



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 8



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

DANIEL BOLDLY STANDS BEFORE THE KING

Dan 2:24-30 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation. ²⁵ Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. ²⁶ The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? ²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; ²⁸ But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; ²⁹ As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. ³⁰ But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. ^{KJV} (Daniel 2:24-30)

INTRODUCTION

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah have received the answer to their prayer. They have petitioned the God of heaven for “mercies” to know “the king’s matter,” and He has graciously responded

during the night. Daniel has not only been given to know what Nebuchadnezzar dreamed, he has been granted the understanding of its meaning. Additionally, confidence and boldness

have been given to him, for they will be required to stand before the king and make known what God has shown to him. It is the nature of faith to appropriate confidence as well as insight, and

The Time Comes for Daniel to Make Known to the King What God Has Made Known Unto Him, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ BRING ME TO THE KING! (2:24)
- ▶ I HAVE FOUND A MAN (2:25)
- ▶ ARE YOU ABLE? (2:26)
- ▶ A SOLEMN REMINDER (2:27)
- ▶ THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN(2:28a)
- ▶ HE THAT REVEALS SECRETS (2:28b-29)
- ▶ IT HAS BEEN REVEALED TO ME (2:30)

assurance as well as understanding. Faith is like a key that unlocks the Divine treasury, then grants the ability to appropriate its riches.

PERCEPTION AND ENDURANCE

In accordance with the nature of faith, Daniel has blessed the God of heaven, confessing Him to be the source of all wisdom and might. His prayer reflected the understanding of faith, for faith enables those possessing it to more fully comprehend the Source of the blessing, as well as the blessing itself. Thus it is written that Moses *“endured, as seeing Him who is invisible”* (Heb 11:27). **The idea is that his endurance was traceable to his perception of the Lord.** The NIV appropriately reads, *“he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible.”*

Daniel’s boldness and confidence was produced by His understanding of the Lord. In answer to the prayer of Daniel and his companions, God had made known *“the king’s matter”* – what he dreamed, and what it meant. An even greater light, however, was focused upon the Lord Himself. This is the first prayer recorded in the book of Daniel. We also have in this text the first insightful verbalization of the glory of God.

- ▶ Wisdom is God’s.
- ▶ Might is God’s.
- ▶ God changes times.
- ▶ God changes seasons.
- ▶ God removes kings.

- ▶ God sets up kings.
- ▶ God gives wisdom to the wise.
- ▶ God gives knowledge to those with understanding.
- ▶ He reveal’s deep and secret things.
- ▶ God knows what is in the darkness.
- ▶ Light dwells with God.

I am suggesting those insights accompanied the revelation of the dream sent to Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation. **The boldness and confidence Daniel now possesses does not come because he has comprehended the “king’s matter,” but because he has perceived the Lord of glory.**

A Principle

Here is a principle in the Kingdom of God: **faith has more to do with God Himself than circumstance. Illumination shines the greater light upon the Lord, and the lesser light upon circumstance.** This is the meaning of that beautiful Psalmic expression: *“For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light”* (Psa 36:9). This very reality was fulfilled in Daniel. It was in the light of who God is that Daniel was shown the king’s dream and its meaning.

GOD INTRUDES IN HUMAN AFFAIRS

Daniel has insightfully confessed that God intrudes into the domain of time. He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets them up. He does not ask their consent to do so. That circumstance not only involves His power and wisdom, it is His nature. This is not merely what God CAN do, but what He DOES. **There has never been a period human history when God did not make changes in times and seasons.**

BEFORE THE LAW

- ▶ In the Garden (Gen 3:24).
- ▶ In dealing with Cain (Gen 4:14-16).
- ▶ In the flood (Gen 6-8).

- ▶ In the plains of Shinar (Gen 11).
- ▶ In the calling of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).
- ▶ In the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19).
- ▶ In the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex 12).

DURING THE LAW

- ▶ The giving of the Law (Ex 19-20).
- ▶ During the time of Gideon (Judges 6).
- ▶ In the reigns of David and Solomon (2 Sam 5:10.; 1 Chron 11:9; 1 Kgs 4:21,24).
- ▶ In the Babylonian captivity (Jer 20:4; 25:11).

AFTER THE LAW

- ▶ In the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:15-17, 67-80).
- ▶ In the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:20).
- ▶ In the death of Jesus (Heb 2:14).
- ▶ In the resurrection of Jesus (Rom 1:4).
- ▶ In the ascension and enthronement of Jesus (Eph 4:8; Phil 2:9).
- ▶ On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
- ▶ In the acceptance of the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).

GOD HAS NOT CHANGED

There are still people – devoutly religious people – who struggle with the level of involvement God has among the sons of men. There is a prominent strain of theology that affirms the age of Divine intrusion into the affairs of men either exists no longer, or is vastly restricted, as compared to previous ages. Nothing in the Scriptures remotely suggests that the God of heaven has experienced a change of nature – **and a cessation of Divine working necessarily requires a change in Divine character.**

If anything, God has increased His involvements with those who are in Christ Jesus. Ponder the promises that require His intervention in human affairs.

- ▶ God gives us our daily bread (Matt 6:11).

THIS IS NOT MERELY WHAT GOD CAN DO, BUT WHAT HE DOES. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A PERIOD HUMAN HISTORY WHEN GOD DID NOT MAKE CHANGES IN TIMES AND SEASONS.

- ▶ God leads not into temptation but delivers from evil (Matt 6:13).
- ▶ He is working all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28).
- ▶ He causes us always to triumph in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 2:14).
- ▶ He makes His children increase and abound in love toward one another (1 Thess 3:12).
- ▶ Believers are taught by God to love one another (1 Thess 4:9).
- ▶ God Himself directs the way of His people (1 Thess 3:11).
- ▶ He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and reserve the unjust until the day of judgment (2 Pet 2:9).

- ▶ It is God who works in believers both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil 2:13).
- ▶ The God of peace works in us that which is well pleasing in His sight (Heb 13:20-21).
- ▶ The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry (Psa 34:15).
- ▶ In the various capacities of the body of Christ, *“it is the same God which worketh all in all”* (1 Cor 12:6).

FAITH PRESUMES AN ACTIVE GOD

Faith in God presumes a working, active God – else faith could yield no true benefit. In fact, I know of nothing in the word or concept of *“faith”* that allows for an idle or inactive God. Phrases like *“the*

eyes of the Lord” (Zech 4:10; 1 Pet 3:12), *“the arm of the Lord”* (Isa 51:9; John 12:38), and *“the face of the Lord”* (1 Pet 3:12), **presume Divine activity**. It is right to expect God to work in the behalf of His people, and to be involved with them.

Daniel and his companions prayed to a God they knew could DO something. They were not motivated by a system of religious persuasions or pattern of theology, but by the persuasion of a living God. **Today, that same persuasion will move people to seek the Lord, asking Him for things they sorely need, yet do not yet possess.** We are urged to make our requests known to God (Phil 4:6-7). Daniel did, so can you!

BRING ME TO THE KING!

“²⁴ Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of

understanding. He is now ready to stand before the king.

DANIEL GOES TO ARIOCH

“Therefore Daniel went in unto

has maintained his grasp of the situation. We do not know if Arioch was stationed in some area in which the wise men were being destroyed, or if he was located in the palace of the king. But Daniel made it his business to know where the one *“ordained to destroy the wise men in Babylon”* was located. His own life, as well as those of his companions depended upon him knowing the location of Arioch. **Spiritual wisdom does not ignore practical matters.**

It is important to note that Daniel did not go *“in unto Arioch”* until he had *“answered”* the revelation given him by blessing God.

Note, Daniel does not take it upon himself to barge into the presence of the king. Instead, he goes to Arioch, whom I am sure he realized had immediate access to the king. At this point, the faith of Daniel again becomes very evident. He is not fearful that Arioch may misrepresent him or deny his request. God had begun a good work in Arioch, and Daniel sensed the Lord would carry it through. He will follow proper protocol, giving honor to whom honor is due, all the while trusting in the Lord. You should know from your own experience that a great of peace and calmness is required to proceed in such a manner. It is ever true, *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose*

TOO OFTEN THE CONDUCT OF THE PROFESSED CHURCH HAS LED PEOPLE TO BELIEVE SERVING GOD CAUSES A PERSON TO BECOME IGNORANT IN PRACTICAL MATTERS. THIS IS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO THE ERRONEOUS CONCLUSION THAT FAITH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ISSUES OF DAILY LIFE.

Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation.” Having blessed the Lord, Daniel’s spirit is now charged with Divine power. The human spirit is effected by fellowship with God and spiritual illumination. Those with faith can stand before those who seek to destroy them. They can give satisfactory explanations to a king who is angry. By faith, and through the reception of *“mercies”* from the Lord, Daniel is bold, confident, knowledgeable, wise, and

Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon.” It is not by coincidence that an emphasis is made of Arioch’s current role in the kingdom: *“ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon,”* among whom Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are numbered. Thus we see that *“the weapon that is formed against”* Daniel will not prosper (Isa 54:17).

Note that Daniel knows where to find Arioch. Knowing its importance, He

mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa 26:3).

An Observation

This is an aspect of faith we do well to ponder. **Too often the conduct of the professed church has led people to believe serving God causes a person to become ignorant in practical matters.** This is a contributing factor to the erroneous conclusion that faith has nothing to do with the issues of daily life. All manner of foolishness has been flaunted in the face of the world by those who wear the name of Jesus. It ranges from domestic disturbance to financial instability. People profess to know God, yet do not apparently know how to handle daily challenges and inconveniences.

