

CORE Seminar  
Spring 2024  
Book of Daniel: Part 1 [Chapters 1-6]  
Week 3: Daniel 2

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### ICE BREAKER

*Did you know that studies show the average person has three to five dreams a night? About 95% of our dreams are forgotten.*

- *Share a fun dream you recently had and what made it so special.*

*Share a story of a time when you found yourself in a position and it was clear that you were not in control of how things moved forward.*

### HANGOUT NIGHT

Spend time discussing next week's Hangout Night:

- What you are going to do?
- Who will host?
- What will everyone bring?

### INTRODUCTION

Last week we opened up **Daniel 1** and read through it. **Chapter 1** dips down into a personal story of how God worked through 4 young men - Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah – and how these 4 young men **RESOLVED** to be known as God's people. They did this though they are no longer in God's land or able to go to God's Temple. They showed themselves to be God's people no matter WHERE they are.

- They did this by resolving not to defile themselves before God.

And here's the thing - **Chapter 1** is really the prologue to the entire book of Daniel. That all of the following themes of Daniel's wisdom, and the boy's stand, and the hostility of the royalty, and the threats made to Daniel. Everything – all of this – comes as a result of their **resolution** to be God's people. **And this continues into Chapter 2.**

And what we are going to see in the first part of **Chapter 2** is an indication of

- God's sovereign **rule.**

- And God's sovereign **reign**.

So, let's start off with a prayer and then we'll move to **Daniel chapter 2**.

## PRAYER

**Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:1-3**

**2 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream."**

IN this first section, we see that King Neb is making these crazy demands. Demands that no man can ever provide to the king.

This is different because things could not be going any better for Nebuchadnezzar.

- The world is at his feet.
- He is ruler over the known world.
- He could not have any more power

And yet, he is having insomnia and he is having bad dreams and he is having some anxiety.

- And because of this power he has, he calls in the experts to help him through this and understand his dream.

**QUESTION: What makes this situation – God appearing to Neb in a dream – different than what we normally see?** [*This time – God delivered the dream to King Neb. IN the Old Testament, we are accustomed to God's people receiving a Word from God – and occasionally they receive the Word while suffering under the rule of someone like King Neb.*]

**Why appear to King Neb & not to the exiles?** [*Because God rules over ALL PEOPLE. He is sovereign over all people – not only His own people.*]

**Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:4-11**

And when they are in the presence of the king, they say, "**<sup>4</sup> ... the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever!"**

- Which is kind of ironic because the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had shuts this down!

And then these professionals hear his crazy demand.

- And in Nebuchadnezzar's panic he begins threatening right away.

Nebuchadnezzar seems to think that he can't trust anyone... they are out there only for "self."

- Because of this, Nebuchadnezzar tells them, the only way that I know you are not working against me is this test of telling him the dream and what it means.
- Not only can you tell me the interpretation – you can also tell me the dream.

And he can't seem to understand that the only reason the "professionals" are there is due to his lack of power and his lack of understanding over his own dream.

And these guys respond to Nebuchadnezzar and say, "dude, what your asking is impossible!

- ***"There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. 11 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."***
- Basically, only the gods can do what he is asking...

**QUESTIONS: What kind of people did Nebuchadnezzar call in to tell him his dream and interpret it?**

- **What was unusual about Neb's request?**
- **What do you notice about Nebuchadnezzar and all these wise men from this passage?**

**Nebuchadnezzar was brilliant. He knew the hearts of his supposed wise men and their political scheming.**

- **Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar asked someone to tell him his dream instead of telling them the dream first?**
- **What do you think he was afraid of by telling them his dream? [He wasn't in the dark about the corruption and deception.]**
- **So why did he rely on these guys?**
- **Do you think Nebuchadnezzar was right in his accusations about their motives?**

Any questions?

Ok, let's keep reading

**Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:12**

***<sup>12</sup> Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.***

Boiling this section down, what we see is one frustrated human being [King Neb] who just discovered that he is not as powerful as he thought, and he is not in control.

- So much so, that he throws this deadly... crazy temper tantrum.

So he makes a bigger pose of his sovereignty by demanding that all of the wise men in Babylon be killed. And by this order, he's not just killing the people in his court that can't do what he has asked - He is ordering the death of a whole group of people that are spread out over an area.

