

Message #1062
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"I HAD A DREAM"
{Daniel 2}
Trinity Presbyterian Church
August 8, 2004

INTRODUCTION

We have before us this morning one of the most fascinating prophecies in the entire Bible.

...we need to be reminded of God's prophetic word

...it is through prophecy that we gain hope

The writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote...

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son..." {Hebrews 1:1-2a}

Those words are interesting in light of Daniel's remarks to King Nebuchadnezzar upon receiving revelation from God concerning the king's dream...

"He {God} has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come...O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen..." {Daniel 2:28b,29}

Therefore, as admonished by Peter, we would...

"...do well to pay attention to the word of the prophets, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." {I Peter 1:29-21}

CRISES IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PALACE

"In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers to tell him what he

had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them: 'I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means!'"

Why should Nebuchadnezzar be so troubled by his dreams?

...he had enormous power and wealth

...he was popular...respected...feared

...and his word was never questioned

...never was his will disputed!

Yet, night after night he is haunted by these terrible nightmarish dreams.

...and day after day he is troubled

...he didn't understand the meaning

...the interpretation was out of his control

...he became morose...given to fits of anger and gloom

...it was making a monster out of him.

He summons those whom he felt should be able to give meaning to these dreams...

"If you show tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So, tell me the dream and interpret it for me!"

And...if they could not comply "they would be cut to pieces and their houses turned into piles of rubble!"

...he is so desperate

He threatens them yet a second time...

"If you do not tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you." His counselors responded that what he was asking was unreasonable...

"There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."

Exasperated, the scripture says...

"This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon!"

Believe it or not, Nebuchadnezzar helps us to explain some of our present day individual and domestic tragedies.

...he is an example of the deep-hidden sense of insecurity that drives people to drink

...to an inordinate pursuit of pleasure

...irrational anger

...erratic behavior towards friends and family

QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE ANSWERED

Mixed-up with all of Nebuchadnezzar's subconscious questions about the stability of his empire were all the other questions raised every day by ordinary people like you and me...

...What is the purpose of life and existence?

...What's it all about and where will it end?

...Why does there come to me, too, at the very best and highest moments of my life, the strange disturbing thought that even this might be the material of tragedy?

...Why is so much that is good and beautiful marked so deeply and indelibly with clear signs of instability and frailty?

Nebuchadnezzar's dilemma reminds us that when WE are faced with the same kind of problems that were troubling him, we too have nothing within the world of our own thought, conscious, or subconscious, be it a dream, or a question, or a tentative philosophy of life, that can lead us towards the answer that our heart cries out for!

My point is this: All the insight and wisdom we seek MUST come from a SOURCE quite other than ourselves, and we NEED around us not only those who are experts on answering human questions; but also, those who can put us in touch with the WISDOM that is entirely from beyond!

DANIEL THE MEDIATOR

One man becomes the key to resolving Nebuchadnezzar's dilemma--Daniel.

...where others felt hopeless

...Daniel took action

Daniel steps into the breach, and finds that God gives him the wisdom and power to control the situation! Others relied upon their own knowledge! Daniel relied upon Almighty God for his wisdom!

Others were out of touch with anything/anyone beyond themselves!

Daniel was in touch with a God who works miracles.

He pleads earnestly with his three companions not to let him--or the cause of God--down by ceasing to pray!

"Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

"He returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends: Hananiah, Michael, 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. During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel

in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven...

"...I praise You, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, You have made known to me what we asked of you, You have made known to us the dream of the king!"

When the answer comes to Daniel he breaks out into spontaneous praise and thanksgiving to God!

...the answer came just in time

...he had been confident that his God would grant him what he requested {why he went to the king}

...he trusted in the God who had NEVER failed him

...and the God who NEVER fails us!

"TAKE ME TO THE KING...I WILL INTERPRET THE DREAM FOR HIM!"

"Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, 'I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.'

"The king asked Daniel, 'Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?'

