

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 2:1-23

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Daniel 1:8-21 Summary: Daniel & his countrymen are blessed by God when they resist compromising with the powers at be in eating the king's food.

What applications can be made to the here and now?

- We can be blessed even in the mist of dire circumstances.
- Honor God even in the small things and He will honor us.

Daniel 2:1-13

Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. ² Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. ³ And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." ⁴ Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." ⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. ⁶ However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation." ⁷ They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation." ⁸ The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹ if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation." ¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹ It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." ¹² For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³ So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

What caused the king to lose sleep?

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and he was troubled because he knew in his spirit that it was important but did not know what it meant.

Did this dream happen during Daniel's 3-year training?

Some say that was the case but most say it the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and after the three years of training for the Hebrew youths.

Who were the Chaldeans?

This was an ethnic term for the Babylonians, but here the context indicates that is another term for a class of astrologer-priest soothsayers to the king.

Why did the king want his wise men to tell him the dream instead of just interpret it for him?

- Nebuchadnezzar didn't "forget" the dream, he was testing the wise men of Babylon
- Anybody could come up with a plausible interpretation of a dream but only those close to the "Dream Giver" could know both the dream and its true interpretation.

Why was the penalty for not satisfying the request of the king so harsh?

- It was the business of these wise men to be able to contact the divine and get secrets from the spirit realm
- The harsh posture of Nebuchadnezzar, as well as his method of execution, is perfectly consistent with an ancient eastern monarch

How did the wise men respond to the king?

The wise men tried to explain the impossibility of Nebuchadnezzar's request. The strategy of the wise men was to convince the king that he was being unreasonable, not that they were incompetent.

Why did Nebuchadnezzar sentence all his wise men to death?

Nebuchadnezzar knew that false religion is worse than useless. He knew that it was a curse, and he had no use for wise men that could not bring him wisdom from God.

- As a new king, Nebuchadnezzar also perhaps used the situation to test the suitability of his father's old advisors. The dream provided him with a good reason to clean house.

Why did God orchestrate this situation by giving the dream to Nebuchadnezzar?

What better way of:

- Revealing Himself to a pagan nation than through the Hebrew Prophet Daniel
- Emphasizing Daniel's abilities and importance to the Babylonian King
- Assuring the following generations that He is in control of nations and human affairs
- Demonstrating that the demonic capabilities of the astrologers, magicians, enchanters and sorcerers are limited in their abilities and are not God's messengers

Daniel 2:14-23

¹⁴ Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵ he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

¹⁶ So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. ¹⁷ Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰ Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. ²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. ²² He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. ²³ "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."

How did Daniel respond when he learned of the king's decree to purge the wise men from Babylon?

- He appealed to the king to give him some time to satisfy his challenge to the wise men.
- Then he consulted with his compatriots soliciting them to join him in prayer about the situation.

What did the way Daniel handled the situation reveal about him?

Daniel's calmness in this crisis showed what kind of man he really was. In one sense, crises do not make the man. Instead, they reveal the man.

Why was it important to get others to help him pray?

Daniel and his companions were in the type of situation where only God could meet their need.

- Therefore, he knew how important it was for both him and his companions to pray.
- The more people involved, the greater God's glory when He answers.
- Considering what was at stake, there is little doubt that their prayers were extremely earnest. God listens to earnest prayer.

What gave Daniel confidence that God would answer His prayers?

- His relationship with Him; he'd seen God do the impossible before.
- Pray Big: Daniel was asking for an unprecedented miracle. Joseph had interpreted dreams with God's help, but had not reconstructed the dreams.

How did God respond to their prayers?

Daniel received a "vision" from God that very night revealing both the dream and the interpretation.

What is the difference between a dream and a vision?

Daniel was awake to see the "vision"; a dream occurs when one is asleep.

How important is revelation from God?

Christianity begins with the principle of revelation. What we know about God is what He has revealed to us. We do actively seek Him, but we seek what He has revealed. Our job isn't to figure things out about God, but to understand what He has revealed to us.

How did Daniel respond to God revealing the secret to him?

Daniel immediately praises God and thanks Him

What specific things did Daniel mention in his praise to God?

- He acknowledged His wisdom and might
- He is the authority behind all authorities
- He gives wisdom & knowledge to those seeking it
- He reveals secrets to His faithful
- He illuminates the darkness with His light – truth
- He answers intercessory prayer

What applications do we see in this story today?

- God works best in humanly impossible situations
- Crises do not make the man, they reveal the man
- Getting others involved is part of earnest intercessory prayer.