



## THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

### Lesson Number 5

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----



# THE WISDOM THAT DOES NOT STAND THE TEST

Dan 2:1-12 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. <sup>4</sup> Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation. <sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. <sup>6</sup> But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. <sup>7</sup> They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. <sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. <sup>9</sup> But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof. <sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. <sup>12</sup> For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. (Daniel 2:1-12)

## INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of Daniel has been a revelation of the working of the Lord, and how He prepares those with a perfect heart for service in His kingdom. The Spirit reminds us that “the eyes of

the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him” (2 Chron 16:9). God is always working, fulfilling His good

pleasure, and carrying out the counsel of His will. When Isaiah saw the Lord “high and lifted up,” above Him “stood seraphim.” They were appropriately adapted for the heavenly realms. Each one

## OUTLINE

- ▶ THE TIME ARRIVES (2:1)
- ▶ THE EXPERTS ARE CALLED (2:2-3)
- ▶ THE POVERTY OF WORLDLY WISDOM (2:4)
- ▶ THE DEMAND AND ITS INCENTIVES (2:5-6)
- ▶ TESTING THE CLAIMS OF THE WORLDLY WISE (2:7-9)
- ▶ BEYOND HUMAN CAPABILITIES (2:10-11)
- ▶ A JUSTIFIED PENALTY (2:12)

of them *“had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew”* (Isa 1:1-2). The magnificent glory of God is seen in the covering of their faces with two wings. Like the prophet Elijah who covered his face with his mantle when He heard the Lord (1 Kgs 19:12,13), so these seraphs veiled themselves before the majestic glory of the mighty God. The Seraph’s covered their feet with two of their wings, showing their humility and submission to the Lord. With two their wings they flew, soaring about the throne with discerning eyes and probing spirits. What they beheld is most significant, for they cried out, *“Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory”* (Isa 6:3). The glory of God filled the earth because He is working in it, fulfilling His counsel (Isa 46:10-11), governing the nations (Psa 22:28), and doing whatsoever He wills (Dan 4:35). **GOD IS WORKING!**

Jesus said of God, *“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working”* <sup>NKJV</sup> (John 5:17). Christ confessed that the works He did were *“the works of Him that sent Me”* (John 9:4). The works of God were brought to their apex in the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, He has always been working. His working is so meticulous that Jesus said, *“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will”* <sup>NKJV</sup> (Matt 10:29). As if that was not minute enough, He added, *“But the very hairs of your head are all numbered,”* or *“has been*

*counted”* <sup>NJB</sup> (Matt 10:30), indicating that not even a hair of your head can fall out without the Father’s approval.

### THE DETAILS TO THIS POINT

In Daniel, we are beholding the inscrutable workings of God. We are seeing examples of His *“judgments”* and *“ways,”* which are otherwise *“past finding out”* (Rom 11:33). Some details are being provided that show how *“God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”* <sup>NASB</sup> (Rom 8:28). We must not fail to see this, for in this understanding encouragement and hope are ministered to the human spirit.

- ▣ Nebuchadnezzar’s besiegement of Jerusalem was orchestrated by God (Dan 1:1; 1 Chron 6:15).
- ▣ The Lord gave Jehoiakin the king into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand (1:2a).
- ▣ The Lord gave the vessels of His house into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand (1:2b).
- ▣ The Lord turned the king’s heart to the consideration of the captive children of Judah (1:3-6; Prov 21:1).
- ▣ The Lord brought Daniel into favor with the *“prince of the eunuchs,”* who was over him (1:9).
- ▣ God gave the four children of Judah *“knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom”* (1:17).
- ▣ God gave Daniel *“understanding in all visions and dreams”* (1:17; 9:22).
- ▣ The wisdom given to the Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah is caused to be made apparent to the king and his court (1:20).

All of these things have been directed by the Lord, of whom are *“all things”* (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6). In none of these details is God merely responding to

the intentions or blunders of men. Without violating His own character or turning men into mere robots, the Lord is working out His own immutable purpose. **Because Daniel has been made a part of that purpose, the Lord is causing him to come into the limelight.** Within a public context, and one which involves writing and records, the Lord is going to unveil His mind and will. He will also confirm the utter impotence of human wisdom, or unlawful knowledge obtained from the world of darkness. There is surely much to be learned from this account.

In this account, and if we will believe, terms that are applied to God will obtain especial significance.

- ▣ *“The Most High God”* (Gen 14:18).
- ▣ *“Possessor of heaven and earth”* (Gen 14:19).
- ▣ *“The God of heaven, and the God of earth”* (Gen 24:3).
- ▣ *“The Lord in the midst of the earth”* (Ex 8:22).
- ▣ *“The God of the spirits of all men”* (Num 27:16).
- ▣ *“God of gods and Lord of lords”* (Deut 10:17).
- ▣ *“God . . . of all the kingdoms of the earth”* (2 Kgs 19:15).
- ▣ *“Exalted as Head above all”* (1 Chron 29:11).
- ▣ *“Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all”* (1 Chron 29:12).
- ▣ The One *“who rulest . . . over all the kingdoms of the heathen”* (2 Chron 20:6).
- ▣ *“LORD alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things*

**WITHIN A PUBLIC CONTEXT, AND ONE WHICH INVOLVES WRITING AND RECORDS, THE LORD IS GOING TO UNVEIL HIS MIND AND WILL. HE WILL ALSO CONFIRM THE UTTER IMPOTENCE OF HUMAN WISDOM, OR UNLAWFUL KNOWLEDGE OBTAINED FROM THE WORLD OF DARKNESS.**

*that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all” (Neh 9:6).*

- ▶ *“In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10).*
- ▶ *“With Him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are His” (Job 12:16).*
- ▶ *“He is the Governor among the nations” (Psa 22:28).*
- ▶ *“The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psa 24:1).*
- ▶ *“He is a great King over all the earth” (Psa 47:2).*
- ▶ *“God reigneth over the heathen” (Psa 47:8).*

*bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26).*

- ▶ *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:6).*

These are not mere theological statements, or tenets of a well thought creed. Rather, these are revelations with which the events of Scripture are to be correlated. They are what enables us to take hold of statements like God working all things together for our good. Our text is revealing to us HOW the Sovereignty of God is expressed among the sons of men. It confirms why nothing is able to separate us from His love, which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:35-39), and why none

entertainment and business. By their very nature, these areas of life promote career-building and selfishness. However, when men are unduly exalted in the realm of religion, a most serious condition exists. In its essence, *“pure religion”* postulates human weakness and deficiency. Thus, the need for God becomes more apparent, and the quest for His approval more prominent. However, when men are exalted, the awareness of a need for, and the understanding of, God necessarily dissipate.

**Human wisdom too prominent.**

Although life itself should accent the inadequacy of human wisdom, our times have greatly obscured this reality. These days, particularly in the Western world, speculation and philosophy, which provide no real answers, are seated upon the throne of human thought. Like the Athenians and Stoics, men are delighting to *“hear some new thing”* (Acts 17:21). New books, new modes of entertainment, new technology – yet in it all, the deep and unquestionable need of humanity lies buried in the rubble of human ignorance.

**A tendency to focus on smaller matters.**

Those who have been in Christ for a considerable time, are aware of the smallness of contemporary thought in general, and religious thought in particular. Men are occupied with issues that have little or no eternal relevance. **In the average Christian, an abrupt change of priorities will take place one second after death.** Often, such a change takes place prior to death during a crisis, or period of great stress and pain. This is the result of the dominance of small and inconsequential thought. The things that are of the greatest concern to the average person of our day are really not very important at all.

These conditions, and more, are why I am taking this approach to the book of Daniel. This, in fact, is providing a setting of silver in which to place golden apples of truth (Prov 25:11). It is what makes the text pertinent to your own life. In the events that are recorded, we are seeing how God works. We are beholding the nature and effectiveness of faith. God is confirming how he causes men to stand, and does, in fact, keep them from falling. He is fully able to do this, and we are to rely upon Him to do so.

**. THE NATURE OF THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE ELABORATION ON THE NATURE OF GOD AND THE NATURE OF MAN. THE LAST FEW DECADES HAVE BROUGHT IN A THEOLOGICAL FOG THAT HAS OBSCURED THE ESSENTIAL MATTERS OF LIFE.**

- ▶ *“God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psa 75:7).*
- ▶ *“He is terrible to the kings of the earth” (Psa 76:12).*
- ▶ *“God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased” (Psa 115:3).*
- ▶ *“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psa 135:6).*
- ▶ *“He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Dan 2:21).*
- ▶ *“The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” (Dan 4:17).*
- ▶ His is *“the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever” (Matt 6:10).*
- ▶ He has *“made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the*

are able to pluck us from His hand (John 10:28-29).

