Pagan insights failing

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0:00] Daniel chapter 2, and looking at this section that we read down to the end of verse 23, a large section but it is a long chapter, and we've come to the stage in this account of Daniel where we find that the Lord is now giving him and giving these men that are with him, indeed also, a particular stage or an environment in which this knowledge and skill and all learning and wisdom that we saw in the first chapter he had given to them is now going to be demonstrated.

We have come to a stage where the Lord has so organized things as the grace that he has given to Daniel will be seen in all its superiority over what do we find in the wise men so-called of Babylon. And it is the case obviously therefore that everyone who has been enlightened by the Lord, whatever gifts he has given to us, whatever kind of gifts they are, we may be sure of one thing, that the Lord never gives us any of these things without providing for us a means by which to display them. He never gives us any gifts or any enlightenment or any wisdom or any of those things but he also provides for us the stage upon which these things are to be declared, to be lived out and to be shown and especially as we pit these things as Daniel did against the insights so-called of paganism. Now you remember we said we would give each of the chapters of Daniel as we go through them a title and then look at the various sections in each of these chapters.

We found in chapter one that faithfulness in a foreign land was found to contain for us the strategy of the enemy and then faith's counter strategy setting against that. And we'll now come to chapter two which will call pagan insight versus divine wisdom. We'll find that there are a number of things in that and today we'll look at two of them especially.

Looking at the insight of paganism which is seen to fail and then looking at the prayer meeting as we'll call it which took place and how there is success over the same matter in this prayer meeting as against what happened with paganism.

[3:03] So let's look then first of all at paganism's insights in the way that it seemed to fail. Now you know that the whole chapter really is dominated by this dream that Nebuchadnezzar had and by the wrath of the king which ensued having found that these people that he called in weren't able to help him with this dream that he had.

And of course we mustn't imagine that the fact that we've confronted here with a dream which is significant that that means every dream for us is significant let alone religiously significant.

We mustn't mustn't imagine that our dreams are of the nature of revelation. Whatever we call them we cannot call them revelation though some today would actually say that God actually uses dreams as a way of communicating revelation to us.

Let's confine the word revelation to the matter that we ought to confine it to to the word of God that we have before us in the scripture. It is closed. It is not to be added to or taken from by any medium including the medium of dreams or visions.

Whatever way God communicates and he may well communicate through the medium of dreams even to us today but it cannot be revelation. It must already be based upon the revelation that now already exists.

[4:38] But that is as we're saying not in any way discounting the possibility of God's communicating with people through the processes of the mind even in dreams.

And we mustn't imagine that it's even his own people that God communicates with in that way. Because here is this pagan king to which in a dream is communicated something that is obviously significant.

That is significant to the extent that this pagan king actually comes to tremble over the matter. He can't remember the details of the dream but he remembers something about it that was significant.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

He remembers that it caused him distress and it still causes him distress even though he can't remember the detail. It leaves him with a sense of foreboding. Something is beyond him.
He's been confronted with something that's bigger than himself and he's troubled by it. He knows there's something that he cannot grasp in what he has seen.
[5:50] And of course you remember that there are others in the scripture also that God actually communicated with through dreams. And remember for example Pilate's wife, Pontius Pilate's wife.

Remember how she said to her husband when he was examining the Lord, She was afraid of the consequences of finding fault with Christ.
The Lord had communicated that to her in a dream. She was afraid much more so than Pilate was even though that may very well have added to his fear.
You see the point is, what do we do with that sense of God or with that sense of eternity if we may so put it, that God may sometimes plant in our mind.
It doesn't have to come through a dream. It may come through other processes, through other means. But when God confronts us with something that tells us there's something there that's much bigger than ourselves.
[7:03] When God actually meets us and gives us a sense of eternity, what do we do with it? To whom do we turn with it? Do we go like Nebuchadnezzar to the experts of Babylon or do we turn to God himself?

