

The King of Dreams

Daniel 2

(preached Pine Grove 1/15/17; Sunday PM)

Introduction

Democracy is not God's preferred form of government.

That may shock you as an American who has been taught since grade school that a democratic republic is the best and highest form of government....

And though a democracy is a great form of government compared to others, it is not God's choice.

God prefers a theocracy, which is a form of government where one person rules and that person is God..

This is the form of government in Israel for many years until the people demanded a king, and God reluctantly gave them one..

This is also the form of government that will exist in eternity as God's people live forever in a new heavens and earth with God as their eternal king..

And here is why...

Where man is in charge of government whether that is a king or the people, that form of government is destined to fail...

Though democracies can last for a while, the length of most of them is 200 years...

The Roman Republic eventually became the Roman Empire...

The American democracy is slowly fading as well as we pass the 200 year mark as a nation...

And we too like other democracies will slip into a dictatorship eventually...

Now, I prefer a republic if given the choice between it and communism or fascism...

But even I realize that no form of government from the mind of man is built to last....

And that all forms of government will fall to God's preferred form of government, and that is the government with Him as the head...

And tonight in Daniel 3, we will see that truth spelled out in His word....

Now, before we get to that very important truth, we need to see how God revealed this plan to the world over 2500 years ago...

So, let's take a quick look at Daniel 2 tonight...

I have divided this chapter into 3 sections...

Let's begin in the first 13 verses of Daniel 2 with.....

I. A King with a Problem (1-13)

Before we look at these verses, let's be reminded of our setting for what is about to take place...

The book of Daniel was written around 550 BC...

If you remember from Bible timeline...(which are on the back table), the book of Daniel was written well into the history of the nation of Israel...

Israel was founded in or around 2000 BC with the calling of Abraham to follow God....

And it was a nation that God blessed with a large population and a land of their own...

God also gave them his laws and revealed himself over and over to them...

God served as their king until 1100 BC when the people wanted a human king like the other nations...

The wanted a monarchy, and God warned them of having a king but they wanted it anyway...

So God gave them a king....

Saul then David and then Solomon ruled over the nation, but like I said before...

A nation ruled by men is doomed from the start and Israel's doom began with their 3rd king named Solomon, who led the nation of Israel to split into two parts...

Which were eventually conquered and carried into captivity...

The northern split was conquered in 722 BC, and the southern section began to fall in 605 BC....

The book of Daniel is concerned with the fall and captivity of the southern kingdom of which Daniel was a part...

As we learned last week, Daniel was a young man when the southern kingdom of Israel began to fall in 605 BC, and he was in the first group of captives taken to Babylon...

But Daniel was chosen along with 3 other Jewish teenagers for a special role in the kingdom of Babylon..

The king had selected them to help assimilate the Israelites into Babylonian society...

Daniel and his friends were given the finest food and treated like royalty during their 3 years of training...

But their loyalty to their God never wavered...

And God blessed their obedience and their training and chapter 1 ended by saying that Daniel and his friends stood head and shoulders above even other servants of the king...

And that brings us to chapter 3, where the king finds himself in desperate need of help..

Verse 1..

2 Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar [a]had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep [b]left him. 2 Then the king [c]gave orders to call in the [d]magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the [e]Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. 3 The king said to them, “I [f]had a dream and my spirit [g]is anxious to [h]understand the dream.”

This is a rather straight forward problem....

The king had a dream, but had no idea what it meant, so he called in his best men to help him understand the dream..

Dreams in unbelieving pagan cultures were held in high esteem...

Many unbelievers thought that the gods were most active
...

So Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and needs help figuring
it out...

Verse 4..

***4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in [i]Aramaic:
“O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants,
and we will declare the interpretation.”***

Like every psychic, the magicians and conjurers and
sorcerers of Nebuchadnezzar were con men....

They were willing to interpret the dream, but they
needed the king to tell them the dream first...

Same tactic used today by psychic hotlines...

Tell us a little bit about yourself and we will tell you
your future...

But good for Nebuchadnezzar because this time he
doesn't fall for their tactics...

Verse 5...

***” 5 The king replied to the Chaldeans, “[j]The
command from me is firm: if you do not make known***

to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be [k]torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. 6 But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation.”

In other words, if you can't tell me what the dream was, I can't trust you to tell me the interpretation...