**WHY SAY THESE THINGS?**

Why take the time to say all of these things? It may appear to have little relevance to our study of the book of Daniel. The nature of the times in which we live require considerable elaboration on the nature of God and the nature of man. The last few decades have brought in a theological fog that has obscured the essential matters of life.

**Ignorance of God.** Not only is there a prevailing ignorance of God, there also appears to be little concern about it. Other things have upstaged the living God, so that He is brought into the fabric of thought only in the time of crisis. In our time, it is difficult to see God in the Word of God, or Divine purpose and grace in Scripture. The theology of our times has hidden these things.

**Men unduly exalted.** We fully expect men to be dominant in

## THE TIME ARRIVES

**“<sup>2:1</sup> And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.”**

Having acquainted us with the preparatory work of the Lord, the Spirit now begins to unfold how God will announce the introduction of His kingdom, and the consequent demise of all earthly kingdoms. The revelation will be made in such a manner as will strengthen and encourage saints of all ages. It will also confirm the impotence of human wisdom, as well as the ultimate futility of all earthly government.

We will also see how the Lord will vault Daniel into prominence, so that his word is heard more widely. Having already conferred unusual wisdom upon Daniel, and given him the ability to interpret all visions and dreams, the use of those gifts will now be shown.

**In this we learn Divine gifts are always to be employed. They obtain no value or profit if they are not stirred up and used for the glory of God** (2 Tim 1:6). Nothing the Lord does or gives is for mere show, or the vanity of self-praise. Every good and perfect gift not only *“cometh down from the Father of lights”* (James 1:17), but is used for His glory, and the implementation of His eternal purpose.

### THE SECOND YEAR

*“And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar . . .”* For some, this text has introduced some difficulties. This is owing to the time frame that is mentioned. Some explanation is in order.

Jeremiah mentions that the word of the Lord came to him in the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign: *“The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in **the fourth year** of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was **the first year** of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon”* (Jer 25:1). Daniel informs us that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim’s reign over

Judah: *“In **the third year** of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it”* (Dan 1:1). It was at that time that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken captive (Dan 1:6).

Our text follows a three year period of training in which the four children of Judah were being prepared to stand in the king’s court. If we follow Jeremiah’s statement, Nebuchadnezzar would now be in the fourth year of his

second year he reigned alone, following the death of his father. Jahn’s History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, p. 134

- ▣ Some choose to believe there is an error in the text, and that Daniel misstated the case – like a typographical error. EWALD Whatever problems are seemingly solved by this view, are neutralized by the reproach it casts upon the Word of God.
- ▣ Josephus dated the reign of Nebuchadnezzar from his conquest of

**WE WILL ALSO SEE HOW THE LORD WILL VAULT DANIEL INTO PROMINENCE, SO THAT HIS WORD IS HEARD MORE WIDELY. HAVING ALREADY CONFERRED UNUSUAL WISDOM UPON DANIEL, AND GIVEN HIM THE ABILITY TO INTERPRET ALL VISIONS AND DREAMS, THE USE OF THOSE GIFTS WILL NOW BE SHOWN.**

reign instead of the *“second.”* If we take *“the second year”* from the standpoint of the capture of the four young men, the second chapter records an event that took place before the end of the three year training of the captive boys. Because some have considered this to be such a monumental problem, certain professed scholars have doubted the authenticity of the book of Daniel. For that reason, I want to devote a few cursory remarks to this academic dilemma.

There are several possible solutions to this difficulty. I do want to emphasize that these are all academic, or pedantic, in nature. Under no circumstances are they to be allowed to cast a shadow of doubt upon the Scriptures.

- ▣ According to history, the first period of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign was one with his father Nabopolassar. Viewed from this perspective, *“the second year”* of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign refers to the

Egypt, at which point he began to reign over the world. ANTIQUITIES 10:10.3

- ▣ One commentator dates the years according to the time of the destruction of the Temple. RASHI
- ▣ Another suggested solution is that *“the second year”* is from the time the boys stood before Nebuchadnezzar to be examined. SUGGESTED IN PULPIT COMMENTARY
- ▣ Yet another suggestion is that this text refers to the time that Daniel and his colleagues stood before the king for examination. WIESLER
- ▣ Still another view is founded upon the historical observation that the first year of the reign of a Babylonian king began with the year following the commencement of that reign. That would make *“the second year”* the *“third year”* of the boy’s training. The difficulty with this, and the previous

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two views, is that they do not harmonize with the extreme anger of Nebuchadnezzar at this time (vs 5,8-9,12).

- ▶ **I will introduce another view, toward which I am inclined.** I am not aware of this view being introduced by any one else, although I have no doubts others have considered it. First, it should be apparent from the last verse of the first chapter that everything is not being recorded in strict chronological order. A summation of Daniel's influence is thus said to extend without interruption *"unto the first year of king Cyrus."* The second

*"minister questions"* (1 Tim 1:4). We are even exhorted to *"withdraw"* from those who have an unhealthy interest in controversial matters, knowing they bring corruption to both heart and mind (1 Tim 6:14). *"Unlearned questions"* are also to be avoided (2 Tim 2:23).

It is important to note the effect of such academic approaches to Scripture upon your spirit. The mere presentation of the various views I have related has an impact upon the believer – and it is not a favorable one. It tends to neutralize the Word itself, opening the door for doubt, or even despising the Word of the Lord.

### The Best Approach

## IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE THAT THESE DREAMS EXTENDED OVER A LENGTHY PERIOD, DURING WHICH REPEATED EFFORTS WERE MADE BY THE KING TO OBTAIN KNOWLEDGE OF THEM

chapter may very well begin with a summary reaching the other way – toward the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. We learn from our text that many *"dreams"* are involved, and not a single one. **It is therefore possible that these dreams extended over a lengthy period, during which repeated efforts were made by the king to obtain knowledge of them.** Thus, the text may very well be describing a rather lengthy process during which the impotence of worldly wisdom was amply demonstrated.

### The Effects of Questioning

My purpose for this brief diversion is not to suggest a flawless solution, although I am satisfied such a solution can be found. Rather, it is to confirm the limited value of such an approach to the Word of the Living God. Most solemnly, we are warned to avoid approaches that

The best approach to Scripture is that of believing. The view should be taken that is less complicated, and allows for *"every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* to stand (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4). Thus, there is a sense in which Nebuchadnezzar's dreams began in the second year of his reign. There is no need to correlate this with every reference to his reign, and that is not the intent of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, and without being contentious, I choose the latter suggestion to be the most plausible: namely, that the king's dreams began well before he was aware of the wisdom of Daniel.

### TROUBLING DREAMS

*" . . . Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams . . . "* Other versions read, *"Nebuchadnezzar had dreams,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"Nebuchadnezzar dreamed such dreams,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> and *"Nebuchadnezzar had a series of dreams."* <sup>NJB</sup>

Some versions refer to a **single dream**. *"Nebuchadnezzar had a dream,"* <sup>DOUAY</sup> *"Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream,"* <sup>Septuagint</sup> *"King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream,"* <sup>NAB</sup> and *"Nebuchadnezzar had a dream."* <sup>NLT</sup>

There is no contradiction in these expressions. **The idea is that he had the same dream multiple times.** We know that a single dream is involved because of Nebuchadnezzar's later reference to *"the dream which I have seen"* (2:26), and Daniel's interpretation of *"thy dream"* (2:28). Evidently, this extended over a considerable period of time.

### God Speaks to Heathen in Dreams

There are numerous instances in Scripture of God speaking to heathen people in dreams. While men may choose to speculate in this area, it is enough to note this is the case, and humbly receive that manner of Divine involvement in the affairs of men. We must not allow our theology to become so rigid and lifeless that it makes no provision for the judgments of God being *"unsearchable,"* and His ways *"past finding out"* (Rom 11:33).

