

(Daniel: The Man God Uses #2) the Revelation of Christ

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores how God reveals Himself through the life of Daniel and the importance of setting one's heart to please Him for spiritual effectiveness.

Duration: 1:01:12

Scripture: Daniel 1:8, Daniel 2:28, Daniel 3:17

Topics: "Daniel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the dream of a statue or man with different body parts made of different materials. He explains that these represent different kingdoms, starting with Babylon and followed by the Medes and Persians. The preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding this symbolism before moving on to the next stages in the life of the man. The sermon also highlights the role of Christ as the stone that will destroy the kingdoms of this world and establish an everlasting kingdom.

Transcript

Our Father, we do thank you that this evening we can take time out and come and wait upon your Holy Spirit to reveal the Lord Jesus to our hearts. We thank you for every part of your word and in a special way tonight for the book of Daniel and we ask you to give us light and sight that we might see him. Enable us to be detached from those cares of life that are so pressing upon us and enable us to have your divine attention that we might see him and appropriate him and be made like him.

Thank you in advance for meeting with us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Good evening. I'll ask you to open to Daniel 2. If we were doing the book of Daniel, we'd still be in chapter 1 for quite a while, but we're looking at the man, Daniel the man. Last week we tried to introduce a little bit these first six chapters of Daniel and we tried to hone in on the heart of God in these chapters.

Let me try to get the meat of what we looked at in that introduction before you and then we'll pick up where we left off. In the book of Daniel, we pointed out that God is doing something and almost every chapter tells you what God's doing. He's making himself known.

Over and over and over again in Daniel, God makes himself known. And then the book of Daniel also calls attention to history. In fact, I don't know of another book that calls attention more to human history than

Daniel.

That fact illustrates that God is moving on the stage, on the platform of human history. This is a book of nations and kingdoms and politics and behind the scenes, God is viewed as one who's in control. He's at the helm.

He's doing. He's making himself known. Where is God doing that? In human history.

And then the Holy Spirit seems to focus in on these four godly men, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these choice servants of the Lord, their stories are now told and they come out as those that God uses to make himself known. And I've suggested because of that, since the message of Daniel is God makes himself known in history through men like these.

Daniel, every time on the whole planet Earth, in any place that God is making himself known, he finds a Daniel, a Shadrach, a Meshach, and Abednego. These are the kinds of instruments through whom he makes himself known. Daniel covers the age of the Gentiles.

History until Jesus returns again. God did it once and put it on paper so we could see forever what he ever does. That's how he always does it.

And so it's important then that God helps us see what these men were like. If this, in reality, is the kind of instrument God will always use. Notice, if you would, just glance at several of these verses.

These men were always making a difference. Chapter 1, verse 8, But Daniel. 1-11, But Daniel.

2-14, Then Daniel. 2-24, Therefore Daniel went in. 3-12, There are certain Jews, namely Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

4-19, Same thing. Then Daniel. 5-13, Then Daniel was brought in before the king.

5-17, Then Daniel answered. 6-21, Then Daniel spoke. God describes the affairs of kingdoms, nations, politics, histories, moving on.

Then Daniel comes along. Then the Hebrews. And they're always interrupting.

They're always being used by God. They're always making a difference. They're always being influential.

They're God's instrument. We often quote Acts 10-34. We know God is not a respecter of person.

If you have the New American Standard, it says, Most certainly I understand God is not one to show partiality. But when you quote that verse, you need to remember the context. God is not a respecter of persons in salvation.

That is, we're all on level ground. No one has an advantage over anybody else in coming to know the Lord. We're all on level ground.

But when it comes to ministry, when it comes to usefulness, when it comes to service, when it comes to God's program of propagating the Lord Jesus Christ, then don't misunderstand it. Most certainly then, God is a respecter of persons. He certainly is.

And God does select. He's very selective in the instruments He uses. And we're not all on level ground.

God seeks out Daniels, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and they become the privileged remnant through whom He makes Himself known. And so we've been asking the question, what was it about these men that made them so usable, so strategic, so special to the Lord? He's going to make Himself known. He's going to do it in history.

He's going to use men like these. And I've suggested that these six chapters, in this proper order, present for us the complete story. Of course, it's Old Testament, so it's picture form.

You get the same truth in 2nd Corinthians in fully developed form. But here, it's in story form, and God gives us the complete picture of the kind of man God will always use. And there's never an exception to this.

First, you will experience chapter 1. Then you will experience chapter 2. Then you will experience chapter 3. Then chapters 4 and 5. Then chapter 6. In that order. The order can't be changed. It has to be in this order.

And so that's where we are, and that, hopefully, is how the Holy Spirit will aid us to lay hold of the spiritual reality of this very historical and prophetic book. So we pray that God will grace us as we look at it. Very briefly, chapter 1, verse 8. This is the first characteristic of the man, the woman, the instrument God uses.

