

Kings and Prophets 16-09-22b

Let's pick up our study now in Daniel chapter 2, and I'm going to hasten, I'll give you back some of the time I borrowed in the first session. But we're at verse 23 where Daniel, having received from God the mystery, the unknown information that could not be deduced or arrived at by any human means, first of all thanks God. He says, I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers.

You have given me wisdom and might, and now have made known to me what we asked of you. Notice the plural there, for you have made known to us the king's matter. And once again, as I said, this word milah or milat, M-I-L-L-A, M-I-L-L-A-T in the actual form that's used here is variously translated decision thing, matter, issue.

But just a quick observation here, notice again that the information about what is going to happen in the future is revealed to the unbelieving Gentile pagan king. He is the one who sees it, but he can't figure out what it means. He knows it means something.

And all of his wise men are unable to give a true interpretation. Now had he told them what he saw in his dream, they would have made something up and it would have been wrong, right? And he knows that, and so he says, you've got to tell me what I dreamed and the interpretation of it. But by way of comparison to our current day, we have a lot of wonderful observation and it is a true observation that is done by scientists in the name of science, but it is interpreted in a philosophical light of secular humanism and materialism.

And the information is sound, but the interpretation is not. But the information is given to or seen by, gathered by, observed by unbelievers. It is the privilege and the opportunity for believers to look at that true observation and give it its correct interpretation.

And those who are seeking truth and looking for truth will respond. Those who prefer a construction that doesn't require there to be a God, that doesn't require there to be personal responsibility, that doesn't require them to be accountable morally, are never going to accept the interpretation. Interestingly, Nebuchadnezzar seems to be on a genuine quest for truth.

He will accept no substitutes. He knows how to test and be sure that it's true, right? And he does that by his request that they tell both the dream and the interpretation. So when Daniel, having given thanks to God in verse 24, goes back to Arioch, whom the Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon.

Take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation. Notice Daniel does not say this until he has the interpretation. Saying this the previous day would have been putting God to the test.

Well, Lord, I made a faith promise. I told him I would give an extra \$300 in the offering plate for the building fund. And I sure hope you'll supply it, because otherwise my kids will have no shoes for school.

He doesn't promise until God has delivered to him something he can make a commitment to. And we don't commit the things and then go to God and say, Oh, Lord, I made this commitment. I hope you can come through for me and make God our servant.

Daniel goes to the Lord and says, Lord, we'd sure like to have this information. It's up to God whether or not he gives it. When he does, now Daniel can go back with confidence and say, Tell the king to stop the kill order.

I'll tell him what the dream means. He has the information in hand before he makes the commitment. He has the resource before he makes the promise.

And this is another point of application that is often missed in the modern Christian world. And certainly the post-modern Christian world. So notice, Ariok quickly brought Daniel before the king and said thus to him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah.

After a diligent search and after much effort on my part, I finally turned up a guy who could give you the answer. Glory to me, O king. He didn't find anything.

Daniel has come to him twice, right? But this is typical of those who want to take credit for what you actually have or what you actually do. And notice Daniel doesn't give the lie to it or correct it. He'll let things stand or fall on their own.

So the king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, this is how he would have been addressed in the court. This is his court name. 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.

Why does it say in the presence of the king? This puts you kind of in the moment, doesn't it? Here's Daniel. He's most certainly a teenager. In the presence of the powerful king that has invaded his land and taken everybody captive and is the dominant force everywhere.

Plus Daniel has just seen that he is in fact the head of gold on this image. But he is also God's chosen conduit for information. And who gets the benefit of this dream? Are the Babylonians going to be blessed and given hope and confidence and a basis for faith and application from this dream that was given to their king? Who gets the benefit of this? Why does Daniel give praise and thanks to God? He says, you've made known to your servants.

You've given us this wisdom. It came through an unlikely source. But who does it benefit? It doesn't end up in the annals of the Chaldeans or the Babylonians.

It ends up in the Hebrew Bible. Much as God's dealings with Nineveh in the book of Jonah aren't really for the Assyrians or the Ninevites. It's for Israel.

These things are for God's people. But they come indirectly through a strange source. This is why it doesn't hurt you to read a bad commentary or to listen to somebody that you disagree

with theologically on a Christian radio program.

