

The Key to Prophetic Understanding



Week Two

inTro



Reflecting on what we learned in Chapter 1, watch the following video:

https://youtu.be/xSua9_WhQFE

Write down your thoughts after seeing it on how to survive in our Babylonian exile in light of what you have read thus far.

Read This Week's Passage:
Daniel 2

PREREQUISITES

Daniel chapter 1 begins with the theme of temperance and its correlation with spiritual revelations, while chapter 2 contains the theme of prayer and its relationship with spiritual revelation. A crisis has arisen in Babylon, and Daniel and his three friends pray. God's answer to their prayers affected not just their circumstance but also Christianity's understanding of prophetic history forever. And it all began in a small-group prayer meeting!

The importance of prayer is often talked about but is seldom practiced beyond the formalities of praying before meals and before one goes to sleep. It has almost become a mere ritual or rite of passage that Christians do out of habit. Thus the organic, authentic, and invigorating potential of prayer is seldom experienced. Furthermore, the transformative power of prayer for the individual as well as the global impact is lost.

We might think of prophecy as an intellectual exercise of the mind. However, the book of Daniel grounds prophetic understanding in physical temperance and spiritual prayer. The book of Daniel does not assume a dualistic approach of the separation between mind, body, and the spiritual nature to understanding. Rather, it necessitates that the entire human being be conditioned for spiritual revelation. Prayer is the prerequisite to spiritual prophetic understanding.



inScribe

Write out Daniel 2:1–30 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Daniel 2:16–23 from your Bible translation of choice. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Daniel 2:1–30. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

Why does humanity refuse to acknowledge its own limitations?

What is your prayer life like - really?

HUMAN IMPOSSIBILITY: GOD'S POSSIBILITY

The king of Babylon has a dream followed by sudden amnesia. His blubbling wise men try to come up with a solution but to no avail. This enrages the king who places all the wise men of the kingdom on death row. Daniel seeks an audience with the king where he asks for more time. His request granted, Daniel returns home and calls a prayer meeting with his three friends and the rest is history. (We will cover the dream and its interpretation in the prophetic section that comes later in this study commentary.)

The first response of Daniel and his three friends to the crisis was to pray. There are times when the only thing we can do is pray especially when the solution requires supernatural intervention. In this case, the supernatural intervention also involved supernatural revelation. Although temperance enhances our spiritual perception, this alone is not enough; we need to bathe our study of God's prophetic Word in prayer. Prayer is the key to spiritual revelation and understanding.

Before Daniel receives the first prophecy, he commits to physical temperance and spiritual prayer—this impacts his being. Being must precede knowing. Being in prayer creates the correct mental posture for approaching prophecy: human wisdom must bow to the Great "I AM." Daniel and his three friends' prayers for supernatural revelation is an example that we are to seek to emulate as we wrestle with the prophetic message found within the book of Daniel. Daniel was in an impossible situation. He was asked to figure out what the king had dreamed in his own bed. Daniel's response to the crisis was to pray. *When we pray, human impossibility is God's opportunity.*

A DEEPER LOOK INTO CHAPTER 2:1–30

Why did God give the dream to Nebuchadnezzar first rather than to Daniel?

God gave the dream to Nebuchadnezzar first and not to Daniel. This indicates that God was trying to reach King Nebuchadnezzar through the dream. One of the greatest predictive prophecies of Scripture was given to a heathen monarch! Bible prophecy is redemptive in nature. It's not just about predictions and fulfillment—it's about saving people. Ultimately Nebuchadnezzar was converted through a series of events that began with prophetic illumination.

Another reason why God gave the message to Nebuchadnezzar first was to reveal to him the futility of seeking truth apart from God's messengers, His prophets. These human vessels were chosen to deliver supernatural revelations. Seeking spiritual truth apart from other sources, whether they be academic institutions, palm readers, or secular sources, all fall short of God's prophetic Word found in Scripture. The book of Daniel reveals the supremacy of Scripture above every other source of knowledge.

Why was prayer the condition of revelation for Daniel?

Before God can give revelation, the heart must be right. This can only be accomplished through prayer. By nature, prayer is an acknowledgment of our own deficiency and of God's supremacy. The simple act of prayer implies humanity's inability, need, and inadequacy. The prophecies of Daniel can only be understood when our studies of the prophecies are bathed in prayer.

Furthermore, prayer has implications for the nature of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. Roger Morneau states, "in prayer and supplication to God, who waits for our requests for help so that He will then have the legal right in the sight of the universe to move with power into Satan's domain and rescue his captives" (Roger Morneau, *The Incredible Power of Prayer*, p. 41). There are rules in the Great Controversy. Prayer gives God the right and authorization to move above and beyond what He would normally be able. Our prayers are our consent in giving God clearance to intervene.

What is the significance of Daniel praying with his three friends?

We see the importance of private prayer in Daniel chapter 6. Corporate prayer in no way diminishes the need for private prayer. Daniel 2, however, establishes the blessing of small group prayer in addition to our personal prayer life—especially in times of crisis. Daniel and his three friends became a community of prayer and fellowship through their experience in Babylon. This also reveals that spiritual revelation comes to the community of believers but can be received in isolation apart from the body. The Bible establishes the essential relationship of spiritual community and spiritual revelation.



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Which composite picture of Daniel's character emerges from this chapter?



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Prayer Life of Jesus

Mark 1:35

Matthew 14:23

Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28

Prayer Life of the Christian

Philippians 4:6, 7

1 Thessalonians 5:17

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 2:1–30?

Review your memorized verse from Daniel 2.

CONVERSATION IS RELATIONSHIP

It's easy to fall into a mindless ritual of saying the same prayers over and over again out of habit or obligation. Prayer is one of the most essential yet neglected practices for professed Christians. Prayer is the lifeblood of the soul. Furthermore, it is conversation with God and conversation is relationship. As one expert on conversation put it, "the conversation is the relationship" and "our very lives succeed or fail, change gradually, then suddenly one conversation at a time" (Susan Scott, *Fierce Conversation*, p. 12). In other words, we talk about having a "relationship with God," but what does that mean? When we boil down our relationship with God down to its essence, it is communion with Him – conversation. Therefore, if there is no conversation, there is not relationship; if there is no prayer, there is no relationship.

It's been turned into a meritorious ritual by some or a non-essential supplementary aspect of the Christian experience by others. Prayer is neither of these. Prayer is purely relational. In our marriages, friendship, or any other human relationship, conversation is our relationship and our relationship with God is no exception. Prayer is conversation; and conversation is relationship.



inVite

Meditate on Daniel 2 again and look for where Jesus is.



Where is Jesus in Daniel
2:17–23?

How do you see Jesus differently
or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to
seeing Jesus in this way?



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

After this week's study
of the chapter, what are
personal applications you are
convicted of in your life?

What practical applications must
you make in your prayer life?

NO PERPLEXITY TOO DIFFICULT

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.....Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. (*Steps to Christ* by E. G. White, pp. 94-95, 100)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



When is the last time you felt like you really talked with God? What was the difference that time?

What are some of the things that make it difficult to pray?

When was a time when God really answered your prayer?

What times do you find it easier to pray than others?

What are the types of things that we typically pray for and why?

Have you ever fallen into a mindless ritual of praying? Why do you think this can happen?

When was a time that you prayed in a small group of friends? What was that experience like?

What do you think is the key to a consistent, powerful prayer life?