

Daniel 05-10-23a

This is Sunday, October 23rd, 2005. The 22nd anniversary of the bombing of the barracks in Beirut, an event for which I was present in the city. And each year on this date, I am grateful that God chose to ensure that I was elsewhere.

I could very easily have checked out of this life on that day. Good friends of mine from Fort Sill, who went over there the same time I did, died on that day. 254 sailors and marines lost their lives because of a homicide bomber on this day, 22 years ago.

Oddly enough, this year the days fall on the same days of the week. It was a Sunday at 6.10am that a terrorist driving a truck full of explosives crashed through the gate. And because the guidance from on high at the time was that the marine sentries on duty would not have live rounds in their weapons to avoid any sort of international incident, they could not shoot the driver or stop the truck.

And it plowed into a multi-story building at the airport in Beirut, collapsing the building and killing nearly everyone who was inside. Thankfully, I was not inside. And it is a blot on our nation's history that we never tracked anybody down.

We didn't start the war on terror at that point. There really was no reprisal, there was no consequence, there was no after effect. We simply lost over 250 sailors and marines as a result of that action.

However, I am still here and for that reason we are going to study the word of God together this morning. We will take a moment to go before the Lord in prayer, exercise our priesthood, and ensure that God the Holy Spirit can teach us from the word of God. So let's take a moment to go before the Lord in prayer.

Father, we know that every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from you, the Father of lights. We know that there is no shadow of turning with you. We know that you are the same yesterday, today, and forever, as is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the embodiment and the reflection of your glory, the fullness of deity in bodily form.

We thank you for sending him as a part of your perfect plan of salvation, that he might deliver us from a lost and hopeless condition. We were conceived in iniquity, we were born in sin, we grow up and live our lives in a corrupt and fallen world, a cursed creation, and we have no redeeming qualities, we have no merit. There is nothing in us that could serve as an object of love, and yet while we were sinners, when we were your enemies, you loved us and sent the Lord Jesus to die for us.

And as a result of your grace, we have been regenerated, we have been restored, we have been renewed. We stand in Christ with strength for today and hope for tomorrow, as the great hymn says. And we thank you and praise you for those facts.

We thank you for the country in which we live. We thank you for our freedom. We pray for those who work to ensure that we continue to be a free nation, both internally and externally.

We ask your special blessing on our president and his cabinet, those believers who are trying to honor you as they fulfill their duties in government. We pray for those in the service, those in law enforcement, all of those who work to maintain the structure and the fabric of our society and our civilization. We know that this is the means by which our freedom to worship, to assemble, to learn and grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior is maintained.

We ask your blessing once again on us as we fellowship in your word together. May God the Holy Spirit find us teachable, impressionable and receptive to the truth of your word. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our scripture reading this morning comes from the second book of Kings. Second Kings chapter 20.

Second Kings chapter 20. We're going to pick up in verse 12. The section of Kings here with which we have to do is giving us information about the reign of King Hezekiah.

You remember that he was on the throne in Judah at the time of the fall of the northern kingdoms with the incursion of Sennacherib and the Assyrians. It looked like the southern kingdom was going to fall, but by a miraculous deliverance, you can see it at the end of chapter 19, came to pass on a certain night the angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000. When people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses, all dead.

Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home and remained at Nineveh. He went home and was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch, his God, and his sons Adramelech and Shamrezer struck him down with the sword, escaped into the land of Ararat and Esarhaddon, his son, reigned in his place. So this was, remember Bob Thieme did a whole series called the Assyrian Crisis out of this section of scripture.

Well, that's the background of the context for what we find in chapter 20. The first half of the chapter is the relatively well-known episode of Hezekiah becoming ill and laying there on his deathbed and he turns his face to the wall and the word of the Lord came to Isaiah to go tell Hezekiah that if he thinks he's going to die, he's not, because God has heard his prayer, seen his tears and is going to heal him. On the third day he will go up to the house of the Lord.

That's in verse 5. Verse 6, I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.

So Hezekiah ends up living another fifteen years. But now let's pick up in verse 12. At that time, after the backing up of the sundial, another of those passages where God alters the basic understanding we have of astronomy and so forth, the shadow of the sundial goes backwards ten degrees.

