

AM Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

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[0 : 00] As you see from your notice sheet in the Old Testament, in Daniel chapter 2. Now this is quite a long chapter, but it's quite repetitive in places.

Daniel chapter 2, reading from the beginning. And this was a dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams.

His spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams.

So they came in and stood before the king. And the king said to them, I had a dream and my spirit is troubled to know the dream. Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever. Tell your servants the dream and we will show the interpretation.

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, the word from me is firm. If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb.

[1 : 19] And your houses shall be laid in ruins. But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour.

Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation. They answered a second time and said, let the king tell the servants the dream and we will show its interpretation.

The king answered and said, I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time. Because you see that the word from me is firm. If you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you.

You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.

The Chaldeans answered the king and said, There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand. For no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

[2 : 33] The thing that the king asked is difficult and no one can show it to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with the flesh. Because of this the king was angered.

And very furious and commanded that all the wise men in Babylon be destroyed. So the decree went out and the wise men were about to be killed.

And he sought Daniel and his companions to kill them. And Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Ariok, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

He declared to Ariok, the king's captain, Why is the decree of the king so urgent? Then Ariok made the matter known to Daniel.

And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time that he might show the interpretation to the king. Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.

[3 : 44] And told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning the mystery so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and hidden things.

He knows what is in the darkness. And the light dwells with him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise. For you have given me wisdom and might.

And have now made known to me what we asked of you. For you have made known to us the king's matter. Therefore Daniel went into Ariok, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon.

[4 : 49] He went and said thus to him, Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Bring me in before the king and I will show the king the interpretation. Then Ariok brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him, I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.

The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belchisazer, Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?

Daniel answered the king and said, No wise men, enchanters, magicians or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked. There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in your bed are these.

To you, O king, as you lay in your bed came thoughts of what would be after this. And he who reveals mysteries made known to you what it is to be.

[5 : 57] But as for me, the mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have, more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. The image mighty and of exceeding brightness stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of his image was of fine gold, its chest of arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partially of iron and partially of clay.

As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold altogether were broken in pieces and became like chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them could be found.

But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom the power and the might and the glory, and into whose hand he has given whatever they dwell, the children of men, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, making you rule over them all.

[7 : 36] You are the head of gold. Another kingdom of inferior to you shall rise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. Like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

And as you saw the feet and toes, partially of potter's clay and partially of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partially iron and partially clay, so the kingdom shall be partially strong and partially brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so there shall be a mix with one another in marriage that it will not hold together, just as iron doesn't mix with clay.

And in the days of the kings of God, of heaven, will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left in other people.

[8 : 47] It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, a great God has made known to the king what shall be after this.

The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel and commanded that an offering, an incense, be offered up to him.

The king answered and said to Daniel, Truly, your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

And the king gave Daniel his honors and many great gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief, but perfect over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel made a request to the king and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

[10:02] May God add his blessing to this reading from his own inspired word. We're looking at the chapter 2 of Daniel, I'd like to highlight part of verse 28, which just says, But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.

There's a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. This is a well-known chapter of Daniel that we're looking at today.

I started off thinking, I'll preach in Daniel 3. And as I looked at Daniel 3, I thought, I need to go back to Daniel 2.

So that's why you're getting to Daniel 2 this morning and Daniel 3 tonight. I think the very close connection between, as you probably know yourself. So, the other thing to point out is from verse 4, as it says there, we just read it, I can't, oh yeah, verse 4 it does say, Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, so, from 2.4 right through to the end of chapter 7, I understand, it's in Aramaic. Now, Aramaic was the language of the people, not just of the Jewish nation. So God was revealing to everyone this message and that's why it's in Aramaic because it's understandable to all who didn't understand Hebrew and that's a principle of God's word even today that we try to translate and communicate God's word in an understandable language that folk from different backgrounds can understand and that's what was happening way back here in Daniel chapter 2 and it's a principle in the Westminster Confession of Faith as well.

[11:56] So, it's a very important principle to get God's word understandable to all people all nations in a clear way and that's why as I say this portion as it says there's an Aramaic.

