

Putting Faith On The Line – Part 2

- Daniel 2:

- **George Washington once said, "Few men have the virtue to withstand the highest bidder." He was right. Most people have a price. A truly uncompromising man is a very rare commodity. But that is exactly the kind of a man and the kind of a woman that God looks for to do his work. God wants uncompromising people with character.**
- **Daniel was such a person. Daniel was a man who wouldn't compromise. Daniel was a man who had amazing character qualities. He was a young man that stood on the side of right even when the odds were not in his favor. God had a plan for Daniel's life, and in chapter 2 we begin to see that plan unfold.**

- We already mentioned last week the impeccable character of Daniel & the determination to not defile himself before God. This week we will begin our look into the amazing faith that Daniel portrayed throughout his life & how it began in a most unusual way.
- It's one thing to have strong faith when things are going well. It's another thing when the bottom has seemingly fallen out & your back is against the wall. That is the moment you need your faith to carry you through like never before & that's exactly what happened early on in the life of Daniel.

1. The Troubling Dream (2:1-11)

- As we begin this chapter, we have a very unfavorable situation that the King's wise associates, Daniel, & the Hebrew boys were placed in:
 1. Nebuchadnezzar has been plagued by dreams & these dreams have now come to a head here in chapter 2 & he wants an answer.
 2. Now its one thing to be able to tell him what his dream was, that in and of itself would be nearly impossible humanly speaking, but then he wants to know what the dream means.
 3. As if this pressure wasn't enough, his penalty for his astrologers' inability to respond in the way he had asked would be the total destruction of all of his best men and to level their homes ([2:5](#)).

2. The Dangerous Predicament (2:12-16)

- Nebuchadnezzar's anger is explosive at this time. He is in a fit of rage & nothing will quench his anger until these men are destroyed.
- He wanted this men to answer for their lack of information regarding his dream. Here's a problem though. Who else is included among this group of men? Daniel & his Hebrew friends.
- Even though they were still interns and not full-fledged "wise men," they were still included among those to be assassinated.
- And so Daniel reaches out to the King's Captain, Arioch, & inquires about the King's hasty response. Then Arioch explained the entire situation to Daniel.
- Then Daniel did something extraordinary. He said, "Allow me to go before the King & in time I will give him the interpretation of his dream if he will give me a chance."
 - Daniel apparently already had some sort of relationship with the King b/c you just don't request to see the King & expect that to happen. But Daniel was confident enough to come before him.
 - You say, "Well of course he did. He didn't have anything to lose." But that wasn't the reason behind his offer as we will see in the next verse.

3. The Source of His Power (2:17-23)

- This is a very difficult situation to be in & now their lives are literally hanging in the balance. Life has not been what they expected it to be up until this point, yet Daniel's faith never wavered.

- They had been uprooted from their homes.
- Forced to take on new names & new education.
- Now this King has threatened to take their lives unless someone comes up with an answer to his dream.
- We could argue tonight that their world had been turned upside down. We find them here in a bad situation, yet Daniel's faith continues to prevail.
- When we find ourselves in the midst of trouble, our world has been rocked, and we have been backed into a corner, how can we expect our faith to carry us through as it did for Daniel? What steps did he take that we can pattern our lives after?

a. He Got On His Knees

- i. Don't miss this crucial point. A lot of religious people would never say that prayer is not important, but often times they skip right over this important area.
- ii. When Daniel left the king's quarters, he wasted no time taking action. First, he hurriedly explained everything to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (2:17). Next, he called an urgent prayer meeting and asked them to join him in pleading "for mercy from the God of heaven" regarding the king's mysterious dreams.
- iii. We're not told how much time Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel, but in view of Daniel's urgent report and request for prayer, it may have been only twenty-four hours. These young men were living on borrowed time. Nebuchadnezzar's anger could explode into action at any moment. Daniel knew that if God did not immediately reveal both the dream and what it meant, he and his three friends were doomed to die "with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (2:18).
- iv. God honored these four young men's plea for mercy. He answered their prayers that very night. By morning, Daniel knew the dramatic details of the dream and what they actually meant.
- v. Church, if you follow after God & seek to serve Him, trouble may still come your way. But in the midst of persecution or trials, God give us the courage & the boldness to come before Him in prayer & seek His face. We too many times use God as a last resort instead of a first choice.
 - 1. Ask for help (plead for mercy). This is the point where we realize we cant fix our own problems or the problems of others.
 - 2. Tell God you are trusting in Him. You see we don't know God's time frame, when or if we will be delivered, but we are saying, "God, though I don't have the answers, I am trusting & waiting on you."
 - a. We often think God is about changing our situations, but He is not.
 - b. He is much more interested in changing our lives.
 - 3. Notice one other thing church under this point, though their lives were at stake, their focus was still on God.
 - a. They never allowed their circumstances to supersede their devotion or their focus on God.
 - b. Folks are often so devastated & disappointed by circumstances that they fail to focus on prayer, church, God's Word or anything else b/c the circumstance has their attention ... not God.

b. He Gave God His Praise

- i. Daniel still had to move quickly in this life-and-death situation. But before he reported the revelation and interpretation to the king, he paused long enough to lift his voice to God in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving (2:20-23).