It is not my intention to cast aspersions at such people, for I have difficulties in practical matters also. What I do want you to consider is that such conditions do not need to continue. How would Daniel have fared if he fell apart during a crisis, or could not maintain a grasp of critical situations? **Faith widens our vision, it does not restrict it.** It enables us to be more discerning, not less discerning. I challenge you to call faith into a more prominent role in your daily life.

This account of Daniel testifies to the effectiveness of such a faith. On a given day, without being expected, Daniel faced the king’s chief executioner. His life, and that of his companions, was in the balance. Yet, faith had made him ready. He knew how to respond to the confrontation. He knew what to tell the king. He knew how to tell his companions. He knew how they ought to pray. He knew how to respond to heaven’s answer. And now, he knows how to speak to Arioch, an executioner with a kingly mandate.

DESTROY NOT THE WISE MEN

“He went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon . . .” Here was a word that directly contradicted the word of the king. The king *“commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon”* (2:12). Arioch had been *“ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon.”* Now Daniel says, *“Destroy **not** the wise men of Babylon.”* **It surely required boldness and confidence to say such words!**

It is evident that the destruction was already under way. Arioch surely would not have delayed to immediately carry out the word of the angry king. He knew full well that he had been appointed to carry out the word of Nebuchadnezzar. The very mandate he had received testified to the total intolerance of the king for insubordination, or a failure to do precisely what he said.

If this is evident to us, it must have been even more evident to Daniel. Yet, faith enables him to rise above the seeming impossibility of the situation. He in effect says, *“Do not do what you have been commissioned to do by the sovereign of Babylon!”*

This word was not spoken because of any great love Daniel had for the wise men of Babylon. They were worshipers of

Daniel does not ask that Arioch represent him, but that he himself be brought before the king. **Faith does not balk at standing before dignitaries.** Joseph stood before Pharaoh under much the same circumstances as Daniel now stands (Gen 41:14-39). Moses stood before Pharaoh to order him to release the people of God (Eph 5:1-20). Paul boldly stood before Felix (Acts 24:24-25), Agrippa (Acts 26:1-18), and even Caesar (Acts 25:21; 27:24).

Faith Dissolves Timidity

Faith can dissolve timidity, bringing godly courage to stand and speak what God has shown to the individual. Every aspiring preacher and teacher should be regularly reminded of this. Even those with no earthly credentials can, if motivated by faith, duly impress those who have them all. As

FAITH WIDENS OUR VISION, IT DOES NOT RESTRICT IT. IT ENABLES US TO BE MORE DISCERNING, NOT LESS DISCERNING. I CHALLENGE YOU TO CALL FAITH INTO A MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE.

false gods, and some of them derived their information from the rulers of the darkness of this world. Yet, even under the Old Covenant, Daniel, like his God, had *“no pleasure in the death of the wicked”* (Ezek 33:11). The man of God did not take personally the failure of the wise men, desiring that they pay the penalty for bringing a sentence of death upon Daniel and his companions. He lived out loving one’s enemies by asking for them to be spared. Surely, he is a noble example for us all.

BRING ME BEFORE THE KING

“ . . . bring me in before the king.” Daniel makes no attempt to barge into the presence of the king. He that believes *“shall not make haste”* (Isa 28:16). **Faith moves him to know how to make known the knowledge and understanding that has been given to him.** There is a wisdom in faith that is most remarkable. It is as though faith is a wide channel through which needed resources are funneled into both the heart and mind.

it is written, *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus”* (Acts 4:13).

Even though Daniel had previously impressed the king with his wisdom and understanding (1:20), he was not well known to the king. He could not come into the king’s presence upon the basis of his reputation or familiarity with him. Like converted Saul of Tarsus, another had to speak in his behalf (Acts 9:26-27). Faith, of course, is humble, and will accept such requirements.

I WILL SHOW THE INTERPRETATION

“ . . . and I will show unto the king the interpretation.” Notice how Daniel states the case. He says he will deliver the interpretation, not the dream, to the king. As we will see, Daniel told the king both the dream itself and the interpretation.

However, here he emphasizes the interpretation, which is what the wise men of Babylon said they could NOT deliver unless the king told them his

dream.

When Daniel had previously appeared before Nebuchadnezzar, he

promised he “*he would show the king the interpretation*” of his dream (2:16). That was at the heart of what Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know.

I HAVE FOUND A MAN

“²⁵ *Then Arioch brought in* | complexity of the situation before us. Four

LET NO PERSON, REGARDLESS OF THE ADVERSE CONDITIONS AROUND THEM, OR THE HOPELESSNESS OF THEIR SITUATION, IMAGINE THAT GOD CANNOT BRING GOOD OUT OF IT! MEN MAY MEAN THINGS FOR EVIL, BUT GOD, MEANING THEM FOR GOOD, WILL TURN THEM TO YOUR ADVANTAGE!

Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.” God is in this whole matter, manipulating the circumstances and turning hearts in order to the revelation of His good pleasure. Confronted with an executioner from the king of Babylon, Daniel has known how to respond appropriately. He has been granted an audience with the king, who has granted time for Daniel to gain knowledge from the Most High. Daniel and his three friends have been moved to pray, asking for mercies, which the Lord delights to give. Their prayer has been answered, and God has been praised and lauded for it. Daniel has known how to address the one sent to destroy the wise men of Babylon. Now, with swift dispatch, Arioch, the one sent to destroy the wise men, brings one of them to the king.

The Remarkable Circumstances

This is not the result of mere human ingenuity. God has been working in Daniel “*both to will and to do of His own good pleasure*” (Phil 2:13). We are witnessing the outworking of Divine purpose, and the manner in which the Lord fulfills His will. Ponder the

captives are in Babylon. The king over Babylon rules the entire world. The wise men of the empire, because of their failure, have been condemned to death by the king. The mandate has gone out, and the slaughter is under way. Daniel and his friends are ignorant of the whole situation, learning of it when an executioner turns up at their dwelling.

Add to this scenario that Israel is being chastened by the Lord, and that the chastening, intended to be seventy years long, has just begun. Everything is against Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. They have been officially classified among a group of people that have been condemned to death. How can anything good come out of these circumstances? Ah, you of tender heart, God can manage these circumstances, bringing an advantage to Daniel, and vaulting him into prominence in the midst of them all. A condemned wise man who trusts in the Lord will live and not die.

Let no person, regardless of the adverse conditions around them, or the hopelessness of their situation, imagine that God cannot bring good out of it! Men may mean things for evil, but God, meaning them for good, will turn them to

your advantage! This is not theological speculation, but is being declared with great power in this very text.

BROUGHT TO THE KING IN HASTE

“*Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste . . .*” When Arioch went out, he was the one giving the orders. Now he is receiving orders, and following the word of one he was sent to kill. Is that not a marvelous thing of itself?

Why In Haste?

Men may speculate why Arioch quickly brought Daniel to the king. Perhaps it was because he was glad to stop the slaughter he had begun. Perhaps he was elated that someone who could give the king what he desired had been found. Maybe he did so because he sensed how glad the king would be to hear the explanation desired so intensely. It is possible he considered how angry the king would be if his sentence was not carried out with dispatch. Thus he brought Daniel quickly, knowing if the king was displeased he could get back to the slaughter quickly.

In my judgment, such speculations yield no satisfaction for the heart. The “*haste*” of Arioch was driven from above, not beneath. God was in this whole matter, bringing things to a conclusion that would give glory to Him, and yield great comfort and encouragement to His people through the ages. **Once the answer from God is received, there is no further justification for delay!** To borrow an expression from David, “*the king’s business required haste*” (1 Sam 21:80).

I HAVE FOUND A MAN

“*. . . and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.*” Bringing Daniel to the king with haste, Arioch declares he

has found a man who can grant the king what he desires.

I Have Found

It must sound strange for the chief of the executioners to say he had found a qualified man. That certainly is not the mission on which the king had sent him. He was sent out “to slay the wise men of Babylon” (verse 14). Now he enters the king’s presence with a message that sounds as though he made an earnest effort to find someone who could interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

From a human point of view, Arioch must introduce Daniel in such a way as will not leave the king wondering why his sovereign commission was not being carried out. From the higher perspective, God is no doubt putting words in Arioch’s mouth that will subdue an outburst of wrath. God can do such a thing, and is frequently said to do so.

- ▶ **BALAAM.** “And the LORD put a word in Balaam’s mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak” (Num 23:5,16).
- ▶ **ISRAEL.** “And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people” (Isa 51:16).
- ▶ **ISRAEL.** “As for me, this is My covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Isa 59:21).
- ▶ **JEREMIAH.** “Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer 1:9).
- ▶ **APOSTLES.** “For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say”^{NKJV} (Luke 12:12).