Chapter 1, 8, "...but Daniel made up his mind," literally from the Hebrew, that is, he set his heart that he would not defile himself. That's the starting point. That's the most basic of all spiritual truths.

Anyone who ever begins, begins there. The man God uses must set his heart, will, purpose, choose, as Daniel did, as these three men did, he determines that all he wants to do is please God. That's how chapter 1 begins, with the setting of his heart.

As far as the record goes, he's about 14 or 15 years old. How he came to this truth, I'm amazed. I don't know.

Maybe his mother taught him this truth. Maybe he learned it in temple. Maybe God gave a special revelation of it.

Maybe he just stumbled over it. I don't know how he got to this place, but he was brought to the place where he set his heart, I just want to please God. Now, so that you don't misunderstand what that means, here's what I'm not saying.

I'm not saying that the man God uses lives for the Lord. That misses the point. That's not chapter 1. That isn't what Daniel did when he set his heart.

He didn't live for the Lord. He didn't live for God. The man God uses wants to live for the Lord.

See, there's a difference there between living for the Lord and desiring it. In chapter 1, Daniel just desires it. He just set his heart and he says, this is what I want.

Desire is one thing, performance is another. It's one thing to decide to choose it, another thing to carry it out. And I'm not talking about carrying it out.

I'm not talking about action. The man God uses just wants to. That's the beginning.

He has set his heart. I choose, I will, I set myself to please the Lord. And it's when God sees the want to, when God sees the desire, he counts that as faith.

He accepts that as faith and then he does the rest. We pointed out that Daniel and his friends, they didn't go after personal happiness. They just said, all I want is to please the Lord.

Though they didn't go after personal happiness, they surely found it when they set their heart on his happiness. Daniel and his friends didn't pursue as a goal the blessing of God. They said, all I want to do is please God.

But they certainly found the blessing of God and as they fed on that which honored God, God blessed that and that became their strength and their testimony. Daniel and his friends did not try to be remembered, to do some great thing to make history. The same verse in Proverbs that says, the name of the ungodly will rot, says the memory of the righteous will be blessed by embracing that single desire, I want to please him.

We're studying him. His memory has been immortalized. He's blessing us today.

He didn't try to be remembered. He just embraced that which God holds in everlasting remembrance. And when he embraced that which was precious to God, God made it last forever.

See, if you read this right, you can't look at these chapters and say, look at these men, their strength, their faith, their courage, their faithfulness, their loyalty, their discipline. That's what made them great. Or you misread it if you read it that way.

It's God's miracle that made them great. That's why these chapters are some of the greatest Old Testament chapters on miracles. It wasn't Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's faith that made them great.

It was God's miracle in the furnace that made them great. God's miracle in the lion's den. God kept coming through.

God kept showing up. God kept doing something. They couldn't do anything.

They have no more strength than you have. They have no more strength than I have. But they could want to, as you can want to.

They can will to, as you can will to. We're not talking about performance. They just said, I want to please Him.

And when they said that in reality, God came through with a miracle. And God kept showing up, and God performed, and God's the one that did it. Those brothers wouldn't have lasted an hour with their desire if God hadn't followed through with a miracle.

Any more than you can last an hour unless God shows up. You can choose, but you can't perform. The duty's yours, but the power's God.

But you have to come to the place somehow, sometime, some way, to begin. You just say, I want to. I choose.

I will. I just want to please Him. When you do that, God will keep showing up then, and He'll make sure that it comes to pass.

Well, I don't want to reteach last week's lesson, but that's the first characteristic. Now, when your heart comes that far, you just want to. Chapter 2 follows.

Let me give you the point of Chapter 2 and then try to illustrate it for you. I hope you did your homework and you read the chapter. We'll read isolated verses in case you didn't, but I think it would help you if you did read on ahead.

From this point on in the book of Daniel, Daniel becomes famous for his spiritual eyes. From this point on in the book, he's known for his eyesight, his ability to understand dreams and visions and revelations of God. He becomes known for his insight, his reputation as a revealer of mystery.

Now, follow along these verses if you would. Daniel chapter 4 verse 9, Nebuchadnezzar speaking of him. He says, I know that the Spirit of the Holy Gods is in you and no mystery baffles you.

Verse 18, you are able for a Spirit of the Holy Gods is in you. And then later in chapter 5, when Belshazzar, the great-grandson of Nebuchadnezzar speaks. Daniel's reputation continues.

511, there's a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the Holy Gods. And in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. 512, same idea.

An extraordinary spirit, knowledge, and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanations of enigmas, solving of difficult problems were found in Daniel. Chapter 514, please. I've heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you.

Illumination, insight, extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. 516, same idea. I've personally heard about you, you're able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems.