That's the crucial question. And really the whole point of the chapter as a whole is to show the superiority of the wisdom that God gives to his people, over and above anything that Babylon's magicians can conjure out.
Here then is Nebuchadnezzar seeking an answer to his dreams. And what he does is he calls in the experts, the so-called experts of Babylon.
The king actually spoke and called for the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.
Now we mustn't imagine that these people are actually brought before us on this page of scripture as a kind of harmless alternative to the religion of Daniel.
[8:13] We mustn't imagine that the things that they were involved in are things that the Bible sees as neutral or unimportant. Because the whole point that is really stressed for us there is that these people are involved in all the rituals of paganism that are specifically condemned by God in scripture.

Because these people are involved with all kinds of magic arts. With all the reading of the heavens, of the stars. With all that you find in animal rituals.
With magic arts. With necromancy. With all the kind of things that the Bible again and again specifically condemns.
This is the essence of paganism. This is how paganism seeks to actually live and order the lives of all those who are under its sway.
This is Babylon's government that we're talking about. Whenever we find it in scripture we find that it is always condemned.
[9:25] Israel are never allowed to even contemplate the practices that these Babylonians are actually engaging in.

It is something that the Lord says to Israel. You must never ever ever find that kind of system among yourselves. Because it's always a challenge to God.
And it's always something that seeks to order your life in opposition to God. It's always something that you find is designed to lead men's minds in a way other than submissively to the will of God.
It is always to manipulate. To lay the emphasis on chance. To go about things in a way that is totally abhorrent to God.
And it seems to be the case sadly that many, though they may be in a minority, yet they are not few in our own day.
[10:34] Who would be not just dabblers in this, but who would be very much involved. Who would place a lot of emphasis on what the tarot cards may say to them.

Upon what palm reading or mind reading may say to them. They may be very well, very well, very well, be well-dressed neighbors of ourselves.
But let that, let not that, let not that actually blind us to the reality and to the dangers of paganistic practices.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Then you see the confidence of these men. Tell us the dream and we will show you the interpretation.
They have absolutely no hesitation in coming to the king with this claim, with this confidence. You show us the dream and we will undoubtedly show you the interpretation.
[11:31] But then you see that is how Babylon and how pagan insight and how pagan ideology always works. It always throws itself upon people with a mind of confidence.

It looks so realistic. It actually promises so much and promises so much in confidence. And it still continues to project itself confidently, even when it seemed to fail.
Remember that incident back in 1 Samuel chapter 5. Where the ark of the Lord was captured by the Philistines for a time. And you remember they took it into the house of their god, Dagon.
And you remember what happened the next day when the Philistines went into the house of Dagon. They found Dagon, they found a statue of Dagon actually fallen onto the ground.
They were confronted with its ridiculousness in the face of the ark of the covenant god. They were faced with the superiority of the god of Israel.
[12:47] Dagon had fallen onto his face on the ground. What did they do? Did they see the ridiculousness of it? Did they actually come with conviction to say that their god was only an idol after all?

No, they didn't. They put him up again onto his shelf. You can hardly read that passage without smiling over it. It's so ludicrous.
They take Dagon. They prop him up. They put him back on their pedestal and then they still continue to worship him. He's a failed god.
But they go back to him. He's a god that they have to prop up. That they actually have to help back onto his shelf. But they still worship him.
He is still their lord and their master. And however ridiculous the passage shows their worship to be, it doesn't have to be a stone statue for you and I to parallel, to have a mirror image of that same ridiculous, pathetic, degenerate kind of attitude.
[14:07] It is in existence in millions today. Think of it. Of pagan ideology and how those who practice it will blindly again and again go back to it.

The unbelieving scientist, he'll go back to his formulae. And he'll say, well I know they didn't work that time, but I know that they must work. I know that it must be right.
The evolutionist goes back to his preconceptions. He goes back to it in such a way as slavishly attaches himself to it.
And with his hatred of creationism and his hatred of everything that is to do with a creator god, the evolutionist will go back to those basics. Even if they've fallen down in the presence of god, he'll still prop them up and he will still slavishly worship them.
And the humanist, wherever humanist tendencies and ideology comes through, in whatever field, will say it doesn't matter what the Bible says. Man is essentially good.
[15:17] And man essentially good will work things out in the end. He will actually come in the end to make a paradise for himself.

