

The King and His Dream
Daniel 2:1-23
October 18th, 2026

1. An impossible situation reveals God's _____. (2:1-13)
 - a. The King had a bad _____. (2:1-3)
 - b. The wise men were _____. (2:4-13)
2. An answered prayer results in God's _____. (2:14-23)
 - a. Daniel requested more time and _____. (2:14-18)
 - b. God _____. (2:19)
 - c. Daniel _____. (2:20-23)
3. Applying the Word
 - a. _____ – don't panic – when things seem impossible.
 - b. _____ the God who controls the world.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on Daniel 2:1-23

1. Do you have any reoccurring dreams? What might they reveal about your worries or concerns?
2. What do we learn about King Nebuchadnezzar and life in the Babylonian royal court in this passage?
3. How can God use seemingly impossible situations to show His greatness? Can you think of any times that He has done this in your life?
4. When Daniel's life was on the line, he prayed and then was calm. What truths about God do we need to believe in order to do the same? How and when do you need to follow Daniel's example?
5. What attributes of God do you notice in Daniel's prayer in vv. 20-23? How can that help us to respond like Daniel when life feels impossible?
6. How do the following passages describe the way in which God deals with kings and kingdoms? (Dan. 2:21; Is. 40:22-24; Ps. 2:1-4) As we consider national and international politics in our time, what truths should we remember from these passages? What impact should that have on us?

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Big idea: The true God of heaven is far superior to the pagan gods, so his people have nothing to fear and nothing to gain from paganism.

Intro

What are your recurring dreams and what do they tell you?

Back in college and realizing part way through the semester that you completely forgot about a class

You're in high school and can't remember your locker combination and the bell has already rung

Show up for work in the wrong clothing

Standing in front of the church flipping through my Bible – can't find my notes and can't remember what I'm supposed to talk about. Or the songs are coming to an end and I can't find my notes and the printer won't work.

A lot we don't understand about dreams, but they often seem to indicate what we fear, what we worry about, what's on our mind.

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar who had attacked Jerusalem and taken people captive in Daniel 1, is troubled by his dreams in Daniel 2. It will take us two weeks to cover the chapter because it's fairly long.

Week 1 – the situation of the dream, the king's anger, Daniel's intervention, Daniel's prayer

Week 2 – the dream and its interpretation – fascinating predictive account of world events that are still future at the time of Daniel, have already occurred in history from our perspective, and some things that are yet to come.

1. An impossible situation reveals God's **uniqueness** (2:1-13)
 - a. The King had a bad **dream**. (2:1-3)
 - i. There are two main characters in this chapter – King Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel.
 1. There are some side characters – wise men, royal officials
 2. We were introduced to both of them in chapter 1. Learn more in chapter 2.
 3. The king was powerful – maybe the most powerful man in the world at the time – but he was helpless in his present problem and he needed answers.
 4. Daniel was powerless but wise – and the Lord used him to provide answers to the king.
 - ii. It was in the second year of his reign – based on how they counted the full years and when siege of Jerusalem happened in chapter 1 – this is probably 603 BC, after Daniel had completed his 3 years of training. Daniel was still a young man in his teens.
 - iii. The king had dreams – plural
 1. We aren't told yet what the dreams are about, but it's enough that it troubled him and his sleep left him.
 2. Have you ever had a dream so vivid or so relatable to your real life fears and worries that you woke up and couldn't get back to sleep? If so, you relate to Neb. here.

- a. Geoffrey King – “As is so often the case, the cares of the day became also the cares of the night.”
 3. David Helm - The king may be virtually all-powerful—but he has no authority over his own sleep.
- iv. What we know about Nebuchadnezzar outside the Bible add some more context.
 1. One of the items in the British Museum from this period of Babylonian history is a clay tablet containing a prayer from Neb. to the Babylonian god, Marduk, asking Marduk to guide him on the right path.
 2. *See ppt*
 3. He assembled astrologers, magicians, and other “wise men” around him who could interpret the stars and other events to give divine insight.
 4. So a vivid and perhaps repeated dream would have weighed heavily on him if he thought there was a meaning he was supposed to understand.
- v. One author describes him in this chapter as restless, unreasonable, and rash.
 1. The “restless” part we just saw. Now we’ll see him as unreasonable and rash.
 2. He calls all the “wise men” –
 - a. Magicians – idea could be like a scholar
 - b. Conjuror – astrologer
 - c. Sorcerers
 - d. Chaldeans – elite people in Babylon
- b. The wise men were **no help** (2:4-13)
 - i. His request started reasonably – I had a dream and am anxious to understand it
 - ii. They respond with flattery expected before a king “Live forever!” and their request – tell us the dream and we will interpret it!
 1. Notice that v. 4 says they answered in Aramaic.
 2. Aramaic was very similar to Hebrew, but it was a different language.
 - a. Like comparing Spanish and Portuguese
 3. Aramaic was the language of Babylon and the international world at the time. Hebrew was limited to the Jews.
 4. The book of Daniel continues in Aramaic from this verse all the way through chapter 7. It switches back to Hebrew in chapter 8.
 5. Why? It could be that since these chapters deal with God’s plan for the Gentile nations – not just the Jewish people – He wanted it written in a language that could be broadly read.
 - iii. The king’s command is firm – no, you tell me the dream AND the interpretation.
 1. You can probably see the difficulty this presented to the wise men.
 2. It would be like if someone reached out for counseling, sat down across from my desk, and when I asked them, “tell me what’s going on? What problem can I help you with?” they say “No, you tell me what my problem is AND tell me how to fix it!”

