

Daniel 2:1-23

December 1, 2024



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

When faced with difficult circumstances, we should turn to God first, acknowledging that He is the Giver of all knowledge and wisdom and is in charge of all things.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Let's start with a recap of what we've covered so far.

We are starting in chapter 2 of Daniel this week. Can anyone who has been here the last few Sundays recap what has happened in Daniel's story so far?

What did we learn about the Israelites' current situation in chapter 1? What about Daniel and his friends' specific situation?

What did we learn about God in the first chapter of Daniel?

Let's shift gears to Daniel 2.



To begin, what instances can you remember in the Bible where God worked through dreams?

What did God accomplish through those dreams?

In Daniel 1, Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—perhaps better known to us as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—were taken into exile in Babylon. God watched over them, granting them favor and helping them excel during the training designed to prepare them for service to King Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter 2 opens with their next challenge: a rash, demanding, tyrannical king. Let's explore how Daniel responds and how, as always, God works in all things.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 2:1-16.

What's happening in this passage?

How would you characterize King Nebuchadnezzar so far? What does his behavior indicate about his current state of mind?

How do we see Daniel respond to the events in this passage? (See verse 14.)

How do you see God at work in this passage?

Let's start with a little background. Scholars believe the events of Daniel 1 took place the year King Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne. The first year of his reign would have been the following year (the second year of Daniel's training), so chapter 2 opens shortly after Daniel and his friends complete their training for public service.

Chapter 2 opens with a tall order to "the magicians, mediums, sorcerers, and Chaldeans" in the kingdom (v.2): The king had a troubling dream and demanded that these men not only interpret the dream's meaning but also recount the dream itself to Nebuchadnezzar—or face destruction (v.5).

Incidentally, the Chaldeans were right when they said, "No one on earth can make known what the king requests" (v.10). While the pagan magicians weren't up to the task, God, who was working in the background as always, is fully able.



When the furious king ordered the execution of all the wise men in the kingdom (v.12), Daniel approached the captain of the guard “with tact and discretion” (v.14) and requested time to interpret the dream for the king.

We can learn so much from Daniel’s response here. In the face of an unfair ruling from an egotistical tyrant of a king, Daniel acted in faith and responded respectfully; again, he embodied the Romans 12:18 command to live at peace with others as much as possible. Daniel also acted boldly, fully trusting the Lord.

This is a theme we will see repeatedly in Daniel: Daniel chose faith over fear.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 2:17-23

What’s happening here? What takes place in this passage?

How did Daniel approach this seemingly impossible challenge?

Look at how Daniel praised the Lord in verses 20-23. What do you notice about his praise? What types of things did he say?

How do we see God working here?

Daniel responded to this difficult situation by turning to God in prayer and asking his friends to pray as well. What a powerful example of how we should respond in all scenarios: turn to God *first*.

Daniel had an awareness here like Joseph’s acknowledgement in Genesis 41:16: “I am not able to. . . It is God who will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” Daniel knew he couldn’t possibly interpret the dream himself—*only God could*.

When God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel in a vision, Daniel reacted *first* with praise. Note the timing of events: At this point, Daniel knew how to interpret the dream but had not yet presented it to the king. Nebuchadnezzar hadn’t proven to be logical so far, so his response would be impossible to predict. Daniel didn’t know what would ultimately happen, but he still praised God for His goodness *first*. God deserves our praise *always*.

Some highlights in Daniel’s beautiful passage of praise (vv.20-23):

- “Wisdom and power belong to him” (v.20). Wisdom and knowledge come only from the Lord. Daniel knew his favor was a result of God’s mercy alone, not anything that Daniel had done.
- God is sovereign (v.21). God controls times and the seasons and “removes kings and establishes kings.” Daniel and his friends had seen this truth with their own eyes. In the



past several years, they'd lived this reality. God had removed and established kings in their life time. Daniel acknowledged here that, despite how bleak their situation seemed, God was in control.

This truth remains relevant for us in a time of political change in our country. We must remember who removes and establishes presidents and remains on the throne, regardless of who is elected. God wasn't surprised by the outcome of the recent election and, as always, remains in control.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In our reading today, we saw God speak to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream and to Daniel in a vision. How does God speak to us today? Do you think God still speaks to us in dreams?

What can we learn from Daniel about how we should approach unfair circumstances?

What can we learn from Daniel's actions about how we should treat others, including those who may make our lives difficult?

Considering these takeaways, how can we approach future hardships differently?

What does today's passage teach us about how we should praise God? What does this look like for us in 2024?

What did we learn about God in our passages today? How do we see Him working in similar ways in our lives?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Praise God for His sovereignty, for being in control even when it feels like He is not, and for working in the background in every circumstance. Thank Him for granting us knowledge and wisdom when we need it. Ask God to show you how you can walk in bold faith, as Daniel did in our passages today.



LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we begin our study of Daniel: The Triumph of Our God.

December 8, 2024 --- Daniel 2:24-49

COMMENTARY

Daniel 2:1-23

2:1. Nebuchadnezzar's dreams took place in the second year of his reign, which might appear to conflict with the claim that Daniel's three-year training program (1:5) began in Nebuchadnezzar's first year (1:1). However, by Babylonian reckoning Daniel's second year of training occurred during what was considered the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (604-603 B.C.). Therefore, the king sought interpretation of his dreams in 602 B.C., shortly after Daniel had completed his three-year education.

2:2. The Hebrew word for sorcerers comes from an Akkadian word that can also mean witchcraft. Chaldeans is both a general ethnic term for the Babylonian people and, as used here, a specific term for priests who served as astrologers, soothsayers, and wise men in the king's government.

2:5. Some versions translate the phrase my word is final as "the dream is forgotten." It is better to translate it as referring to the certainty and finality of the king's demand. Nebuchadnezzar withheld the facts of the dream not because he could not remember them but because he wanted to test his wise men.

2:11. This candid confession by the wise men admits that despite all their incantations, magic, and astrology, they were not capable of receiving supernatural revelation.

2:12. Wise men is a general term for all the king's counselors, who gained their knowledge through occult practices.

2:13. Daniel and his friends were subject to execution because they were in the class of wise men; they had not participated in any of the discussions with the king.

2:18. This mystery refers to a secret that can only be known by divine revelation.

2:20-23. Daniel's song of praise includes the two key ideas of the chapter: First, that God is sovereign over the political affairs of humanity because He removes kings and establishes kings. Second, that God alone can give revelation by giving wisdom to the wise and by revealing the deep... hidden things, even the king's mystery that had stumped the wise men.