In fact, I heard someone the other day just talking on the subject of the supernatural. And this was what she said.
After all, she said the supernatural is just the natural science of tomorrow. As much as to say, you just give us time.
We'll work it out. You just give us a few more months or a few more years. We'll master this. We'll actually, by the genius of mankind, we will actually order things so that we are secure.
Mankind's gods and above all, mankind making himself as god. And that is what these particular individuals are about.
[16:19] And that is why they go to the king and say, O king, live forever. It's not a pious sentiment. It's simply the fact that they are confident that everything the king wants, they can give.

And when they're saying to him, O king, live forever, they're simply saying, Don't worry. We can arrange things so that you are not to be afraid.
We can guarantee that our insight knows what's best for you. We can guarantee that no harm will come to you. All you've got to do is simply rely upon us.
And that is what pagan insight will throw at you today. It doesn't matter where you will find it. Confidently it will say to you, Whatever you do, don't think religiously about your problems.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Whatever you do, don't take it to your pastor for counselling. Whatever you do, don't look for a Christian neighbour. Whatever you do, don't actually go in for that kind of thing.
[17:27] You must rely, rather than go to them, On the insights that we have In all our human experience, In all these generations of experience.

You rely on us. We are much more advanced. And to go back to the Bible. You'll come across it in your reading.
You'll come across it on television. You'll come across it in many, many fields. But don't let the sparkle of confidence trick you. There are many people that are confronted with those things that say, Well, it must be right.
It's so convincing. Don't let the confidence of pagan insight Duke you into Swallowing all that they say.
You measure it by this word. Measure it by the revelation of God. What does God say about it? That is what matters.
[18:32] Well, then here are these Particular individuals. And then Nebuchadnezzar, of course, Tells them to do something Which is totally unreasonable. They are seen to fail, certainly.

But Nebuchadnezzar has gone too far. As tyranny always does. When the patience of Nebuchadnezzar runs out, The Chaldeans had better look out.
And every tyrant that has ever been Is exactly the same. Hitler's patience run out. And the Jews suffered by it. Every other tyrant Is exactly the same.
Tyranny Cannot rest short Of exacting Its own impatience. But having said that, It is still the case That these Particular individuals Are seen to fail.
Nebuchadnezzar says, I've forgotten the dream. I can't Actually remember the details. What you've got to do Is tell me that dream. You've got to actually go out Tell me the dream And the interpretation.
[19:47] And of course they come and say, There isn't a man upon the earth That can show the king his dream. Therefore there is no king, lord, or ruler That asks such things That any magician Or astrologer Or Chaldean.

It is a rare thing That the king requires. And there is none other That can show it before the king Except the gods Whose dwelling is not with flesh. Nebuchadnezzar's wrath says, This is what I will do Except you actually show me this dream.
And they are confronted With their own failure. They cannot do it. Just in passing Notice how Nebuchadnezzar's government works.
There are two things By which he sets down Before these men This requirement of his. Two things By which he seeks To keep them In his power.
And it is always the case That Babylon power Will try and keep you In its service By these two things. He first of all Offers them all the best Of material things.
[21:00] If you show me this dream Then you shall certainly receive Of me gifts and rewards And great honour. Therefore show me the dream And the interpretation thereof.

Yes Babylon will always appeal To your natural instincts. It will always appeal To your material instincts.
To our natural love Of monetary material gain. And all the time What it really is about Is that it's seeking To keep you there Firmly locked in Under its government.
And Babylon is about that Each and every day. Whatever it is That we're confronted with As a source Of keeping us There under its way Babylon will say I'll give you more of that As long as you stay Faithful to me.
And if that doesn't work Babylon will continue To threaten you. Make that man's house A dunghill Except he really gives me What I want to give.
[22:16] That is the threat Where the incentive Doesn't work. The bullying tactics Are brought to bay. Satan will actually say to you Look you cannot go And join these Christians.

