

Daniel 2 – Providence and Four Men of Substance: Resting in God

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You must always think of the Book of Daniel in terms of God's covenant people. It is not simply a book of Daniel and his wise friends helping the Babylonians and showing them how great Jehovah is. It is not just a book of God's power to preserve a man from hungry lions or from raging fires. Those things are true, but they are not the whole truth, or the main truth of this book. The main truth is that God would use these men (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah) to be a source of inspiration 神灵的启示 and a source of instruction to his people as they endured 承受 his punishment. God wanted his people to know that they were without their homes, but not without his hope, so they would endure his fatherly punishment and look forward to returning to Jerusalem, rebuild the temple, and worship Jehovah there.

Now today you will see how these 4 men of substance 坚实 dealt with a difficult situation – how they rested on God's providence and faithfully fulfilled their responsibility.

Our headings are: **Nebuchadnezzar Demands to know and get an Interpretation** 解译 of his dreams, **Daniel Desires for Jehovah to Instruct** Nebuchadnezzar to know truth, and **Jehovah Delivers the Witchdoctors from death** (gives truth to the king, and encourages the Jews).

Our goals are: **That you see the strange workings of God to protect and provide for his people – his people through Jesus Christ, and to inspire them to keep resting in him.**

Nebuchadnezzar Demands to know and get an Interpretation for his Dream

1 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 占星家, the sorcerers 巫师, and the Chaldeans 迦勒底人, 占星者, 预言家 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 阿拉姆语 "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 垃圾堆. 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 法令, 旨意 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 愤怒, and gave a 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.

1. Dreams were used by God before the whole Bible was completed to instruct men in truth. But dreams had to be interpreted as they were often many symbols in them. Now Nebuchadnezzar had dreams in the 2nd year of his personal rule. (He ruled for 2 years under his father.) These dreams that Nebuchadnezzar had were troublesome more than usual because he could not remember what the dreams were. Further, he was bothered by the message of dreams that he could not sleep. Maybe there were bits and pieces of the same dream over time. And because God did not reveal the truth (the dreams and the interpretations) to Nebuchadnezzar's witchdoctors – fellow devil worshippers, they did not know what to say to him. These dreams were from God, not from the Devil as at other times when the Nebuchadnezzar's servants could interpret them.

2. In his autocratic 独裁 way, Nebuchadnezzar demanded that his witchdoctors tell him his dreams and what they meant, upon the pain of death and their houses burned if they couldn't. By the way, "houses" may mean everyone in their houses. Maybe their whole families would be burned. At the very least, it meant their homes would become a garbage dump. Hence 于是 the problem!

3. Seeing death coming their way, the witchdoctors decided to try a delay tactic 策略 on the king. They asked the king to at least tell them the dream so they could give him the interpretation. They witchdoctors must have thought that asking for the dream it would make the king feel bad about his inordinate 过分的 request of them telling him his dream and giving the interpretation. But the king would have none of it. He still demanded to know the dream and its interpretation.

4. Not being able to tell the dream and the interpretation, the king proceeded with killing the witchdoctors. And since Daniel and his friends were considered in the same category (wise men), executioners started looking for them as well to separate their bodies in little pieces from their souls.

Daniel Desires for Jehovah to Instruct Nebuchadnezzar in truth

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 紧急?" 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:

1. Daniel did not take matters lying down. That is what lazy careless people do. He was moved to immediate action. But even though Daniel was in line to be killed, he wasn't afraid. He knew that death was not a disaster for a Christian...but an entrance into eternal life. His trust in God made him bold. And because he was not afraid, he did not hide or try to escape. Rather, Daniel asked advice and spoke to the head executioner about why he was executing the witchdoctors.

2. After finding out, and having access to the king (by he and his friend's work and God's providence), he went in and offered to explain the dreams and the interpretation to the king. But he also was brave enough to ask for time so he could ask God for the dreams and the interpretation of those dreams. God granted him favor through the king and the king gave him time. Daniel had to work quickly as his and his friend's heads were in line for the executioners axe.

3. Daniel at once contacted his brothers in Christ, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, to explain the problem and asked them to pray. Why wouldn't Daniel and his friends escape if they knew they were unjustly going to be killed? That would not have been wrong. But they stayed because other people's lives were at stake 危亡 and Daniel, a true Christian, could not run away. He had to fight for his brothers and he had to fight against the unjust taking of human life - even of non-Christians.

