

through the proper channels and observed the correct protocol in approaching the king. We know from the book of Esther that unless one were bidden properly to approach an Eastern potentate to do so presumptuously meant certain death. All that Daniel asks is "time." This will postpone the execution until he could commune with his God, and give the desired interpretation to the king.

It is most interesting to note that Daniel was sure he could give the king the interpretation of the dream before he had even received the knowledge of what the dream was from God (cf. 2:19). Daniel had such faith in God that he believed the will of God would be done before it was actually done! This same "great" faith the Lord expects of all His children. Only the "interpretation" is mentioned and not the dream itself. However the conciseness of the narrative explains this omission. If Daniel knows the interpretation, he most certainly must first know the dream and he is not asking the king what the dream was, as did the Chaldeans.

### QUIZ

1. Why seek out Daniel to be slain?
2. How did Daniel answer with "counsel and prudence?"
3. Why did Daniel ask for an appointment to the presence of the king?
4. How would one have made such an appointment in those days?

## II. DANIEL'S DECLARATION—2:17-35

### a. PRAYER

TEXT: 2:17-24

- 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:
- 18 that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his companions

should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

- 19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.
- 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his.
- 21 And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that have understanding;
- 22 he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.
- 23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast now made known unto me what we desire of thee; for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter.
- 24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had appointed 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.

### QUERIES

- a. Was Daniel selfish in praying for his own safety?
- b. Does God really have a hand in putting rulers in rule?
- c. Why does Daniel pray for the safety of the Chaldean wise men?

### PARAPHRASE

Then Daniel went home and told the whole matter to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and having confided in them he asked them to pray to the God of the heavens to grant them His mercy and reveal to them this secret mystery in order that Daniel and his companions would not be executed together with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. And that very night the secret of the king's dream was revealed unto Daniel in a vision. Then, in prayer, Daniel praised the God of heaven, saying, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for He alone has all

wisdom and all power. World events are under His control and are used for His purpose. He removes kings and rulers and sets others on their thrones according to His sovereign purpose. All true wisdom, knowledge and understanding comes from Him. All His plans that are not yet known to man He reveals in His own good time and His own way because He knows all things that are hidden. He is all-wise and there is no ignorance in Him at all. I think and praise You, oh God of my fathers, for You have given me wisdom and ability to solve the problem at hand. You have revealed to me all that we desired concerning the king's perplexity. Then Daniel went in to see Arioch, who had been ordered to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said, Do not slay the wise men of Babylon. Take me in to the king and I will reveal to him the interpretation of his puzzling dream.

### COMMENT

v. 17-18 THEN DANIEL WENT TO HIS HOUSE, AND MADE THE THING KNOWN . . . Daniel's associates are so thoroughly one with him in faith in God and in purpose to glorify God that he can immediately confide in them and seek their assistance. Daniel asks their counsel and consent, and believes that their fellowship in intercessory prayer will please the Lord and accomplish His will for their lives in this particular circumstance. The chief object of the intercession is not selfish. This is evident when in verse 24 Daniel intercedes on behalf of the pagan wise men of Babylon that they might not be slain. Daniel's purpose in praying for salvation from the executioner's sword was because he was fully persuaded God had put him in Babylon "for just such a time as this." Daniel simply wanted to be allowed to be God's "living sacrifice" to bring the revelation of God to this pagan emperor and to God's own covenant people who so desperately needed strengthening now. He was praying for a higher purpose than mere physical existence, but physical existence was a necessity that the higher purpose be served.

v. 19-22 . . . THE SECRET REVEALED UNTO DANIEL . . . THEN DANIEL BLESSED . . . GOD . . . WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS . . . AND HE CHANGETH THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS . . .

HE REMOVETH KINGS, AND SETTETH UP KINGS . . . This is one of those most arresting passages of O.T. scripture speaking of the divine sovereignty and immutability of the purposes of God in the events of earth's history. It does not teach "predestination" or "irresistible grace" in the strict Calvinistic sense. However, it is a fact of scripture, too often ignored by Restoration preachers and writers, that the prophets and apostles speak of God as doing things which He permits, without distinguishing verbally between His direct action and His permissive action. If we are going to speak where the Bible speaks we must insist upon preaching the Living God of intimate, actual relationships in every-day history. Our God is God of the "now." In II Sam. 24:1 and I Chron. 21:1ff we read, respectively, that David was moved by the Lord to number Israel and Judah, and that Satan provoked David to number Israel. Taking these two passages of Scripture together, there is no contradiction but simply a lesson that God acts in what He permits. God permitted Satan to provoke David to number Israel. Whatever God permits, He permits for His own good purpose. Just as in the case of Joseph and his brethren, Joseph was able to say, "you intended it for evil but God intended it for good . . ." (Gen. 50:20). So we are to understand that whatever evil God may permit in allowing despotic rulers to reign He permits as a part of His disciplinary or sanctifying providence.

