

Daniel's Impossible Mission: Daniel 2:1-23 Explained

Daniel 2:1-23

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. 2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. 5 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. 6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 9 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 shew me the interpretation thereof. 10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. 14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: 15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: 18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 And 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: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. 23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

INTRODUCTION

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever faced a problem that had no human solution? Maybe the doctor said, "We don't know what to do." Or, maybe the fourth doctor you've seen says, "There's nothing else we can do." Maybe the bills were higher than your paycheck. Maybe your child made a decision you couldn't fix.

Maybe someone asked you a question and you had absolutely no answer. Imagine your boss calling you into his office tomorrow morning. He says, "I have a question." You say, "What is it?" He says, "I'm not going to tell you. But if you don't give me the right answer by tomorrow, you're fired!" You'd probably think, "That's impossible."

That's exactly where Daniel finds himself here in Daniel 2. Only the stakes are much higher. If Daniel can't answer, he dies.

I. THE KING DEMANDS THE IMPOSSIBLE

Daniel 2:1-13

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. 2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. 5 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. 6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 9 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 shew me the interpretation thereof. 10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

Now imagine standing in that throne room on that day. Nebuchadnezzar says, "I had a dream." The wise men answer, "Tell us the dream." He says, "No, I don't remember the dream. You tell me what I dreamed."

Can you imagine the silence? Everyone in that room is probably thinking, "How can anyone know that?" The wise men even admit it. "No king has ever asked this." They're right. This wasn't difficult. It was impossible.

Then the king becomes furious. Not just with one man. With all the wise men. Everyone is sentenced to die. Imagine being arrested, not because of something you did, but because someone else couldn't answer an impossible question.

That's Daniel here in Daniel 2. He hasn't even been called into the room yet. Yet he's already under a death sentence. Have you ever felt like life handed you a problem you didn't create? Sometimes that's exactly where God begins His greatest work. When you don't know what to do, go to the One who does. God is the only one who can answer the impossible.

II. DANIEL DOESN'T PANIC

Daniel 2:14-16

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: 15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

Notice what's missing. No panic. No anger. No blaming. No complaining. Daniel simply asks, "Why is the decree so hasty?" He gathers the facts. Then he asks for time. Think about that. Imagine your house catches on fire. One person runs around screaming. Another calmly calls 911. Which person is actually helping?

Panic rarely solves problems. In a dangerous situation, panic doesn't help. Staying calm and cool will help. You can't think straight when you are panicking about the situation.

Panic doesn't solve problems, but faith in God and Jesus Christ does. Daniel isn't calm because the situation is small. He's calm because his God is bigger. The problem hasn't changed. The king hasn't changed. The death sentence hasn't changed.

Daniel simply remembers that God hasn't changed either. When you don't know what to do, go to the One who does. Remember God at all times. He's the only one who can solve the impossible.

III. DANIEL'S FIRST STOP IS PRAYER

Daniel 2:17-18

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: 18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

This is my favorite part. Where does Daniel go? Home. Why? To pray. He gathers Hananiah. Mishael. Azariah. Notice something. His first meeting isn't with all the leaders or politicians or judges or the high ranking officials.

It isn't with military leaders. It isn't with philosophers. It's with God's people. Why is that? Because God listens to His people. What do they do after they meet together? They pray.

Imagine carrying a heavy table by yourself. It's hard. Now imagine three strong friends grabbing the other corners. Suddenly the load becomes much lighter. That's one reason God gave us a church family. We weren't meant to carry impossible burdens alone.

Daniel knew something. The greatest battles are won on our knees praying to God and asking Him for help. How often is prayer our last resort instead of our first response in these difficult situations? Daniel teaches us something here. When you don't know what to do, go to the One who does.

The king was going to kill them all soon. And there isn't a man upon the earth that could answer the king without the Almighty God's help. No one.

IV. GOD ALREADY KNOWS THE ANSWER

Daniel 2:19-23

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: 21 And 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: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. 23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

God reveals the dream to Daniel. Notice Daniel's first response. He doesn't run to the king. He praises God. Daniel doesn't say, "I'm smart. I'm talented. I figured it out." He says, "Wisdom belongs to God. Might belongs to God. He revealeth the deep and secret things."

Think about that. Before Nebuchadnezzar ever had the dream, God already knew it. Before Daniel ever heard about the crisis, God already had the answer. Imagine reading the final chapter of a mystery novel before you start chapter one. You already know how it ends.

God has never faced a surprise. Nothing has ever caught Him off guard. That problem keeping you awake tonight? God already knows the answer. When you don't know what to do, go to the One who does. Always remember that God knows the answer.

CONCLUSION

Let me ask you one final question. Where do you run, when life becomes impossible? Who do you actually run to? You know the right answer, but is that what you do? Do you run to fear? Do you run to worry? Do you run to anger? Do you run to everyone else? Or do you run to God?

Remember Daniel. The king didn't know. The wise men didn't know. Daniel didn't know. But God knew. And that made all the difference. The impossible problem wasn't solved because Daniel was extraordinary. It was solved because Daniel knew the extraordinary God. And God loved Daniel so God answered Daniel's prayer.

The next time life hands you an impossible situation, remember Daniel. This situation is far more difficult than any you've had. How could anyone answer king Nebuchadnezzar? Only God could do that. **When you don't know what to do, go to the One who does.**

Let's pray.