

1. Last week I continued our analysis of Daniel chapter two. When time ran out I was in the process of providing several principles learned from Dan 2:5.

2. Before continuing our study, let me give you an expanded translation of Dan 2:1-5.

Dan 2:1 In the third year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the King began to have several very troubling dreams; he was greatly disturbed; so panic stricken that he developed a serious case insomnia.

Dan 2:2 Accordingly Nebuchadnezzar summoned his scribes, his best scientists, his sorcerers, priests and soothsayers; they were told the nature of the King's problem.

Dan 2:3 The king said to them, "I have had a dream which greatly troubles me and I want to know its meaning."

Dan 2:4 The men summoned to the palace bowed before Nebuchadnezzar saying in unison "O King live forever." The leader of the group said "now tell us the dream and we will tell you its interpretation.

Dan 2:5 The king answered "I have already issued an irrevocable decree "If you do not tell me what I dreamed and then interpret it for me, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.

1. 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.

2. 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.

2.1 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.

2.2 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 god enough to be King.

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

4. Not only did he decree his staff would be executed along with their families but to add insult to injury; if they failed he said "even their homes would be razed, their hacked bodies dumped atop the rubble and the entire area made a garbage depot."

5. As Babylon's dunghill, the waste of the city would be carried to their once stately residences, and poured upon the ruins of their former home sites.

6. Seventy or so years later a Persian King by the name of Cyrus will make a decree that anyone interfering with the work of Zerubbabel and Joshua in rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem shall receive like punishment.

Ezr 6:3 In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be ninety feet high and ninety feet wide,

Ezr 6:4 with three courses of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury.

Ezr 6:5 Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God.

Ezr 6:6 Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you, their fellow officials of that province, stay away from there.

Ezr 6:7 Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site.

Ezr 6:8 Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop.

Ezr 6:9 Whatever is needed--young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem--must be given them daily without fail,

Ezr 6:10 so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.

Ezr 6:11 Furthermore, I decree that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble.

7. At the same time, however, Nebuchadnezzar offered an alternative if the diviners could come up with an interpretation.

KJV

Dan 2:6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts (Mattenam) and rewards (Nebizenah) and great honour (Yaqaar): therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

NIV

Dan 2:6 But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

1. The carrot offered by the king was one of expensive gifts, a monetary stipend and fame.
 - 1.1 Mattenan, Nebizebah and Yaqar are well translated in the KJV and NIV. You can in fact see the translations are the same.
2. All that the magicians, sorcerers, astrologers and priests have to do is tell Nebuchadnezzar what he dreamed and then interpret for him the dream.
3. Their reward would be a large stipend of money, sets of armour, jeweled swords, shields, chariots, horses, and even chests filled with precious stones and lastly what has been translated "great honor" would be a grand promotion with special perquisites, notoriety, etc.
4. With the stakes do high, the diviners responded as you might expect. They again asked the king "tell us the dream and then we will give you your interpretation."
5. The sorcerers knew their only hope was to ask again.
6. Once they knew the dream they then could consult their charts and other demonic devices to come up with "a believable interpretation."
7. Little did they know that in this case a little known "rookie" prophet named Daniel would save the day.
8. Now let's look at verse seven and eight where we find the diviner's answer and the King's restatement of "the dilemma."

KJV

Dan 2:7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

NIV

Dan 2:7 Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

1. Evasively the King's "state department" repeated their need for the substance of the dream but the king is suspicious and as earlier noted this perhaps because of a prior bad experience or experiences.
2. "Uneasy lies the head of him who wears the crown" or as we say today "it is often lonely at the top." This King though powerful beyond measure was miserable and in need of help.

3. The dream has spawned an anxiety totally without cause. When we see the dream interpreted, rather than something about which the king should worry, the dream is, as it relates to him, innocuous

4. So often in our own lives, the impending calamity anticipated more often than not never comes. As our Lord said "worry not about tomorrow sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof."

KJV

Dan 2:8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

NIV

Dan 2:8 Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:

1. The king's discernment can be seen in verse eight.
2. Do not be fooled by the statement "the thing is gone from me."
3. You may remember we earlier noted this is an idiom for "I have issued and unalterable decree."
4. It would seem from verse eight the King knew exactly what was happening - the "boys" were stalling for time.

5 Now let's see what principles we can gather from verse nine.

KJV

Dan 2:9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

NIV

Dan 2:9 If you do not tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

1. Nebuchadnezzar wanted the staff to get on with the business and tell him the dream and then the interpretation.

1.1 The modus operandi of these guys was to record the dream or vision, go back to their offices, caucus and then consult cards, astrology charts, past dreams, past interpretations and various demonic devices and then they would parlay and come up with the "verdict."

2. It is clear we started our story with one terrified King and now we have the same frightened king with a terrified staff.

3. I think we can conclude Nebuchadnezzar realized that some of the past pronouncements made by the diviners lacked an essence of truth.

4. The king this time, however, will not be hoodwinked.

5. In minor matters the king had tolerated error but when it came to this dream Nebuchadnezzar wanted accurate answers.

6. He knew this dream was important though he wasn't sure how and why.

7. Desperately, he insisted that they relate both the content of his dream and the interpretation.

8. Nothing else would suffice.

9. Now let's see what we can glean from verses ten and eleven.

KJV

Dan 2:10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

NIV

Dan 2:10 The astrologers answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.

KJV

Dan 2:11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

NIV

Dan 2:11 What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."

1. As we read in the Cambridge Ancient History Set, Babylonian scientists, sorcerers, priests and soothsayers were powerful influences.

