

Daniel 2

How Do You Respond When Your Life Is On The Line?

I. Review

A. Why Study The Old Testament?

1. It allows us to see examples – Good and Bad – of how we are to interact with God (1 Corinthians 10:6-11; James 5:10-11; Hebrews 12:1)
2. As a tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24)
3. To convict us of sin (Romans 5:20, 7:7)
4. To show us that God is sovereign, faithful and unchanging throughout history

B. God is Sovereign

1. It is foundational to scripture that God is sovereign (Psalm 103:19)
2. He is sovereign over everything (Psalm 24:1-2)

C. Why Did God Give Us the Book of Daniel?

1. To show us God isn't done with His plan regarding Israel...Has not abandoned the Jews
2. The events recorded by Daniel, I believe, were given to provide the Jews hope
3. Throughout Daniel we will see that God is sovereign and in firm control of history and the world's governmental situation

D. What transpired in Chapter 1?

1. We are introduced to the current situation of Israel
2. We are introduced to Nebuchadnezzar
3. We are introduced to Daniel, Mishael, Hananiah and Azariah
4. We saw what the 4 were made of
 - a. They determined not to defile themselves with the King's food...they were men of conviction
 - b. They drew the line based on the Word of God (meat)
 - c. They drew the line based on being firmly convinced in their conscience (wine)
 - d. They could forgo the issues where there is no biblical and didn't violate their consciences
 - e. They responded with respect for authority
 - f. They excelled in what they were required to do. (Super)Naturally

II. Introduction

- A. How do you respond when your life is on the line?
- B. Going to see 3 different responses to stress
- C. Going to see 2 different responses to when your life is on the line

III. Read Daniel chapter 2

IV. When are we in history and in regard to Daniel's time in Babylon?

- A. 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar
 - 1. In Babylonian reckoning the years of a King's reign started being counted after their first in power
 - 2. The initial year (or zero year) was considered the ascension year
 - 3. We know from the historical record that Nebuchadnezzar ascended to the kingship in 605 BC after the death of his father Nabopolassar
 - 4. Therefore 602 BC
- B. After the graduation exercise recorded in chapter 1:18-20
 - 1. Daniel and friends were deported just after Nebuchadnezzar became king in 605
 - 2. Their training was to last 3 years (1:5)
 - 3. Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd year was the 3rd year after deportation
 - 4. Daniel, Mishael, Hananiah and Azariah are in the service of the king as they are sought out for execution (2:13)

V. Nebuchadnezzar

- A. What is going on with Nebuchadnezzar?
 - 1. He has been having dreams (2:1, 28)
 - 2. Contemplating what is to come in the future (2:29)
 - 3. It stressed him – *"His spirit was troubled and his sleep left him"* (2:1)
- B. How does Nebuchadnezzar respond to the stress?
 - 1. He calls the wise men
 - a. Magicians – People who write or engrave...scribes
 - b. Conjurers/Enchanters – Those who had contact with the spirit world
 - c. Sorcerers – Those who have practice incantations or witchcraft

- d. Chaldeans – The original ethnic group of whom Nabopolassar was king. As the original ethnic group would have been part of the trusted group of advisors. Practiced astrology.
 - e. He pulls out all of his many earthly resources in an attempt to resolve his situation
2. What does he ask of them?
- a. Tell me the dream
 - b. Interpret the dream
3. Why does he approach them this way?
- a. He has either forgotten the dream or he is testing his advisors
 - b. I am of the opinion that he was doing the later
 - c. He questions the motives of his wise men (2:9)
 - d. The wise men don't attempt to make up a dream for Nebuchadnezzar even in the face of promised reward (2:6)
 - e. Nebuchadnezzar responds with awe and amazement at Daniel's telling of the dream (2:46-47)