"Daniel replied, 'No wise man, enchanter, magician, or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, 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 lay on your bed are these...'"

...and Daniel proceeds to describe what Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream

"You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

"This was the dream...now we will interpret it to the king..."

Nebuchadnezzar's dream gives a sketch of one aspect of the whole course of history as it culminates in the Kingdom of God.

...Daniel makes it clear that his is a revelation from God

...he was as incapable as Nebuchadnezzar's fortune tellers in and of himself--but with God ALL things are possible!

...the answer came only after the intercessory prayers of Daniel and his three friends.

THE INTERPRETATION

The statue represents four earthly empires--each inferior to the other...

1. The Head of Gold--Nebuchadnezzar--the Babylonian Empire
 2. The Chest and Arms of Silver--Media-Persian Empire--led by Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede.
 3. The Belly and Thighs of Brass--Greek Empire--Alexander the Great
 4. The Legs and Feet of Iron and Clay--the Roman Empire led by Caesar Augustus
- ...Rome divided into two kingdoms {two legs}
...The Empire degenerated into ten kingdoms {ten toes}
...eventually overrun by Barbarians in 476 A.D.

One cannot help but notice that the statue is top heavy--from the head of gold to feet of iron and clay.

...it's unstable
...as is Nebuchadnezzar's empire is unstable
...its weakness is of the legs and feet
There was a tradition current in the world of Nebuchadnezzar's day that human history would consist of four great ages...
...each succeeding would be less happy than the preceding
...each would be characterized by a series of metals--each of lesser value than the other
No doubt Nebuchadnezzar knew this myth and it may be what provoked his dreams.

THE DRAMATIC ENDING

"A ROCK was cut out, but NOT by human hands and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them..."

...the statue topples

...the wind carries away the remnant of the empires

"BUT THE ROCK THAT STRUCK THE STATUE BECAME A HUGE MOUNTAIN AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH!"

There is yet another empire...kingdom...that is yet future. Daniel describes this to King Nebuchadnezzar...

"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. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what WILL take place in the future.

THE DREAM IS TRUE and the INTERPRETATION IS TRUSTWORTHY!"

Note: Daniel doesn't focus on the decline of the four empires--he fixes Nebuchadnezzar's mind on the INEVITABILITY of the coming AND TRIUMPH of the KINGDOM OF GOD!

CONCLUSION

The stone is none other than Christ and His Kingdom!

...He broke into history as God incarnate

...the One who came to Serve

...to seek...and to save

He will return in great triumph--King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The remnant of the ten toes still exist...what was prophesied is happening before our eyes..."In the time of those kings..."

...the amalgamation of the nations of Europe

...a common currency--the EURO

The stage is being set for history's next great historic event--the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream gives significance to Jesus birth, death, resurrection, and of His coming again.

Empires rise...empires fall...!

God's Kingdom will never end!

The Christ who came in humility will return in majesty.

The Christ who came to serve will come to be worshiped

And when He returns--every knee will bow...every tongue confess that He is Lord!

Isaiah also prophesies of this great event...

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from His roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him--the Spirit of wisdom and of

understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord--and He will delight in the fear of the Lord.

"He will not judge by what He sees with His eyes, or decide by what He hears with His ears; but with righteousness He will judge the needy, with justice He will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth; with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

"Righteousness will be His belt, and faithfulness the sash around His waist.

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; an a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the vipers nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

"IN THAT DAY THE ROOT OF JESSE WILL STAND AS A BANNER FOR THE PEOPLES; THE NATIONS WILL RALLY TO HIM, AND HIS PLACE OF REST WILL BE GLORIOUS..."
{ Isaiah 11: 1-10}

John records the voices of the multitudes crying out... "Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to Your name? For You alone are holy. ALL NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU Babylonians, Medes/Persians; Greeks; Romans....} FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED!"
{ Revelation 15: 3b-4}

And Nebuchadnezzar responded to Daniel: "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery!"