

## THE KING IN DISTRESS

Daniel 2:1-18

Intro: Have you ever had a dream that you couldn't remember? Do you ever forget something, and rack your brain trying to think what it was? Do you sometimes call someone to tell them something, and by the time they answer the phone, the very thing that you were so intent on telling them has flown from your mind?

King Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful man with a forgotten dream: a dream that he could not remember, and that's bad.

### I. VSS. 1-3, THE ANXIOUS KING

A. VS. 1, Tossing and turning on his bed the king is unable to sleep. It is not unusual for those in power to have sleepless nights. The old saying goes: "Uneasy lays the head of the head that wears the crown." Power has its drawbacks, its costs. People in leadership lay awake at night trying to solve problems or writing notes to themselves to review in the morning. The light is turned off; and then a thought comes to mind, and the light is back on again and a note is written down. Sometimes I think that I am just too tired to turn the light on. Surely I will remember the profound thought that I have. In the morning, try as I may, I cannot remember what had come to mind in the night. Nebuchadnezzar did not know Jehovah God; he had no peace within. Now he has a dream that he cannot remember. He is distressed and anxious. I believe that the king knew deep down that these dreams of his were special. They were different, and truly, they would prove to be very important to the history of the world, then and now. God was going to use Nebuchadnezzar to bring honor to Him, although the king was a vessel of wrath. In Jeremiah 27:6, the king is spoken of by God as: "Nebuchadnezzar my servant." God in His Sovereignty can use whatever vessel He pleases, as is illustrated in Romans 9:17-20 concerning Pharaoh.

1. The child of God has something that is lacking in the life of the unregenerate. That something is peace! We have peace because of what Christ

Jesus has done for us; we have peace in the midst of the storms of life (Isaiah 26:3). The world cannot understand the peace that a Christian has; it is a peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7).

2. Child of God, take your burdens and cares to the Lord and leave them there; don't take them to bed. God wants you to cast your cares upon Him; He wants to give you rest (Psalm 127:2, "He giveth his beloved sleep.").

B. VSS. 2-3, The deep distress of the king is seen in these verses. In the midst of the night, the distressed king gets the wise men out of bed.

1. Note the different categories of men are called upon:
  - a. Magicians - diviners, in a sense one possessed of occult knowledge.
  - b. Astrologers – conjurors, exorcists.
  - c. Sorcerers - to practice witchcraft.
  - d. Chaldeans - wise men from lower Tigris and Euphrates river region. Thought to be the wisest, yet they were not believers in Jehovah God.
2. He wants an interpretation to a dream he cannot remember! He wants this so bad that he calls in all the men with brains, the scholars in the kingdom, all but Daniel and his three friends. Daniel was a man of faith, and what could faith have to do with this dream? Many today do not want to acknowledge what men and women of faith can contribute to problem solving.
3. The king had hoped to get the interpretation of the dream by bringing these wise men of different specialties together. Each, he thought, could contribute something to come up with the dream and its interpretation. He didn't know it at the time, but he would need someone with Biblical reasoning to crack this case.
4. The singular use of "dream" indicates that only one of his numerous dreams really meant much prophetically.

II. VSS. 4-6 THE ANSWER OF THE DREAM'S SIGNIFICANCE DEMANDED

- A. VS. 4, From Daniel 4:1 to Daniel 7:28, the book of Daniel is written in Syriack. Syriack is a Gentile language; it is also better known as Aramaic. A Gentile language is used because the prophecy is limited to the Gentile nations. The scholars of Babylon now wanted to know something that the king could not tell them; the dream itself.
- B. VS. 5, Some have suggested that the astrologers, magicians, sorcerers and Chaldeans that served under Nebuchadnezzar's dad were still in place, and that he wanted them out. If they could not conjure up the dream and the interpretation, they would be "cut in pieces" and their houses made into manure piles. This king reminds us of how ungodly despots deal with those who cannot be of benefit to them as well as any who would oppose them.
- C. VS. 6, "Show me the dream" and I will richly reward you because you have done something for me. "Rewards" is translated from a Persian word meaning "a present." This would not be a true present for it would be worked for. It would be all or nothing for these men. This type of action was customary in the ancient world as is exemplified by Joseph and Mordecai.

III. VSS. 7-9, THE AWFUL PERPLEXITY OF THE DEMAND RENEWED

- A. VS. 7, You can feel the depth of their perplexity in the words of this verse. "We have to have something to go on, tell us the dream and we will give you the interpretation."
- B. VS. 8, The king plainly says: "You are just buying time." The dream had left the king, and these supposed wise men could not do a thing. All of their "book learning" and calling upon evil spirits would be of no avail.
  - 1. There are a lot of smart folks in the world who cannot give you answers to life's deepest questions because those answers are spiritual. And they do not have spiritual discernment (1 Corinthians 2:14). What you and I should desire is spiritual knowledge.

The Bible has the answers for life's questions (2 Timothy 3:16).

