**DANIEL CHAPTER 2**

In the Daniel Chapter 2 we learn that, not only is Daniel an extraordinary man, but he also has an extraordinary gift. He can interpret dreams. How is Daniel able to do this? God gave him this ability. Likewise, the only reason any of us have the talents, gifts and abilities that we have is because God gave them to us. As this chapter opens, nobody is aware that Daniel can interpret dreams. But they will soon find out.

READ Daniel 2:1-3. King Nebuchadnezzar is disturbed, troubled in his spirit and cannot sleep. He had a strange dream then tossed and turned as he contemplated what it might mean. Daniel 2:29 gives us, the readers, some insight into what Nebuchadnezzar had on his mind that night, specifically, what would take place in the future regarding his kingdom.

Unable to sleep, he gives orders to call in a whole large group of spiritual advisers who are later in this chapter referred to as “the wise men of Babylon.” He requests that they explain to him the meaning of his dream. These guys are the brains of the empire, the so-called intellects that should have all the answers. He assumes they can solve this riddle for him. He lays the situation out for them: “Men, I had this dream and I can’t sleep because I don’t understand what it all means.”

[Question 1] So the wise men respond… READ Daniel 2:4. Sounds reasonable. If the king tells them the details of his dream then they will tell him what it means. But the king refuses to tell them what he had dreamed. Some Bible scholars believe Nebuchadnezzar doesn’t disclose his dream because he had forgotten it. I personally believe (this is just me) that what we have here is more than just plain human forgetfulness. I believe that God intervenes and gives the king a case of temporary amnesia regarding the details of his dream. Why does God do this? So that He will receive the glory later on in the story we are about to read.

God has given Nebuchadnezzar this dream and God is preparing His man to interpret that dream. But it won’t be any of THESE wise men of Babylon.

READ Daniel 2:5. We get a good picture here of just what a ruthless tyrant King Nebuchadnezzar is. He looks at all these wise men standing in front of him in the middle of the night and he tells them that if they don’t reveal his dream… well bad news!

[Question 2a] He tells them, “You’ll be torn limb from limb, and your houses laid in ruins.”

READ Daniel 2:6 But to the man who CAN tell him the dream and its interpretation… good news!

[Question 2b] He says, “You shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor.” No pressure, right?

The wise men look at each other in utter disbelief. Surely the king can’t really mean what he just said. Again they speak up. READ Daniel 2:7. King Nebuchadnezzar knows they are stalling for time and grows more impatient. READ Daniel 2:8-9. Basically the king says, “I know you’re only stalling. How do I know whether or not you can really interpret dreams? If you can tell me WHAT I dreamed, then this will prove to me that you also know HOW to interpret that dream. However, if you can’t tell me my dream then I will know that you are a bunch of frauds.” Nebuchadnezzar has obviously grown deeply suspicious of these so-called wise men.

READ Daniel 2:10. The wise men go from a display of ignorance to a display of arrogance. They figure that if they don’t have the answer, then nobody else does either.

READ Daniel 2:11. They say, in essence, “Only the gods know the answer to the king’s demand and they don’t associate themselves with us mere mortals!” This is not the answer the king wants to hear. He becomes furious and orders all the wise men of Babylon to be destroyed.

READ Daniel 2:12-13. Unfortunately because of their current position in the king’s service, Daniel and his friends are associated with these doomed wise men. The king’s officers go to arrest them and haul them off to be executed.

READ Daniel 2:14. Daniel calmly replies with words that I believe were given to him by God. He shows good judgment and is discerning. He has a wise heart.

[Question 3] This is stated in the next verse…

READ Daniel 2:15. Arioch lays out the situation for Daniel. You get the sense that Arioch and Daniel have a pretty good relationship.

READ Daniel 2:16. Daniel discovers that he and his friends have been handed a death sentence through no fault of their own. But Daniel doesn’t panic. He remains calm. Because of the respect he has earned, Daniel gains an audience with the king. Daniel requests that the king give him just a little time. This same king who had grown impatient with the wise men of his kingdom shows a lot more patience with Daniel. Again, I see this as divine intervention. Remember, God gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream. He has a message for the king and Daniel is going to be the instrument by which that message is revealed. God is working behind the scenes!

