

GOING WITH GOD

Sermon Two

THE GOD OF DREAMS AND DESTINIES

Daniel 2

Last week we began our exciting journey with Daniel by discovering God to be a God who both rules and overrules. We were challenged by this fact to then go with God and encouraged that as we go with God, God will always come through for us, ruling as well as overruling.

In chapter two we are given another picture of who God is as we discover God to be the God of dreams and destinies. In this chapter God begins to apply his master plan for both His people and the people of Babylon and we see in practical ways just how God rules and overrules. Let's be encouraged this morning as we look at how God is the God of dreams and destinies and how this can impact our lives today.

1. GOD DISTRESSES A KING vs 1

Nebuchadnezzar was in the second year of his reign feeling rather satisfied with life having conquered the nation of Judah and plundered their temple. He was the king of probably the strongest empire the world had yet known and things seemed to be going pretty well until God decided to show up and rain on his parade. God intervenes in his life and gives to the King dreams that leave him greatly disturbed and urgently wanting to discover the meaning of the dreams. The king knew these dreams would have a significant impact on his life. God did the same for Pharaoh in Gen 41 when Joseph was called to interpret as Daniel ultimately would be. The amazing thing about our God is that he is able to communicate with pagan kings even though they do not recognise Him. He is able to encounter them and turn their lives upside down just through a dream. Throughout the

Scriptures God intervenes in the lives of men in dramatic ways to get their attention and turn their worlds upside down. Think of God confronting Jacob at Bethel with the dream of a staircase to heaven. What of Jesus confronting the devout Saul on the road to Damascus and leaving him blind for many days. Given the fact that God is a God who rules and overrules, he is also a God who in His time, breaks through into the lives of ordinary people, rattles their cage and shakes their world in order to get their attention. Once He has their attention, he is able to begin the process of revealing His will and purposes for them. Sometimes God needs to take us out of our comfort zones to get our attention. God can and does use a little distress in our lives to achieve His purposes. He may speak to us in a dream even though this would not be the norm or in some other way that is meaningful to us.

2. GOD DISGRACES THE “WISE MEN” vs’s 2-13

Having gotten the kings attention, God now wants to demonstrate very clearly to the king that the answer to his distress is not to be found among the wise men that he consults but it is God alone who has the answer to his dream. God wanted to keep the Kings attention on Him! The kings of the day always had a huge counsel of wise men who would advise on many issues and it is into the group that God would place Daniel. God however disgraces these wise men in order to get the kings attention on Him. Even when Daniel under the power of God interprets the dream, he is very quick to point out that it was not he that had interpreted the dream, but that it was God. At various times in Scripture God exposes the foolishness of the world. Moses and Aaron defeated the magicians of Pharoah and the gods of Egypt and Elijah exposed the deception of Ball worship on Mount Carmel.

God constantly wants to show up the wisdom of the world as foolishness. God speaks through the prophet Isaiah in 29:14, “Therefore once again I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish”. James reminds us in 1:5, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault; and it will be given to him”.

3. GOD DISCLOSES THE SECRET vs's 14-23

What we need to realise is that there was a spiritual battle going on here in the heavenlies. Satan realises that God has planted Daniel and his friends in Babylon to achieve His purposes and so he instigates the King to kill them along with all of the other wise men. However, as we had seen in chapter one, Daniel had decided to go with God and so faced with the challenge of the dream and the threat

on their lives, we read in verse 18 Daniel urges his friends to plead with God to reveal the mystery, which God graciously does. The word mystery or secret is used eight times in this chapter, and reminds me that much of our life is a mystery and a secret that can only be discerned with God's help. Paul says in 1 Cor 13:12, “Now we see but a poor reflection...now I know in part...” There is a large dimension of life that God alone can reveal to us. In Daniels prayer of praise after God had revealed the mystery, notice what he says about God, He changes times, gives wisdom, reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, he gives wisdom and power, and made known to Daniel all that he had asked of God.

Not only does God know all things, he is willing to share the mysteries of life with us as we ask Him in faith. All that Daniel had to do was ask and believe!

Going with God is about going constantly to Him for wisdom rather than relying on the wisdom of man.

A W Tozer noted, **“Whatever God can do, faith can do, and whatever faith can do prayer can do when it is offered in faith. An invitation to prayer is, therefore, an invitation to omnipotence, for prayer engages the Omnipotent God and brings Him into our human affairs”**.

4. GOD DISPLAYS HIS WISDOM AND POWER vs’s 24-25

In God revealing the meaning of the dream to Daniel and he in turn revealing it to the King God demonstrated that he is the powerful God of the ages, the alpha and the omega the beginning and the end. The one who knows the beginning from the end. The one who raises up kingdoms and dynasties and removes them at his pleasure.

Nebuchadnezzar is rocked to the core when he discovers how wise and powerful the God of Daniel was. The meaning of the dream and the large image refers to four kingdoms as follows.

1. Head of Gold – Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom – 636 BC to 539 BC.
2. Breast and arms of silver – The Medo-Persian kingdom – Darius the mede conquered Babylon.
3. Belly and thighs of bronze – The Grecian Empire under Alexander the great – 330 BC – 63 BC.
4. Legs of iron and feet of iron and clay – Roman Empire – 63 BC –AD 475.
5. Finally all these kingdoms will destroyed by the rock cut out of the mountain refers to Jesus and the establishment of the Kingdom of God that will reign eternal.

There at least four truths that can be learnt out of this image.

1. God is in control of history. He knows and plans the future.
2. Human enterprises decline as time goes on. We think that we are getting better when in fact we are declining till the end of the age.
3. It will be difficult to hold things together at the end of the age. A mixture of iron and clay does not bond well.
4. All of history points to the return of Christ, the destruction of all preceding kingdoms and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The king is blown away by the awesomeness of Daniel's God, His wisdom and power for which there was no equal to be found. The must have also realised that he was there because of the pleasure of God. Daniel points this out to

him in verse 27, "The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory...".

We need to realise that all we have is as a result of God's pleasure and can be removed by him at any moment. It is God who holds all things in his hands. This understanding needs to humble us.

5. GOD DISTINGUISHES HIS SERVANTS vs's 46-49

In chapter one God showed favour to Daniel because he resolved in his heart to go with God. In chapter two he distinguishes Daniel once again and puts him in a position of great authority because he humbled himself and prayed for God's wisdom in solving the mystery.

God always honours those who honour Him. Again we are reminded that it is God alone raises men and brings them down in accordance with His purposes. Think of Joseph being distinguished in Pharaoh's court.

CONCLUSION

And so we are given a picture of the God of dreams and destinies and are reminded of how it is God who rules and overrules. He interrupts the life of the King, shows up the foolishness of the wisdom of man, reveals his own wisdom and power, and raises men up as He pleases. That is why He is the God we should go with.