VI. The "Wise" Men

- A. How do the wise men respond to the request?
- B. How do the wise men respond to stress?
 - 1. Need more information...Tell us the dream (2:4, 7)
 - 2. Whine...This is too difficult (2:11)
 - 3. Disparage the king...No king ever requested this before (2:10)
 - 4. It can't be done...Man can't do this only gods and they don't live here (2:10-11)

VII. What is Nebuchadnezzar's response to the wise men...in his stress?

- A. If you don't figure this out then you will be torn limb from limb and your houses turned into the public dump (2:5)
- B. Anger and Fury (2:12)
- C. Just kill them all (2:13)
 - 1. Sends Arioch to round up ALL of the "offenders" and carry out the order (2:14)
 - 2. Remember these are not idle threats
 - a. He is the sovereign over the world (2:37-38)

- b. Things happen when he gets angry (2:12; 3:13)
- c. He is ruthless (Jeremiah 52:1-11)

VIII. Daniel and Friends

A. Where are Daniel and friends?

- 1. Not sure exactly but most likely somewhere else in Babylon
- 2. Hadn't risen to the level of the most trusted of wise men
- 3. Interestingly enough we will see throughout the book that most of the time Daniel is somewhere other than where the trouble is

B. How do Daniel and friends respond to stress?

- 1. Tact and Wisdom (NIV)/Discretion and Discernment (NASB) (2:14)
 - a. Respond respectfully...What's the hurry?
 - b. Request the king for time to do what is commanded...Give me 24 hours
 - c. God has favorably disposed the people to them (1:9)
 - d. Maybe the graduation exercise was still fresh in the King's mind (1:19-20)
 - e. Daniel approaches with respect and humility
 - f. Requests the ability to try, God can do this, not just that it can't be done
- 2. Prayer (2:17-18)
 - a. They turn to God and acknowledge His ability to do this
 - b. They request his compassion/mercy
- 3. Praise (2:19-23)
 - a. God is wise and powerful
 - b. He is sovereign over the earth
 - c. He reveals His will
 - d. He gives wisdom and knowledge to men who are wise and knowledgeable
Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
- 4. Humility (2:27-28, 30, 45)
 - a. The wise men were correct as they stated in 2:10-11...no man only God can do this
 - b. I'm no wiser than the rest...all the credit belongs to God

IX. How is the stress relieved?

- A. Note that both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel get response to their supplications from God
- B. God reveals to Nebuchadnezzar his pondering about what will take place in the future (2:29, 45b)
- C. God exercises mercy/compassion to Daniel and his friends in response to their supplication (2:17-19)

X. How does Nebuchadnezzar respond to the relief of his stress?

- A. Falls prostrate before Daniel and treats him as a god
- B. Acknowledges Daniel's God
- C. Does as he promised...Rewards Daniel with gifts
 - 1. Brings Daniel into the court
 - 2. Promotes Daniel to overseer of the whole province of Babylon
 - 3. Promotes Daniel over all of the wise men
 - 4. Promotes Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah...at Daniel's request
- D. Does Nebuchadnezzar's response indicate a changed heart in regard to God?
 - 1. No. As we will see this event is quickly forgotten.
 - 2. But it is the first of a series of confrontations with God that lead to a changed heart

XI. How do we respond to stress...whether our life is on the line or not?

- A. Is your first instinct to pray and seek God's wisdom, mercy and compassion?
- B. Do you maintain your God provided character and respond to the situation with wisdom and tact?
- C. Do you respond to the situation in humility acknowledging God's sovereignty
- OR -
- D. Is your first instinct to pull out and rely on all the earthly resources and "wisdom" at hand?
- E. Do you revert to wheedling, whining and disparaging to get what you want?
- F. Do you respond in anger and frustration at your inability to understand and control your situation?

XII. How do we respond to the relief of our stress?

- A. Do we acknowledge God with a heart changed such that we respond better next time?
- OR -

- B. Do we make gestures of acknowledgement but only pay lip service and forget what God has done as the pressure is removed?