Viewing the activities of men from the Lord’s point of view, Solomon wrote,

“The **preparations of the heart** in man, and **the answer of the tongue**, is from the LORD” (Prov 16:1). Arioch no doubt had a personal reason for addressing the king as he did. But over and above his objectives, the purpose of God was being served. We are beholding HOW God works things together for the good of His people. He enables His people to have appropriate responses. He can incline the hearts of those who would harm them to listen. He can move Arioch

advantage now. **Now, in the presence of a king, last known for being angry, being a captive Jew was far more advantageous than being a Babylonian wise man.**

It is an invariable trait of the wisdom of the world that it proves vastly inferior in the hour of crisis. However highly it may be esteemed, you will learn by experience that it fails you when you need it the most. It is during

WE ARE BEHOLDING HOW GOD WORKS THINGS TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE. HE ENABLES HIS PEOPLE TO HAVE APPROPRIATE RESPONSES. HE CAN INCLINE THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO WOULD HARM THEM TO LISTEN.

to bring Daniel to the king swiftly. And He can move Arioch to speak words that will assuage the anger of the king.

Of the Captives of Judah

“I have found a man of the captives of Judah.” The chief executioner does not say one of the wise men has the answer, but that one of the “captives of Judah” has it. These are words “fitly spoken,” and will **not** further arouse the anger of the king. When Nebuchadnezzar sees Daniel, he will not make an immediate association with the condemned wise men, but will more readily recall how impressed he was with Daniel when he tested him.

Also, this introduction will further promote humility in Daniel, moving him to rely upon his identity with God rather than with the elite wise men of Babylon. Daniel had gained infinitely more from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, than from the teachers of Babylon. His tutelage under the Law of God brought far more advantage than the language and literature of the Chaldeans. All of these advantages are summoned up by the reference to “Judah.”

While at one time it may have been very prestigious to be counted among this distinguished group, it was no

such times that it becomes more evident to the believer that it is far better to be related to God than to have the best the world has to offer.

The Interpretation

“ . . . that will make known unto the king the interpretation.” There is no indication that Daniel told Arioch what God had revealed to him. He only said he would tell the king the dream and its interpretation. But Arioch does not doubt the word of Daniel. Risking his own life, he tells the king Daniel will make known the interpretation of his troubling dream. He appears to have no doubts, even though he will surely be put to death if Daniel fails. How is it that he can speak with such seeming confidence. It is not merely because he cares for Daniel. That is not sufficient reason to risk his own life. Even Ashpenaz was unwilling to risk his life for the sake of Daniel, even though God had given Daniel favor in his sight (1:9-10). The executioner does not have one mote of evidence that Daniel can interpret the king’s dream, except for the word of Daniel himself. Arioch’s bold words were pushed through his lips by the Lord. Heaven was in charge of this situation, not Nebuchadnezzar or Arioch!

In contemporary use, the word “interpretation” is not a strong word. It is

often associated with a private view, and is not considered to always be expert testimony. But this is not how the word is used in Scripture. Doubtful testimony is called “**private interpretation**” (2 Pet 1:20), or an explanation deduced by the speaker himself. The word used in the Second Peter text (ἐπιλύω) is used a single time in all of Scripture. There, we are told this kind of interpretation has no part whatsoever in the formation of Scripture.

Another word is used where unquestionable truth is intended. Sample

- ▶ “*But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name **by interpretation**) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith*” (Acts 13:8).
- ▶ “*To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another **the interpretation** of tongues*” (1 Cor 12:10).
- ▶ “*How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a*

What Daniel said would be the solitary meaning of the dream.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

With the present inordinate value place on academics, human opinion and personal persuasion have been granted increased hearing in the church. People have been brought to believe that pooling a host of varied opinions somehow brings required answers to us. You can imagine what would have happened if Nebuchadnezzar had granted such a procedure in his court! The king wanted to know what the dream was and what it meant. He was not interested in the private opinion of one of the astrologers, or the suggestion of one of the magicians.

IT IS GOOD TO REMEMBER THAT WHAT GOD REVEALS DOES HAVE A MEANING. THAT MEANING IS NOT DETERMINED BY CONSENSUS, AND DOES NOT COME CLOSER TO OUR UNDERSTANDING AS IT IS PASSED THROUGH THE INTELLECTUAL FILTER OF HUMAN OPINION. IN FACT, THAT PROCESS PUTS THE TRUTH AT AN EVEN GREATER DISTANCE FROM US.

It is good to remember that what God reveals does have a meaning. That meaning is not determined by consensus, and does not come closer to our understanding as it is passed through the intellectual filter of human opinion. In fact, that process puts the truth at an even greater distance from us. This is what caused our Lord’s teaching to stand out amidst all of the doctors of the Law. It was said of Him, “*For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes*” (Matt 7:29). Somehow it came across to honest and good hearts that Jesus knew what He was talking about. He was not giving them a “*private interpretation*,” but what the truth really was and meant.

uses of “*interpret*” in this sense include the following.

- ▶ “*And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is **by interpretation**, A stone*” (John 1:42).
- ▶ “*And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which **is by interpretation**, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing*” (John 9:7).
- ▶ “*Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which **by interpretation** is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did*” (Acts 9:36).

*tongue, hath a revelation, hath **an interpretation***” (1 Cor 14:26).

- ▶ “*To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being **by interpretation** King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace*” (Heb 7:2).

Each of these texts rules out the possibility of a private view, or opinion. Similar uses of the words “*interpret*” and “*interpretation*” are found in Moses and the Prophets (Gen 40:5-18; Judges 7:15; Prov 1:6; Eccl 8:1; Dan 2:4-45; 4:6-24; 5:7-26; 7:16). What Arioch promised was what Daniel said he would do – give the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. He would not provide a possible meaning, or suggest various hypotheses.

That is ever the manner of the Kingdom. If the truth is going to burrow into the hearts of men, someone must rise who knows what God is talking about – someone with an understanding of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His eternal purpose. Just as surely as Daniel’s life was in the balance, so our lives are directly impacted by the truth of God. We really cannot afford to be wrong. True religion is not an arena for experimentation and philosophizing.

ARE YOU ABLE?

“⁸⁶ The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?” Now, for the first time in this

book, the Divine spotlight shines upon the person of Daniel. Prior to this, an emphasis was placed on the king’s diet.

Then it was placed upon the king's testing of the four children of Judah. Finally, the emphasis was upon Nebuchadnezzar's need to have his dream known and interpreted. But now the accent has shifted to young Daniel. He will be put to the test to see whether he can provide what no other man in all the world could supply. God has prepared him for this hour, and thus he will be able to enter into it with *"the full assurance of faith"* and *"the full assurance of understanding"* (Heb 10:22; Col 2:2).

WHOSE NAME WAS BELTESHAZZAR

"Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar." You will remember that this name was given to Daniel by Ashpenaz, the prince of the eunuchs (1:7). This is the very first time that name is mentioned since given to Daniel at least three years earlier. Twice in this book Nebuchadnezzar calls Daniel by his Babylonian name (4:9,18). All of the other references say Daniel was *"called Belteshazzar,"* but no one else of record called him by that name. Daniel is referred to by this name under the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar (4:8,19), Belshazzar (5:12), and Cyrus (10:1).

The name *"Belteshazzar"* means "Bel's prince," or "the one whom Bel favors." ^{McClintok/Strong} Bel was a Babylonian god, and is mentioned in Isaiah 46:1, Jeremiah 50:2, and 51:44. Isaiah declares Bel bowed down under burdens. Jeremiah declares he is *"confounded"* and will be *"punished"* by the God of heaven.

It seems to me that a point is being made here by the Spirit. First, Bel, nor any other god of Babylon, was

OUT OF A HABERDASHERY OF A, UNKNOWN DREAM, TROUBLESOME NIGHTS, A BABYLONIAN KING, THE CHIEF OF THE EXECUTIONERS, A MOTLEY BAND OF CONDEMNED WISE MEN, A MANDATE OF DEATH, AND A YOUNG CAPTIVE HEBREW, GOD HAS PRODUCED AN OCCASION FOR THE REVELATION OF SOMETHING HE HAS DETERMINED!

able to deliver an answer to the king. Those who served Bel had the sentence of death passed upon them because they could not come up with an answer – even a concocted one. Daniel was, indeed, named *"Belteshazzar,"* the one favored by Bel. But he will answer as one favored by the God of heaven. **The interpretation will come from Daniel, favored of God, not Belteshazzar, favored by Bel.**

ARE YOU ABLE?

"Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" Other versions read, *"Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"* ^{NKJV} and *"Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"* ^{NIV}

The degree of sincerity in Nebuchadnezzar's question is difficult to measure. Was he asking a question like Pilate did to Jesus: *"Art Thou king of the Jews?"* or *"What is truth?"* If so, then the question would be something like this: *"Are YOU able to make known to me . . ."* Was Daniel, a hostage from a city Nebuchadnezzar easily overthrew really

able to provide the king's demand? Can one of the Jews, who fell before his onslaught, step forward and supply what his cultured wise men could not do? Is this young man, barely beyond the border of youth REALLY able to do this?

Of course, that is all from an earthly point of view. Looking at the situation through faith, the king's heart has been turned toward Daniel. He does not threaten him with death, but opens the door for him to declare what the Lord has shown to him.

I do not cease to marvel at the remarkable details in the working of the Lord. **Out of a haberdashery of a, unknown dream, troublesome nights, a Babylonian king, the chief of the executioners, a motley band of condemned wise men, a mandate of death, and a young captive Hebrew, God has produced an occasion for the revelation of something He has determined!** How true it is, praise the Lord! *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* (Rom 11:33).

A SOLEMN REMINDER

"²⁷ Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king."

