

23-1231a Transcript

23-1231a - *Jesus, The Rock of Ages, Part 2, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Readers: Kevin Woosley and Roger Raines

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Jesus, The Rock of Ages, Part 2

Transcript (0:03 - 33:56)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Kevin Woosley

Daniel 2:31-35,

(0:03) Good morning, Church. I'll be reading out of the book of Daniel chapter 2, verses 31 through 35. (0:14) Daniel 2, 31 through 35.

You, O King, were watching, and behold, a great image. This (0:22) great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you, and its form was awesome. (0:28) This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, (0:37) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

You watched while a stone was (0:44) cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. (0:51) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together and became (0:59) like chaff from the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away so that no trace of (1:05) them was found, and the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the (1:10) whole earth. And that is the end of the reading. (1:13)

2nd Reader: Roger Raines

Daniel 2:44,45,

(1:18) Good morning. The book of Daniel chapter 2, (1:23) verse 44 and 45.

In the days of those kings, God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will (1:32) never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people. It will crush and put (1:40) the end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone (1:49) was cut out of a mountain without hands, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, (1:58) the silver, and the gold, the great was God hath made known to me, to the king, (2:06) what will take place in the future.

So the dream is true, and the interpretation is trustworthy. (2:16) This concludes this reading. (2:18)

Transcript

Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(2:22) Amen. Well, good morning, everybody. (2:28) Well, this morning, I'm going to be bringing you

the second part of a lesson that I presented back (2:36) in January of this year, so it's almost a year since I've spoken on this, and I will hopefully (2:45) bring the conclusion of that this evening. It's on The Great I Am, Jesus the Rock of Ages.

(2:53) So this is part two of that, and I hope I can make it through okay. (3:01) In the Old Testament times, Holy Spirit moved men to describe Yahweh God as a rock, (3:09) and rock in Hebrew is the word sur, T-S-U-R, and this epithet describes God as immovable, (3:21) unbreakable, strong, representing safety where you can take refuge, and high ground, (3:30) a solid foundation on which you can trust to build. We are going to explore this word (3:37) and its usage and some of the variations and synonyms of it and how they were used in Scripture, (3:45) and I believe by doing so, that will give us all a deeper and clearer picture of (3:52) our Savior as God, Jesus the Rock of Ages.

As a quick review, the introduction to the (4:01) idea of God the Rock is seen in Exodus 17, 6, where God said to Moses, (4:10) Behold, I will stand before you on the rock, there on Horeb, you shall strike the rock, (4:18) and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. Moses did so and decided the elders (4:24) of Israel. So here we see that Yahweh, God, can do the impossible by bringing water from a rock, (4:35) proving himself to be God, only God could do something like that, and showing that he will (4:43) go to great lengths to reveal himself to his people and provide for them.

The Apostle Paul (4:50) confirmed this story to us in 1 Corinthians 10, 1-4, where he said, For I do not want you to be (4:59) unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, (5:06) and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, (5:16) and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which (5:24) followed them, and the rock was Christ. So here's Paul, controlled by Holy Spirit, (5:33) revealing that our Jesus, the Christ, was that very one on that rock of Horeb, (5:42) providing water from that rock. And he being the one that followed Israel around through the desert (5:50) is none other than the angel of the Lord, who was the cloud of smoke by day and the pillar of fire (5:59) at night.

Then later in Exodus 33, 21-22, Moses recalls, Yahweh also said to me, Behold, there is (6:12) a place by me, you shall stand on the rock. It will happen while my glory passes by, that I will (6:20) put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. So for (6:29) Moses, who wanted to know Yahweh greater, there was peace and safety in the cleft of the rock, (6:38) where Yahweh put him as he passed by.

No one could behold this holy being face to face, (6:46) but he was willing to let him be seen from behind. That's why he hid Moses in the rock. (6:53) And the story from Exodus inspired a modern songwriter of hymns, who used that line, (7:01) He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, and then ending with, and covers me there with the (7:09) sand.

