

Shine With Perception

TV's *Designated Survivor* begins with a terrorist attack on the U.S. Capitol during the State of the Union address. A low-level Cabinet Secretary is named the new President as our national leadership is decimated.

In Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar threatens his leading advisors with annihilation after they are unable to interpret a troubling dream. The palace is thrown into a panic as preparations are made for a major leadership purge. What will godly young Daniel do?

Four Steps in Shining with Perception:

1. _____ (Discern) Your _____ (Dilemma)
 - a. *“When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king’s officer, ‘Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?’ Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.” Daniel 2:14-15.*
 - b. Daniel is in danger of going from a rising star (Daniel 1:20) to the gallows. The king’s demand that his wise men both reveal and interpret the dream leaves them in a quandary. Nebuchadnezzar was probably testing them, to see if they really did have a connection to the gods.

2. _____ (Seek) Your _____ (Savior)
 - a. *“Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the god of heaven concerning this mystery so that he and his friends might not be executed.” Daniel 2:17-18.*
 - b. When we’re in a pickle, we have a choice: pray or panic. Daniel chose prayer by 1) sharing his heart with his friends; 2) pleading to God with them; and 3) demonstrating humility. *“A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” Psalm 51:17.* They surrendered to the will of God (Romans 14:8), just like Jesus did in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39).

3. _____ (Praise) Your _____ (Prince)
 - a. *“During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven.” Daniel 2:19.* Jesus is the coming Prince of Peace (Daniel 9:26; Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 1:5), far greater than Satan and his demons (lesser princes - Ephesians 2:2; 6:12). Only Jesus can reveal the deepest mysteries (Revelation 1:1).
 - b. Daniel is awestruck by the greatness of God. Earthly kings come and go. They rise and fall as ordained by God (Daniel 2:21).

4. _____(Marvel) at the _____(Mystery)
- a. *“Daniel says to the king, ‘No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the days to come.’ Daniel 2:27-28.*
 - b. The dream specifies that four earthly kingdoms will rise:
 - i. Babylon (605-539 BC)
 - ii. Medo-Persia (539-331 BC)
 - iii. Greece (330-63 BC)
 - iv. Rome (63 BC-476 AD)
 - c. Four lessons are apparent from the dream: 1) God controls history; 2) Human endeavors decline as time goes on (gold to silver to bronze to iron to iron/clay); 3) Great difficulties will plague the end of the age (the statue is top-heavy and teetering); 4) A rock is coming (Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:23; I Peter 2:8) who will set up a lasting kingdom!

Why does God give prophecy? 1) to declare His goal, 2) to authenticate His Word, 3) to reveal His power, 4) to inspire hope in us, 5) to produce purity in us, and 6) to create urgency. History is coming to a climax and the souls of all people are hanging in the balance. Will you share Christ while there is still time to believe?