We're going to have to study 2 Kings one of these days. It's a great book. It's a great book, another one we hope to live long enough to get to.

But verse 12, at that time, Baradak, Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon. Now remember, the Assyrians are the great blazing sun in the sky at this point, and Babylon has not yet come to greatness. But the king of Babylon sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

Hezekiah was attentive to them and showed them all the house of his treasures, the silver and the gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory, all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. This is called not keeping your cards close to your vest.

Then Isaiah the prophet went to king Hezekiah and said to him, What did these men say and from where did they come to you? So Hezekiah said, They came from a far country, from Babylon. Hezekiah figures, What the heck? Assyria is a big threat. Babylon is not a problem.

I'll brag. I'll show off. I'll impress them with my riches.

Verse 15, he said, What have they seen in your house? Hezekiah answered, They have seen it all. They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Pay attention, this impinges directly on our passage in Daniel. Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and what your fathers have accumulated until this day shall be carried to Babylon.

Nothing shall be left, says the Lord, and they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Hezekiah said to Isaiah, The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good. For he said, Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days? Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city, that Hezekiah tunnel inscription is hanging in my office if you want to look at it.

Not the actual inscription, a very good plaster cast made from it. Are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Hezekiah rested with his fathers and Manasseh his son reigned in his place. What a fascinating prophecy.

At a time when Babylon was no great shakes, everybody thought Assyria was the threat, Hezekiah lets his guard down. Hezekiah makes himself vulnerable. Hezekiah, by showing everything that's in the palace and everything that's in the temple, sets up the fall and the future destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the stuff and the royal line to become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

And that prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in Daniel chapter 1. And as we turn now to Daniel chapter 2 where we resume our study, we remember last time the great tribulation that Daniel and his three friends undergo as they are uprooted and torn from their lives, their homes, their families. They are brought to Babylon and they themselves are the fulfillment of that prophecy in 2 Kings chapter 20 as they are made eunuchs and trained to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon. We saw last time at the beginning of chapter 2 that in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he took Daniel and his three friends during the first year of his reign.

If you look at the career of Nebuchadnezzar, he came to the throne of Babylon in 604 BC, succeeding his father Nabopolassar. He is going to reign until 561 BC, 43 years. Interestingly, from the time that Daniel is elevated to the post that he is going to receive in this chapter until the end of Nebuchadnezzar's reign is essentially 40 years.

Daniel is going to sit in the throne room, in the palace, in the government as a close personal advisor and highest ranking member of the cabinet to Nebuchadnezzar for just about exactly 40 years. Because this chapter takes place in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and he is going to die 40 years later. He had been the general of his father's armies for probably five years before he received the news that his father had died and he had to hurry back to Babylon and take the throne.

You remember that story. He had been down there whipping up on Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in 605 BC. The battle of Carchemish, one of the most famous battles of the ancient world is the battle that established the dominance of the Babylonian Empire.

It's recorded in 2 Kings 23.31, 2 Chronicles 35.20. That battle took place at the Euphrates River, by the way. After he drove Necho out of Asia, settled the affairs of Syria and Palestine, he had to rush back because his father died. Later, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, or the third year for using Babylonian reckoning, which we saw in Daniel 1.1, he came up against Jerusalem and carried away the vessels of the temple and these noble royal blood captives.

He had to go back about six years later because of the rebellion, the uprising that we talked about earlier. So, in Jehoiakim's eleventh year, he went back and captured Jerusalem. He imprisons Jehoiakim.

We hear no more about him. He evidently died in chains. He puts the uncle Jehoiachin in place.

Jehoiachin is besieged in Jerusalem, captured, deposed and carried captive to Babylon. He is going to stay there for thirty-seven years until Nebuchadnezzar dies and Nebuchadnezzar's son, evil Merodach, not evil in the sense of bad, but that's his actual Babylonian name, evil Merodach, is going to set him free. In the ninth year of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar goes a fourth time.

