

1. Last week I completed the teaching of chapter one. When time ran out I have just begun an analysis of Daniel chapter two.

2. Before we proceed let me give you an expanded translation of Dan chapter one.

Dan 1:1 In the third year of Jehoiakim's reign as king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon surrounded the city of Jerusalem and began to siege the city.

Dan 1:2 Jehoiakim king of Judah surrendered the city of Jerusalem; the sieging of the city ceased when Jehoiakim agreed to certain terms mandated by Nebuchadnezzar. As part of the settlement certain very valuable vessels used in the Temple liturgy were carried off to Babylonia where Nebuchadnezzar stored them in the house of his god. The death of Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar occurred during the siege which in part motivated Nebuchadnezzar to cut short his siege; his need to return to Babylon also resulted in Jehoiakim being left on the throne as his Regal agent.

Dan 1:3 In order to guarantee the loyalty of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz whose title was "Prince of The Eunuchs, to take as hostages some seventy young men from Jehoiakim's palace; they were to be of nobility, young men who had been raised in the palace. As was the custom of the day the boys were to be between the ages of 14 and 17.

Dan 1:4 All seventy were to be handsome, well built, intelligent and good students; they were to be well mannered and capable of standing in the presence of King's and Potentates; men who had a special aptitude for learning. They were one might say to be the cream of the crop." Young men who would one day serve Nebuchadnezzar as advisors, prophets, administrators; young men capable of learning the Chaldean language and becoming as Chaldean as Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Dan 1:5 The king decreed the boys would eat with him in the royal dining hall; he assigned them special rations and they were to drink the finest of wine from the king's cellars. They would be trained for three years said Nebuchadnezzar, and after that he would assign them special duties depending on their demonstrated abilities...

Dan 1:6 Among the seventy were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

Dan 1:7 Ashpenaz gave the four boys new names: to Daniel, Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

Dan 1:8 But Daniel from the Bible Doctrine stored in his right lobe decided he should not defile himself by eating at the palace dining hall; Daniel was certain that the food and libation had not been prepared in accordance with the dietary rules proscribed in the Mosaic Law therefore he asked Ashpenaz if he might be excused from attending.

Dan 1:9 Now God Himself had made certain Ashpenaz saw Daniel as a young man with a future; Ashpenaz looked upon Daniel with favor and genuine appreciation.

Dan 1:10 And Ashpenaz said unto Daniel, "I am afraid of Nebuchadnezzar. Remember he has selected what you will eat and drink; now if he sees that a diet other than that selected leaves you less healthy than the other Hebrew children, I will lose my job and maybe my life."

Dan 1:11 Then Daniel met with the Meltsar, the officer responsible for the immediate supervision of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah:

Dan 1:12 "I want you to let us eat only vegetables and water as a test, all you have to do is simply permit a trial for ten days." Daniel paused for a moment and then continued "what possibly bad can happen by feeding us vegetables and water for such a short time?"

Dan 1:13 Daniel continued: "at the end of ten days you can check our appearance in comparison with the other Hebrew hostages who are eating at the King's table and at that time depending on what you see, you can decide to either stop the test or continue."

Dan 1:14 So the Meltsar agreed and permitted them to eat only vegetables and water.

Dan 1:15 At the end of the ten days the appearance of Daniel and his companions improved, they looked in general healthier than the boys eating from the king's table.

Dan 1:16 As a result, the Meltsar decided to continue their special diet of vegetables and water.

Dan 1:17 As to the four teenagers, God provided not only doctrine for their souls but He also gave them special understanding in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel was given the gift of prophecy; he was able to interpret all manner of dreams and visions.

Dan 1:18 At the end of three years , Ashpenaz accompanied the boys to the Throne room where they stood before Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 1:19 The King then presided over an intense oral examination and to no ones surprise Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah tested out ahead of all the other students; as a result the boys were given positions on the King's staff.

Dan 1:20 And in every subject the boys not only were considered the best students but all four were considered head and shoulders wiser than all the other magicians, and astrologers in the land.

Dan 1:21 And Daniel continued even until B.C. 536 the first year of Cyrus' reign as King of the Persian Empire.

3. Now let's return to our analysis of Daniel chapter two. After Daniel passes his exam he takes his place among the prophets and soothsayers on the staff of Nebuchadnezzar.

KJV

Dan 2:1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

NIV

Dan 2:1 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.

1. In his third year just after he had examined Daniel, the king had a distressing series of dreams.

1.1 In the church age everything God wants us to know has been communicated in the completed Canon of Scripture.

1.2 Before the completion of the Canon, God communicated His will in various ways. Last week we studied five of these ways. One of those ways was dreams.

2. There is apparently one dream which bothered Nebuchadnezzar greatly.

3. This dream had left the king very anxious and in a state of dread.

4. Here was a man who had just conquered Assyria, Egypt and Judah (effectively the world), a man who "had everything" and yet we find him pacing the floor pained and in a state of anxiety.

5. There is a principle here; neither a position of greatness, nor personal ability, nor wealth can provide peace of mind. True stability of mind comes from Bible doctrine in the soul.

6. Nebuchadnezzar panics and calls for help.

7. He calls upon what we might "think of" as a strange "his State Department."

8. Daniel chapter one verse two tells us Nebuchadnezzar's "think tank" consisted of "magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans.