The time has come for Daniel to speak. The revelation he has been given must be declared. He is not required to simply

share it with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. That would be easy enough. He must speak before an earthly monarch that appears to hold Daniel's life in his hand. Whether Daniel knew of the Lord's way of dispensing power in as precise a way as has been revealed in Christ, I do not know. But he sensed in his heart the very thing that Jesus affirmed to Pilate.

"You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above" ^{NASB} (John 19:11).

The very dream God had revealed to him, together with its interpretation, unveiled the Sovereign rule of God. I do not doubt that the message Daniel had been given buoyed up his spirit as he

stood before the king. He was “*first partaker of the fruits*” of his message (2 Tim 2:6).

A Lesson to be Learned

There is surely a lesson to be learned here. **What the Lord shows you will sustain you. It will embolden you and give you confidence and assurance.** Truth is to be proclaimed. Make no mistake about that. Yet, that very truth will sustain and refurbish the soul who is bold enough to speak it out. What person who loves the truth has not found this to be true? Has not many a weary and troubled soul suddenly been renewed when the truth of God became more clear to them? Even if they were given a word to declare to someone else, did they not find that very word to be a sweet elixir of comfort to their own soul?

forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb 13:5-6). As the mighty prophet Isaiah would say, “*This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD*” (Isa 54:17).

Perhaps you have a message you must declare before your own Nebuchadnezzar. Maybe you are in a king’s court, where you are not accustomed to stand. Let your thoughts take hold of the account before us. Daniel was subject to the same kind of infirmities as those with which you wrestle. The account of how he handled this event can be a trumpet sound from heaven, assuring you of strength as well.

THE IMPOTENCE OF THE WISE MEN

“The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the

has reserved for Himself.

Mind you, Daniel was not present when the demand was made. He has received his information from Arioch, the chief of the king’s executioners – and we do not know that Arioch was there. Yet Daniel knows what the king has demanded, and who was there. Now he waxes bold and declares what these wise men were not able to do.

The wise men, with all of their vast panorama of knowledge, familiarity with the literature of Babylon, historical records, and acquaintance with the manners and demands of the king, could not show the king what he wanted. Their well was not deep enough.

The astrologers, with their claim to discover future events by the position and path of the stars, had to admit the king had asked something of them that was impossible. Their horoscopes, monthly prognostications, and astrological predictions were powerless to give them an answer. Whatever boast their pretended science made, its mouth was stopped by one request from the king.

The magicians, with all of their superstitions and eminence in learning took their place along side the powerless wise men and astrologers. Nothing in their craft could dredge up an answer for Nebuchadnezzar. Like the magicians of Egypt, their powers ran out. What was required of them demanded more than their source could supply.

The sorcerers, with their incantations, narcotic substances, and invocation of infernal spirits, had to give up. That to which they had devoted their lives was no better than the ignorance of the greatest fool in Babylon. With a single dream, Nebuchadnezzar had brought their house of knowledge tumbling to the ground. They were just as impotent as the others who were classed as the wise men of Babylon’s mighty empire.

Daniel Declares the Facts

Daniel does not overlook the impotence of the king’s court of knowledge and expertise. He solemnly reminds the king that he has not been able to obtain what he desired from those whom he himself had designated as wise.

WHAT THE LORD SHOWS YOU WILL SUSTAIN YOU. IT WILL EMBOLDEN YOU AND GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE AND ASSURANCE. TRUTH IS TO BE PROCLAIMED. MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THAT. YET, THAT VERY TRUTH WILL SUSTAIN AND REFURBISH THE SOUL WHO IS BOLD ENOUGH TO SPEAK IT OUT.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING

“Daniel answered in the presence of the king.” Now Daniel, but a young and inexperienced man, stands before the most illustrious ruler of the era of global empires. He has a message to give that will place the accent on *the “God of the Jews,”* and upon His purpose. This is not the God that Nebuchadnezzar worships. He has dared to place the vessels of the house of Daniel’s God in the house of his false god (1:2).

The truth uttered by *“the sweet psalmist of Israel”* was in the heart and mind of Daniel. *“In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me”* (Psa 56:4). Centuries later, Paul would take up the chorus and sing it more loudly, *“for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor*

astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king.” At once Daniel emphasizes why Nebuchadnezzar requires assistance. It is not because he has been forgetful. His inability to remember what he had dreamed was not due to a loss of sleep, or some other inconvenient circumstance. The dream was a *“secret.”* It had been hidden from the king, and that is why he could not remember it.

Even though the king was demanding, exerting all of his sovereign power, he could not constrain the wise men of Babylon to provide him with an answer. His political position could not make it happen. His great authority and power could not produce so much as a spark of wisdom among the wise men. He *“demanded,”* but he could not make things happen. That is a prerogative God

There comes a time when those who have trusted in vanity must be shown how futile it was to do so. It has been God's manner to do this – to show to men the absurdity of things in which they have put their trust and hope. Often God has chided those who trusted in vanity.

- ▶ **“Where are they? where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt”** (Isa 19:12).
- ▶ **“But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah”** (Jer 2:28).
- ▶ **“Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?”** (Jer 37:19).
- ▶ **“Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee”** (Isa 47:13).

Divine Intentions and Causes

The Lord is dedicated to publicly displaying the vanity of worldly wisdom. He chooses the times and the circumstances in which this will be done. But make no mistake about this, it will be done. Thus it is written, **“I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself, and spreading out the earth all alone, causing the omens [signs] of boasters to fail, making fools out of diviners, causing wise men to draw back, and turning their knowledge into foolishness”**^{NASB} (Isa 44:24-25). With God, this is an aggressive agenda. There is no age when He has abandoned this intention. If men have eyes to see and ears to hear, the Lord is continually putting on display the vanity of worldly wisdom and ingenuity.

In explaining why he preached the Gospel without mingling it with cunning words and whit, Paul referred to this

Divine manner. **“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom**

of life through intellectual filters that have been devised by men.

Those with deep spiritual problems are being offered diagnoses that have neither truth nor power in them. Explanations for human conduct are being pandered to the masses that have no power to transform, and do not enable needy souls to rise above the flesh. The Word of God itself is being analyzed as though it was in a convenient test tube. We are living in critical times.

However, in orchestrating the affairs of men, God has a way of dashing

MUCH OF THE FRUSTRATION THAT EXISTS IN OUR WESTERN CULTURE IS DIRECTLY TRACEABLE TO THE INABILITY OF THE WORLD'S WISE MEN TO SATISFY THE NEEDS AND DESIRES OF HONEST PEOPLE.

knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor 1:17-21).

The Ultimate Display

The ultimate exhibit of the futility and emptiness of this world's wisdom is found in the power of the Gospel of Christ. The world's most eminent theologians and politicians saw with their own eyes **“God manifest in the flesh.”** They could not properly assess Him in their own wisdom. They concluded He was an imposter and was worthy of death. **The Lord Jesus piled evidence upon evidence before their eyes, and spoke words none of them could effectively contradict.** Here was the Wisdom of God, standing before them, speaking gracious words, and working wondrous things. Still, it is written, **“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”** (1 Cor 2:8).

Our Time

We are living in a time when the wisdom of men is being unduly exalted. **Men are women are being taught to assess spiritual matters with worldly wisdom – to pass the circumstances**

of all this wisdom upon the rocks of futility. He can bring people to a point where those in whom they trust can no longer help them – just like the wise men of Babylon could not help Nebuchadnezzar. **Much of the frustration that exists in our Western culture is directly traceable to the inability of the world's wise men to satisfy the needs and desires of honest people.** It is God who has caused their wisdom to fail, just as surely as He frustrated the magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers of Babylon.

In this text God has so arranged things as to display the vanity of Babylonian wisdom. Further, lest it escape Nebuchadnezzar's attention, God's prophet Daniel is pointing out that vanity. That is God's manner. Should the lesson ever be taught to you, it will be well to give heed to it.

There are things the world cannot produce! Its wisdom is vanity, and its power is but an imagination in such matters. It is God's nature to make sure the wisdom of this world is brought to nothing, and the understanding of the prudent is smashed to the ground. Just as surely as the Lord did with

Nebuchadnezzar, He will challenge those who trusted in such wisdom to obtain what they need from that vain and foolish

source. Before Nebuchadnezzar received an answer, he had to try to get the

answer from his wise men. In that effort, he would see their inadequacy.

THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN

“^{28a} But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.” At some point, those who seek answers, direction, power, or any other needed resource, are going to have to come to the Lord. Their eyes are going to have to look upward, and their affection must be set on things above (Col 3:1-3). Until this happens, life cannot and will not be truly satisfying, productive, or eternally profitable.

After pointing out the impotence of Babylon’s wise men, Daniel now draws attention to the Source of wisdom. He will not only contrast the Living God with the false gods of Babylon, he will also inform

not heard, and that no mortal mind has conceived – yet they have been made known to the sons of men (1 Cor 2:9-10). We have just such a case before us. Now that earth has failed – utterly failed – heaven will be brought into the picture. Now that the wisdom of men has proved helpless, the wisdom of God will be made known. Now that the gods of men have been shown to be vain, the God of heaven will be declared.

“But” is a Scriptural word that picks up where the powers of men and the world ended. “But” is a word that brings hope where there was hopelessness, understanding where there was ignorance, and sight where there was blindness. It is a word through which

▣ **When the enemies of the faithful appear to be gaining the upper hand. “BUT GOD shall wound the head of his enemies”** (Psa 68:21).

