

Daniel 2:17–30 (ESV)

17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. 23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for 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 matter.”

24 Therefore Daniel went in 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; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation.” 25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: “I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.” 26 The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?” 27 Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: 29 To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. 30 But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

We sometimes hear that all **religious roads** lead to **God**. From what I can tell this idea grows from looking at all world religions with a **sympathetic eye**. Some similarities arise with religions. And rather than be harsh and confrontive, the onlooker assumes a **common-ness** about all religions.

What we need in order to straighten out that kind of thinking is a King Nebuchadnezzar. Instead of looking at religions as some kind of philosophy that can be granted credibility based on how reasonable it sounds, look at it backwards. Which religion has **the power to deliver upon its promises**? Which

religion can produce spiritual results? Which one can actually produce verifiable miracles?

When some say that all roads lead to God, it may be best evaluated by going to the **destination first** to see if the road ever makes it there. Nebuchadnezzar, at this point in time, needed to know which road really went to God. So he **demanded evidence** that only **the God at the end of the road** could provide. He was tired of all the babble about religion. He wanted proof that only God could provide. And he got it.

I think at the end of the day that what **we** are challenged with is do **we really believe** in that God. Do we live like our God is in absolute and total control of, not only our **daily** situations, but the **global** situation that we find ourselves in? Do we believe He has both the **Wisdom** and **Power** to control our worlds? Do we refuse to worry, not because worry is harmful to our psyche, but because it is **colossally stupid** if we believe God is who He says He is.

I would guess that all of us who are adults have told the stories of Daniel to children who were in our care. But who of us will handle the same kind of situation **Daniel was in** the **way** Daniel did because **we believe the same things?** Because we **believe in the same God?** That is the challenge before us.

17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel had just been told that he had a death sentence by King Nebuchadnezzar. He responded wisely and bought some time. So he tells his Hebrew buddies. They were all in this together.

Look at the focus.

They were going to **seek mercy** from the **God of heaven** concerning this **mysterious dream** so they will not be **killed** by the King. These guys needed God to move, and they needed it pronto. Notice that they did not waste any time. They did not sit around trying to come up with a man made strategy. There are times for thinking about strategies, but this was not one of them. What they need right now is something that **only God can do**.

Notice **how** they pray. They do not **tell God** what **God needs to do for them**. They don't spend time trying to drum up some state of **perfect faith** so their prayers will be answered. No. They approach a God who **does not owe them anything** and they ask God to give them something that **they do not deserve** but they **desperately need**.

The focus here is not on how Daniel and his friends prayed. The focus is **on who** they pray to and **what** they believe about Him. They trust that their God is a **merciful God** and they cry out to Him to **show mercy**. And they are very specific about exactly what they need. They need to know the King's dream. These men were praying like their lives depended upon it because, well, they did.

We are not told how long it took. All we know is what it says in verse 19. **Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.**

The **one and only** God came through on what **the one and only God** could do. Now we might have felt, if we were those guys, that this whole event was something that we needed God to **react** to. And we would have been **wrong**. God had arranged this whole dramatic backdrop to **show off** His wisdom and power. He was showing Himself superior to all the false Gods. We saw earlier that **God gave** this dream to the King. The dream did not just happen. God gave it. Now **God is giving the dream to Daniel**. God arranged for the failures of all the wise men so God could show Himself to be the one and only God.

I am sure that Daniel and his friends **felt** like their lives were in danger. From an earthly perspective, this king had the power to put people to death. But in a **greater reality**, from a **heavenly perspective**, they weren't in any danger at all. The **apparent danger** was only part of the back drop for the work that God was going to do.

The point is we do not need to figure out what God's intent is for us in difficult circumstances. We only need to know that He is **loving** and **strong** and **wise**. And He promised He will use it for our good if we are His children, if we have surrendered our lives to Christ. Then we need to **trust**. It is never a mistake for a child of God to trust his Father. Daniel and his friends could have easily spent this time **freaking out** and **worrying**. I would venture to guess that we have never faced as great of a threat to our lives as they did. But they prove to be an excellent example to follow. They **run to God** and they **trust God**. That makes all the difference in how they handle this threat.

God pulled through for Daniel and his friends.

So Daniel immediately ran over to give the answer to the King?

No. Daniel had something more important to do than saving his own life and the life of his friends. Daniel had to thank His God.

Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

I think it is stated like this because Daniel wanted it clear **which** God it was that **could** deliver this secret. He did not want any confusion about who is the one true God.

And here is Daniel's prayer

20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those

who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. 23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for 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 matter."

It is always wise to begin prayer with **praise**. Thanking God for who God is (that is what praise is) immediately puts everything we are going to pray about into perspective. If you were going to make a request of a governor, it might be good to look at what legal authority he has due to the position he holds. Then when you appeal to him, you appeal to him in the truth of the position he holds.

Praising God at the beginning of a prayer is a little like that. It emphasizes the credentials and the qualities of the God you are praying to. Daniel came to God needing wisdom and he needed someone that had the power to deliver that wisdom to him. Here Daniel thanks God for owning those exact two attributes.

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

Daniel acknowledges that only God has the attributes that Daniel needed. God did not just have wisdom and might. They belong to God. They are divvied out by God as his possession. He is the source of it.

The Hebrew God is alone that one true God that has existed forever.

