

I. INTRODUCTION: A GENERATION OF CHANGE

- A. Like Daniel, we are definitely living in a time of transition. Everywhere we look things are shifting.
- B. I tangibly felt that in late October of this year as we were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles in Illinois.
- C. Before the week was over, the war began in Israel.
- D. It has been clear for some time that pieces are falling into place in fulfillment of Biblical prophecy for the End Time scenarios to come to pass. But it's ramping up more and more each day.
- E. Sunday I saw something unusual during worship. It was circular and large and varying shades of blue. Some of the blue color was bright and brilliant and some was dark and deep. I was not sure what I was looking at until the image back up a little and I could see I was looking at a very large eye, first only seeing the iris and the center. I knew it was the eye of God but had no understanding to what it meant.
 - 1. On Monday I was visiting with old friends and we were discussing what the Lord was showing us for 2024. My friend said to me she was not sure, but they felt God telling her to "Find my eye". Like when you are disciplining a small child you get their attention first and tell them to "look into my eye", or "look at me", establishing eye contact so you know they are not distracted.
 - 2. I then shared what I saw and her husband told me that blue represented communion and nearness. So I did a little more research and found that blue also represents:
 - a) Holy Spirit (breath of God)—decreeing (River of God) - His flow and refreshing, intercession, contending, unstoppable, release of the gifts of Holy Spirit, renewal
 - b) Water—river of God, cleansing life-giving flow of the Holy Spirit.
 - c) Communion and Revelation and heavenly communication.
 - (1) So ultimately what I believe the Lord was showing me is that we need to stay focused on the Lord and what he is saying and doing in this hour. His eye is upon us and desires to draw us into to deep communion with Him.

For the eyes of the Lord roam to and fro over all the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are fully devoted to Him (2 Chron. 16:9).

II. DANIEL: A PROPHET IN EXILE - Chapter 1

- A. The Book of Daniel begins in the year 605 A.D. Nebuchadnezzar was quickly overtaking the ancient world and Israel was a part of his conquests.
- B. This was part of the judgement of God against Israel for forsaking him. In Jeremiah we read "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says,....."Tell this to your masters: With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and it's people and the animals that are on it, and I will give it to anyone I please. Now I will hand all your

countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes..." Jeremiah 27:4-7

- C. In fact, God was telling them that this is not going to be a quick process. And he was calling out the false prophets of the day that were giving words saying the opposite. You know..."what itching ears want to hear".
- D. Daniel as a young man was taken captive and forced to serve the king in Babylon.
- E. From the beginning Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself (Daniel 1:8) and he was already committed to the place of prayer.
- F. The first test Daniel and his friends faced was the question of eating food that was not permitted. And rather than enjoying the richness of the food, they limited themselves to only vegetables and water.
- G. In the end, Nebuchadnezzar found them supernaturally sustained and 10X wiser than all his other servants. They were elevated in the eyes of the king and honored by him. Though he did not yet know about their God.

III. THE REVEALER OF MYSTERIES - chapter 2

- A. Daniel was once again tested when God spoke to the king in a dream. In chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar had a troubling dream. He was insecure and new to the throne and did not know who he could trust so he made an "impossible" request of his wisemen. He wanted them to not only interpret the dream but tell him what the dream entailed.
- B. When they could not do so, they were condemned to die.
- C. But Daniel and his friends turned to God, cried out for revelation and God answered their prayers.
- D. God was the source of the dream and he clearly wanted to reveal something to the king and to Daniel. So why would God NOT answer their prayers?
*19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So, Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. 23 "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand." ... 28 But **there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets**, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. (Daniel 2:19-23, 28)*
- E. Nebuchadnezzar saw the image of a man, with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze and legs of iron mixed with clay. A large stone struck the image and destroyed it becoming a huge mountain that filled the whole earth.