- ▶ God came to **Abimelech**, king of Gerar, in a dream by night (Gen 20:3).
- ▶ God came to **Laban** the Syrian in a dream by night (Gen 31:24).
- ▶ God gives a **Midianite** a dream that revealed they would be overcome by Gideon (Judges 7:13).
- ▶ **Pharaoh's butler** dreamed of a vine with three branches that budded and brought forth rich grapes which he pressed into Pharaoh's cup (Gen 40:5,8-11).
- ▶ **Pharaoh's baker** dreamed of three baskets of white bread which he carried upon his head, and from which the birds ate (Gen 40:5,16-17).
- ▶ **Pharaoh** dreamed of seven fat cows that were eat up by seven lean ones (Gen 41:1-4).
- ▶ **Pharaoh** dreamed of seven plump ears of grain that appeared on a stalk,

only to be swallowed by seven thin ears of grain (Gen 41: 5-7).

- ▣ **The wise men** from the East, who came to see Jesus (Matt 2:12).
- ▣ **Pilate's wife** has a dream about Jesus (Matt 27:19).

### God Speaks to Believers in Dreams

One of the marks of the New Covenant, declared by Peter on Pentecost, was *"your old men shall dream dreams"* (Acts 2:17).

While no man can systematize these events, or plot a pattern of Divine involvements with men through dreams, this is one of the manners in which God has worked among men – heathen men. There are, of course, multiple instances of God giving dreams to His covenanted people (Jacob (Gen 28:12; 31:10-13; 46:2), Joseph (Gen 37:5-10), Solomon (1 Kings 3:5), Joseph, husband of Mary (Matt 1:20; 2:12,19,22).

Notwithstanding, there are precious few such dreams recorded in Scripture. **In my judgment, the fewness of recorded dreams is designed to neutralize the human propensity to involvements with God that do not involve understanding.** There is not enough information concerning *"dreams"* in Scripture to formulate a theology concerning them. There is also not enough said about them to promote trust in them, or move men to expect God to direct them through dreams.

### Lessons to Be Learned

- ▣ **The fact that God has spoken to the heathen through dreams confirms they are not the highest form of Divine communication.** This is not intended to deny their reality, or move men to despise them. **It is to say that they do not bring any form of spiritual superiority to the individual.** God distinguished Moses from others by NOT speaking to him in dreams and visions (Num 12:6-8). Through Jeremiah, God likened dreams to *"chaff,"* when compared with His Word (Jer 23:28). These facts should keep us from an inordinate desire for dreams.

- ▣ **God does have access to the minds of men while they are in a subconscious state.** He can gain a person's attention during the night hours, when one is not ruled by rationality.

- ▣ Here is another aspect of the Lord's control over our enemies, and how He works everything together for our

king, but the implications of the dream, which he could not remember, much less explain. It appears that he sensed this was the dealing of God, and that it pertained to his kingdom, being of great importance.

The language of the King James Version is very precise and Accurate: *"his sleep brake from him."* Other versions say his sleep *"left him."* <sup>NKJV/NASB</sup> It is as though his spirit was so agitated sleep ran

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**IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT TO BE AGITATED AND DISTRESSED OVER THINGS THAT ARE NOT PROCESSED BY RATIONALITY OR LOGIC. IT IS MARVELOUS TO CONSIDER HOW THE LORD WORKS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUCH COMPLEXITY, FULFILLING HIS WILL, AND BRINGING BENEFIT TO HIS PEOPLE.**

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good. When we are tempted to despair because of those who oppose us, we can recall how God worked with men like Abimelech, Laban, Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar – in dreams.

### The Troubled Human Spirit

*" . . . wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him."* Other versions read, *"and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him."* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"his mind was troubled and he could not sleep,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"a dream that disturbed him so much that he couldn't sleep,"* <sup>NLT</sup> and *"a dream which left his spirit no rest and robbed him of his sleep."* <sup>NAB</sup>

The dream Nebuchadnezzar repeatedly experienced was very troubling to his spirit. Even though the NIV reads *"his mind was troubled,"* this is not a proper view. The agitation went deeper than the mind, for the king could not even remember the dream, much less ponder various nuances of its meaning (2:5).

The word *"troubled"* literally means to strike, to beat, or to pound. It speaks of severe inner agitation, upheaval, and turmoil. It was not a particular rational thought that so troubled the

from the king, for sleep cannot cohabit with turmoil and upheaval of spirit. **The dream pounded sleep out of him, so to speak.**

In all of this, we must not forget that God is getting Nebuchadnezzar's attention. He uses a most unconventional, but highly effective, means to do so – a dream that could neither be remembered nor interpreted. The king experienced much the same thing as Pilate's wife, who seemed to have a bit more understanding of her dream. She said to her husband, *"for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him (Jesus)"* (Matt 27:19).

**It is possible for the human spirit to be agitated and distressed over things that are not processed by rationality or logic.** Thus it is written, *"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding"* (Job 32:6). It is marvelous to consider how the Lord works within the framework of such complexity, fulfilling His will, and bringing benefit to His people.

### SOMETHING ELSE TO CONSIDER

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Something else to consider is the time at which these troublesome dreams came upon Nebuchadnezzar. It was when he was at the zenith of his power. According to Divine mandate, “*all nations*” served him, including even the “*beasts of the field*” (Jer 27:6). God gave the mighty nation of Egypt to him as wages (Ezek 29:19-20). He had sacked Jerusalem, “*the city of God*,” and carried the choicest of Judah away captive. His nation was mighty, and its glory unexcelled among the kingdoms of the world.

**This mighty king lost no sleep over nations that would not submit to him.** When Jehoiakim, king of Judah, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king came upon Judah and “*slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age*” (2

Chron 36:13-17). He subdued nations conspiring against him, including Edom, Moab, Tyre, Sidon, and Ammon. He also smote the Arabs of Kedar, and the kingdoms of Hazor (Jer 49:28-29). This king seemed invincible.

**Yet, he was reduced to a troubled and sleepless man by dreams!** Men ought to learn from Nebuchadnezzar of the frailty of a human spirit that is not on fellowship with the Living God. Daniel could sit calmly among lions (Dan 6:22-23), and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could walk about in a fiery furnace heated “*seven times more than it was usually heated*” (Dan 3:19-25). Peter could sleep between two soldiers, with no reason to believe he would not be beheaded the next day (Acts 12:6), and Paul could learn how to suffer need as well as how to abound, all the while possessing peace and confidence

(Phil 4:12). **But Nebuchadnezzar could not contend with dreams that came to him from God.**

**We learn from this that earthly prosperity cannot bring peace to the troubled heart. A position of high rank cannot do this either.** As the Scripture affirms, “*There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked*” (Isa 48:22; 57:21). Yet, there come times when a soul will give all that it has for some peace of mind. What a blessed affirmation of Divine power is given to the sons of men. “*When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?*” (Job 34:29). In Nebuchadnezzar’s case, the Lord did not give him quietness, and thus his life was turned on end because of dreams. The knowledge of these things would revolutionize the lives of many, bring great hope to those who trust in God.

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## THE EXPERTS ARE CALLED

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**“*Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king***

and sleep fled from him, he determined to consult with his advisors. His first recourse was not to the Lord. Nor, indeed, was it to the “*four children of Judah.*” We

in which God will unveil the impotence of worldly wisdom in the arena of comprehending Divine intent. We will learn later that the dream in question came from God Himself: “*the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter*” (2:45b). The interpretation of the dream will not be a Divine adaption of truth to a dream generated apart from Himself. By inspiration, Daniel is **not** applying heavenly parallels to a fleshly imagination or circumstance. The dream came from God. It was a critical revelation of something God was going to do in the world. It was not given to a Jew – not even to a prophet. Instead, God revealed it to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The difficulty is that the king cannot even remember the dream, much less dig out its meaning.

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**THE DREAM CAME FROM GOD. IT WAS A CRITICAL REVELATION OF SOMETHING GOD WAS GOING TO DO IN THE WORLD. IT WAS NOT GIVEN TO A JEW – NOT EVEN TO A PROPHET. INSTEAD, GOD REVEALED IT TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON.**

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***his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.***<sup>3</sup> ***And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.*** We do not know how long these dreams continued, or the duration of Nebuchadnezzar’s troubled spirit and sleepless nights. As is the manner of the Holy Spirit, He provides only such details as lend themselves to the consideration of God and His purposes. After the king’s spirit had been agitated for some time,

should not be surprised, therefore, when his own efforts to understand the dream are thoroughly frustrated.