4. And notice the sweetness here in Verses 17&18. Notice the benefits of brothers in Christ. (Know why the prayer list that Amos sends out weekly is important for the church. See why you need to tell others when you have a difficult time so others can pray for you. Shouldn't you cause others to praise God when you give reasons for thanksgiving?) In this case, there was no protest from Daniel's friends - no complaint that "Prayer is so hard." No, they saw prayer as asking for mercy from their gracious God. Their trust in God made them go to him in prayer. The Devil is out to destroy, but prayers moves the hands of God to save and to sever, to protect and to destroy.

Jame 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer 热切地 of a righteous man avails 受益 much.

5. After their praying, God then revealed the dreams and interpretation to Daniel. But it was Daniels response that is most fascinating 有趣的 He did not run immediately to the king with the interpretation. The king could wait. Rather, he took time to bless the God of heaven. They rested in God's Words and did not have to run to test and see if God's Word was true! Look at Daniel's praise.

"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."

4. What a beautiful thanksgiving prayer he offered. It is a doctrinal 教义的 Daniel praised God and desires that God would be praised for eternity. He acknowledged God's wisdom and might. That wisdom and power caused him to changes the seasons and change the kings when he saw fit. (Imagine Daniel praying this even when he is serving a foreign king who pretends to have all power.) He praised God for the wisdom God communicates to his children... God does speak to this children and he speaks truth to them. You can rely on his communication.

Psalms 75:6 For exaltation *comes* neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.

And he concluded his praise with recognizing that the God of truth was his personal God - and God of his Fathers!

Jehovah Delivers the Witchdoctors from Death and give truth to the King

24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation." 25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation." 26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers 预言家 cannot declare to the king. 28 "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 29 "As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. 30 "But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

1. Daniel, because he was speaking God's Word, and because he had no fear of death, had incredible boldness. He told Arioch the executioner to stop doing his bloody work. (Imagine the trouble into which Daniel and Arioch could get. They could have the executioner's axe on their necks.) The boldness of Esther before King Ahasuerus comes out. The boldness of Joseph before Pharaoh comes out. The boldness of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin comes out. The boldness of the Lord before Pilate stands out. It is more important to obey God rather than man.

2. Daniel went to the king and announced that he would explain the dream and the meaning of the dream, both of which came from God. In doing this, Daniels denied himself an opportunity for self-advancement. He did not want to take the credit for what he was about to do. He made it clear that the true God – the God of heaven – who had all power and wisdom (remember his prayer) would reveal the dreams and their interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar. He was concerned about the souls of the Babylonians leaders – even those who were keeping him as a servant in a foreign land. What godliness! What an example to emulate 效力! Naaman's young servant girl comes to mind.

3. And think about this for a minute. Why didn't Daniel want these wicked witchdoctors to be executed? Well, suppose they saw what Daniel did for the king – or heard about it, wouldn't that have been proof that their God's were useless and that they needed the true God? Maybe they would believe in the true God of heaven. And if these men, who lived in all parts of Babylon believed in the true God, wouldn't that have given Daniel and his friends ready access to all parts of the world? Would they not have had access to the people of God in provinces? Wouldn't the message of God's restoration of his people to Judah spread? And would the message that Christ would come and conquer the world come to them? Imagine how that would have encouraged God's people who were being oppressed.

Conclusion:

Nebuchadnezzar demanded to know what God had not revealed to him. So through Daniel, God revealed the truth to him and used that whole incident 事件 for the good of his people. This is the sovereignty 至高无上 of God. Everyone works for God. None is outside of his control. Praise the Lord. So God's people were encouraged and they would be hopeful for the future.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. You have God's revealed Word – everything God wants you to know. Study it well. Study it hard. Study it with the help of the Helper – the Holy Spirit - so it would be truly useful. 2. Use God's Word to save the lives of those who are lost and for guidance to those who have been found. But you have to know it to teach it. 3. Learn and use the blessing of prayer to move God's loving and rich hand. Share your requests with others. You are in Christ's family. He redeemed you by his blood. You are blood brothers with each one here. Live as a family. It doesn't matter what your circumstances 境况 are in life. Take what comes from God's hand and live for his glory.

Finally, if you don't get and believe the revelation of God – that God sent his Son to die for the sins of the wicked – you have no hope. But I have told you. Do you believe? If you don't, you die in your sins. If you do, you live in love. Your choice.

