

Before we dive into Chapter 2, I want to review a couple of key points from Chapter 1.

When Daniel and his friends came to Babylon, two things occurred:

1. The chief of the eunuchs changed their Hebrew names to Babylonian names
2. Daniel and his friends respectfully declined the king's food and wine so that they would not defile themselves with unkosher food and wine sacrificed/dedicated to idols.

It's interesting that the boys didn't protest the name changes that now became names related to pagan gods.

However, when it came to eating and drinking food/wine, they did resist their captors.

We need to understand that this wasn't a random decision, but rather, a commitment to keep the Law of Moses. And, I also do not believe that they were doing this in a legalistic manner. It's unsure what would have happened if the chief eunuch simply refused Daniel's request.

However, Daniel was willing to take the risk for the sake of his relationship with our God and his! If it was legalism, Daniel might have compromised, looking for excuses, looking for a loop-hole in the Law.

And that's what I want all of us to keep in mind as we read this book. Daniel never met his God yet believed everything he was taught about Him. About His grace and mercy and his righteous judgement; Daniel heard and read about the Almighty God who redeemed and delivered His chosen ones from Egypt and brought them into the Land that He gave them forever. These weren't just stories but revelations of how much God loved them and wanted only the best for them – and certainly this shaped his heart to want to be close to this God who cares, who speaks, who loves, who loves righteousness and hates evil. So, Daniel and his friends bent the knee of their hearts and bowed low at the Presence of the God who is Light and Love! Their faith had its source in the faithfulness of God!

Two other things:

1. **1 Samuel 2:30** Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: 'I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, **and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.**
 - I will treat with contempt those who despise me.
 - ***and those who despise me will be considered insignificant.***
 - the one treating me with contempt shall be disgraced.

Daniel honored the God he knew but couldn't see and the God who kept His eyes on Daniel honored him and his friends.

2. Daniel's friends are always named in the same order:
 - a. Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego.
 - b. Many believe that Daniel was being a bit clever in declaring his belief in the One True God: If you take the "SH" from Shadrach, the "M" from Meshach and the "A" from Abed-Nego, you have a wordplay for the "**Shema**", the most sacred declaration for Jews to utter: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One". The word 'hear' is '**Shema**' in Hebrew!

(Daniel 2:1) Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was *so* troubled that his sleep left him.

The king seemed to have recurring nightmares that troubled him to the point where he could not sleep.

(Daniel 2:2) Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

He called for his advisors:

1. Magicians – the root word of the Hebrew used means engraver or one who writes; this has led some to think of these as scholars; Strong's has its meaning as "a *horoscopist* (as *drawing* magical lines or circles)
2. Astrologers – these men looked to the stars for hidden meaning and so-called truth or wisdom.
3. Sorcerers – who were said to have contact with the spirit world and derived special knowledge from the dead.
4. Chaldeans – some believe these were a special priestly class of Babylonians who could interpret dreams. One researcher says that they used "dream manuals" which were filled with recorded dreams and the events that followed.

(Daniel 2:3) And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

Did he mean that he forgot his dream as we often do upon waking? Probably not. A nightmare would have stayed, so he's more likely asking "so...what does it mean".

The next section of the book is from Daniel 2:4 thru 7:28; This is the only section of the Bible written in Aramaic. This was the language of the Babylonian Empire. It is written in Aramaic because this section of the book deals with God's dealings and revelations to the Gentile nations.

(Daniel 2:4) Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

This is a perfectly reasonable request. How else could they interpret the dreams?

(Daniel 2:5) The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.

Our surly king, obviously sleep-deprived makes an unreasonable demand! Some might even say irrational since it came with a death threat.

(Daniel 2:6) However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

But, also consider the rewards!

(Daniel 2:7) They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.”

Trying to buy time, they ask again for the dream.

(Daniel 2:8) The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: (9) if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

Gee, do you get the feeling that the King doesn't trust these men? Remember, Nebuchadnezzar has only been king for a couple of years; Perhaps he remembers these guys from days with his father whom he succeeded and doesn't trust them at all.

(Daniel 2:10) The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “**There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter**; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean.

They complain that this request is unheard of! And that no mere mortal would be able to fulfill his request!

Well, they got that right! Or did they?

(Daniel 2:11) It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is **no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.**”

Yes. Again, they are correct but dead wrong: their 'gods' are mute; they are somewhere 'out there' in their imaginations!

(Daniel 2:12) For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. (13) So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men*; **and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.**

Even though Daniel and friends were new to the court and service to the king, they came under this decree for the wisdom they showed the king.

