

The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment

Daniel 2

Lesson #3 for July 15, 2006

Scriptures: Daniel 2

1. Why did God give this dream to Nebuchadnezzar? Why was it preserved for our time? What is God trying to say to us?
2. Isaiah 40-55 tells us that there are three criteria—listed here in descending order of importance—on which to decide if something has a divine origin. Only God can 1) create, 2) predict the future, 3) perform true miracles.
3. Do Daniel 2, 7-9 demonstrate the divine origin of this book?
4. What is the purpose of these prophecies? What did Jesus suggest was the purpose of prophecy? (John 13:19; 14:29)
5. When was the book of Daniel written? Why do almost all Christian “scholars” believe that Daniel was written in the second century B.C. and not in the sixth?
6. Daniel 2 presents a clear picture of the final triumph of God in the great controversy. When the rock cut out of the mountain without hands completely destroys the statue and God himself sets up a kingdom that will last forever, surely this represents God’s victory in the great controversy. (Daniel 2:34-35; Dan. 2:44-45)
7. **Considering all the issues that we know that have been raised in the great controversy, what is needed for God to win in the great controversy? Does God need to destroy the devil and his evil angels? Does he need to prove that he can overpower every earthly government? Does he need to answer all the questions that have been raised about him and his government by the devil and his angels and even by other beings in the universe? Does he need to prove that he is the one who has told us the truth from the beginning? Does God have to win here on planet Earth as well as in the rest of the universe? What would it take for God to win the great controversy here on Earth?**
8. Review the events which led up to Daniel’s answering and interpreting the king’s dream in Daniel 2. What would you do if suddenly in a time of unparalleled prosperity and success in your career someone knocked on your door and announced that you had been chosen by the government to be executed?
9. Who was it that came up with the idea of killing all the wise men in Babylon? Was Satan trying to eliminate the influence of Daniel and his three friends?
10. Would you have done what Daniel did in this situation? Did the situation seem essentially hopeless? Did Daniel have anything to lose by asking for an extra day or two to interpret the dream?
11. **This dream covers a time span of at least 2600 years. How does God predict the future that far in advance? Were any of the details of this dream incorrect?**
12. **When God predicts the future are his predictions accurate because he makes it come out the way he predicted it? Or does God have some way of looking into the future and predicting how it will come out without violating any human free will?**
13. Why do you think evangelists love to begin a series by preaching on Daniel 2?

14. **Why do you choose to believe this prophecy and the rest of the book of Daniel? Why do many Christians choose to reject Daniel as prophecy?**
15. Jesus quotes Daniel in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. He states that some of Daniel's prophecies were yet to be fulfilled. In light of this how can our Christian friends say that Daniel is a book written after the events predicted?
16. Review the four main kingdoms discussed in Daniel 2. Only two of them are named. Are you certain that we have correctly identified the rest of them?
17. **Why do you think this dream and its prophetic interpretation were given to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel instead of to Jeremiah or Ezekiel or some other prophet? Is there a particular reason why God chose to give this prophecy at this time to these people?**
18. Look at Daniel's prayer in asking for the interpretation of the dream. "Four facts stand out in this prayer: (1) wisdom and power are God's; (2) God controls "times and seasons," as well as the movements of nations and powers; (3) 'He reveals deep and hidden things,' (Daniel 2:22) and those who walk with Him need not fear darkness; (4) He is a God who answers prayers." *Adult Teacher's SS Bible Study Guide*, p. 33.
19. "In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to [500] a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counter-play of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. {PK 499.4}
20. "The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. **He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.**" *Education* 190 (1903); *Counsels to Teachers* 462; *Lift Him Up* 115; *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, 346
21. **Do we understand and are we able to see the workings of God and the workings of the devil through the play and counter play of human history? In our time?**
22. What is different about the fourth kingdom made of iron? What is implied by the fact that the feet and toes are part of iron and part of clay? Clearly there's a change in the government involved here from solid iron to iron and clay. What does that imply? Does Rome still rule? "If a man considers the origin of this great ecclesiastical dominion, he will easily perceive that the papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned on the grave thereof." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*.
23. When you review the prophecy of Daniel 2 how does it affect you? Are you amazed? Bored? Curious? Full of questions?
24. Do you believe that the book of Daniel was at least partly written for the people in Daniel's

day? What do you think it might have said to them? About God? About their future?

25. Do you understand that the book of Daniel from beginning to end was largely written for the benefit of those of us who live at the end of time?
26. Think of the history of the Roman Church. Do you think there were people who questioned the truthfulness of the prophecies of Daniel soon after the pope was taken captive and died in 1798? Did it seem like the Roman Church was finished?
27. By comparing the prophecies in Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, and assuming they are speaking of parallel time periods, we can identify the four major kingdoms that are named: Babylon (Daniel 2:37, 38); Medo-Persia (Daniel 8:20); Greece (Daniel 8:21); and then a fourth kingdom not named; followed by God's eternal Kingdom (Daniel 2:44). Do you feel comfortable in making these parallels between the different prophetic visions of Daniel's book? If not, why not? Can you see any reason why the different prophecies should have completely separate and different fulfillments? Is there anything to indicate this in the prophecies themselves?
28. Seventh-day Adventists are among a very small group of people who consistently interpret the book of Daniel as prophetic of literal history. If you read the text of Daniel 2 and then Daniel 7 to 9 with as little bias as you can manage do these prophecies seem to interpret themselves? How much of the prophecies are still in doubt in your mind?
29. Is there any doubt about the final outcome pictured in each of these prophecies?
30. Would you feel that you were directly denying the word of God if you questioned the previous Seventh-day Adventist interpretations of the book of Daniel?
31. Is there any way that Daniel could have guessed these prophecies? How do you choose to interpret the amazing accuracy apparently spelled out in Daniel 2?
32. Understood correctly, Daniel 2 shows that God is in charge of all the affairs of the vast universe, and at the same time takes a personal interest in the individual lives of his children even here on this rebellious planet. God fully sees and understands all that is going to happen in the future, just as clearly as he sees the past, and he can—if he chooses—reveal that future in detail to human beings. Even in difficult times we can put our trust in him.

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