2. Jonathan Edwards writes of the need of spiritual mindedness: "The godly man's idea of God consists very much...of spiritual ideas, that are complicated of those simple ones of which the natural man is destitute. But as soon as ever he comes to have the disposition of his mind changed...he gets the sight of the excellency of holiness and of God...hence we have the reason why regeneration is so often in Scripture compared to opening the eyes of the mind, to call out of darkness into marvelous light, enlightening the dark u n d e r s t a n d i n g e t c . " (apuritanmind.com/JonathanEdwards) Of the wise men in Babylon, one in particular had a spiritually enlightened mind, Daniel the Jew. Daniel had a spiritual mind because he had kept his heart in tune with Jehovah God. As we shall see with Daniel and his friends, "to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

- C. VS. 9, Nebuchadnezzar as says John Walvoord, "was not willing to accept any easy interpretation of his dream but wanted proof that his wise men had divine sources beyond the ordinary." He lined them down pretty harshly. He was getting angry and frustrated, and the axe was near falling on all the wise men. If they could not tell him the dream, how could they give him the interpretation of it. Lots of charlatans today ask leading questions, and then come up with some interpretation. This would not work with the Nebuchadnezzar.

#### IV. VSS. 10-13, THE ANGUISHED PLEA OF THE WISE MEN

- A. VSS. 10-11, The wise men lay out their case and plead before the king. They were saying: "No human can do what you want done, only the Gods." The fakes were proven to be false prophets; God allowed things to go the way they did to prove them so.

1. If the dream had come from evil spirits, then the magicians etc. might have been able to conjure something up; but this dream came from God.
  2. Dr. Oliver B. Greene wrote concerning the dream: "It revealed 'the times of the Gentiles' and the face that the Gentiles would reign over the earth until their time should come to an end. King Jesus would then call His people from the four corners of the earth and from the islands of the sea; He would plant them in their own land never to be plucked up again, and He, the Messiah, would reign over them. God gave the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, and ONLY God could bring it to the minds of the wise men and give the interpretation of it."(64).
- B. VSS. 12-13, This would be a formal execution, like a public hanging; except in this case these men would be beheaded. All of this, because of the anger of a tyrant. Even Daniel and his friends were sought out. I think here of the Kurds gassed in Iraq at the hands of Saddam Hussein and of the Jews at the hand of Hitler.
- V. VSS. 14-16, THE ASKING FOR TIME TO SEEK THE TRUE GOD FOR INTERPRETATION OF THE KING'S DREAM
- A. VS. 14, Note with me the calmness of Daniel, the courage of Daniel, and the courtesy of Daniel.
    1. Arioch, in his position as the king's Captain of the Guard, had the responsibility of rounding up the wise men that were not at the king's court and bringing them in for execution.
    2. Daniel did not throw a fit; he spoke wisely to the Captain of the Guard. Proverbs 15:1-2 says: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."
  - B. VS. 15, Daniel wants to know why the degree has gone out so hastily. He wants an explanation and Arioch gives him the story.
  - C. VS. 16, Daniel is given an audience with the king. When before the king, Daniel, who had not been at the original

meeting of the wise men, asks for time to know the dream, and show the king the interpretation. Daniel needed time to go to Jehovah God and seek His face in prayer.

VI. VSS. 17-18, THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO HIS FRIENDS OF THE DECREE AND THE NEED FOR PRAYER

- A. VS. 17, Daniel went home and gathered his friends around him. When in time of need, we need to get together in prayer with our Christian friends. These three friends of Daniel were concerned about the situation for they too would lose their lives if they did not get an answer from God. Do you have an accountability partner that you can trust with your deepest need spiritually and otherwise? Christian friends are important to our spiritual well being.
- B. VS. 18, The prayer of Daniel and his friends was crucial in many ways. Without an answer, they would die; and without an answer, we would not have the prophecies of the “Times of the Gentiles” given to us in the book of Daniel.
  - 1. They desired mercy. They understood that God was able to do as He pleased and that “all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. “The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away,” 1 Peter 1:24. They did not want what they deserved; they wanted the mercies of God; they wanted what they did not deserve: MERCY. Mercy that would deliver them from death. To be delivered from spiritual death, you must have God’s mercy and grace (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:2-9).
  - 2. They prayed to the “The God of heaven.” This terminology is used in the book of Daniel nine times. It is also used in Ezra six times, and in Nehemiah four times. These books of the Bible are called captivity books. During the time of the captivity, Jehovah God was referred to as “The God of heaven.” Dr. Jerry Vines say: “When Judah turned away for, the Lord, Ezekiel saw a vision of the glory of God departing from the earth.” Ezekiel

saw the glory of God lift up from over the mercy seat and depart from the Temple. It moved from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives and departed up to heaven. This is why Daniel and his three friends prayed to the God of heaven. This glory did not come back until Christ came to earth (John 1:14).

Conclusion: As we see in verse 19, God heard the prayers of his servants and a great number of folks were saved. It is even so today; when the righteous pray, God blesses and saves. Christians are salt and light: salt to preserve and light to show men the way to Christ.

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