

There is a God in Heaven

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Daniel Chapter 2: 1-30

The last time I spoke..... it was a message Daniel chapter one.... Babylon had conquered Jerusalem....the King of Babylon...King Nebuchadnezzar took exiles from Judah...the brightest and best of the youth...among whom were Daniel and his 3 friends

And these teenagers have their faith tested at every turn...their godly Hebrew names were replaced with names that honoured the gods of Babylon...they are sent to a school that will indoctrinate them in all things Babylonian..every morning to their faith was taken away.

But they stand for God...even refusing to eat the kings meat...and God rewards them with superior wisdom.....in fact the king recognizes it as 10 times better than all the other wisemen

But in chapter 2 we go from the **classroom** to the **real world**...in this narrative the tables are

turned....it is the king himself who does the learning.....the king will be introduced to Daniel's God...and he will learn that Daniel's God is the God Most High.

It is Daniel's God who is truly **wise**..and it is Daniel's God who truly **rules and reigns**.

V1) In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

The narrative begins with an unsettled feeling in the palace.....the king cannot sleep....he is having dreams that trouble him.....In the ANE dreams were not attributed to eating a spicy pizza late at night.....dreams were often seen as a omen...having some significance....especially if it was the king having the dream....it was thought the gods were trying to communicate something.

V2) Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

Four classifications of wise men are listed....magicians....enchanters....sorcerors...and Chaldeans.....the word Chaldean may seem out of

place....it is not referring to a nationality ..here it is referring to a particular sect among the Chaldeans known for their wisdom...in fact the NIV translates the word here for Chaldean as **astrologers**.

So Nebuchanezzar summons the **entire** wisdom dept....he wants every man on deck.... The kings figures that if he can just get enough smart people in the same room all at oncethey will be able to tell him his dream and interpretation.

Even more importantly...Daniel is preparing the reader for a **colossal failure**..... he names them **all**...the magicians come...the enchanters come....the sorcerers come...the astrologers come...they **all** come and they are **all** present.....**all** the wisdom man can muster....and they **all fail**.

There was a popular song in the 70s called..*Send in the clowns*....I can't help but think of that song title evrytime I read this..the king would have actually been better off calling in the dancing clowns..and jugglers and court jesters...he still would not have his dream known...but at least he would have been entertained.

I Cor 3:19 says *“For the wisdom of the world is folly with God”*

So in verse 2 Nebu calls for his professional dream team....two words characterize this group...**deception and darkness.....**

They all claim to offer the same thing....guidance ...information...revelation

They all have one thing in common...they seek to do it without God.....it is godless wisdom
They rely on man’s intellect and cunning....and on the darker side they rely on demonic forces.....it is why God condemns all forms of these practices.

It turns out the New Age Movement is not **all that new**....It has been about 2,600 years since Daniel wrote these words...yet not much has changed....man still believes that the stars and planets exert some influence on human destiny.

A 2023 survey found 35% of Canadians believe in astrology...and what is even more frightening is that the younger generation is increasingly turning away from traditional religion and embracing new age practices. Certainly the rise of social media has aided this new found love of astrology.....but the younger generation cites **uncertainty** as the main

reason....the pandemic...global warning..economic stress....and political upheaval.....are all contributing factors...and people want answers. They ...just like Nebuchadnezzar's wisemen think they will find them among the stars.

The sad irony here is that God gave us the stars to point us to Him...not away from Him.

Psalm 19:1...the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

So the king informs his wisdom dept of the problem in verse 3.

V3) And the king said to them, “ I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.”

4) Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.”

An interesting feature of the book of Daniel is that the first 2 chapters are written in Hebrew....then it switches to Aramaic starting here in verse 4 and up until chapter 7 ...so it is fitting that chapters 2 thru 7 that primarily concern the Gentile kingdoms were written in the language of the Gentiles.

....but then chapters 8 thru 12 deal primarily with the nation of Israel...therefore it reverts back to Hebrew.

