

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

True repentance begins with knowledge of sin. The eyes of the repentant person are opened. He sees the length and breadth of God's holy law with distress and confusion. He sees the extent, the enormous extent, of his own transgressions. To his surprise, he discovers that he has been under a huge delusion by thinking of himself as a good person with a good heart. He learns that in reality he is wicked, guilty, corrupt, and evil in God's sight. His pride breaks down. His high thoughts melt away. He sees that he is a great sinner. This is the first step in true repentance.

Ryle, J. C.. Repentance - What it Means to Repent and Why We Must Do So (pp. 3-5). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

Our Sovereign God – Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream

November 17, 2024

Sermon Text: Daniel 2:31-49

Scripture Reading: Daniel 2:1-30

This morning we are changing gears, moving from First

Corinthians way back some 600 years before Christ to the book of Daniel. For the present time in which we find ourselves I think that the great theme of the Sovereignty of God over kings and nations as revealed in Daniel is most relevant for us.

Now, that of course does not mean that the rest of First Corinthians (chapters 7 – 16) are not relevant!

The subjects which Paul addresses there include:

- The Christian's liberty and matters of conscience
- The church's support of those the Lord calls to preach the gospel
- The dangers of idolatry
- The Lord's Table and the abuse of it
- Spiritual gifts
- The supremacy of love
- The gifts of prophecy and tongues
- Orderly worship and the errors of selfish chaos
- The Resurrection (we will return to chapter 15 next Easter Sunday)

All of these subjects are important, but I think you will see that the themes found in Daniel are *particularly* applicable for days such as we are living in right now. They are truths which are extremely encouraging, but at the same time they are doctrines which, if forgotten or denied, bring God's wrath and judgment upon a nation.

If you have been following the mid-week study of Daniel, you know that we have already considered, in the first 3 studies, the issues of authorship (how we know Daniel wrote this book), how Daniel and his 3 friends came to be in Babylon, how the Lord blessed them for refusing to eat the king's food which had been sacrificed to idols, and how these 4 Jewish youths found themselves in a life or death situation.

This, then, is the 4th message in our series on the book of Daniel and for our Scripture reading this morning, follow along as I read the first 30 verses of chapter two where we learn the background against which the Sovereignty of God over the nations is going to be displayed to the king of Babylon:

Dan 2:1-30 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. (2) Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the

king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. (3) And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.” (4) Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.”

(5) The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. (6) But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.”

(7) They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.” (8) The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— (9) if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for

you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.”

(10) The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “**There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand**, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. (11) The thing that the king asks is difficult, **and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.**”

(12) Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. (13) So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

(14) Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. (15) He declared to

Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. (16) And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king. (17) Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, (18) and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

(19) Then the mystery was revealed to 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 forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. (21) **He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings;** he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; (22) he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. (23) To

you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter."

(24) Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

(25) Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation." (26) The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?" (27) Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanter, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, (28) **but there is a God in**

heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: (29) To you, O king, as you lay in bed came **thoughts of what would be after this,** and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. (30) But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

There is the setting then. Daniel's faith in the Lord is evident in this. His faith and trust are in the Lord and the Lord hears his prayer. Listen now as Daniel tells the king his dream very precisely. Nebuchadnezzar must have been astonished:

Dan 2:31-36 "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and

its appearance was frightening. (32) The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, (33) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. (34) As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. (35) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (36) "This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

This was no normal dream. It was a vision given to Nebuchadnezzar in shocking reality with the result that he could not sleep – "his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him." He was driven by the need to find out what it meant. "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." You get the

impression that he didn't even wait until morning before commanding his staff of conjurers to appear before him.

We were told earlier –

Dan 1:17 As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, **and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.**

Daniel is always quick to give all glory to God for this ability. His gift is nothing like what we see being claimed today by the typical charlatans who seem to thrive on announcing their dreams and the interpretations as virtual divine prophecy. No, Daniel's ability came from the Lord actually showing him what Nebuchadnezzar had seen and then giving him its meaning. Daniel will have other dreams and visions, but he is never left to himself to decide the meaning. The Lord always reveals that meaning to him. In fact, Daniel left to himself might see the dream or vision, but he

didn't know the meaning until it was revealed to him:

Dan 7:15-16 “As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. (16) I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things.

