

DANIEL INFORMS NEBUCHADNEZZAR THAT GOD HAS REVEALED THE MEANING

DANIEL 2:24-30

SCRIPTURE READING AND INSIGHTS

Begin by reading Daniel 2:24-30 in your favorite Bible. As you read, never forget that you can trust everything recorded in the Word of God (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35).

In the previous lesson, God revealed the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to Daniel. In today's lesson, Daniel reports to Nebuchadnezzar that God told him about the dream and its meaning. With your Bible still accessible, consider the following insights on the biblical text, verse by verse.

Daniel 2:24-25

Daniel went in to Arioch (2:24): Daniel immediately went to see Arioch because the stakes were so high in quickly meeting the king's demands. One should not miss the fact that Daniel not only had easy access to Arioch but also enjoyed some level of influence with him. This indicates the high respect that Arioch and others in the royal service had for Daniel. Daniel had a good reputation.

Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon (2:24): Daniel sought to prevent any further executions of Babylon's wise men. Here again we find Daniel manifesting a godly attitude, focusing on the safety of others. Much later in

history, the apostle Paul would describe this attitude in Philippians 2:4: "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Recall that Jesus Himself taught, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). Daniel loved and cared for the other wise men even though they were occultists.

Bring me in before the king (2:24): Daniel requested that Arioch take him immediately to see the king, for he now knew the dream and its interpretation. Notice that Daniel had no hesitation in sharing this news with Arioch. He was not unsure of himself. He did not say, "I *think* I know the dream and its interpretation." Nor did he say, "I have a *good idea* what the dream is and its interpretation." Daniel was absolutely sure that God had accurately revealed the dream and its meaning to him. He was completely confident in God.

Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste (2:25): Just as Daniel had quickly gone to see Arioch, so now Arioch quickly took Daniel to see the king. Perhaps Arioch thought that if he brought good news to the king, the king might reciprocate by looking upon him more favorably. Perhaps the king might even reward him. Time was of the essence. The sooner he got to the king, the better he would look.

I have found among the exiles from Judah (2:25): Notice how Arioch distorted what really happened. Daniel had come to Arioch, but Arioch boasts that he went out and found Daniel, as if he were busily trying to solve the king's dilemma. Daniel, a man of integrity, did not seek to correct Arioch on this.

Notice that Arioch introduced Daniel as one from "among the exiles from Judah." It is interesting to observe how often God has used a Jewish person to bring deliverance to others. Recall that when a number of kings joined in a coalition to overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and many others were taken captive. Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, delivered them from bondage (Genesis 14). God used Joseph to deliver many Egyptians (and others) from the great famine that came upon the land (Genesis 37-50). God used a resistant Jonah to bring a message of repentance to Nineveh, after which they all repented, and God withheld His punishment of the nation (Jonah 1-3). And who can forget the wondrous salvation that

has come through the divine Messiah, Himself a Jewish man (Matthew 1:1; John 3:16).

Daniel 2:26

Are you able to make known to me the dream...and its interpretation? (2:26): The king—perhaps a bit cynical after the failure of all the other wise men in Babylon—got right to the point with Daniel. Notice again that the interpretation of the dream would not be enough to satisfy the king. Daniel must first reveal the dream itself and then give the interpretation. Daniel was subjected to the same test of truth that the other wise men experienced.

Recall that the other wise men informed the king, “The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” (Daniel 2:11). Thus Daniel’s claim to know the dream and its message must have seemed extraordinary to Nebuchadnezzar. However, his knowledge of the dream was not from “the gods” but rather from the one true God.

Daniel 2:27

No wise men (2:27): Daniel’s main point in Daniel 2:27-28 is that no one could possibly satisfy the king’s request on his own. Daniel’s reference to “wise men” referred not only to the occultists who failed to reveal the dream but also to himself. Daniel freely admitted that left to his own abilities, he could not tell the king his dream or its meaning. The good news, however, is that God in heaven does have this ability, and Daniel received revelation from God through a vision.

Daniel 2:28-30

God in heaven (2:28): The phrase “God in heaven” distinguishes Daniel’s God from the multiple local deities of Babylon. Daniel was careful to emphasize that he knew the dream and its meaning only because the God of heaven had revealed it to him (compare with Genesis 41:16). Unlike Arioch, Daniel had no interest in promoting himself, but rather sought to honor and glorify God.

