

## Daniel 2:1-23 (NASB) Notes

⇒ The theme for chapter two is “only God’s wisdom can reveal the mysteries of life.”

- It is not the content of the revelation of the future that is primary, but the fact that it is only Daniel’s God who knows the future.
- This chapter recounts the “power struggle” between the “God of heaven” and the Babylonian gods. Cf., Joseph in Pharaoh’s court (*Gen.41*); Elijah on Mt. Carmel (*1Kings18*).

1 Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was **troubled** and his sleep left him.

- Ancient Babylonians believed that dreams were messages from their gods. That God would communicate directly to a pagan king is evidence of His grace. The language indicates that these were possibly recurring dreams. Literally, his spirit was “struck” as with a hammer on an anvil.

⇒ Does God still use dreams today to communicate His will? What is His primary means of communication?

- cf., *Jer.23:25-32*

2 Then the king gave orders to call in the **magicians**, the **conjurers**, the **sorcerers** and the **Chaldeans** to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

- “**magicians**” (חרטום – chartom) = stylus or pen, ∴ an engraver, writer, scribe.
- “**conjurers**” (אשף – ‘ashshaph) = enchanters, incantation priests who allegedly communicated with the spirit world.
- “**sorcerers**” (כשף – kashaph) = those who practiced witchcraft.
- “**Chaldeans**” (כשדימה – Kasdiy) = an ethnic group residing in southern Babylonia who represented a specific class of astrologers. They used manuals to track and interpret the stars. Nebuchadnezzar descended from these people.
- > 100 years earlier, God had challenged the Babylonians’ powers of astrology: *Isa.46:1-10; 47:12-15*.

3 The king said to them, “I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.”

- *2:4 – 7:28* is written in Aramaic because the focus is on Gentile nations.

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

5 The king replied to the Chaldeans, “The command from me is firm: If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.

6 “But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation.”

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

8 The king replied, “I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm,

9 “that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation.”

- If you were a psycho-therapist, how would you describe Nebuchadnezzar’s psyche?

10 The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean.

- They discredited their own practices!

11 “Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is **no one else who could declare it to the king except gods**, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.”

- **Isa.41:21-23 ...** They unwittingly set the stage for Daniel.

12 Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

13 So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill *them*.

14 Then Daniel replied with **discretion** and **discernment** to Arioch, the captain of the king’s bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon;

- Daniel is still young, probably 17 or 18.
- **“discretion”** ( עֵטָא – ‘eta’ Aramaic) = KJV – “counsel & wisdom”
- **“discernment”** ( טַעַם – t@’em Aramaic) = to taste.
- cf., **Col.4:5-6**

⇒ How developed is your sense of “*spiritual taste*”? How can this be cultivated? Does not automatically come with age, but with understanding God’s Word and His ways.

15 he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.

16 So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

17 Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter,

- **Ps.50:15** ... A.W. Tozer, "The Set of the Sail," p. 33 – "Whatever God can do faith can do, and whatever faith can do prayer can do when it is offered in faith. An invitation to prayer is, therefore, an invitation to omnipotence, for prayer engages the Omnipotent God and brings Him into our human affairs." Daniel's life was marked by prayer.

18 so that they might request compassion from the **God of heaven** concerning this **mystery**, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

- **"God of heaven"** ( שמיין אלה – 'elāhh shamayin) = Used 6x in Daniel (2:18,19,28,37,44;5:23). The name of God used by His people during years of exile and dispersion.

- **"mystery"** ( רז – raz Aramaic) = something unknown.

19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. **Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven;**

- Notice the priority of Daniel's response. His prayer of thanksgiving is listed before the details of the answer ... in anticipation of God's answer.

⇒ Identify specific ways that Daniel blessed God.

20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for **wisdom** and **power** belong to Him.

- Daniel highlights these two aspects of God's character throughout the book.

21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.

- Wisdom is not something achieved by human effort, but granted by revelation from God.

22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.

23 "To You, O God of **my** fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given **me** wisdom and power; even now You have made known to **me** what **we** requested of You, for You have made known to **us** the king's matter."

- Daniel's prayer ends on a personal note with repeated uses of first-person pronouns.