▣ **When human strength utterly fails. “BUT GOD is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever”** (Psa 73:26).

▣ **When Peter could not see that the Gentiles should hear the Gospel. “BUT GOD hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean”** (Acts 10:28).

▣ **When we were hopelessly condemned as sinners. “BUT GOD commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** (Rom 5:8).

▣ **When we are seeming tempted and tested beyond our ability. “BUT GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”** (1 Cor 10:13).

▣ **When we were dead in trespasses and sins. “BUT GOD, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved”** (Eph 2:4-5).

▣ **When Epaphroditus grew sick, and it looked as though he was going to die. “BUT GOD had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow”** (Phil 2:27).

You Must Make the Transition

As you read this account, you must make the transition from Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel to your own

THERE IS A DIMENSION TO LIFE THAT HAS ITS SOURCE AND DIRECTION OUTSIDE OF THIS WORLD. THE FACT THAT THE WORLD AT ITS BEST CANNOT PLUMB THE DEPTHS OF A MATTER DOES NOT MEAN IT IS UNKNOWABLE.

Nebuchadnezzar that God has been dealing with him. He has chosen to make known to the king of Babylon the destiny of all worldly kingdoms, as well as the entrance and dominance of His own kingdom.

“BUT”

“BUT there is . . .” Even though a satisfactory wise man could not be found in all of Babylon, hope was not lost. **There is a dimension to life that has its source and direction outside of this world.** The fact that the world at its best cannot plumb the depths of a matter does not mean it is unknowable. There are things that eye has not seen, ear has

faith enters into a “large room” (Psa 31:8). How frequently the Holy Spirit lifts our minds, shifts our vision, and cheers our hearts with this single word.

▣ **When Samson was perishing with thirst. “BUT GOD clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived”** (Judges 15:19).

▣ **When David was hounded by king Saul, who aggressively sought to kill him. “BUT GOD delivered him not into his hand”** (1 Sam 23:14).

case. The very area in which you are struggling or troubled is the one in which you must find **"BUT GOD."** It may seem as though you have battered your head against a wall. Solutions and answers may appear to be getting further from you. Your strength may be fading away. **But neither your circumstance nor your assessment is the end of the matter.** After you have reviewed all of the troubling and helpless circumstances, have the faith to put a comma after them, not a period, and say **"BUT!"**

This is precisely what Daniel is doing in our text. He is taking over where the wise men left off. He is acknowledging that Nebuchadnezzar has been challenged with something for which the world has no answer.

THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN

Before Daniel speaks of the works of God, He first speaks of God Himself: *"there is a God!"* All sound theology begins with this postulate: *"There is a God!"* If that is not true, then no point of theology is true. If it is true, everything about true theology is not only true, but relevant, and pertinent to the affairs of men. Faith also begins with this premise: *"There is a God!"* As it is written, *"he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"* (Heb 11:6). Before men seek something from God, they must first be persuaded of His Person. **Those who stand in doubt of God's existence, or of His power, will be able to proceed no further. That is the starting point.** This, Daniel begins at the proper place.

Immediately, Daniel raises the thoughts of the king – away from the lowlands of this world to heaven. Here, he is not speaking about the starry heavens, space, or some other facet of the vast expanse of creation. In the book of Daniel alone, the word *"heaven"* is mentioned thirty-two times (2:18,19,28,27,28,44; 4:11,12,13,15,20,21,22,23,25,31,33,34,35,37; 5:21,23; 6:27; 7:2,13,27; 8:8,10; 9:12; 11:4; 12:7). Every single reference has to do with God Himself, something He revealed, or something He was doing.

The fact that God is in heaven accentuates His Sovereign rule, for, as Nebuchadnezzar found out the hard

way, *"the heavens do rule"* (4:26). There is a higher realm, a loftier domain, where restriction is not known, and all wisdom and power reside. There is a throne that has dominion over the affairs of earth, and Daniel now points the king to the mighty God who sits there, presiding over the affairs of men.

Repeatedly, God has associated Himself with *"heaven"* – far above the access of nature.

- ▣ *"The LORD He is God **in heaven above**"* (Deut 4:39).
- ▣ *"For the LORD your God, He is God **in heaven above**"* (Josh 2:11).
- ▣ *"And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not Thou God **in heaven**"*

As used in our text, *"heaven"* is not a geographical term. Technically, it is not describing where God is located. Rather, it is accenting His dominion by contrasting the higher with the lower, and the eternal with the temporal.

In other words, if the king was ever going to know what he dreamed and what it meant, the answer was going to have to come from above the earth. Explanations would have to come from the One who gave the dream, and He is in heaven. It simply could not be found in the natural realm.

An Application

One of the telling signs of a godly generation is its heavenly mindedness. Unlike the hog, whose eyes are slanted

. SOLUTIONS AND ANSWERS MAY APPEAR TO BE GETTING FURTHER FROM YOU. YOUR STRENGTH MAY BE FADING AWAY. BUT NEITHER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCE NOR YOUR ASSESSMENT IS THE END OF THE MATTER.

??" (2 Chron 20:6).

- ▣ *"For God is **in heaven**"* (Eccl 5:2).
- ▣ *"Your Father which is **in heaven**"* (Matt 5:16).
- ▣ *"That ye may be the children of your Father which is **in heaven**"* (Matt 5:45).
- ▣ *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is **in heaven** is perfect"* (Matt 5:48).
- ▣ *"Our Father which art **in heaven**"* (Matt 6:9).
- ▣ *"How much more shall your Father which is **in heaven** give good things to them that ask Him?"* (Matt 7:11).
- ▣ *"But he that doeth the will of My Father which is **in heaven**"* (Matt 7:21).

downward, those who live by faith have an upward posture. Their eyes are focused on the heavenly realms, and affection is fixed on *"things above, and not in things on the earth"* (Col 3:2). How often we read the words, *"lift up your eyes"* (Isa 40:26; 51:6; Jer 13:20; John 4:34), and *"look up"* (Psa 5:3; Lk 21:28). The ability of people to lift up their eyes and *"look toward the hills,"* knowing that *their "help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth"* (Psa 121:1-2), confirms they are trusting in the Lord and living by faith.

One of the solid confirmations of a heart that is alienated from God is a consistent tendency to view things from an earthly perspective.

Faith does not come from this world, and it certainly does not fasten our hearts to it. Men and women of faith always resort to God. That is one of the loud messages of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. A worldly-minded church is a contradiction of terms, like saying an angelic demon, or wicked good man.

The modern church has been greatly debilitated by its earthly emphasis. Whatever makes this world large, by that very circumstance, makes heaven small. Whatever accents human experience diminishes blessings from heaven. Anything that makes circumstance the most prominent matter, by that very prominence causes the awareness of the God of heaven to recede into the background of all thought and consciousness.

HE REVEALS SECRETS

“ . . . that revealeth secrets . . . ”

Because this point has been made in a previous lesson, it will suffice to say only the following. In Scripture, this kind of secret is one that can only be revealed by the God of heaven. It is not possible to know such things apart from revelation.

The point Daniel is making here is that the gods of Babylon could not make this secret known. Nebuchadnezzar had

king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.” What a remarkable proclamation! Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of all earthly potentates, was chosen by God to learn of things that would happen in *“the end of days.”*^{NRSV}

Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Hosea spoke of *“the latter days.”* (Num 24:14; Deut 4:30; 31:29; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28; 10:14; Hos 3:5). The word translated *“latter”* is also translated *“last”* in the KJV (Gen 49:1; Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1). It is always associated with some epoch to be initiated or controlled by the Almighty. The New Covenant Scriptures use the term *“last days”* (Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; James 5:3), and *“latter times”* (1 Tim 4:1).

The Significance of the Expression

There are two perspectives to these expressions. First, the emphasis is on the closing period of time. Second, there is an accent on what God will do

These words are also used to denote the conclusion of those *“last days,”* or the final period of time. Thus, during the *“last days”* of Hebrews 1, Paul wrote, *“This know also, that in **the last days** perilous times shall come”* (2 Tim 3:1). In this text Paul revealed the introduction of corrupt religion on an unparalleled scale. Religious people would have *“a form of godliness that denied the power thereof.”* Its powerlessness was made known by the lack of a change in the character of its adherents (vs 2-5). In stark contrast with the declaration of a new birth, a new heart, and a new creation, the religion of the people would leave them unchanged. Such times, the Spirit affirmed, would be *“perilous.”* Peter spoke of the same period of time. *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in **the last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation”* (2 Pet 3:3-4).
We are living in such times.

THERE ARE TWO PERSPECTIVES TO THESE EXPRESSIONS. FIRST, THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE CLOSING PERIOD OF TIME. SECOND, THERE IS AN ACCENT ON WHAT GOD WILL DO DURING THAT CLOSING PERIOD OF TIME.

Paul also alluded to this period in his letter to the Thessalonians. *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”* (2 Thess 2:3). While this might stir our curiosity, this is not the place to further delineate this time. The point is that there is infinitely more to life than the here and the now! This text will be considered when we review the eighth chapter of Daniel.

“gods.” In fact, certain people referred to them when pointing out that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not bow to a golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. *“These men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not **thy gods**”* (3:12). When confronting these three young men, the king asked, *“do not ye serve my gods?”* (3:14). **Where were Nebuchadnezzar’s gods during his quest to know what he dreamed?** They were powerless to reveal the secret. *“But,”* Daniel affirms, *“there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets.”*

Thus, while the attention of both Arioch and Nebuchadnezzar has been turned to Daniel, he promptly puts the focus upon the God of heaven.