Listen anyway. You never know what conduit God is going to use. You've got the Spirit.

You don't have to depend on one teacher and say, well, I don't trust anything unless this guy says it or it comes from this commentary or this source or this study Bible or whatever. You've got God the Holy Spirit who leads us into truth. He will tell us the difference between a rock and bread.

He'll tell us the difference between something that's from God and a snake and a scorpion. But don't quibble about the source. If Daniel had said, well, nothing that a pagan king dreams can be from God, he would have never prayed.

He would have never gotten the answer. He would have faded in obscurity. We wouldn't have a book of Daniel.

We'd have a book of somebody else. It might have been the book of Hananiah. We might have the book of Mishael or something in here.

The reason it's the book of Daniel is Daniel doesn't limit the Lord in terms of how he is going to communicate. And I would submit that even though we are Bible-thumping, fundamentalist, conservative Christians in many ways, I am not prepared to tell God that he can't communicate with me any way except through a verse of Scripture. God will use the means that God is going to use.

And Daniel might have said, well, you know, we've got the prophecies of Isaiah that were recently minted. We've got Jeremiah floating around. He might have heard of Ezekiel down there by the River Kabar.

And he might have said, you know, God's got his prophets, and if God's going to tell us something, it'll come through a prophet. Well, guess what? It came through the pagan king, the arch villain, the enemy, the guy that destroyed their land and took them captive and made them eunuchs. That's the chosen conduit for God's Word.

I think it would caution us, wouldn't it, to not limit the Lord? Let the Lord be the Lord. Let God do what God's going to do. And how does Daniel express his thanksgiving? How does he begin it? I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers.

You have given me wisdom and might, and have made known to me what we ask of you. You've made known to us the king's mystery. You have given us wisdom and might.

Notice, there's the word there for power. This word might in Hebrew is gibur, from the same word that means the mighty men, the giburim, you know, the warriors. You've taken us from being captives to being soldiers, being mighty men.

You've answered our prayers, but what is the mechanism? It's the pagan king's dream. Who

would have seen that coming? Well, maybe somebody that was rehearsed in the law and remembered Joseph and remembered Pharaoh and said, well, you know, there is some biblical precedent. Well, guess what? You and I now have two biblical precedents for God moving in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform, and His information to transmit.

The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows forth His handiwork. You can get theology from creation.

You can get theology under the guiding ministry of God's Holy Spirit when we ask and seek and knock and pray for wisdom. It can come in unforeseen ways, so we don't limit the Lord. And so Daniel now confidently comes before the king and says, I will make known to the king the interpretation.

The king says, can you do it? Daniel says, the secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. Point of application. Even if Daniel had told the soothsayers the dream, they would have not had any idea what it meant.

Our modern day wisdom from science and technology and those who are able to build and manipulate the environment around us and invent medicines and devices and all sorts of wonderful machines and so forth, they can breed new crops and they can genetically modify this, that, and the other, and they can make lettuce that glows in the dark and crossing lettuce with a firefly, if you can believe that. I've actually seen glow-in-the-dark lettuce because they took the firefly stuff and cross GMO'd it into lettuce. You've got lettuce.

That's the answer to all my prayers, glow-in-the-dark lettuce. But the point here is that there is a God in heaven who makes known the meaning and the purpose of things. Nebuchadnezzar knows the dream, but he doesn't know what it means.

Science can reveal a lot about what's going on around us and even some of how it might have come into being, but what does it mean? What is its purpose? That comes from God alone. We are privileged to have access to that information. What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of life? Who are we and why are we here? This is something that God reveals.

This is something that he has given us as custodians and stewards, and when people learn all the science and all the engineering and all the technology that they want, they will never get the answers, Who am I? Why am I here? How can I transcend the corruption and the limitations of my mortal flesh and my fallen nature? God has entrusted us with those answers, and we can confidently speak on those subjects. And don't let scientists and militant atheists cow us into silence on these questions. They don't have an answer for the why and the who and what is coming in the future.

We have that information. Now, what evidence can Daniel offer that his interpretation is correct? What concrete scientific proof can he give that it's correct? How does Nebuchadnezzar

know that Daniel is telling the truth? Nebuchadnezzar is seeking the truth, and a truth seeker, just like a baby that's seeking its mother's milk, will know when he gets it. I don't know what it is, but when I find it, I will know it.