This is not once or twice that this is referred to. But Daniel now becomes known for his ability to see through. Insight, eyesight.

Now, certainly what they observed, they didn't understand in Daniel. They thought Daniel had this special natural talent, you know. He's able to interpret dreams and so on.

You could come to him with a mystery and say, alright Daniel, I've got this problem and you've got this gift, so let's work together and you can tell me what this means. Daniel didn't have that kind of a gift, a natural ability into these things. He had to seek the Lord.

Look at chapter 2, verse 17 and 18. Daniel went to his house and informed his friends Hananiah, Meshach, and Azariah. That's the same as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Informed them about the matter in order that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning the mystery. They say, he has a gift, he can just do it. Well, he had a gift, but he better seek the Lord.

And he went and prayed about it and he had his friends pray about it. Verse 19, the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then he blessed the God of heaven.

And then in chapter 2, 22, he confessed, it is he who reveals the profound hidden things. He knows what's in the darkness, light dwells with him. See, Daniel constantly confessed, chapter 2, verse 27, 28, neither wise men, conjurers, magician, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king.

However, there's a God in heaven who reveals mystery. Chapter 230, as for me, Daniel says, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man. Daniel had insight, but oh, how he had to seek the Lord.

Now in this connection, I'm going to take a little bypass here, and I'll come right back. But let me say a word about gifts, and especially this gift of insight. When you read the rest of the book of Daniel, a tremendous light is shed on this gift of illumination that Daniel had.

Rather than being something easy and natural that was performed at the drop of a hat, the opposite was true. That was the most exhausting gift God ever gave the man, insight. Daniel was exhausted.

It drained all the strength out of him to use that gift. He had to lay hold of the Lord, and then when he was finished, he was all out of strength. Just glance at these verses.

I won't spend long here, but I want you to see this. Chapter 7, 15, my spirit was distressed within me. The visions in my mind kept alarming me.

Verse 28, as for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me. My face grew pale. I kept the matter to myself.

Chapter 8, 27, I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. I got up again and carried on the king's business. Chapter 10, verse 2, in those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks.

I did not eat any tasty food, nor was any meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed. Same chapter, 10, verse 8, I was left alone, and I saw this great vision, yet no strength was left in me. My natural color turned to a deathly pallor.

I retained no strength. Chapter 10, verse 16, O my Lord, as a result of the vision, anguish has come upon me. I've retained no strength.

As for me, there remains no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me. You see, the world doesn't understand those who see through to God. Neither does the Christian world understand those who see through to God.

They have the idea, oh, you have the gift of insight. That's wonderful. I'm so glad you have that gift, to be able to understand and see.

So here's the problem. And then they lay out the problem. And Christian A says, oh, thank you so much for asking me that, because I've got this gift of spiritual insight.

Now, as I understand it, it means blah, blah, blah, blah. That's not the way it is at all. And Daniel sheds a lot of light on that.

Those who really have those gifts from God are constantly on their face before God. And they labor before the Lord, and they stay in His presence, and they linger in His presence, and it's quite exhausting to the flesh to really get through to God. It's so easy to say, oh, I've got a gift.

You know, I understand these things. It's another thing to lay hold of the law. In this connection, legalism is a cop-out.

It's the easy path. And I say it's the easy path, because all it does is bring sweat to the forehead. And anybody can endure that.

But the draining of the Spirit is something else again. And we need to pray as, like Daniel, when he laid hold of God, then God opened the truth and gave him life. But light leveled him.

It drained him. It exhausted him. And we need to pray that God would raise up men and women who knew what it was to get revelation from God, who knew how to pray through all the way until they got the light from the Lord.

Well, that's a little off the point. Let's get back to chapter 2. Chapter 2, let me just say it in a word and then prove it to you. Chapter 2 is the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's not the complete statement, but that's the beginning. The revelation of Christ. Now, the whole point of that dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, the spiritual message was the revelation of the Savior.

Now, don't get all lost in this dream with the golden head and the silver arms and the brass hips and the thighs and the iron legs and the clay toes and all of that thing, because you can do that and miss the point. You could say, chapter 2 is the revelation of history, and you'd only be half right. It's not just the revelation of history, the revelation of Christ.

And if you don't see Christ, you missed the chapter. Say, what's chapter 2 all about? Well, here's the surface answer. Chapter 2 is about Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

He had a dream that he couldn't understand and chapter 2 is all about that dream. Not deeper than that. Chapter 2 is not about his dream.

In a sense it is, what was the dream? I don't mean by that, what did it contain? I don't mean that. What was the dream? The dream was the Word of God, and I can prove it. Say, alright, let me see you prove it.

Alright? Look at chapter 2, 31 to 35. Just glance at that. Chapter 2, 31 to 35.