What a beautiful song, and what a beautiful image that is of a loving God, (7:17) hiding his believers in the cleft of the rock, where there's safety, where there's peace, (7:25) and where he takes care of them. So in Deuteronomy 32, 3-4, it says, For I proclaim the name of Yahweh. (7:37) This is in the song of Moses, by the way.

So I guess he would be singing this. I'm not going to (7:43) do that. I can feel my voice is starting to break up a little bit.

For I proclaim the name of Yahweh, (7:50) a scribe greatness to our God, the rock. His work is perfect, for all his ways are just. (7:59) A God of faithfulness and without injustice.

Righteous and upright is he. Yahweh used the (8:09) epithet, rock, to describe his nature in Isaiah 44, 6-8. And it says, This is what Yahweh, the (8:20) king of Israel, and his redeemer, Yahweh of armies, says.

I am the first and the last. Besides me, (8:28) there is no God. Who is like me? Who will call and will declare it, and set an order for me, (8:35) since I established the ancient people? Let them declare the things that are coming, (8:41) that will happen.

Don't fear, neither be afraid. Haven't I declared it to you long ago and shown it? (8:49) You are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? Indeed, there is not.

I don't know any other (8:57) rock. King David too would use this name in three verses in Psalm 18, to praise God. (9:06) In verse 2, Yahweh is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.

(9:16) My shield, the horn of my salvation, my high tower. In verse 31, who is God except Yahweh, (9:25) who is a rock besides our God? In verse 46, Yahweh lives, and blessed be my rock, (9:35) exalted be the God of my salvation. And did you notice, verse 46, that too was made into a song (9:44) that we sing even this day.

The Lord liveth and blessed be the rock, and let the God of my (9:52) salvation be exalted. Okay, I believe we have a pretty good grasp on the rock, and how it was (10:04) used in the Old Testament. Now I want to guide our thoughts towards the time when Judah was punished (10:09) for ignoring the rock, for ignoring the God of Israel.

And they turned to idols, they turned to (10:19) other false gods, and they practiced things that were detestable to God. And so rather than listen (10:29) to the prophets that God would send them, warning them to repent, they ignored them. They reached a (10:37) point of no return in their sinning, and God made good on his warning of punishment.

He raised up a (10:45) Babylonian king, King Nebuchadnezzar, whose army carried them all away. Those who didn't get killed (10:53) got carried away, and they're known as the remnant of Judah. And so they spent 70 years (11:03) captivity in Babylon, and even while they were in captivity, God still loved and cared for them.

(11:11) He often delivered them out of the hands of evil men. He saved his people on a personal level, (11:19) such as delivering Daniel from the lion's den, and he delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (11:27) from the fiery furnace. And he used Esther to save her uncle Mordecai, and the entire (11:34) remnant of Judah from a genocidal plot concocted by their enemy Haman.

Though the remnant was (11:44) being punished, God's intent was not to destroy them, but to change their hearts. He'll let us (11:53) go through some pretty extreme things to get our attention. But to keep them from losing all hope, (12:03) he continued to speak to them by his prophets.

One such prophet was Daniel, who was one of the (12:10) young captives that was taken to Babylon. And he worked in Daniel's life, making it possible for (12:18) him to be of great value to his captors. Daniel was one of King Nebuchadnezzar's wise men.

(12:27) God gave Nebuchadnezzar dreams which greatly disturbed him. The king asked all his local wise (12:35) men, who were known as Magi, to tell him about his dream. The Magi were the Chaldeans, (12:45) the ancient people who worshipped the stars, and would interpret the times by them, (12:50) much like the Charlatan astrologers of today.

