

Daniel 2

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[0 : 00] Let us read in the book of Daniel and the second chapter, reading from the beginning of the chapter.

This is a long chapter and I want to split up the reading tonight. Daniel, chapter 2. Now in Psalm 45, the second version of the Psalm from verse 2, the tune is Busser, Psalm 45 from verse 2.

Add his blessing to that further reading from his word. Let us sing on now in Psalm 72. Psalm 72.

And we sing from verse 7. The tune is St. Lawrence.

The just shall flourish in his days and prosper in his reign. Daniel, chapter 2.

[1 : 19] And we may take as our connecting link, verse 44. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

And the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms. And it shall stand forever.

During the 70 years that Judah spent in the exile in Babylon, God was destroying the delusion of nations such as Babylon.

That the God of Israel was just another God, like any of the tribal deities that abounded at that time. It was necessary that the God of Israel, who was the living and true God, would be shown to be such before the people whose gods were empty and vain and the delusions of their own minds.

[2 : 58] Now, there were various ways which God did this during the lifetime of Daniel in Babylon. He did it particularly in two particular ways.

He did it by the miracles that were performed by God at that time. For example, the miracle of the fiery furnace, the preservation of the men in the fiery furnace, the preservation of Daniel in the lion's den, and the miraculous wracking of the finger on the wall.

The other way in which he did it was by revealing to Daniel in dreams and visions something of the future history of the world.

Now, in the miracles, God was showing his omnipotence, his unlimited power.

In the visions, as someone put it, the several revelations concerning the future are given in order that the nations might see that the God of Israel is the God in whose hands are held the sovereign dispositions of the affairs of men.

[4 : 22] And this came particularly to light in this dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. Now, last week we saw that Daniel had distinguished himself as a student.

He was a highly respected member of the community. And as a privileged young man, he was not afraid to make a stand on religious principles.

And he made a stand, as we saw last week, on the side of his God. But God had also given Daniel a particular gift that, and this is referred to in various places in this chapter, that of understanding mysteries and interpreting dreams.

And perhaps it is in this light that Daniel is often considered to be a prophet. Because through the interpretation of these dreams, he was able to reveal from God the future as it was to unfold.

He has given insight into the mystery and into the wonder of God's purpose. And given an insight into the wisdom and the power of God in determining that future.

[5 : 59] And these revelations, as I said, were communicated to Daniel by dreams, by visions, and by angelic messengers. Now, this night, tonight, in this chapter, our attention is directed to the dream that this king Nebuchadnezzar had.

As we know, he was a powerful and all-conquering monarch. And yet, he was troubled by a dream. Daniel said to him, as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came unto thee upon thy bed. What should come to pass hereafter.

And it was this dream, whether Nebuchadnezzar could not recall the dream in its entirety. And you know yourselves, when you dream, no matter how clearly you dream, there are times when you try to recall a dream that you find missing links in it.

And you can't recall it exactly as you saw it. There are other times when that dream may trouble you. And though you may be aware of the trouble of your mind, you cannot accurately recall the dream.

[7 : 16] You might not even be able to recall it at all. All you know of is that you dream something that bothers you. Now, it may be that that's what happened in Nebuchadnezzar.

And he called the astrologers. He called his magicians, all the wise men together. He called them in there. And he told them, look, I'm bothered by a dream.

I can't even recall the dream. And I want you to tell me what the dream was. And I want you to tell me what it means. Let's take it that that is how we are to understand this chapter.

Well, it's interesting that a powerful man like this could be upset by a dream. He was haunted by what he had seen day after day and night after night.

Only one thing dominated thinking. This dream. And the longer he went on thinking about it, the stronger the impression was born upon his mind that it was meant to convey something to him.

[8 : 28] There was a threat to him. In this dream. And he felt increasingly uneasy and increasingly insecure.

And as his uneasiness grew, so did his sense of frustration and his anger because his own so-called wise men couldn't reveal his dream to him and therefore couldn't interpret to him the meaning of what he had seen.