Daniel 1:20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which

the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm.

Why the king didn't call on Daniel and his friends at the first is up for conjecture. Probably their ages...

(Daniel 2:14) Then with **counsel and wisdom** Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon; (15) he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

Daniel receives favor from the captain of the guard. Actually, this was from his God whom he honored! The captain even explains the entire situation to him.

(Daniel 2:16) So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.

Arioch evidently either left Daniel and his buds to live, or he gave Daniel permission to seek the King. I suppose he believed that it would not go well with them and he'd wouldn't have to kill them himself!

Again, grace follows Daniel; the king was unwilling to accept any stalling from the other wise men, but for Daniel he was willing!

(Daniel 2:17) Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,

Daniel refers to his friends using their Hebrew names.

They hear the good news and decide to party like it's 1 AD.

Not!

(Daniel 2:18) that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon.

Their first reaction was to go to the God of heaven and earth. Perhaps in His mercy He would reveal the king's dream. And it would also have a nice side-affect of not being killed with the rest of the wise men.

(Daniel 2:19) Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a **night vision**. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Whether this was a dream or a vision he received at night is debatable. But the fact remains, God answered their prayers.

This prayer was not recorded but the prayer he spoke next, thankfully, was:

(Daniel 2:20) Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. (21) And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. (22) He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what *is* in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. (23) "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."

- He is wise
- He is powerful
- He is sovereign over His creation, the world He created and the people He created as well. It's a difficult thing to accept that God would put a dictator, a fascist or a maniac in power...but we must because He knows the beginning to the end, and therefore has all knowledge and therefore, Father knows best.
- In His grace and mercy, He gives of Himself: wisdom, power, revelation, gifts, and all spiritual blessings.

Daniel received the dream AND its interpretation all at once!

(Daniel 2:24) Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

Daniel goes to the chief of the guards and they go quickly to the king with the "good news".

(Daniel 2:25) Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, **"I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."**

Arioch takes full credit for finding Daniel. It may be that he was unaware that Daniel already had seen the king...but then again, in the strictest sense, he did "find" Daniel.

(and would have killed him and his friends had God not intervened).

(Daniel 2:26) The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

Making sure that Arioch got it right, that is, this will include both the dream and what it means...the king questions Daniel.

(Daniel 2:27) Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, and the

soothsayers cannot declare to the king.

Perhaps a bit of rubbing their noses in it...or more that he is rubbing it in the noses of their pagan gods (so to speak).

(Daniel 2:28) But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

And the first thing Daniel declares is that there is a True and Living God in heaven who is making this all known to the king. There's also a strong hint to the king that what He is doing to reveal thru Daniel is for the "latter days".

Now, let's not get too carried away with the phrase "latter days". As we will see, this more likely refers to the latter days of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and what comes next!

(Daniel 2:29) As for you, O king, thoughts came *to your mind while* on your bed, *about* what would come to pass after this; and **He** who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. (30) But as for me, this secret **has not been revealed to me because** I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for *our* sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

Daniel hammers home that it was his God that reveals secrets. And that there was nothing of worldly wisdom that caused God to show mercy to Daniel, his friends and even **all** the wise men in Babylon who were under a death sentence.

And, oh by the way, Mr. High and Mighty King, this God will also reveal the true thoughts buried in your dark little heart!

And, like Acts Chapter 28, this is where we stop for now.

I want all us to take the example of Daniel seriously. I do not get the impression, at all, that he was motivated by fear of Godly retribution or by just doing what the letter of the Law said. "But didn't he keep kosher?" I don't think the issue was the specific foods or drink...the issue was what they were used for and to whom they were sacrificed and dedicated to: false gods who lived only in the pagan imagination.

In our world today, there is as much if not more pressure to conform, to "assimilate" into the culture that's being pushed on us. It's not fun to be criticized or mocked for our beliefs. In other parts of the world, people are martyred every day for their belief in Christ. As much as the NT writers spoke about walking like Christ, putting on Christ, behaving like believers in Christ, there was a lot of teaching on suffering for the Word,

for Jesus. This is one reason why this book is so important. Daniel and his friends are going to teach us what it means to be a believer in the True and Faithful God. They are going to teach us that there's a Real and Awesome King who will one day rule and reign and be the righteous Judge of all mankind.

Let's learn our lessons well. We are living in the End of Days. Let these boys who lived 2500+ years ago teach us to be strong and courageous!

The first lesson is:

Daniel loved God. God loved Daniel first.