THE LATTER DAYS

“ . . . and maketh known to the

during that closing period of time.

From a general point of view, the final period of time is *“the day of salvation”* – the time from the exaltation of Christ until the end of the world. This is the sense in which *“last days”* is used in the first chapter of Hebrews. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in **these last days** spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”* (Heb 1:1-2). Peter announced the commencement of this period on the day of Pentecost. *“And it shall come to pass in **the last days**, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams”* (Acts 2:17).

Again, James, using the same words, wrote with the termination of all things in mind. *“Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for **the last days**”* (James 5:3).

In This Text

In this text, God will make known to the king the end of his empire. He will also unveil the end of all empires, and the commencement of an unending rule.

The point to be seen is that the purposes of God are far reaching, and that times and epochs have a conclusion. Now, Daniel affirms, the God of heaven has made known to the

king things relating to the closing period of history. He is not doing this for Nebuchadnezzar's sake alone, but for the ages to come, including ours.

An Observation

Knowing "the last days" is a hotly contested subject in religious circles, a thought has occurred to me. It is how unlike man God really is. Men draw back from this subject, but God is forward to speak of it, even to a heathen king who

worships other gods. Everything is not static, remaining the same, during this day of salvation. Jesus did not induct a period during which no significant changes would be made. **This is not a time in which everything has been locked into a certain mode.** But there are those who imagine this is the case. King Nebuchadnezzar probably viewed his own kingdom in this way, thinking nothing was going to change. But he was wrong!

The people of God are not to imagine that nothing looms on the horizon of time. **Woe to the person who thinks either the best or the worst has already happened!** Such a person has set himself up for grief and a serious test of his faith. If God humbles Himself to make the future known to us, we do well to give Him our hearts and ears. It is to our profit to do so, and to our eternal detriment to fail to do so.

HE THAT REVEALS SECRETS

"^{28b} Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; ²⁹ As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass." Daniel is carefully presenting the dream and its interpretation. He will do it in a such a manner as brings glory to God and subdues the pride of man. **He will leave Nebuchadnezzar thinking more about the God who gave the dream than about the dream itself.** This is a form of spiritual mastery that characterizes all inspired men and women. They bear a message that, if believed, leaves the individual with a proper focus.

Leaving Proper Impressions

In the "church" world, there are countless messages and emphases that leave the people with barely a thought of the God of heaven. After ingesting such messages people can leave the presence of the speaker thinking about things mundane, and even profane. However, no such reaction is found in Scripture of those who gave heed to inspired messages. Those who listened to Moses, taking in his words, were left thinking of the Lord and their relationship to Him. The same may be said of all of the Prophets, John the Baptist, the Apostles, and others.

The premier example is the Lord Jesus Himself. His message was so focused that people asked Him things no one of record was ever

before asked.

- ▣ "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17).
- ▣ "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8).
- ▣ "Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?" (Matt 17:10).

world to come.

The same was true of Apostolic teaching. After hearing Peter and John preach, their listeners concluded they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

There is a consistency of this manner anywhere and everywhere someone spoke in behalf of the God of heaven. When the Scribes and Pharisees taught, the people thought upon traditions and rules. When Jesus taught,

THIS IS A FORM OF SPIRITUAL MASTERY THAT CHARACTERIZES ALL INSPIRED MEN AND WOMEN. THEY BEAR A MESSAGE THAT, IF BELIEVED, LEAVES THE INDIVIDUAL WITH A PROPER FOCUS.

- ▣ "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt 22:35).
- ▣ "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt 24:3).

These were questions the people asked **no** other teacher. Why? Because the focus of Christ's teaching was different, as well as the manner in which He taught. His words left people thinking about God, eternal life, the end of the world, and the

they thought of eternal life, forgiveness, and the God of heaven doing something for their good.

The Relevance

On the surface, it may appear as though this has very little to do with the book of Daniel. However, this is a Kingdom manner that will be reflected in Daniel's words to the king. His words will have an accent and focus that yield benefit if the king will listen to them. They will help him prepare for the future, as well as understand the past and the present as well.

VISIONS UPON THY BED

“Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these . . .” Not only did the dream of the king come to him from the God of heaven, Daniel proclaims that the thoughts experienced while upon his bed were known by the Lord. Daniel speaks as though he was standing in the king’s bedchamber, reading and comprehending his very thoughts – thoughts the king himself could not remember.

A Supposition

Nebuchadnezzar was prone to think of his own works. Later, having learned little from the occasion we are now covering, he will survey his kingdom with pride and say, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?” (4:30). I suggest that he had probably been having similar thoughts when he had his troubling dreams. It is as though the God

LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts” (1 Chron 28:9).

If you read the Scriptures with this in mind, you will find it surfacing nearly every time God is dealing with a person. Divine searching of the heart is the mother of conviction and the father of persuasion. It contributes to sobriety, generates hope in the believing heart, and fear in the doubter.

THOUGHTS CAME INTO THY MIND

“As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed . . .” It is written, “The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Psa 94:11). From one perspective, in Nebuchadnezzar’s case they were not vain because of their substance, but because he could not recall them. They will be of no profit whatsoever to him until someone to whom God has revealed the secret communicates it to him. From another

lay upon his bed, Daniel at once has the attention of the king. He will anxiously hear every word that is told him.

**WHAT SHOULD COME TO PASS
HEREAFTER**

“ . . . what should come to pass hereafter . . .” Like the disciples, it was given to Nebuchadnezzar to know these things. As it is written, “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables” (Mk 4:11). In Nebuchadnezzar’s case, the mysteries were not wrapped in a parable, but in a dream. The king, therefore, experienced both sides of the equation. First, he received something he could not recall or decipher with his own “thoughts.” Second, through Daniel, it was given to him to learn more precisely about the future. No longer will he have to speculate about the future or attempt to recall his dream.

In the Divine economy it is God Himself who makes the determinations, then chooses those to whom He will make them known.

For some, this appears to be too fatalistic. However, there is no need for men to think in this way, for the Lord has spoken abundantly on the matter.

From the very beginning, Divine determination played a key role in the spread and propagation of humanity. As it is written, “From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live”^{NIV} (Acts 17:26). When the various nations were established in the world, certain boundaries were placed by the Almighty. “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, He set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is His people, Jacob His allotted inheritance” (Deut 32:8-9).

A number of Scriptures confirm to our hearts the role of God among men, their kingdoms, and their inheritance.

☐ “And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be

THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM WAS TO PREPARE HIM FOR WHAT DANIEL WOULD SAY. IF THE PROPHET HAD DIVULGED THE DIVINE AGENDA WITHOUT THIS PREPARATORY WORK OF GOD, THE KING WOULD HAVE FOUND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO RECEIVE.

of heaven responded to his vain thoughts. Whereas he might well have pondered who would take the kingdom after him, and how the glory of it would continue, God will tell him it is going to come crashing down. The Lord would start where Nebuchadnezzar’s thoughts faded into meaningless, and make known things to come.

The Lord Tries and Searches Hearts

The Lord has revealed that He “trieth the hearts and reins” (Psa 7:9; Prov 17:3). Acutely aware of this, Paul once acknowledged he spoke “not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (1 Thess 2:4). David knew, and now Daniel will confirm to the king, “the

perspective, as I have already suggested, Nebuchadnezzar might have began contemplating the future on his own, with God taking control of his thoughts and taking the matter further. In that case, his personal thoughts were vanity. Only the thoughts God put into his mind were profitable, and that only if a man of God unveiled them to the king.

The whole purpose of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was to prepare him for what Daniel would say. If the prophet had divulged the Divine agenda without this preparatory work of God, the king would have found it more difficult to receive. But the troublesome dreams had cultured his heart for a word from God. By referring to the king’s thoughts as he

there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth" (Ex 8:22).

- ▶ "And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for **I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession**" (Deut 2:19).
- ▶ "Art not thou our God, who didst **drive out the inhabitants of this land** before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" (2 Chron 20:7).
- ▶ "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by My outstretched arm, **and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me**" (Jer 27:5).
- ▶ "But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and **the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation**" (Jer 10:10).

The hand of God is upon the affairs of men! As Governor among the nations (Psa 22:28), He orchestrates what is occurring among them. In blessing the Lord, Daniel has acknowledged he sees that God removes and sets up kings. He changes times and seasons. He does not consult with men in order to do this, nor can men nullify His determinations. If what God determined could, in fact, be altered, there could be no such thing as prophecy, and Daniel's words would be pointless. How could God promise to "bless all nations" (Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8) if His will was subject to change because of men?

The Lord shouts out to the doubter and the skeptic. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, **declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure:** Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that

executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, **I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it**" (Isa 46:9-11).

If a person fails to see God as He has declared Himself to be, the prophecies of Daniel will seem unimportant. A shallow significance be attached to them, and they will be sifted through history instead of the Word of God to obtain some meaning from them. **Scripture is NOT an analysis of history, but a declaration of the works and will of the Lord.** Unless history is seen as HISTORY it will have no lasting significance to us. Further, even if we do perceive the shifting of political powers as the work of God, unless we see such maneuverings as related to His "eternal purpose," they will seem to have no bearing upon our life.