Abraham was from the land of the Chaldeans, (12:59) and they were not only to interpret the dream, but to tell Nebuchadnezzar what the dream was. (13:12) If none were able to do this, the king said they would all be torn from limb from limb, (13:19) and their homes would be turned into a dung heap. He deliberately made the task difficult, (13:26) near impossible, to reduce the risk of fraud, because he knew that some of his wise men (13:34) were Charlatans, and were like ancient yes-men who just blew smoke, (13:41) and just told the king what he wanted to hear.

So he made it very hard for them. They tried (13:49) several times to reset the terms in their favor. Please, king, just tell us the dream, (13:55) and we'll interpret it.

Give us a little hint. But Nebuchadnezzar wouldn't budge, (14:03) and he was no fool. The king offered them great wealth as motivation if they could do this, (14:10) and finally the king knew that they were just trying to stall for time, (14:15) because they couldn't do what he asked.

So the order went out to execute all of the wise men, (14:22) which included Daniel and his friends. When Daniel heard about the order, he and his friends, (14:29) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, those were their Babylonian given names, (14:37) they prayed to God about it, and overnight God revealed the dream to Daniel. Daniel informed (14:46) the palace guard that he could help the king, so he was taken before Nebuchadnezzar, and said that (14:52) he could advise him about the dream and the interpretation of it.

So let's do a verse by (14:59) verse breakdown of this story in Daniel 2. We'll look at verses 31 through 35 first. Daniel 2, (15:13) 31 through 35. You, O king, were looking, and behold, there was a single great statue, (15:27) which was large and of extraordinary splendor, (15:31) that was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome.

So when God revealed (15:38) the dream and its interpretation to Daniel overnight, Daniel saw exactly what Nebuchadnezzar (15:45) saw. So he was able to recite and explain it with great detail, and Daniel affirms that this sight (15:53) was awesome. It was awesome to Daniel.

Verses 32 and 33. The head of that statue was made of (16:02) fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, (16:11) its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. At this point I'm sure the king was silent, (16:19) probably because he was totally amazed as his dream was being explained by this young (16:28) Judan, Daniel.

He was describing it in perfect detail. None of his wise men could even do this, (16:37) and here this young man is explaining it in great detail. So he was speechless, I'm sure.

(16:46) Verse 34. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, (16:53) and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. (17:01) So being a pagan, Nebuchadnezzar was used to idols and such, but this statue was exceptional (17:08) in splendor.

He was impressed with that, but what became terrifying was this mysterious stone (17:17) that was cut out of a mountain without hands, and now the dream entered the realm of the supernatural (17:26) and it frightened him. At this, as a point of interest, the Hebrew word for stone is ebon,

(17:35) Ms. Ebenschweler, which means stone, and the root for stone is banah, which can mean to build or (17:44) build up or to build up into a family, and keep that last idea in mind as we get to the interpretation (17:53) that Daniel will give of this dream. Let's look at verse 35.

Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, (18:00) the silver, and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like shades from the (18:07) summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But (18:14) the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Now the dream (18:24) takes on a rather violent tone.

A stone that was cut out by no mortal hands crushed the idol to (18:32) dust, starting at the feet where it was weakest, clay mingled with iron, and then the rest of the (18:41) statue was crushed into powder and was blown away never to be seen again, and so now Daniel will (18:48) interpret the dream. So let's look at verses 36 through 35. This was the dream.

Now we will tell (19:00) the king its interpretation. You, oh king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has been given (19:08) the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory, verse 38, and to whose hands he has given human (19:15) beings wherever they live, the wild animals of the field and the birds of the air, and to whom he (19:22) is established as ruler over them all, you are the head of gold. So Daniel was wise and gave respect (19:31) and honor to Nebuchadnezzar, while at the same time let him know that Yahweh, the true God, (19:39) gave him his kingdom, power, and glory.

So we see God's providence at work here. (19:48) This was news to the king, but he would soon believe and praise that God of Israel himself. (19:54) Other great foreign leader kings have acknowledged the fact that it is Yahweh who is the only true (20:02) and living God, the God of Israel, the one who establishes kingdoms and empires, (20:09) the king of the empire that would succeed Babylon, said in Ezra 1 verse 2, thus says King Cyrus of (20:19) Persia, Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has (20:26) charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem in Judah.