This has been the common understanding for the use of two languages in Daniel.

5) The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and you houses shall be laid in ruins.

The phrase "*The word from me is firm*:" is difficult to interpret...the original hebrew word can either mean **gone from** or **gone forth**.....the KJV and other translations interpret it as *..gone from me*...indicating that the King could not remember his dream.....it was the **dream** that had gone from him.....he had forgotten it.

Other translations.... including the ESV....take it as *gone forth*...it was not the dream but the **decree** that had gone forth....that is why it is translated *the word from me is firm*....indicating the king's mind in made up and and the punishment will be certain death if they cannot tell him the dream.

So what is it?.....was it that the king **could not** remember his dream....**or would not** remember his dream?..commentators seen pretty much divided over this.

Well..... ultimately.....whether the King **could** not or **would** not reveal his dream does not change the narrative....either way....it is the same dilemma facing the wisemen....give the king his dream.... or die.

6) But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.”

Verse 5 speaks of being torn apart limb from limb...ver. 6 speaks of gifts....rewards...honour..... I think **not being torn** limb from limb would have been enough incentive for me.

7) They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.”

You can feel the tension rising

8) The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm

It is the same difficult Hebrew word as in verse 5...the best sense is that the king's word is firm...he will not change his mind...that is why the king accuses the wisemen of stalling...trying to gain time.

9) If you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation”

...there seems to be some element of mistrust in these verses.....of a conspiracy against the king....he accuses his advisors of *agreeing to speaking lying and corrupt words before him*

Does the king question their loyalty to him?...or their competence....?

Perhaps both....it seems the king wants a true test of their ability.....this is why I favour the notion that the king actually withheld the dream...tell me

the **dream**....confirm what I already know....and I shall know that your **interpretation** is trustworthy.

V10) The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

The wisemen do not claim to be *incompetent*... Instead they accuse the king of being *unreasonable*....it is not us..it is you O King.....there is no precedent for this...no king has ever asked for their dream to be told.

What about the king’s demand to know the dream... ..was the king really being that unrealistic?...were his expectations too high?....is this really an unreasonable request?
.....maybe the king is just thinking **logically**.....if the wisemen truly possess abilities to know the *future*.....would they not also possess the ability to know the *present*....why could they claim to see into the dark future...when they could not tell him his present dream...perhaps the king saw this as inconsistent...either you have supernatural abilities or you don’t

Every so often Windsor hosts a physic convention...and I am always amused when they ask you to pre-register for the event...really pre-register...shouldn't they already know who's coming?...they are physics afterall...just seems inconsistent doesn't it.

So in verse 11 the wisemen protest...don't ask us for the dream....we are not in the business of **producing** the signs....we are in the business of **interpreting** the signs.....this is not part of our job description.

As a was doing some reserach for this message....I discovered that the Chaldeans kept records of dreams...called dream manuals...they kept track of dreams and recorded what they thought was the eventual result....this is why it was vital for them to **know the dream.**

V11) The thing that the king asks is difficult and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

This may have been the truest revelation the king's advisors ever gave....essentially what they are saying is that man's knowledge is limited....for a group of advisors who claim to have superior

intellect and abilities....this would be a very humbling admission...we can't help you.

V12) Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

I don't know how but the king was **both** angry and furious...I think we get the picture...the king is not accustomed to being told **no**.....and now he is out of his mind with rage.....

Decisions made in a fit of anger are often bad decisions ...this a knee jerk emotional reaction... Killing all the wiseman is not going to solve anything....it will only makes things worse...it is foolish.

I hope you see the irony here... the wisemen are being punished for actually **telling the truth**....we can't help you..

V13) So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

V14) Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's

guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel finally enters the narrative....and his actions are sharply contrasted with the king's....the king is out of control and Daniel is acting with prudence and discretion.

V15) He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent? Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.

V16) And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

Daniel asks for more time...and the king ...amazingly....grants it....here is the unseen hand of God at work.....the wiseman were accused of trying to gain more time in verse 8..and were refused.

