

Rebuilding After the Apostasy
Lesson 2 – Rebuild With an Immovable Anchor
(A Study of Daniel 2 and 4)
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Introduction: Life has little meaning if one does not know where he is going!

- A. Sooner or later one will come to a point in life where the questions of: “Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?” are asked in all earnestness.
 - 1. There is placed within each of us that innate desire to seek and know God. **(Ecc 3:11)**
 - 2. That desire may be suppressed by pride when things are going well. We can close our eyes and forget God. **(Deut 6:10-12)**
 - 3. There is not a man on earth that fails to have these needs.
- B. Often it takes an event in life to bring us to reality and see our need of finding God.
 - 1. Manasseh, one of the most evil kings in Judah, was humbled by God and in turn he repented and was forgiven. **(2 Chron 33:9-13)**
 - 2. The entire Babylonian captivity was meant to teach this lesson for Israel. **(Jer 20:10-14)**
 - 3. Today we will study two humbling experiences for one of the most powerful kings that ever lived, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon.
 - 4. When we learn the lesson that God is in control then we can build our lives on a solid rock that will never be moved.

I. Nebuchadnezzar learns the difference between the true God and man-made religion.

- A. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that came from the living God. **(2:1-3)**
 - 1. Up to this point in his life he had only experienced the vain, empty actions of the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers. It is likely that he innately knew that these things were empty but still a tradition of his people.
 - 2. Until now he did not know of any alternative. He now has a dream from the living God.
 - 3. When one tastes the genuine the fake is hard to go back to. **(1 Pt 1:18-19)**
 - 4. This experience left him troubled and searching! He would not settle for man-made answers any more.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar’s search for truth quickly exposes the false religion he had previously trusted in. **(2:4-13)**
 - 1. He now makes a request that only a true prophet of God could do.
 - a. When one determines to find the truth at all costs they will find themselves rejecting that which they once accepted as being false.
 - b. When that rejection comes there often will come hostility to the previous deception. **(Acts 19:16-20)**
 - 2. In a short order Nebuchadnezzar has these fakes admitting that they do not speak for God!
 - 3. When a person really seeks the truth at all costs he will find it. But watch out,

you may be surprised at what you find. (**Jn 7:17**)

C. Daniel responds to his impending destruction by trusting in a living God. (**2:14-23**)

1. While Daniel was not a part of the false prophets he still was lumped together with them and is scheduled to be killed.
2. Daniel's reputation continues to open doors of opportunity! Arioch gives him warning and then a chance to speak to the king. (**2:14-17**)
 - a. Confidence in God will give you boldness. (**Acts 4:13**)
 - b. We also will have a boldness in prayer. (**Heb 4:15-16**)
3. Daniel has such confidence in God that he tells the king that he would have an answer.
4. Daniel also called for his spiritual companions to join him in prayer.
 - a. He no doubt had a prayer of confidence.
 - b. Daniel knew that God would freely give mercy.
5. They also praised God for His answer.
 - a. Those who know the true God describe Him as "holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel." (**Ps 22:3**)
 - b. Those who know God often find themselves looking at God alone and praising Him! These people learn the great blessing of praise.
 - c. Consider the things about God that are revealed in this action:
 1. "For wisdom and might are His."
 2. "And He changes the times and the seasons"
 3. "He removes kings and raises up kings"
 4. "He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding."
 5. "He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what *is* in the darkness, And light dwells with Him."
 - d. How would a knowledge of these things about God help us in our life?
6. Nebuchadnezzar is about to learn these things about the one true God!

Class Discussion:

1. How far should we go in the search for truth? (**Jn 8:32; 2 Tim 2:24-26**)
2. Why would someone accept something less than the truth for their lives? (**Jn 3:19-21**)
3. How can one be "double-minded" in prayer?
4. How can we have a greater confidence in our prayers?

II. The first dream of Nebuchadnezzar (2:24-49)

A. Daniel appears before Nebuchadnezzar. (**2:24-30**)

1. Do you think Arioch believed Daniel could do what he said?
 - a. Arioch did try to gain some credit for himself in the way he presents Daniel to the king: "I have found..."
 - b. Still Arioch in his earlier actions knew who to turn to in difficult times!
 - c. Christian you may have many come to you in years to come because of

your stand of faith today! **(1 Pt 2:12)**

2. Daniel was careful to explain to Nebuchadnezzar where the interpretation came from.
 - a. The wisdom and faith of Daniel is shown here. We likely would have rushed in and told the interpretation the first thing if our lives were in danger.
 - b. Daniel's response shows both a faith in God and no fear of what Nebuchadnezzar could do to him. **(1 Pt 3:12-15; Jn 19:11)**
 - c. He reinforces what Nebuchadnezzar already knew about his soothsayers.
 - d. Daniel gives God the glory so Nebuchadnezzar might know the one true God!
 - e. When we seek glory for ourselves we take glory away from God!
(Jn 3:30; 2 Cor 4:5-6)