**All of these circumstances are not intended to be the fullest and most precise view of the situation. They are but a framework in which the Lord Himself is working, fulfilling His immutable counsel.**

We have before us a circumstance

All of this being true, we have a situation much like that of Moses and the plagues of Egypt. Those plagues were nothing less than judgments “*against all the gods of Egypt*” (Ex 12:12). They revealed the Lord truly is “*God of gods*” (Deut 10:17). The fact will be emphasized in Babylon, as it was when the children of

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh cried out, “*The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knoweth*” (Josh 22:22).

**This Divine judgment will not only be against the gods of Babylon, but specifically against the accumulated wisdom of Babylon.**

#### THE BEST THE WORLD HAS

“Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams.” **The king calls for the recognized Babylonian experts in the appropriation of wisdom and knowledge.** These men were among Nebuchadnezzar’s counselors, and were often employed to assist him in critical decisions.

#### Magicians

Most versions read “*magicians.*” Some alternate translations read “*wonder-workers,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*scribes,*”<sup>YLT</sup> and “*enchanters.*”<sup>Septuagint</sup> In this text, the word “*magicians*” is not to be understood in the ordinary sense. The accent of the word is on wisdom. These were “men eminent in learning and science.”<sup>McClintock & Strong</sup> Their expertise was not traced to academics or the study of books, but to supernatural acquisition. Thus, the king called for them because he sensed his dream was itself supernatural. At this point, the validity of the “*magicians*” knowledge is not the point.

In Scripture, this classification of wise men is repeatedly associated with Egypt (6 times) and Babylon (7 times).

#### In Egypt

In Joseph’s day, the Pharaoh called for the Egyptian “*magicians*” (same word) to interpret his dream of the seven fat and seven lean ears of corn (Gen 41:24). When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, he confronted Egyptian magicians. With “*their enchantments,*” they turned their rods into serpents (Ex 7:11). They also turned water into blood (Ex 7:22), and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt (Ex 8:7). They were not able to bring up lice, or duplicate any other of the ten plagues (Ex 8:18). They recognized that what Moses and Aaron were doing was “*the finger of God*” (Ex 8:19). During the plague of boils, the Egyptian

“*magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians*” (Ex 9:11).

Nothing in Scripture suggests what these men did was not real, or that it was accomplished by slight of hand, or some other trick.

#### In Babylon

The first reference to the Babylonian “*magicians*” is found in the first chapter of Daniel (1:20). There, “*in all matters or wisdom and understanding,*” the four children of

understanding proved vastly inferior to that of the Hebrew children.

Through Isaiah, the Lord challenged those who relied on heavenly bodies to appropriate knowledge. “*Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee*” (Isa 47:13).

These men are only mentioned in Daniel, and are related to the Babylonian pool of wisdom. They are called in to

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## THIS DIVINE JUDGMENT WILL NOT ONLY BE AGAINST THE GODS OF BABYLON, BUT SPECIFICALLY AGAINST THE ACCUMULATED WISDOM OF BABYLON.

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Judah proved “*ten times better*” than these “*magicians.*” They are also mentioned in association with the dream introduced in this chapter (2:2,10,27). They also were summoned to assist Nebuchadnezzar to interpret his dream of a great tree that was cut down (4:7-9). King Belshazzar was told that Nebuchadnezzar had made Daniel “*master of the magicians*” (5:11).

Once again, nothing in Scripture suggests the Babylonian “*magicians*” were merely experts in illusion and conjuring tricks.

#### Astrologers

Other versions read “*conjurers,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*enchanters,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*the wise men,*”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “*the users of secret arts,*”<sup>BBE</sup> and “*soothsayers.*”<sup>NJB</sup> These men were users of horoscopes, and professed to divine future events by the appearance of the stars. This was a common form of knowledge in the Eastern world. We were also first introduced to these “*astrologers*” when Nebuchadnezzar examined Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (1:20). At that time, their wisdom and

assist in interpreting this dream (2:2,10,27). They were also consulted when Nebuchadnezzar had the dream of a tree that was cut down (4:7). Belshazzar also summoned them to interpret the handwriting on the wall (5:7,11,15).

Once again, nothing in Scripture declares astrologers were mere pretenders. Although some element of pretension may have been found among them, the activity itself appears to have issued from the realm of “*the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Eph 6:12).

#### Sorcerers

Most all versions read “*sorcerers.*” Additional renderings include “*magicians,*”<sup>DOUAY</sup> and “*those who made use of evil powers.*”<sup>BBE</sup> Sorcery is associated with divination, a Satanic art in which the knowledge of the future and secret things is acquired.

The word used here is found six times in Scripture. Moses confronted “*sorcerers*” in Egypt, who duplicated a few of the plagues (Ex 7:11). A “*witch,*” or

“sorceress,”<sup>NKJV</sup> was condemned to death by the Law (Ex 22:16). A “sorcerer”<sup>NKJV</sup> was not to be found among the children of Israel (Deut 18:10). King Manasseh consulted with sorcerers (2 Chron 33:6). Malachi prophesied of God coming against sorcerers in judgment (Mal 3:5).

### The Chaldeans

All versions translate the word “Chaldeans,” with the exception of the NIV, NIB, and NLT, which use the word “astrologers.” The “Chaldeans” refers to professional experts in Chaldean wisdom. Their understanding was associated with the idolatry prevalent in Babylonia, in which light and the heavenly bodies were considered a source of wisdom and

speak most precisely concerning Paul and company (Acts 16:16-17), why should it be thought strange that such phenomenon could occur elsewhere?

### God’s Condemnation

The fact that God condemns unlawful sources of knowledge suggests they are very real, not that they are pretentious and spurious (Ex 22:18; Lev 19:26-31; 20:6,27; Deut 13:1-5; 18:9-14; 1 Sam 15:23; 1 Chron 10:13; 2 Chron 33:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4; Mal 3:5; Gal 5:20).

### We Wrestle Against Very Real Powers

Those in Christ are said to engage in aggressive warfare “against

### Satanic Power Is Real

We must not allow religious sophists to persuade us Satanic power is only a pretension! Ponder the power that Satan employed against Job.

- Raised up the Sabeans to take Job’s oxen and asses and kill all of the servants caring for them but one (Job 1:14-15).
- Caused fire to fall from heaven, burning up Job’s sheep, and all of the servants watching them, except one (1:16).
- Moved the Chaldeans to come in three bands against Job, taking away all of his camels, and killing all but one of the servants watching them (1:17).
- Brought a great wind from the wilderness that smote the house in which his sons and daughters were, killing them all (1:17-18).
- Smote Job with sore boils from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet (2:7).

Is there anyone that would affirm all of these were mere illusions?

There are other instances of Satanic power that are identified by the Holy Spirit.

- Two men from the country of the Gergesenes, who became exceeding fierce because of demons (Matt 8:28).
- A man made dumb, or speechless, by demons (Matt 9:32-33).
- A man made deaf and dumb by a demon (Matt 12:22).
- A young girl grievously vexed by a demon (Matt 15:22).
- A son made a lunatic by a demon, who also often threw the young boy into fire and water (Matt 17:15).
- A woman Satan bound for eighteen years with a spirit of infirmity, so that she was bowed together, and could not raise up (Luke 13:11-16).
- When entering a herd of swine, demons drove them over a cliff into the sea, where they drowned (Matt 8:32).
- There are demons who promote doctrines and spirits that seduce souls (1 Tim 4:1).

Who would dare to suggest these were mere misrepresentations? If these

## NOWHERE IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE ARE ANGELS EVER REPRESENTED AS BEING CHALLENGED OR HINDERED BY MEN. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, HIGHER FORMS OF WICKED INTELLIGENCE AND POWER THAT CAN RESTRAIN EVEN MIGHTY ANGELS.

knowledge. These were the elite among the wise men. They are mentioned in relation to this dream (2:2,5,10). From among this number certain suggested Nebuchadnezzar set up a great image, demanding that all men worship it (3:8). These also were consulted concerning the king’s dream of a tree that was cut down (4:7). Belshazzar called for them when the hand appeared writing on the wall (5:7,11).

### WAS THIS PRETENTIOUS KNOWLEDGE?

These consultants were respected and influential in the Babylonian empire. It should be obvious they did not have a track, record of failure and disappointment. **If that was the case, God would receive no glory for comparing the wisdom that came from Him with theirs.** I understand some respected Christian thinkers feel the knowledge of these men was wholly spurious. In my judgment, this view cannot be justified. If the woman from Philippi, with a spirit of divination, could

*principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Eph 6:12). Let no one question the reality of these wicked personalities, or their influence among men. They traffic in knowledge, through which they influence simple souls. There are thoughts fostered by them that cannot be overthrown with human logic, philosophy, and earthly arguments. These bastions of thought can only be cast down by weapons that are given to us by God (2 Cor 10:3-5).

