wise men would know to follow His star to Bethlehem.

Application:

The king turned to those who were supposed to know the future when his spirit was troubled. Where do you turn when your spirit is troubled? Too often we are like the king here because we set out and exhaust all avenues before we turn to God. We tend to forget that God allows the times of trouble to come into our lives to drive us closer to Him.

1 Peter 1:6-8

⁶ *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*

⁷ *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

⁸ *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:*

1 Peter 5:6-7

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

⁷ *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Notice Daniel 2:4

We need to notice here that the language changes in this verse to Aramaic and will continue to Daniel 7:2. Why is this? Because Aramaic was the language of the Gentiles and God longed to see the Gentile come to repentance. Therefore, God would have this prophetic section dealing with the Gentile nations recorded in a language that the Gentiles could understand. God wanted the Gentiles to know what was coming and He longed for them to turn to Him. Let us notice what God told Israel after they came out of Egypt.

Exodus 19:4-6

⁴ *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

⁵ *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:*

⁶ *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Israel was to be the spiritual light to the world to reach the Gentile nations. They had failed because of their sin and now they were in captivity. God therefore would speak to the Gentile nations through the dream of a Gentile king and the interpretation by a Jewish young man.

Application:

God has given us the opportunity to carry the Gospel to the world. We are to be lights that shine in a world of darkness. But too often believers get caught up in everything but spreading the Gospel. Let me remind you that much of what the church is involved in today has no value for eternity.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

¹⁰ *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

¹¹ *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

¹² *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

¹³ *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

¹⁴ *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

¹⁵ *If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

Conclusion:

Daniel will prove to be a light in the darkness as he lives to glorify God in the pagan society of Babylon. Let us live as Daniel and as our world gets darker let us shine brighter and let us stand for the Truth of the Word of God.

Jude 1:3

³ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.