

Daniel 2:1-6; 17-18; 26-35 “A Revealer of Mysteries” 4/21/24

Martin Luther is not to be confused with the American pastor and civil rights reformer named Martin Luther King, Jr - Martin Luther was a German Roman Catholic priest, and he wanted to reform the Catholic Church - He made a list of 95 things that were wrong with the Church in that day - And then nailed it to the Church door in Wittenberg Germany on October 31, 1517

Luther had been ordained into the priesthood in 1507 - He came to reject several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church - In particular, he disputed the view on indulgences, which were a way to purchase your way into heaven by giving the Church a nice donation - Luther attempted to resolve these differences peacefully

He first proposed an academic discussion of the practice and usefulness of indulgences in Ninety-five Theses, which he authored in 1517 - In 1520, Pope Leo X demanded that Luther renounce all of his writings, and when Luther refused to do so, the Pope excommunicated him in January 1521

Later that year, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V condemned Luther as an outlaw at the Diet of Worms - When Luther died in 1546, Pope Leo X's excommunication was still in effect¹

Martin Luther may not have been too successful with his efforts to reform the Catholic Church - But the controversy surrounding his actions is credited with sparking the Protestant Reformation - Today Protestant Churches, like ours, abound - And the Lutherans even bear Luther's name

His connection to today's Daniel passage is through a dream that he is famous for having and sharing with others

¹ Some Martin Luther background information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther

In a dream, Martin Luther found himself being attacked by Satan - The devil unrolled a long scroll containing a list of Luther's sins and held it before him - On reaching the end of the scroll Luther asked the devil, "Is that all?"

"No," came the reply, and a second scroll was thrust in front of him - Then, after a second came a third - But now the devil had no more

"You've forgotten something," Luther exclaimed triumphantly "Quickly write on each of those sins, 'The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanses us from all sins'"²

In Biblical times, dreams were considered to be messages from the gods - And the Lord, our God, has also used dreams to communicate with people

In Genesis, Jacob had a dream we call Jacob's ladder - Where he saw angels ascending and descending on it³ - Also in Genesis, Joseph is recorded as having a dream that his brothers didn't like, and he also interpreted several dreams by Pharaoh's cupbearer and his baker, in addition to Pharaoh himself⁴

1 Kings 3:5 says, "At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you."⁵ - Solomon famously chose wisdom as what he wanted God to give to him

1 Kings 3:9-10 records his words, "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this"

Joseph, in the New Testament also had an important dream - In it, an angel appeared to him and told him that the Baby Jesus was in danger - Joseph awoke and fled to Egypt with his Baby and his wife Mary⁶

² Occult Bondage and Deliverance, K. Koch, SermonCentral.com

³ Genesis 28:10-15

⁴ Genesis 37: 5-11; Genesis 40-41

⁵ Scripture quoted has been taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version,

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⁶ Matthew 1: 20-24

In our Daniel passage today, King Nebuchadnezzar has had a dream that he recognized as an important prophecy - And he expected his wise men to interpret it - Usually, the wise men could give some sort of interpretation as long as they knew what the dream was about

This time, however, Nebuchadnezzar did not share what the dream was about - Instead he demanded to be told the dream also - As you can imagine, this was a major problem for the wise men

As you may remember from Chapter 1 last week - Because of the faithfulness of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; they had been promoted to be among the Wise Men - So now, the king's wrath fell on them as well as on the Babylonian Wise Men

So, when the Wise Men told the king that they'd need to know what the dream was about before they could interpret it, Daniel 2:12-13 record Nebuchadnezzar's reaction

Those verses say, "Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them"

Daniel seems to be in a heap of trouble here - Imagine going to see the powerful, temperamental king who had just angrily ordered your death! - Daniel, however, did not tremble in fear, or run the other way, but confidently believed God would tell him all the king wanted to know

When the king gave Daniel time to find the answer, Daniel found his three friends and they prayed - My Life Application Bible recommends that, "When you find yourself in a tight spot, share your needs with trusted friends who also believe in God's power

Prayer is always more effective than panic - Panic confirms your hopelessness - Prayer confirms your hope in God

Daniel's trust in God saved not only himself, but also his three friends and all the other wise men of Babylon"⁷

Daniel's description of the dream is recorded in verses 31 to 35

He said, "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly 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, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the 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."

The next 10 verses record Daniel's interpretation - But given the advantages of history, my Life Application Bible shows when and how each part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was fulfilled

The head of gold on the statue in the dream represented Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the Babylonian Empire - The silver chest and two arms represented the Medo-Persian Empire, which conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

The belly and thighs of bronze were Greece and Macedonia under Alexander the Great, who conquered the Medo-Persian Empire in 334–330 BC - The legs of iron represented Rome, which conquered the Greeks in 63 BC

The feet of clay and iron represented the breakup of the Roman Empire, when the territory Rome ruled divided into a mixture of strong and weak nations - The type of metal in each part depicted the strength of the political power it represented

⁷ Life Application Bible, © 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 2012 (Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL)

The rock cut out of the mountain depicted God's kingdom, which would be ruled eternally by the Messiah, the King of kings - The dream revealed Daniel's God as the power behind all earthly kingdoms

God's kingdom will never be destroyed - It's easy to be upset and worried in a world where war and evil leaders are commonplace - But, we are to trust that God, not world leaders, decide the outcome of history

Under God's protection, God's kingdom is indestructible - Those who believe in Jesus are members of His kingdom and are secure in Him⁸

When we consider these truths, our response ought to be one of joyful confidence, knowing that the Lord has everything under control and will one day reign on this earth

While God's people should do everything we can to alleviate suffering and make this a safer and happier world, our hope is not in the good things we can do - Not in our abundance of material things - Not even in our family or friends - Our hope is in the Lord

Daniel 2:44 records Daniel's words, "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever"

That verse speaks of the followers of Jesus - His kingdom shall never be destroyed, and it shall stand forever - All of us who know Jesus are that kingdom - And our citizenship there is celebrated the moment we invite Jesus to be our Savior

If you have not already done so, please accept Jesus as your Savior - In a simple prayer tell Him you cannot go back and change a thing about the past - Invite Jesus to save you from sin and be the Lord of your life - In the twinkling of an eye you will be transformed into a new creation in Christ Jesus

⁸ Ibid.