Is that the Word of God? Or is that the dream? See, it's both. It's the dream, but it's the Word of God. It's the dream.

Just think, Nebuchadnezzar had this big problem. He couldn't understand his dream. Nebuchadnezzar couldn't understand the Word of God, which came to him in the form of that dream.

But it was the Word of God he couldn't understand. That's what the whole point is. And neither could anybody else.

All the wise men of Babylon and the Chaldeans and the magicians and the conjurers, they were all baffled. They were all in darkness because they couldn't understand the Word of God. What was it that was revealed to Daniel? Don't say Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The thing that was revealed to Daniel was the Word of God. That's what Daniel saw. And what he saw in the Word of God was the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The revelation of Jesus Christ through the Word of God. So don't get lost in the dream or you miss the spiritual point of the chapter. The spiritual point of the chapter is seeing the Lord Jesus in the Word of God.

That's what this is all about. And I'm suggesting that's the second principle of the man God uses. First, he sets his heart to please the Lord.

And when he chooses God, he becomes now a candidate for the revelation of Christ through this book. The revelation of Christ in the Word of God. Now with that principle before you, let's home in on it.

I'm going to ask you to follow as we read just the facts of the dream from verses 31 to 35. You, O King, were looking and behold there was a single great statue. That statue which was large and of extraordinary splendor was standing in front of you and its appearance was awesome.

The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands and it struck the statue on the feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like the chaff from the summer threshing floor.

And the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Facts of this dream can be summarized in four.

Number one, the statue or the man. Number two, the stone. Number three, the wind.

And number four, the mountain. And if you understand the man and the stone and the wind and the mountain, then you understand the second stage in the life of the man, the instrument that God uses. Let's take them one by one and then we'll wrap it up.

Number one, the man. The man, the image with its head of gold and its arms of silver and its belly and thighs of brass and legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. You say, well, that's easy to explain.

If you just look at chapter 2, 36 to 45, it's all explained. There are five kingdoms. The head of gold is Babylon.

And then when that passes, then the Medes and the Persians are going to come. That's silver. And then Macedonian Empire, that's the brass.

And then Rome is iron. And then someday in the future, there'll be a mixture of ten tolls, ten individual kingdoms. And in the days of those kings, the Lord Jesus will return and set up his everlasting kingdom.

So it's easy to understand the man. It's all politics. It's all history.

Babylon, Medes, Persians, Greece, Rome, and then the tenth kingdom. But if it were just a history lesson and no spiritual principle, wouldn't the vision read like this? And I speak as a fool. And I beheld the image and behold, as I looked, suddenly the golden head fell off.

And then the silver arms became prominent. And I kept staring at the vision. And then the silver arms fell off.

And all I saw was the brass thighs. And after a while, the brass thighs disintegrated and they were just iron legs. And then the iron legs fell to pieces.

And finally, when Jesus returned, all that was left were ten tolls and iron and clay mix. If it was just Babylon, because Babylon passed away. And then the Medes and Persians, they've come and they're gone.

They're thousands of years old. They're gone. And then Greece passed away.

And Rome passed away. So they'd be gone. But you notice in the vision, when the stone comes, they're all there.

Babylon hadn't passed away. Still there. And so is the silver, and so is the brass, and so on.

See, what this vision is saying, it's more than A is followed by B, and B is followed by C, and C is followed by D, and ultimately Alpha and Omega come in. More than that, there's a spiritual message in this section. You know, people argue over all of the historical, but they miss the spiritual.

Oh, may God give us eyes to see the spiritual. The historical is to illustrate the spiritual. If all you see here is Babylon and Rome and so on, my, you're missing the heart of God.

You're missing the heart of the Lord. It's not an accident that the kingdoms of earth were in the form of a gigantic man. See, that could have been a bull.

It could have been an alligator. It could have been anything. It could have been a tree.

Why was it in the form of a man? I think God is saying that this is the kingdoms of men, on one side, over against the kingdom of God on the other side. You see, that image represented the whole world system. The kingdoms of men.

Yes, it's Babylon. Yes, it's the Medes. Yes, it's Persia.

Yes, it's Macedonia. Yes, it's Rome. And yes, it's every nation and land, kingdom that's ever come.

But it's man. It's the kingdom of man, that which is human, that which is flesh, that which is self, that which is on the earth, earthy. It's the kingdom of man.

And all that's worldly and all that's fleshly, this world, this world system has got to be destroyed and replaced by Christ. That's the message of this chapter. It's not political history.

This is spiritual history. Man's kingdom, with all of its glory and all of its pride and all of its pomp, is on a very brittle foundation. Not only a great image out there in nations, but that monstrosity, that colossal giant, is also in here, in my heart and in your heart, the kingdom of this world.