That way aside, we have this first thing is this failure of these different magicians with their various titles and magicians and all these wise people clubbed together the difficulty they had in helping the king fulfil his request and this was something I noticed as we were reading and I noticed earlier as well he understood that quite often when the king had previous dreams it wasn't just his first dream I don't think and the people generally had dreams these magicians and saying well tell me your dream and we'll tell you what it's about and I can't spot the verse here but obviously the king twigged sometimes they just made up something that sounded good and so he was testing them by asking them don't just tell me the interpretation tell me the dream as well because he kind of suspected that they were just going to say something out the top of their heads kind of thing I think that was partly in the background the interesting thing when they asked the magicians to do this they said there I think it's verse 11 except the gods who dwelling is not with flesh there though it's the gods only they can help you in this situation so it's interesting but there was this sense in these magicians of something other than earthly they had this sense of what they call gods and it was only the gods that could help the king understand this this goes back to another principle is that as you know god was made in man's image and there's always been this in man an inkling to satisfy in some way they don't understand it and that they've been made in god's image but we know that so down through the centuries people have been aware of this but in their foolishness or lack of revelation or understanding like these magicians here had these gods and things that they relied on to help let's take just one example of this many years ago we had took a trip it was a holiday we took we weren't always on holiday but this was a holiday we took we worked in a place called Kakamaka in the mountains in Peru and one time we decided to go to a place called Huaraz and went was it just two boys at that time anyway whether it was two or three I can't remember two I think it was they took us on a long long bus tour along the mountain sides of this area and eventually we arrived at a place called Chavin and it's very very interesting and the boys loved it they got their torches to search down these tunnels and down way down in the depths I can still remember this these Chavin were people prior to the Inca that's how long ago we're talking about and underneath these tunnels was a huge gigantic olive oval type of stone carved out with all kind of lettering and it's quite remarkable and it's just to show you that way back whenever the Chavin reigned I don't know the date but prior to Inca times there were people like these magicians believed in something other than themselves and I thought that was an interesting insight into what was happening here God has made us in his image until we find the true meaning of his revelation there's these suspicions and other things that will never satisfy so this was the king testing out these people it says in Corinthians the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ and we have to remember this when we're proclaiming the gospel to people there's this force in other words the devil is blinding people to the truth and we need God's spirit to break through that blindness we in ourselves are helpless to do that and this is why Daniel was gifted to show the king so that's the first thing the

failure to understand

[17 : 29] God's revelation and that failure to understand God's revelation of course still maintains the day and until God opens up their eyes to see there's this blindness although to us the revelation as we sang in Psalm 19 is so clear that there's a creator and we have come to know him through his word isn't it sad but just like these magicians and company there's a failure to understand God's revelation let's pray that people eyes will be opened to this revelation that God has given and that they would realise that there isn't such a thing as gods but one God who has revealed themselves so that's the first thing from this passage a failure to understand God's revelation by these magicians so how what's the next step and I've just mentioned it I think is praying you know what Daniel did next was get three friends now they've got two different names one their original name which was

Hananiah Mishael and Azariah but when they reached Babylon the king changed their names so it's the same people but just two different names the original name that they came with these exiles and then the king said no you're going to call Shadrach Meshach and Abednego from now on and he asked these three friends to pray for God's mercy that's something we need to come to ourselves about God's revelation as I just said we need to pray that God's mercy would show people his revelation just like Daniel asked his three friends to pray for that this revelation would be made seek God's mercy for this and pray about it why don't we form a prayer group of two or three people and pray for someone who God's mercy might show them what God's saying to them today I think I mentioned before

I still remember I think it was the 80s or 70s but there was such a thing as triplets of prayer I don't know if you ever came across but it was quite popular way back and I think it was a good thing that people did join together in triplets of prayer to pray together and here way back in the Old Testament where Daniel encouraging his three friends to pray for God's mercy so that Daniel would understand so that he would communicate the revelation to the king and that he would be able to help in that situation so as in Matthew 18 19 for example well it just says if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask it will be done isn't that encouragement to pray for someone to gather together a couple even two people if not three to pray that God would intervene and show somebody the mercy of God