XIII. The Dream and Interpretation

- A. Next we are going to look at the dream as it was given to Nebuchadnezzar and revealed to Daniel
- B. Then we will look at the interpretation...what it all means

XIV. The Dream

- A. What did Nebuchadnezzar see in his dream?
- B. He sees a statue (2:31)
 - 1. It is huge
 - 2. It is dazzling
Imagine polished gold, bronze and iron in bright light
 - 3. It is awesome
Comes from the root to fear
- C. The statue is composed of various materials (2:32-33)
 - 1. The head is gold
 - 2. The chest and arms are silver
 - 3. The abdomen and thighs are bronze
 - 4. The legs are iron
 - 5. The feet are iron mixed with clay
- D. The statue is destroyed and replaced (2:34-35)
 - 1. It is struck on the feet
 - 2. By a stone that is cut out without hands
 - 3. It is smashed to dust and blown away
 - 4. It is replaced by the stone which becomes a mountain and fills the earth
- E. So what does all this mean and how do we gain an understanding of its meaning?
- F. I will digress for a moment...

XV. How do we interpret the Bible at Valley Bible Church?

- A. We say at VBC we interpret the Bible literally
- B. First off what is interpretation?

1. Understanding the intended meaning of the author
“That’s why I like to refer to the step of Interpretation as the recreation process. We’re attempting to stand in the author’s shoes and recreate his experience – to think as he thought, to feel as he felt, and to decide as he decided. We’re asking, ‘What did this mean to him?’ before we ever ask, ‘What does it mean to us?’”
Hendricks: *Living by the Book*, pg 201
 2. How many correct interpretations of a passage are there?
 - a. Only one!
 - b. There may be however multiple applications.
 3. So why are there so many different interpretations?
 - a. People want it to say what they want it to say to justify their position
 - b. “That’s not fair” – ...That is an unjust Law!...God chooses whom he will?...People are condemned to Hell?...Genders have different roles in teaching, eldership, pastorship, family?...
 - c. We are more advanced in our thinking...science has shown...Biology, Psychology, Evolution
 - d. We are fallible. We have imperfect understanding.
 - e. We don’t or won’t do the work
 4. Why is interpretation such hard work?
 - a. Because a lot has changed in the last 2000 - 6000 years
 - b. Changes of language - translational difficulties, meanings change with time
 - c. Changes of culture - ...hand to the plow...the Lord is my shepherd...burning coals on the head...
 - d. Not learning/understanding the literary types - history, poetry, parable, wisdom literature
 - e. Communication barriers - Husband and Wife
- C. So what is Literal interpretation?
1. If interpretation is: Understanding the meaning intended by the author.
 2. Literal interpretation is: Understanding the meaning intended by the author by using the ordinary principles one uses to understand anything written.
 3. This is done by an approach called Hermeneutics

A. What is Hermeneutics?

1. New Bible Dictionary – “The study and statement of principles on which a text is to be understood”
2. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary – “The study of the methodological principles of interpretation”
3. Vine’s Expository Dictionary
 - a. From the Greek word *hermeneuo* (ερμηνευω) – denotes to explain, interpret, and is used of explaining the meaning of words in a different language
*John 1:38 “Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’ They said, ‘Rabbi’ (**which means** Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’”*
 - b. Also *diermeneuo* (διερμηνευω) a strengthened form of the above is to interpret fully to explain...this is what Christ did in Lk 24:27
*“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he **explained** to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”*
4. An easy answer is that hermeneutics is the science and art of biblical interpretation. Science because there are rules to apply. Art because they must be applied skillfully.

D. So what about figures or figures of speech or symbols?

How do you interpret them literally?