And you remember when Ezekiel is by the river Kabar and the messenger comes and says, Jerusalem has fallen and Ezekiel's tongue is loosed. That's what takes place as a result of

Nebuchadnezzar's fourth expedition against Jerusalem when he besieges it, captures it and destroys it. This is also talked about in Jeremiah chapter 52.

Nebuchadnezzar also, in addition to all of these battles and sieges and so on against Jerusalem, he does other things. He carried on a long siege of Tyre. We talked about this again in Ezekiel when we looked at the word of God directed toward the prince of Tyre and the king of Tyre.

Nebuchadnezzar carried on this siege for 13 years. From Nebuchadnezzar's 7th year to his 20th year, he besieged the city of Tyre. Who is his right-hand man and advisor during that 13-year siege of Tyre? Daniel.

It all takes place during Daniel's reign. That battle eventually results in the reduction of Tyre. At the same time, he fought three different wars with Egypt.

The first, of course, he defeated Necho at Carchemish. The second was the one we saw in Ezekiel where everybody said, Egypt will be our buddy. Egypt will help us out.

Pharaoh Hophra comes up there and everybody says, the deliverance from Egypt. It's a bent reed that's going to break and stab one in the hand. Nebuchadnezzar goes back down there and drives Hophra from Palestine.

That's during the first year of the siege of Jerusalem under Zedekiah. Then later, well into Nebuchadnezzar's reign, in his 37th year, Daniel is still his right-hand man, still his big advisor. Nebuchadnezzar is going to go back and march all the way down to Egypt and invade it and defeat Amasis, the big leader and general, Pharaoh down there, and completely wipe Egypt off the map.

Sort of atypically for the ancient world, you don't find any monuments or stela or inscriptions where Nebuchadnezzar says, here are my battles and here are my victories and here are the kings that I defeated and brought in chains back to my capital. We find that for a lot of other ancient kings, the Moabite stone. We have a lot of other inscriptionary evidence, but we don't have any inscriptions that give us this information.

But he does speak of his conquests in the past tense and talk about the foes that he's conquered and the people that he's ruled. He mentions the Hittites by name. He mentions a victory that he achieved in Lebanon and so on.

But the thing that we have left behind as far as archaeological evidence from Nebuchadnezzar is his building and inscriptions of a religious character. Nebuchadnezzar, as a lot of non-Christian people would say today, they say, well, I'm very spiritual. Nebuchadnezzar was a very spiritual man.

He was very attuned to the invisible and the otherworldly. He, unlike any that had preceded him, built temples, built monuments to the various gods of Babylon. He was very into offerings and observing ceremonies and so on connected with the worship of gods.

When you find inscriptions from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, they usually contain two hymns enclosed with a prayer to some god or other. If you look at the names of his sons, two of his three sons were named for Marduk. They have Marduk right in the name because Marduk seems to have been his favorite god.

When you do find inscriptionary evidence from the time of Nebuchadnezzar, it frequently mentions offerings that were made of gold and silver and other precious metals, precious stones. He made things out of expensive wood. He would offer game, fish, wine, fruit, grain, other objects that he thought the gods would like.

He was forever going down and trying to connect with the gods. He doesn't seem to have any connection to blood sacrifice. These are all sort of votive offerings, commemorative offerings and so on that he makes.

But we know both from archaeology and from history and from the word of God that Nebuchadnezzar was very interested in the whole realm of religion and the gods. And for this reason, when this dream comes, and actually this seems to have been a recurring dream. We don't know if he had it more than one night or several times in the same night.

But you notice in chapter 2, verse 1, it says Nebuchadnezzar had dreams, plural. His spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. So he calls for the magicians and the Chaldeans and so on.

But we've talked about the role of dreams in the ancient world. We've talked about the role of dreams in Babylonian mythology. And we've talked now about Nebuchadnezzar and his background.

Why are we giving ourselves all of this background? Not only does it illuminate our passage, but it reminds us that God controls history. It is no accident that Nebuchadnezzar is the kind of man he is. It is no accident that the Babylonian culture and Babylonian mythology is oriented toward the gods and toward dreams and that God then communicates this information not to Daniel.

Ezekiel is down there by the river Kabar at this time having visions from God and standing up and preaching. Daniel does not get a vision at this time. The king gets it.