I think as in Matthew I went to look it up I've noted the text but I haven't written it down God has revealed these things to little children or something and kept it from the wise God reveals to those who humble themselves and we need to gather together and pray for God's revelation to be made known to someone that we care about someone with our family somebody in our neighbourhood get together and pray that God would reveal himself not the mystery of the dream here but the mystery of Christ crucified so that was the solution to come together to pray together and to trust that God would hear if you read through this long chapter again there's this trust in Daniel trust in God trust in his friends that they would gather and pray for God's mercy trust that God would hear their prayer that it wouldn't just stop at the ceiling but God would hear their prayer and intervene and show them the mystery and then not only did we have the prayer encouraged by the three friends of Daniel but he himself as you see if you have a Bible like mine it's quite clear we have the prayer of Daniel himself there in scripture from verse 20 to 23 that was his Daniel praise and he recognised that only God has wisdom and might and he removes kings and sets up kings but particularly as he's praying about that he already knows the interpretation of the king of the dream and that's exactly what they summed up that's what the dream spoke about he removes kings and sets up kings that was the summary of the dream but mainly he prays for wisdom and gives thanks to

[23 : 03] God and that's how he ends the prayer oh God of my fathers he's bringing in the covenant God remembering how God was so faithful to his fathers I give the thanks and praise for you've given me wisdom and might so after his friends praying for God's mercy Daniel's praying thanking God thinking about his wisdom realising he is the ruler that removes kings and sets up kings and then then he's able to go assuredly to this guy Ariok and say to him don't kill the magicians because God has revealed this to me and take me to the king and it's interesting what Ariok says in verse 25 I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation

I found him it looks like Ariok's looking for a prize for himself here isn't it he's kind of saying it's really me that's done this but anyway he goes down and Daniel is invited into the king's presence and the

king then tells him this dream this dream of this big statue this image that he sees of gold of silver of thighs how it was made up and he then interpretes this dream with the help of God and as you go to the next section so we have the first thing we said about that revelation is hidden until God intervenes and how that happens is through prayer and then our help comes from the Lord as the next reach from verse 31 because

Daniel through these verses is very conscious that it was God that had revealed to him this dream and what it meant he tells the dream this dream about the image being of gold its chest of arms of silver its middles of thighs and bronze its legs of iron a stone came and hit it the stone turned into a mountain and filled the whole earth and then he explains to them the dream with God's help and right through as he is explaining Daniel's emphasising it wasn't out of his own gifts that he did this it wasn't because he was wise than him else the credit all goes to God and he recognised our help comes from a God and that's the same with us all our resources that we have have been given by God and we always have to give him thanks for the gifts that he's given and that's what Daniel does realises his help has come from

God he alone can enlighten our minds to understand heavenly mysteries so the interpretation of this dream is probably well known most commentators break up the statue and explain to us that the first the head of gold is obviously the king it tells us that so the first part of the kingdom that he's talking about is Babylonian Babylon itself and then the one that follows most folk identify as the Medial Persian kingdom and then the Greek kingdom after that is Alexander and then finally Rome that's how they divide it up one of the commentators says this about what was important in Daniel's mind was not to define these four empires exactly but to fix the king's mind on the inevitability of the triumph of God's kingdom kingdom and that's probably probably right what they're saying but that's not the emphasis on the interpretation and emphasis is the triumph of God's kingdom that these kingdoms will come and go and each kingdom you know the metals the clue in the different metals of gold silver bronze and iron is that the kingdoms slowly kind of lose some of their power some of their relevance because of different metals but also iron is quite a tough iron so it's pointing towards kingdoms that are although they're passing away they're quite strong but then despite all this strength there's this stone that comes and hits the feet at its most weakest point and crushes it to almost sawdust to chaff it's blown away and that stone becomes a mountain in Isaiah chapter 2 we read this chapter 2 verse 2 it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of his house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be lifted up above the hills and all the nations shall flow to it and that's the interpretation here that's talking about the stone coming and Isaiah says there's a day coming when there's going to be a wonderful kingdom and it's going to be established as the highest of the mountains and all the nations shall flow to it and this is what we find in the

