

Daniel 2

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[0 : 00] In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. His spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

! 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. And the king said to them, I had a dream and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.

Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever. Tell your servants the dream and we will show the interpretation. 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 your houses shall be laid in ruins. 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.

They answered a second time and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream and we will show him the interpretation. The king answered and said, I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time because you see the word from me is firm.

If you do not make the dream known to me, there is one but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change.

[1 : 37] Therefore tell me the dream and I shall know that you can show its interpretation. 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 thing that the king asked is difficult and no one can show it to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh.

Because of this the king was angry and very furious and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. So the decree went out and the wise men were about to be killed and they sought Daniel and his companions to kill them.

Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Ariok, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. He declared to Ariok, the king's captain, why is the decree of the king so urgent?

Then Ariok made the matter known to Daniel and Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint a time that he might show the interpretation to the king. Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael and to Azariah, his companions.

[3 : 03] And he 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.

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

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 reveals deep and hidden things.

He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise. For you have given me wisdom and might and have made known to me what was asked of you.

For you have made known to us the king's matter. Therefore Daniel went into Ariok, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon.

[4 : 11] 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.

Then Ariok 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.

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? Daniel answered the king and said, No wise men, enchanters, magicians or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked. 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.

To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this. And he who reveals mysteries has made known to you what is to be.

[5 : 25] 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 known to the king and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and exceeding in brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold all together were broken in pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors.

And the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

[6 : 41] This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power and the might and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them, you are the head of gold.

Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and chafes all things.

And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom.

But some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage. But they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

[8 : 08] And in the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering of incense be offered up to him.

The king answered and said to Daniel, Truly your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.

Then the king gave Daniel high honours and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

[9 : 27] Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

Let's join in a short prayer. Almighty God, we thank you that you are the same God today as you were in Daniel's time, the revealer of mysteries.

We pray that you will reveal mysteries from your word to us, that you will help us to hear from you now, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Thanks, Chris.

We'll do keep that passage open in front of you, as we'll be looking at it in some detail. But not too much. I won't keep you for an hour or anything like that.

Well, one night can change everything, can't it? We often see that on election nights. You might go to bed with one prime minister, and you'll wake up and there's a completely different prime minister. [10:35] In this country, whenever there's an election, the big question of the pundits is, who will have a Portillo moment? You might remember that night in 97, when the rather self-assured Michael Portillo, who thought he was in a pretty safe seat, shockingly lost his seat.

And so from then, people have been asking, who will have their Portillo moment in the election? And there have been plenty of them. And there have been plenty of surprise results in elections, certainly in recent years, haven't there?

One night can change everything, and one night has certainly changed everything for King Nebuchadnezzar in the passage that we see here. We find ourselves in Babylon, and everything has changed for this great and powerful king.

Chapter 1, we see he's quite a tyrant. He's quite a terrifying king. Everybody is scared of him. Everybody's wondering what he might do. But here he's got a taste of his own medicine, and he himself is now troubled in spirit.

But here's the problem. He won't tell anybody why. He's troubled, but refuses to let people know why, apart from saying, I had a dream.

[11:49] But he won't tell anyone what the problem is. So the big question throughout this whole chapter is, who knows? Who knows this secret? And so we need to look at all these characters that we meet, who are summoned, to try and tell the king the dream, and the interpretation.

And we need to figure out, well, who knows? And first of all, obviously the king knows. He's the first one who knows. He knows what the dream is, although he doesn't quite understand what it means. But he knows that this was not good news.

He was troubled. He knows that this was a nightmare. And so while he's used to having people interpret his dreams, he knows that it's always been, oh, it means that you're wonderful, and it means you're fantastic.

And there's all these sycophantic people coming and telling him, oh, the dreams are all about how fantastic you are. He knows this is bad news. And so he's not going to let these sycophantic advisors tell him that this is great news for him.

So he's going to summon them, and he's going to do something he's never done before. And so in they come. And we meet then the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans.

[12:59] And he asks of them, as he's never done before, tell me not just the interpretation of the dream once I've told it to you, but I want you to tell me the dream and the interpretation. He suspects they might try and just whittle their way around it, just make something up.

So he's not giving them even an inch of leeway. He wants to check whether they really know. He wants to know, who knows the secret of this dream.

And he is serious, isn't he? He is deadly, literally deadly serious. If you look in verse 5, he gives them quite a threat. If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.

Or literally a rubbish dump, or even a dunghill. He is deadly serious. And so they try to negotiate, don't they?