We quote here from Charles Hodge: "The decrees of God are free in the sense of being absolute or sovereign. The meaning of this proposition is expressed negatively by saying that the decrees of God are in no case conditional. The event decreed is suspended on a condition, but the purpose of God is not. It is inconsistent with the nature of God to assume suspense or indecision on his part . . . whatever God foreordains must certainly come to pass. The distinction between the efficient (efficacious) and the permissive decree of God, although important, has no relation to the certainty of the event. All events embraced in the purpose of God are equally certain, whether he has determined to bring them to pass by his own power, or simply to permit their occurrence through the agency of (the free will of) his own creatures . . . some things he purposes to do, others

he decrees to permit to be done. He effects good, he permits evil. He is the author of the one, but not of the other.

"The universality of the decrees follows from the universal dominion of God. Whatever he does, he certainly purposes to do. Whatever he permits to occur, he certainly purposes to permit. Nothing can occur that was not foreseen, and if foreseen, it must have been intended. As the Scriptures teach that the providential control of God extends to all events, even the most minute, they do thereby teach that his decrees are equally comprehensive." (cf. all of the following scriptures: Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17; Neh. 9:6-7; Job 9:12; 12:7-10; Psa. 104:27-32; 135:6; I Chron. 29:12; Dan. 4:35; Jer. 27:5-7; Isa. 10:5ff; 45:5-7; and cf. also our commentary *Minor Prophets*, pages 93-111, "Theocratic Philosophy of History.")

Leupold notices how fluent Daniel was in Scripture in his prayer according to the quotations (on v. 20a see Psa. 103:1-2; Psa. 113:1-2 on v. 20b see I Chron. 29:11-12; Job 12:13; 16-22. on v. 21a see Psa. 31:15; on v. 21b see Job 12:18; Psa. 75:6-7 on v. 21c see I Ki. 3:9-10; 4:29; on v. 22r see Job 12:22; on v. 22b see Job 26:6; Psa. 139:12; Isa. 45:7; on v. 22c see Psa. 36:9 on v. 23a see Gen. 31:42; Ex. 3:15).

The phrase "changeth the times and the seasons" reminds us that God determines how long one culture or influence shall prevail and when another shall become operative. One dynasty influences world culture and wanes and disappears at the directing influence of God's immutable moral laws governing the universe, and another comes to the fore (cf. Jer. 27:5ff). God creates both "weal and woe" (cf. Isa. 45:5-7). God is able and does this because He has all wisdom and understanding and knowledge. He is able to reveal the future—the deep and secret things—because all time and space and mass are within His knowledge and control at all times—all at once. Nothing can be hidden from Him and if He hides anything man can know it only if He reveals it to man. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all . . ." (I Jn. 1:5). This entire passage (v. 20-22) has to do with God's special revelations to prophets (and later to apostles) concerning His scheme of redemption.

v. 23-24 I THANK THEE . . . THOU HAST MADE KNOWN . . . THE KING'S MATTER . . . DANIEL WENT . . . UNTO ARIOCH . . . DESTROY NOT THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON . . . I WILL SHOW . . . THE KING THE INTERPRETATION. The original language here is emphatic . . . "THEE, praising am I." God is placed first. It is interesting to note that Daniel, in his prayer of praise, includes his companions as equally important in this matter. He does not forget them, thinking that God is interested only in him. Having glorified the name of God and being satisfied that he is carrying out the will of God in this matter, Daniel seeks the emperor's presence through Arioch, one of the chief guards of the palace. He persuades Arioch not to destroy the wise men of Babylon because he will be able to make known to Nebuchadnezzar both the dream and its interpretation. So Daniel the captive, the foreigner, intercedes on behalf of the Babylonian wise men and saves their lives through the revelation God graciously provided. It is difficult for us, inasmuch as we are so familiar with this account and removed from it some 2600 years, to realize that it was an actual, historical event—it really happened. When we do realize its actuality, we stand amazed at the working of God in carrying out His purposes!

## QUIZ

1. Why did Daniel immediately make known to his companions the matter?
2. Why did Daniel pray for salvation from the executioner's sword?
3. What does the phrase "he changeth the times and . . . seasons" mean?
4. How does God remove kings and set up kings?
5. What does the fact that this was an actual event mean to you?

## b. PROFESSION

TEXT: 2:25-30

- 25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the

- children of the captivity 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 before the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers, show unto the king;
- 28 but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made 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 hath made 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 to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that thou mayest know the thoughts of thy heart.