You're going to give up Too much. And he will bully you And he will cajole you And he will actually Suggest to you That if you're really Going to go into That kind of life Full time Then your house Is going to be Made a dunghill.
It's far too much. You're going to suffer Too much. You're going to lose Too much. Well friends That's Babylon's strategy.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That is Babylon's Attempts at keeping you In his service. What you've got to do Is face that Knowing that there is A confidence.
Knowing that there is A confidence that can be And that must be used. The confidence Of being in Christ. And whenever you hear That little voice In your mind Saying to you No don't go through With it.
[23:19] It's going to cost Too much. You can be sure That that is Babylon's Babylon's government. That that is Satanic insight. That that is actually The strategy of Satan That wants to keep you Where you are.

Your house will not Be made a dunghill. You will not lose Too much By becoming Christ. You have the promise Of Christ's own word In that.
And so Pagan insight Is seen to fail. As we turn to our Second point To look at What we call this Prayer meeting.
We find that This is how The chapter portrays The superiority Of that life of faith And trust in God That this man Daniel actually Exercises.
Here is Daniel And he actually Hears of what has Happened And he goes in And asks of Ariokh The captain Of the king's guard Why is the decree So hasty From the king?
[24:24] Why has the king Gone about this In such a hasty manner? And when he was Told about it Daniel went in And desired of the king That he would Give him time And that he would Show the king The interpretation.

You see Even there How It's Daniel That really Dictates the matter. He goes in To the king He asks the king For time Something that he Hadn't been willing To actually give To the Chaldeans And to the magicians When they asked him For time He actually accused them Of trying to Put one over him As it were But here is a man Of God That has God with him And having God with him He dictates To Nebuchadnezzar And he asks Nebuchadnezzar For this time That he will then Show the king The interpretation And Nebuchadnezzar Grants it But then you see The splendid difference Between the approach Of paganism And the approach Of this man Of faith Is brought out Clearly for us Where these Necromancers These occultists Where they looked To their own insight To their own strength
What does Daniel do? He turns to God Not only that But he turns to God Confidently We mustn't imagine That it's a contrast Between the confidence Of paganism And the non-confidence Of Daniel Daniel is equally confident Equally confident To anything that Paganism has to offer But he is confident In God And he is confident Expressing it In prayerfulness And it's in that confidence That he gathers His friends together For that prayer meeting Because it's not just Private individual prayer Important as that is It's corporate prayer It is the strength Of one mind In prayer That the chapter Is talking about It is a prayer meeting It is a prayer meeting Where these faithful souls Are together in prayer Where there is this
Emphasis on what Can be done When there are two Or three Together in the Lord's name Mightily beseeching The God of heaven And you notice He's stressing The God of heaven Pagan insight Looks to the heavens As their God Faith looks to the God Of heaven And seeks the insight That comes Through prayer Through waiting Upon the true God And of course There is an importance In the fact That it is Corporate prayer We all need to be Engaged Zealously Privately In praying We all need to Actually close The door of our Closets Of our prayer closets And be about Beseeching the heavens Knocking on heaven's doors Privately Zealously Continuously That's of the Atmost importance But it's not to be
To the neglect Of corporate prayer Of coming together To pray Of having one mind In many people Over the same issues Seeking mercies Of the God of heaven There's a text there That we very often Quote in prayer Where two or three Are gathered together In my name As Jesus said I am there In the midst But We quote it Sometimes at least Without realising Just how connected It really is To the verse That goes before that Because the verse That goes before that Says If two of you Shall agree Be on earth As touching Whatsoever Ye shall ask It shall be done For them Of my Father Who is in heaven For Wheresoever Two or three
[28:39] Are gathered together In my name Yes it's Jesus Yes it's Jesus in the midst Yes it is God's presence In the midst Of his people Even when it is Two or three It is still God In the midst But it is God In the midst It is Jesus In the midst Of a prayerful people It is Jesus In the midst Of corporate prayer It is Jesus In the midst Of the many With the one mind And let's not Take the two Texts apart And here is Daniel Bringing these Matters to God Along with his Fellows In this one