- F. These distinguishing parts of the image reflect four major world empires that would dominate the world beginning with Babylonia. The stone represents the coming kingdom of God that will overtake them all.
1. The Head of Gold - Babylonia 605-539 BC.
 2. The Chest and arms of silver - Media Persia. - 539-331 BC.
 3. Belly and Thighs of bronze - Greece. 331-146 BC.
 4. Legs of Iron - Roman Empire 146 BC - 395 AD
 - *Split into two:*
 - a) *West - until 476 AD.*
 - b) *East - until 1453 AD.*
 5. Feet iron mixed with clay - Roman Empire 146 BC. - 395 AD
 - This shows that the kingdom is divided. It carries the remnants of the strength of the Roman Empire but is made up of different kingdoms and people and the mixture shows it is partly fragile.
 - At this point the dream stretches beyond the near future and appears to be referring to the last days.
 6. The Rock that strikes the image, and destroys it completely is Christ. It is revealing that the kingdom of God will come and wipe away all previous kingdoms.

*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. ⁴⁵ Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” (Daniel 2:44-45)*
- G. The King’s heart was changed. He now knew that the God of Daniel **is real** and that he **reveals hidden secrets**.
- H. Daniel and his friends were promoted.
- ⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered Daniel, and said, **“Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets**, since you could reveal this secret.” (Daniel 2:46-47)*

IV. THE GREAT IMAGE OF GOLD - GOD REVEALED AS THE DELIVERER - Chapter 3

- A. As time went on, the king decided to resurrect an image to his own honor. He yielded to the temptation to receive worship.
1. This image was about 30 meters high and covered in gold.
 2. A great celebration was announced, and all the leaders and governors gathered for the dedication of this statue that had been raised.

3. The people were called to bow down and worship this image and if they did not comply, they were to be thrown into the fiery furnace.
 4. For some reason Daniel was not present but his friends were and when they refused to bow down and worship, the king was angered and ordered the three of them into the fire.
- B. Once again God showed up in power and delivered them. You know the story. When the King looked into the fire he saw four men, unbound, unharmed walking in the fire. When he ordered them to bring them out, they didn't even smell like smoke.
- C. This was a testimony to all who witnessed the event.
- D. Nebuchadnezzar then gave honor to the True God
- 1. Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshac and Abednego**
 - 2. The Decree: There is no other God who can deliver like this!**

V. THE ANCIENT DECREE - SETTING THE STAGE FOR Chapter 4

- A. Psalm 2 and God's Ancient Decree.
1. Father God has made an eternal decree concerning the rule of the planet. He has declared that only His Son will be King on His Holy Mountain. God established his King and His Kingdom, and they will not be moved.
 2. However, mankind continues to exhibit rebellion against this King and against this decree. Psalms 2 speaks of how God sits in heaven and laughs at them. He will execute his wrath and judge the nations of the earth that reject His leadership.
 3. ***Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings and rulers set themselves up against the Lord and against His anointed one?....I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion! (Psalm 2:1,2,6)***

VI. NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS ANOTHER DREAM - Chapter 4

- A. *How great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion is from generation to generation. (Daniel 4:3)*
- B. Nebuchadnezzar is established and growing in his understanding about God.
1. He is now established in his kingdom and flourishing.
 2. Every confrontation between the two kingdoms brought more revelation and light to this pagan king.
 - a) In chapter 1, the King examines Daniel and his friends and finds them 10X wiser than all of his wisemen.
 - b) In chapter 2, he learned that God was Omniscient and the Revealer of Mysteries.
 - c) In chapter 3, he learned that God was able to deliver his servants.
 - d) Here in chapter 4, he declares how great God is, showing signs and wonders, having dominion and an everlasting kingdom.
 3. So it is with us, every time we are in a spiritual battle, we should rejoice because God

is up to something and the reason behind the clash is often an opportunity to reveal God to a lost world.