They try and negotiate a deal with him. Come on, just tell us, tell us a dream. We will give you the right interpretation. But it's all to no avail. They try and buy some time, and all to no avail.

[14:06] They complain, this is impossible. You can't ask this of us. They do know who does know, in verse 11. They know that the gods know, but of course they don't live here, and they don't really tell us anything.

They're up there knowing their stuff, and they never speak to us. So the gods know, but who could ever get anything out of them? So they know that the gods know, but they can't access it. And verse 12, because of this, the king was angry, and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon, be destroyed.

But if you're familiar with the previous chapter, this isn't just a story of intrigue in Babylon. This is why it's so interesting for the Bible, because among these wise men, were some of God's own people, who had been dragged into exile, in Babylon.

And so we've got to look at, well, God's people are now under threat. That is why this is so of interest in the Bible.

[15:10] But maybe they're God's people, maybe they know. And so we meet God's people, Daniel and his friends, and maybe they know. The first chapter shows you that Daniel's got a good head on his shoulders, he's a pretty wise man, and maybe he knows, but he doesn't know.

Not even God's people know, and he will later tell the king, I don't know this any better than anybody else. But, Daniel does know, who does know.

He knows where to go. And while when the going gets tough, the world will, at the end, give up, Daniel knows that when the going gets tough, the godly get praying.

And so with his friends, in verse 18, you'll see, they seek mercy, from the God of heaven, concerning this mystery. So while the magicians figured, the gods know, but they don't really care, and they don't really speak to us, Daniel knew, that there is a God in heaven, who is merciful, merciful beyond what anyone could imagine, and he reveals, even the deepest, of secrets.

Which is why, that is exactly what he does, in verse 19. This is the great hinge, in the story. This is the, the great turning point. Then, the mystery, was revealed, to Daniel, in a vision, in the night.

[16:35] Then Daniel blessed, the God of heaven. This is who knows. This is the answer. The God of heaven knows. And the God of heaven, is willing to tell, Daniel the answer.

He, is merciful, and he reveals, these deep mysteries. Look at verse 22. He reveals, deep and hidden things. He knows, what is in darkness. And the light, dwells with him.

And so, what does he know, that the king finds, so disturbing? Well, here's the long and short of it, from all that, all that we saw from the dream. Here's what God knows, that King Nebuchadnezzar, now knows, but doesn't really like.

That kingdoms come, and kingdoms go. And then, there will be one kingdom, that will overcome, and outlast, any kingdom. And indeed, Nebuchadnezzar's own kingdom, would be gone, even within, Daniel's lifetime.

So no wonder, he was so disturbed, that Nebuchadnezzar, probably had an inkling, of what this dream meant. Kingdoms come, kingdoms go. And we've seen that, all throughout, world history, haven't we?

[17:47] 150 years ago, 150 years ago, people would have sung, Britannia rules the waves, and they would have absolutely meant it, the sun never set, on the British Empire, and now, it's nowhere near that grand and great, is it?

Kingdoms come, kingdoms go. But there would be a kingdom, that would last forever. this tiny stone, that grows, smashes everything, and it's a mountain.

A tiny kingdom, that would apparently come, from nowhere, the rock, isn't cut by hands, it just sort of appears, and it seems very small, seems very insignificant, and yet it grows, and it grows, and all the world's kingdoms, would fade, and get smashed, and they would, pale in comparison, with this, seemingly impossible, king.

There are more people, who know, the secret. Jump with me, about 600 years, forward in time.

God's people, are back from exile. But the empire, of the time, most of these empires, have come and gone, these four empires, they're on this, the fourth of these kingdoms, the empire of Rome, is in power, and Rome still has, its hand of power, over Jerusalem.

So the people are back there, but they're still, ruled by Rome, and there's a puppet king, in place. And this king, doesn't really know anything.

[19:20] He certainly doesn't know, but he is scared, and paranoid enough, that he doesn't really need, a nightmare, to disturb him. And he's visited, by some wise men, from the east.

Who knows, maybe the descendants, of these wise men, that we meet here. Maybe they worked, in the same school. And this time, these wise men, do know something. They know, that there is a king here, worth worshipping.

This king, had actually been around, for a couple of years, by this point. The impossible king, had appeared. He had been born, of a virgin, of all things. And neither, King Herod, nor his Roman masters, had noticed, even a tiny bit.

Herod, who had all these prophecies, and all these teachers, in his palace, and he didn't have a clue. And so, these wise men, come and tell him, that, no he's come. This impossible king, has come.

