

DANIEL 2

AIM OF STUDY:

Start to get into the main issues that the book of Daniel throws up with an eye to one of the important themes, ie that the God of Israel is the revealer of mysteries and Lord over all peoples everywhere. He holds all of history in his hand. This gives us great confidence that as followers of Jesus we are held securely in Christ.

MAIN TEACHING POINT:

God is the revealer of mysteries and the great mystery revealed in this chapter concerns God's kingdom which will prevail and be established forever over all other kingdoms of this earth.

INTRODUCTION

Dreams play an important part in the OT narrative. Remember how Joseph rose to power under Pharaoh in Genesis 41:1-8. Back then, Pharaoh was troubled in his spirit by what he saw in his dream. He recounted his dreams to all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, only there was none who could interpret them, none of course, except Joseph.

PART 1 - THE LEAD UP (VERSES 1-16)

The comparison with what takes place in Babylon under king Nebuchadnezzar is striking. Just like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar's spirit was troubled by the dream and he wanted to know its meaning. However unlike Pharaoh, king Nebuchadnezzar was not prepared to divulge the dream to his advisors.

Daniel 2:2 (ESV)

Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams.

1. In what way do you think that verse 2 has an ominous ring to it?
 2. In 2:3-9, what threats does king Nebuchadnezzar make towards the wise men? What does he accuse them of?
 3. How do you explain king Nebuchadnezzar's aggressively hostile stance towards his advisors?
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It would appear for the king not everything is rosy in the Babylonian empire. The all powerful, all encompassing, bright and shiny Babylon is not as great as it seems, from the king's perspective. The power play between the religious and political hierarchies in a pagan context makes interesting reading. The harsh line that the king takes with his advisors may tell us that he has been disappointed by them in the past.

4. What do the Chaldeans say to the king in defence of their inability to meet his demands? (verses 10-11)
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Remember back to 1:20 how the 4 Jewish youths stand head and shoulders over everyone else in the whole Babylonian kingdom (which by this time must have grown to become exceedingly large!).

Read what Daniel says about God in verses 20-23.

Verses 21-22 are a bit of a teaser for the whole book of Daniel as we shall see in future weeks.

Daniel knows and makes it clear to the king in the verses which follow that the revealing of mysteries is entirely in God's hands. (see verses 27-30)

5. What does knowing that the one who reveals mysteries has rescued us mean for us today? Read Ephesians 1:7-10. See also Ephesians 3:4-12.

PART 2 - THE KING'S DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION (VERSES 31-45)

The Dream

6. The image (statue) itself looks impressive but by the end of the dream how much of it is left? (verse 35a)
7. The stone that shatters it is even more impressive than the statue itself. What information can we glean about the stone from the dream itself?

The Dream's Interpretation

8. What is the cumulative effect of hearing about all the successive kingdoms? What happens to all these kingdoms, represented by the statue itself, in the end?
9. What does the stone represent?

PART 3 - RESOLUTION (VERSES 46-49)

The king's initial anger and great fury towards all the wise men of Babylon has given way at the end of the chapter to great respect and honour offered to Daniel and his God.

In verse 47 the king say to Daniel,

Truly, your God is _____ of _____

and

Lord of _____

and

a _____ of _____ .

10. How do we see these three things said about God fulfilled in Jesus?
11. Which of the 3 speaks most loudly to you at the current time? What does it tell us about our security as Christians?