READ Daniel 2:17-18.

[Question 4] So they pray and what happens?

READ Daniel 2:19. God reveals the king’s dream to Daniel. It’s almost downplayed here in this passage.

[Question 5] Notice Daniel’s immediate response. He begins to bless the Lord. The next few verses reveal a lot about Daniel’s prayer life and his relationship with God…

READ Daniel 2:20-23. This prayer is a great model for us to follow. He spends time praising God for who He is and for what He has done.

READ Daniel 2:24. Daniel goes back to Arioch and tells him, “You don’t have to kill anyone. God has given me the answer from heaven.” So Arioch escorts Daniel back to the king.

READ Daniel 2:25-26. The king asks Daniel point blank if he can tell him his dream and reveal its interpretation. What a great opportunity for Daniel to take some credit for himself. But instead, how does Daniel respond? He gives testimony about his great God. He witnesses to King Nebuchadnezzar!

READ Daniel 2:27-30. Not only is Daniel about to reveal the king’s dream and its interpretation, but God has even told Daniel what the king had been lying in bed thinking about the night he had the dream. Daniel makes it clear to the king that the reason he, Daniel, had been given the interpretation from the Lord isn’t for Daniel’s personal glory, but to reveal God’s truth.

Now Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar what he had dreamed…

READ Daniel 2:31. At this point Daniel had already told the king more than any of those other wise men had been able to tell him. The king had dreamed about a massive statue or image whose appearance had a dazzling splendor. You can just picture the king nodding his head with approval as Daniel relates the dream to him. He listens intently as Daniel continues to describe the image in detail…

READ Daniel 2:32-33. As we pan from top to bottom, notice that the great image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is made up of different materials – head of fine gold, breasts and arms of silver, thighs of brass, legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. But then something happens to this image.

READ Daniel 2:34-35. A hewn stone, not made with human hands, strikes the great statue on its feet and crushes both feet. The statue, which is a bit top-heavy, can no longer support itself and it comes crashing down. Dust flies everywhere. The wind then carries the dust away and soon there is nothing left of the statue. Meanwhile the stone that brought the statue down becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

READ Daniel 2:36. Before we get to the interpretation itself, I feel compelled at this point to offer some commentary. The image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream represents the panorama of history from Nebuchadnezzar’s day until the final days of Gentile power when Jesus Christ will return to the earth to establish His kingdom. Jesus actually taught about this in Luke 21 so let’s go there briefly.

READ Luke 21:20-24. Some commentaries believe this is Jesus foretelling the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 A.D. But others see this as a broad brushstroke of history where Israel and Jerusalem have been constantly threatened and dominated by Gentiles. It started in 586 B.C when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. But this oppression will continue off and on all the way to the end of the Tribulation Period discussed in Revelation. Jesus goes on in the rest of the Luke 21 passage to talk about His return and defeat of the nations which we know occurs in Revelation 19 (future even for us). This all coincides with Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream. So keep this in mind as we read the next several verses.

READ Daniel 2:37-38.

[Question 6a] Isaiah 14:4 calls Babylon, “the golden city.” The Babylonian Empire will last until Belshazzar dies under the judgment of God (Daniel 5) and is conquered.

READ Daniel 2:39a “shall arise after you” [Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon]

[Question 6b] The second kingdom corresponds to the breasts and arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The image has two arms. One of them represents the nation of Media and the other Persia. This empire will be formed from two nations. In 550 B.C. (future for Daniel) the Persians led by Cyrus will rebel against Media. Cyrus will becomes the leader of the new Medo-Persian Empire. He will defeat Babylon in 539 B.C.

The Medo-Persians under Cyrus will be a strong military power and very wealthy. But they will lack the strong central control that Babylon has. This is why it’s referred to as an “inferior” kingdom. Also, they will not be interested in world domination. In 538 B.C. Cyrus will issue his famous decree allowing the Jews to return to their homeland

READ Daniel 2:39b.