So we have a picture here of an agitated king and agitated because there was conveyed to him in a dream something of what was to happen in the future and he couldn't understand it.

Now, as we turn to the other side of this page, as we turn away from Rebbe Chet Neche for a minute, let us remember that he was this tyrant who exercised dominion not only over his own nation, Babylon, but over the Jewish nation as well.

And making a part and a considerable part of the nation at this time were those Jews who had been taken from Judea, from Jerusalem, into Babylon.

[10 : 00] Now, you think of these people. What was peculiar about these people? This, that to them God had entrusted the promise of the blessing and in them the nations of the earth were going to be blessed.

Indeed, in a very real sense, the whole world existed because of this small nation and this people called the Jews.

And here they are now in captivity, captured, perhaps ready to be obliterated. And the question was how could God accomplish his purpose and his promise to the world through them at this time? How could that be? With mighty heathen nations like Egypt and Assyria and now Babylon dominating them.

How was God going to fulfill his promise to them? And in this dream and the interpretation of it from Daniel, they were to learn that God was using Babylon and the other nations in the interests of Israel.

[11 : 28] As someone put it, in answer to these questions, the book of Daniel reveals that God has not cast off his people. The nations will arise and become powerful, but they will nevertheless be subject to the all-controlling power of God.

And as the verse before us tells us, when the appointed time comes, God will establish his own kingdom. And that is the message at the heart of the dreams interpreted by Daniel in this book. All the splendor of the world's empires vanish away. Christ's kingdom alone stands. Christ's kingdom alone remains.

Christ's kingdom alone is immovable and unshakable. It alone is sure. And God makes history, even the history of heathen nations, to serve his will.

Now, my friend, this is something that you and I must learn and must put into practice. Because there are times when you and I panic as well. Just as the Jews may have panicked in Babylon, I think there are times when we panic in the Christian church.

[12 : 51] Why all this confusion in the world today? What's behind all this confused going on, for example, in Yugoslavia? Why do things happen in various nations throughout the world?

What is the connection between that and God's purpose for his own church? And though you and I may not see it, though you and I may be perplexed, totally confused, we must remember as Daniel told the king that it is the hand of God to change times, to remove kings, and to set up kings, God is directing history, behind history, in control of history, moving history, and all that in the interests of his own kingdom.

And when nations rise and fall, when men dominate history for a period, and you wonder if anyone else will ever dominate history again, men come and men go, nations rise and nations fall, but the kingdom which God has established in Christ continues in and through all that confusion and moves steadily on towards the predetermined end when Christ will deliver up the kingdom to his father and God will be all and in all.

So, though there is a message of warning to Nebuchadnezzar and all other despots and dynasties, so there is a word of encouragement as well to his own beleaguered church exiled at this time in Babylon.

Let's home in now for a minute on the stream. In particular, and in the first place, home in on the failure of Nebuchadnezzar's astrologers to ease his troubled mind.

[15:01] When they failed, he issued this decree. He became more and more despotic. The more frustrated he became, the angry he became, the more tyrannical he became and the more despotic he became.

And we see this from time to time and even in our own day. men who assume positions of authority and become total autocrats.

Their word holds sway and whatever they decree has to be done. Nebuchadnezzar decreed, seeing you fail to meet my needs, you will be put to the sword.

Who knows? But that this man was beginning to see the hollowness and the futility of the religion that was practiced in his own land. He became increasingly uneasy and frustrated.

And there he was confronted with men who were quite incapable of diagnosing this mental and physical unease and exhaustion and anxiety on his part.

[16:13] And they were quite unable to to explain what was lurking like a dark shadow in his own subconsciousness.

And as he delved and as they delved deeper into the hidden resources of the mystical and the magical powers of the land, they drew a blank.

And Nebuchadnezzar recognized that there was something here beyond their dominion, beyond their power, and beyond their ability.

And because he recognized that he was driven to illogical conclusions by his own fear, his own unease, and his own anxieties.

And I think you have here a perfect picture of modern man, with his own unrecognized sense of insecurity.