- C. Even in his prosperity the dream causes him to tremble, and he calls on Daniel once again.
1. Content of the dream
 - a) A large tree, strong and visible
 - b) It was fruitful and a refuge for the animals and birds.
 - c) A Holy One - a watcher came down from heaven and ordered the tree to be chopped down but leave the stump.
 - d) It then speaks of a man, and his heart becoming as a beast, grazing with the animals and seven times (years) will pass over him.
 - e) The purpose of this was to show the living that God rules over the affairs of men, and he determines who will rule in the earth.
 2. The Interpretation of the dream
 - a) Daniel did not want to tell the king the interpretation because it was not good news for him.
 - b) The King was the tree, and it was determined that he would be cut down.
 - c) He would be humbled and dwell with beasts for seven years.
 - d) The stump, however, showed that he would be restored once he came to know that Heaven rules.
 - e) Daniel advised the King to repent and show mercy to the poor, hoping for mercy and a prolonged time of prosperity.
 3. The fulfillment of the dream.
 - a) After 12 months, the King spoke in pride about his kingdom and what he had built and immediately he heard a voice from heaven..... The kingdom has departed from you....and it was done just as the dream prophesied.
 4. At the end of the 7 years, he was restored.

*³⁴And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: **For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.** ³⁵All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" ³⁶At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. ³⁷**Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.** (Daniel 4:34-37)*

VII. THE JUDGE - THE PROUD WILL BE HUMBLER - Chapter 5

- A. A New King on the Scene: Belshazzar the son or grandson (possibly son-in-law) of Nebuchadnezzar
- B. Belshazzar is a proud and arrogant man and did not survive long as King. He refused to repent, and his fall happened quickly. He only ruled for 2 years before the Persians took over Babylon.
 1. The difference is he refused to humble himself, trusting his own strength.
 2. He mocked the Jewish people and their God by drinking from the Holy vessels.
 3. The writing on the wall, interpretation and imminent fall.

VIII. KING DARIUS AND THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL - Daniel 6

- A. The king really had no vendetta against Daniel, but the leaders did, and they set him up for a fall. They suggested an idol to honor the king be erected and that all would be forced to bow before it.
- B. Daniel refused and was thrown into the Lion's Den. By now he was in his 70's.
- C. King Darius was conned, and now forced to do something he did not want to do.

¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." (Daniel 6:16)
- D. King Darius stayed awake all night fasting, and just could not sleep.
- E. Early in the morning he was relieved to find that Daniel had been spared.

*He then made a decree to all the people of the earth. " ²⁶ I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For **He is the living God**, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. (Daniel 6: 26-27)*
- F. Daniel then prospered under the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus.

IX. Summary of Daniel's life and influence.

- A. He served under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus
- B. Under each king he was challenged, and under each king God prevailed and used Daniel to speak to these men.
- C. The last 6 chapters occurred under these same kings and shows Daniel's encounters, revelations, fastings, intercession.
- D. The Revelations of Daniel were so detailed and incredibly accurate. To the point some biblical scholars do not believe it could have been written by Daniel.
- E. King Cyrus issued a decree permitting the Jews to return to Israel but only a portion returned. Daniel was one who stayed in Babylon. *This is what the Lord says, "When*

seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and I will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you....(Jeremiah 29:10-14).

1. Perhaps because of his age. Returning would be difficult and he was not physically up the challenge of rebuilding.
 2. Perhaps he still felt called to serve where he had been serving.
 3. Regardless Daniel had prayed for this and longed to see Israel restored.
- F. Many of the prophecies of Daniel have been fulfilled but many are for the time of the end. We can be assured that God will fulfill all of His Word completely.

X. GOD IS OVER ALL THE NATIONS, and He has a special concern for the leaders of the world.

- A. The posture of the king's heart really determines if he will illicit the blessing of God or the judgement.
- B. *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes. (Proverbs 21:1)*
- C. God gave Solomon special wisdom and great understanding because he asked for it (1 Kings 4:29)
- D. *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable. (Proverbs 25:2-3)*

XI. CONCLUSION.

- A. Regardless of what our position is in this world or in the kingdom of God, we are called to challenge the realm of darkness and declare the Glory of God.
- B. Our lives can be an incredible testimony of faithfulness to those around us if we trust Him who created and saved us.
- C. Testimony of my father "a tender heart before the Lord".