And there's the old glory of Babylon here and the independence of the Medes and the Persians and the wisdom of the Greeks and the strength and the independence of Rome and so on. It's all in my heart. It's all in your heart.

And this world system is a kingdom that's built on clay. And if we're going to know God, if we're going to be used by God, if we're going to be this group within the group within the group, this remnant, then that kingdom has got to be brought down. That image represents the whole world system, the whole king

system.

And it's got to be brought down and replaced. Look at a few of the facts. In verses 5 and 6, don't get the idea that Daniel understood all of this.

In fact, when you read the chapter, he seems to be the most ignorant one in the whole chapter. He doesn't know what in the world's going on. When you read verse 5 and 6, the king answered and said to the Chaldeans, the command from me is firm.

If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you'll be torn limb from limb. Your bones will be made of rubbish heap, or rather your houses will be made of rubbish heap. And if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you'll receive from me gifts, reward and great honor.

Therefore declare to me the dream and the interpretation. Now this whole thing seems so unreasonable and so unfair of Nebuchadnezzar. Did Nebuchadnezzar remember the dream and say, you tell me what it is so I know you're not faking? Or did he forget the dream and want to be stimulated to remember it again? We don't know.

What we know is this. Now remember, this is a book about missions. God is making himself known in the world, and now he's beginning, and we'll see it chapter by chapter, he's stirring, he's beginning to make himself known to Nebuchadnezzar.

He brings Nebuchadnezzar the Word of God. He's working in Nebuchadnezzar. And Nebuchadnezzar has been lied to many times by his magicians and Chaldeans.

In fact, verse 9, you've agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the situation is changed. See those four groups of men, those wise men, they had made great claims. They had claimed that they were able to read the stars and communicate with departed spirits and know beyond that which you could see and read the tea leaves and know the future.

And Nebuchadnezzar is just saying, look, let me see you do what you claim you're able to do. Let me see some reality. Show that you're not hypocrites.

You claim contact with the gods? Then tell me, tell me what dream I dreamt and then tell me what it means. And I think that request was designed to shut the mouths of hypocrites, to expose the liars. God was dealing with Nebuchadnezzar.

You're not going to understand this unless you see missions, Jerry. God is beginning to stir in the heart of this king, and he's already brought him to this place where he's saying, I don't want man's answers. I want reality.

I don't want to be lied to anymore. I want something that doesn't come from men, that can only come from the gods. You know, at first I was puzzled when I read through Daniel.

Chapter 1, it says that after their education, God so blessed Daniel and his friends that they were found ten times wiser than all the magicians and the Chaldeans and so on. Now wouldn't you think if somebody was ten times smarter than somebody else, if you had a problem, you'd call him first? Creek day, I would. If I had somebody ten times smarter than somebody else, I'd call him first.

And yet, over and over again as you go through the record, they always forget to call on Daniel. And then after they have exhausted all the other resources and found them to be dry, then they remember the man of God. Oh yeah, there's a man in the kingdom whose name is Daniel.

And it seems like they keep forgetting him. And I think I ought to run right away to them, but I wonder if the Lord somehow doesn't wait until the world exhausts all of its own resources. Now over and over again, you know, people will ignore you until a crisis comes in their life.

And then all of a sudden the phone rings. And I just thought of calling you. I wonder if God's not behind that.

If he waits until everything else is drained, until there's no answer, until their heart is crying out, I want reality. I don't want to be lied to anymore. I want what only God can give.

Chapter 2 verse 10 says, There's not a man on earth who could declare the matter. No one could declare it to the king except the gods whose dwelling place is not with flesh. And it was almost like he was looking for something beyond what man could give.

And I think God maybe engineers that. And when everybody else fails, there's the man of God. There's the woman of God.

And finally, at the last resort, they go running to this person. Well, anyway, try to understand this in terms of Daniel. Get the picture.

God is soul winning. Not Daniel. Daniel's not exalted now to a high position.

He's just sort of walking down the street. He's not trying to win anybody. Daniel isn't saying, What I need now, Lord, is a revelation of the fading kingdoms of this world and a picture of Christ as the little stone that grows into a mountain.

He didn't know that. He wasn't praying for that. He didn't have a clue that that's what he needed.

God is making himself known to Nebuchadnezzar. And all of a sudden, Daniel finds himself in a place which is a matter of life and death. God's not dealing with Daniel.

He's dealing with Nebuchadnezzar. And all of a sudden, Daniel is going to die. He doesn't know what's happening.

He doesn't know in the world what's going on. He's just living his life. He doesn't know God's going to use him.

That God's dealing with Nebuchadnezzar. He doesn't know that. All he knows is a guy comes up to him on the street and says, They're looking for you.

Oh, yeah? Why? They want to kill you. What happened? This morning, everything was great. I was one of the great leaders, 10 times smarter than everybody else.