### QUERIES

- a. Had Arioch "found" Daniel or had Daniel sought Arioch?
- b. How did Daniel have the courage to talk about his God to king Nebuchadnezzar?
- c. Does Daniel mean in v. 30 that God's immediate purpose was to reveal something to a pagan king?

### PARAPHRASE

Then Arioch, in great excitement, brought Daniel into the presence of the king, and said to him, O King, Behold, I have found one of the captives from Judea who claims he is able to tell you your dream and its interpretation. The king said, Belteshazzar, is this true? Are you able to make known to me both what I dreamed and its interpretation? Daniel replied, As far as my revealing to you myself what your dream was—I could not do it any more than your own

wise men. No mortal could do such a thing! But there is a God of heaven who reveals secrets. And He has seen fit in His own purpose to reveal to you, king Nebuchadnezzar, in your dream, what is going to happen in the future. Yes, your dream was this: You dreamed of coming events. He who reveals secrets was speaking to you. But, it is as I said before, it is not because I am wiser than any other living person that I know this secret of your dream, but because God has chosen me to be His instrument to make known to you what your secret thoughts mean.

### COMMENT

v. 25-26 . . . ARIOCH BROUGHT IN DANIEL . . . I HAVE FOUND A MAN . . . ART THOU ABLE? Notice the precociousness of Arioch! He seizes the opportunity to feather his cap by claiming to "have found" an answer to the most perplexing problem Nebuchadnezzar has ever had in all his life. In fact, Daniel had found Arioch! How could Arioch make such an incongruous statement seeing that he had just a few hours before this gained an audience before the king for this same Hebrew lad? Arioch is doing what is incongruous but normal for practically all underlings of some great monarch—making the most of any occasion to put himself in favorable estimation by his superior.

The king, greatly vexed of soul, and constantly plagued by such machinations of his underlings, probably did not give Arioch's attempt at politicking a second thought. He was intent upon finding someone who could set his mind at rest concerning this troubling dream. The king, skeptical that anyone could do what he asked, makes a special point of asking Daniel if he is able to tell both the dream and its interpretation. The king calls Daniel by his Babylonian name, Belteshazzar.

v. 27 . . . THE SECRET . . . THE KING . . . DEMANDED CAN NEITHER WISE MEN . . . ETC. . . . Daniel quickly disavows any human ability to tell secrets. He wants the king to be prepared for his next statement which will be a testimony to the One True God. Daniel's words are also a mild rebuke to the king for expecting so much from any human "wise man."



v. 28 . . . BUT THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN THAT REVEALETH SECRETS . . . What a wonderful opportunity for Daniel to plant the seed of Truth in the mind of a pagan monarch. What courage it took to stand in the presence of such an absolute despot who considered himself a god and speak of The Living God. Daniel's courage was born of his faith in God and his knowledge of the situation—the extremity of Nebuchadnezzar's anxiety.

The phrase "latter days" can mean only one thing in its context! It refers to the days which follow from that present time unto the coming of the Messianic kingdom which occurred, of course, when the church was established on Pentecost, Acts 2. We shall treat this subject thoroughly in the remainder of the chapter.

v. 29 . . . THY THOUGHTS CAME . . . WHAT SHOULD COME TO PASS HEREAFTER . . . Evidently the king had gone to bed thinking about the future—what is going to happen in my future. Nebuchadnezzar was somewhat of an "Alexander the Great." He had conquered the civilized world of his day; he had done just about everything a monarch of that day could do in conquests, building, etc. With such personal glory already his he might well wonder what the future had in store. He was at the top of the ladder already! He lay down to dream because there were no more worlds to conquer! And what a dream!

Daniel describes his God as The Revealer of secrets and distinctly states that Jehovah has sent this dream to Nebuchadnezzar in order to tell him what shall happen in the future.

v. 30 . . . AS FOR ME . . . NOT REVEALED . . . FOR ANY WISDOM THAT I HAVE . . . Again Daniel disavows any personal, meritorious claim upon the gift of God to interpret dreams. He makes it plain that he is being used only as an instrument through which God is making known to the king what all these secret thoughts and dreams mean.

We admire Daniel's courage before a great monarch such as this. We would also do well to reflect on the trust in God necessary for Daniel not to presumptuously claim for himself these powers to reveal secrets! What a temptation

it would be for most of us to take to ourselves this glory rather than give it to God. Looked at from an immediate and physical or selfish perspective it could have been exceedingly profitable for Daniel to have claimed these powers all on his own. But, like Joseph, he said, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer . . ." (Gen. 41:16).

### QUIZ

1. Why did Arioch claim to have found Daniel when in the king's presence?
2. Why did the king ask Daniel if he were able to tell the dream?
3. How did Daniel rebuke the king's decree to kill all the wise-men?
4. What had the king probably gone to bed thinking about before his dream?
5. What does "the latter days" refer to?
6. What is especially significant of Daniel's disavowal to any personal merit?