And anybody that isn't satisfied with the truth isn't looking for the truth. You cannot shove food at somebody that's not hungry. You can't shove drink at someone that's not thirsty.

And you cannot push truth into somebody who doesn't want it and isn't looking for it. The hungry and the thirsty will be filled. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

They are the ones who will be filled. Nebuchadnezzar here, and by the way, you know he's going to be in glory. He is a believer in the one true God.

And he died a believer, and he's going to be in glory. We'll get to see Nebuchadnezzar in the resurrection. He is a truth seeker.

Who would have thought the king of Babylon, the archenemy of Judah that destroys it all, would come to faith? And by the way, I don't know but that the Pharaoh of Joseph wasn't also a believer. And we'll see him. Not the Pharaoh of Moses, but the Pharaoh of Joseph's day appears to have honored the God of Joseph and certainly respected him.

If he came to faith, we'll find out. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

Your dream and the visions of your head upon your bed were these. As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed about what would come to pass after this. It is the future.

What a comfort for these people so recently in the first wave of captivity to be given a vision of what would come to pass. And by the way, part of it is, it is limited. It's not indefinite.

You're not captive forever. There is a limit. Kings and times are going to change.

God will always be in His heaven. He will always be in control. And this is a message of comfort and encouragement first and foremost to Daniel and Hananiah and Mishaël and Azariah.

Don't you think the first thing Daniel did when he woke up after his night vision was grab those three and say, The Lord has answered my prayer. That little song of praise was first delivered to his three friends who prayed with him, who were seeking as he was. And he shares it with them and they say, Glory to God.

This is part of a larger plan. We are involved in something bigger than ourselves. Motivation for service.

Motivation for endurance. Motivation for patience. What will come to pass after this.

He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. How careful is Daniel to make sure the king knows. As for me, this secret was not revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living.

But for our sakes, who makes known the interpretation of the king, that you may know the thoughts of your heart. We have the privilege of sharing what God reveals to us so that others who have a seeking heart and a troubled heart and are agitated and want to know the truth can come to find it. God doesn't send angels to evangelize people.

He sends people to evangelize people. We are entrusted with that wonderful truth. And those who are seeking will recognize it when they hear it.

You don't have to argue with them. You don't have to have special words. You don't have to have superior techniques.

If you are a faithful believer and you have been praying to God for wisdom and that he will... It reminds you of the promise God made to Moses when he said, well, I'm slow of speech. I have a slow tongue. What did God say? I'll be with your mouth.

I'll teach that thing what it needs to say. You just be willing. You stand there before Pharaoh and what you need to say will come out of your mouth.

I will be with your mouth. And how many times have I thought back on that, you know, pretty much every Bible class. I think, Lord, be with my mouth and help me say what you want to have said.

It isn't by might and it isn't by power. It's by God's spirit. That's how it's done.

And Daniel is careful to preface the answer while he's got an attentive and leaning forward audience. I just want you to understand this isn't coming from me. It's not because I'm a smart guy or that I'm particularly eloquent.

This is information that God has revealed because you have a seeking heart and he is telling you what you want to know so that you will know the thoughts of your heart and what they mean. You, O King, were watching a great image, this great image whose splendor was excellent, stood before you, its form was awesome. The image's head was of fine gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, feet partly of iron, partly of clay.

You watched while a stone was cut without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Now, if the image represents kingdoms, successive kingdoms, and then those kingdoms are utterly destroyed and blown away like chaff, they start out being so solid.

How does gold and silver and bronze and iron get blown away in the wind? Well, when the rock strikes it, it converts it, turns it into chaff, and it can no longer be seen. It has vanished utterly away. What is the stone that becomes a great mountain and fills the earth, replaces the image? Well, it is also a kingdom.

This is the stone made without hands. This is the Lord Jesus and His kingdom in the same way that the head of gold is both the kingdom and the king. He says, But that's the Babylonian kingdom that He represents, right? Well, the stone, the rock of our salvation, the stone of stumbling, the corners of the building and the arch keystone, that's the Lord Jesus, but it is also His kingdom.