Why does Daniel need time?...well...maybe he needs time to consult the dream manuals...maybe he needs time to organize a rally against this edict...maybe he needs time to plan his escape.....nohe needs time to pray

Really Daniel...your life is on the line..and all you are going to do is pray?

Isn't prayer often our last resort.....our last optionwe try to fix everything ..solve every problem with our own effort....then... perhaps try praying...but for Daniel.... prayer was the first and only avenue he sought...we see this in verse 17

V17) Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hanaiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

V18) and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Notice that Daniel does erupt in anger...he does not bitterly complain about how unfair this king's decree is.....Daniel's response to this crisis was to pray.....what a powerful example for us

When you think of the book of Daniel the first thing that comes to mind are the **prophecies**..and rightly so...but also the book of Daniel emphasizes **prayer**....prophecy and prayer...seems like two

unlikely bedfellows.....but they really do go hand in hand

Prohecy demonstrates that God is **all wise**....God knows the future...God knows all things.....is this not a great encouragement to pray?

Prohecy illustrates that God is **all powerful**....able to accomplish His will in history...what God says... he does.....is this not also a great impetus for us to pray?.....I would suggest that prayer and prophecy are two natural companions

We know Daniel was committed to prayer..in fact it was this discipline that got him at date with the lions in chapter 6.

So Daniel gathers together with his companionsand they pray. I believe this is the first mention in scripture of a **group** prayer meeting.

V19) Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

So as soon as Daniel knows the dream and it's interpretation...he immediatly rushes off to tell

the king...no...his first priority is to worship and thank God....in fact this whole fast paced narrative seems to slow down at this point ...the next 4 verses record Daniel's Psalm of Praise.

V20) Daniel answered and said:

**“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
To whom belong wisdom and might.**

Wisdom and might....what a powerful combination...wisdom and power
God... through his infinite wisdom knows what will be....and through His power... he brings it to pass....even if the wisemen could know and interpret the king's dream...they lacked the power to bring it to pass....only God can do this.
The dream itself...the accurate interpretation...and the complete fulfillment of the dream was all in the hands of God...what wisdom...what power

**V21) He changes times and seasons;
He removes kings and sets up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have
understanding;**

He changes...he removes....he sets up...

Do you get the impression that God is in control?...that it is God who is directing history?

Removing and setting up kings is no doubt in reference to the dream....Daniel would have seen in succession one mighty kingdom displaced by another mighty kingdom...kings being set up and then removed.

Who is doing this?...It is God.

**V22) He reveals deep and hidden things:
He knows what is in the darkness,
And the light dwells with Him.**

In a very powerful way...verse 22 magnifies the wisdom of God.

He reveals deep and hidden things

In verse 28 Daniel refers to the unknown dream as a **mystery** ...and this is an appropriate term...since the wisemen or Daniel could never know the dream unless God revealed it....and this is the definition of a mystery in scripture...God reveals to us something we could never otherwise know.

*He knows what is in the darkness,
And the light dwells with Him.*

There is nothing hidden to God...there is nothing that God does not know.....nothing so obscured in darkness that he does not know it...everything is as pure as day to God.

**V23) To you, O God of my fathers,
I give thanks and praise,
For 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
matter".**

Daniel says you have made known to **us**...this is a reminder that this answer came as a result of the group prayer meeting.

V24) Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king has appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

V25) Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."

It seems Arioch is taking credit for finding Daniel...when it was really Daniel who approached Arioch...notice the humble description of Daniel.....*an exile from Judah*. Was it an expression of disrespect or disbelief...?...perhaps both.

V26) the king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?”