### c. PUBLICATION

#### TEXT: 2:31-35

- 31 Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible.
- 32 As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass,
- 33 its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay.
- 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces.
- 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

## QUERIES

- a. Exactly what does the word "image" mean?
- b. Why all the different metals in one image?
- c. What is the significance of the grinding to dust of the image?

## PARAPHRASE

Oh king, you saw in your dream a huge and powerful statue of a man shining brilliantly, frightening and terrible, so fascinating you were unable to take your eyes off what you saw. The head of this statue was made of purest gold, its chest and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs were of bronze, and it had legs of iron with feet part iron and part clay. Then as you watched, a stone was cut out by supernatural means. It came hurtling towards the statue and crushed the feet of iron and clay, grinding them into dust. Then the whole statue collapsed into a heap and the iron, clay, bronze, silver and gold were all ground into dust by the stone and the dust was blown away forever. The stone that struck down the great statue became a great mountain that covered the whole earth.

## COMMENT

v. 31 . . . A GREAT IMAGE . . . THE ASPECT THEREOF WAS TERRIBLE . . . The image was a huge statue bearing the resemblance of a man. This dream-statue would undoubtedly appear to Nebuchadnezzar exactly like the statues of Assyrian-Babylonian men discovered by archaeologists. The original language indicates that Nebuchadnezzar was "continually staring" at this statue, as if transfixed by it. It was brilliant and terrifying.

v. 32-33 . . . HEAD OF GOLD . . . BREAST OF SILVER . . . BELLY . . . OF BRASS . . . LEGS OF IRON . . . FEET . . . OF IRON AND CLAY . . . Why all the different metals in one image? We suppose the scarcity of the metals would tend to give the image greater significance. We note the steady descending scale in preciousness of the metals from the head of the image down to its feet. The word translated brass means bronze or copper. One of the things which transfixed the king was the size of this statue. Another fascinat-

ing thing about it was its extraordinary splendor. It must have been an imposing sight indeed. As far as can be determined there is no precedent concerning such symbolism—therefore God has given a unique vision to the king—its origin is in divine revelation. We must look for a revealed interpretation, guided by common sense and hermeneutical principals that are in accord with other accepted interpretative principles.

v. 34-35 . . . A STONE . . . CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS . . . SMOTE THE IMAGE . . . The dream now becomes a “moving picture.” Action takes place. A stone (we would suppose a large stone) is “detached” or cut loose from, we assume, a mountain, and it is cut loose without natural or human aid—it must therefore have been cut loose by supernatural aid. We note that “stone” is an appropriate symbol here for the kingdom of God in both Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament God refers to Himself as the Rock (cf. Deut. 32:15; Psa. 18:2; 31:2; 62:2; Isa. 44:8; 51:1) and Christ’s diety is referred to as the “rock” upon which the church is built (Mt. 16:18; cf. also I Cor. 10:4).

The great statue lay directly in the path of the moving stone. The stone struck the statue specifically at the feet which was the most vulnerable part of the whole because they were part iron and part clay. The remainder of the statue was demolished so that the whole thing was utterly destroyed, ground to dust, and blown away with the wind. One might expect the statue to be broken into large portions with such a blow from a large stone, but a very unexpected thing happens—it is ground to dust in its entirety and the original language indicates the blowing away was so complete that the dust found no visible resting place. It is important to remember, when we come to the interpretation of the dream, that the *entire* statue was obliterated when the stone struck it.

The climax is the unusual, supernatural growth of the stone which had struck the image. It grew to such gigantic proportions that it became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

Leupold observes: “So the vision begins with a huge statue; it ends with the largest possible mountain. There is

not a superfluous word in Daniel's entire description and account. It is a masterpiece of pithy word painting." This is indeed one of the finest examples of symbolism in Old Testament literature. It is a great aid in understanding the symbolism in other places in the scriptures (Ezekiel, Zechariah, Revelation).

### QUIZ

1. What resemblance would this "great image" probably bear?
2. Why an image of different kinds of metals?
3. What caused the king to be so transfixed by this image?
4. Why is "stone" so appropriate here?
5. What is important about the stone striking the image in its interpretation?
6. How significant is the symbolism of this dream?

## III. DICTATORSHIP'S DESTINY—2:36-49

### a. FIRST THREE KINGDOMS

TEXT: 2:36-39

- 36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.
- 37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;
- 38 and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.
- 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

### QUERIES

- a. How could God give "the kingdom" to Nebuchadnezzar?
- b. Who are the other two kingdoms?
- c. Did they rule the entire earth?