This order was included to show Nebuchadnezzar's perceived power – but all it does is set the stage to reveal God's power to the entire Babylonian kingdom. This is because King Neb's men are sent out to destroy but in their mission ***they find God's men.***

Any questions?

Ok, let's keep reading

**Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:13-23**

***.... <sup>19</sup> Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. <sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said:***

***"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,  
to whom belong wisdom and might.  
<sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons;  
he removes kings and sets up kings;  
he gives wisdom to the wise  
and knowledge to those who have understanding;  
<sup>22</sup> he reveals deep and hidden things;  
he knows what is in the darkness,  
and the light dwells with him.  
<sup>23</sup> To you, O God of my fathers,  
I give thanks and praise,  
for you have given me wisdom and might,  
and have now made known to me what we asked of you,  
for you have made known to us the king's matter."***

Nebuchadnezzar is completely falling apart because he knows he can't control **everything**.

- DANIEL, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are COMPLETELY AT PEACE BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE CAN'T CONTROL **ANYTHING**.
- And in Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah we see that they **rest** in God's Sovereignty.

The mystery was revealed to Daniel and it just became more dangerous for Daniel. He could save the lives of all the wisemen in Babylon but it just became more dangerous for him.

- He is not worried because he is dependent on God.
- His dependence is then exercised in his obedience.
- He fully belongs to God – the fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom.

**In this section we see 3 elements of dependence on God's Sovereignty:**

1. **Petition**: In **verse 16**, Daniel was crazy bold by asking Arioch to set the time to see the king so that an interpretation can be given to the king. By the way, Daniel didn't have the interpretation yet. **So what is Daniel leaning on here?**
2. **Prayer** – In **verses 17-18**, Daniel went home to tell the boys – it's time to pray. **The real us is who we are in the first moments after a crisis. And, in verse 18** – he doesn't "go to prayer" he immediately begins to pray. He is not asking God to be Sovereign... He is going to God because **HE IS SOVEREIGN**.

And guys, our full dependence on God is revealed in how we pray. In their prayer, they are not laying out their plan... they are begging for mercy!

- "Lord Save Us!" **vs. 18: so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.**
  - And, God in His mercy reveals this to Daniel...
3. **Praise** – In **verses 19-23**, God gave Daniel and the guys the answer. And they immediately began praising God. Notice they didn't rush out of the room to see if they could bump up their time before King Neb – they praised God for providing the answer **ONLY HE COULD PROVIDE**. not just dependence – shows that we know God is Sovereign

Daniel's praise is the theological center of this passage. Praise is necessary in recognizing God's sovereignty. Praise is necessary to Daniel and his friends – because it focuses their hearts towards the greatness of God. He is not rejoicing / praising in his spared life. He is rejoicing in His God.

**QUOTE:** Trials do not disappear when we praise God, but our hearts are healed from despair when we praise God. - Bryan Chappel

**QUESTIONS:** What do you notice about Daniel's relationship with Arioch?

- Did we see something similar to this in Chapter 1? [Yes, with the Chief Eunuch]
- Why do you think this has happened to Daniel?

Daniel's first response when he hears about needing to interpret and tell Nebuchadnezzar the dream he had is to plead to God and seek out His mercy.

- What role does prayer play in our response to a difficult situation?
- Do you tend to rely on God OR ignore Him and attempt to deal with the situation yourself?

What does Daniel's response reveal about his faith and his character?

- Did Daniel doubt God? Explain

How does our God use our situations and circumstances that seem impossible for both His glory and our good?

Any questions?

Ok, let's keep reading

Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:24-30

... <sup>27</sup> Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, <sup>28</sup> but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ...

King Neb asked Daniel if "he" is able to give him the dream and the interpretation.

- Daniel responds with a "the professionals" were right. Man, can't do it.
- But God can and did! – **verse 28**

**"But there is a God..."** who not only knows the future but RULES the future.

- He alone knows the future and He alone can make it known.

And the reason He has revealed this dream to you King Nebuchadnezzar is that He rules over you as well.

- He is not telling you what He is going to do with His people who are under your control
- He is telling you what He is going to do with you – oh king...