3. Neb. is unreasonable from a human perspective – certainly from the perspective of his counselors – but maybe he has a reason. Maybe he knows that the only way he will know if they really have insight into the meaning of his dream is if they can supernaturally tell him what his dream was (v. 9).
- iv. Not only does he make the unreasonable request – his response to their refusal or inability is to threaten a violent death. (v. 5)
 1. Torn limb from limb
 2. Not an idle threat –with the cruelty of a king like Neb – common to be executed by dismembered and homes ruined
 3. Davis – 1-13 depict Babylon as a place of fear, helplessness, and brutality.
- v. They plead with him a second time (v. 7)
- vi. He reiterates his requirement (vv. 8ff)
- vii. They plead with him a third time and explain the impossibility (vv. 10-11)
 1. A bold move that doesn't pay off
 2. Their words set the stage for God's works
 - a. There is not a man on earth who could do this!
 - b. No king has asked this!
 - c. Only the gods can do this, but they don't dwell with us
 3. They are right and they are wrong.
 - a. No man could do this
 - b. But the true God has made his dwelling place with mortal flesh.
 - i. God dwelled with Adam and Eve in the garden
 - ii. He heard the cries of His people in Egypt and rescued them
 - iii. He dwelled in the middle of them in the tabernacle in the wilderness
 - iv. And ultimately the Word became flesh and dwelt among us in the incarnation of Jesus (John 1:14)
 1. **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - v. The promise of our future with the Lord is that He dwells among us
 1. **Revelation 21:3-4** And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."
4. The narrative is setting the stage for God to do something that only God can do.
 - a. The pagan gods and their sorcerers can do nothing.

- b. Think about the original audience of this book for a moment. They would have been Jews living in exile in Babylon and later Medo-Persia. They were surrounded by wise men worshiping pagan gods. They were far from home. Far from the temple, which was destroyed anyway. Daniel shows them that they have nothing to fear from these pagan gods and nothing to gain from going after them.
- viii. The king's anger rose even further at this and he commands that not just these men in front of him but all the wise men of the city be found and killed.
1. Daniel and his friends were not exempt.
2. An answered **prayer** results in God's **worship** (2:14-23)
- a. Daniel requested more time and **prayed** (2:14-18)
 - i. He replied with discretion and discernment – characteristic of Daniel in chapter 1 also. It wasn't panic it wasn't outrage – I wasn't even there! The request is impossible!
 - ii. But he did ask the king for more time and the king gave it to him.
 1. Given the king's anger in the previous verses, it is surprising.
 - iii. Daniel gathered his friends and they prayed.
 1. Asking your brothers to pray for you in a hard situation is good and biblical
 2. Requesting mercy from God where the king shows no mercy
 - iv. Stortz: They felt the urgency, they felt their helplessness, and they knew that only God was great enough to perform such a miracle. I think the reason that we do not pray more faithfully and fervently is because we don't feel the urgency; we tend to be self-sufficient, and we do not see our God as big enough. So there are times when God brings things like this into our lives and into the lives of our friends to bring us to our knees.
 - v. Paul experienced that and described in his the letter of 2nd Corinthians
 1. **2 Corinthians 1:9-11a** indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us,¹¹ you also joining in helping us through your prayers
- b. God **responded** (2:19)
- i. God revealed it to him in a night vision
 1. Not a dream but a supernatural revelation given to him while he was awake.
 - ii. That will form the second half of the chapter, which we'll discuss next week.
 1. If you can't wait, you can read it at home to prepare! It's fascinating so I strongly encourage you to read it.
- c. Daniel **worshipped** (2:20-23)
- i. He blessed the God of heaven
 1. The Babylonians worshiped the stars. Daniel worshiped the true God who made the stars.
 - ii. Wisdom and power belong to God

1. Stortz - Many rulers and leaders have power but lack wisdom, making them dangerous.
2. Many people are wise but they are not in positions of power.
3. God is both powerful and wise. He governs the world with wisdom, so we don't need to fear His power.

iii. He changes times and epochs, specifically removing and establishing kings

1. That is what Neb. dream was about – coming kingdoms over coming centuries.
2. This is what God does.

iv. He knows what is in darkness and light dwells with Him

v. God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise to You.

1. Far from the land of his fathers, but not far from the God of his fathers.

3. Applying the Word

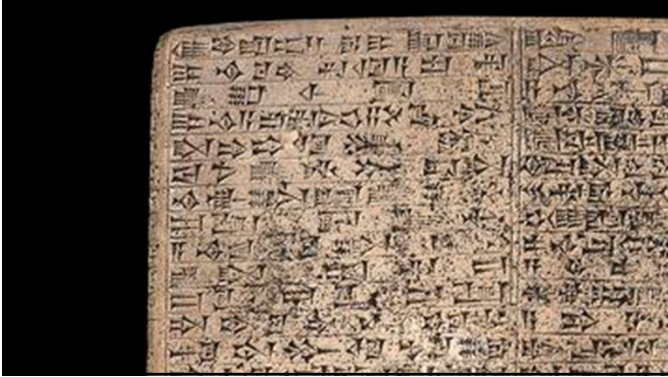
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