[17:15] And the more insecure he realized himself to be, the more illogical become his actions. He's driven by the sense of his own fear and insecurity.

For example, to drink, to drugs, and in many instances to the occult. There are many people tonight who are troubled by disturbing thoughts in the very midst of so-called security of life.

And they delve deeper and deeper for answers to these disturbing thoughts. and they try within the limited resources, the limited spheres of their own resources, to find something that will alleviate this mental distress and this spiritual agony and the pain through which they go.

And so you have today so much of what is referred to as human researches into behavioral problems. people analyzing the difficulties and the anxieties through which people pass.

And many, many people I believe in their anxiety will go down to the paper shop and buy the daily newspaper or the weekly newspaper or the weekly magazine and many of them perhaps the first page will flick over to find the astrologer.

[18:55] Look and see what the stars are saying to them. Is there anything that is going to lift the gloom that has settled over their mind? And you know that there are people in this church I believe tonight who who perhaps engage in that ridiculous practice and there are people in the media who know the thirst and the yearning that people have to delve into the future to peer there is something of the spiritualist in every one of us trying to delve to peer into tomorrow you'll switch on the telly tvn are the only thing you'll wait for is to hear this man who's able to read your stars tell you what's going to happen tell you what to avoid what to look for what to anticipate expect and so on there's nothing new under the sun Nebuchadnezzar was the same he gathered around and people who

were expert in that field but there came a time when they couldn't help him there was a problem and they couldn't reach it there was an answer that they couldn't give and so someone said all the light all the wisdom that we seek must come from a source quite other than ourselves and when around us not only those who are experts in answering human questions but also those who can put us in touch with the wisdom and the word that is entirely from beyond and it is here that Daniel comes in he was embraced by the decree that threatened every wise man in

Babylon with death and when he heard of it he went to Ariok the man who was responsible for putting the decree into effect and he said hold on a minute what's the problem here I told no one can interpret the dream that this man has seen well tell him you go and tell him that there is a God in heaven who can deal there is an answer to this problem and so he comes to the fore in the first chapter he stood out as a man who said no in the face of questionable practices no I will not I make my stand this is the religion which I was brought up I will not do it he dared to say no in this chapter he was prepared to say yes as the situation presented itself to him he accepted that he had a part to play in this very acute and tragic human situation and as someone has put it in the most practical way he gives himself to respond to and answer the desperate cry for help and try to do something positive for those who were around him and this is the other side of the Christian's witness there is a time when he has to say no because he's different there are other times when he has to say yes for the very self-same reason because he is different and we have to distance ourselves as Christians at times from questionable situations and activities that does not mean to say that we are not to become involved with the problems thrown up by society and which lead many into areas of confusion and trouble and distress after all he who was our great example of the Lord Jesus Christ and his mind we are encouraged to cultivate was himself very deeply involved with the troubles and the sins of his own sin-torn society when others failed Daniel stepped in and this is the role of the Christian and this is the role of the Christian church and the Christian church must tell this troubled society we have the answer to your problem we have the answer to your difficulties we have the cure for your anxieties for these dark clouds that are gathering around you and hovering over you this thing that knows away and that leaves you uneasy in your waking and in your sleeping we have the answer

Daniel steps forward and he says to Ariokh look you go and tell the king just to hang on for a minute there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets that's the second thing we look at the way in which Daniel went about doing this and it's in this you have to read verses 17 to 23 how he did it the first thing he did was this he went to his friends in the faith these three men he told them the problem and he said look we'd better pray about this we'd better pray about this now my friend this is a wonderful thing to do to be able to do to know that you can approach someone with whom you can pray for a particular problem it's good to know that there are people who are in contact with the God of heaven there are people who know that God hears and God answers prayer there are people who know the reality and the power of God and the ability of God to help them in certain situations there are people who know that there is a God who works that there is a religion that works that there is a God who directs and who helps and some people have come to know that in their desperate hour of need God has sweated himself in all his power to them in their felt weakness down here on these men they knew where to go and they knew who could help have everyone here tonight there's a problem a pressing need particular anxiety I'm sure that there are times when you ask questions about tomorrow like what's going to happen what does the future hold what is going to be do you know where to come with your problems you know the saying more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of well