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Corporate Prayerfulness What a mighty Influential thing Is this Corporate prayer Do we really Bring things Confidently to God In the conviction That corporate prayer

Is really A mighty thing Do we bring it With the same Convictions That Daniel Actually had When he brought These fellow Believers together To seek Mercies of the God of heaven And you notice He is asking There for mercies Of the God of heaven Not just describing By that The sparing Of their lives But every single Aspect To the answer Of prayer It is mercies Of the God of heaven We have no Rights of our own We have no Claim by ourselves Upon God Everything that we Have of a claim Upon God Is a claim That we have On mercy's ground The way that is Opened Is a way That mercy Has opened The things That we receive Of God The answers To our prayers They are mercies Of God We are the beggars With our arms Ball outstretched And God
Is not of himself Obliged To fill Any portion Of it But he is the Great arms Giver And although He is not Of any Native necessity Or compulsion To fill Our begging Ball as it Stretched out Oh let us Never ever Think But when he Fills it That he gives Us the bare Minimums Because the God of mercy Does fill Our begging Balls And that is One of the Great convictions That we have When we go to Him In our prayers In our Corporate prayers That we are not Stretching out Our hands To a God Who delights In being Niggardly In giving us Simply the Very basics That we need To go by Isn't he the One That does Exceedingly Abud Above all That we are Able to ask Our thing Doesn't he Exceed our Expectations Hasn't he Done more For us In our lives Than we ever Dared To imagine And doesn't he Continue to do More for us Than we would Even dare to Hopeful in Faith That is Our God The God Of mercies That corporate Prayer Actually locates With These are Largely Untapped Resources Because we Fail to Estimate The magnificent Grace And friends God will Answer corporate Prayer Of that we Are sure However many Times we've Seen it It is still The case That we are Convinced he Will again Do for us What he has Done before
Let us Never imagine That it has To be instant That it has To be now That it has To be tomorrow That it has To be as Instant As it was For Daniel But the fact That it is Not instant Doesn't mean That the Corporate Prayer of God's People Is anything Other than What Spurgeon Called it When he Called it The boiler House When he Took them Down to The depths To the Bowels Of his Building And when He saw There a Group Actually engaged In prayer There he Says it's The boiler House And friends If the Boiler House Breaks Down Then you Can be Sure That the Ship Is actually Going to Drift If the Boiler House Breaks Down The ship Is at The mercy Of the Tides And the Winds We Need That Boiler House To Really Work We Need That
[33:41] Boiler Us To Be Fully Stoked Up We Need To Really Avail Ourselves Of All The Advantages Of Corporate Prayer Let's Be About Stoking The Boilers Let's Be About Really Making These Particular Prayers The Prayers Of Daniel And His Fellows One Mind In The Many Men Mind In The Many Individuals Is The Stoking Boilers Of The Ship Of The Gospel There Are Two Things That Daniel Does Finally In Response To God's Answer To His Prayer God Gave Him The Desire Of His Heart Or That God Would Give Us The Desire First Of All To Ask With All The Confidence Of Daniel And