And we read, that he was troubled, and all Jerusalem, with him. So we have, yet another troubled king, precisely because, the wise men, did know something. And again, the wise men, tell the king, and they don't know, precisely where he is.

[20 : 30] But, this time, they go, and they're told, they're told, go to Bethlehem. That's what these books say. Nobody bothers to go with them. But they go. And the king, wanted them to come back.

But this time, the wise men, don't tell the king, the secret. Not because they don't know, but precisely, because they do know. And they got another dream, to tell them, not to tell the king, and to go home another way.

You see, it's almost Daniel 2, in topsy-turvy. And then, despite Herod's, horrible, and gruesome attempts, to defeat this king, this impossible, unstoppable king, he grew up.

And this king, grew and grew, and his kingdom, grew and grew. As the hearts, of people, in empire, throughout the empire, and then in empires, throughout the world, turned from their emperors, to this king.

This king, Jesus. And so, we see that this dream, come true, as it kept disturbing kings, and as it captivated hearts, around the world.

[21 : 42] And so, God knew, and he revealed it to Daniel, so Daniel knew. And then somehow, mysteriously, 600 years later, these wise men knew. And we don't even know, how they knew.

But they knew, there was a king, worth worshipping here. And so, we need to ask, well, who else knows? There's one more group, of people that could know.

And that is very simply, anyone who is willing, to see it. Anyone who is willing, to stop building, their own empire. Anyone willing, to say, my life is not about me.

Anyone willing, to bow, to King Jesus. When Jesus, had grown up, and he was, fulfilling his ministry, people were seeing, more and more, this is the king.

He had one, at one point, he sent his disciples out, on a mission trip, and they came back, and they said, we just saw amazing things happen, when we did things, in your name. They said, Lord, even the demons, are subject to us, in your name.

[22 : 46] In Luke chapter 10. And then, he had to give him a lesson, about staying humble. Yes, you have authority, in my name. But that's not the main focus, of what your life should be.

But then, he does pray a prayer, in language very similar, to Daniel's prayer here. I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden, these things, from the wise, and understanding, and revealed them, to little children.

He thanks God, that more and more people, throughout the world, are seeing, that he is king. So, 600 years previously, only one man, was given to see, that this was, this was what the mystery was.

This coming, impossible, unstoppable king. But now, anyone can see him. And so, the key question, of course is, do you see it? Do you see, that this is the king?

Or do you think, that you're too wise, or too clever, to know this? Do you think, you can know better, than to acknowledge, the power, and the rule, of the impossible, king Jesus?

[23 : 54] Now, maybe you have questions, about it. Maybe you're wondering, some things, and you've got questions, about whether, this could possibly be true. And we'd be happy, to talk to you. Maybe you're wondering, what it would look like, to acknowledge, what it would look like, to acknowledge, that Jesus is king.

And so, we would welcome you, to come and join, the Sunday worship services, that we have, as the church, that arranges these things, as a flyer, on the back table, that you're most, most welcome to take. Come and join us, and see, part of what it looks like, to live with Jesus, as your king.

Excuse me. But I would say, don't dawdle, in answering, this question. Do you see, that Jesus is king? Because if you don't see that, you do need to ask yourself, why?

You do need to ask, what is my case, for the defense, against this charge, that Jesus is my king, and I haven't been living, as that? Because unless you look, at your defense, you won't see, how many gaping holes, there are, in your defense.

So let me just close, by just urging you, at some point today, if not now, maybe later today, block off 30 minutes, on your diary, for the day.

[25 : 10] This will be worth, missing pointless for, or even worth, missing the news for. Just block off, 30 minutes, so just think about, this one question, do I acknowledge, Jesus as my king?

Just, just block off, that 30 minute slot, in your diary, write it down, put it on your iPhone, as a reminder, think about, for 30 minutes, do I acknowledge, Jesus, is king?
And if, if you do, great, think about, why that is. And if you don't, think about, why that is not, the case. And see, is this a good enough case? Do I have, a proper defense of this?
And do come back, and share us, share with us what you think. We would love to talk about that more. Do come to our services, to see what that looks like. But do think about this. Do, do I acknowledge, that Jesus is king, as we come to this Christmas season?
It is not about me, and me feeling nice, and me enjoying some turkey, as, as much as we can enjoy some turkey. But it is about this, impossible king.
[26 : 14] And do I acknowledge, that my whole life is about, not me, but about, him. Let's close with a brief prayer. Thank you.