[25 : 56] Daniel knew that so he said to these men look let's pray and God answered that prayer God revealed to Daniel the dream that debuchath Nesra had and its meaning and he thanked God he didn't only he didn't just ask God but having received he thanked him how many of us do that oh we're good asking but are we good at thanking next 30 is going to be a thanksgiving day in this island I wonder how much of the spirit of thanksgiving is in the heart of each one of us you've asked for things and God has answered have you thanked him for the answer that he gave Daniel didn't forget to thank him and he blessed him for his power and his wisdom and he blessed him for the power that was exercised in wisdom and then he blessed him because the court of history was in his hands because he had the sovereign determination of all political changes he blessed him that he was in control do you and he also blessed him because he revealed his own hidden counsel

I think it's a reference to the unfolding of the plan of redemption as God unfolded what is in his mind from all eternity concerning the salvation of the world through his plan so that plan was revealed bit by bit to the prophets in the Old Testament times and then Daniel acknowledged that all he received from God was in accordance with his grace he didn't deserve one good thing it was in the goodness of his grace that God revealed this to him and so he comes in to the presence of Nebuchadnezzar and interprets a dream to him and he tells Nebuchadnezzar this is the third thing the interpretation of the dream as we have from verse 24 to 45 he tells him this Nebuchadnezzar he said you saw a dream and as you thought about it you realized that something was being told you about the future verse 29 as for thee

O king thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed what should come to pass hereafter you wondered what it meant you wondered what it was saying to you about the days to come well he that revealeth secrets has made known the meaning of the dream and this it is this is it Nebuchadnezzar you saw a huge colossus you saw a huge image a colossus it had a head of gold chest and arms of silver it's belly and it's a it's a thighs were made of bronze and it's legs were made of iron and it had feet of iron and clay is that not what you saw yes that's what I saw what does it mean well

I'll tell you this the head of gold that's you and your kingdom but there's going to come another kingdom that's going to subdue you and it is going to be like a sword of silver and then another kingdom will arise and subdue it it was going to be like bronze then another kingdom will subdue that one it's like iron but remember Nebuchadnezzar see what you see the feet of this colossus the feet were made of iron and clay that just won't last they don't mix there's no stability there's no security and that colossus is going to fall it's going to be broken in pieces but what is going to break it in pieces it's not it's not its own insecurity but this great stone that God is going to take from the mountain from the rock and he's going to hurl the stone at the kingdoms they're going to be destroyed and this stone is going to get larger and larger and larger as the generations go on that's a dream and its meaning

Nebuchadnezzar is this no matter how strong the nation it will not survive and that will be true of every single nation that comes after you there is only one kingdom that will last throughout all ages and that is the kingdom this stone the kingdom of God and as we know today with a complete revelation of the word of God the kingdom of Christ he didn't pull his punches he didn't fudge the issues he told them the facts as they were revealed to him by God well is that not the whole teaching tonight of the world that's not going to any fanful interpretation as to who the kingdoms were after

[31 : 48] Babylon we know in history that after the nation of Babylon it was the Persian Empire then the Greek Empire then the Roman Empire it doesn't matter if you go on what about Nazism and what about communism well alright let's look at them it doesn't matter what nation you bring up here if you want to interpret that so be it the fact of the matter my friend is this they come and they go ten years ago you would not believe that communism at the height of its strength would be where it is today in ruins and this is not what the word of God tells you he is in control of all things he directs all the nations of this world they have their rise and they have their fall but his kingdom abides his kingdom which is of divine origin not cut by any hand this kingdom which in

