



Ministry of the Word

Sunday 19th March 2017

by Vincent Gannon

Scripture: Daniel 2:25

Subject: Chapter 2 - Part 8: The Battle of Reason Verses Revelation

“The Battle for the Mind”

We come to verse 25, and Daniel is on his way to the King’s palace with Arioch at his side. Daniel had received from God, what only God can and did reveal, which was the very thoughts of the kings’ mind. But more much more than that, God gave the interpretation of the dream, and what an interpretation it was! Because of what God had done in revealing the dream, Daniel and his friends were about to be catapulted up the ladder of the Babylon civil services, however, we are still outside the throne room of the king. There had been a battle, a spiritual battle going on and it would continue, but for now God had a mighty victory over the powers of darkness.

You will recall Pauls address to the Ephesians in chapter 6 when he told the believers to get “geared up” for the battle by putting on spiritual dress. He uses “typology” in the form of military dress so as to remind them, while they were not part of any emperor’s army; they were in fact soldiers of the Lord.

We have become so condition to war that we automatically think of conventional types and means used in such but not so in spiritual warfare where such things are of no value

whatsoever. For the unsaved, it's a battle for their souls while at the same time, the same enemy is raging war against the saints but this time for **the battle is for the mind**.

Many of the advisors in Babylon had been senior priests in the many temples scattered around the city as well as the intellectuals. Daniel and his friends were numbered among these. Except, we perhaps have forgotten one important detail which the Spirit of God revealed to us in verse 20 of chapter one. This statement raises a question, a very important question that we need as believers today need to think about seriously.

Reason verses Revelation

What in fact is meant by 'better'? It's a relative term. As a tool for gaining knowledge and clear reason, we can call it brilliance. Is relative brilliance all there is? True that there are those who have incredible minds and can learn and know more than the average person. My question to you is, "is there nothing more?"

You see the advisors to the king did not believe there was such a thing as revelation. Their gods did not communicate with mere humans. Their "epistemology" was naturalistic. Their views were no different than the scholars who believe that Daniel could not have possibly wrote this book in the 6th century (B.C) because he would not and could not have had access to the information of events that were yet to occur. So many scholars today do not believe in the category of revelation, full stop. Their universe is that of the naturalist or possibly of the materialist. It's a closed system of cause and effect undisturbed by the supernatural. Their understanding is that of Enlightenment. In other words, it comes from the human mind alone. The verse that comes to mind in relation to this is **2 Corinthians 4:3-7 (read)**.

"The Battle for Meaning"

The account of the king and his dream also raises the question of the relationship between reason and revelation. Atheist, often pit these against each other, as if revelation was anti-reason. Yet this is false as this account shows. Remember the advisors to the king were prepared to use their reason on any data presented to them but the problem was that none was forthcoming. Had the king given them anything, they would have probably just used their reason and tried to come up with an answer. God had other plans and our brother Daniel

knew that God not only had the dream but its interpretation and further still, he knew that God if He so desired could and did reveal it to him.

This advances the meaning of revelation one step deeper. It clearly shows not just to the believer but non-believers that what happened then was not human reason but Divine revelation. We have here a wonderful explanation concerning the meaning of revelation. And it is this. Revelation produces information that unaided reason cannot access.

If you were in a court and wanted to prove a debatable point all you have to do is go to one of the “legal books” that every good barrister has, find a case file that shows a similar judgment in the past which was made. There would be no argument the judge would have to concede that what you say is there in the book. The problem with our book, the Bible, is that man in his sin says, “it has no meaning or very little”, yet, I don’t think he would really like to live outside its moral laws that have protected us so far.

The sceptics say that there is no reason to believe in revelation but our account tells us otherwise. The stakes were the highest. All the wise men including Daniel and friends would die if there was no such thing as revelation. They would all die if there was no such thing as wisdom coming from above. They would all die if God did not speak. God spoke clearly and all Daniel had to do was to relate it to the king. What man at his best could not do God did!