V27) Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king asked,

Daniel says this mystery cannot be solved by man.....he tells the king..your wisemen cannot help...your gods cannot help

But..... there is one who can..verse 28

V28) but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:

*there is a God in heaven.....*I think we are often tempted to skip through these verses in chapter 2 because we want to get to the dream and the interpretation...and no doubt that is fascinating....but the lead up to the interpretation is powerful...I believe it is the centerpiece of the chapter...O king...there is a God in heaven...Daniel....this POW...this exile from Judah...perhaps still a teenager...he has no authority...he has no power...he has no wealth.....yet he stands before perhaps the most powerful human ruler this world has ever seen.....and proclaims to him...there is a God in heaven.

What gave Daniel such confidence...such courage...because Daniel had just received the answer to the mystery....from the God in heaven.

Daniel says there is “A” God...not many Gods...one God....and this one God is in heaven.....He has created the heavens ...he rules the heavens....the very heavens worshipped by the Babylonians ...the very heaven charted by the Chaldean astrologers

.....it is this God ...O King....who has revealed your dream.

Is not the whole narrative directing us to this point?.....why did the king have dream?...why did

he want it interpreted?...why couldn't the wise man help him?...why was it only Daniel who had the answer?.....it was for this very moment... so that the God Most High would be seen in all his power and glory and wisdom and might ...and proclaimed to the Gentile world.....it is all for the glory of God...

and so to is our lives...the things that happen to us ...how God directs the events of our life...is it not ultimately for God's glory

V29) To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and He who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.

V30) But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

In verse 30 Daniel has come to the proverbial fork in the road....Daniel must chose what path he will take....here he is at the start of his career....all he had to do was take credit for revealing the dream

and interpretation...and he have been set for life....he could name his price....the fame...the glory...the power...it was all right there in front of him to grasp.....but Daniel chose the path that honours God.....Daniel deflects any credit for this wisdom away from himself and towards God

In closing....

The Jewish exiles in Babylon would have been greatly encouraged by Daniel's inspired writing...it would have answered two nagging questions that were surely on their minds...

Is God all wise?

They were perhaps questioning what God was doing...remember they were taken out of the promised land...they were under the control of a powerful, Gentile empire..they had lost their temple...Jerusalem lay in ruins...countless thousands of their countrymen had perished...looking at their circumstances they would have perhaps questioned God's wisdom in all of this.....perhaps they should be looking elsewhere for wisdom..is God all wise?

The book of Daniel does a masterful job at exposing the foolishness of man's ungodly

wisdom...three times in the book of Daniel the wisemen are called upon to save the day with their wisdom..and three times they come up short.

God is reminding the Jews that He is the only one who is all wise..knowing everything from beginning to end.....God was the only one who could reveal the mystery of the dream and its intrepratation.

The Jews also have questioned the **power of God**....maybe the gods of babylon were more powerful?.....remember the items from the temple in Jeruslam had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar and placed in the temple of His gods...an indication of defeat.....had the gods of Babylon defeated Yahweh?

But this chapter would have reassured the Jews...it is as if God was telling them....you might be in Babylon..but I am still on the throne....as to these powerful kings and empires...I am the one who sets them up and takes them down....history will unfold as I have planned it....for I am the only true sovereign...all doubts about God's sovereign power should have been removed.

Daniel chapter 2 should also encourage us today...we need to be reminded that there is a

God in heaven.....we may question what we see going on in our world.....we may see chaos...we may be frightened at what is going on in the middle east..or eastern europe...we may be unnerved by a shaky economy....but let us remind ourselves...there is a God in heaven....a God who rules overall.....it is not Trump ...or Putin..or Netanyahu..... that is in control..it is God.

I do not know if you have notice but ever since Covid..a phrase has been coined by the news media....even advertisers have capitalized on it.....and it seemed to have a resurgence when the tariffs were first announced....and it is this....*in these uncertain times*...I am 64 years old...I don't remember a time in my life that was certain..do you?.....do you recall a time when we knew for sure what was going to happen...the world was at peace..the economy was rock solid...no dark clouds on the horizon....ever since Genesis 3 it's been tough....since the fall of man we have lived in uncertain times...and this is why God asks to live by faith and trust Him..the immotral....invisible.... God only wise.