**Surviving in Dangerous Times – Lesson 2 – Daniel 2**

I. Review

II. Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and demands an interpretation (v1-13)

 A. Time frame – 2nd year of his reign

 B. Character of dream – troubling

 C. Called for magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and Chaldeans to tell what the dream was

 1. Chaldeans respectfully ask the king in Aramaic to tell them the dream and then they

 would declare the meaning

 2. King responds that they must declare both the dream and the interpretation

 a. Penalty for failing to do so was a violent death and destruction of their homes

 c. Reward for doing so would be gifts and great honor

 3. Wise men repeat their request for the king to relate the dream

 4. King issues the threat a second time

 5. Babylonian wise men object that no man on earth could declare dream – Is 44:24-25

 a. No king had ever asked anything like this of his wise men – Is 46:5-10

 b. Explain that only gods could declare dream itself and gods do not dwell with men

 D. King becomes enraged and enraged

 1. Gives orders to destroy all wise men of Babylon – Prov 16:14

 2. Those to carry out this sentence also looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them too

III. Daniel intervenes to save all the wise men (v14-24)

 A. Daniel and friends in danger completely out of the blue due to bad dreams of the king and impotence of the king’s gods and wise men

 B. Daniel responds to Arioch, captain of the king’s bodyguard

 1. Uses discretion and discernment

 2. Asks about the urgency of the king’s command

 C. Daniel requests time from the king to declare what he wants to know

 D. Daniel informs his friends

 1. They all humbly pray before God – I Ki 8:48-51, Ps 50:15, Jer 33:3, Jas 1:5

 2. God reveals mystery in night vision

 3. Daniel thanks God before he knows final outcome of appearing before Nebuchadnezzar – prayer of thanks and praise (v20-23)

 4. God has power to do whatever He wants through whoever He wants to do it – a message to Jewish exiles that their God is in charge, not the pagan ones

 5. Wisdom of this world is limited

 6. Christians have a different starting point – “He is There and He is not Silent”

 E. Daniel returns to Arioch with requests

 1. Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon

 2. Take me to the king – I will reveal his dream and interpretation

IV. Daniel declares and interprets the dream before the king (v25-45)

 A. Arioch brings Daniel before the king

 B. King asks Daniel if he is able to do this

 C. Daniel gives unusual response – deflects all credit from himself to God

 1. No men can do this, but contrast is clear – pagan gods impotent vs. a true God

 2. Only the God of heaven can do it and he has revealed to the king what will happen in times to come

 a. God alone establishes and removes kings

 b. A bold statement to a powerful earthly king

 3. God revealed everything to Daniel so Daniel could explain it all to the king, not because Daniel himself had more wisdom than other men

 D. Daniel explains the details of the dream first

 1. King saw single great statue of great splendor and fearsome appearance

 a. Head made of gold

 b. Breast and arms made of silver

 c. Belly and thighs made of bronze

 d. Legs made of iron and feet made of both iron and clay

 2. A stone was cut out without any hands and struck the feet and crushed them

 3. All materials of statue were crushed so they became like chaff which wind blew away and the stone remained and became a great mountain

 E. Daniel interprets the dream

 1. Focus of dream not on specifics of who the kingdoms are or the timing – instead on a philosophy of history – what will happen, not when or who precisely

 a. Transient nature of earthly kingdoms

 b. Lust for power and desire to dominate is a constant

 c. The final kingdom is our hope, not the transient

 2. Nebuchadnezzar is a king of kings in a kingdom given to him by God along with great power, strength, and glory

 a. God has given him sovereignty over all that is in his kingdom

 b. He is the head of gold of the statue

 3. Another kingdom will arise – most say Medo-Persia

 4. A third kingdom will rule all the earth – most say Greece

 5. A fourth kingdom comes next – most say Rome

 a. As strong as iron and will break all other kingdoms in pieces

 b. Will eventually be a divided kingdom – will combine but will not adhere to each other – a divided Europe? whole world?

 6. During the time of the fourth kingdom, God will establish His own kingdom (the stone) that will never be destroyed, but will destroy all the other earthly kingdoms – the stone was Jesus (Ps 118:22; Is 28:16; Lk 20:17-18)

 a. Will not be destroyed by another people

 b. Will endure forever and will destroy all else completely – supernatural

 c. For the Jews – waiting was in order – their kingdom was not coming for a while

 (1) Not to destroy hope, but to have true hope and assurance of final victory

 (2) In the meantime serve where you are placed – Jer 29:5-7, I Cor 15:58

V. Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction to Daniel’s interpretation (v46-49)

 A. Nebuchadnezzar pays homage to Daniel and gives him gifts – homage wrongly directed

 B. Nebuchadnezzar praises Daniel’s God – God of gods, Lord of kings, revealer of mysteries

 C. Daniel promoted to ruler over province of Babylon and superintendent of all wise men

 1. Daniel’s friends over the administration of Babylon

 2. Daniel served at the king’s court

VI. Lessons to be learned

 A. Seek God in humble prayer when needing wisdom – world has nothing to offer as far as wisdom goes

 B. God does intervene in lives of His people when they fully trust in Him during dangerous circumstances

 C. God shows mercy and compassion to ordinary believers

 D. If God brings us into trials, He will either deliver us or will sustain us by His grace in them

 E. All gifts and abilities we have are ultimately the result of God working in and through us – give your best to God’s kingdom

 F. Humility – seeing our own size rightly in comparison to the surpassing greatness of God

VII. Postscript – this dream is expanded in Dan 7, 8, 9, and 11