

There is a God in Heaven

Text: Daniel 2:1-23

Introduction:

1. This chapter contains one of the most significant prophecies in the Bible giving an overview of the times of the Gentiles. It describes four great kingdoms that are associated with Israel and dominate it during this time.
2. The circumstances that lead to this dream being revealed and explained are challenging and instructive. We will find Daniel and his three friends suddenly enveloped in a life-threatening trial that was unforeseen and unprovoked. How did they come through it victoriously? The answer: PRAYER!!!
3. This account serves as a powerful reminder that God answers prayer.
4. We will study the text before us under four headings

I. The Peril of the Prophet (Vs. 1-13)

A. The Events that led to his Peril (Vs. 1-11)

1. The king's dream (Vs. 1)
 - a. The timing of his dream – the second year of his reign. There is a supposed contradiction here but it is easily explained when one understands the Babylonian method of reckoning. Denis Lyle explains: "In the Book of Daniel, you do not have Jewish reckoning, you have Babylonian reckoning. And it comes up several times in the Book. The first year of any monarch in the Babylonian system was not considered a part of his reign. It was his year of accession. And when they dated their kings, they dated them from the first full year to the last. So officially even though Nebuchadnezzar had come to the throne, it was called his accession to the throne and they never started counting until the beginning of his first full year."
 - b. The troubling from his dream – he was disturbed in his spirit. This was something that went beyond a superficial nightmare. God was trying to get this king's attention. So troubled was the king that he couldn't sleep.
2. The king's demand (Vs. 2-6)
 - a. The people – the wise men of Babylon. The king summoned the best minds of his day in a worldly sense. These were the elite intellectuals and spiritualists in Babylon. There were the...
 - i. Magicians – those who practiced magic
 - ii. Astrologers – those who studied the stars and made prophecies

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- iii. Sorcerers – the wizards, soothsayers, those who practiced witchcraft and could supposedly communicate with the dead
 - iv. Chaldeans = the philosophers who made the sciences their special study (e.g. astronomy & mathematics). They were the original inhabitants of Southern Mesopotamia. (Cloud). Note Gen. 11:28 “Ur of the Chaldees”
- b. The particulars – they were to both reveal the dream and give the interpretation. The penalty for failing to do so would be severe. You would be cut in pieces and your home would be made a public outhouse!
3. The king’s discernment (Vs. 7-11)
- a. The wise men request that the dream be told them a second time (Vs. 7)
 - b. The king’s response reveals his underlying suspicion and skepticism of the supposed wisdom of these wise men (Vs. 8-9) “These ancient fortunetellers were well adept in the art of drawing out sufficient information to form the basis of some prediction. The framing of their answer was in such an ambiguous manner that it would appear correct whichever way the event would go.” (Butler)
 - c. The wise men admit they cannot fulfill the king’s request. It was impossible for a man to do, it could only be done by God! (Vs. 10-11)
 - d. Note: Intellectuals, spiritualists and practitioners of false religion are powerless to give real answers to the real questions and challenges of life.

B. The Edict that legislated his Peril (Vs. 12-13)

- 1. The prompting of the edict – diabolical rage (Vs. 12) “*He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly...*” (Prov. 14:17)
- 2. The requirement of the edict – death of the wise men (Vs. 13)
- 3. Note: It is of interest that Daniel and his three friends were excluded from the king’s conference. Why this was we do not know. Possibly the jealousy of the other wise men on account of their superior wisdom (1:20). Or perhaps it was due to their ethnicity

II. The Prayers of the Prophet (Vs. 14-19)

A. The Appeal to the Earthly Throne (Vs. 14-16)

- 1. Daniel’s handling of the situation was with wisdom and composure (Vs. 14-15)
- 2. Daniel appeals to the king for time so that he can seek an answer from the Lord (Vs. 16). The king granted Daniel what he had refused the other wise men! There was something authentic about

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Daniel, something real. Here was a man on earth who was in touch with heaven. Behind the human dimension, the unseen hand of God was moving in this whole situation to bring about his purposes and plan.

