Building Trust

Trust is built on history and track record. Trust is a dynamic relational entity that increases or decreases based on our history with an individual or group that has demonstrated trustworthiness. In other words, if we have a history of seeing and experiencing a person who has come through for us time and time again, our trust grows. If we experience the opposite, our trust decreases.

Trust is based on our belief in the person's character. The character traits of steadfastness and commitment to keeping one's word build trust. Who the person is and what the person says in terms of reliability determines our level of trust in the individual.

Trust is based on our belief in the person's capability. We can have trust in the person's character, but we won't trust an individual to a particular task if we believe that they are incompetent for the task. In other words, trust must be based on the person's character and capability.

Prophecy is God's way of building our trust. The desire to reveal prophecy gives indication of God's character. And the accurate record of predictive prophecy reveals the capability of God. In the prophecy of Daniel 2, God gives us a history and a track record of evidence that appeals to our minds and hearts to trust Him.
Write out Daniel 2:31–49 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, draw out Daniel 2:31–35. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.
In Daniel chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that is interpreted by Daniel giving us a stunning prediction of the rising and falling of kingdoms ending with the second coming of Jesus. The king saw a great metal man; with Daniel’s interpretation and historical verification, the following prophecy is both fulfilled and predicted:

- Head of Gold – Babylon
- Chest of Silver – Medo-Persia
- Belly of Bronze – Greece
- Legs of Iron – Rome
- Feet of Iron and Clay – Divided Europe
- Rock – Second Coming of Jesus

Daniel 2 predicts that there will be four earthly world powers represented by the metals. The metals decrease in value as you progress through history; but the metals increase in strength. The Bible predicts the fragmentation of the world empire into iron and clay; also predicting that they would never be joined together in the same way as the other kingdoms, although there would be attempts. Indeed Charlemagne, Napoleon, and Hitler all tried and have failed in uniting Europe. Then the Bible predicts the installation of God’s eternal kingdom which would never be destroyed.

God is five for five in His predictions. Babylon is followed by Medo-Persia which is followed by Greece, etc. With incredible accuracy while the kingdom of Babylon was at the height of its glory and power, Daniel 2 predicted with remarkable 100% accuracy the story of the succession of kingdoms.

The only part that is not fulfilled is the second coming of Jesus. From purely a statistical probability standpoint, belief in the second coming is a rational and reasonable belief. Faith in the second coming is not based on a lack of evidence that appeals to our reason. God gives us His track record of 100% accuracy to trust His Word.
A DEEPER LOOK INTO CHAPTER 2:31–49

How do we know that Daniel is a legitimate prophet and whether his book can be considered trustworthy?

The prophecy of Daniel 2 is so compelling and its interpretation straightforward that critics have contended that Daniel could not have written it during the time of Babylon but rather sometime after the fall of Rome. In Matthew 24:15 Jesus says: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand).

Jesus, while living on earth during the time of the Roman empire, states that Daniel is a prophet and gives a ringing endorsement of not only the prophet’s authenticity as a real reliable prophet. He also endorses the veracity of the book written by Daniel by indicating that we should read it. In other words, if we believe in Jesus, we can also believe in Jesus’ words authenticating the prophet Daniel and his book. If you are a believer of Jesus, you must also believe in the credibility of Daniel and that Daniel 2 and its dream happened when it said it happened.

Is there a Secret Rapture?

The dream of Daniel 2 indicates that the second coming of Christ will be a tumultuous event that will strike at the feet and destroy the entire image. The dream indicates that the coming of Christ will mean the cessation of any earthly power even in its iron and clay form. The secret rapture espouses the belief that Christ’s followers will be secretly snatched from the earth and taken to heaven while those remaining are left to continue through the tribulation. From even a cursory read of Daniel 2, one can see that the secret rapture is incapable with the way the second coming happens. It comes with a huge stone that ends all human history as we know it.