If you don't have the power to know what the dream is, who's to say you have the power to tell me what it means...

This is like calling the psychic hotline and the asking them to predict your name before offering to give them a dime...

And the clear answer to the king's request was “we can't do that.”

So they tried to stall to avoid being killed...

Verse 7...

7 They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation.” 8 The king replied, “I know for certain that you are [l]bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that [m]the command from me is firm, 9 that

if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one [n]decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt [o]words before me until the [p]situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation.” 10 The Chaldeans answered [q]the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter [r]for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any [s]magician, conjurer or Chaldean. 11 Moreover, the thing which the king demands is [t]difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it [u]to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.” 12 Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the [v]decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to [w]kill them.

The king realized what any rational person realizes sooner or later...

These sorcerers and psychics are a fraud...

And he orders them to be killed, and that is bad news for Daniel and his friends who are considered some of the wisest men of the Babylonian kingdom....

So, we got a king with a problem and no one to solve it...

So we know turn to verse 14 and find....

II. A Kid with a Solution (14-30)

14 Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's [x]bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; 15 he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the [y]decree from the king so [z]urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. 16 So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would [aa]give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

17 Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, 18 so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel hears that his life is in danger, so he turns to the only source of help..

He turns to God...

Now, two things to notice here...

The first is obvious to us, but it needs to be said here anyway...

And it is this...

God's people know that God is all-knowing...

When Daniel heard that the king needed an answer to his problem, he immediately thought to turn to the One who has all the answers and that is the One true God...

God's people know that nothing is impossible or beyond the power of their God to solve...

When they need help, their first thought is not to look for a solution of man but for a solution from God...

The second thing to see here is this....

Daniel's first thought is that God wanted to show mercy to them and save them by giving them an answer to save their lives...

So many people (even those who call themselves Christians) think that God is sitting in heaven ready to destroy people if they make one false step...

They see him as a vengeful God who is eager to destroy rather than save...

But Daniel's first thought is not...

“Oh well friends, prepare to die...Its God plan to end our lives..”

No, Daniel’s first thought is, “Friends, lets turn to God for an answer because we know He is merciful and wants to show us His power to save our lives.”

The first response to bad news is not...

“Oh well, I’m doomed.”

But “Oh boy. This bad news gives God an opportunity to show his power to save me.”

So, Daniel and his friends to to God seeing the content of the king’s dream and the interpretation of it...

Verse 19 gives us the simple answer to what happened...

19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.

That is how simple this problem was solved...

No great fanfare or struggle, but God simply answered Daniel’s request in a night vision...

While some prayers may take weeks, months or years to be answered, some prayers are answered almost immediately...

WE should go to God expecting a quick reply but not demanding it...

As a result of God's goodness to him, Daniel prays one of most beautiful prayers of thanksgiving and praise in the entire Bible in verse 20-23....

*Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; 20 Daniel said,
“Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,
For wisdom and power belong to Him.*

21

*“It is He who changes the times and the epochs;
He removes kings and [ab]establishes kings;
He gives wisdom to wise men
And knowledge to [ac]men of understanding.*

22

*“It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And the light dwells with Him.*

23

*“To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise,
For You have given me wisdom and power;
Even now You have made known to me what we
requested of You,
For You have made known to us the king's matter.”*

Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving to God was simply truths that he already knew to be true of God...

God is to be praised...God does have the power to reveal mysteries....God is in control of kings and kingdoms

God is the one who has given them an answer and showed his power to save their lives...

If you looking for a prayer to offer to God, memorize these verses and pray them to God or write them down and read them to God....

God is blessed as we pray his Word back to Him...

And God was blessed by Daniel's prayer...

And so we have a king with a problem and now we have a kid with a solution....

So Daniel heads to the king with an answer...

Verse 24...

24 Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me [ad]into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."

25 Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel [ae]into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the [af]exiles from Judah who can

make the interpretation known to the king!” 26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?” 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, “As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, [ag]magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. 28 However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the [ah]latter days. This was your dream and the visions [ai]in your mind while on your bed. 29 As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts [aj]turned to what would take place [ak]in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. 30 But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom [al]residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may [am]understand the thoughts of your [an]mind.

The first thing to notice here is another incredible quality of Daniel...

Last week, we learned that he was a man who was contented, full of conviction, he was uncompromising and he was committed...

