Prayer Meeting – November 29, 2023

Focus: **Daniel 2:24-49**

I. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation.

A. (Daniel 2:24-30) Daniel is ushered into the king's presence, and gives glory to God for revealing the dream.

24 Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."

25 Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!" 26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. 28 However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. 29 As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. 30 But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

1. ***I have found a man:*** Arioch tried to glorify himself and Daniel for the answer to the king's dream. But Daniel refused to take credit, recognizing that the credit went to God, who revealed this dream to Daniel.

2. ***What will take place in the latter days:*** Nebuchadnezzar's dream didn't just concern himself for his kingdom, but the whole span of the future — which was to Nebuchadnezzar the latter days.

B. (Daniel 2:31-35) Daniel describes Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

31 "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. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; 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.

1. ***Behold, there was a single great statue:*** Daniel's description was clear. This was a massive and spectacular image made of different materials (fine gold… silver… bronze… iron… partly of iron and partly of clay).

    a. The materials descended in value from top to bottom, with gold at the top and iron mixed with clay at the bottom.

2. ***Crushed them:*** This spectacular image was destroyed by a stone made without hands, and what remained of it was blown away like worthless chaff, while the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

C. (Daniel 2:36-45) The interpretation of the dream.

36 "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

39 After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. 41 In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of

the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

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; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

1. ***Now we will tell its interpretation:*** Daniel first accurately reported the content of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This gave Daniel credibility when explaining what the dream meant: the interpretation.

2. ***You are the head of gold:*** Nebuchadnezzar was clearly said to be the head of gold. After him would come three other kingdoms, each represented by the different materials Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream. After the succession of kingdoms, then came the final kingdom set up by God.

    a. "Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was likened unto gold because it was an absolute monarchy, God's ideal government. Nebuchadnezzar was not, however, God's ideal monarch!" (Talbot)

3. ***The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy:*** This prophetic dream was clearly fulfilled in history.

    a. Three dominating empires came after Babylon: Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The nature of these empires was accurately reflected by the nature of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream.

    b. The empires succeeding Babylon were inferior to Nebuchadnezzar's head of gold in the sense of their centralization of absolute power. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch, and the succeeding empires were progressively less so. They were larger and lasted longer than Babylon, but none held as much centralized power as Nebuchadnezzar did.

    c. "Babylon, the head of gold, was an absolute autocracy. Persia, a monarchial oligarchy with the nobles equal to the king in all but office,

is represented by silver. Greece is set forth by brass, indicated the still lower value of it aristocracy of mind and influence… Rome, a democratic imperialism, with military dominion dependent upon the choice of army and citizenry and administered in the spirit of martial law, is set forth by iron." (Newell)

d. The third kingdom of bronze was the one which shall rule over all the earth. Indeed, Alexander's Grecian Empire was the largest among those compared in the image (except the final government of the Messiah).

e. The Babylonian Empire stood for 66 years; the Medo-Persian Empire for 208 years; the Grecian Empire for 185 years, and the Roman Empire stood for more than 500 years.

f. Liberal commentators do not believe that the fourth kingdom is Rome, but they say it is Greece, and that the second and third kingdoms are Media and Persia respectively, instead of the Medo-Persian Empire as a whole. They interpret this way because they believe it was impossible for Daniel to predict the rise of these empires.

4. ***In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed:*** This described the fulfillment of this prophecy in the future. The stone cut without hands shatters a confederation of kings, represented by the feet of the image, and then God's Kingdom will dominate the earth.

   a. Since Roman history provides no fulfillment of this federation of kings (which seems to number ten, because of the number of toes, and passages like Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12) this prophecy must still be future.

   b. Since the fall of the Roman Empire, there has never been a world-dominating empire equal to Rome. Many have tried — the Huns, Islam, the so-called Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin — but none have succeeded. Each of these had amazing power and influence, but nothing compared to that of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire, in some form or another, will be revived under the leadership of the final fallen dictator, the Antichrist.

   c. ***It crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold:*** This described a single, decisive event that shattered the image representing the glory of man's rule on earth. Since the Church or the

Gospel have not, in a single decisive event, shattered the reign of human kingdoms, this event is still in the future.

d. This isn't the gradual salvation of the world by the church; "Smashing is not salvation. Crushing is not conversion. Destroying is not delivering nor is pulverizing the same as purification." (Heslop)

e. This stone cut without hands is the Messiah, not the Church. Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, Isaiah 28:16, and Zechariah 3:9 also refer to Jesus as a stone.

f. Therefore, the final superpower of the world is thought to be a revival of the Roman Empire, a continuation of this image. This will be the final world empire that the returning Jesus will conquer over.

5. ***Some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle***: This final world empire will be according to the nature of clay mixed with iron. It will have more the image of true strength than the substance of strength.

   a. As a whole, the image accurately represented human power and empire. The image seems invincible, but it was actually unstable at its base. Therefore one blow to the foundation could topple the whole thing.

   b. It's also significant to see that the image described devolution, not evolution. Instead of man beginning in the dust and evolving into gold, this vision declares that man's dominion begins with gold and devalues into dust.

   c. Some 40 years from this, Daniel had a vision describing the same succession of empires. Daniel saw it from God's perspective, and Nebuchadnezzar saw it from man's perspective. Nebuchadnezzar saw these empires as an impressive image; Daniel saw them as fierce beasts.

6. ***The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy:*** Daniel didn't guess or analyze. Through him God announced the future. The only reason that God can predict history is because he can control it.

D. (Daniel 2:46-49) Nebuchadnezzar's reaction to Daniel's reporting of the dream and its interpretation.

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. 47 The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court.

1. ***King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face:*** This great king was obviously impressed. He wasn't in the habit of showing such respect to anyone, especially a foreign slave who was about to be executed with the rest of the wise men. This confirmed that Daniel accurately reported the dream and skillfully explained its meaning.

2. ***Surely your God is a God of gods:*** Nebuchadnezzar knew that it wasn't Daniel himself that revealed these things, but Daniel's God revealed it through Daniel. Daniel wanted the glory to go to God, and it did.

3. ***Then the king promoted Daniel:*** Daniel not only had his life spared, but he was promoted to high office — and he made sure his friends were also promoted. It was fitting that Daniel's friends got to share in his advancement, because they accomplished much of the victory through their prayers.