

THE EMPEROR STRIKES BACK

Story of the Future of the Empire

Daniel 2

Have you ever faced a demand—a totally impossible demand--that you didn't stand a chance of fulfilling?

What do you do when faced with a totally impossible demand?

How do you respond to it?

Next few weeks:

Bible & Tomorrow's News from Daniel's perspective

Daniel is neither prophet nor preacher

–never went to prophet's school or seminary!.

Politician who seeks to live for God in pagan culture.

Times are hard and future is dark.

Daniel predicts more difficult days ahead.

Daniel's message:

The faithful always triumph in the end!

Daniel 1-6 – Historical evidence

Daniel's about to reveal uncertain times that lie ahead.

–frightening future for Israel. Things don't look good.

God's people can trust Him in uncertain times!

In pagan lands & hard times, ***faithful ultimately triumph!***

6 examples =>

God controls history, even in pagan lands.

If God could protect the faithful in past,
we can trust Him with our future.

Faithful Always Triumph in the End.

2nd incident: **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

Most studies focus on **content** of dream.

Of 49 vss, only 15 deal with the content

34 deal with *the challenge* & how God intervenes.

Emphasis is on miracle—NOT content of vision!

In spite of impossibility of king's demand,

God intervenes to save His faithful servant

KING'S IMPOSSIBLE DEMAND 2:1-16

2:1-9 *In the 2nd yr of his reign, Nebu. had dreams; his mind was troubled & he couldn't sleep. ²So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers & astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in & stood before the king, ³he said to them, "I've had a dream that troubles me & I want to know what it means."*

⁴Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, & we'll interpret it."⁵The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I've firmly decided: If you don't tell me what my dream was & interpret it, I'll have you cut into pieces & your houses turned into piles of rubble. ⁶But if you tell me the dream & explain it, you'll receive from me gifts & rewards & great honor. So tell me the dream & interpret it for me."⁷Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, & we'll interpret it."

⁸Then the king answered, "I'm certain that you're trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I've firmly decided: ⁹If you don't tell me the dream, there's just one penalty for you. You've conspired to tell me misleading & wicked things, hoping the

situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, & I'll know you can interpret it for me."

No king had *ever* asked such a thing **10-11** *"The astrologers answered the king, "There's not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great & mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. ¹¹What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, & they do not live among men."*

"Only the gods" know! –and they aren't talking!

King responded: decree's firmly fixed--no getting out of it.
It's Nebu. 2nd yr. Daniel was still "in school."

He didn't take part in dialogue. They didn't consult him.

He's just a youth--a student. *What would HE know?*

His *teachers* didn't have the answers!

Gods would know, but they won't tell.

Problem with gods men make for themselves.

**Dan. had chance to show pagan community that
Yahweh is different than their gods.**

Daniel asks for time to talk it over with God

DREAM REVEALED TO DANIEL 2:17-23

Daniel & friends take petition to the Lord

If God doesn't solve it, they have no hope!

Pagans are right!

NO ONE can do what king asks! Not even Daniel!

God reveals it to him

[So,] Daniel praises God 19b-23

--BEFORE king accepts answer!

Acknowledges God is the Only one who could do this.

God is the One Who... **20-22** *“changes times & seasons; he deposes kings & raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise & knowledge to the discerning. ²²He reveals deep & hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, & light dwells with him.”*

God reveals mysteries that men can't guess & pagan gods don't [can't] tell!

If this is the God we serve, we can trust Him to deal with issues too big for US to handle!

DREAM REVEALED TO THE KING 2:24-45

Approach to the King 2:24-30

Daniel goes to the captain to inform him

The captain ran to tell the king 25

King couldn't believe it!

26 *“Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream AND interpret it?” 26*

Dan. gives appropriate response: HE can't!

27 *“Dan. replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,”*

Dan. can't do it! NO magician or fortune teller can!

You can picture king about to shout a death sentence!

BUT, there is a God who reveals mysteries!" 28

Daniel serves God Who Reveals Mysteries.

God's intervention doesn't come because WE deserve it

God intervenes because **He's the God who knows it all & controls it all!**

God shows Nebu. what will happen in future 29-30
Nebu.'s Dream Described 2:31-35

What does he see? 31-33

Great image, like frightening strong man

Head of statue made of gold.

Chest and arms made of silver.

Stomach & muscles made of bronze

Legs made of iron.

Feet made of iron, mixed with clay.

=> 34-35 *"While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron & clay & smashed them. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver & the gold were all broken to pieces & became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain & filled the whole earth."*

A rock struck its feet and the entire

Rock turns into huge mt. & fills the earth.

Dream Interpreted 2:36-45 *What does it mean?*

Statue represents 4 kingdoms that arise to control history

Begins with Nebu.; represents Babylon.

God gave him dominion over world

2nd kingdom will be weaker => Media-Persia

3rd kingdom will rule the earth => Greece

4th kingdom will be stronger => Rome **40**

4th will be divided & become weaker 41-42

4th forms alliances with other kingdoms 43

It will remain strong, but not as strong

=> diluted by alliances.

In end there'll be alliances with other powers,
but not union.

=> 44-45a *"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms & bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.*

Final kingdom will crush other kingdoms

Image & its power are destroyed by eternal kingdom

Comes from God, conquers all others...

Final kingdom will endure forever.

God has shown king what will happen in the future. 45b

**God reveals nations that control history
from their day until millennium.**

DANIEL AND HIS GOD HONORED 2:46-49

Nebuchadnezzar honors Daniel 46

NOT because of the content of the dream

Because he had done what was impossible

God must be with Daniel!

God is glorified 47 “The king said to Dan., “Surely your God is the God of gods & the Lord of kings & a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

This God must be greatest of all gods!

God's faithful servant is promoted 48-49

He promotes him to high position & 3 friends with him.

Points to Ponder: in hard times:

1) God knows the future

2) God controls history –the times we live in!

3) God answers prayer.

4) God does the impossible

He can handle what we never could!

5) God reveals mysteries

How impossible are the circumstances WE face?

More impossible than Daniel's?

God's able to hear our prayer and do impossible for us!

–Covid

–political/economical situation

Whatever issues we face,

we can trust the God Who reveals mysteries!

He knows what tomorrow holds.

He holds our future in *His* hands!

HOW DO WE FACE IMPOSSIBLE TASKS?

Daniel moved ahead in quiet dependence on God.

4 steps he followed:

1. DON'T PANIC!

2. TRUST GOD TO HANDLE IT!

3. When God answers Do Whatever He Tells You

That was Daniel's habit. "Just do it!"

4. After God answers, Give Him All the Credit

No limit to what God will do when our only concern is that God gets glory.

**What impossible task lies ahead for us,
as WE look ahead into our future?**

Don't panic! Trust God to handle it for you!

Give your problem to Him! Do whatever He tells you!

Then give Him all the credit for what He does!

Our God is big enough to handle whatever impossible situation comes our way.

Trust Him! ***The faithful ultimately triumph!***