### Powers That Hinder Angels

Nowhere in all of Scripture are angels ever represented as being challenged or hindered by men. There are, however, higher forms of wicked intelligence and power that can restrain even mighty angels. Later in Daniel we will read of an evil principality that successfully withstood a holy angel for twenty-one days (Dan 10:13). Let no one question the reality of these powers, or imagine they only generate delusions and illusions.

things were not real, they would not have required the miraculous intervention of the Lord.

### Knowledge in the Demonic World

Not only is the dark world associated with external phenomenon, it is also related to knowledge.

- One of the primary areas of which we are told is that of doctrines, or teachings, that are actually promoted by the demonic world (1 Tim 4:1).
- When Jesus confronted a man with an “unclean spirit” in a local synagogue he said, “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24).
- The demon possessing the Gadarene cried out, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not” (Mark 5:7).
- The demon possessing the two men of the Gergesenes said to Jesus, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matt 8:29).
- The woman with a spirit of divination said of Paul and company, “These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17).
- An “evil spirit” who was confronted by some pretending exorcists confessed “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” (Acts 19:15).
- There is a wisdom that is “devilish,” or “demonic”<sup>NKJV</sup> (James 3:15).
- Satan’s first assault of humanity was through the intellect (Gen 3:1-5).
- Satan can corrupt men’s mind through subtlety (2 Cor 11:2).
- Satan has “false apostles,” who “transform themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Cor 11:13).

**Make no mistake about this, Satan and his hosts traffic in knowledge.** He has the power to give men wisdom – wisdom that is not lawful, and is unproductive, but wisdom nevertheless.

### King Nebuchadnezzar

Nebuchadnezzar was no ordinary king. His military exploits were

extraordinary. His architecture was magnificent, remaining until this day. Why would one imagine he would be duped by men who merely invented explanations? I find it difficult to believe he would have surrounded himself with obvious pretenders, and those who had no access to knowledge outside of nature.

I have taken this time to briefly comment on these matters because of the tendency of some to dismiss the Babylonian wise men as mere sophists. **These men had knowledge, but it was not legitimate. It was above the**

**rise above itself.** It makes little difference how frequently the workings of the Lord are seen, or how often its wisdom is frustrated. **The flesh always prefers its own.** This is seen in Israel’s gravitation to unbelief, even after God worked mightily among them by deliverance, provision, and strength. After all God had done for and through them, He lamented over the whole nation. “I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts” (Isa 65:2). After three years of going about and doing good, healing all

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**GOD WILL REVEAL THE INFERIORITY OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE – NOT BY SHOWING THAT IT WAS SPURIOUS, BUT THAT THERE WERE MATTERS IT COULD NOT DECIPHER. THAT KIND OF TEST WOULD BE WHOLLY WITHOUT PURPOSE IF THESE MEN HAD NO ACCESS TO GENUINE, YET UNLAWFUL AND LIMITED, KNOWLEDGE.**

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**norm, yet had boundaries beyond which it could not go.**

God will reveal the inferiority of their knowledge – not by showing that it was spurious, but that there were matters it could not decipher. That kind of test would be wholly without purpose if these men had no access to genuine, yet unlawful and limited, knowledge.

### DANIEL NOT CALLED AT FIRST

It ought to be noted that Nebuchadnezzar did NOT call Daniel at the first. Prior to this, he had already found Daniel and his friends “ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm,” in “all matters of wisdom and understanding” (1:20). Why, then, not call for them first? Why did the king first seek an answer from the wise men who had already been proved to be inferior?

It is the nature of the flesh to gravitate to flesh. That is why Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). **The fleshly nature (which is all Nebuchadnezzar had) cannot**

who were oppressed by the devil, the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matt 23:37).

Why did such conditions exist? Simply because “flesh” gravitates to “flesh,” returning to old ways, even though they have amply been shown to be inferior, and sometimes even sinful. That is why Nebuchadnezzar resorted to the vastly inferior “magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans.” That is why he forgot Daniel. He had more confidence in Babylonian wise men than Daniel.

That is the external view of the situation. **Behind the scenes, however, the Lord was maneuvering the circumstances in order to bring Daniel into the limelight.**

### SO THEY CAME

“So they came and stood before

the king.” Obediently, and without delay, the wise men of the empire assembled before the king. They had no reason to think this was going to be different than other times when they came to consult him. However, they were being assembled like the prophets of Baal before Elijah. The futility of their wisdom to open the revelations of God would be made known in a most decisive manner.

#### THE FACTS ARE PRESENTED

“And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.” Other versions read, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream,”<sup>NKJV</sup> and “I have had such a dream that my spirit is troubled by the desire to understand it.”<sup>NRSV</sup> Nebuchadnezzar made known everything he knew. He

dreamed a dream, and was agitated to know what it meant. Quantitatively, that was not much. In reality, however, it was the full storehouse of his knowledge on the matter.

Those are the facts in the case, and truly wise men should be able to take it from there. Drawing upon their vast resources, they should be able to answer.

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## THE POVERTY OF WORLDLY WISDOM

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“**Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.**” Do not forget what is being made known in this incident. It is something for all succeeding generations to learn. **The wisdom that does NOT come from God cannot possibly**

(Isa 23:13; Isa 43:14; 47:1; 48:14; Jer 21:4; Dan 1:4; Hab 1:4). However, in this text, it is used for a select number of the Chaldeans, who were among the soothsayers and wise men of the country (Dan 2:2,4,5,10; 4:7; 5:7,11,30).

This same approach is taken to the term “Jews.” From one point of view, it

Jeremiah. “Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a **nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say**” (Jer 5:15).

In speaking to the king in the native language, every possible advantage is being given to the Babylonian wise men. The Lord will leave no stone unturned in His demonstration of the impotence of the world’s wisdom.

#### LIVE FOREVER

“O king, live for ever . . .” This is a general saying that expressed a desire for the king to live a long, prosperous, and satisfying life. It was also one of high respect for those to whom honor was due. Thus Bathsheba said to David, “Let my lord king David live for ever” (1 Kgs 1:31). Nehemiah said to king Artaxerxes, “Let the king live for ever” (Neh 2:3). Belshazzar’s queen said to him, “O king, live for ever” (Dan 5:10). Daniel addressed Darius the Mede with this words, “O king, live for ever” (Dan 6:21).

#### TELL US! TELL US!

“. . . tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” Here is the first eruption of the impotence of worldly wisdom. Although some of these men had contact with the nether world of evil spirits, they required assistance from the king. Ignoring his demand that they tell him the dream, they send the matter back to him, asking that he provide them with some details, after which they will gladly give him the meaning.

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## THE WISDOM THAT DOES NOT COME FROM GOD CANNOT POSSIBLY DECIPHER MESSAGES THAT COME FROM HIM. THIS IS TRUE OF DREAMS, WHICH ARE THE LOWEST LEVEL OF REVELATION, AND ARE AS “CHAFF” WHEN COMPARED WITH A WORD FROM GOD

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decipher messages that come from Him. This is true of dreams, which are the lowest level of revelation, and are as “chaff” when compared with a word from God (Jer 23:28). The relevance of this knowledge becomes apparent when one considers the academic slant of nearly all contemporary Bible teaching. Too, the church has now wed itself to the world in many areas, including (1) understanding the human mind, (2) an accent on original language, (3) motivational techniques, (4) finances, etc.

#### THE CHALDEANS

The term “Chaldeans” is applied to the entire nation of the Babylonians

represents all of the people (2 Chron 32:16; Esth 3:6; Jer 40:12; Matt 2:2; John 2:13; 4:22). The same word is also used of a select number of the nation (John 19:31,38; Acts 9:22,23; 17:5; 23:30; 2 Cor 11:24).

#### IN THE SYRIACK

“Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack.” Other versions say they spoke in “Aramaic.”<sup>NKJS/NASB/NIV</sup> The word “Syriack” means “Syrian tongue.” The word “Aramaic” signifies the language of the Syrians itself. In other words, they spoke to him in the native language of Babylon. This was a strange language to the Jews, fulfilling the prophecy of

## THE DEMAND AND ITS INCENTIVES

**“<sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.<sup>6</sup> But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.”** The Spirit will now provide details that will confirm every possible opportunity will be given for earthly wisdom to prove itself. God does not make diviners “mad,” turn wise men “backward,” or make their knowledge “foolish” (Isa 44:25) without giving them due opportunity to prove themselves.