We are warned by the Apostle Paul against deceivers who:

Col 2:18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

Here then is this striking dream in which the Lord shows Nebuchadnezzar that He alone is sovereign, ruler and ordainer of human events:

The image or statue is of terrifying appearance. It was *mighty* and incredibly bright. It reveals to this king what is really happening in the

course of human history, unseen to man.

There are 4 sections of the image:

- Head of gold
- Chest and arms of silver
- Middle and thighs of bronze
- Legs of iron, feet of mixed iron and clay

Notice the descending glory of these sections – from gold to iron and clay.

And then, regardless of the apparent might of this image, it is suddenly and utterly destroyed in a remarkable way:

Dan 2:34-35 As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. (35) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image

became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

This part of the dream, as we will see, conveys the primary message:

- A stone
- Not cut out by man
- Hurls into the feet of iron and clay
- The entire image collapses into pieces until it is nothing but dust
- All remnant of the image is blown away
- BUT – that stone! It grows into a mountain that fills the entire earth.

What does it all mean? What is the message God is communicating to this pagan world ruler? Daniel reveals it-

Dan 2:37-45 You, O king, the king of kings, **to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,** (38) and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of

the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.

(39) Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you,

and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

(40) And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

(41) And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. (42) And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. (43) As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

(44) And in the days of those kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,** (45) just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

The kingdoms represented by these sections of the image are (as history demonstrates) –

- Babylon
- Media-Persia
- Greece (Alexander)
- Roman Empire

The iron mixed with soft clay (see vs 43) representing “mixing with one another in marriage, but not holding together,” is difficult to interpret, but most probably means

that rulers of these kingdoms will always be trying to merge with other nations to form a world empire, but their efforts will never hold together. That certainly is true of human history.

Now, notice this – *all of these portions are part of the same image*. Only the stone cut without hands is outside of the image. Listen to Edward Young on this”

“We first observe that the Gentile kingdoms are seen as a whole. It is neither historical succession nor moral features with respect to God and man, but the kingdoms all together forming, as it were, a personage before God, the man of the earth in the eye of God, glorious and terrible in his public splendor in the eyes of men.”
[Geneva Commentary]

Understand? It is the kingdom of man (consisting of sub-kingdoms) versus the kingdom of God. The kingdoms of man are all really one kingdom of earth. The City of God and the city of man, as Augustine put it. Always in tension with one

another, yet God sovereign over all. It is Daniel’s God who is the only living and true God. The gods of the nations are the imaginations of man. They are nothing. Kings seek glory for themselves and claim that they are sovereign, and yet in reality it is the Lord, the God of Israel, who raises kings up and who removes them.

And *one day* –

... the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever...”

The stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand. It is the kingdom of God whose King is the Lord Jesus Christ. The day is coming when Christ returns and will bring to a finality all human kingdoms, including that one-world kingdom of the Antichrist.

And unlike any other kingdom that every existed, Christ’s kingdom will have no end. It shall never be

destroyed. It shall never be succeeded by another nation. All of man's history, all of the rise and fall of nations, will be finished once and for all time. The New Heavens and Earth will have arrived.

Jesus taught the very same truths about His kingdom, although he frequently emphasized *the gradual growth of the kingdom* while here in Daniel there is both gradual and finality -

Mat 13:31-33 He put another parable before them, saying, "**The kingdom of heaven is like** a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. (32) **It is the smallest of all seeds**, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants **and becomes a tree**, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." (33) He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is **like leaven** that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, **till it was all leavened.**"

Mat 12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, **then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

So what we have here in Daniel is really a quite incredible and reassuring fact –

Human history has always been in the Lord's hands. He raises up a nation and He brings it down. He decrees that nations rise and nations fall. In spite of all that wicked leaders do in order to establish a "1,000 year Reich" their efforts will always fail. And one day when Christ comes, when Antichrist boasts of his worldwide kingdom, the great stone of God's kingdom will smash it once and for all. And of His kingdom there will be no end.

Dan 4:3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Dan 6:25-26 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. (26) I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.

Dan 7:13-14 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. (14) And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Psa 145:11-13 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, (12) to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. (13) Your kingdom is

an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Rev 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

Are you in His kingdom? As Daniel told the king – “The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.” All else is passing away. Where is your treasure?