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Sunday, February 15, 2009
Dare To Be A Daniel Series
"Who's In Control?"
Daniel 2

I'm sure that we have all had dreams of one sort or another.

I remember having a dream about being a student at the University here in Madison a long time after I had graduated. I thought that I had finished all my course work to graduate but found out that I hadn't completed one course for some reason or another. In my dream I was in agony over what happened. I wasn't going to be able to graduate. When I awoke, of course, it was just a dream. But at the time it seemed so real.

As our text pointed out as we read from Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar, the great ruler of Babylon, had a dream. It was a different kind of a dream than I have ever had, and I would assume that you have had as well.

I. Nebuchadnezzar's trouble (Daniel 2:1-6)

1. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (2:1).

He was deeply troubled by dream which he had, so much so that he couldn't sleep.

2. Nebuchadnezzar called in the experts to provide help with his dream (2:2-6).

(1) The king's request.

The king called in the magicians, the conjurers, the scorcers, those who dealt in magic potions, enchanters, those involved in the occult to help him understand the dream (2:2-3).

(2) The wise men's response.

The so-called wise men requested that the king tell them the dream that he had and they would provide the interpretation (2:4).

(3) The king's explanation (2:5a)

The king had something else on his mind – he wanted his wise men to tell him the dream that he had and then give the interpretation of the dream.

(4) The king's warning (2:5b-6).

If they couldn't tell him his dream nor the interpretation, they would die and their houses would be rubbish. If they could tell the king the dream he had and the interpretation, then they would receive gifts and great honor.

II. The wise men's challenge (Daniel 2:7-13).

1. The wise men's second request (2:7).

They ask the king again to tell them his dream (2:7). If the king would tell them about his dream they would give him the interpretation.

2. The king's second assertion (2:8-9).

The king asserts a second time that the wise men must tell him what his dream was and interpret it.

The king believes that the wise men are biding for time, and accused them of lying, evidently about what his dream might have been.

3. The wise men's reply (2:10-11).

The wise men replied that was impossible for them to tell the king his dream. No king or ruler had ever asked such a thing of them. In fact, there was no one who could know the dream except the gods whose dwelling is not with mortal flesh.

4. The king responds in anger (2:12-13).

The king was so furious at the wise men that he made a decree that all the wise men should be destroyed in Babylon, which included Daniel and his friends.

We need to note here that for some reason Nebuchadnezzar could not remember his dream. It evidently had left him when he awoke, for usually one can remember a dream that one has during the night. Obviously, as we read on, God was in control of the situation.

III. God's opportunity for Daniel (Daniel 2:14-23).

1. The king's decree comes to Daniel (2:14-15).

When Daniel hears about the king's decree to kill all the wise men for not being able to tell the king what his dream is, let alone interpret it, Daniel had a conversation, using discretion and discernment, with Arioch the bearer of the news. He wanted to know why the king's decree was so urgent. He must have told Arioch that he would talk to the king about the matter.

2. Daniel goes to talk to the king (2:16).

In talking with the king, Daniel requested time in order that he might tell the king the interpretation of his dream. The king gave Daniel the time that he needed. Certainly, the king would remember that Daniel and his three friends had shown themselves to be 10 times wiser than all the other wise men. Daniel had already, then, established the king's trust in regard to his ability.

King Nebuchadnezzar honored Daniel's request giving him time to discover what his dream was and give the interpretation of it.

3. Daniel gathers prayer support for discovering what the dream was and the interpretation of it (2:17-18).

Daniel knows that prayer is the **first thing** to do when there is a challenge and wisdom is needed. He tells his three friends to pray that God would show compassion on them and reveal the mystery of the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. It was urgent for their very lives were at stake.

I trust that is how we respond as we face the challenges and difficulties in life. The first thing we do is pray, whether it's just a quick prayer to heaven or a longer prayer. Sometimes prayer is our last resort, but not with Daniel. Prayer was the first response that he had to the challenge at hand.

Perhaps the three friends prayed together or prayed separately. There is power in corporate prayer, as Peter was released from prison due to the combined prayers of the saints.

Paul told the Philippians – "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (4:6-7).

The first thing to do in any situation, challenge or difficulty, is to pray. That's what Daniel and his three friends did. May we do the same.

4. God brought the answer to the prayers of Daniel and his three friends (2:19).

We are not told how much time passed before their prayers were answered. Regardless, the mystery, that is the dream and its interpretation, was given to Daniel in a night vision. This was God's way of communicating with Daniel about the king's dream.

Truly this was a first class miracle here, as God answered the prayers of Daniel and his three friends. Again we see that God is in control with His miraculous power displayed.