The contest that is being set up is much like that of Elijah with the prophets of Baal. When Israel and the prophets of Baal gathered on mount Carmel, the fiery prophet Elijah would give ample opportunity for the false prophets to prove the validity of their role. Both Baal’s prophets and Elijah would deal with the same thing – fire consuming their sacrifice. Elijah allowed these prophets to call upon their God from morning until evening. If they were really prophets, and their god was real, that was sufficient time for those things to be confirmed.

What we have in the text before us is the provision of adequate time for the Babylonian wise men to garner help from every resource available to them. This is a Divine provision – a context in which the Lord will work for His own glory.

### REMEMBERED, YET GONE

“The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me . . .” Here is the first challenge to the wise men of Babylon. If they have access to supernatural knowledge (and evidence is that they did), here is an area where it is surely needed. Nebuchadnezzar cannot recall his dream. Thus, the wise men, through some revelation, or by studying the stars, or through some activity of sorcery, must uncover the dream itself.

This circumstance does **not** suggest there is no such thing as supernatural knowledge that is evil – such as the woman with the spirit of divination precisely identifying Paul, or the demons in the Gadarene demoniac being able to identify Jesus, and knowing they were destined for torment. What is DOES mean, is that **Satanic forces cannot probe the purposes of God. They cannot discover what God has determined, or uncover a revelation given by God, but forgotten by men.** This will be developed later.

*cut in bits and your houses made waste.”*  
<sup>BEB</sup>This threat is so arresting that it nearly stands alone in Scripture. Once, in the Psalms, God speaks similarly to those who dare to forget Him. “Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver” (Psa 50:22). He also told the house of Judah He would be like a wild lion, tearing them and leaving them (Hos 5:14; 13:8). This is what Samuel did to Agag, hewing him in pieces before the Lord (1 Sam 15:33). David did the same with the Ammonites, cutting them with saws and axes (1 Chron 20:3).

## SATANIC FORCES CANNOT PROBE THE PURPOSES OF GOD. THEY CANNOT DISCOVER WHAT GOD HAS DETERMINED, OR UNCOVER A REVELATION GIVEN BY GOD, BUT FORGOTTEN BY MEN.

### THE DREAM AND THE INTERPRETATION

“ . . . if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof . . . ” The requirements for the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans are clear. There is no ambiguity. These men must tell Nebuchadnezzar what he has dreamed, then provide its meaning.

### STRONG INCENTIVES

“ . . . ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.<sup>6</sup> But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor . . . ” If men require an incentive, the need is certainly met in Nebuchadnezzar’s commitment. The incentive has both a negative and positive side, and both are equally strong.

**First, the threat.** It is a very real one, and the men will sense immediately that it is to be taken seriously. “You will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be made a rubbish heap,”<sup>NASB</sup> “you will be

The saints do well to give thanks for living in “the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2), and being “under grace” instead of Law Rom 6:14-15)!

**Second, the benefit.** “But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor.” Here are two things attractive to the flesh – gifts and great honor. Many men have lost their own souls to obtain these things. Keep in mind, this was the king of the most glorious empire of the world that was speaking. When such an one as Nebuchadnezzar gives and honor, they will of great significance. Thus the king has provided the wise men of his empire with reason enough to come up with what he demands.

### THE DEMAND STANDS

“ . . . therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.” The king does not back down. If the wise men possess the wisdom and the powers they affirm, they will be able to satisfy his demands. He is asking them to do only what they have alleged they can do.

## TESTING THE CLAIMS OF THE WORLDLY WISE

*“<sup>7</sup> They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it.<sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.<sup>9</sup> But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye*

*“They answered a second time,”<sup>NASB</sup> or “Once more they replied.”<sup>NIV</sup>*

### FLESH REASONS

*“Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it . . . ”* Fear could not push intelligent words from their lips! The desire for great reward and honor could not provoke them to speak wisely, or even to couch their request in different words. It is true there are occasions when *“A soft answer turneth away wrath”* (Prov 15:1). However, that tactic will not

### STALLING FOR TIME

*“ . . . I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.”* The king senses the men are stalling for time – not because they imagine they can receive an answer, but because they hope he will be able to remember the dream. Perhaps they also thought themselves capable of coming up with a witty answer that would assuage the king. **Such is not possible, however, because the mighty God is drying up the well of their wisdom, proving it to be filled with profitless dust and vanity.** The God of heaven is pushing their backs to the wall, making the king ready for the introduction of Daniel.

These men wanted to retain their reputation for knowledge, all the while casting the credit for deficiency upon the king, instead of themselves and their diabolical sources of knowledge.

**It is still true that certain people have a reputation for being wise, even though they produce no real proof of it.**

**WE SEE HERE THE EFFECTS OF THE DEVIL UPON THE MINDS OF MEN. EVEN THOUGH HIS ARTIFICES OBVIOUSLY CANNOT PRODUCE WHAT IS REALLY REQUIRED, HE BLINDS MEN INTO THINKING AT LEAST SOME OF THE ANSWERS CAN COME FROM HIM.**

### THERE IS BUT ONE DECREE

*“But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you.”* Other versions read, *“If you do not tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you,”<sup>NIV</sup>* and *“if you do not tell me the dream, there is but one verdict for you.”<sup>NRSV</sup>* The king continues to pile reason upon reason why they ought to employ their powers of wisdom.

- ☐ If they do not tell him the dream and interpret it, they will be cut in pieces.
- ☐ If they fail in their assignment, their houses will be made a dung hill, burned down to the ground.
- ☐ If they show him his dream, and interpret it, he will personally give them great gifts and rewards.
- ☐ If they fulfill their assignment, he will personally give them great honor.
- ☐ He has charged them with seeking to gain time, thereby urging their utmost sobriety, honesty, and obedience.
- ☐ If they fail to do what he says, there is

*can show me the interpretation thereof.”*

This dialog is important. In it every possible advantage is given to the wise men of Babylon. Like the ten plagues provided an opportunity for Pharaoh to acknowledge the truth, so Nebuchadnezzar’s requirements give an chance for the wise men to acknowledge the deficiency of their wisdom. He resorts to threats, terror, and even rewards, seeking to draw out any genuine wisdom in these men. **However, it is not possible to cause wisdom to surface where it does not exist, or where it has not been granted.**

### THEY ANSWERED AGAIN

There is no originality in the flesh. After they have heard staggering threats of destroying households, and after they have heard of receiving rewards and honor, what will these men say? They simply repeat what they had said before. The reservoir of their wisdom is too shallow, and their knowledge is too limited. Thus,

work here.

We see here the effects of the devil upon the minds of men. **Even though his artifices obviously cannot produce what is really required, he blinds men into thinking at least some of the answers can come from him.** Maybe the arts of the wise men cannot reveal the king’s dream to them, but they will surely be able to tell what it means.

### Some Observations

It should not surprise us that countless numbers of people live with the notion that Christless resources can at least provide some of the answers. Perhaps if someone wise or more knowledgeable can at least give them a few facts, they will be able to take the matter from there – without Christ, without the Spirit, and without the wisdom that comes from above. There are more people who think in this manner than we dare to believe. Such are slaves of Satan, even though they do not know it.

only one alternative, and it will not be good.

The king will not change his demand. He will not alter or remove the sentence if they cannot do what he has demanded. There will be no appeals to a higher court, and no one will be able to deliver them from his hand.

#### **LYING AND CORRUPT WORDS**

“ . . . for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed.” Other versions read, “For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed,”<sup>NASB</sup> and “You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change.”<sup>NIV</sup>

One should not expect a king, particularly Nebuchadnezzar, to be an easily deceived and thoughtless man. He saw through their delaying tactic. I do not understand Nebuchadnezzar to mean these wise men had agreed to purposely deceive the king. Rather, they had agreed among themselves to use this stall tactic if they were faced with something they could not do. This seems plain from Nebuchadnezzar’s additional words, “till the time be changed.” He thus saw them as stalling until the circumstance hopefully was modified. Perhaps the king would remember his dream. Maybe his anger would assuage, and he would be more understanding of their ignorance. It might be that he would repent of such a harsh demand, and simply let the matter go. Things certainly could not get any worse for them. Perhaps they would get better.

