

DANIEL INTERPRETED NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Daniel 2:1-49

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel

Key-location: Babylon

Key-repetitions:

- Nebuchadnezzar's dream: the king had a dream (Dan 2:1); the king asked advisors to tell and interpret his dream (Dan 2:2); advisors asked the king to tell them the dream and they would interpret it (Dan 2:4); the king promised to kill advisors if they couldn't tell him his dream and reward them if they did (Dan 2:5-6); Daniel requested time to interpret the king's dream (Dan 2:14); Daniel told captain that he would interpret the king's dream (Dan 2:24); Daniel told the king his dream (Dan 2:31-35); Daniel interpreted the king's dream (Dan 2:36-45).
- Prayer: Daniel urged his friends to pray for mercy (Dan 2:18); Daniel gave thanks and praised God for answered prayer (Dan 2:20-23).
- Impossibility of telling the king his dream: advisors told the king that it was impossible to tell another person's dream (Dan 2:10); Daniel told king that no one but God could interpret the king's secret (Dan 2:27).
- Secret: secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision (Dan 2:19); Daniel called God the "Revealer of Secrets" (Dan 2:28-29); Daniel said the secret had been revealed to him (Dan 2:30); Daniel said God had revealed secrets of what is going to happen (Dan 2:29); the king called God a "Revealer of Secrets" (Dan 2:46).

Key-attitudes:

- King Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance toward his subordinates.
- The advisors' despair over king's command.
- Daniel's dependence on God during difficulties.
- Daniel's praise of God.
- Daniel's confidence in God when he stood before the king.

Initial-situation:

God became so angry with Judah that he sent Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to conquer and destroy Judah. Babylon's first invasion into Judah took place during the first year he was king. Daniel and other Israelites were captured and taken to Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar told his chief-of-staff to choose some Israelite youths for three years of training. They were to eat from the same food served at the king's table. Daniel and three of his Jewish friends were chosen. Daniel determined not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. Daniel and three other Jewish youths obtained permission to eat vegetables and to drink water. God gave the four Jewish youths wisdom and the ability to learn. After three years of training, they entered the king's service.

Initial-problem:

King Nebuchadnezzar started having dreams that disturbed him, and he could not sleep.

Final-situation:

King Nebuchadnezzar showered Daniel with gifts and made him ruler over the province of Babylon and in charge of all its wise men. The king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to administrative posts.

BIBLE STORY

During the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he began having dreams that disturbed him. The king summoned the Babylonian magicians, wizards, sorcerers, astrologers, and fortune-tellers to interpret his dream. The king told them, "I had a dream that disturbs me; I want to know what it means."

Babylon's wise advisors answered the king, "Your Majesty, live forever! Tell us your dream, and we'll interpret its meaning for you."

Nebuchadnezzar told the wise advisors, "You must tell me the dream; then you must interpret it. If you don't tell me the dream and interpret its meaning, I'll have you cut into pieces. If you tell me the dream and interpret it, you'll receive gifts and honor. Now, tell me the dream and interpret it."

Once more the advisors replied, "Your Majesty, tell us the dream, and we'll interpret its meaning."

The king answered, "If you don't tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for all of you. Now, tell me the dream, and I'll know that you can interpret its meaning."

The wise advisors answered the king, "No one anywhere can do what the king asks! No king has ever asked anything like this from any magician, wizard, or fortune-teller. What the king asks is impossible. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods."

The king became so angry that he ordered the execution of all Babylonian wise advisors. Daniel and his companions were included in this death warrant (Dan 2:1-13).

The captain of the king's royal guard made arrangements for the executions. Daniel asked the captain, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" The captain explained everything to Daniel. Daniel went to the king and asked for time so that he might interpret the meaning of the dream.

Daniel returned to his house and explained the situation to his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Daniel urged them to pray for mercy from the God of heaven, so that the four of them might not be executed. That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Daniel praised the God of heaven and said, "Praise be to the Name of God forever and ever; wisdom and power are his. I thank and praise you. You gave me wisdom and power. You showed me what we asked of you. You made known to me the king's dream."

Daniel returned to the captain of the royal guard and told him, "Take me to the king, and I'll interpret his dream" (Dan 2:14-24).