Who reveals mysteries (2:28): This God in heaven is the One who reveals mysteries. In the present case, the mystery involved Nebuchadnezzar’s dream

and its meaning. In the Bible, a mystery is a truth that cannot be discerned simply by human investigation, but requires special revelation from God. The God of heaven gave special revelation to Daniel about Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar (2:28): The moment had now arrived. Daniel was about to pass on to Nebuchadnezzar what God Himself had passed on to him.

He who reveals mysteries made known (2:29): Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar that God was revealing the prophetic future to Nebuchadnezzar.

The Old Testament use of the term "last days" (and similar terms) typically refers to the time leading up to the second coming of the Messiah to set up His millennial kingdom on earth. More specifically, the Old Testament usage of such terms as "latter days," "last days," "latter years," "end of time," and "end of the age" all refer to Israel's time of tribulation, which leads to the second coming of the Messiah.

We will investigate the specifics of this prophetic dream in the next chapter. We will see that Nebuchadnezzar's dream spanned Gentile history and dominion, including the kingdom of his day and the kingdoms that followed, up to the days preceding the coming of Israel's Messiah in the prophetic future. The dream focuses heavily on what Jesus called "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). The future sequence of Gentile kingdoms would one day climax with the appearance of God's eternal kingdom.

As for me (2:30): Daniel again took the path of humility. He took no credit for the dream or its interpretation, nor did he claim to be superior to the other wise men in Babylon. The mystery was revealed to him by the God of heaven. Despite Daniel's personal humility on the matter, one must recall that Nebuchadnezzar himself had earlier found Daniel and his friends to be "ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom" (Daniel 1:20).

Take a moment to ponder some of the rich spiritual truths about God we have uncovered in today's biblical text:

- He is the only true God and is infinitely greater than all.
- He is sovereign over all kings and nations and is guiding human history.

- He is omniscient and knows the distant future.
- He answers prayer, gives revelation to human beings, and providentially protects His people.

Our God is an awesome God!

MAJOR THEMES

1. *God is omniscient.* Daniel knew that God is omniscient, so he boldly informed the king, “There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). Scripture reveals that God knows all things, both actual and possible (Matthew 11:21-23). He knows all things past (Isaiah 41:22), present (Hebrews 4:13), and future (Isaiah 46:10). And because He knows all things, His knowledge can neither increase nor decrease. Psalm 147:5 affirms that God’s understanding is beyond measure. God’s knowledge is infinite (Psalms 33:13-15; 139:11-12; Proverbs 15:3; Isaiah 40:14; 46:10). Thus, God could easily reveal to Daniel the king’s dream and its meaning.
2. *God alone knows the future.* Closely related to God’s omniscience is the biblical teaching that the one true God can foretell the future: “Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it?” (Isaiah 44:8). “Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD?” (45:21). “I declared them to you from of old, before they came to pass I announced them to you” (48:5). You and I may not know what the future holds for us or for anyone else. But we do know the One who knows the future—our all-knowing God.

DIGGING DEEPER WITH CROSS-REFERENCES

God’s foreknowledge—Exodus 3:19; Deuteronomy 31:16; Isaiah 42:9; 44:7; 46:9-10; 48:3; Matthew 21:2; 24:36; Acts 2:23; 3:18; Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2

Looking out for the interests of others—Daniel 2:24; Romans 12:10; Ephesians 4:2; 5:21; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 5:5

LIFE LESSONS

1. *God reveals the prophetic future to human beings.* Someone has rightly said that God *moved* and the prophet *mouthed* prophetic truths. God *revealed* and man *recorded* His words about the future (see 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; see also Jeremiah 1:9; Zechariah 7:12; Acts 1:16; 4:24-25). If there's one thing we learn from this, it is that we ought to place our trust not in human psychics, who make many mistakes and who are involved in occultism, but rather in the one true God, who knows the future.
2. *Following Daniel's example of humility.* Daniel was a humble man who pointed away from his own abilities and pointed to God instead (Daniel 2:27-28). The Scriptures tell us that those who would please God must walk in humility. Not only that, but God exalts the humble: "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you" (James 4:10; see also Luke 1:52). Daniel humbled himself all throughout the book of Daniel, and God subsequently exalted him. Scripture exhorts us to clothe ourselves with humility (1 Peter 5:5).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Can you think of another Old Testament personality who was challenged to interpret a dream for a high government official? (Hint: The answer is in the book of Genesis.) Try to think of at least five ways these two are alike.
2. What leadership qualities do you see in Daniel in today's Scripture reading?
3. Do a little self-inventory. Ask yourself, *Am I more interested in building others up or in building myself up in the eyes of others?* What have you learned in this lesson that might help you seek the kind of humility Daniel displayed?