It was he who released the remnant of Judah (20:38) to be free and go and build the temple. Let's look at verse 39, after you shall arise another kingdom (20:45) inferior to yours, yet a third kingdom of bronze which shall rule over the whole earth. (20:52) So those mentioned here that would follow after Babylon, the golden head, (20:58) are the second kingdom, the silver portion of the statue representing the empire made up of (21:06) two nations, Persia and the Medes.

The third empire is the brass portion of the statue, (21:14) that's the Greek empire that's mentioned in the dream. (21:20) And this is actually a prophecy from God, this dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, (21:31) and he's letting the king know future world history, which is pretty cool. (21:40) And then that empire was led by Alexander the Great, we know that from all the history books, (21:47) from going to school.

And his empire was so vast, it also spread a common language, the Koine Greek, (21:58) and that would become sort of the second language that all nations kind of had to know in order to (22:05) do business back then. So that was setting up God's providence at work (22:14) for the gospel when it would come along to be able to be spread quickly, having a common language. (22:23) So from Greece to India, going down to Africa, that was Alexander's rule, it was the known (22:30) world at that time.

So he was actually the first world leader. So Alexander's rule and life was (22:41) very short due to an illness that he had picked up. And so on his deathbed he divided up his (22:49) empire between the Diadochi, which were his four trusted generals, and they were Ptolemy's Soter, (23:00) who established the Ptolemaic dynasty that succeeded the pharaohs in Egypt, (23:07) and Seleucus Nikator, who established the Seleucid dynasty that ranged from Central Asia to (23:16) Iran to Iraq, and Cassander and Lysimachus, who ruled around the Greece Macedonian Thrace area, (23:25) sort of their home base where the Greek empire would rule from.

And eventually (23:34) they started fighting amongst themselves, and only Ptolemy and Seleucus played a role in the (23:42) Holy Land. And if you remember your world history, Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a Seleucid king, (23:50) set about exterminating the Jews, the remnant that returned from Babylon, and almost succeeded. But (24:00) God raised up the Maccabean family, led by Judas Maccabee, who was known as the Hammer, (24:08) and actually routed the Seleucid army out of the Holy Land.

So for a while there they had (24:17) peace in the Holy Land for the remnant. And that's where the holiday that the Jews will soon (24:26) be celebrating, Hanukkah, comes from. Because it's Hanukkah when they purge the temple.

It's called (24:35) the Festival of Lights. They had a great celebration that lasted a week, and we even see the Christ (24:45) in the gospel participated in Hanukkah. So let's look at verses 40 to 43.

(24:55) And there shall be a fourth kingdom strong as iron, just as iron crushes and smashes everything, (25:03) it shall crush and shatter all of these. Verse 41. As you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's (25:12) clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the strength of iron shall (25:18) be in it, as you saw the iron mixed with the clay.

As the toes of the feet were of part iron and part (25:27) clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with (25:34) clay, so they will mix together with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together (25:41) just as iron does not mix with clay. So the bottom portion of this statue represents (25:49) the Roman Empire.

That's who succeeded the Greek Empire. And Rome, as described in the text, (25:59) crushed everything in its path to be the dominant empire. And though it was strong in the legs (26:06) because they were of iron, its feet were brittle because they were made of a mixture of iron and (26:13) clay.

That made them weak. And the emperors, who were called Caesars, and the Roman emperors (26:22) considered themselves to be gods. And the people were ordered to treat them as gods.

(26:30) And if Yahweh did not like to share his glory with Satan, who wanted to be co-equal with God (26:38) and be worshiped, he was certainly not going to share his glory with puny men who called themselves (26:47) God and wouldn't acknowledge the true and living God of heaven. Such arrogance. As the Proverbs say (26:56) about pride, it precedes a fall.