New Testament especially in Pentecost as the people come and of course the interpretation as we know of this stone coming and hitting these kingdoms is pointing towards Christ who comes and establishes an eternal kingdom a kingdom that will last forever a kingdom that we're invited to join in and a kingdom that will not fade away like these kingdoms strong as they were and how long they lasted the Greek Empire and Roman Empire as we can read about in the New Testament these are all past and Christ's kingdom is an eternal kingdom and that's the message of the interpretation it's pointing towards Jesus Christ as a stone as a cornerstone and it's pointing towards that passage in Peter talking about the stone that make men stumble but this stone shall become a mountain and it smashes into the statue and destroys it and that's why we're saying

[30 : 40] Psalm 2 you'll break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces but one version of the Psalms Psalm 2 verse 12 talks about kissing the sun you should be kissing the sun in other words the solution for you not to be destroyed and come under judgment of God is to embrace Jesus Christ as your saviour that's the solution Psalm 2 is talking about to kiss the sun this means to come into a relationship with Christ and that will be the thing that will keep you sure other than that God's rod of iron will dash them to pieces but the solution of Psalm 2 verse 12 says is to come into this relationship and you'll enter this kingdom remember part of the Lord's prayer thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven thy kingdom come and that's what we're praying for in that

Lord's prayer this kingdom that Daniel touches upon in this interpretation of the dream we're praying that thy kingdom will come and that's some prayer to pray and we pray that we'll be ready to enter this kingdom when it does come by having a relationship with this God who's revealed himself not

just in dreams but revealed himself in his word and finally has revealed himself in the sun and so we see here we've spoken about a couple of things we started off looking at the failure to understand God's revelation and how we're dependent upon God to in the role of prayer to ask God to reveal in his mercy his revelation and in Daniel's prayer that we can look at and then we focus on our help comes from

God and that's Daniel's emphasis as he revealed the interpretation and then we looked at the dream and interpretation and after all this is over Nebuchadnezzar himself fell on his face and paid homage to Daniel and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him there's a kind of in Nebuchadnezzar's life most folk look at it as a step by step kind of into a confession of faith at this point he's not converted as we would use the language but God's trying to bring him to himself and I think that I read most people understand at the end of it all Nebuchadnezzar did come to faith but not at this point you can see how his faith is mixed up not only did he come to acknowledge that your

God is God Lord of Kings but look what he does he falls upon his face and pays homage to Daniel interesting there's not mention that Daniel said stop remember was it Paul and Barnabas in the New Testament and people said they started to worship them it's in Acts 14 it was after the miracle Barnabas did and they were worshipped by the people because of this miracle and their reply was we also are men we bring good news that you should turn from these vain things to God but Daniel there's no mention here what Daniel's response is could it be that the corruption of the kingdom was beginning to niggle at Daniel he was surrounded by this environment of Babylon he made a wonderful stand in Daniel 1 if you want to go and read Daniel 1 it's very difficult in our corrupt society to maintain our discipline and to maintain not to fall into temptation as we're surrounded by corruption and as we're surrounded by these ethical thoughts contrary to the Bible that are coming in and I think there is something of that hinted here that Daniel didn't sort of rebuke the king for falling down paying homage to him but they were promoted so this is chapter 2 in summary if you remember this it's God trying to reveal himself and tell

Daniel about this everlasting kingdom that was going to come and just ask yourself this morning am I part of this kingdom can I pray thy kingdom come and if you can pray that prayer you know that you're going to be part of that kingdom pray that God will bless these few thoughts to us this morning God Lord no Lord no no■■■■ know on creole that going all trib pr do Lord ■■■■■■■■ amen me or the ladies even heart ■■■■■■ Share■ tray on Okay minute■■■■■