The king knows they are not honest in their request. Their words are intended to cover their ignorance, and draw Nebuchadnezzar’s attention away from them and to himself.

**These men were operating by a false worldly principle: “Time is on our side.”** How often have you heard such an expression – as though things naturally tended to get better. This, however, is only a delusion. Time is against those who do not acknowledge the truth – particularly when they do not admit their miserable deficiencies, and turn their backs on the resources that

have brought on that inadequacy.

#### **I WILL KNOW THAT YOU CAN**

“ . . . therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof.” Other versions read, “therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation,”<sup>NASB</sup> and “So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”<sup>NIV</sup>

The idea is that if they can correctly tell what is past, yet cannot be remembered, they will surely be able to

He did not immediately turn to Daniel to exercise the wisdom and knowledge he had already shown. Nor, indeed, did he seek wisdom from the God of the Hebrews. He chose to continue to make every effort to push wisdom out of the mouths of those who obviously were devoid of it.

#### **The Manner of the Flesh**

That is the manner of the flesh. That is precisely why those enslaved to sin continue to wallow in it, whether it is strong drink, drugs, lust, or some other form of fleshly indulgence. There are also

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## **THESE MEN WERE OPERATING BY A FALSE WORLDLY PRINCIPLE: “TIME IS ON OUR SIDE.” HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU HEARD SUCH AN EXPRESSION – AS THOUGH THINGS NATURALLY TENDED TO GET BETTER. THIS, HOWEVER, IS ONLY A DELUSION. TIME IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRUTH**

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tell what is to come. **It is quite true that those who cannot properly perceive the past have no business dabbling in the future.**

Here, then, is the final test for the wise men of Babylon. This is the means by which the king will know they are, in fact, capable of interpreting the dream. If they can tell the king what he has dreamed, they will, in that very deed, prove they are capable of telling him what it meant.

#### **ANOTHER THING TO SEE**

There is something else to see here – another dreadful trait of the flesh. This can be seen in Nebuchadnezzar. Although he had been exposed to the superior wisdom that comes from God, yet he clung tenaciously to the imagination the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, could possibly come up with the answer. It is as though he refused to let the traditions of his fathers go, even though were proving to be woefully deficient. That is the nature of the flesh.

countless multitudes who continue to expect good things from dead churches, and wise theological discourses from those who lack spiritual understanding. The tactic of Nebuchadnezzar is not strange. It remains all about us. Multitudes of people continue attempting to draw water out of broken traditional cisterns that can hold no water (Jer 2:13). They continue to depend upon resources that have failed them, and sit at tables that have not fed them.

Even though there is such a thing as spiritual bread that does not satisfy, yet men continue to buy it, investing their resources in vanity. It is no wonder that the Lord cries out, “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?” (Isa 55:2). For some, it is easy to see the folly of Nebuchadnezzar trying to get answers from men who do not have them. But it is not so easy for them to relate that circumstance to the religious climate of our time. Believers are actually being subjected to vastly inferior wisdom.

## BEYOND HUMAN CAPABILITIES

***“<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king’s matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.<sup>11</sup> And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”*** Now the Chaldeans begin to reason with the king. They have not resorted to reasoning before, but have only made two requests for the king to tell them what he has dreamed. Now we will be confronted with an example of fleshly reasoning – how men think who are not

there was no dream that would prove too challenging for him. However, these men were not aware of Daniel, even though their wisdom and understanding had previously been compared with his, and proved to be ten times less. **Those who do not keep company with the people of God will not be able to recall them in the hour of crisis.**

These men, astute by Babylonish definition, could think no higher than the earth, even though they consorted with spiritual powers. Whatever a person may think of demon power, familiar spirits, divination, necromancy, and the likes, they cannot pull the veil away from anything beyond this world that should be

### THE WORLD OPERATES WITHIN ITS LIMITS

*“ . . . therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.”* Not only were these men limited to the earth, they confined their thinking to their own locale. They spoke as though there were no other sources of wisdom than the Babylonian magicians, astrologers, and Chaldeans. They had the **“We are it”** syndrome, and were unable to break out of it.

### NEW Things Can Happen

Note how they relied upon the past to assess the present and the future. Like Solomon, they reasoned *“there is no new thing under the sun”* (Eccl 1:9). This, however, though true in Solomon’s day is not intended to be a saying for all time – even though countless preachers have so represented it. Lest we forget, it is God who said, *“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert”* (Isa 43:19). Again He declared, *“Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them”* (Isa 42:9). And again, *“for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth”* (Jer 31:22).

## THERE IS A CONSISTENT MARK ON THOSE WHOSE WISDOM DOES NOT COME FROM GOD. THEY DEAL WITH “THE EARTH,” THINGS THAT ARE TEMPORAL AND WILL PASS AWAY.

motivated by faith, but trust in the arm of the flesh. The flesh, or sinful nature, has a certain mind-set, and it always breaks out when pushed to its limit. You will note that the world is the boundary of such reasoning. The flesh is confined to sense and time, and cannot rise above it.

### KNOWN LIMITATIONS

*“There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king’s matter . . .”* Other versions read, *“There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks!”<sup>NIV</sup>* and *“There is no one on earth who can reveal what the king demands!”<sup>NRSV</sup>*

First, **this was NOT the truth**, as will be amply shown later. There was a man *“on the earth”* who *“had understanding in all visions and dreams.”* Because God had given Daniel this ability,

known. Even though demons know of the torment to come (Matt 8:29), they spend no time unveiling it to the sons of men.

**There is a consistent mark on those whose wisdom does not come from God. They deal with “the earth,” things that are temporal and will pass away.** Later, when Daniel stands before Nebuchadnezzar, he will say, *“But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets”* (Dan 2:28). But no such confession is made by these wise men. At this point, their minds are nailed to the earth like Sisera’s head (Judges 4:21), and they cannot rise above it.

**Thus, the wise men confessed the limitations of their own craft.** They did not do so voluntarily, but had to be pressed to do so.

- ☐ Prior to Noah, there had never been a global flood in which *“all flesh died”* (Gen 7:21).
- ☐ Before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, no cities had suffered *“the vengeance of eternal fire”* (Jude 1:7).
- ☐ Prior to Abraham, no barren woman ever had a child, especially by a man whose reproductive powers were *“now dead”* (Rom 4:19).
- ☐ Prior to the tower of Babel body of people had ever had their speech confused (Gen 11:7).
- ☐ Before the birth of Jesus, no virgin had ever conceived and brought forth a child (Matt 1:23).
- ☐ Before Christ’s death, no one had ever destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14), spoiled principalities and powers (Col 2:15), or put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb 9:26).

- ▣ Before the exaltation of Christ, the Holy Spirit had not been given to men as it is now (John 7:39).

All of these things, and more, took place *“on the earth.”*

There is such a thing as *“newness of life”* and *“newness of spirit”* (Rom 6:4; 7:6), a *“new man”* (Col 3:10), a *“new covenant”* (Heb 8:8), and a *“new creation”* (2 Cor 5:17) – and all of them have taken place *“under the sun.”*

Solomon’s view was a partial and low one. His statement is not the standard for the body of Christ. The Chaldean wise men were not correct in limiting the possibilities, or confining their thinking to the earth.

### A TIME TO DEMAND HARD THINGS

*“And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king . . . ”* Other versions read that the matter was *“a difficult thing,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“too difficult,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“is extra ordinary,”*<sup>DARBY</sup> *“a very hard one,”*<sup>BBE</sup> and *“an impossible thing.”*<sup>NLT</sup>

Like many, these men had been coasting on the hill of normality. Nothing had occurred that challenged their faulty reasoning and meager resources. That is the effect of the blight of mediocrity! Nothing is demanded that necessitates one moving out of themselves.

But Nebuchadnezzar will have nothing to do with their reasoning. He demands something that has never been demanded of them before, and they are expected to rise to the occasion. In this case, the Lord was setting the stage for the introduction of Daniel, and a revelation of a kingdom superior to all earthly kingdoms. The matter was *“too difficult”* for them, but not for God. It was *“a rare thing”* for them, but not for the man who walks by faith. It was *“impossible”* for men, but not for God.

### Something to Think About

There remains in the flesh the tendency to recoil at anything difficult or challenging – particularly when it comes to things pertaining to life and godliness. But this tendency must be put down, for it is closer to Babylon than to Jerusalem, and is more related to earth than to

heaven.