This week, we have seen that Daniel had a right view of God...

He knew that God had the power to give him an answer...

And he knew that God was full of compassion and desired to spare his life...

But on top of all those incredible qualities, Daniel was also a man filled with incredible humility....

Think of the opportunity here if Daniel had been a prideful, greedy and selfish man...

God had given him the answer to a question of the world's most powerful king...

Daniel could have walked into the king's presence with an answer and bargained for something great...

He could have said, "I have your answer, but it is going to cost you.."

He could have asked for a truckload of gold and got it...

Daniel held all the cards because God had been so generous to Him....

But Daniel doesn't steal the Lord's glory...

Daniel doesn't even say that he got an answer based upon anything that he had done...

Daniel walks in with an answer and doesn't ask for any of the spotlight...

He puts the spotlight on God and no one else....

"King, I have an answer but it is only because the true God of this world gave it to me."

"King, I have an answer but its not because I have any wisdom in me. IT simply because my all wise God has given it to me."

We live in a day where everyone wants to be recognized..

We live in a day where everyone wants their name in lights..

Daniel could have gotten all of that, but he lived to put God's name in brighter lights than his own...

And God uses people who are truly humble...

If Daniel has been filled with pride, I doubt God would have provided and answer to the king's question...

But since God knew Daniel was filled with humility, he got an answer that saved his life...

And people who are grateful to God don't want recognition, they simply God to get all the recognition...

Daniel then begins to give the king an answer to his dream beginning in verse 29...

The king's dream was about future events...

And even that was an understatement because what we are about to see is that the king's dream was about every kingdom that would rise to power over the next 2500 years in world history...

In God's plan, this Gentile king had a dream that was going to become the story of world history before any of it became history....

Nebuchadnezzar was given a picture of world history by the One who has world history in His hand....

So, now we have a king with a problem and a kid who gave a solution that ultimately described...

III. A Kingdom without End (31-49)

Let's now see the king's dream and the interpretation

Verse 31...

31 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and [ao]of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You [ap]continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed [aq]all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

As the king had requested, Daniel began by simply gives a description of the king's dream...

It was a dream about a statue...

I am going to put up a slide that is a drawing of what we see here...

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a most unusual statue...

The statue was not all made of the same material...

There were precious metals in the statue but also worthless clay in it as well...

But the end of the dream saw the statue being crushed by a mountain that came to destroy and then fill the earth...

So, that was the dream, but what was the point of seeing the statue and then the destruction of it by a mountain?

Verse 36....

36 "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the [ar]kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

Daniel starts his interpretation of the dream at the top of the statue...

And the head of gold was a picture of the present day world in which Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar lived...

Because the head of gold represented the Babylonian kingdom that Nebuchadnezzar ruled over...

His kingdom was vast and his power was great, and even the material of the head of this statue was appropriate because the Babylonian kingdom was a kingdom made of gold...

Historians have testified that gold was so common in Babylon that it lost its value...

And Daniel makes it clear to Nebuchadnezzar that this golden kingdom was not the result of his hand, but simply was the result of God allowing Babylon to rise to power with Nebuchadnezzar as its ruler...

So, the head of gold was a present reality, but now Daniel moves into the future as he moves down the statue to the breasts and arms made of silver...

Verse 39...

39 After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

Though Daniel doesn't detail these kingdoms here...

We know the first kingdom represented by the chest and arms of silver represent the Medo-Perisan kingdom which overthrows the Babylonian kingdom later in the book of Daniel..

It was a kingdom that arrived on the world scene in 538 BC when Babylon was defeated by a man named Cyrus the great...

His Medo-Persian kingdom of silver lasted for about 200 years until they were defeated by the Greeks in 330 BC by a man named Alexander the Great who ruled the world until 100 BC...

When the fourth empire came to rule the world...

That empire was the Roman Empire...

We read about it beginning in verse 40..

40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.

The legs of iron represented the kingdom ruling the world when Jesus was born, lived, and died..

The Roman Empire was a strong empire and also the largest of the 3 preceding empires...

Rome ruled the known world for hundreds of years...

IT eventually split into two parts...

And eastern and western Roman empire, the western part faded out in the late 400s AD, but the eastern part of the empire lasted in the 1400s AD...

Rome is the only one of these empires seems in this statue that wasn't clearly conquered by another empire...