And it tells you that there is coming a time when that kingdom is going to utterly blot out all traces of all of the... And you think even today, all of these prior kingdoms, we have benefits. We have literacy. We have mathematics.

We have engineering. We have the Archimedes, and we have philosophical truths from Plato and Aristotle and Socrates, the Socratic method, and we have an inheritance. So much of our language is Latin and Greek and especially philosophical terms and medical terms and scientific terms.

All of that's in Latin, and we've inherited it from these previous kingdoms, the Romans got it from the Greeks, and the Greeks got it from the Persians, and the Persians got it from the Babylonians, and it is all a part of a heritage all the way down to the modern day where our understanding and our knowledge and technology and even outlook on the world is built on that foundation. Well, all of that is going to be utterly replaced. It will be invisible.

It reminds you of the great white throne, and it says heaven and earth fled away and couldn't be found when that takes its place. So that was the dream. Now we will tell you the interpretation of it before the king.

It's a curious plural there. Who's this we? You know how they always say, well, you got a monkey in your pocket? Why does Daniel say we? What is he still doing? He's standing there alone. His three friends are not there.

So who's the we? The God of my fathers has imparted this to me, and I as his representative am speaking for him, and we, he and I, will tell you the interpretation. This we plural isn't just some sort of we of majesty or something. He says, I didn't come up with this.

He doesn't say, must I bring water forth from this rock for you? He says, we. I am a representative of the Lord God. We together.

With God all things are possible. We will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings.

Who has that title with a capital K? Well, who's the big stone at the end of this dream? You start

out being the king of kings. At the other end of it, there's going to be a capital K king of kings. But you are a king of kings, for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory.

What a great perspective Daniel has. Nebuchadnezzar didn't get this because he's just so much of a genius general that nobody could stop him. Not because the times were right or his father laid the foundation.

God in heaven has brought this about. Daniel has his captivity, the destruction of his land, the massacre of his people, the relocation, the emasculation, all the rest of it in perspective. This is of God.

Nebuchadnezzar is there because of God. Nebuchadnezzar has had this dream because of God. Nebuchadnezzar is getting the answer because of God.

You think about the circumstance he's in and maintaining this perspective, much as Joseph did in his situation, much as the Lord Jesus did in his situation. It's a wonderful example for us. Don't lose sight of the fact that God has brought all of these circumstances about anybody that's in power, whoever's the current president, whoever's ever on the Supreme Court, whoever's the governor or the mayor or whatever else, whoever's your teacher, whoever's your boss, whoever's your authority, whoever is making decisions and affecting the outcomes that make your life in some ways a misery or a challenge, requiring endurance, it is of God.

The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. Everything you have is from Him. And wherever the children of men dwell or the beasts of the field and the birds of heaven, He has given them into your hand and has made you ruler over them all.

You are this head of gold, but after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours, then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth, and the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron. As iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything, and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Whereas you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, yet the strength of iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with clay.

And as the toes and the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. And you have the bookend of this in Revelation where you have the seven heads with the ten horns. Ten horns are the ten toes.

And this is what they sometimes call the revived Roman Empire. It's got the iron, but it's divided. It's not the two strong legs, it's the ten toes.

As you saw iron mixed with clay, they will mingle with the seed of men. Notice, mingling with the seed of men. Why are they mingling with the seed of men? This is going to be the return to active demonic infiltration.

Once again, there's a symmetry, there's a bookend. When's the last time there was angelic interference and infiltration in the human race and in government? Genesis 6, sons of God, daughters of men. This is going to take place again.

And there's no other way to take mingling with the seed of men. There is going to be this strangeness. This won't happen until we're gone.

This is 70th week. This is time of Jacob's trouble. This is end times prediction.

They will not adhere to one another just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. That's the big stone.

That's the millennial kingdom. That's Revelation chapter 19. The Lord Jesus returning to earth, setting up that kingdom.

It will never be destroyed. It doesn't say it will never end. It says it will never be destroyed.

Right? If it ends, it'll be God's time to replace it with something new. But it's not going to be destroyed like all the previous kingdoms were. The kingdom shall not be left to other people.

It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw, and this again is Olam, it will stand as long as God wants it to. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces, iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold, the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.

