

RISE AND FALL

Daniel 2:24-49



SYNOPSIS

This past Sunday, we continued on in our series on the book of Daniel exploring the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the interpretation that God had revealed to Daniel. In the dream (*Daniel 2:31-45*), four kingdoms are presented, and the interpretation of this dream was the rise and fall of the next four empires in this region - the head of gold (Babylonian Empire), the arms and chest of silver (Medo-Persian Empire), the belly and thighs of silver (Greco Empire), and legs of iron/feet of clay + iron (Roman Empire). Yet the crux of the dream is the rock not cut by human hands that would strike the statue and become a huge mountain that fills the whole earth. This rock represents the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God would indeed go on to break through every culture and barrier and become an eternal kingdom filled with people from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

We also see in the text the character of Daniel that walks humbly before God. Daniel understands that his role is that of a servant and mouthpiece and brings glory and honor to God instead of himself (despite the temptation to do so).

Finally, we see King Nebuchadnezzar promote Daniel to a position of great power and influence, and we can only conclude that this is the favor of God. This is the difference between God's promotion and self-promotion, and as we also wait on God's promotion in our own lives, let's be content and rested/at peace with where we are currently planted. Our desire is to be in the center of the will of God.



OUTLINE

1

RISE AND FALL OF KINGDOMS

Don't fear the turbulence of the nations - in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we are reminded that earthly kingdoms are temporal in nature (no matter how strong and long-lasting they may seem), but we are citizens of an eternal kingdom - one that will have no end and will continue to break barriers and increase throughout human history until it fills the earth and is established for all eternity. Praise God for the hope we have in that!

2

CHARACTER OF DANIEL

Daniel rightly understood that he was a servant of God. He didn't have to embellish his ability, but simply pointed to the power of the "God of Heaven." We can be tempted to make things about ourselves and believe that the impact and fruit of our ministry is by our own brilliance and talent. Let's remember the joy there is in saying "He must increase and I must decrease" as we place our joy in Jesus receiving the reward of His suffering.

3

THE PROMOTION OF GOD

In a world obsessed with power, influence, fame, and promotion, let's trust in the promotion of God. We must resist the temptation of self-promotion and resist the temptation to covet others in their positions. Rather, let's be confident that the foundations and character God is cultivating in us is important for the ministry He wants to do through us. When we have been promoted by God, we know that's where He wants us to be.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

As we are reminded of the temporal nature of the earthly kingdoms vs the eternal nature of God's kingdom, how does that shape the way we live our lives and where we place our hope in?

2

What does the image of Revelation 7:9-10 stir inside of your heart?

3

What would you say are characteristics of a servant? If we are described as servants of God, what should that look like in our lives?

4

What does "He must increase and I must decrease" look like in your life? In what ways is God asking you to lay yourself down?

5

Do you feel content with where you are? Do you compare yourself with others and covet the position of others?

6

How have we been tempted to seek after our own self promotion and how does that reflect our lack of faithfulness and/or patience in where God has planted us?



BIG IDEA

Even though we will witness the turbulence of nations, we know that our citizenship is in a kingdom that cannot be broken and is eternal in nature. And as that reality brings a peace inside of our spirit - may God use us wherever we are planted to be faithful servants - with the refrain of John guiding our hearts "He must increase and I must decrease."