

DANIEL TESTIFIES TO GOD BEFORE THE KING

Daniel 2:1-49
Key verse 2:28

"But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these."

We thank the Lord for the Bible study of the book of Daniel. We were privileged in the first lesson to learn about the faith decision of Daniel who, in an unbelieving environment, did not allow himself to be overcome by the ungodly spirit of the age, but made a clear decision not to make himself unclean by eating food sacrificed to idols, but to live a pure life with his spiritual identity as God's people. We saw that God blessed his decision and he lived a victorious life regardless of the situation, even becoming ten times wiser than everyone else. We were allowed to renew our decision not to make ourselves unclean with the ungodly spirit of the times, but to live with spiritual identity before God, and like Daniel, to glorify God in all circumstances. We thank the Lord for blessing the missionary journey of M. Peter and M. Sarah, graciously accepting their servanthood to the Next Generation in New Jersey, and establishing a base camp for world mission. We thank God that He continues to work in the Next Generation, that they may embrace God's nurturing love for them, hold their spiritual identity and calling at all times, and grow as global spiritual leaders for this generation.

Today we wanted to learn about Daniel chapter 2. The powerful king Nebuchadnezzar had a revelatory dream from God concerning the transience of the worldly kingdoms. God showed him how even the great kingdoms of the world would be destroyed and crushed by a living stone that would come without the intervention of human

hands. We learn here that there is a God in heaven. He is the Lord and Sovereign of history. The goal of history is the eternal kingdom of God. Only in this God can we get answers to the ultimate questions of our existence by submitting to Him. Today, we also learn about the power of prayer when we together ask the God of heaven for mercy. Let us clearly testify to the fact that there is a God in heaven, even before the mighty and kings of this world.

1. God Who Reveals Dreams (1-30)

The incident of chapter 2 took place in the 2nd year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar (640-562 BC). Verse 1 says that during the night he had a dream that so frightened him that he woke up and could not sleep. Nebuchadnezzar was a very capable and fearless man. He had already defeated the other two world powers, Assyria and Egypt, as the commander-in-chief of the army before he became king, so that Babylon rose to number one and he had now become the most powerful man in the world. But that night he was very frightened because of a revelation dream God had given him.

Although he had conquered such a great realm, he had been very worried, wondering what would happen in the future, whether or not this realm and everything he had achieved would remain. Even at night he was preoccupied with this question (v.29). Then God gave him a revelatory dream. Because

he could not understand the dream, he became even more restless. In the middle of the night he summoned all his advisors, the wise men and magicians and soothsayers and sign interpreters, to find out from them what the dream was about.

These sages were highly educated intellectual people. They all held high positions in the government. They were also skilled in interpreting various dreams according to Babylonian culture and all the rules of psychoanalysis. But this time they were faced with a conundrum because the king would not tell them his dream, but demanded that they tell both his dream and its interpretation. This was actually an impossible demand. Several times they tried to persuade the king to tell them the content of the dream. But Nebuchadnezzar only threatened them with the death penalty if they did not succeed. They tried to make him understand that no one could guess the king's dream, but could only interpret it. Thus they revealed their complete helplessness.

Verse 12 says, "This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon." When they could not fulfill the king's impossible command, the death sentence was passed on them. Daniel and his friends were also among the group of people who were to die. Daniel, however, did not panic at that moment. He did not try to escape. Rather, he acted wisely and intelligently by asking the general of the bodyguard the reason for this strict order. Then he obtained a deadline from the king to tell him the interpretation. Above all, he asked his three friends for prayer support to ask the God of heaven for mercy.

Let's read verses 17 and 18: "Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." Even Daniel could not solve the problem, but he knew whom to turn to. He had

learned to pray to the God of heaven. He asked his companions for prayer support and formed a prayer vessel with them. They heartily asked God to give grace and solve this problem. Prayer is the strongest weapon of believers. We are also not infrequently confronted with unexpected and unsolvable problems. But we are not helpless; we have One to whom we may bring all these problems: our heavenly Father, God. Jesus himself went first to prayer the night he was betrayed. He also asked three disciples for prayer support. In prayer, he received strength from God to drink the cup of suffering to the end. Jesus taught his disciples, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Matt. 7:7) Prayer is the expression of faith that we can do nothing, but that God can do everything, as Mark 11:24 says, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Samuel Mills was a student at Williams College. He had a heart for world missions. But what could he do for world mission? He mobilized four of his friends to pray together. Lacking another venue, it became the Haystack Prayer Meeting. It looked too small, but God worked through this prayer vessel. Eventually, this small prayer meeting on one campus grew into a large movement the Student Volunteer Movement, mobilizing thousands of students for world missions.