And now after lunch, I'm going to get killed. He doesn't begin to know what's going on. All he knows is one minute he's exalted to a high position, and the next minute they're ready to kill him.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, if you set your heart in reality, to satisfy God, I promise you, one of the first indications of that is you're not going to know what's happening in your life. You see, Daniel, he just said, All I want to do is please God. Then God begins to deal with this person.

And all of a sudden, you're brought to a place of death. Everything's swept out from under you. You know, you don't often hear people pray for missions like that.

They say, We're going to pray for souls and missions. And here's the prayer. Lord, deal with Nebuchadnezzar.

Wipe me out. Deal with Nebuchadnezzar. Bring me to emptiness.

Bring me to the place of death. Confuse me to pieces. And I suggest that's real evangelism.

That's real missions. That's soul winning. You don't get that in a crash course on soul winning, how to lead people to Christ.

Heart says, All I want to do is please Him. Then God begins working in him. And all of a sudden, you're wiped out.

And you're ready to die. And suddenly, he's thrown into this situation. And he doesn't know how to pray.

Don't give Daniel more spiritual credit than the Bible gives him. Keep Daniel in the Bible and study him just as the Bible presents him. When Daniel began to pray, he didn't dream in a million years.

A little play on the word dream there. But he didn't think in a million years what was involved in his request. He has a prayer that's this big and he gets an answer that's this big.

He never expects that he is going to now get the revelation of what God's going to do in the next four empires through the age of the Gentiles until Jesus comes back again. He's not praying for that. He doesn't even know he's involved in history.

He doesn't know God's writing the Bible through him, using him as a pencil. He's just trying to live. That's all he's trying to do.

In fact, look at his prayer, verse 17 and 18, his request. In order that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning the mystery, so that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed. He's just praying for his life.

That's all he's praying for. He's not saying give me this great revelation, give me this great vision, show me about the four kingdoms that are coming, show me how Christ will return. He doesn't pray for any of that.

He's just praying that the sun will rise on him the next day. He's just praying to survive. This is survival for him.

Chapter 2, verse 13, and it was real, because they were ready to kill him, as you see. And so Daniel is brought to the place, God's dealing with somebody else, and here's Daniel, man of God, just said, I want to please God. All of a sudden, God wipes him out, and he doesn't know what in the world's going on.

He's in a spin. And he's brought to the place, all I could pray for is life. And he calls out for life, because he doesn't know what to pray.

And he says, Lord, just give me life. Oh, when a man of God begins to pray for life, what does he get? Well, he gets the revelation of Christ. Daniel saw that in spite of his education, and in spite of his high living, and in spite of the places where he had been exalted, everything around him was death.

Nothing mattered, except life. And so he cries out for life. I think it will be a great day for the church, when men and women of God begin to cry out for life, real life.

When nothing else matters except a word from God, a revelation from God. That's where Daniel was. Usually, when God begins to do something like this in our lives, we think, boy, I wish I could get my life back together, so I can serve God.

And we have this idea that all this confusion, all this darkness, all this turmoil, I wish my life would get on to some kind of a track, so I can get involved in missions. So I can start getting with the program. I'm so sidetracked by my life.

All of these struggles, and I'm wiped out. I wish I could get things back together again, so I could get involved in the work of the Lord, and in ministry, and so on. Well, may I suggest that your death is not sidetracking.

When God engineers you to be brought to this place of death, that's the main point. That is missions. That's what it's all about.

And so, God, as he did to Daniel, he forces us sometimes to cry out just for life. And when he cries out for life, this is what he gets. The second fact of this chapter, he sees this tremendous image, which represents this world, the systems of this world.

Then he looks at the second point, verse 34, You continued looking until a stone was cut without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. And that's explained in verse 44, In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. And that kingdom will not be left for another people, but it will crush, put an end to all these kingdoms, but it itself will endure forever.

Daniel understood by this revelation that that little stone was Christ. And one day Christ would come as that little stone flying from heaven at the foundations of this whole world system. The kingdoms of this world.

And he would destroy the kingdoms of this world and set up his own kingdom. That's the historical fact. Here's the spiritual reality.

He understood that that's how Christ comes. Not only literally, someday in the future. May I suggest that that's how he came into your heart? When you first received him? He mysteriously came from heaven and when he came into your heart, of course you just prayed something like, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

You didn't realize he's going to come in as a stone and knock away the very foundations of the whole kingdom that was already within there. That's how he came in. And his entrance caused a great trembling.

And a giant image began to topple inside your life. And I'm telling you what takes place as it crumbles. The collision of the Lord Jesus Christ with the kingdom of this world is so dramatic.

A great mess occurs. And all of the rubble and the ashes of this kingdom just begin to fall at our feet. In verse 35, it's described as chaff on the summer threshing floors.

