

The Pieces Fall into Place

Daniel 2:17-30

TEXT:

“Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
to whom belong wisdom and might.
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;
he reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and the light dwells with him.
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.’

“Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: ‘Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.’

“Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: ‘I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.’ The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, ‘Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?’ 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, 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: To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.’”

NOTES:

- A. As we mentioned last week, Daniel is a wonderful example of faith in this narrative.
 1. Daniel requested from the king that he might be given time & then reveal the matter to the king.
 2. **We** know that God is going to reveal the dream to Daniel, that Daniel to be promoted in the kingdom, but does Daniel know any of that?
 - a. We were previously told: “Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (1:17).

- b. But, when did Daniel know that he “had understanding in all visions and dreams”?
 - 1) However we reckon the time from Daniel 1 & Jeremiah 25, using both Jewish & Babylonian dating methods, it is certainly possible—even quite likely—that Daniel interpreted this dream ***before*** the end of his training period.
 - 2) Did God give Daniel a vision to allow him to know that he had understanding in visions & dreams? Interestingly, none of the visions in the second part of the book—chapters 7-12—come from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.
- c. It is quite evident—regardless of how much Daniel knew about his God-given abilities—there was absolute faith & dependence on God at this point.
- 3. That absolute faith & dependence become quite evident as Daniel asked Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to pray concerning the vision.
 - a. Why pray to ask God to do something I can already do? E.g., Why ask God to help me write a sermon for this morning when I already have one written?
 - b. Daniel doesn’t know the dream Nebuchadnezzar had & he asked his companions to pray that he might receive the dream & its interpretation.
- B. There are important lessons for us here:
 - 1. We must have dependence upon God.
 - a. “By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith” (Heb 11:7).
 - b. “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore” (Heb 11:11-12).
 - c. In these texts, Noah & Sarah trusted God.
 - 1) Noah knew that, although it had ***never*** rained on the earth, if God said it was going to rain & there was going to be a great Flood, it was going to rain & there was going to be a great Flood.
 - 2) Sarah knew that if God had said that she & Abraham, although well past childbearing age, were going to have children, they were going to have children.
 - d. How much do we depend on God?
 - 1) When things aren’t going well in life, do we place our confidence in God, knowing that regardless of the outcome God is still on his throne?
 - 2) When we pray, do we pray knowing that God hears us, loves us, & has the power to help us?
 - 2. I’m also convinced that there is a great lesson here on the efficacy of prayer.
 - a. Daniel asked Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah “to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery.”
 - 1) We then read: “The mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.”
 - 2) What if Daniel & his three companions had not sought “mercy from the God of heaven”?
 - a) Would God still have revealed to Daniel the mystery?
 - b) While it is certainly possible that God would have done that very thing, for he was revealing his purpose to Nebuchadnezzar, it’s also possible that God would have found another way for Nebuchadnezzar to understand the meaning of the dream?
 - b. There is great power in prayer.
 - 1) When Zechariah was ministering in the temple, he saw an angel & became quite afraid. The angel spoke and said: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John” (Lk 1:13).
 - 2) “I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the

one who knocks it will be opened” (Lk 11:9-10).

c. Do we believe in the power of prayer?

C. Notice that the “mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.”

1. This was not a dream, for the Book of Daniel makes clear that dreams & visions are clearly two different forms of revelation.
2. However:
 - a. This vision comes to Daniel at night, the period during which you would expect one to dream.
 - b. Pagans considered dreams a lower form of revelation than a vision.
3. In this one sentence we have both a link to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream & a distinct difference from it.
4. God is showing that he can give dreams to whom he wishes & that he can prophesy through whom he wishes.

D. Daniel then “blessed the God of heaven.”

1. Daniel prayed, and then received the answer to that prayer. He then praised God for providing the answer to that prayer.
2. How often are we like Daniel & thank God for the multitude of prayers he answers?

E. In praising God for revealing the dream to him, Daniel uses much language that is important for the entire Book.

1. To God belong wisdom & might.
 - a. God’s wisdom is displayed through the dreams & visions he gives to kings & Daniel.
 - b. God’s might is seen in his putting kings on the throne & being them back down—It was God who gave Jerusalem into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand, drove Nebuchadnezzar into the wilderness, & gave the Babylonian kingdom to the Medo-Persian Empire.
2. He changes times and seasons & removes and sets up kings—Again, we see the idea of God’s sovereignty; all the kingdoms of the world are in God’s control.
3. He gives wisdom to the wise & reveals deep and hidden things—again, God is seen as One who reveals his plans to man in an appropriate way.
4. He is the God of Daniel’s fathers.
 - a. Here is an interesting concept in this Book.
 - b. God had led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage & made a covenant with them, but when they broke the covenant, God, true to his word, allowed the Israelites to be taken into bondage.
 - c. However, God also promised that when his people repented, they would be allowed to go back to Canaan. In this Book, we see: a) Daniel repenting for the sins of the people (9:1-19); b) That Daniel was in the court until the first year of Cyrus, the king who would allow the Israelites to leave (1:21).
 - d. The Book of Daniel, therefore, shows the faithfulness of God to Daniel’s forefathers.

F. After he had thanked God for revealing Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel went & told Arioch to take him before the king so that he could reveal the dream to the king.

G. Arioch went before the king & told Nebuchadnezzar that he had found one who could interpret the dream.

1. Notice that again it is pointed out that Daniel is an exile from Judah.
2. There continues to be a great juxtaposition between the different classes of Babylonian “experts” who couldn’t interpret the dream & a “POW” who can.

H. The king asked Daniel if he were able to make known the dream to him.

1. Daniel, however, denies being able to do so.
 - a. Daniel cannot interpret the dream. In fact, Daniel has just asked his companions to pray that he might be able to know the dream Nebuchadnezzar had.
 - b. Only God can interpret the dream.
2. Daniel also denies that he was given the interpretation of the dream because of any wisdom.
 - a. On the one hand, that’s a surprising statement, for Daniel, in his prayer to God, thanked God

because he gives wisdom to the wise.

- b. Daniel's point, however is two-fold—1) God gave Daniel understanding into the dream so that he could reveal it to Nebuchadnezzar; & 2) So, that God could accomplish his purposes.