And that is why we read this in verses 41-43...

41 In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with [as]common clay. 42 As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 And in that you saw the iron mixed with [at]common clay, they will combine with one another [au]in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

While the legs represented the Roman Empire of history, the feet and toes represent a resurrection of the Roman Empire in a day that is still future to us...

This restored Roman empire won't be as strong as the original because there is a mix of iron and clay....

Suggesting that the future Roman Empire will have a resemblance to the original one, but will be weaker and contain more than just Rome...

I think this is a clear reference to a united European empire that will rise one day....

If you are a student of history, Europe has more in common today at any one point in their history...

They share a common currency called the Euro today and they have very open borders..

I think we will see Europe continue to unite mainly as they fight against an influx of radical Muslims and as their immigrant population surges...

There will also be financial hardships to untie them and that is happening everyday...

Though we don't fully see the empire of iron and clay yet, that empire is there to be resurrected...

And so in these very few verses, Nebuchadnezzar was given a picture of world history from his empire in 600 BC to the final empire at the end of time....

But that is not all...

That final Roman empire will not stand forever...

Verse 44...

44 In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be [av]left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place [aw]in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

As that revived Roman Empire is resurrected along comes a kingdom not made by human hands or war or force...

And that is none other than the kingdom of God coming to earth in the book of Revelation led by Jesus Christ on a white horse and accompanied by believers of all time...

That kingdom will descend to the earth and crush that revived Roman Empire led by Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet...

And Jesus will set up his Kingdom on earth that will never be defeated...

And he will reign over it for 1000 years....

With that, the dream and the interpretation of the dream is over...

Daniel has given King Nebuchadnezzar an answer to his problem that is both trustworthy and reliable because it was given to him by God Himself who rules history and knows history before it even comes to pass...

The chapter then ends in verses 46-49...

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and [ax]fragrant incense. 47 The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king [ay]promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief [az]prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's [ba]court.

So that is the resolution to the king's dream..

It was no ordinary dream...

It was the dream of all dreams as Nebuchadnezzar got a glimpse of eternity future in a single night's sleep...

Conclusion

Now, what do we take from this?

First...

#1 - God can reveal the future because he knows the future.

There is no such thing as a fortune teller, palm reader, astrologer or psychic...

But there is a God who knows the future because he wrote every line of it...

For those who are right with Him, your future is secure because your God is already there...

#2- God is eager to save and rescue His people.

We can live courageously like Daniel when we embrace the fact that God isn't looking to strike us down but to protect us from the plans of evil men...

When men look to do evil to us, let us look to God who is looking to protect us...

#3 - God's word about the kingdoms of the world can be trusted because God has shown Himself to be trustworthy.

Do you know why I can confidently stand up here and tell you with 100% certainty that Jesus will return and set up his kingdom and it never be overthrown?

Because the Babylonian kingdom fell, and Medo-Persian kingdom fell, the Grecian Kingdom fell, and the first Roman kingdom fell...

I can trust the promises of God because he has shown this dream and interpretation to be true in what happened in history..

The sun will rise in the morning...

How can I make such a bold prediction?

Because God has caused it to rise every morning of my life..

Only a fool would read Daniel 2 and say that he has no idea what the future holds in terms of world empires..

God has given us the future kingdoms of the world, and there are but two left...

A revived Roman empire and the kingdom of God that will come to replace all the kingdoms before it...

And will never end...

#4 - The God who created the world and directs the kingdoms of the world is a God to be worshipped.

Once Daniel started talking and giving details about the king's dream, the king is left speechless for 19 verses...

He doesn't utter a word.

He only listens.

Then as Daniel finishes up in verse 45, the king has but one response...

He acknowledges that Daniel's God is a God of gods..

Now, Nebuchadnezzar will still do some foolish things..

We will see that next week, but I believe his response here is the beginning of God working to change his heart...

And that is the effect of seeing the power, the sovereignty and the majesty of God who knows the past, present, and future with exact accuracy...

And can look into a man's dreams and knows what the dream was and how to interpret it...

Let me assure you tonight....

The God of the Bible is not a weak, watered down, powerless God...

He is a God who can see a dream for one night, but can also see 2500 years worth of nights down the road....

God is a God of the future, but he demands to be worshiped now....

So, let us make sure we are doing that....

Let us pray.