- ii. When is the last time you thanked God for His blessings, answered prayer, His protection, for Him just meeting your needs?
 - 1. We finally get the answer to our prayers, God steps in & meets our need, and often times it goes unnoticed when it comes to our gratitude.
- iii. When God met his need, Daniel was quick to give God the praise.

4. The Interpretation Revealed & It's Consequences

- o God gives Daniel the interpretation & so Daniel asks to come before the King to deliver the meaning of his dream. But hang on ... the interpretation is not a good one for the King.
- o Daniel gets the answer to his prayer, but it is not what he expected. It's bad news for the King instead of good news. How will Daniel handle this?

a. The Interpretation (2:24-45)

- i. The Golden Head (Babylonian Empire – 605-539 BC)
 - 1. As the picture demonstrates Daniel reveals that the head of Gold was king Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. Daniel boldly explains that it was God who gave him his glorious kingdom and made him powerful and strong. Hearing these words was not only the king, but the exposed wise men of Babylon who represented the various gods of that nation. Daniel's word struck to the core of their man-made religions and exposed them as false.
 - 2. The truth of Daniel's statement was authenticated in the fact that he alone, who worshiped the true and living God was revealing to the king what his fake wise men could not do. Only God, Almighty had such power and it must have sent chills down the spines of the imposters.
 - 3. We need to remember that when God did miracles it was always to authenticate His word by demonstrating His power. God always did so in such a way that there could be no other explanation except that He was God and His word was true. We can be sure that the wise men of Babylon were greatly relieved that Daniel in revealing the dream and its interpretation was saving their very lives. We also can wonder what spiritual impact this had on them. We know that even though Nebuchadnezzar saw a miracle performed before him, at this time he did not truly believe. (See Daniel 4:28-34)
- ii. Silver Arms & Chest (Medo-Persian Empire – 539-331 BC)
 - 1. Daniel then explained that after king Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire would come another kingdom which would be inferior to him. This empire was lead by King Cyrus & later on King Darius.
- iii. Brass Belly & Thighs (Grecian Empire – 331-168 BC)
 - 1. Then there would be another kingdom that would follow which would be even more inferior of course we know later on was led by Alexander. Gold is the most precious and expensive of all metals and has the greatest splendor and brightness. Silver too is a valuable material, but it does not compare to gold in is value. Brass is a lesser metal than silver and iron, though useful, is cold and has little or no beauty within itself.
- iv. Iron Legs (Roman Empire – 168 BC-AD 476)
 - 1. Iron is the strongest of these metals and can easily break these more precious minerals. The fourth kingdom would be the strongest nation of the four & would be led by 6 different men.
- v. Iron & Clay Feet (Divided Kingdoms – AD 476-Our Lord's Return)

1. Interestingly, it is a fact that this great image of the kingdoms of the world had a weak foundation represented by the feet of iron and clay. Iron mixed with clay loses its strength and is easily broken up.
 2. We also understand that because this fifth kingdom is made of iron mixed with clay that it is a weakened extension of the nation of iron. This will be explained in detail further later.
 3. Note that more explanation is given to the description of this last kingdom. Daniel 2:42, reveals that the meaning of the mixture of iron and clay is a reference to the people of this kingdom who will be politically divided which makes it weak.
- vi. The Stone (The Revelation of the Coming Millennial Kingdom)
Daniel 2:44-45
1. Daniel then reveals that God will set up a new kingdom and eternal kingdom which shall not be destroyed. Note this coming and eternal kingdom is not associated with any metal. The scope of this kingdom will be global and include all the peoples of the earth. This kingdom will consume all the fallible kingdoms of men and twice in this verse it is declared to be eternal.
 2. Nebuchadnezzar's attention at this point in Daniel's interpretation is again focus on the stone that was supernaturally cut out of a mountain. This great stone will break into pieces all the previous empires. Clearly this is a reference to the coming King of Kings, our Almighty God and Savior Jesus the Christ.

b. Nebuchadnezzar's Response (2:46)

- i. The scene that is now described seems to be impossible, because we have the greatest king on earth, the powerful monarch of Babylon falling on his face and worshipping Daniel. It must have been a powerful moment as the king's court witnesses the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar, who holds the power of life and death over all his nation, is bowing prostrate before a Hebrew captive.
- ii. Nebuchadnezzar then made a public statement that must have overwhelmed Daniel, his three friends, and all of his own wise men: "Surely your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery" (2:47).
- iii. God through this dream revealed Himself to Nebuchadnezzar. However, as Daniel reveals in the following chapters the king really had not submitted himself to God. He saw God's power first hand, but he had not yet accept the truth that God, who had sent the dream and Daniel to interpret it, was the only God.
- iv. He heard Daniel earlier say that it was God who had put him on the throne of Babylon, but Nebuchadnezzar clearly did not believe that God was the only God. Because of pride, Nebuchadnezzar did not see or would not believe that God was the Supreme and only God the Creator of the Universe. But God was not through with Nebuchadnezzar and would demonstrate His power to him several more times and eventually completely humble the king.
- v. Nebuchadnezzar presented this young man with "many gifts" and then promoted him to "a high position" in the kingdom. In fact, "he made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon" & his Hebrew friends as key advisors.