God has given us the weapon of prayer. God will surely richly bless our persistent prayer at every faculty and school, forming the prayer vessel with our fellow workers and experiencing the mighty working of God that we may each form 12 one-to-one Bible study teams and win 10,000 Bible teachers and 5,000,000 prayer workers for spiritual revival in Germany and Europe.

What happened when Daniel and his friends prayed so heartily? Verse 19 says: "During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven." As they prayed, God gave them His grace. That night God gave Daniel a dream

and so he learned what the king had dreamed. Thereupon, Daniel praised God with all his heart and gave Him glory. Let us read verses 20 to 22: "and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him."

When we have experienced the answer to prayer, the first thing we should do is to thank God with all our heart and testify it. God gives us His grace so that we may give Him glory, not take that glory for ourselves. Daniel praised and extolled God with all his heart that he is the Lord over time, over kings, over wisdom, over understanding and even over hidden mysteries. Our God is the almighty and great God who is above all and who gives us victory in His grace. We see a similar prayer of praise with Hannah, with Mary and with Zechariah when they experienced the miraculous grace and answer to prayer in their lives.

What happened when Daniel came to the king? He testified to God from the beginning to the end: "Not I, but God!" Daniel clearly said that he has no wisdom, that no man has it either. Even the best professors and scientists cannot reveal the secret. This secret can only be explained by God.

Let us read verse 28 together: "but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these." Nebuchadnezzar was an idolater. He was an unbeliever. He had regarded the temple in Jerusalem as one of the other idolatrous temples and had taken some of the treasures to the house of his god Marduk. But before this unbelieving idolater Daniel testified, "There is a God in heaven." Nebuchadnezzar had a very serious question about the future in his heart that

no one could answer. But now he got the answer, "There is a God in heaven." God in heaven is the answer and only He could answer his question about the future. Daniel became a shepherd and Bible teacher to Nebuchadnezzar. It took some time, but in chapter 4:34 we see that after many years he finally acknowledged the God of heaven.

Whether before children and youth, before the able students, before great leaders, or before kings, we may bear a clear testimony on every occasion that there is a God in heaven. Especially the capable and successful people have unresolved questions in their hearts: where do I come from? Where am I going? What will the future bring? Do my successes and achievements last at all? Neither science nor philosophy can answer these questions for them. But we can testify to them that there is a God in heaven. This God in heaven knows history and the future and even mysteries. He can give us the answer to all our questions. This God in heaven gave Nebuchadnezzar an answer through a dream and through a Bible teacher Daniel. He also gives answer today when we pray to Him. Above all, He speaks to us through His Word. We may listen to him through Bible study and get God's answer.

2. The King's Dream (31-49)

In verses 31 to 45, we learn about the king's dream and Daniel's interpretation of it. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a great glorious statue of a man, made of the materials gold, silver, copper, iron and clay from top to bottom. But then, without the intervention of human hands, a stone came down and struck the statue at its feet, crushing it completely. This stone in turn grew and eventually filled the entire earth. Daniel explained to the king that the statue represented different world empires. The golden head was Nebuchadnezzar himself, that is, the Babylonian world empire. Then come other world empires, such as the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, and the Roman Empire that was as hard as iron. Finally, it was to become a divided empire,

which consisted of iron and clay. But all these empires, as glorious and great as they were, would pass away. A living stone that came down from above without intervention would destroy and crush them. Eventually, this stone would itself become a mountain representing the eternal and imperishable kingdom of God.

We learn here that all the kingdoms of this world pass away, but that God is the eternal controller of history. Forty years ago, Europe was strictly divided into East and West and the Iron Curtain was the seemingly insurmountable border. No one could think of sending missionaries to the Eastern Bloc. But through faith in Almighty God, M. Dr. Samuel Lee began to pray for the pioneering of the then USSR within 10 years. We prayed for it at every opportunity. Many laughed at us for this prayer request because it looked so impossible. But Almighty God heard this prayer. The Iron Curtain was opened and we were able to send missionaries and experience God's mighty work after only 5 years.