2. Their influence was however limited.

2.1 Their limitations are self-admitted. "No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."

2.2 Sounds a lot like 1Co 2:13 and 14 does it not. Only the spiritual man can know the things of God.

1Co 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1Co 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

3. A normal king, i.e., one not irrationally disposed to violence might have listened to the wise men and if possible told them the dream or communicated he could not remember the dream.

3.1 A candid rational response by the king would have permitted his advisors to use their considerable wisdom and past experience to develop "a reasonable plan."

3.1.1 We must not forget though that the hand of God is in this and His permissible will is directing the all things.

3.2 The cadre of wise men knew a lot about mathematics, chemistry and other subjects which made them appear to be wizards.

3.3 They knew human nature and human reactions therefore they had performed numerous feats of greatness.

3.4 Interestingly given our knowledge of their demonic activities, one could wonder "had they consulted the demons and received no help."

4. The diviners elect to subtly "challenge" the king. Given the king's death sentence they have little to lose by challenging the king. They quietly and respectfully ask that he compare his request to what other kings have done.

5. Though the diviners may not realize, their technique is Scriptural "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

5.1 Responding in kind to a frightened and violent man is usually a sure fire way of invoking greater wrath.

5.2 At this point the king could care less about what others have done; he wants an answer.

5.3 The response from the staff "what you are asking us to do is impossible" precipitates the adage "if it was easy boys I would do it myself" or "nothing men is impossible to the man who doesn't have to do it himself."

5.4 Said another way King Nebuchadnezzar is totally without sympathy.

6. This king seems to be upset because the astrologers have in the past given advise lacking "the essence of truth."

7. In minor matters the game of "wisemans bluff" could be tolerated but not in this case.

8. Nebuchadnezzar clearly considers his need paramount; he wants an interpretation.

9. The very wise men have resorted to what might be called three gimmicks

- the first it is humanely impossible to answer such a question
- the second was "no one has ever asked such a thing" in the past
- the third "only the gods could answer" such a question

10. Their reasoning only serves to enrage the frightened King.

Now let's take a look at Dan 2:12 and 13 where we see an outburst from a powerful King.

KJV

Dan 2:12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

NIV

Dan 2:12 This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

KJV

Dan 2:13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

NIV

Dan 2:13 So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

1. Nebuchadnezzar's "slow burn" finally exploded.
2. His irrationality shows in his decree. Not only will he rid himself of the wise men who met with him, but all the wise men of Babylon - the entire state department is to be eliminated.
3. This is a perfect example of the innocent suffering with the "guilty."
4. While Daniel and his three friends had only recently entered the service of the king they too were to be executed. Daniel and his four companions had not even been in the meeting with the king.
5. Nebuchadnezzar obviously has not thought this thing through; he will be worse off without a "state department" and certainly a rational king would have remembered the most recent exam when he tested four boys who were ten times wiser than all his other "wise men."
- 5.1 When panic stricken it is difficult to think. This man has just seen four smart boys from Judah; one with the gift of prophecy and yet his anxiety will not let him think straight.
6. This edict however, regardless of how ill thought, will provide opportunity for the Lord to show His power as over against the impotence of secular and demonic strength.
7. In almost every chapter of this book Daniel faces a crisis.
 - 7.1 The vegetable/water crisis of Dan 1:12-16 was merely a dry run for this current test.
 - 7.2 Keep in mind this is a teenager but one full of doctrine.
 - 7.3 This young man has prepared for the battle.
 - 7.4 And now as he faces a new but more severe test, the question is: will he fall apart or will he bring honor to the Lord?
 - 7.5 As we have studied, in his early life he learned doctrine in the palace of Josiah and then as time progressed he consistently applied "resident doctrine" to circumstances.
 - 7.6 The doctrine cycled in his soul strengthened his backbone and provided the stability of mind necessary to become God's man for the crisis.

7.7 Doctrine, suffering and pressure, in that order, had equipped the youngster so that he could face this ultimate crisis with a calm, cool and collected manner.

7.7.1 Doctrine he cycled in his soul during the reign of Josiah.

7.7.2 Suffering he received in his deportation and possible physical emasculation.

7.7.3 Pressure he endured in the first vegetables and water test and now the terrible crisis of life and death.

8. Now let's go to verses fourteen and fifteen of Daniel chapter two:

KJV

Dan 2:14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

NIV

Dan 2:14 When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

KJV

Dan 2:15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

NIV

Dan 2:15 He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

1. The Scripture "Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom" is the key and turning point in this chapter.

2. Daniel did not panic, he kept his cool and used the wisdom God had given him.

3. We could say from a categorical analysis "counsel" is advice based on doctrine and "wisdom" is the application of doctrine to experience.

4. It is God's plan for every believer to move from nothing at the moment of salvation to maximum maturity in time.

4.1 Maximum maturity for every believer is a unique status; it is known only to God but perfect given the needs of the body of Christ.

5. This advance to maturity is accomplished by the GAP process whereby each believer follows the protocol plan of God for his dispensation. For us of the church age this means we find our right pastor teacher and attend under the filling of the spirit.

6. As we attain our maximum maturity level by moving up the maturity ladder where often we receive greater suffering as test points associated with greater blessing.

Phi 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Phi 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

Phi 3:14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize ...

7. When we plateau in the process we slide into reversionism and then there is discipline to motivate us; but only if discipline is the perfect answer, remember God knows our frame.

8. The final state of maturity immediately proceeds death and hopefully results in the manifestation of "Dying Grace".

End Lesson Taught 9-3-2000