It's a big mess. Now you say, well, I remember, I received Jesus into my heart to straighten out the mess. Well, ultimately, that'll be so.

Ultimately, he'll straighten out the mess, but before he straightens out the mess, he's going to make a mess. That's how he comes in. He comes in to make a mess.

And as Christ begins to take over, the old begins to crash. You ever see the demolition crew knocking down some old building or some old city block or something like that? I saw it on TV, how they plant the explosives, you know, and I guess it's implosion. And then the whole thing begins to cave in.

And then all you see is dust and debris every place. They did that once in Chicago. And they had a picture of this in the newspaper.

Some lady next door didn't know it was going to happen. And she was pictured hanging out the window with a white handkerchief. And she was surrendering because all this dust came up and all of this debris.

In this connection, let me just, in passing, say a word about the dust that rises from the demolition of the old. There's a great tendency these days to blame everything on Satan. And to blame everything on demons and on the enemy.

And when something goes wrong or something's upset in your life or something's disturbed or something caves in, then you hear somebody say, oh, please pray for me. Satan's working overtime in my life. Everything's falling apart.

Everything's a mess in my life. I can hardly see my way clear for the cinders and the dust that are in my eyes. Maybe it's Satan.

Maybe it's Christ. Maybe it's Satan. Maybe it's Christ.

Maybe the dust in your eyes is caused by the crumbling of that which must be replaced if you're ever going to enter into the fullness of Christ. He's got to destroy the old before he can take you into the new. I think Satan's blamed for an awful lot of what God's doing.

And I think sometimes the dust is God's dust that's in our eyes. Anyway, Christ is the stone, the little stone that comes out of heaven and flies as a missile at the very foundations of this world's system. Someday he's going to do that literally.

And if you want to see the mess that takes place then, read Revelation. And you see when he comes back, there's an awful mess because he's going to destroy the whole system and set up his own kingdom. Verse 35, let's look at the third fact.

The iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crossed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors. Now watch. And the wind came and carried them away so that not a trace of them was found.

Isn't that a glorious word? The wind. The wind carried them away so not a trace of them was found. When the Lord Jesus comes into our lives to strike at the foundation of the old, as the man kingdom crumbles

into a colossal mass, he sends a wonderful wind.

And the wind takes all the trash and blows it away so that not a trace of it's left. Now, praise God for the stone. Praise God for the wind, too.

The stone is the Lord Jesus Christ. The wind is the Holy Spirit of God. That's the wind.

And oh, what a precious picture this is. How does God deal with itself, with the old kingdom? And the answer is always by the coming of Christ. That's how he deals with it.

Christ is revealed as the stone. And Christ comes and he breaks down and he destroys. And then the Holy Spirit comes and he blows it all away.

I'll tell you, what that means practically is this. It means I'll never have to shovel the trash out of my life. That's one thing it means.

I don't have to try to clear out the old. Boy, I'll tell you, that's a precious liberty and a precious release. I don't have to try to get rid of this sin or that sin.

Try to quit this habit or try to quit that habit. I just cry out for life. And when I cry out for life, Christ comes and breaks it down and the Holy Spirit blows it away.

I wouldn't trade anything for those two truths. Before I leave this, let me just say this. Until Christ deals with your old kingdom, it's not dealt with.

You understand what I'm saying? Until Christ deals with it, it's not dealt with. And until the Holy Spirit blows it away, it's not gone. Oh my, there's no substitute.

Those two things. Christ knocks it down and the Spirit blows it away. Thousands and thousands and thousands of Christians are trying to deal with the old kingdom.

And they look in the mirror, you know, and there they see Babylon with all its glory. And they see Persia with all of its wealth and its independence. Oh Lord, I cannot be changed or altered.

I want my way. And they see Greece with all of its wisdom and they stand proud. And they see Rome with all of its strength and its independence and its authority.

And they look in the mirror and they say, I got to get rid of Babylon. And I got to get rid of Persia. And I got to get rid of Greece.

Then they try to deal with it. It'll never work. God will just bring you to the place of death.

You cry out for life. God opens the Word. He shows you Christ.

Christ comes into your life in a new revelation. He begins to crumble the old. The Holy Spirit comes and blows it away.

Then what? Then you see Christ again. He comes in, crash! And the old goes down. The Holy Spirit blows it away.

Then it's dealt with. Christ knocks it down and the Spirit blows it away. And we don't have to try to deal with that.

The man is this world. The world system. The stone is Christ.

The wind is the Holy Spirit. And the mountain. Oh, this is marvelous.

Read it. Verse 35, The stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. If you say, that's the kingdom of God.

Close. Close, but no cigar. It's not the kingdom of God.

It's the King. The stone. That's Christ.