Christ broke into history in the fullness of time often unseen in its progress but nevertheless sure sometimes at the whim of some dynasties and tyrants the kingdom of Christ seems to be obliterated but ah my friend it never is why rage the heathen and main things why do the people think like that kings of the earth gather themselves princes are combined they plot against the lord against the anointed people tonight are bent on the destruction of Christ and his word and his church his kingdom and the world but it survives it is unconquerable it is indestructible thy kingdom hath none end at all it doth through ages all remain we are living today in the days of the kingdom of Christ as first corinthians 15 tells us christ is ruling in heaven tonight he has established his kingdom he is directing the affairs of his kingdom it is spreading from nation to nation year after year after year nation which have never heard of the Lord hear of him in accordance with the word and in spite of all the opposition directed against it it still abides founded on truth and mercy and peace as we sang in psalm 45 look at that wonderful prayer as Christ the head and the king of the church is pictured riding forth into battle in the interest what in the interest of peace and righteousness he triumphs in the heart of men and women boys and girls he brings peace into the heart and his kingdom grows in the individual as it grows throughout the world nebuchad nebuchad

nether you are king of a vast empire that is going to perish there is only one that endures what I find so amazing here is this that we look finally in our word at this nebuchad nether's response to the interpretation if you had been nebuchad nether if I had been there

I think I would have been furious how dare you say that about my kingdom but he wasn't he paid homage to Daniel he gave tribute to the god of Daniel and he appointed Daniel and his men his accomplices to exalted positions in Babylon oh how wonderfully God works how he moves the minds of men and women who are his greatest enemies to operate in his own interest and very often he does it without knowing it very often he does it like that but nebuchad nether was very submissive to all intents and purposes very humble very grateful and very gracious converted no oh no because the next chapter tells us that he returned to his paganism and to his pride but he was influenced he was suitably impressed and he worshipped to an extent the

God of Israel he felt as the New Testament tells us the powers of the world to come and here I want to say something to you and I want to say it with all the sincerity at my disposal and with all the solemnity that I can bring to bear upon it and I want you to listen to this something that someone said but never had reaction to Daniel's interpretation of the dream sometimes a religious experience can stimulate an impressive response at a superficial level and yet leave us untouched in the depths of our being you heard that sometimes a religious experience can stimulate an impressive response at a superficial level and yet leave us untouched in the depth of our being let me explain that a religious experience can relieve the distress that is caused by such things as bad dreams and bad experiences and bad moments our religious experience can give you another interest another dimension to life our religious experience can give you a measure of satisfaction and relief it can enable you to an extent to make a new beginning so that the life that you now live is at least better than the life that you had before but my friend you and

[39 : 00] I need more than a new beginning we need more than a religious experience we need the experience that brings life spiritual life into the very depth of our being that will bring reality and power into our worship that will constrain us to live a life in which the Lord dominates which has its goal heaven above we need to know that Christ is the ground of our acceptance before God we need to know that we need to know that we are justified freely by the grace of God through faith in Christ we need to know that we need sanctification we need to know that we are sinners that we need that we decide to be rid of sin and that we want the mass mastered by the holiness of Christ and clothed with his righteousness we need more than our religious experience we need the experience that will bring us to him and that will make

Christ our religion not our religion our religion but Christ our religion and we need to know that Christ is at the heart of all our religious feelings and all our religious experiences because in spite of all that the American answer heard in spite of all that he was told he remained unchanged in his heart maybe it's significant for us at this juncture of our own experience as a people as a community as an island in which so much interest is being showed in religion perhaps it is opportune for us yet again to come across in the word of God a passage that reminds us that here was a man who had a decidedly religious experience but his life and his heart remained unchanged as a result and I say that because

I know this that where God has begun the good work he will continue it where his hand has touched the life he will deepen that impression and he will bring forth fruit in our lives but when it is our hand or the hand of any other individual it won't bring forth that fruit and it won't leave that impression so my friend let us beware of having a response that Nebuchadnezzar had to Daniel's interpretation of a dream that reminded him as it reminds us that God reigns God is in control God directs his kingdom is in our midst his kingdom is extending and no matter the forces that are brought to bear upon it no weapon that is formed against it will prosper he will bring forth judgment into victory and he will can see you in his taking the mundo x time Twitter he will to hear you okay

I care Xi was who can him I can XX Him