9. Let's review the four classifications of court officials.

KJV

Dan 2:2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

NIV

Dan 2:2 So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,

1. Magicians-- "Those who write with a pen."

1.1 They were the scribes who recorded and filed all the secrets of the Chaldean religion, as well as laws, contracts, etc.

1.2 This "Legal Department," brilliant in administration, was consulted because the king hoped they could find some precedent on which to base the interpretation of his dreams.

2. Astrologers-- "Those who whisper and breathe, those who blow."

2.1 They were those who performed incantations - the "mumbo jumbo" people.

2.2 These men were also highly trained in science, mathematics and astrology.

2.3 Their skills were used as a cover for predicting the actions of other nations--actually; some historians write that they were engaged in espionage. They were known for "traveling afar."

2.4 That they were demonically guided was no doubt true.

3. Sorcerers-- "Those who were influential in handling people."

3.1 Today we would call them the human resource department or public relations personnel.

3.2 They entertained visiting dignitaries. They also practiced necromancy and witchcraft.

4. Then there were those who are only classified as Chaldeans-- "Those belonging to the priestly caste." They were a holdover from the conquered Medes and early Babylonian tribes.

4.1 Through witchcraft and idolatry they kept the citizenry under control.

4.2 They were exceedingly powerful and served like as a Gestapo and/or KGB.

5. Now let's see what principles we can learn from verse three:

KJV

Dan 2:3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

NIV

Dan 2:3 he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."

1. It would seem from the context the king has forgotten his dream.

2. There are those who do not believe the king forgot his dream.

3. Col. R. B. Thieme for example writes: "He remembered its contents - in fact, he could think of nothing else!"

4. The reason he did not reveal his dream was that he knew his staff would not hesitate to fabricate an interpretation if necessary. However, if they could tell him the content of the dream, he, in turn, could rely on the accuracy of its interpretation.”

4. It is certainly possible Nebuchadnezzar had previously encountered problems with his "astrologers" and the king lacked confidence in them.

5. Whatever is true, the king is not telling; if the "wise men" do not come up with an answer there will be hell to pay.

6. Now let's move to verse four of chapter two.

KJV

Dan 2:4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

NIV

Dan 2:4 Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

1. In the King James we have mention that the scholars answered the king in Syriac.

2. You can see the NIV translates 'Arammi' (meaning Aramaean) as "Aramaic.”

3. In my earlier introduction I taught that the Book of Daniel was written in both Hebrew and Chaldean.

4. The Chaldean language is actually Eastern Aramaic. Because this portion of Scripture deals primarily with Gentile nations, a Gentile language is used from Daniel 2:4 through Daniel, chapter 7.

5. After chapter 7 we find the Hebrew language is resumed. This because these Scriptures deal again with Israel.

6. The phrase "O king live forever" is a standard greeting to royalty. A greeting of deference designed to demonstrate subordination and "kow-towing.”

7. The rest of the verse may prove how well Nebuchadnezzar knew these men.

8. The king doubts their abilities and this doubt may have sprung from more than one past bad experience.

9. Now let's look at the King's response and edict.

KJV

Dan 2:5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

NIV

Dan 2:5 The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

1. The phrase translated in the KJV "The thing is gone from me" has been corrected in the NIV.

2. It is literally "I have made a decree" and when a Babylonian king made a decree, that was it; even he could not change it. This was not so much a Babylonian custom as it was a middle eastern custom for we see it later in the case of the Persian kings.

2.1 In the Book of Esther when Ahasuerus decreed all the Jews were to be killed he could not reverse it; he could however and did let Mordecai prepare another decree for Ahasuerus' signature; the latter permitting the Jews to arm and then defend themselves.

2.2 The courage of Esther, the wisdom of her uncle Mordecai and the favorable outcome in which the Jews successfully defended themselves against Persian annihilation is celebrated even today at the Feast of Purim.

3. Nebuchadnezzar was out of control for he either could not recall the dream which bothered him the most or he could think of nothing else and out of distrust of his soothsayer staff he chose not to reveal its contents.

4. This dream was the one in which he saw a giant statute:

4.1 It had a head of gold.

4.2 Its arms and chest were of silver.

4.3 Its waist and thighs were made of bronze.

4.4 Its legs were made of iron its feet were made of part iron and part clay.

5. Perhaps the King did not reveal the contents of the dream because he knew the staff in their own self-interest would not hesitate to fabricate an interpretation if necessary.

6. This violent man on the verge of insanity had already decreed an irrevocable death sentence to his Chaldean and Hebrew diviners and prophets, unless of course they came up first with the dream and then the interpretation.

6.1 His decree was not only one of death for the diviners on his staff but their families were also to be executed by cutting them up in little pieces and this meant their wives, their children and their servants.

6.1.1. In this case "the family slain together does not always stay together."

6.2 The reason a middle eastern monarch of this period could not revoke an official decision is because as "god" he could not make a mistake therefore a future alteration would be an admission that "god" had made an error and thus he was not omniscient and therefore "maybe some might believe - he was not a god.

7. The decree illustrates how ruthless a great man can become when he is plagued with the mental attitude sins of idolatry, fear and worry.

End Lesson Taught 8-27-2000