The idea of the secret rapture is based on two main ideas: the thief in the night and the one being taken and the other being left. The thief in the night idea can be easily dispelled simply by reading the other part of 2 Peter 3:10, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” This is anything but secret. The thief in the night refers to the notion that a thief comes at a time that we least expect, but it will not be a secret event that we will miss.

The other mantra of the secret rapture is “one will be taken and the other will be left” (Luke 17:24–37). In verse 37 Jesus gives an indication of the state of the wicked, when the disciples ask “where Lord?” Jesus said to them “So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.” In other words, the wicked are not given a second chance when they are dead. They are food for the birds (Rev. 19:17–18).
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

*God’s Claim of Predictive Powers*
Isaiah 46:9, 10
Daniel 5:30, 31 (rise of Medo-Persia)
Daniel 8:20, 21 (rise of Greece)
Luke 2:1 (rule of Rome)

*Characteristics of Christ’s Second Coming*
Acts 1:9–11
Revelation 1:7
1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 2:31–49?

Review your memorized verse from Daniel 2:31–49.
INTELLECTUAL AND RELATIONAL

In John 14:29, Jesus points out one purpose of predictive prophecy, “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.” In other words, predictive prophecy is evidence that appeals to reason. The prophecy is predicted and it happens. This is evidence in favor of the trustworthiness of Scripture. Is there still room to doubt? Sure there is. However, this is true for any proposition. Jesus gives us prophecy so that we can have evidence on which to base our belief. When it comes to our doubts, we are called to have faith based on the evidence given; one of those evidences being predictive prophecy.

In John 13:19, Jesus gives the main purpose of predictive prophecy, “Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.” The purpose of prophecy is to lead one to the Person of prophecy, Jesus Christ. Prophecy leads us to the God whose mind foreknows the future and in His infinite love has chosen to reveal the future before it happens so that we may come to be intrigued with wonder, awe, and love with the God of prophecy.

Prophecy establishes our trust in God’s Word and introduces us to the God of prophecy. Prophecy is intellectual and it is relational. Prophecy appeals to the mind and heart. Predictive prophecy appeals to our reason and appeals to our hearts yearning for God.

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Where do you see Jesus in Daniel 2:44, 45?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dan9-6
**EVIDENCE-BASED FAITH**

Many, especially those who are young in the Christian life, are at times troubled with the suggestions of skepticism. There are in the Bible many things which they cannot explain, or even understand, and Satan employs these to shake their faith in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. They ask, “How shall I know the right way? If the Bible is indeed the word of God, how can I be freed from these doubts and perplexities?”

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith...

God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can. Yet we are to beware of deifying reason, which is subject to the weakness and infirmity of humanity. If we would not have the Scriptures clouded to our understanding, so that the plainest truths shall not be comprehended, we must have the simplicity and faith of a little child, ready to learn, and beseeching the aid of the Holy Spirit. A sense of the power and wisdom of God, and of our inability to comprehend His greatness, should inspire us with humility, and we should open His word, as we would enter His presence, with holy awe. When we come to the Bible, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.

There are many things apparently difficult or obscure, which God will make plain and simple to those who thus seek an understanding of them. But without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them. There is much reading of the Bible that is without profit and in many cases a positive injury. When the word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer; when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God, or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubts; and in the very study of the Bible, skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct. Whenever men are not in word and deed seeking to be in harmony with God, then, however learned they may be, they are liable to err in their understanding of Scripture, and it is not safe to trust to their explanations. Those who look to the Scriptures to find discrepancies, have not spiritual insight. With distorted vision they will see many causes for doubt and unbelief in things that are really plain and simple. (*Steps to Christ* by E. G. White, pp.105, 109.)
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How does a person’s commitment to keeping their word affect your level of trust?

How does a person’s history of keeping or not keeping their word affect your level of trust?

How does Daniel 2’s accuracy affect your view of God’s credibility?

How does looking at the prophecy through the relationship lens change your understanding of prophecy?

How does prophecy build your trust in God? In His Word?

How does one process the doubts and evidence that God presents?

How do one’s motivations play out in terms of how we see evidence and process our doubts?