- ▣ What do you suppose would have happened if Noah viewed the building of the ark as *“too difficult?”* After all, no one had ever required the building of one before, and no one had engaged in such an endeavor.
- ▣ Had anyone ever been required to walk through the Red Sea on dry ground before Israel was commanded to do so?
- ▣ How would Israel have fared if they had told Joshua no one had ever asked a body of people to walk around the walls of a city before, even expecting them to fall down? Had anything like that ever been asked of anyone?

3:5)

- ▣ *“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might”* (Eph 6:10)
- ▣ *“Seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God”* (Col 3:1).
- ▣ *“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”* (Col 3:2).
- ▣ *“Put on the whole armor of God”* (Eph 6:11).
- ▣ *“Lay hold on eternal life”* (1 Tim 6:12).
- ▣ *“Be not weary in well doing”* (2 Thess 3:13).
- ▣ *“Cast not away your confidence”* (Heb 10:35).

When such things are asked, let no soul respond, *“the thing God asks is too*

**SETTLE IT IN YOUR MIND THAT GOD WILL NOT ALWAYS ASK EASY THINGS OF YOU! IF NEBUCHADNEZZAR ASKED FOR HIS SERVANTS TO DO DIFFICULT THINGS, MUCH MORE WILL GOD ASK HIS SERVANTS TO DO SO! DO NOT DOUBT IT!**

- ▣ Or how about a shepherd boy facing a giant with a sling and a stone? Had such a thing been required of anyone before?
- ▣ Before Ezekiel, had a prophet ever been asked to lay on his side three hundred and ninety days, then turn over and lay on the other side for forty days (Ezek 4:4-6)?
- ▣ How about Isaiah being required to walk naked and barefoot for three years (Isa 20:2-3)?

Settle it in your mind that God will not always ask easy things of you! If Nebuchadnezzar asked for his servants to do difficult things, much more will God ask His servants to do so! Do not doubt it! Ponder some of His requirements.

- ▣ *“Rejoice in the Lord always.”* (Phil 4:4)
- ▣ *“Mortify the deeds of the body”* (Col

difficult!” Rather, seek the resources that come from him. **Get your mind above the earth, and consider that what the Lord demands He gives grace to fulfill.**

### THE “EXCEPT” IS KNOWN

*“ . . . except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”* Now the case of the king’s advisors is greatly complicated. At the first, they confined their thinking to the earth, referring to other men and other kings. But now, they catch a small glimpse of something else. Their knowledge is limited, but they know enough to do something with it if they only will.

There was the matter of Deity. Because of their limited knowledge, they spoke of *“gods.”* Yet, they realized there were resources transcendent to men. Even here, however, they attempt to mingle the

wisdom of the world with this small fragment of knowledge – “*the gods.*” They add, “*and they do not live among men.*”<sup>NIV</sup> That is, they were sure men do not have access to Deity. A real God did not have direct dealings with men. That is what they thought. But they could not possibly have been more wrong.

- ▶ In the beginning, God walked and talked with man (Gen 3:8), thereby making known His desire for man’s fellowship.
- ▶ Enoch “walked with God” (Gen 5:22,24).
- ▶ Noah “walked with God” (Gen 6:9).
- ▶ Abraham was the “friend of God” (James 2:23).

- ▶ David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam 13:14).
- ▶ God “was with” Solomon, and magnified him exceedingly (1 Chron 1:1).
- ▶ God “was with” Asa (2 Chron 15:9).
- ▶ God “was with” Joseph (Acts 7:9).
- ▶ God announces “*I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*” (Isa 57:15).

All of this was BEFORE the Lord Jesus and the “*day of salvation.*” Now the Savior is named “*Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us’*”<sup>NKJV</sup> (Matt

1:23). The Father now “*dwells*” in believers and “*walks*” in them (2 Cor 6:16).

The wise men of Babylon were wrong – 100% wrong. Even though what Nebuchadnezzar asked from them seemed impossible, it was a small thing for the God of heaven and earth! They should have aggressively called for Daniel themselves, taken hold of his skirt, and said, “*We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you*” (Zech 8:23). But they did not, for God’s purpose was to shine the light on His prophet, not them. When men live at a distance from God, they do not do what they should, nor are they strongly inclined to do so.

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## A JUSTIFIED PENALTY

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**“<sup>12</sup> For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.”** Other versions read, “*Because of this the king became indignant and very furious, and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon,*”<sup>NASB</sup> and “*This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.*”<sup>NIV</sup>

There were at least two reasons why the king became furious. First, the men whose business was being wise and understanding could not do what he asked. Second, they said his request was

unreasonable, impossible, and wholly without precedent. He seemed to sense the dream he had was important, yet was wholly frustrated by the shallowness of Babylon’s wise men.

It may appear on the surface that Nebuchadnezzar’s judgment was too harsh. However, he had only required these men to do what they alleged they were capable of doing. Ponder the extent of his judgment. He did not merely order the execution of the men before him, but “*all of the wise in Babylon.*” He now saw their entire order as a lie and a liability. He therefore determined to rid himself of

them all. They had proved to be vain, fundamentally ignorant of critical matters, and prone to blame the king himself for their lack of ability.

You can see that Nebuchadnezzar had no interest in building the careers of his subjects unless they were able to do what they were assigned. He had no place in his court for advisors that could not advise, wise men that had no wisdom, or star gazers that had no essential answers. It would revolutionize both religion and politics were such requirements placed upon people today. Those who occupy positions should be able to fill them.

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## CONCLUSION

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Thus the Lord has again revealed His inscrutable works and masterful maneuvering. Before He unveils Daniel, to whom He will show secrets, He first reveals the need for such a man. He does this with a dream – one of sufficient impact that the king cannot let go of it. What God gives to Nebuchadnezzar is more than earth can know or decipher. **Like everything God gives, His own influence is required to understand and profit from it.**

All of this has been done without

Daniel being present. The way is being prepared for him without him even knowing it. This also is a Divine manner. The Lord can “*make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert*” (Isa 43:19). He can move Babylon’s obstacles out of the way, and provide a circumstance where young Daniel can make known the mind of the Lord.

### **THE LOWEST REVELATION IS TOO HIGH FOR THE FLESH**

There is an important truth to be seen here. The lowest form of Divine

revelation is too high for the flesh. No manner of earthly wisdom can decipher the smallest revelation from God. Dreams are the lowest form of Divine revelation. It is a manner of Divine communication that God can have with the heathen, or those who know Him not. Yet, such communications soared high above all forms of human wisdom and fleshly expertise.

The people of God must come away from all forms of reliance upon, and trust in, the mind of the flesh. There is

altogether too much dependency in the body of Christ on inferior forms of knowledge and understanding. God's people should seek to Him for their understanding (Isa 8:19), not to fallen men and a defiled realm.

**THE CHURCH MUST BE MORE DEMANDING**

It is time for the church to be more demanding of worldly experts! When they seek to hawk their inferior wares among us, we must challenge them to do more than their feeble crafts can do. When the psychiatrists come to us, or invade the thoughts of our children, let them be required to accomplish what God requires! Let them be compelled to enable people to forget the things that are behind, cast out fear, be strong in the Lord, and be bold and courageous. These

are things God can do. They are also things these men cannot do. But if they will company among us and sell their wares, they must be required to do the things God can do!

When the motivators creep into the church, they must be recognized for what they are, and required to accomplish what God desires. Let them move people to seek a city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Let them enable people to crucify the flesh, mortify the tendencies of the flesh, and set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth! These are things God requires. If they are truly motivators, these are things they must do!

When the financial experts push his way into congregations of believers, let

them be required to produce cheerful givers, those who are willing to give all that they have, and even above their means. Let them move people to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven rather than upon earth, where moth and rust corrupts, and thieves break through and steal.

The people of God have no reason to reduce the requirements God has placed upon His people. There is no more justification for tolerating carnality and spiritual deficiency in the church than there was for allowing unwise wise men to be in Nebuchadnezzar's court.

Indeed, there is much to be learned from this Divinely orchestrated incident! We will be the wiser for learning those matters.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/22/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 13-18 of the second chapter. The lesson is titled, **"THE HANDLING OF A LIFE-THREATENING CRISIS."** The wisdom that is from above mingles faith and trust with knowledge. Because of this, it can handle crises, moving the individual to work with God, while trusting wholly in Him. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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*The Wisdom of this World Cannot Open to the Minds and Hearts of Men what God Gives, by Given O. Blakely*

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