We learn at this time that many rulers think that they are the greatest and can do anything they want. But they have to acknowledge that God is above them. The empires of Putin, Xi or Kim, Jong-Un will also pass away one day. The Western empires founded on humanism and liberalism will also pass away. Ultimately, only the Kingdom of God will remain as an eternal and imperishable kingdom.

It is a great grace that we do not work for a perishable kingdom, but for the glorious and eternal kingdom of God. Every worldly ruler and all those who want to gain something in the world will sooner or later be confronted with the nullity of their actions. Even every professor or company boss, no matter how much fame or money he may have, has to face the fact that his kingdom will pass away and be crushed. Therefore, it is wisdom to acknowledge God's dominion and work for the glorious and eternal kingdom of Jesus.

I also used to want to build my empire in the world, not necessarily with money, but with

fame and recognition and knowledge, by becoming a big personality as a computer science professor. I wanted to impress others with my knowledge and immortalize my name on many book covers. But I had to acknowledge that even this goal, even if I achieved it, would mean dying and disappearing meaninglessly in the end. In the end, all the programs I am now painstakingly writing will also be destroyed and crushed and end up on the trash heap of history.

It is encouraging that M. Peter made a decision not to work laboriously as a clinic director and build something that will be crushed and trampled on in the end, but to be used as a Bible teacher for spiritual revival and the building of the Kingdom of God. Because he lives with the identity as a rock of faith for the church of God and as a Bible teacher for spiritual revival, his struggle has a lasting and eternal significance.

When S. Anja failed her master's thesis the first time, there seemed to be no hope and no possibility. Moreover, her professor discouraged her very much that she had no hope. But in this situation, she was allowed to know faith in Almighty God: "All things are possible to him who believes." Through this faith, she was allowed to find another professor who was willing to supervise her master's thesis. God heard the persistent prayer from the servant of God and from many co-workers, and finally gave her the victory of faith that glorifies God.

Let us not be among those who, like Nebuchadnezzar, worship their own egos and dream badly, but live by faith and trust in Almighty God. Our next generation are blessed because God has called and chosen them to be used as Bible teachers and global spiritual leaders in His eternal work of salvation. Because they are not fighting for human glory or wealth, but for the eternal Kingdom of God, their dedication has eternal value. The disciples were ordinary people whose lives as fishermen seemed mundane and meaningless. But when they took up God's calling personally and followed Jesus, they were changed into the influential figures and

teachers of humankind whose spiritual legacy is still visible everywhere today.

The God of heaven is the almighty and sovereign God who also holds history in His hand. He already had His plan and purpose when He installed Nebuchadnezzar as king in Babylon. He had already foreseen and planned everything. The goal of history is the coming of Jesus and the establishment of the eternal kingdom of God. Now we too may be a part of this story by serving the disciple-making ministry through one-to-one Bible study and raising up the next generation as global spiritual leaders for world mission. Although we are actually nothing, God has placed us in His eternal history of salvation through His calling and given us a place in it. Now, with the glorious hope of his kingdom, we may also proclaim in our generation that there is a God in heaven.

Just as the stone came without the intervention of human hands and destroyed the statue, so also Jesus came into this world not through the intervention of human beings, but through God's sovereign counsel and grace. He accomplished the work of redemption for us by bearing the punishment for sinners himself on the cross, thus opening the way back to God for us. He will also come again without the intervention of human hands to then destroy all the powers and dominions and authorities of this world and establish the eternal kingdom of God. Verse 44 says: "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."

When the king heard Daniel's words, he fell on his face and worshiped Daniel and that God in heaven. He realized that despite all the pomp and glory, he may acknowledge that God is above him, that he alone directs history, and that everything will come to his eternal kingdom. When Jesus comes again, he will completely destroy all rule and power and authority and set up a new and eternal

kingdom that will never pass away. Nebuchadnezzar then exalted Daniel and appointed him as chief wise man and as prince over the land of Babylon. At his request, his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were appointed over the three districts of Babylon.

Today we have learned that God is the sovereign ruler of history who holds all things in His hand. He is leading world history to its best destination by establishing the glorious Kingdom of God. Only in this God in heaven will all our existential questions also be answered. We have also learned to form the prayer vessel in the impossible situation like Daniel and his friends and ask the God of heaven for His grace because He gives us wisdom and understanding. In the midst of the ungodly environment, let us witness the God of heaven by serving the work of God influentially, forming 12 one-to-one Bible study teams each this summer, and bringing about the spiritual revival and mobilization of our next generation.