

## Evangelical Free Church of Keokuk

Daniel 2:1-45

05/28/2017

### Main Point

We can have faith that God knows the future and trust Him to handle our tomorrow.

### Commentary

#### Daniel 2:1-45

2:1. Nebuchadnezzar's dreams took place in the second year of his reign, which might appear to conflict with the claim that Daniel's three-year training program (1:5) began in Nebuchadnezzar's first year (1:1). However, by Babylonian reckoning Daniel's second year of training occurred during what was considered the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (604-603 b.c.; see note at 1:1 about reckoning time). Therefore, the king sought interpretation of his dreams in 602 b.c., shortly after Daniel had completed his three-year education.

2:2. The Hebrew word for sorcerers comes from an Akkadian word that can also mean witchcraft. Chaldeans is both a general ethnic term for the Babylonian people and, as used here, a specific term for priests who served as astrologers, soothsayers, and wise men in the king's government.

2:5. Some versions translate the phrase my word is final as "the dream is forgotten." It is better to translate it as referring to the certainty and finality of the king's demand. Nebuchadnezzar withheld the facts of the dream not because he could not remember them but because he wanted to test his wise men.

2:11. This candid confession by the wise men admits that despite all their incantations, magic, and astrology, they were not capable of receiving supernatural revelation.

2:12. Wise men is a general term for all the king's counselors, who gained their knowledge through occult practices.

2:13. Daniel and his friends were subject to execution because they were in the class of wise men; they had not participated in any of the discussions with the king.

2:18. This mystery refers to a secret that can only be known by divine revelation.

2:20-23. Daniel's song of praise includes the two key ideas of the chapter: First, that God is sovereign over the political affairs of humanity because He removes kings and establishes kings. Second, that God alone

can give revelation by giving wisdom to the wise and by revealing the deep... hidden things, even the king's mystery that had stumped the wise men.

2:27. Daniel asserted that no pagan soothsayer could solve the mystery. Rather, he attributed revelation to God alone. The word translated astrologer expresses the idea of cutting or determining, referring to a person who is able to determine another's fate.

2:28. In the last days indicates that the king's dream would find its complete fulfillment only in the end times.

2:31-45. Daniel interpreted the parts of the colossal statue to represent four empires in historical succession. The head represented the kingdom of Babylon (605-539 b.c.). The chest and arms symbolized the Medo-Persian Empire (539-331 b.c.). The stomach and thighs stood for the Greek Empire (331-146 b.c.). The legs referred to the Roman Empire (146 b.c.- a.d. 1476 in the West and 1453 in the East). The feet were mixed of iron and clay and represented a future continuation or revival of Rome. The material of each section of the statue decreased in value but increased in strength. Daniel also described a stone that would shatter the final kingdom and grow into a mountain that filled the whole earth. This "stone" is the kingdom of God.

Some view the never ending kingdom as a spiritual kingdom, embodied in the church, which gradually conquered the Roman Empire. Others more accurately view it as a future kingdom, when Messiah Jesus will return and establish His physical rule that will govern the whole earth and never be destroyed.

## Introduction

*AS YOUR GROUP TIME BEGINS, USE THIS SECTION TO INTRODUCE THE TOPIC OF DISCUSSION.*

Do you remember the panic surrounding Y2K? Did you do anything at all to prepare for it?

What is the craziest thing you have ever seen someone do to prepare for the future? What do you do to prepare for the future?

How does the way you invest your time, money, and resources for the future demonstrate your faith and trust in God?

Some people have bomb shelters, weapons stockpiles and Twinkie stashes as their fall back plan for an uncertain future. Most people have emergency funds, savings accounts, or 401(k) plans to prepare for what lies ahead. The way we prepare for the future demonstrates where our faith lies. If we place our faith only in wealth and money as opposed to God, we are not prepared. Just as Daniel did in Daniel 2, we must place our faith in God knowing that He will handle tomorrow.

## Understanding

*UNPACK THE BIBLICAL TEXT TO DISCOVER WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS OR MEANS ABOUT A PARTICULAR TOPIC.*

Have a volunteer read **Daniel 2:1-16**.

How did the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and Chaldeans respond to Nebuchadnezzar's request? What happened when they could not tell the king his dream? What did they have faith in?

Why couldn't these "wise men" interpret the dream?

The magicians, sorcerers, and other wise men placed their faith in themselves. They believed they could interpret the dream, but found themselves in trouble when Nebuchadnezzar would not tell them the dream. They did not have the power or the ability to know the king's dream so he promised to kill them.

Have a volunteer read **Daniel 2:17-23**.

What would have happened to Daniel if he could not discover the king's dream?

How did Daniel approach his uncertain future? What must Daniel have believed about God to make an appointment with the king?

What did Daniel do when God revealed the dream? How do you respond when God works in your life?

Just like the wise men, Daniel faced death if he could not tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream. Daniel approached his perilous future by having faith in God to reveal the dream. When God revealed the dream, Daniel worshipped Him.

Have a volunteer read **Daniel 2:24-30**.

Describe Daniel's conversation with Nebuchadnezzar. Where did Daniel give credit for the ability to discern dreams?

Why did Daniel give the credit to God instead of keeping credit for himself? How often do you give credit to God?

Daniel approached the king with confidence because of his faith in God. Daniel proclaimed that God gave him the knowledge of the dream. He did not seek credit for himself. Daniel knew that it was the work of God that had revealed the dream, and he trusted in God not in his own greatness.

Have a volunteer read **Daniel 2:31-45**.

What did King Nebuchadnezzar's dream mean? What is the kingdom that will last forever?

The dream that Daniel interpreted focused on kingdoms: the power of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and a future greater kingdom that would never end. Daniel's interpretation was looking to Jesus Christ, who would institute a new kingdom and whose reign would never end.

## Application

*HELP YOUR GROUP IDENTIFY HOW THE TRUTHS FROM THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE APPLY DIRECTLY TO THEIR LIVES.*

How does uncertainty about the future cause anxiety or fear in your life?

What does it look like today to have the same faith that Daniel had in God when facing an uncertain future?

What is a step of faith you need to take this week?

How can remembering the cross and resurrection of Jesus give you confidence as you face the future?

## Pray

Close in prayer, asking God to help your group trust Him more this week. Pray that you would not worry about the future, but have faith in God who reveals dreams and the future.