

Daniel 2

By Wayne Herman

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- The text identifies this story as taking place in the “second year” of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, yet this appears to be after the end of the three years of training for Daniel and his friends.
- Nebuchadnezzar's request (“Tell me the dream”) seems impossible, but may have been his way of cleaning house with his father's advisors

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- The switch in the text in 2:4 from Hebrew to Aramaic, which continues through the end of chapter 7, identifies these chapters as a unit within the book
- Aramaic was a common language in Babylon and later became the *lingua franca* of Jesus' day
- The fact that these chapters are set apart from the rest of the text is something that should alert us to their potential significance

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- Nebuchadnezzar threatens his counselors with painful death and shame (2:5-6)
 - Nebuchadnezzar's request is not as outrageous as the counselors suggest (2:10)
 - This functions to expose not only them but also their gods as ineffective (2:11)
- The king is a man of his word and orders the destruction of all his counselors (2:12-13)

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- Daniel asks for time to pray for God's intervention (2:14-16)
 - He spoke to the king's commander "with wisdom and tact" (2:14)
 - Daniel asks for clarification (2:15)
 - Daniel requests time to do what the king has asked (2:16)
- Daniel solicits the prayers of his friends (2:17-18)

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- Daniel praises God for answering his prayer (2:20-23)
 - Wisdom and power are his.
 - HE changes...he deposes...he gives wisdom and knowledge...he reveals...he knows...
 - YOU have given ME wisdom and power, you have made known to me what WE asked of you, you have made known to US the dream of the king (2:23)

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- Daniel tells the king the dream and interprets it
 - Daniel gives God credit for the interpretation (2:27-30)
 - The dream concerns a statue made of four sections with materials of decreasing value, struck and destroyed by a rock that grew into a mountain (2:31-35)
 - The interpretation is that the statue represents four kingdoms, the last of which is destroyed by God's indestructible kingdom (2:36-45)

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- The king responds by prostrating himself (2:46) and declaring God's praise (2:47)
- Daniel is rewarded with gifts and a high position (2:48)
- Daniel's friends—at his request—are also given positions of influence (2:49)

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- Summary
 - The king threatens death to all the wise men
 - Daniel and his friends pray
 - God reveals the dream and its meaning
 - The king declares God's praise
 - The king honors Daniel and his friends
- The point: God is the Revealer of mysteries and the Sovereign Lord

Message to Post-exilic Israel

- God is in control
- God takes care of his people
- Daniel serves as a model for dealing with difficult people
- God responds to earnest prayer and faith
- Human kingdoms will rise and fall, but God's kingdom is eternal

Questions for God's People Today

- Which aspect of your life seems to be chaotic?
- How is God taking care of you?
- How can you follow Daniel's example of dealing with difficult people?
- What in your life requires earnest prayer and faith?
- How can we live first and foremost as citizens of God's kingdom?

The Aramaic Section of Daniel

- Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a four-part statue and the rock that destroys it (ch. 2)
 - Daniel's friends' trial by fire (ch. 3)
 - The pride, humiliation, and restoration of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 4)
 - The pride and destruction of Belshazzar (ch. 5)
 - Daniel's trial in the lions' den (ch. 6)
- Daniel's dream of the four beasts and the victorious son of man (ch. 7)