The general lack of emphasis upon this aspect of God demands that we say something about it – especially when dealing with a text like this.

Divine Appointments

There is such a thing as Divine appointments. At the very threshold of human history, Eve knew this. When she gave birth to Seth, who was begotten in Adam's own image, she said, "God . . . hath appointed me another seed instead of

king is not a possibility, but things that "shall come to pass." Other versions read "what will be,"^{NKJV} "what will take place,"^{NASB} "what is going to happen,"^{NIV} and "that which is to be."^{YLT} These are not the declaration of what men will do, but what the Lord God will accomplish. **Daniel is not making known things that God, in His omniscience, has seen in the future, but things the Lord has determined for the future.**

This should not be difficult for us to receive. Daniel has blessed the Lord because he has seen that God changes times and seasons, removes kings, and sets up kings. **All of these are Divine interventions – an alteration of things as they are.**

The Lord can, and does, "bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor 1:28). He can "cause the arrongancy of the proud to cease" (Isa 13:11), and "cause" His people to "be removed from all kingdoms of the earth" (Jer 15:4). He declares, "know, I will **cause** them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD" (Jer 16:21). He can take a world that has been "filled with violence" (Gen 6:11) and cause it to be "filled with the knowledge of the Lord" (Heb 2:14).

THESE ARE NOT THE DECLARATION OF WHAT MEN WILL DO, BUT WHAT THE LORD GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH. DANIEL IS NOT MAKING KNOWN THINGS THAT GOD, IN HIS OMNISCIENCE, HAS SEEN IN THE FUTURE, BUT THINGS THE LORD HAS DETERMINED FOR THE FUTURE.

Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen 4:25). Isaac was born at an "appointed time" (Gen 18:14). The Lord "appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom" (2 Sam 17:14). On one occasion the Lord "appointed" a pestilence that killed seventy thousand Israelites (2 Sam 24:25). What God purposes surely comes to pass. As the Lord Himself affirms, "So shall it stand" (Isa 14:24).

What God has made known to the

The God of heaven is making known the things He Himself will do. **Those charged with teaching and leading the people of God must often remind them of their God.** It is as true with you as it was with Belshazzar. He is the God "who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways"^{NKJV} (Dan 5:23). Faith shouts out to the Lord, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For **all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours;**

Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all^{NKJV} (1 Chron 29:11-12).

Only a God like this can unveil the future with certainty! What is more, this is the God to whom we have been “reconciled” (Col 1:21). This is the God with whom we now “have peace” (Rom 5:1). This is the One who is working all things together for our good (Rom 8:28). Child of God, His eye is upon you, and His ear is open to your cry (Psa 34:15). It is

ever true, “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan 4:35).

SECRETS MADE KNOWN

“ . . . and He that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.” Again, Daniel affirms what the Lord God has done. This is the God who alone can reveal the secrets He has “purposed in Himself” (Eph 1:9). These are **His** plans – things **He** has determined

to do in the earth for **His** glory. He can divulge them with all the hosts of darkness listening, and they will not be able to stop them from occurring. These are sure things, cast in the stone of Divine purpose. They will come to pass. How gracious the Lord is to make His purposes known to the sons of men!

Glad day when you come to know what God has purposed! Just as Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, this knowledge did not come to you by flesh and blood. God, who knows and has access to your heart, has made them known.

IT HAS BEEN REVEALED TO ME

“³⁰ But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.” Because this circumstance may tend to draw undue attention to Daniel himself, he now

the secret to the king. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar will question how this can be, since God alone is the revealer. Foreseeing this, Daniel wisely explains the Source of his knowledge, unwilling to rob God of His glory. He sends all of the glory back to God, taking none for himself. He knows that if God had not made the matter known to him, he would have been just as

add nothing to the matter, nor can Melzar, who had the charge of the four children of Judah during their training. However, a distinction has been made in Babylon. There is one man – one solitary man – who is able to declare precisely what was dreamed, and exactly what it means.

Daniel knows full well that he has been endowed with special wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. In an open comparison, he had proved “*ten times better*” in his astute answers than all the wise men of Babylon. Perhaps this might lead the king to conclude Daniel’s intellectual superiority and quick learning ability had enabled him to uncover the mystery. Perhaps his expertise in the language and literature of the Babylonians has qualified him to give the answer the king demanded. In order to remove all doubt in this matter, Daniel now shines the light upon himself. He delivers a true picture of the situation.

PERHAPS HIS EXPERTISE IN THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE BABYLONIANS HAS QUALIFIED HIM TO GIVE THE ANSWER THE KING DEMANDED. IN ORDER TO REMOVE ALL DOUBT IN THIS MATTER, DANIEL NOW SHINES THE LIGHT UPON HIMSELF. HE DELIVERS A TRUE PICTURE OF THE SITUATION.

humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, that God may exalt him in due time (1 Pet 5:6). When the truth is known, it does not contribute to pride or a fleshly sense of self-worth. “*The knowledge of the truth*” (1 Tim 2:4) is humbling as well as satisfying. It is quick to point the listener to the “*God of truth*” (Deut 32:4).

There is another thing to be seen here. Daniel has boldly declared that God alone reveals secrets. Yet, he is going to tell

ignorant as Nebuchadnezzar about it.

AS FOR ME

“*But as for me . . .*” Daniel has reminded the king that what he demanded could not be given to him by “*the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers.*” As for the king himself, he cannot even remember what he has dreamed, much less decipher the meaning of the dream. Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard can

NOT FOR ANY WISDOM

“ . . . *this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living . . .*” Other versions read “*this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man,*”^{NASB} “*this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men,*”^{NIV} and “*This mystery has been revealed to me, not that I am wiser than*

anyone else.”^{NJB}

One might argue that Daniel was, indeed, wiser than other living men. After all, he had been shown to be “ten times better” in his intellectual grasp of things. And, Daniel is not denying this is the case. He is not saying he has no more wisdom than anyone else, for God had given him wisdom above his peers. He had also given him the ability to be quick in learning. He stood out among the captives of Judah, and he stood out among the wise men of Babylon. Daniel does not deny this.

However, in the king’s matter, all of Daniel’s wisdom proved wholly inadequate. He knew no more about the dream and its meaning than Nebuchadnezzar or any of the other Babylonian wise men. Daniel knew this all too well. He had to seek mercies from the Lord to obtain understanding – and the Lord gave it to him.

However, the heavenly Father did not show Daniel the dream and its meaning because he was smarter than all others. It was not because he had a more keen mind, or was quick to comprehend. It was not because Daniel could put the facts together better, or had a more logical mind, or was an expert in hermeneutics. It was not because he knew the original language of Babylon, or had achieved a place of prominence among thinkers. Rather, it was because he asked for wisdom. He besought the mercies of the Lord, which could open the matter to him.

Something to be Learned

There is a dimension of knowledge that extends beyond the circumference of ordinary, and even extraordinary, wisdom. There are things to be known that do not depend upon intellectual acumen. **There is truth to be comprehended that does not rely upon human logic and interpretation.** There are matters that need to be understood that do not come through consensus, group dialog, and discussion groups. **There is a realm of learning where worldly credentials and expertise have no value whatsoever.**

This is why we are told, “*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness*

unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:16). Other versions read, “*But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised,*”^{NASB} and “*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*”

What can be traced back to Adam is “natural.” However refined it might be, it cannot enable a person to comprehend the things of God. That consideration is a fundamental one. The comprehension of it will clear up many matters that otherwise tend to be confusing.

If Solomon, in all of his wisdom, had been in Nebuchadnezzar’s court, he could have provided no more insight on

By the same token, at the very time Nebuchadnezzar needed something on one else could supply, Daniel rose to prominence. He had access to something that was not available to the wise men of the Babylonian empire. In fact, not even Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had received these things. Even though there is no respect of persons with God, all of His children do not receive exactly the same thing. Neither, indeed, do they all occupy the same office.

A Growing Crisis

Currently, there is a crisis of spiritual knowledge in the church. The Joseph’s and Daniel’s are in isolation because there is no demand for them. Those who traffic in spiritual realities and have an understanding of the ways of God are keeping sheep on the back side of the desert like Moses. Their spiritual expertise simply is not perceived as a need – at least not in normal times, or within the institutional agenda.

THERE ARE WHOLE BODIES OF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD AN INSIGHTFUL EXPOSITION OF THE SCRIPTURES, OR THE OPENING UP OF THINGS PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS. THEY ARE LIKE THE CITIZENS OF BABYLON WHO HAD A CLUSTER OF SEEMING WISE MEN.

the matter than the magicians or astrologers. Even the lesser Socrates and Plato, should they have been in the king’s court, would have been condemned to death with the rest of the wise men.

If the king had demanded only things that could be known in the wisdom of this world, Daniel would never have risen to the prominence he would later enjoy. In this regard, he bore great similarity to Joseph. Until something arose that demanded wisdom and understanding no one else had, Joseph remained in prison. But the very day that he had received from the Lord was perceived as necessary, he was brought from the dungeon of isolation.

The current popularity of problem solving, wit, organizational skills, statistical expertise, and motivational knowledge confirm the modern church is not asking for much. If a person has an impressive list of credentials – like the wise men of Babylon – they are offered key positions in the church and its subsidiary organizations.