The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. Now, if Nebuchadnezzar had said, well, where's your evidence? You know, show me a proof. What is the proof? Daniel, properly detailing the dream and giving this interpretation, Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the truth because it is truth that he is seeking.

You will never get a non-truth seeker to find satisfaction. And when you repeatedly point to the truth that God is in control, God is the creator, God is behind all of these things that science thinks created themselves, if people continuously and persistently reject that, you've got to wait for them to come to a different conclusion on their own. You will never force their head down in the water to drink.

You can lead the horse to water, but if they do not respond to the truth, they at the present time are not seeking the truth. So save your breath, wait for a more opportune season. Because of this, King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face prostrate before Daniel.

Look at that. What a reversal. Remember when Jesus said, the last shall be first and the first shall be last? Here is, I mean, can you imagine the shock wave that went through the royal court when King Nebuchadnezzar gets off his throne, falls on his face in front of a captive

teenager? Are you kidding? It's unheard of.

I can only imagine the gasp of shock and dismay, especially among the Chaldeans and astrologers who were lately fearing for their lives. He commanded that they should present an offering and incense to Daniel. The king answered Daniel and said, Truly your God is the God of gods.

Notice how well Daniel got the point across that this information and this truth came from God and that Daniel wasn't just, I'm wiser than all of your wise men. Your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret. That was the point of the we.

Daniel doesn't let him forget that it is his God that has brought this truth. And we must always not get so busy, you know, refuting the claims of science or poking holes in their arguments or pointing out where they are engaged in fallacies or overstepping, but get back to the Lord God in heaven. There is a reason for these things.

Your God is the God of gods. The king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel petitioned the king and he set, notice that this is the official proclamation now, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

This is the court. Daniel is adjudicating. He's setting policy and what a benefit he can be to his captive people, not just now after the first wave, but remember there's a second wave in 597 and a third wave in 586.

And Daniel never loses this place. And because he is faithful, because he is a man of prayer, and because he is reliant upon God, God is going to make him a blessing, not only to his captors, but to his own people. He's going to sit in the gate.

He's going to influence policy for decades to come, but it all begins here. It began in chapter one with no compromise of his core beliefs and principles, his personal responsibilities before God. And secondly, with his confidence in God, his recognition that he needs to have time to go before God in prayer, to wait for an answer from God, and not to commit to anything until he has the answer from God.

And then to stand boldly and deliver what he knows is the truth of God without fear, without compromise, and with full acknowledgement of its source. This is, in a nutshell, what we as Body of Christ should be doing today. We don't have to go out and make an issue out of every observation of immorality or indecency or unbiblicality that we see, but we do have to stick with our core values.

We have to be uncompromising in our own commitment to God's word. When challenged, our prayer life should be foremost, our waiting upon the Lord to reveal through his word and

through his spirit the truth that we need, so that we can not only apply it ourselves, not only can we give thanks and bless God's name personally and within our own fellowship, but then to shine his lights in the world, to let our light shine so that men see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Notice when Daniel delivers this, the first thing Nebuchadnezzar does is do the same thing Daniel did, glorify the God of heaven.

And everything else in this book wouldn't be there if these first two chapters weren't there, if Daniel wasn't a man of commitment and a man of prayer, and his three friends, men of commitment and men of prayer, trustworthy. And Daniel doesn't accept all of the accolades himself. He says, look, these three are God's men as well, and you need to put them where they can be of use.

And they end up being rulers in this province as well. But there are a lot of comparisons to Joseph. It's worth reflecting on.

But fundamentally, our faith is in God. Truth comes from God. Nothing makes sense apart from God.

It's going to be a dream that is a mystery. It is information that is going to be cryptic and inscrutable unless and until there is an appeal to God, dependence upon Him. When the time is right, God reveals His truth and His wisdom, and we have to trust Him.

Didn't give it to Josiah. Didn't give it to Daniel directly. Gave it to the king.

Figure that out. You never know from what quarter God is going to bless us and provide for us and move His plan forward in and through us. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

We'll pick up in chapter 3 next time, whenever that may be. Father, we thank You for the truth of Your Word. We thank You for the wonderful inspiration and exhortation and compelling truth that we find in this section of Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart. We pray that in all things we can represent and glorify the Lord Jesus personally in our fellowship and before the world. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.