Lesson 003 Daniel 2:1 – 49

But There is a God in Heaven, Part 1 Daniel 2

- I. The Unsettling Dream (v. 1)
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- II. The Unreasonable Request (vv. 2 13) V. The Unexpected Response (vv. 46 49)
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I. The Unsettling Dream (v. 1)

^{1a} In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar..."

The question in the commentaries is, "If Nebuchadnezzar's dream occurred "in the second year of [his] reign," was it before Daniel graduated from Babylon Academy or after?"

Daniel's Training	Nebuchadnezzar's Reign	Date
First Year	Year of Accession	Sep. 605 – Nisan
		(Mar/Apr) 604 B.C.
Second Year	First Year	Nisan 604 – 603 B.C.
Third Year	Second Year (dream occurred)	Nisan 603 – 602 B.C.

The most likely scenario is that at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel and his friends were recent graduates of the Babylonian training program. They would have still been very young men at this time (somewhere between the **ages of 16 – 20**).

1b "...Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him."

Nebuchadnezzar was already feeling the burden of reigning over such a large kingdom. He knew that nations rise and fall. He may have had fears of assassination and fears of defeat by an enemy. So, he must've wondered, "What will the future hold for me and my kingdom? These concerns caused him restless nights. But when he did sleep, he "had dreams." However, <u>one dream</u> was of <u>great concern</u> to him. And in **verses 28 – 29**, we learn that God was sending Nebuchadnezzar a message.

II. The Unreasonable Request (vv. 2 – 13)

In verse 2, Nebuchadnezzar called in the professionals to interpret his dream.

The word for "magicians" (Hebrew = $hart\bar{o}m$) "to cut" or "to scratch" and refers to engravers or writers. These men were religious scribes and sacred writers. These "magicians" were supposedly in touch with the spirit world.

"Enchanters" (Hebrew = $a\check{s}\check{s}\bar{a}p$) refers to an incantation priest who could communicate with the spirit world through magic spells and chants.

"Sorcerers" (Hebrew = mēkaššēpîm) is a title given to those who practice witchcraft.

"Chaldeans" (Hebrew = ka'sdîm) is used to describe the astrologers of Babylon. These were men who carefully studied the moon, stars, constellations, and planets.

Collectively, this likely large group of men were known as the "<u>wisemen</u>" of Babylon. They were the wisest men in the kingdom. They were the priests and prophets of the king. And what they all had in common was the use of heathen methods to obtain divine guidance.

In **verse 4**, the Hebrew language stops at that word "Aramaic." From that point forward, all the through to the end of **Daniel 7** was written in Aramaic. This is a signal that these middle chapters have a special significance for the Gentile world.

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At the end of **verse 4**, the wisemen say, ^{4b}"O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."

They all desired to provide the king with an interpretation he would be pleased to hear, or at least one that was so ambiguous it could mean anything.

However, much to their surprise, in **verses 5 – 6** the king added a requirement that he had never asked of them before. This time, he said, "I not only want you to tell me the <u>meaning</u> of my dream, I also want you to tell me the <u>contents</u> of my dream."

Therefore, the stakes were very high. If the wisemen <u>were</u> successful, they would receive "gifts and rewards and great honor."

However, if they could <u>not</u> follow through with an accurate recounting of the dream <u>and</u> its interpretation, they would be "torn limb from limb." This was no idle threat (**Daniel 3; 2 Kings 25:7; Jeremiah 29:22**). Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar was a cruel and brutally vicious man.

Some commentators suggest (based upon **verse 3**) that Nebuchadnezzar couldn't remember his dream and that's why he asked his counselors to reveal its contents.

However, I'm more inclined to agree with other commentators who believe that Nebuchadnezzar was *testing* his wisemen. He perhaps suspected they were "Yes" men, always telling him what he wanted to hear.

But this "dream" was so disturbing, and seemingly so significant, that Nebuchadnezzar wanted to ensure he was receiving an accurate interpretation.

In **verses 8 – 9**, Nebuchadnezzar doubles down on his threat to kill them. He accuses them of stalling for time, perhaps hoping that his anger will subside, and cooler heads will prevail.

Their response in **verses 10 – 11** reveals the limits of human wisdom. **No one** "on earth...can meet the king's demand." They were, after all, mortal men.

Therefore, the wise men were humiliated. They were forced to admit that Nebuchadnezzar was asking them to do what only a *divine being* can do. They were confessing, not only their inability, but also the inability of their gods.

This isn't the only time in Scripture that God exposed the foolishness of the world and the deceptiveness of Satan's minions (**Ex. 7 – 12**; **1 Kings 18**; **Jer. 28**; **Acts 13:1 – 12**). But ultimately it is Christ, who by His Person and His work on the cross, has declared that the *wisdom of the world* and its *false religions* are foolishness (**1 Corinthians 1:18ff**).

In **verse 12**, we learn that Nebuchadnezzar not only wanted to kill the "wise men" who were present at this meeting, but also "<u>all</u> the wise men of Babylon." He wanted them "destroyed" for **not** doing what was **impossible** in the first place.

Verse 13 says that even though they were likely only recent graduates of Babylon University, "Daniel and his companions" found themselves on the "kill" list.

Such is the brutality of Babylon's king. Therefore, "Arioch, the king's captain," began rounding these men up, arresting them, and bringing them in for a formal execution.

However, the good news is, that contrary to Nebuchadnezzar's intentions, the stage is now set for the God of Daniel to do what these "wise men" and their "gods" could not do.