

## Daniel 2:1-19 – Nebuchadnezzar’s Troubling Dream

In chapter 1, Daniel had been taken from his family and his home and put in a new country with a new language, culture and religion. Early on, Daniel decided that he would not compromise in following the law of God. God prospered Daniel and his three friends during their three years of training. Daniel probably wondered how long he would stay in Babylon. Would he ever return to Judea? Would he ever see his family again? How long would the Babylonian empire last? King Nebuchadnezzar also thought about his kingdom and how long it would last. God had a general answer for both Daniel and king Nebuchadnezzar about the endurance of the Babylonian empire.

**Read Daniel 2:1-11.**

In the beginning of the book of Daniel, king Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. Daniel’s training lasted for three years, if all went according to plan. Chapter 2 happened in the second year of king Nebuchadnezzar. Many commentators don’t think that chapter 2 occurred during the time of Daniel’s three year training course. There are various explanations for the seeming discrepancy. I don’t think Daniel forgot what he wrote 21 verses earlier in the book. It was not a contradiction to him but it is not explained to us. What troubled king Nebuchadnezzar? (2:1)

From verse 2, who did the king rely on to explain his dream and to relieve his mind? (2:2)

In verse 3, the king told those he assembled that he had a dream that troubled him and that he wanted to know the meaning. Of the various groups assembled, it was the Chaldeans who spoke up. What did they tell the king? How did the king respond to the Chaldeans? Was king Nebuchadnezzar a fair man? Why do you think the king was hostile towards his “dream experts”? What were the consequences of not being able to tell the king both the dream and its interpretation? What were the rewards if they were successful? (2:3-6)

In verse 7, they asked the king a second time for him to tell them the dream so that they could give the interpretation. Why did the king not want to tell them the dream? (2:7-9)

Nebuchadnezzar did not change his mind. See verses 5, 6, and 9. He wanted someone to read his mind and tell him the dream he had. How did the Chaldeans respond to the king’s request to retroactively read his mind? How would you respond to someone who asked you to do the “impossible”? (2:10-11)

## **Read Daniel 2:12-19.**

In verse 12, the king followed through with his threat. The magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans seem to be lumped into one category called “wise men”. If these men were truly wise, what does it say about the king’s wisdom if he would kill all of them? The king’s anger may remind us of a 2 year old throwing a temper tantrum. The big difference is that the king had the power to kill when he got mad. There was only one who knew the king’s thoughts and who could stop the king’s madness. (2:12)

It may have come as a surprise to Daniel that after three years of training, the king sent someone to kill him and his friends. In verses 14-16, how did Daniel respond to the news that the king had commanded that he be executed? (2:13-16)

In verse 16, what did Daniel do? We can only wonder if Daniel spoke to the king directly or sent a message to the king. It seems like he sent a message. ESV has “appoint him a time”, which sounds like he was scheduling an appointment. NASB has “give him a grace period”. NIV has “asked for time”. NKJV has “give him time”. NASB, NIV, NKJV all imply that Daniel was saying, “give me a little time and I will give you what you want”. Which makes more sense? Did Daniel know what the dream was at the time he declared that he could tell the king what he wanted to hear? Why do you think Daniel did what he did? Is this a model we should follow in our lives? Verse 1:17b may have been a factor in Daniel’s actions. (2:16)

In verses 17-18, what did Daniel do? At the end of verse 18, what was the goal of Daniel’s actions? (2:17-18)

How did God respond to the prayers of Daniel and his friends? Why do you think God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel? What was Daniel’s response to God in verse 19? The full response is in verses 20-23. (2:19)

In verse 1, it was revealed that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. After 19 verses, we still don’t know what the dream was. The dream is not revealed until verse 31. What does this chapter tell us about the “wise men” of this world? What does this chapter tell us about God?