There are whole bodies of Christian people who have never heard an insightful exposition of the Scriptures, or the opening up of things pertaining to life and godliness. They are like the citizens of Babylon who had a cluster of seeming wise men. Yet, when issues arise that have to do with knowing God, discerning

the times, or gaining the victory over the world, their wise men have to admit they are ignorant, having no knowledge.

The result of this crisis is that God is becoming more and more unknown within the professed church. For the most part, the people are Scripturally illiterate, and cannot handle aright the Word of God (2 Tim 2:15).

Of course, God will, in His own time, so orchestrate the circumstances as to confirm the impotence of worldly wisdom. Some of His people have already experienced this, and are finding there is no substitute for the knowledge of God – for fellowship with Him, access to the throne of all grace, and asking for wisdom. If you are a person who delights in the knowledge of the Lord, yet lack opportunity, keep the faith. Your time will come. God will open a door for you into which no one else will be able to enter.

Nebuchadnezzar could not be comprehended by Nebuchadnezzar himself. It could not be discerned by his wise men. That is the manner of the Kingdom, and there is no way to violate that manner and yet obtain an understanding of the truth.

I have known highly educated men who confessed the things of God were beyond them. In humility, like David, some of them have sought understanding from the Lord (Psa 119:34,73,125, 144,169). Also, like David, they were not disappointed.

An Explanation

I understand that it may appear I am just a disgruntled old man, but that is not the case at all. I carry a burden for the people who are deprived of the knowledge of God, yet flooded with the wisdom of men. I know by experience that the world's wisdom generates a spiritual fog that obscures the things of God. I pray for

themselves the objective – that is, they were given so that they might be understood. ^{KJV/NASB/NRSV} The NKJV gives the sense that the purpose for the dreams involved the benefit of both Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar.

Actually, all of these perspectives are involved in the text. So far as Nebuchadnezzar was concerned, God did not give the dream to him in vain. It was given in order that it might ultimately be understood. From Daniel's perspective, it was given in order that Daniel might know the dream and its interpretation, becoming a co-laborer with God in making it known. From the standpoint of the dream itself, it was a Divine prelude to revelation – the means God chose to unfold matters pertaining to the future.

Driven By A Divine Agenda

Daniel is making known to the king that his demand is NOT why he will receive the interpretation. **Revelation is not given because of human curiosity, but because of the purpose of God.** It was God Himself who initiated the procedure leading to the explanation of the dream, NOT the demand of Nebuchadnezzar.

A Principle to be Seen

There is a marvelous principle to be seen in this text. **God always introduces men to revelation in order that they might appropriate its meaning.** What God gives or shows to men is not intended to remain a mystery, even though it may be secret at the first. Those who see faint glimmers of truth are to pursue them, for they were granted to them to be understood. Further, introductions and glimmers are never ends of themselves, whether in the form of dreams, intuitions, or Scriptural knowledge. Such things are like a hand, beckoning men to pursue understanding, and engage in a quest to know the Word and will of the Lord. Many a soul has come short of knowing the will of the Lord simply because they did not pursue what the Lord showed to them.

It should trouble our hearts when the things of God are a mystery to us. That is why David prayed so fervently for understanding. He knew what the Law said. He was familiar with the Testimonies of the Lord. Yet, he sensed

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT GOD HAS REPUDIATED THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD. HE HAS LOCKED THE THINGS OF GOD SO THEY CANNOT BE ACCESSED BY THAT MEANS.

The Fact of the Matter

The fact of the matter is that God has repudiated the wisdom of this world. He has locked the things of God so they cannot be accessed by that means. That is precisely the declaration of First Corinthians 1:19-21. *“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him.”*^{NIV}

The Kingdom of God is so ordered that what God reveals cannot be deciphered by the world's wisdom. What He made known to

the day when men and women of God will be valued in strict accord with what they have received from God, not men.

BUT FOR THEIR SAKES

*“... but for **their** sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king ...”* Other versions read *“for **our** sakes,”* ^{NKJV} *“but for **the purpose** of,”* ^{NASB} *“but so that **you**,”* ^{NIV} *“but **in order** that,”* ^{NRSV} *“but for **this sole purpose**,”* ^{NJB} *“but because God wanted **you** to understand,”* ^{NLT} and *“but in order that the sense of the dream may be made clear.”*^{BBE}

Here, the various versions tend to muddy the water. Some read as though the reason God revealed the dream to Daniel was in order that Nebuchadnezzar might know. Others read as though the vision and its interpretation were

there was more to them than he was seeing. Thus he prayed, *“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”* (Psa 119:18). He saw the Word of God as a deep ocean, whose depths **could** be plumbed. It was like a deep well in which cool and refreshing water **could** be had – but they were located in deep places. Thus he confessed, *“Thy thoughts are very deep”* (Psa 92:5).

It is written that the Spirit *“searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God”* (1 Cor 2:10). And why does the Spirit search them? It is certainly not for Himself, for He is not in the learning mode. The Spirit is in the teaching and enlightening mode. He searches the deep things of God to give them to the redeemed. That, of course, is precisely the meaning of that verse. *“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*

An Example

Child of God, what God reveals is intended to be understood. That is - precisely why it is given. Some believers are tempted to lay aside certain books of the Bible because they appear to be too difficult for them to understand. Take, for example, the book of Revelation. There is a blessing bestowed upon those who give attention to it. *“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near”*^{NIV} (Rev 1:3).

Notice, the blessing is not to the one who understands, but the one who reads. It is not on the one who comprehends, but on the one who hears. It is not on the one who can fully expound the book, but the one who takes it into his heart, pondering and thinking upon it. It is not that reading, hearing, and pondering are themselves the blessing. **Rather, it is in these involvements**

that God begins to unfold things what would otherwise remain secret. Like all things God makes known, the Scriptures are intended to be understood. As you apply yourself to them, living by every Word of God, you will find this is the truth.

KNOWING THE THOUGHTS OF THY HEART

“... and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.” Other versions read, *“that you may understand*

The thoughts of reference in our text were in Nebuchadnezzar’s mind, but they were not his thoughts. They were God’s thoughts, brought to him in the form of a dream. The king did not conjure up these thoughts, they were put into his mind.

David spoke of God sending thoughts to him. He saw them as very numerous, even beyond count. *“Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts*

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the thoughts of your mind,”^{NASB} and *“that you may understand what went through your mind.”*^{NIV}

The phrase *“the thoughts of thy heart”* is not to be taken in the same sense as Simeon’s prophecy to Mary: *“that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”* (Lk 2:35). There, an expose of the conscious thoughts of the heart was intended. The cause for the flood was that the thoughts of man’s heart *“was only evil continually”* (Gen 6:5). God, we are told, searches and understands *“understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts”* (1 Chron 28:9). David, discerning that there was more to his thoughts than he fully grasped cried out, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts”* (Psa 139:23). These were all thoughts that had their genesis with men themselves. They were *“their”* thoughts.

which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered” (Psa 40:5). They were exceedingly precious to David. *“How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!”* (Psa 139:17). That was because he was able to ponder them.

But it was different with Nebuchadnezzar. He could not even remember the thoughts of his heart. That did not mean they were pointless, or that they should be forgotten. **Daniel declares he was given their meaning so the king could know what God had put in his heart.** See, what God gives is to be known. It is **not** to be treated as something that is neither necessary nor satisfying. Do not ignore or treat lightly holy thoughts that come into your mind. Consider them a stewardship to be handled with zeal and interest.

CONCLUSION

As the book of Daniel progresses we are beholding the working of the Lord. Masterfully he weaves the tapestry of life

with threads that do not normally mingle together. A Hebrew, an executioner, a king, and a dream are included. The dark

threads are selected of a king’s anger, wise men who obtained their wisdom from nether sources, and a mass execution.

The Time Comes for Daniel to Make Known to the King What God Has Made Known Unto Him, by Given O. Blakely

Throw in the light thread of youth, and the gray thread of ignorance. All of it does not appear to be of any great potential.

However, in the hands of the Lord of glory a wondrous work will be accomplished. The mind of an executioner will be changed. The hearts of four children of Judah will be challenged and assured. A young Jewish man will receive something no one in all of the empire possessed. A king's wrath will be assuaged. And a message will be delivered that will feed and nourish the saints of God for ages to come. A Divine purpose will be unfolded that was never before made known. It is no marvel that the Lord's doings are called "wonderful

works," and that they are "marvelous in our eyes" (Psa 40:5; 118:23).

Child of God, what is there in your life that appears to be in disarray? What is there that you do not understand, or that looks hopeless to you. **Do not imagine for a moment that God cannot bring a blessing out of it all.** God is your Master, not circumstance! Eternity is your destiny, not time. Eternal life has been determined for you, not everlasting misery. Is it not written, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1 Thess 5:9-10).

Lift up your head and be of good cheer. You have been raised to a higher level than Daniel. Daniel was not greater than John the Baptist, yet Jesus said this of John. "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt 11:11). It is certainly not that any of us are greater than Daniel or John the Baptist on a personal level. In a sense, they were giants and we are midgets. The difference is that they were standing in a valley, and in Christ we are standing on a mountain. You can expect God to honor the position in which He has placed you!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/3/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 31-45 of the second chapter. The lesson is titled, "**NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FIRST DREAM INTERPRETED.**" We will learn that God does not always speak in generalities. There are remarkable details in what was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar. That is why a man of God had to reveal these things to him. They detail the purpose of the Almighty, with whom the king was not familiar. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

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