The stone becomes the mountain. It's not the kingdom. It's the King himself who rules the kingdom.

Now, certainly that's going to be literally true when Christ comes. But here's what he's saying now in present foretaste. He's saying, once you set your heart to see Christ, Christ is going to come in and strike at the system, the world system.

And as he begins to change you, he'll change you gradually. He'll knock down the old, the spirit will blow it away, and he'll begin to grow. And Christ will come in as a stone and grow into a boulder, and from a boulder into a hill, from a hill into a mountain, until pretty soon he fills the whole landscape of your life.

Doesn't it sound like we're reading Romans? Or Corinthians? Or Ephesians? It's the same truth. It's Old Testament. Picture form of the same thing.

And I suggest, this is the message that, the second step, the man God uses. The man God uses is seeing Christ in this book. Christ is coming in and breaking down and blowing away and growing and growing until he fills the whole landscape of your life.

That's what Daniel needed to see. And all he did, he didn't know anything about missions and evangelism. He didn't know God was dealing with Nebuchadnezzar.

He just said his heart went down, I want to please God. And all of this began to happen. Well, with the revelation, as you know, there are many benefits.

First of all, the revelation saved his life. The revelation always saves your life. Not only saved his life, but it saved the lives of all those around him, too.

They didn't die because he had that revelation. He wasn't trying to be spiritual. He wasn't trying to save anybody's life.

He just cried out for life himself. What Daniel saw brought life. It always brings life.

That's all you ever need for this moment and for all the ages of eternity, just to see Christ. If God begins to show you the image, the stone, the wind, the mountain, you'll never need anything else. That's what it's all about.

Christ comes in, he breaks down, he blows it away, he grows. He comes in, he breaks down, he blows it away, he grows. He comes in, he breaks down, he blows it away, and he grows.

It's the Christian life. You can't be used until you've come that far. That's the second step.

Daniel wasn't trying to exalt himself. He wasn't looking for gifts and rewards and honors. He wasn't trying to fight his way up the Babylonian ladder of success.

With this, that was freely given to him. That was an extra. He entered into all of that.

He wasn't looking for that. That just came. Let's say that Daniel never got this vision, this image of Babylon and Greece and so on.

Would it have still happened, even if he didn't see it in advance? Sure it would have. The Medes and Persians would have taken over Babylon, and then Greece would have taken over the Medes and Persians. But there would have been a confusion about that history.

The revelation of Christ brought some kind of sense into what otherwise would have been a confusion. History would have appeared as a runaway train with no one at the controls. When you start seeing Christ, your history is going to start making sense.

And what God is doing. It begins in chapter 1. You set your heart. All I want, I just choose to please Him.

Then you begin to see Christ in the book. That revelation of Christ. You're going to be you.

Nebuchadnezzar is going to come to Christ. Daniel is sort of incidental in all of this. He's not memorizing verses to ramrod down Neb's throat.

He's not trying to see how he can collar him and evangelize to him and weave Jesus into every conversation. He's not trying to do that. This man is just living.

He doesn't even know God's using him. He doesn't have a clue. He's just living.

He's cried out for life. And because he's cried out for life, he became that choice instrument that God used. He begins to open the Word.

And because of this, he can now experience chapter 3. See, you can't touch chapter 3 until you've understood chapter 2. Until you're seeing Christ in the Word. Until the rock is breaking down the old and the Spirit's blowing away the trash. Until Christ is growing.

Then you're ready for 3. And then you're ready for 4, 5, 6. Those are the ones that God used. Well, obviously, if we're studying Daniel, there's a lot more we'd look at. But I think that's the heart of this chapter.

Any comments or questions about what we've looked at? An illustration of Daniel, isn't it? Thank you. Other comments? Let's bow together. Commit our time unto the Lord.

Our Father, we thank you for this revelation of our Lord Jesus in Daniel chapter 2. Certainly, we've experienced in a measure that He's come in as a little stone. Changed our thinking and changed our lives and changed our habits. He's certainly taken down the old.

And the Holy Spirit has blown it away so that not a memory, not a trace of it remains. Lord, sometime when this dust begins to fly in our lives, we just wonder what's happening. Thank you for the precious wind of the Holy Spirit that blows away all of that old.

And Lord, we've seen you in days past begin to grow in our lives. So imperceptibly. And yet we look back and we see how much more we know of you than we did.

We pray that you'd grow and grow and fill the whole landscape of our lives so that we might be those choice instruments through whom you can make yourself known in history. We ask you to work these things in our hearts. Thank you for the fellowship we can enjoy now and guide our conversation, that we might edify one another and exhort one another.

And thank you for the refreshments that are provided, nourish our bodies with them. And we thank you for those that have provided them. Just give us a good time of fellowship now.

We ask in Jesus name.

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