

Hymns: RHC 314 Near, Still Nearer 315 Walk in the Light 446 Lord, Speak to Me

Daniel 2

Daniel 2:1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. **2** Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. **3** And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. **4** Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. **5** The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. **6** But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. **7** They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. **8** The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. **9** But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. **10** The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. **11** And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. **12** For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. **13** And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. **14** Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon: **15** He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why *is* the decree *so* hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. **16** Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. **17** Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: **18** That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. **19** Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. **20** Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: **21** And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and

knowledge to them that know understanding: **22** He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. **23** I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter. **24** Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. **25** Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. **26** The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? **27** Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; **28** But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; **29** As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. **30** But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. **31** Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible. **32** This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, **33** His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. **34** Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. **35** Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. **36** This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. **37** Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. **38** And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold. **39** And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. **40** And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. **41** And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the

iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. **42** And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. **43** And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. **44** And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. **45** Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. **46** Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. **47** The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret. **48** Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon. **49** Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

Going Through Trials with God

OUTLINE

- (1) Imminent Danger (v1-13)**
- (2) Importunate Prayer (v14-18)**
- (3) Impassioned Thanksgiving (v19-23)**
- (4) Giving All Glory to God (v24-49)**

INTRODUCTION

Daniel kept himself pure and he kept himself close to God. This was the secret of Daniel's strength. He lived faithfully in a faithless world. God honoured his faith and blessed his life. It was a worthy testimony to the glory of God's power in a believer's life. We left off chapter 1 with this testimony in verse 20:

Daniel 1:20 *And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them (Daniel and his three friends), he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*

Proverbs 22:29 *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.*

This proverb is an observation. It tells that ambition does not always lead to success. There are many frustrated people around. In fact, many people pour so much energy into their ambitions that they have little time to develop any

godliness. On the other hand, there are many examples of those who were never seeking promotion or success and yet have achieved it.

The worthwhile pursuit for the Christian is to pursue godliness, seeking to glory God and enjoy Him, just as Jesus puts in excellently, God will take care of the rest – **“Matthew 6:33** *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

Daniel was diligent to seek after God, that’s the definition of faith that Paul gave in Hebrews 11:6 *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

God brought Daniel before the greatest king, Nebuchadnezzar in the ancient world and verse 21 tells us that his ministry transcended human kingdoms. He was there after the Babylonian Kingdom fell and the Medo-Persians took over.

Daniel 1:21 *And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.*

But it is a challenge indeed to dare to be a Daniel. He had a conviction and a courage to carry that conviction. He knew Who He is that gives to him his very existence and there is no other true life outside this life as Peter would put it in John 6:68.

John 6:68 *Then Simon Peter answered him (Jesus), Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

For a young man like Daniel, his life was set for good success. He was as a tree that is by the rivers of water, that bringeth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper because his delight is in the law of the LORD and in his law doth he meditate day and night. He knew in Jehovah is hidden all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom (Col. 2:3) and so he held in order, in steadfastness of faith, rooted and built up and stablished in the faith, abounding with thanksgiving.

He tells us the reward of such a life with God in Daniel 12:3 - ***Daniel 12:3*** *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

And now in chapter 2, he will face the challenge of living a righteous life with God. You will see many examples of what does it mean to live faithfully in the subsequent chapters.

The scene opens in chapter 2 in the 2nd year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, having been appointed into the king’s court as wise men, Daniel and his friends together with the multitude of counsellor and magicians served in the kingdom of Babylon.

At this juncture, God gave to king Nebuchadnezzar a disturbing dream that puzzled and troubled his heart. There is a message that God is conveying through this dream. And he summoned all the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers and the Chaldeans but none could show the interpretation of the dream. The king told them that he had even forgotten the dream and it is up to them to show the interpretation promising rewards of gifts and great honour and also their very lives if they would simply lie to him!

(1) Imminent Danger (v1-13)

The situation was precarious for all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel and his three friends are among those under the wrath of the king. How is it possible to interpret a dream when you do not have any inkling of an idea of it? Impossible with men but not with God! All wisdom comes from Him. This was a great trial indeed for Daniel and his friends. None of the wise men in Nebuchazzar had a clue where to begin.

10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

It's relatively easy to live as a Christian when things are calm. But it's a much more difficult prospect when the storms of life hit with full force. This was such a time of Daniel. Their very lives were threatened.

James, the veteran shepherd, gave this advice when we face trials.

James 1:5-8 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

To obtain wisdom to endure trials joyfully, see your need, and know your God is able, and then ask Him in faith to meet your need. What James is saying is that we all lack wisdom when we face difficult trials, but, we don't always see our need for God's wisdom.¹

(2) Importunate Prayer (v14-18)

Daniel is teaching here the skill that enables us to live obediently before God in the midst of trials – a vibrant prayer life. The result will be a truly beautiful life that glorifies God. Seek God in prayer.