And this is with complete forethought and planning on God's part. God sends this dream to Nebuchadnezzar and it sends the entire government into turmoil because they're all about to be killed. The entire cabinet of Nebuchadnezzar, the ones who have advised him in the battle of Carchemish and in ascending to the throne of his father and all these other trusted advisors and soothsayers and so on are all about to be executed.

Some of them are already getting executed by the time Daniel comes in to talk to Nebuchadnezzar. Why? Nebuchadnezzar is superstitious. Nebuchadnezzar believes in mythology.

Nebuchadnezzar has spent a lot of money and a lot of time and will continue to do so in the

earlier years of his reign cultivating the favor of the gods. And this is a factor and this is a circumstance that God weaves into the fabric of his plan so that Daniel and Azariah, Mishael and Hananiah are in the right place at the right time and are promoted by the work and hand of God to their place and their role in circumstance and in history. So, the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

In the first year he grabs the four Hebrew children and others who are not mentioned. Evidently they failed to distinguish themselves by any mark of faith. We know that there were many more than four individuals who were taken captive.

But it was only these four who distinguished themselves by faith. All of these captives who were brought into the training program were made eunuchs. And evidently a lot of them just threw in the towel and gave up.

Did not follow the example and were not inspired by the leadership of Daniel the way that Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were. And missed their opportunity to glorify God in their lives. They are forgotten.

Their names are unknown. Their lives are meaningless at this great juncture of human history. Simply by trusting God, Daniel and his three companions are forever honored and immortalized in the pages of scripture.

Of course they are immortalized in other ways as well. But the king gives the command to call the magicians. He says, I've had a dream.

Tell me what it is. They can't. The king says, you're stalling for time if you don't make known the dream.

There's only one decree for you because the thing has gone from me. The decree has gone forth from me. Speak the dream and its interpretation or die.

So, the Chaldeans say, there is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter. Therefore, no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. Verse 11, it is a difficult thing that the king requests.

There is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh. What they basically say is, you know, your majesty, you really ought to be down in one of these temples you just built. You ought to be down there talking to the priests of Marduk and not be asking your political advisors to get into the realm of the religious.

Separation of church and state. We think you should go to church and get the answer to your question instead of asking your political advisors. So, they're sort of making an appeal to the constitution, if you will, to try to save their lives.

For this reason, verse 12, the king was angry and very furious and gave the command to

destroy all the wise men of Babylon. We've already noted the timing. This is the second year of Nebuchadnezzar on the throne.

Daniel and his three friends have not completed their three-year training program that began the previous year. So, although they were not called in and asked any questions, as cadets at the academy, so to speak, they are going to be swept up and destroyed in this great purge of the wise men. Then, verse 14, with counsel and wisdom, Daniel answered Ariok, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

You remember Friday night in our Revelation study, we talked about the armies that go forth, the two million men armies. We talked about the locusts that come out of the pit and their horses that have teeth like lion's teeth and the symbolism involved in the idea of the lion in Scripture, the devil roams the earth like a lion seeking whom he may devour. And it speaks of violence, random violence.

You don't know when a lion is going to strike. It pounces, it lies in wait, and then it suddenly appears and runs you down and mauls you and chews you. Well, it is no accident that the captain of the king's guard here is named Ariok.

And if you look at the first three letters of that, Ari, it's a name you find in Israel today. A lot of Hebrew, a lot of Jewish individuals have this name. Ari, Ari-el.

Ari means lion. Ari-el means lion of God. Ariok means lion-like, like a lion.

And so here comes in the person of Ariok this unexpected violent threat, destruction. Going out to kill the wise men of Babylon. So Daniel answers and says to Ariok, the king's captain, why is the decree from the king so urgent? And Ariok makes the decision known to Daniel.

Notice the three-fold repetition of the captain's name. We didn't get a three-fold repetition of the master of the eunuchs' name, did we? But we get a three-fold repetition of it here. Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time that he might tell the king the interpretation.

The difference between Daniel's request for time and the wise men stalling for time is Daniel is up front. He's honest. He says, let me consult with the God of my fathers and I will reveal the dream and its interpretation.

