

**Series Title: Daniel's Visions Of the Ages**

**Today's Message: Dreams Concealed and Dreams Revealed; Daniel 2:1-23**

Daniel 2 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible for understanding what God has revealed concerning His Sovereign rule over the nations. In particular, in Daniel 2, we see the history of the major kingdoms and empires as they relate to Israel and God's plan to fulfill His purposes through Israel. In Daniel 2 we see the prophetic view of the overthrow of these kingdoms by God, the God of Heaven--as Daniel is inspired to call Him!

As a side note, you may be asking, what is God's purpose for Israel? In brief remember Romans 9 -11. Paul traces the plan and purpose of God in selecting and eventually saving Israel. But Romans 9:4-5 provides a quick view of God's plan and purpose for Israel. "...the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs is the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen."

So, you see history, biblical history is framed around God's redemptive plan unfolding through the prophetic history of Israel, and revealed and applied through His Son, our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

But in the book of Daniel, Daniel interprets dreams, and dreams visions. These dreams and visions concern Sovereign God and His raising up and bringing down kings and kingdoms and finally establishing an unmovable, unshakeable, eternal kingdom with the Son of God sitting on David's throne forever!

Someone wrote that Daniel 2 is the foundation for understanding the general prophetic outline and timeline expounded on in Daniel through the book of the Revelation! Being informed by the simple outline of Daniel 2 concerning the five major kingdoms will make interpretation of the rest of biblical eschatology much easier. For instance, with the foundation clearly set in Daniel 2, the interpretation of the visions in Daniel 7 and 9 become much easier. And though these subsequent visions carry with them a little more detail, they are still rooted in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. And, by the way, as a point of reference, the vision of Daniel 7 came to Daniel about 50 years into the exile, and Daniel 9 came to Daniel nearly 64 years into the exile! That's interesting!

Daniel 2 divides nicely as follows: Nebuchadnezzar's dream is concealed (2:1-16); Nebuchadnezzar's dream is revealed (2:17-23); Daniel describes and interprets the dream (2:24-45); and Daniel is promoted (2:46-49).

- I. The Story of Daniel 2
  - A. Nebuchadnezzar had troubling dreams.
  - B. Enter the Wizards
    1. No man can know what another man dreams.
  - C. Enter Daniel
    1. Seeks time from the king and mercy and wisdom from God.
    2. Daniel reveals and interprets the dream per God's favor upon him.
  - D. The Dreams
    1. concerning 5 kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and God's kingdom.

2. Only one kingdom will remain! (2:46)

E. The Promotion of Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar

1. Daniel is honored and promoted by the king.

## II. (2:1-16) Nebuchadnezzar's Dream is Concealed

A. (2:1) Two years in and living in troubled times

1. Neb was a mighty warrior. He had led numerous military campaigns for his father.

His victories are quite impressive:

a. He defeated Pharaoh Necho II (see Jeremiah 46)

b. He was part of his father's military when Assyria was defeated.

c. Of course, he defeated Judah and took the people captive.

2. However, Neb lived in the constant shadow of his father who preceded him.

a. Some of the "vassals" (kings that give homage to a superior leader) doubted Babylon's power under Neb, and called his "empire" weak, and therefore constantly threatening revolt.

3. Neb's troubling dreams

a. With a shaky grip on his kingdom, the dreams caused anxiety. Probably overwhelmed with fear of losing the kingdom.

B. (2:2-3) Troubled Neb summons the wizards

1. Astrologers, magicians, enchanters, sorcerers

a. Babylon's occultic roots stemmed from the days of Nimrod.

b. These wizards were treated like royalty.

2. Neb did not have patience for *bellowing blowhards* (2:9). He feared for his kingdom and demanded that those with so-called *spiritual powers* prove those powers.

a. Tell the dream or die, and your homes will become latrines! (2:5)

b. Tell the dream and live and you will be honored and rewarded.

C. (2:4-13) Troubled and powerless wizards

1. *Aramaic* from 2:4 – 7:28.

a. Aramaic was to the ancient world what English is to the modern world.

2. Troubled b/c Neb demanded that they tell what the dream was.

3. A key verse: 2:10: "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks!"

a. Key b/c men are not **omniscient**.

b. They operated under occultic powers. Yet, Satan and demons are not omniscient.

c. There is not a man nor demon who can, but God can!

i. God is perfect in knowledge! (1 Samuel 2:9)

(2:14-16) Troubled Daniel appeals to the king asking for time.

1. Despite the death sentence (2:12-13), Daniel *interceded* on behalf of himself and the wizards and *asked* the king for time.

## III. (2:17-23) Nebuchadnezzar's Dream is Revealed

A. (2:17-18) Daniel musters his friends for prayer.

1. Goes home explained the matter.

- a. He did not conceal the serious life or death matter.
  - i. Wisdom in gathering faithful people to pray.
    - 1. Acts 12 when Peter was in prison by Herod, many gathered for prayer to pray (12:12).
- 2. He urged them to pray specifically concerning the matters at hand:
  - a. To pray for **God's mercy** (not Neb's mercy!).
  - b. To pray for insight into the *mystery* (known to God!).
  - c. To pray not to be executed along with the others.
    - i. He prayed for these occultic practitioners to be spared.
      - 1. Not imprecatory prayers against them.
      - 2. But intercessory prayers for them!
        - a. 1 Tim.2:1, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people."
- 3. Lesson to learn:
  - a. Prayer is important. Of course, God is Sovereign and He does what He pleases. But He calls us to pray.
    - i. Matthew 7:7-12, "...<sup>11</sup>If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!"
    - ii. 1 Tim. 2:8, "Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling."
  - b. It is a balance to be sure, but Divine Sovereignty and Human responsibility meet together when we pray.
    - i. Would the outcome be different if they didn't pray? If not, then why pray?
- B. (2:19a) Answer to prayer! The mystery was revealed by God in a vision.
- C. (2:19b- 23) Daniel immediately praised the God of heaven when prayer was answered.
  - 1. Look at how his praise is directly related to the matter at hand.
    - a. Praising God for the things that are His alone:
      - i. Praise, eternal praise;
      - ii. Wisdom and power are His (He is the source)
        - 1. 1 Cor. 1:30: "Christ Jesus has become our wisdom from God."
      - iii. Changes seasons, sets up kings, brings them down, gives wisdom freely, knowledge; He reveals secrets and brings things in the darkness to light!
      - iv. Thanks God for answering prayer exactly as he prayed.
- D. Compare Daniel's knowledge of God with the hopeless state of the wizards in **2:11**.
  - 1. Their gods were aloof. "They do not live among men."
  - 2. Daniels God, our God is near, and caring, and with us! **See John 17:20-24**