B. The dream and its meaning. (2:31-46)

1. He saw an image of four distinct parts consisting of different elements.
 - a. The head is of gold.
 - b. The chest and arms are of silver.
 - c. The belly and thighs are of bronze.
 - d. The legs are of iron and the feet are of iron and clay!
 2. Then he saw a stone "made without hands" hit the image on the feet and completely obliterate it.
 3. The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
 4. If this was all that we knew, consider some terms that help us with the interpretation.
 - a. "Made without hands." – **(Col 2:11)**
 - b. "Great mountain"
 5. What is the absolutely best way to know the meaning of a figurative passage?
 - a. How can we know the fulfillment of **Joel 2:28-32?** **(Acts 2:16-17)**
 - b. Many take figurative passages and build destructive doctrinal systems around it. **(2 Pt 3:15-18)**
 6. Daniel by inspiration tells us:
 - a. God has given Nebuchadnezzar his power as well as the kings that would follow. **(Rom 13:1-4)**
 - b. There would be four consecutive kingdoms beginning with Nebuchadnezzar.
 - c. In the days of the fourth kingdom God's eternal kingdom would be established.. (History tells us the kingdoms were: **Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome**)
- (Dan 2:44)** ⁴⁴ And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.
- d. This will come to pass! **(Dan 2:45)**

C. Lessons for Nebuchadnezzar and for us. (2:46-49)

1. He knew of the supremacy of the one true God.
 2. He knew to humble himself and worship God.
 3. He honored the servants of God.
 4. Do you know this about God?
- D. Other passages that confirm this prophecy.
1. All speak of God's kingdom and its nature. (**Isa 2:1-4; Mic 4:1-5; Joel 2:28-32**)
 2. The exact fulfillment is certain. (**Lk 24:46-49; Acts 1:6-8; Acts 2:16-17**)

Class Discussion:

1. Why do we need to know that God has foretold and controlled the destiny of past kingdoms?
2. What is the doctrinal system known as pre-millennialism? Why should we be concerned with this doctrine?
3. Where does our hope come from? (**Titus 1:2**)

III. The second dream of Nebuchadnezzar (4:1-37)

- A. Remember the time line of the book.
- Chapter 1 – 17 years old**
Chapter 2 – 19 years old
Chapter 3 – 21-22 years old
Chapter 4 – 47-52 years old
- B. This dream is told by Nebuchadnezzar himself after all has past. (**4:1-3**)
1. While He now glorifies God and exalts Him, He had to be shown this once again! How many years had passed since he had known this?
 2. One of the true challenges we face in not forgetting what we know about God in the midst of success. (**2 Pt 1:12-15; Jas 1:21-23**)
- C. Nebuchadnezzar gives his soothsayers the first try then calls for Daniel. (**4:4-9**)
1. It is sad to see that he continued to use these people. Tradition is hard to put away!
 2. Maybe because these men know of Daniel that they do not dare to try to interpret the king's dream!
 3. The religious leaders of the world today flee from an open Bible when God's people are present!
 4. He admits the difference between his god and Daniel's God. Why does he not change?
- D. Elements of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
1. There was a great tree that provided for beasts, birds and all flesh.
 2. A holy watcher from heaven had the tree cut down and the stump bound with a band.
 3. The tree (man) would be wet with the dew of the ground and graze with the beasts because his heart was changed to that of a beast.
 4. Seven times shall pass over the man.
 5. The lesson of this dream is: "that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will..." (**Dan 4:17**)
- E. The interpretation and its fulfillment. (**4:20-37**)

1. Daniel was troubled by the meaning of the dream. **(4:18-19)**
 - a. Give Nebuchadnezzar credit, he wanted to know no matter what!
 - b. We too should want to know everything that our God reveals.
2. The tree represented Nebuchadnezzar and though cut down the stump and roots were preserved so that he might return. **(4:20-26)**
 - a. He needed to learn that “Heaven rules.”
 - b. In the midst of the interpretation Daniel gives some needed advice!**(4:27)**

(Dan 4:27) ²⁷Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by *being* righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

 - c. In spite of “good preaching” Nebuchadnezzar does not change! While he was full of praise for Daniel, he was not ready to yield his heart.
 - d. Pride can glory in knowledge and ability and never let the heart be touched. **(Ezk 33:30-33)**
3. Nebuchadnezzar finds out that God means business. **(4:28-37)**
 - a. Does this remind you of a New Testament king? **(Acts 12:21-24)**
 - b. Now he sees where he is before God. **(4:35)**

“Muhammad Ali was in his prime, and as he was about to take off on an airplane flight, the stewardess reminded him to fasten his seat belt. He came back brashly, "Superman don't need no seat belt." The stewardess quickly came back, "Superman don't need no airplane, either." Ali fastened his belt.”-James S. Hewett