So those fallacies created a very unstable government (27:05) politically. The foundation of this great statue, the Nebuchadnezzar's dream, was built with iron (27:12) mingled with clay. Two materials that cannot work together.

So its foundation was faulty. (27:21) It was founded on man's boastful arrogance and lies rather

than on God and his strength. (27:31) Let's look at verses 44 and 45.

And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a (27:38) kingdom that shall never be destroyed. Nor shall this kingdom be left to another people. It shall (27:48) crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end.

And it shall stand forever. (27:56) The stone was cut out from the mountain, not by hands, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, (28:04) the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God has informed the king what shall be hereafter.

(28:11) The dream is certain and its interpretation trustworthy. And at that moment, the king (28:21) literally fell prostrate before Daniel and started worshipping Daniel in order that incense (28:30) be burned to him. I'm sure Daniel was saying, no, no, because he knows that man does not receive (28:39) this kind of glory.

It's only God, especially as he went through and told Nebuchadnezzar, (28:45) it was the living God of Israel who gave this interpretation to Daniel. Daniel even admitted (28:54) not having any special wisdom above any other man. God chose to reveal it so the king would know what (29:05) was going to happen in the future.

So during the time of the Roman Empire, a stone, an ebon, a banna, (29:14) was cut out of the mountain by invisible hands. And this stone would put an end to these kingdoms (29:22) and they would never be heard from again. All of those kingdoms, their gods were idols.

They were (29:29) pagan gods. They were worthless images of stone and wood, fables. And in the prophet Zechariah, (29:42) he said there would be a time when all of these idols and false gods would leave the land.

(29:51) And that's talking about this, when this kingdom would be set up with this stone. God established (30:02) this everlasting kingdom. The stone, of course, is the promised Christ who would bless all the people (30:11) of every nation.

The third promise that was made to Abraham. And this stone, who is the Christ, (30:19) would grow into a mountain that would cover the whole earth. And this is describing his church.

(30:29) The church will never be destroyed and it will stand forever. And another will never assume (30:37) control over it. Christ is the head.

The Pope is not the head, if that's news to you. (30:47) The church is the family of God and the stone, the Banner, the description of the word says, (30:55) is a family that's built up. And so appropriately named is that stone because that growing stone (31:04) that turned into a mountain and covered the whole earth was God building up his holy living temple.

(31:12) The church were all living stones. And I'm going to bring that up in this evening's (31:19) lesson. So as Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar, the dream is certain and the interpretation is true.

(31:27) Before any of it happened, we can say amen because we know world history. (31:34) And the prophecy that Daniel interpreted for the king happened exactly as our secular world (31:47) historians recorded it. God knew ahead of time and told it right here in scripture.

(31:54) And that should give us all great comfort to know this isn't just something man made up.

(32:02) Who could know the succession of world empires? Who could know that except the God (32:11) who knows everything? So that's quite exciting to me. And those prophecies, as I was told, (32:22) as I was a young unbeliever, are the things that changed my heart.

I could see that that goes (32:31) beyond the realm of chance. There had to be something to it that got me digging into the (32:39) Bible. So amen to that.

And as Christ did indeed come and establish his church during the Roman (32:49) Empire, that fourth level of the statue, he established his kingdom. And his kingdom is still (32:58) thriving today. And it's all across the world, just as the prophecy foretold.

And Christ is its (33:09) glorious king. God's word is true and reliable. And this evening, I'll bring part three of Jesus, (33:16) the Rock of Ages, and we'll discuss what makes up the foundation of this everlasting kingdom.

(33:25) So I'll part with this one last quote from Isaiah 26.4. (33:33) Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yahweh, God, we have an everlasting rock, (33:43) Jesus, the Rock of Ages. If you have any need from the congregation, let it be known this is (33:50) the invitation. So come as we stand and sing the invitation song. (33:56)