1. Plain literally...The meaning is the explicit assertion of the words
John 11:14 “So Jesus then said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead,’”
2. Figurative literally...The meaning is the specific meaning intended by the figure or the symbol
John 11:11-13 “This He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.” The disciples then said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.”
3. So what are the guidelines for determining Plain or Figurative literal?
 - a. Look for the plain literal meaning first – Daniel 2:1-3

- b. If the plain literal reading leaves a contradiction, moral or physical “impossibility”, or is explained as a figure – look for a figurative literal sense
Example: A plank or log in the eye – Mt 7:3-5
CAUTION – Please remember that we as humans are limited. Miracles can be seemingly impossible (Gen 1; 2 Kings 6:1-7; Jn 6:16-24). That’s why they’re miracles.
- c. If a figure or symbol is used or intended, look for an explanation or clue to it’s meaning in the surrounding verses as was done in John 11:11-14 and as we will see in Daniel
- d. Remember these rules
If the plain literal sense makes good sense seek no other sense
Interpret the Bible with the Bible

E. So now back to the book of Daniel

XVI. The Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

- A. What do we know directly from the passage?
- B. The materials and differing parts of the statue and the stone represent literal kingdoms or the king of that kingdom
 - 1. We see that the head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom
2:38 “You are the head of gold”
 - 2. We also see that the silver and bronze are kingdoms (2:39)
 - 3. Although it is translated that the kingdoms are inferior it can also be translated that they are below (or earthward)
 - 4. We see explicitly that these first three kingdoms and the kingdom represented by the stone will be world wide kingdoms (2:38-39; 2:35)
 - 5. We see that the iron and the iron mixed with clay are a fourth kingdom (2:40-41)
 - 6. Although not stated explicitly I believe the implication is that this fourth kingdom is also a world wide kingdom
It crushes and shatters all things
 - 7. This fourth kingdom will be in two parts...one purely of iron but another of iron mixed with clay
 - 8. The first four kingdoms are earthly kingdoms ruled by earthly kings

9. The fifth kingdom represented by the stone will be God's kingdom (2:44)...ruled by Christ
- C. Beyond this we can use other passages and history to further interpret the statue as well as implications about the materials
1. Remember that to Daniel all of this is prophecy except for the first kingdom
This is only the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign...He will rule for 43 years
 2. We have further revelation through scripture (Daniel and the New Testament)
 3. We have the benefit of roughly 2600 years of history to see how Daniel's prophecies have been fulfilled
 4. We can use this to make further statements about these kingdoms and who they are
- D. Some general observations about the materials as you move down the statue
1. The materials are of decreasing density...the statue is top heavy and therefore somewhat unstable
Such are human kingdoms
 2. The materials are of decreasing value...the four kingdoms become more and more hostile toward God
 3. The materials are of increasing strength and brittleness...they are stronger but more disrupted when broken.
 4. Interestingly each of the following world kingdoms historically can be associated with the material which represents them
- E. Who are the kingdoms?
1. All of the kingdoms are world empires
 2. Certainly the first kingdom is Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire...605 – 539 BC
 3. The second kingdom based on Daniel 6, 7 and 8 (8:20) would be the Medo-Persian empire...539 - 331 BC
 4. The third kingdom also based on history and Daniel 7, 8, 11 and 12 would be the Greek empire...331 - 146 BC
 5. The fourth kingdom based on history would be Rome
146 BC to 395 AD united then west to 476 AD and east to 1453 AD

6. There has not be another world empire since the fall of the Roman Empire so there is a gap of time between the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay
7. Based on Revelation 13 and information from Daniel 7, 11 and 12, the mixed portion of the feet is a future world empire arising from the Roman empire as a confederation of 10 kings culminating in rule by one world leader, the Antichrist.
8. This final kingdom and the world system represented by the statue will be destroyed in the future by the coming of God's kingdom as represented by the stone.

The stone hits the feet

The Roman empire was not destroyed by Christ's first coming

XVII. Summary

- A. God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar what would come in the future
- B. I believe He also provided this specifically for the Jews so that they would know that God is faithful and will fulfill his promised to them
- C. I believe He has done this so that all may see that He is in control of world events both in the past and in the future and is working them to His purposes.

Following is from the Harvest House Publishers International Inductive Study Bible