As we look at biblical history, we see that God displayed His miraculous power down through history, but sometimes with greater exclamation – like in the time of Moses when the different plagues were brought upon Egypt and then the miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians as the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. During the time of Elijah and Elisha God brought amazing miracles through them. Then during the time of Christ, He demonstrated that He was truly God as He healed the sick, cast out demons, and raised the dead. The miraculous was greatly emphasized. In the time of the apostles' ministry, another period of miracles was performed, as God used the apostles to establish His New Testament Church. This doesn't mean that God can't still perform miracles today, but it seems that God had certain times in history to emphasize His power in a more visual and emphatic way.

That is what is happening in the Book of Daniel. God is showing His miraculous power with exclamation here in giving Daniel the dream king Nebuchadnezzar had and its interpretation. In fact, as we get more into the book of Daniel, we will continue to see God's miraculous power displayed all through the book of Daniel. God is saying through Daniel that He is the miracle God who is in control.

But notice as well the context in which these more miraculous periods of history were displayed. To the Egyptians – involved in idolatry. The plagues were against their gods. To the northern kingdom of Israel who had sunk deep into idolatry. In the time of Jesus, the Jews were caught up in the letter of law, adding to it, and missing what the Old Testament Scripture was all about, and what it foretold about Christ. There was total unbelief with emperor worship by the Gentiles. In the time of the Apostles there was continued emperor worship by the Gentiles with the Jews engulfed in form with no substance.

Here in Daniel, this young man and his friends are in a pagan society steeped in idolatry.

What was needed in Egypt, what was needed in Israel, what was needed in the time of Christ and the time of the apostle, yes, what was needed in the time of Daniel?

There was needed a demonstration that the biblical God is the eternal personal God who is alive and well and is the all-powerful God who has power over the evil one and his idols in the nations, and is carrying out His purpose despite the evil one's opposition.

I believe that the reason Nebuchadnezzar could not remember his dream, was that God kept him from remembering his dream so that the true control and miraculous power of God could be displayed through Daniel and his friends.

The biblical God always has the last word in the affairs of men. Praise the Lord!

And that is what Daniel did!!

5. Daniel blessed and praised the God of heaven for giving Him his answer regarding Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:20-23).

Notice Daniel's blessing of and praise to the biblical God.

(1) Daniel praises God's person (2:20).

- He is the eternal personal God – who has an eternal name.
- He is the God of all wisdom (omniscient) and power (omnipotent). That is the biblical God is the source of all wisdom and power.

(2) Daniel praises God for His ability (2:21-22).

- He is the God who is sovereign over the affairs of men.

Verse 21 reminds us that our President, and those ruling in other countries are not there by their own design. God has a purpose in putting different people into places of leadership. Sometimes we may not be sure what that is, but God is working out His plan in history. Whether men like it or not, God is involved in politics.

- He provides wisdom and knowledge – giving understanding to men.

This is true when men ask for God's wisdom and knowledge as Daniel did. God's wisdom is available when we ask Him for it. James 1:5 tells us that if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God.

- He is the omniscient God – knowing all things actual and possible.
- Nothing is hidden from our God.

Read Psalm 139 again some time. He knows our thoughts even before they come into our minds.

(3) Daniel thanks God for answering His prayer regarding the king's dream (2:23).

Daniel is very specific in his thanks to God for providing him the answer to his prayer. When God answers our prayers, we should be quick to thank Him for being involved so personally in our lives. We must never take our relationship with the Lord for granted. He deserves our thanks as He answers our prayers.

IV. God's message through Daniel to the King (Daniel 2:46-49).

1. Daniel relates to Arioch, the king's commander that he has an interpretation of the king's dream (2:24).

Note that Daniel emphasized he wanted to do this so that the wise men will not be destroyed.

2. Arioch immediately takes Daniel into the presence of King Nebuchadnezzar (2:25).

Arioch tells the king that there is an exile from Judah who can make known what the king's dream was all about.

3. The king speaks to Daniel (2:26).

"Are you able to make known to the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"

4. Daniel replies to the king Nebuchadnezzar (2:27-45).

Don't miss these words of this young man, Daniel in his early twenties as he is in the presence of this king who has incredible power and might – who is involved in idolatry – but Daniel comes into his presence representing who? The King of kings and the Lord of lords.

(1) Daniel acknowledges the finiteness – the limitations of men (2:27).

Daniel knows that man can only do so much. Even the king's wise men could not tell Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was and the interpretation of it.

How we need to hear that man is finite by our political leaders today. How we need to hear that man is finite in our elementary, secondary schools today. How we need to hear that man is finite in our universities today. How we need to hear that in the public square and in the various religions today. Man is finite. He is not god. He withers like the flower and the grass. Because of that, man needs the Savior – Yes, Jesus Christ.