[Question 6c] Most Bible scholars see this as prophesying the rise of Alexander the Great (Greek Empire). In 332 B.C. a young Alexander and his soldiers equipped with bronze helmets, breastplates, shields and swords will make quick work of the Persian Empire and he will go on to conquer the world.

READ Daniel 2:40-41.

[Question 6d] These verses depict a kingdom that will subdue everything in its path – the iron legions of Rome. But just as the feet of the statue contains iron mixed with clay, so too the Roman Empire will be a mixture of strength and weakness. Rome will be mighty militarily but it will be marked by internal decay. No foreign nations will defeat Rome. They will collapse from within. Do you notice any parallels to America today? Just a thought. Notice I said Rome, ETC. The next few verses explain what I mean.

READ Daniel 2:42-43. Some scholars believe that these verses refer to a futile attempt to combine autocratic rule (represented by iron) with a people’s democracy (represented by the clay). Basically attempts at a revival of the Roman Empire. Throughout history others have tried to establish world domination – Napolean and Hitler come to mind – but all attempts failed. What is specifically meant by these verses is a mystery to us. My personally belief is that this parallels the events of Revelation 18. Since it is future for us we can only venture a guess as to the specifics. All we can gather from these verses is that, in the end there will be a coalition of some kind; a military or a political pact or an economic union. But it will fail for the same reason Rome failed. All the best-laid plans devised in the mind of man, no matter how great they may seem at the time, eventually fade away. Only that which is from God can stand the test of time. So I believe that this describes perfectly the demise of the antichrist’s government and religious Babylon that we saw in Revelation 18. There are a whole lot of other interpretations out there, but that’s what seems to make the most sense to me.

READ Daniel 2:44-45. The great kingdoms of the world come and go and are eventually replaced by God’s kingdom. This refers to the 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth (Millennial Kingdom). Just as the image is smashed by the stone, so too will Jesus come to earth and smash the world powers that oppose God. This parallels Revelation 19.

[Question 6e] In the N.T. Jesus is referred to as “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” (1 Peter 2:8); “the stone which the builders rejected” who became ”the very cornerstone” (1 Peter 2:7). Paul says that Israel “stumbled over the stumbling stone” (Romans 9:33), referring to Jesus. This leaves little doubt that the stone in Daniel 2:45 represents Jesus Himself! And what happens when Jesus returns?

READ Revelation 19:15-16.

[Question 7] That all happens at the Battle of Armageddon. Jesus then establishes His Kingdom on the earth. This will put an end to the Gentile oppression of Israel which has gone on for thousands of years. Yes, it is still happening. Very few nations in the world support Israel.

So there you have the dream and its interpretation – revealed by God to Daniel for Nebuchadnezzar’s benefit. Later in the book of Daniel we will get into more prophecies about the future but this gives you a taste of some of the prophecies that we’ll be looking at.

READ Daniel 2:46-47. Nebuchadnezzar gives respect and reverence to Daniel. He acknowledges that Daniel is indeed the messenger of the eternal God.

READ Daniel 2:48-49.

[Question 8] God is actually the One behind Daniel’s rise to prominence in Babylon. Go back to Chapter 1. If Daniel had never purposed in his heart to not defile himself but had just gone along with the flow, what the rest of the guys did, we would never have heard of him. But because Daniel made a commitment to do what he knew was right, made pleasing God his life’s priority, God used him in a mighty way. The result is that Daniel receives favor and honor from God and from men.

Application. What is it that we can we learn from Daniel in this chapter? When we face a crisis in life – a broken or wounded relation-ship, death, a major life change, physical problems – how should we respond? In our limited human understanding often these things don’t make sense and we might even be overwhelmed emotionally. When rough times come remember the words of Daniel: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might… He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.” (Daniel 2:20-22). I love the words of James 1:5: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” When you don’t understand and when nothing seems to make sense, GO TO GOD. There is a God in heaven – the God of Daniel and YOUR God, who has all the answers!