The captain of the royal guard took Daniel to the king and said, "I found a man from the exiles of Judah who can interpret the king's dream."

The king asked Daniel, "Are you able to tell me my dream and interpret it?"

Daniel replied, "No wise advisor, wizard, magician, or diviner can interpret the king's secret. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. The Revealer of Secrets showed Your Majesty what is going to happen in days to come. This secret has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other men, but so that you'll understand what you dreamed.

"Your Majesty, in your dream, you saw a huge statue in front of you. The head of the statue was pure gold; its chest and arms were silver; its belly and thighs were bronze; its legs were iron; its feet were an iron-clay mixture. You watched this statue and an invisible hand cut a rock out of a mountain and the rock struck the statue, smashing its iron-clay feet. Then, the whole thing fell to pieces. Iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were broken to pieces. The wind blew them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

"Now we'll interpret your dream. Your Majesty, you're the most powerful king on earth. The God of heaven has given you power, strength, and glory. You're the head ruler all over the world. You're the head of gold on that statue.

"After you, a second kingdom, one of silver will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, iron-like in strength. Just as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all previous kingdoms. You saw that the feet and toes were partly baked clay and partly iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it. This kingdom will be partly strong and partly breakable. That fourth kingdom will not bind together any more than iron and clay bind together.

"During the time of those kings, the God of heaven will be establishing a kingdom that will never be destroyed. God's Kingdom will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but God's Kingdom will endure forever. This is the meaning of your dream of the rock cut out of a mountain by invisible hands, a rock that broke to pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. Your Majesty, the dream is true and the interpretation is accurate" (Dan 2:25-45).

King Nebuchadnezzar fell facedown to the ground before Daniel. The king told Daniel, "Your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a Revealer of Secrets. I know because you revealed this secret."

The king showered Daniel with gifts and made him ruler over the province of Babylon and in charge of all Babylon's wise advisors. At Daniel's request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to administrative posts (Dan 2:46-49).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 4. What problems did the characters face? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |

7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened when King Nebuchadnezzar asked his wise advisors to tell his dream and interpret it?
2. How did Daniel react to the king's plan to kill all his wise advisors?
3. Why did King Nebuchadnezzar believe he had the right to ask his subordinates to do what they thought was impossible?
4. How did Daniel react to God's answering his prayer?
5. How do we react when God answers our prayers?
6. When faced with a desperate situation, how can we experience hope instead of despair?
7. What did Nebuchadnezzar's dream reveal about the future?
8. Why was God able to reveal the future to Daniel?
9. What difference should it make in our lives that God knows the future?
10. How did Daniel give credit to God?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **God often demonstrates the impossible through those who serve him.** The astrologers told the king that no one could know the dreams of another person (Dan 2:10-11). But God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel (Dan 2:19).
2. **The leader who allows power to go to his head can demand the impossible from subordinates.** The astrologers told the king that no person could know the dreams of another person. Yet the king demanded his wise advisors to tell him both his dream and its meaning (Dan 2:5-11).
3. **Prayer is more effective than panic. Panic confirms a person's hopelessness; prayer confirms his hope in God.** Daniel trusted God to save him, his three friends, and the other wise advisors of Babylon. Daniel and his friends prayed (Dan 2:16-18).
4. **The person who takes a prayer request to God should match persistence in prayer with gratitude when his request is answered.** Daniel asked God to reveal Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him. God answered Daniel's prayer, and Daniel praised the Lord (Dan 2:19-23).
5. **A person should not take credit for what God does through him.** Before Daniel interpreted the king's dream, he stated that God had revealed the dream and interpretation to him. Daniel gave God credit for interpreting the king's dream, and the king honored both Daniel and his God (Dan 2:27-30).

6. **God can use people who find themselves in undesirable situations.** Daniel and his friends were forced to leave Jerusalem against their will at a young age. Yet, they served God in Babylon.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Sharing Daniel-like Experience**

Invite one or two listeners to share an experience about what appeared to be an impossible difficulty; yet, they prayed and God enabled them to have victory over the difficulty.

2. **Pray for Listeners Facing Difficulties**

Invite everyone to get into a big circle. Listeners who are facing difficulties are to get into the center of the circle. Then different individuals who are part of the outer circle are to pray for those inside the circle.