Daniel does not know what this is going to mean for him or for Nebuchadnezzar... he doesn't know all... just what God has given to him to know.

- Daniel doesn't know all things
- But he knows that God knows all things and rules over all things.

**QUESTIONS: Notice in telling and interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar that Daniel points back to God who gave him this wisdom and discernment and who is establishing His kingdom.**

- **What does this tell us about the wise men's ability as sorcerers/magicians and false religious leaders?**
- **What are ways that you are right now showing others in your life that God is the source of your wisdom, joy, peace, and what you have currently?**

**How does understanding God's omniscience and omnipotence help Christians understand the future?**

Any questions?

Ok, let's keep reading

**Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:31-45**

What God has given to Daniel is a secular history – a theology of all history. With the Babylonian captivity, **God's people are being absorbed into the global community.** This is a dream of ALL history.

**Statue:**

- Head of Gold - **Babylon**
- Arms of silver – **Medes & Persians**
- Middle is bronze – Alexander the Great and **the Greeks**
- Legs are iron – **Roman Empire**
- And the feet are iron and clay – Roman Empire that eventually **caves in** on itself.

The point here is not to overly analyze this statue because this statue represents man and all of man's endeavors. And in this statue God can tell you what is coming – but the **WHOLE POINT IS THAT IT IS LUMPED TOGETHER AND DESTROYED.**

Then Daniel revisits the statue:

- King Neb you are that head of gold
  - Neb's response! – FINALLY! We are getting somewhere!
  - Somebody finally recognizes me for who I am!
- In **verse 37 - O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, <sup>38</sup> and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all**
  - Recognition of the reach and might of Neb's power.
  - He really was this powerful.
  - He was a worldwide ruler
- And this power is only given to him – because God gave it to him.
  - And God can take this power away.

But in **verse 44**, God reveals to Daniel that there is a Kingdom that is coming that will destroy ALL kingdoms – a **ROCK** not cut by human hands...

- Attributes of the Rock:
  - Unlike the statue of the man it is supernatural
    - It is a stone – it is earthly and physical
  - It is common – it does not appear valuable.
    - Not made of pressure metals and despised by the world
  - It is gradual – the stone becomes a mountain
  - It becomes dominant and overwhelming
  - It is universal and fills the whole earth
  - It is also ultimate
  - It is final and never destroyed
    - An eternal reality – only time there is not an “after this”

**QUESTIONS: In verse 37, Who does Daniel say gave King Neb “the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory...”?**

**Why would God tell King Neb in his dream what would happen to him and to earthly kingdoms in the future?**

**We often over-analyze the statue – focusing on figuring out the statue – but that is not the main point of the vision.**



- What is the main point that King Neb should have gotten AND which we must get?

How does the Rock differ from the kingdoms of gold, silver, bronze, and iron/clay?

- What does that mean to you?

Have someone in your group read Daniel 2:46-49

<sup>46</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to **him**. <sup>47</sup> The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.” <sup>48</sup> Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>49</sup> Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. **But Daniel remained at the king's court.**

The content of what Daniel has told him forced him to fall on his face and acknowledges the superiority of Daniel’s God.

- And that’s it – for the moment
- And then this is it – he is not transformed / not converted...

He is told the dream and asks no further questions.

- He is happy to be a doomed head of gold
- **Unlike the Philippian jailer – “How can I know this God?”**

**QUESTIONS: What was King Nebuchadnezzar’s response to Daniel’s interpretation of his dream?**

- How should you respond when someone praises you for something God has done?

**Does it seem ridiculous that Nebuchadnezzar could hear this from the Lord and only be impressed but not transformed?**

- Can you see that this proclamation is as much about our future as it was about his?

## CONCLUSION

Last week, we read that God had blessed Daniel with the ability to translate dreams. Tonight, we saw this in action. **Chapter 2** provided our first look at Daniel as an interpreter of dreams, and God as the One who provides understanding/ interpretation of all dreams – in this instance the earthly empires represented as the great statue. The chapter ends with

Daniel and his boys receiving government jobs – which prepares the way for what happens in Daniel chapter 3.

We have a couple of weeks off before picking back up on the first Sunday in April!