B. The Appeal to the Heavenly Throne (Vs. 17-19)

There is rich instruction in these verses concerning prayer. Note six characteristics of their praying that brought about a Divine answer:

1. They prayed believingly (Vs. 16)
 - a. Daniel believed God would shew him the dream.
 - b. Prayers that get answered are faith filled prayers.
2. They prayed collectively (Vs. 17)
 - a. Daniel had true friends he could count on in times of crisis. A real friend is someone you can pray with in real life.
 - b. There is power in united prayer.
 - i. Matt. 18:19 *“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”*
 - ii. Acts 4:31 *“And when **they had prayed**, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”*
 - c. Challenge: How much do we value the collective prayer meetings of the church? When we come to those meetings, do we pray!?
3. They prayed fervently (Vs. 18a) (James 5:16)
4. They prayed reverently (Vs. 18b)
 - a. “the God of heaven” = God is Omnipresent but His special abode is in heaven. “Our Father which art in heaven”
 - b. We need to remember Who it is we are praying to.
5. They prayed pointedly (Vs. 18c)
 - a. They asked God for specific things expecting specific answers.
 - b. They prayed that God would reveal the dream and spare their lives. Trials can have the effect of sharpening our prayers to what is really needed.
6. They prayed effectively (Vs. 19)

III. The Praise of the Prophet (Vs. 19b-23)

A. The Person of God (Vs. 19-22)

1. His Name (Vs. 20a)
2. His Omniscience (wisdom) and Omnipotence (might) (Vs. 20b)
3. His Sovereignty (Vs. 21a)
 - a. Times & Seasons are in his hands – this includes the physical seasons as well as the movements of men and nations.

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- b. Kings and rulers are in his hands – governments and politics in God’s control
- 4. His Wisdom (Vs. 21a-22)
 - a. He is the source of wisdom
 - i. God is the creator of man’s intellect and is the ultimate source of all His genius. Therefore, God should receive all the glory for all that has been designed and developed by man.
 - ii. Illustration: The famed astronomer Johannes Kepler wisely said, “I was merely thinking God’s thoughts after him. Since we astronomers are priests of the highest God in regard to the book of nature, it benefits us to be thoughtful, not of the glory of our minds, but rather, above all else, of the glory of God.” (Cloud)
 - iii. Illustration: Bezaleel and the Tabernacle. Exodus 31:2-5 **“See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.*”**
 - b. He is the revealer of wisdom – *“The **secret** things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”* (Deut. 29:29). *“The **secret** of the Lord is with them that fear him...”* (Psalm 25:14) Think of the amazing things God has revealed to His people in His Word concerning His character, His workings in the affairs of men and ultimately, His glorious plan of salvation.
 - c. He is the possessor of all wisdom – God knows what is in the darkness. There is nothing hid from His all-seeing eyes! Psalm 139:12 *“Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”*

B. The Personal experience of God (Vs. 23)

1. Note the personal pronouns – ‘I’, ‘me’ & ‘us’. Daniel had personally experienced the supernatural workings of God in his life.
2. “wisdom and might” = Daniel’s prayer of praise commenced with this (Vs. 20). God is the possessor of all wisdom and might and had granted Daniel a supply of it!
3. “made known” = God had revealed His secret to Daniel. This was no ordinary dream. This was one of the most significant prophecies of the entire Bible.

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4. Summary: We praise God for the great truths concerning Himself generally then we praise Him for His Divine workings in our lives specifically.
5. Challenge: Do we stop to thank the Lord when He answers our prayers? How much time do we spend thanking Him for what He has accomplished in our lives? *“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”* (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21 & 31)

Conclusion:

1. Are you cultivating a life of prayer? Daniel didn't only pray in emergencies. Prayer was the heart beat of his daily life.
2. Is prayer your first or last resort in trials?
3. Do you thank the Lord for answered prayer? Do you glory in His wondrous Person?