“The Blessedness of Biblical Prophecy/Revelation”

It’s of vital importance that we hold steadfast to what the text says and not what others think it says. So many who have tried to change the meaning of the texts of Scripture like these have made many erroneous faith statements which are abroad today. Some, even purporting to be “Christian”.

When the sceptics say that reason is all there is and that there is no need to believe in revelation, our account here in Daniel tells us otherwise. When Daniel relates the contents of the dream to the king, the king in turn has all the evidence he needs to believe in revelation. There is no way, and the king understands this perfectly, that Daniel could come up with a perfect description of his dream unless it was by revelation. Can you see where this is leading Nebuchadnezzar to? Of course he is a tough nut so there was more in store for him.

Now the dream is one thing but does the interpretation make sense? Nebuchadnezzar was no buffoon or mindless pagan. He was a good bit down the road then the rest of them, so will the interpretation make sense? Well Daniel has to explain it and as he did, it made perfect sense.

Under the pressure of secular naturalism and the strong attacks spiritually, it is easy for the Christian to lose sight of the meaning of their name. "Those who believe in Christ". For many the name is attributed to someone though "decent". But of course the word Christ is the Greek word, for Messiah see John 20:31.

Christians, as defined by the Bible, are those who believe that Jesus is the One whose coming was announced by the prophets which in turn became the hope of the Jewish people. John 24:13-27.

The fulfilment of prophecy, which is the revelation that God has given to His prophets in the Scriptures both Old and New Testaments lies at the heart of what Christianity is. Remember it was Jesus Himself who took the Old Testament and shows how our faith is embed in both the history and prophecies of the past. The Cross itself is there in Psalms 22. Did you realise that Jesus was crucified for claiming to be the Son of Man? Matthew 26:64-65. The high priest knew his scriptures and especially Daniel 7:13!

Remember, if you will, Peter as he came to the end of his life, had such an experience with the Saviour. Remember the mount of transfiguration Matthew 17:5. He met with Moses and Elijah, and his Saviour changed right before his eyes and as clear as a bell ringing out in the stillness of the night, the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased: listen to Him." No doubt Peter experiences convinced him of a real heaven and a higher dimension than this one and just as real. Here is where Jesus reigns as King, and He is the source of all life and light there. We learn an important lesson from this, that a life invested for Christ is not wasted as some may think. Peter knew that he was blessed to have been with Christ on that occasion, but what about the vast majority of the disciples like you and I, how can we be convinced that Christ's eternal kingdom is no delusion? Peter himself gives us the answer in terms of the nature and purpose of prophecy. Please read 2 Peter 1:19-21.



Of course you know what that means? That prophecy is divine revelation and does not come from someone's **own** interpretation. This is not the product of man's own intellect or reason no matter how "brilliant" he or she may be. It comes only from God. God spoke to Daniel and Daniel spoke for God. He was carried or borne along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter is telling us that prophecy has a supernatural dimension to it and it is important that we take this on board, he says, "knowing this first of all". Why this concern? Because we should be convinced in heart as well as mind that God actually spoke through the prophets as Jesus demonstrated to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Peter goes even further for he tells us the purpose of prophecy. He tells us that as a source of light, the prophetic word including the book of Daniel is to be regarded even surer than the transfiguration experience. It was given to us to generate in us an awareness of the reality of Christ's eternal kingdom so that we should invest our lives in it. Through the prophets we are meant to hear the voice of God, authenticating itself and leaving us in no doubt that the transcendent and eternal is no less substantial than the material.

Sadly, the Jews had closed their ears to this and the consequences were enormous. Do you think it's possible for us to do the same? Thousands sit under the preaching of God's word and it never seems to have any effect or lasting effect. So too did the Jews week after week so on and so forth. They began to reject it, after all others seem to be having a good old time, making the most of their lives and nothing bad seemed to be happening to them! So David once observed, but that changed did it not when he went before the Lord. A week to a 3-year-old seems like a life, to a 30-year-old like a few days, to an 80-year-old like a few minutes. Eternity is the same. What we do in time determines our eternity!

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