Then That He Would Give Us The Desire Of Our Hearts What Does Daniel Do When God Answers His Prayer Two Things He First Of All Turns To His Devotions He He He Doesn't Do Anything Until He First Of All Turned To God And Thanked Him And Blessed Him And What Does He Bless Him For He Blesses Him For What He Is He He Blesses Him As The God Who Changes The Times And The Seasons Who Removes Kings And Sets Up Kings Who Gives Wisdom To The Wise And Knowledge To Those That Know Understanding He He Reveals The Deep And Secret Things He Knows What Is In The Darkness And The Light Dwells With Him There's No Doubt In Daniel's Mind What Nebuchadnezzar Is Yes He's The King Of Babel But Really Ultimately What Is He Well He's A Tiny Fragment Of One Piece Of A Massive
Jigsaw He's Not Out Of Place In It But He's Just A Speck In It And There's Nothing In The Jigsaw Out Of Place The God Of Heaven Is The Helms Man Of The Universe Whenever We See The Change That We're Seeing In Our Day We Must Have The Conviction Of Daniel We Must Seek The Same Approach To Things Seeking To See God At Work To See God Actually At Work In The Setting Up Of Kings In The Taking Down Of Kings In The Placing Of This Peace Here And This Peace There Until It Will All Be The Finished Plan That He Has Purposed From All Eternity God Of Heaven God And Isn't It All The God That Is The God Who Fills Our Begging For Us Daniel
Calls Him The God Of My Fathers And Again It's Not A Mere Sentiment Because He's Capturing For Us In That The Covenant God In Other Words He's Capturing For Us In That One Phrase I

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Thank Thee And Praise Thee O Thou God Of My Fathers He's Capturing For Us The Faithfulness Of God This Is Jehovah The God Of The Covenant The God Of His Fathers The God Who Has Truly Put His Own Faithfulness To The Test As It Were And Has Seen Has Been Seen Thee But Daniel Is Saying More Than That When He Calls Him The God Of My Fathers He Brings Out Clearly His Own Resolution And Determination That Whatever The King Of Babylon Saves Whatever
The Gods Of Babylon Might Suggest This Is Where Daniel Will Stand He Will Be Faithful To The God Of His Vows The God Of Abraham Isaac And Jacob He Will Be My God Says Daniel Through All Of This This Is The One That I Stand In Relation To This Is The One That I Depend Upon This Is The One That Will Not Let Me Down I Thank The For Thou God Of My Vows That Old Conviction Are We Relying On Him And Not On Our Sells Daniel's Devotions Would Have It To Be This Way And Then Finally There Is A Second Matter In His Response His Doing It Is Not Just Prayer On Its Own
[38:44] Not Even Corporate Prayer On Its Own There Has To Be The Practice Along With The Prayer There Has To Be The Putting Into Action Of The Things That We Have Prayed For Of The Things That We Pray Concerning It's Not A Matter Of Being Isolated From The World In A Hermit Type Of Existence It's A Matter Of Being Prayerfully Involved But Also Being Practically Involved In Our Doings He Went To Arioch Immediately Soon As He Had His Answer To His Prayer He Went Into Arioch And He Said To Him You Bring Me In Before The King And I Will Show Him The Interpretation Daniel's Devotion Tied Up With Daniel's Doing All Part Of What He Has Approached

Through Grave All Part Of How We May See The Superiority Of The Life Of Grace As Against The Life Of Pagan Insider Who Is Our God To Whom Is Our Allegiance Who Has Your Heart My Heart Whose Insights Are We Applied To Our Lives Is It Unbelievable Is Is It The Ideology Of Babylon Or Is It The Word Of God Of Heaven O Lord O God We Thank Thee For The Way That Thou Has Shown To Us The Power And The Wisdom That Is Thine In Christ
That He Is The Way The Truth And The Life That As We Come To Thee We Know That In Him Thou Art Pleased To Accept On Us Bless To Us Thy Word That Our Allegiance May Be Strengthened To Be Fortified Against All The Government Of Babylon We Would Find In Our Own Day The Many Allurements By Which We May Be Induced To Leave Our Present Position May We Find O Lord That Thy Power Is Made Perfect In Our Weakness Thereby Testifying To The Full Sufficiency Of Thy Grace That We Might Also Be Able To Stay But When We Are Weak Then Are We Strong Seal Thy Word To Our Heart And Bless Us In What Remains Of This Day For We Ask It Seeking The Honor And Glory Of Thy Name For Jesus
Sake Amen fountain Just N To Help To Go To

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host