F. He learned a lesson that all must learn about pride. **(4:37)**

 1. There are several words that indicate pride: “Haughty, vainglory, high look..”
 - a. Paul uses the word: “Puffed-up” - “to inflate, blow-up, blow out, to cause to swell up...fig. To make proud.”
 - b. Have you ever said that someone is “full of hot air.” **(Prov 25:14)**
 2. Pride is an unrealistic view of ones abilities.
 - a. The scriptures clearly warn us. **(Gal 6:3; Rom 12:3)**
 - b. Be sure you do not confuse the Bible sin of pride with self-respect. There is a realm wherein we “ought to think”.
 - c. An “inferiority complex” is not humility. Often these people will turn to pride as a mask of there internal insecurities.
 - d. “Let us make sure that the kind of pride we posses is the kind that keeps the head and chin up and not the nose!”
 3. Pride comes from abundance, achievements and blessings, that is why it is so dangerous.
 - a. Knowledge is good, but watch for pride. **(2 Cor 8:1-2)**
 - b. Be careful at who you put into positions of responsibility. **(1 Tim 3:6)**

c. The apostle Paul needed help to avoid pride. (2 Cor 12:7)

“I received a little printed form the other day with a rather intriguing title: How to Be Perfectly Miserable. And it goes on to list a few things you can do that will not only make you perfectly miserable but also keep you that way.”

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself.
3. Use the personal pronoun "I" as often as possible in your conversation.
4. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others.
5. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
6. Insist on consideration and respect.
7. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
8. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown them.
9. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
10. Expect to be appreciated.
11. Be suspicious.
12. Be sensitive to slights.
13. Be jealous and envious.
14. Never forget a criticism.
15. Trust nobody but yourself.

Class Discussion:

1. Why do we find it difficult to remember what we have learned about God?
2. When are we most vulnerable to pride?
3. What can we do to avoid pride?

Conclusion: Where does your hope lay, upon yourself or God?

A. God will never disappoint us because He always keeps His word! (1 Pt 2:6)

1 Peter 2:6 (NKJV) ⁶Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

“Behold, I lay in Zion

A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

B. How does one act who has this hope? (1 Jn 3:1-3)

1 John 3:1 through 1 John 3:3 (NKJV) ¹Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Pride's Connection to Envy
Ken Marrs

A Refusal to Rejoice

A neighbor comes over to your house to show you their new car. Your boss wants to tell you about his vacation in Hawaii. A friend tells you their daughter just received a full scholarship from three different universities. Are you happy for them? Can you "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (**Rom. 12:15**)? Some can ... and some cannot.

Why is it that some of us find it difficult to genuinely feel glad for our friends and brethren when some good fortune comes to them? Could it possibly be that when we see our neighbor's new car we are really saying to ourselves: "Why can't I have a new car too?" "I deserve it just as much as they do!" or, try this one on for size: "What a shameless waste of money. Don't they have anything better to spend their money on than some fancy car/house/vacation? Why couldn't they have bought something cheaper and given the difference to the poor?" Shades of Judas.

You see, when we find ourselves criticizing someone's good fortune, it may be that we are not really critical of what has been done, but that someone else has prospered rather than us. We may even find it easier to say "I'm so sorry" to one who has experienced some misfortune, because we are in fact quietly content that someone else is suffering and not us.

The real problem here is not just a weak spirit, but a dominating sense of the flesh ... our flesh ... our welfare ... our own exclusive world of "me." When someone else prospers, it's not fair if we don't prosper also, and when another suffers, at least we are not suffering!

Few things could be as un-Christlike as the inability or unwillingness to feel and show true compassion for a brother. The humble heart will naturally empathize with a brother's lot in life, whether prosperous or calamitous (**1 Corinthians 12:24-26**), but a proud heart will be impotent to understand another's circumstance. A Christian life without compassion is inconceivable. A Christian life without humility is impossible.

Envy

Envy is more than just wanting to have what others have or be as someone else. Envy seems to involve a measure of hatred. Paul enjoined envy with malice (**Titus 3:3**). Envy is married to resentment, and resentment is hard to hide. Pilate recognized the Jews and chief priests were moved with envy when they demanded that Jesus be crucified (**Mark**

15: 10). The chief priests and rulers were not really concerned with the truth of Jesus, but with a self-centered heart they saw our Lord as a threat to their place in the Synagogue and with the people.

Several years ago a gospel preacher was fired. Over ten years later, that same preacher received a phone call one Sunday afternoon. The man on the phone was from the congregation that had earlier "terminated" this preacher. The caller was crying as he explained that he was the reason for the preacher's dismissal. He had been a "favorite" of the congregation for several years until the new minister came. Everyone loved the new preacher and his wife, and they became the new favorites of everyone at the church. This brother couldn't stand it so he began to secretly spread false rumors among the brethren about the new preacher.

The caller had made a public confession that morning at worship services and was now asking for forgiveness from the one he had wronged. What a tragedy! What a burden to carry for over a decade of one's life! All because of selfish pride which conditioned this brother's heart to envy.

Pride is insidious. It strips us of reality ... the reality of ourselves and the reality of others. When we start comparing ourselves to others, we are faced with the never-ending task of explaining to ourselves why we don't have or didn't accomplish what others have. How torturous. How self-defeating. How foolish. Surely, selfish pride is the driving force in much of man's disapproval of other men.

Solution

The problem of envy could be solved in our lives if we would just humble ourselves toward each other as we do the Lord. Just think about this for a moment; we do not envy our Lord ... why? ... because we readily see that He is greater than ourselves. Likewise, we would not envy our brother if we would "... esteem others better than himself" (**Philippians 2:3**).

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