(2) Daniel witnesses to the reality that there is God (Elohim) the eternal personal Creator God who has all knowledge and wisdom (2:28a).

Here Daniel makes the strong contrast between the finite man and the infinite eternal God. He is immeasurable, His reservoir of knowledge and wisdom is unfathomable.

(3) Daniel testifies to the king that God used him to be involved in what the dream contains (2:28b29).

Daniel wants the king to know that God is involved in the dream that he had on his bed. God was speaking directly to this pagan king. Again God is in control.

Has this happened before in biblical history? God gave two dreams to Pharaoh in Egypt (Genesis 41) another Gentile ruler, and Joseph was used by the Lord to interpret them. God gave the Magi a dream in Matthew 2:12 so that they wouldn't return to Herod about where Christ was. They returned home another way.

God certainly had a definite plan in mind for those He gave dreams in the Bible times.

(4) Daniel is careful to tell the king that he is just an instrument being used by God (2:30).

Daniel displays his humble attitude here before the king, giving God the glory for what is taking place. He is just being available to the Lord to be used by HIM.

(5) Daniel tells king Nebuchadnezzar the content of his dream (2:31-35).

- The king saw a large statue (2:32-35a).
 - Head – gold
 - Breast and arms – silver
 - Belly and thighs – bronze
 - Legs and feet – legs of iron, feet iron and clay.
- The king saw a stone cut without hands come and crush the statue. The stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth (2:35b).

(5) Daniel gives king Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of his dream (2:36-45).

- The head = Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom (612-538 B.C) (2:36-38).
- The breast and arms = Medes and Persians (538-333 B.C.) (2:39a).
- The belly and thighs = Greece (333-63 B.C.) (2:39b).

- Legs and feet = Rome (63 B.C. – A.D. 475; Divided into Eastern and Western Empires in A.D. 364 (two legs) (2:40-41).
- The ten toes = 10 kings (2:42-44) reigning at the time Christ sets up His kingdom (Possibly the United States of Europe yet to be formed).
- The stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Christ's kingdom on earth that will crush all the other kingdoms of men (2:44-45).



What was Nebuchadnezzar's response to Daniel being able to tell him the dream he had plus interpreting it.

V. King Nebuchadnezzar's response to Daniel involvement (Daniel 2:46-49).

1. The king give Daniel god status (2:46).

So overwhelmed that Daniel could tell him the dream he had along with the interpretation that Nebuchadnezzar treated Daniel as if he were a god. He gave him an offering and fragrant incense. Cornelius, the Roman centurion, treated Peter this way (Acts 10:25-16). Paul and Barnabas were accepted as gods at Lystra (Acts 14:8-18).

Knowing the true God, Daniel must have abhorred all this adulation, but it was useless to protest the response of the king.

2. The king gave recognition to the true and living eternal God (2:47).

In paying homage to Daniel, king Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged that Daniel's God was truly the God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, of his dream. This was an amazing admission of a king steeped in the Babylonian idolatry. There would even be more changes later in his life.

3. The king promoted Daniel to a place of authority in his kingdom (2:48).

Perhaps this means that Daniel had authority over the province of Babylon (perhaps the city) along with being over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel requested that his three friends be a part of what was happening and they were made administrators over the province of Babylon.

Daniel was in the king's court, perhaps sitting at the King's gate to make judgments and to give advice and discernment to those who came.

In the process all the wise men's lives on the king's court were saved.

What started out to be an awful tragedy turned into a great victory for Daniel as he prayed to and trusted in the true and living personal and eternal God. He received the glory.

What can we learn and apply to our lives from this incredible passage of Scripture?

1. We can learn something about God's involvement in history.

(1) God is in control of history – He is in charge.

It is His Story recorded on the pages of history as He involves Himself in the affairs of men, even using pagan kings to accomplish His purposes, such as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Pharaoh, and others.

Psalm 20:16 – The Lord is King forever and ever; Nations have perished from His land." Psalm 29:13 reads, "Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.

Listen to Isaiah 40:15 & 17 – “Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, he lifts up the islands like fine dust. . . all the nations are as nothing before Him. They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless”

Isaiah is showing the greatness of the eternal God in relationship to the powerlessness of the nations before Him. He is the eternal King and God. For God loves all people, all nations, that’s why He sent His Son to die, to pay the penalty of sin which all people have committed, and through faith in Jesus, forgiveness and eternal life is offered to all, but especially to those who believe. Still, He is God and in control of all things.

(2) Kingdoms of men decline as time goes on.

As we considered the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, the massive statue changed in value from head to foot – from gold to clay, but it also changed in strength, finally ending in feet made of iron mixed with clay. Really, then, the statue was top heavy – weight of gold is ten times that of clay, and silver is five times heavier than clay.