¹ <http://www.fcfonline.org/content/1/sermons/042405M.pdf>

17 Then Daniel went to his house... his companions... **18** That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel and his friends sought the LORD their God in prayer for His compassion upon them that they should not perish with the wise men of Babylon. Instead of fretting and panicking for want of solution, they called upon the LORD in a prayer meeting.

Only believe, only believe
All things for possible, only believe
Only believe, only believe
All things for possible, only believe

We may observe that Daniel and his friends were in a desperate predicament. Their very lives are in danger should there not be any answer found. Yet, they trusted their God and sought Him. This passage provides for us the key to Daniel's entire career as an instrument of the true God of Israel. He knew the supreme importance of believing prayer, preferably with other believers. Not until three believing men were available to unite their prayers did mankind begin "to call upon the name of the Lord" in a significant new way (Gen. 4:26). The Lord Jesus told His disciples: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20; 2 Cor. 1:11) ²

As Paul would put it:

2 Corinthians 1:11 *Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.*

They "desire mercies of the God of heaven". The word "desire" means "to seek".

Matthew 7:7-11 *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*

Ask, seek and knock is the Christians answer to life's perplexities. Prayer is power, God's power and wisdom given in answer to prayer.

Jesus holds us to us the broadest and fullest promise to prayer. He illustrates God's readiness to hear our prayers by an argument drawn from the well-known practice of parents on earth: "evil" and selfish as they are by nature, they do not neglect the wants of their children according to the flesh; much

² John C. Whitcomb, Daniel, Moody, 1985, 42.

more will a God of love and mercy attend to the cries of those who are His children by grace! (Ryle)

Indeed, they sought God's mercies and they found God's mercies outpoured upon them.

The compassions of the LORD fail not. The mercy of God is inexhaustible and unchanging toward her children. Did they deserve it? There is nothing they could bring before God except their devotion to Him and their faith in His unfailing love. It is in such a desperate state that God manifested His glory through His servant. Truly, men ought always to pray and not to faint.

"17 Then Daniel went to his house... his companions...18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

(3) Impassioned Thanksgiving (v19-23)

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. 23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Daniel blessed the name of the Wise and Almighty God. He saw the sovereign reign of God. Empires come and go, it is by the Almighty God who puts one king up and puts down another.

Psalm 75:6-7 *"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."*

Daniel experienced true wisdom to see the certainty of the future with God. Dear friends, our future is secured with our LORD, keep trusting Him and keep looking to Him.

God's answer to Daniel's prayer was very specific. God answered Daniel's prayer to the jot and tittle! Every part of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was interpreted so that Daniel could reveal them to the king. Now, Daniel was ready to meet the king.

Truly, *"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."* (Proverbs 10:22)

(4) Giving All Glory to God (v24-49)

28 *But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.*

Nebuchadnezzar's dream concerns the major empires of the gentile nations throughout man's history culminating in the establishment of God's kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue with the head of fine gold, the breast and arms are of silver, the belly and thighs are of copper or bronze, legs are of iron and the feet of part iron and part clay made with man's hands. Daniel with God's help told Nebuchadnezzar the dream and interpreted it. The head of gold is the Babylonian Empire, the breast and arms of silver is the Medo-Persian Empire to come. We know from history, the belly and thighs of brass refers to the Grecian Empire and the legs of iron refer to the Roman Empire. It was in the "leg" portion that Christ first came.

Today, we have not entered into the part-iron and part-clay feet, which is the Revived Rome Empire that will bring forth the Anti-Christ. Daniel 2:34-35 gives the framework of the picture in Revelation 18, which gives destruction of economic Babylon, *"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."*

Finally, the stone, not made with man's hands that destroyed the statue at Christ's second coming in Daniel 2:44 *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."*

This final empire, God's rule is detailed for us in Revelation chapters 19:11-22 with Christ's second coming to establish His millennia rule on earth and the eternal state after the millennium. The millennia kingdom of Christ will end all the kingdoms of man forever as revealed in Daniel's dream. We learn from the book of Revelation that Christ's 1000 year rule on earth will be the last the final rule on this present earth (Rev. 20). Thereafter this heaven and earth will be destroyed forever and replaced by a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21-22).

The king was overwhelmed by the answer out of Daniel's mouth. He fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel. Daniel was careful to give God all the glory. The king understood that for Daniel did not take any credit for himself but was a vessel fit for the master's use. Indeed, He must increase and we must decrease. Indeed, Nebuchadnezzar found in Daniel a trusted servant for he appointed him ruler over the whole province of Babylon.

CONCLUSION

May this be your testimony too, a child of God who manifest in your life the wisdom and might of the Almighty God so that others too may come to faith in Him.