I'm not stalling. Give me a set period of time. So Daniel went to his house and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Notice they are not on some altruistic crusade to save the rest of the wise men of Babylon. If they were not being swept up in this purge, they might not be staying up all night praying. But they figure like the Israelites who marched out of Egypt under Moses, God has not brought us into the wilderness to die.

God has not delivered us out of one disaster to simply have us perish in another. Now what kind of praying do you think these four young men did that night? I don't think they said, Oh Lord, if it be your will, let this scourge pass. I think they knew that God had spared them, that God had positioned them for such a time as this.

I think they knew the prophecy of Isaiah from many years before that there would be those of the royal line that would be made eunuchs to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon. They are not yet serving in the palace, are they? So they can go to scripture and they can pray with confidence, Oh Lord, we know that this was foretold, that you predicted this, you told King Hezekiah that some of his descendants would be made eunuchs to serve in the palace of the king of Babylon. So we are confident that you have brought us here for a purpose.

We pray that you will work that purpose out in our lives. May we be found faithful, may we conduct ourselves so that we can be useful, so that we can be of service, so that we can fulfill your plan and purpose and reflect your glory in this heathen land. We know that many of our people are captive and we are in a position here to make a difference, to be strategically located to influence the course of human history and the fate of our fellow Israelites from Judah who are now captive and victims of devastation and destruction.

So, they sought the mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, they sought God's mercy, they appealed to God's mercy so that they might not perish. They are not just trying to stay alive for their own sake. They see their existence, their being spared as part of the purpose and the provision of God, part of the outworking of God's plan.

And they are not just praying, Oh God, I don't want to die. They are saying, Oh Lord, we want to be those through whom you can fulfill your purpose. And there is a difference.

It's not a selfish prayer. It's not a prayer of desperation. It's not a prayer of simple, I'm afraid to die, please don't let me die.

These young men, the reason they are where they are is they have a perspective of God's work in history. Then in verse 19, after they pray this prayer, God could have picked any point to reveal to Daniel the content and the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, but when does God choose to do it? After he and his three friends pray. God already has the answer.

God already has every intention of revealing to Daniel the dream and the interpretation. But God does not reveal it until they pray. Why? It reminds us of the importance of prayer.

Yes, God knows what we need before we ask. Yes, God has already made provision in eternity past for our every need, and our every challenge, and our every trial. But, he still expects us to pray and to cycle through our souls the promises and the principles and the doctrines that are the basis for claiming his grace.

We are to consciously recognize God's mercy and to appeal to God's mercy. It's interesting to me, people who, you know, it's easy to say, well, if God knows everything, why do I even need

to pray? I mean, God's going to do what God's going to do. And yet, the Lord Jesus was one of the greatest men of prayer that you will find in the Bible.

Stays up all night praying to his Father. If anybody knows what God is already going to do, it's God the Son. Right? So, why would Jesus bother to pray? And yet, he prays constantly.

He prays to his Father. He prays in front of his disciples. He teaches his disciples to pray.

He stays up all night praying. He gets up early in the morning to pray. Jesus, one of the most prominent features of his personal life that we know about is that he was all the time on his knees in prayer to his Father.

Why? Because he knows, and he exemplifies this same principle. What do you know about the man Daniel? From Sunday school, from your earliest training in the Old Testament. What do we know about Daniel? We know he was in the lion's den.

Why? Because Daniel prayed three times a day. David was a man of prayer. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.

Psalm 55 So, Daniel went to his house, and Daniel went to his knees. Daniel went to his friends, and they went to their knees. And together they appeal and seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

And then, the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Daniel jumps up and says, wake the king, I've got the answer. Stop the presses.

Somebody go get Ariok and tell him to put his sword back in the sheath. What does Daniel do when he receives this answer? Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel, before he does anything else, sits down and composes a hymn of praise.

He composes a poetic tribute, a poetic and very carefully constructed and well thought out paean of praise to God. Blessed be the name of God forever and ever. Now, why is this included here? We're in the middle of a story.

We're in the middle of this big threat. People are about to die. Daniel and his three friends are potentially about to die.

They get a day's reprieve so that they can pray. And here is the answer. Here is the solution to the problem.