As we look at the kingdoms that have come and gone on the pages of history, there has been progress on one level, but on another level there has been decay and decline. Sad to say, America is the same way. We have great progress in technology and provisions for comfort and ease, but underneath is immorality and godlessness –spiritual decay has set in. There is the definite need for the Savior Jesus Christ.

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

(3) It will be difficult for things to hold together at the end of the age.

The feet of the image were composed of iron and clay. Iron provides strength and durability, but clay is weak and can crumble easily. Actually, the clay robs the iron of its strength. What a picture of our day as we see man’s attempt to bring peace in the Middle East. Our economic crisis is a picture of man in his own strength failing, iron mixed with clay. Yes, man came from dust, at best clay. He can do great things, but his heart is far from God. His basic problem is spiritual, needing to accept God’s forgiveness and grace provided for him in Christ’s death, burial and bodily resurrection.

(4) Jesus Christ will return, put down the rebellious nations, and establish His kingdom on earth. The stone is the frequent image of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Psalm 118:22 – The Stone which the builders rejected (cf. Acts 4:11; I Peter 2:4-8).
Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 – A stone, a tested stone (Matthew 21:42).

2. We can have confidence in our God in the present and hope in our God for the future.

(1) God is still on the throne in heaven for us.

Psalm 121 tells us that God neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Ephesians 1:11 tells us that God works all things after the counsel of His own will.

In spite of what our leaders in Washington, and in our state, are doing and not doing in this economic challenge, God is very much aware of what is going on, and is waiting for the leaders to look to Him for His wisdom and guidance. God never leaves us nor forsakes us.

(2) God is always available for us to bring all of our prayers to Him.

As Daniel prayed to the Lord first, so God wants us to do the same in our challenges and difficulties. He tell us to come boldly to His throne of grace with all of our needs, requests, and desires (Heb. 4:15-16). God is just a thought a way. Do we use this privilege?

Our Lord also makes intercession (Hebrews 7:25) for us and the Holy Spirit prays with us interceding for us as well (Romans 8:26-27). How great is that!

(3) Depending on the indwelling Holy Spirit who lives within, as believers in Jesus Christ we can act with discernment and boldness.

The words in Daniel 2:14-16 are very instructive.

****Discretion and Discernment –**

When Daniel received word that the king was going to kill all the wise men for failing to tell him his dream and interpret it, he replied to the bearer of the news, Arioch, with discretion and discernment. Daniel acted wisely in talking to Arioch, using God's wisdom, His discernment, in finding out why all this was happening.

****Boldness - bold faith– willing to risk his life because of His faith in the Lord.**

Then Daniel went to the king and requested that he be given some time to ascertain what the king's dream was as well as the interpretation of it.

Daniel didn't even know yet anything about the dream Nebuchadnezzar had. Yet through faith in the Lord, he believed that God would provide the answer, and through prayer that would happen.

God is challenging each of us as followers of Christ today to be people who have discernment in our lives as we live in this world. Daniel was given that discernment because he knew God's Word and acted upon it. The word of God dwelt richly in his heart. Again He made up His mind based upon God's Word to trust God and act upon God's Word.

Having God's discernment we can go forth and do God's will for His glory. Be bold for Christ where He puts us in by life and word – be willing to risk for Christ as He has risked for us.

Where is God challenging us to use His discernment and be bold for HIM. To Dare to Be a Daniel.

(4) We can live in hope, in expectation, of Christ's any moment return.

Why? Because God's word is true. Daniel was used to give an overview of what would happen in the nations down through history. Much has already happened, there are still other events that will happen in our day and beyond. But we know the events that have not yet happened will happen because some of the events foretold have already come true.

Jesus said that when he went away he would come again. Daniel foretold the future with God's help when Christ would come to earth to establish His kingdom. Nothing is said about Christ's coming for His church before the great tribulation time. However, in the full revelation, we are told in I Thessalonians 4 that Christ will come in the air for His church, then will be the tribulation or wrath of God on earth as depicted in Revelation 6-19. At the end of the tribulation time in Zechariah 14, Matthew 24 & Revelation 19, as depicted here in our text of Daniel 2, Christ, the living STONE will come and put down all the nations rebelling against HIM, and establish His kingdom on earth, which I take to be the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth.

So the next event that will happen on God's calendar is that the trump of God will sound, the dead in Christ will rise first and we who know the Lord living on planet earth will go to be with the Lord forever.

John writes, that believer who has this hope purifies Himself even as HE is pure.

May we live in the expectancy of Christ's return this week, confident that He is in control. Then in the Spirit's power use the Lord's discernment and boldness that Daniel had, willing to risk for the Lord.

May He receive the praise!