They always talk about the rush to judgment. Ever since the O.J. Simpson trial, they say, oh, it's a rush to judgment. Everything is a rush to judgment.

Daniel, once he is given the answer by God, doesn't rush headlong back to the king to implement the solution and get the threat resolved. He acknowledges that it has come from

God and before he does anything else, before he talks to the king on this earth, he talks to the king in heaven. Before he gets himself out of trouble with the king on earth, he gives glory and praise to God in heaven.

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever for wisdom and might are his. Not only is this a thanksgiving and a recognition of God's grace and God's mercy, but it is also a great therapy, if you will, a great mind conditioner for Daniel. Daniel is about to go in and he knows.

Daniel is no dummy. He knows that when he reveals this to Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar is going to be thrilled. Nebuchadnezzar is going to be grateful.

And Nebuchadnezzar is probably going to honor him with something. Riches, power, position, whatever it may be. But he knows that he is about to go in and be the object and the focus of tremendous attention.

His name is going to be on the front page, if you will, of every newspaper in Babylon. And Daniel orients himself to grace and he says, wisdom and power are not mine. Wisdom and power, wisdom and might belong to the God of heaven.

He is the one who changes the times and the seasons. Has Solomon already written the book of Ecclesiastes? Has he already written, to everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven? Remember that? Daniel says, God is the one who changes the times and the seasons. God is the one who removes kings and raises up kings.

God is the one who gives wisdom to the wise. God is the one who gives knowledge to those who have understanding. God reveals deep and secret things.

God knows what is in the darkness and light dwells with him. He knows what is in the darkness, this unknown dream. Light dwells with him.

The illumination that Daniel needs on this occasion comes from God. So Daniel says in verse 23, I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers. You have given me wisdom and might.

Kind of goes back to verse 20, doesn't it? Wisdom and might are God's to give and God has given them to Daniel. Have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's demand. This is a beautiful piece of poetry.

Verse 24, Therefore Daniel went to Ariok, whom the king had appointed. By the way, the name Ariok is not occurring in Scripture here for the first time. If it sounds familiar, it should.

Because way back, keep your finger here in Daniel chapter 2 and turn back to Genesis chapter 14. Genesis chapter 14. This is after Abram and Lot separate.

Lot goes to live in Sodom. God promises whatever he walks on, Abram will be given. Then in chapter 14, It came to pass in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar, Ariok, king of Alassar, Keter Laomer, king of Elam, and Tidal, king of nations, they made war with the five kings of the plain.

Remember the four kings of the north come down and attack the five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. Those four great kings of the north. And we remember from our studies elsewhere that four is the number of universality.

The four winds, the four points of the compass, the four dimensions on earth. And so Ariok, the lion-like one, was king of Alassar way back in the days of Abram. Well, what region is he from? He has allied himself with the king of Shinar.

Where is Shinar? Babylon. Alassar and Shinar and these other locations up here, the Elamites and so on, all of this is the ancient region of Babylon. And it's an early portent of things to come when the kings up there go south to consume and attack and subjugate.

And so Ariok here is in a sense named after this ancient famous king of Alassar. So Daniel goes to Ariok, 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.

Take me before the king and I will tell the king the interpretation. So Ariok quickly brought Daniel before the king and said thus to him. Of course, Ariok is no fool.

I have found a man of the captives of Judah who will make known to the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel whose name was Belteshazzar, Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation? Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers and the magicians and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets.

And he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions, plural, of your head upon your bed were these. And he is about to give the detail of that dream.

But notice Daniel reflects in his words and in his posture before the king the same thing that he put in his hymn of praise. It is God in heaven who is revealing secrets and making known to the king what will be in the latter days. And he could not be talking to a more receptive king, could he, than Nebuchadnezzar who is very sensitive to dreams and is a very quote-unquote religious man.

Unlike any of his predecessors, he is going to be the temple builder. He is going to be the worship supporter. And so this is of God.

And Daniel is put there to introduce Nebuchadnezzar to the true God, the God of heaven. But we are going to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we will start in on the dream and the analysis of the dream that is given in Daniel chapter 2, verse 29 and following.