21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

Where it says He changes the times and seasons, this is a quote from the Expositors Bible Commentary-

God determines when in history events are to take place and how long each process or phase in history is to endure. Thus Yahweh not only decreed the fall and destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.—an event future for Daniel in 602 B.C.—but also the exact number of years the captivity would last (cf. 9:2). The rulers of earth may imagine they have attained power by their own might, but it is only by God's choice that they are permitted their transient authority. At any time he may remove them from their thrones and set up others in their place (v.21a).

You and I often experience life in a cause and effect kind of fashion. If I work hard, I advance. If I train for a competition, I have a better chance of winning it. Stuff like that. But here Daniel takes us behind that veil.

Everything is coming from the hand of God. Are you smart? One thing is for sure. You did **not give yourself** the mental capacity you have. You may determine how to use it. But you did not **give it** to yourself. God did. You did not determine the **period of history** you live in and **what information** would be available. God did. So there is no sense in **us** trying to take any credit for that which only God could give to us.

The war between Ukraine and Russia did not start a moment sooner or later than God had ordained. Trump's election and defeat happened on God's timetable. Biden's elections and political success were all in God's plan. His health situation is determined by God. He will live as long as God wants him to and he will die on the day God has ordained. Does it look like the world is out of control? It isn't. We just aren't looking at our God like we should.

22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

Do the things we do not know often trouble us? Things like, who are the human beings behind globalization of world government and world banking? Why do they have the agenda they have? Why are they doing what they are doing? God knows the answers to every one of those question. And if **He** knows, we **don't need to know**.

Have you ever dealt with a child that worried about how things were being handled in your household? After a while you just need to comfort them with this information. You tell them- this is not **your** concern. **Mom and Dad** have this handled. If we need your help, we will let you know what we need you to do. That is often how it is with God. God knows the deep and hidden things. Even when we cannot tell each other why we did a certain thing, when we don't even know our own motives, God knows that hidden thing. He knows what is in the darkness. There is no **darkness** great enough to **limit God's vision** into it. With God dwells the ability to see into any situation just like it is being illuminated by the noon day sun. God's vision suffers no limitation. Revelation of truth dwells in God's character. There is no darkness in Him. His spiritual night vision goggles work perfectly.

In Daniel's particular case He was probably **exceedingly thankful** that **nothing was hidden** from God. That characteristic saved Daniel's life.

23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for 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 matter."

So Daniel is closing up His prayer and He shows where the rubber met the road for his life. He prays to the same God that all of his Jewish predecessors had worshipped. He gives **thanks**, thanks is for **what God has done**, and praise, praise is thanks to God for **who He IS**.

And he says why.

It is because God did not hold onto all this information but He revealed it to Daniel in His mercy.

God has wisdom and might, and He gave some to Daniel. He provided to Daniel that which was God's own. Ultimately Daniel's thanks is for a **very specific prayer request** answered in a **very specific way**.

You revealed the King's dream and its interpretation.

Here again is an example in Daniel's life that we do well to copy. Daniel gave praising and thanking God a higher priority than all the other important things in his life, like running to the king to save his life.

This reflects a very loving relationship toward his God. How quick are we to take time out of our most stressful days to give thanks and praise to God? And I doubt any of us are living under the stress of a death sentence.

Daniel was a great example for us here.

24 Therefore Daniel went in 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; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."

So now, once the prayer is done, Daniel makes his way to Arioch's office.

Can you imagine how pleased Daniel would have been in delivering this news? He had to know this was going to get him all kinds of good kudos. Plus it will save his life and the life of his friends and coworkers.

He said- Don't destroy the wise men of Babylon. I wonder why Daniel put it that way. This may have been a **golden opportunity** to get rid of his competition, all of the promoters of false religions. One thing is for sure. His enemies would never show that same courtesy. But whatever the case, Daniel's faithfulness saved a lot of idol worshippers and false prophets.

So Daniel says, Get me a meeting with the King and I will tell him the dream and interpretation.

Now in a corporation, what is the next thing you would expect? How will Arioch deliver the news? I just love this. Here is a guy hoping to please his boss.

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: "I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation."

The key words here are, "I have found". This would imply that Arioch was actually searching for someone who could interpret the dream because he just loves the king so much. Some things never change.

There may have been much more revealing ways of saying this, but none the less, it seems like anyone Daniel touches, he blesses.

So the King says-

26 "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?"

I doubt that this was an overly idealistic question that the king asked with stars in his eyes. My guess would be that he was suspicious of Daniel being able to do this thing. It may have been more like, so Daniel what is your angle to save your skin.

Now look at Daniel's answer.

27 Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

The King asked, Are you able to do this Daniel?

Daniel’s answer is in turn, no. No man is able to do this.

I think, among other things, Daniel is clarifying that the false prophets in the king’s employ are not worshipping the right God. And it truly is a God that will need to reveal the mystery.

But the punch line is really

No man can. But God can.

And not only **can He**, but **He has**.

Again we find an excellent example in Daniel. He knows what his purpose is. He exists to glorify God. So in this circumstance when Daniel could have spoken about all of his talents and abilities, he could have handled it like we need to speak in a job interview, Daniel takes a completely different tact. He refuses to speak about how great he is. He talks about how great God is. We do well to follow his example.

Now it is interesting that Daniel does not start by drawing attention to **what God revealed to Daniel**. He starts with **what God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar**.

The dream that the king had was given by God. The dream God gave to the King was to reveal what was to come in the future. God wanted the king to know.

Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: 29 To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.

It is difficult to know exactly how these visions were provided to the King. It looks like he may have been thinking about the future of the world. Then God gave Him a glimpse into it in a vision or a dream or both.

So the God **who Daniel serves** is the same God who **provided the information**.

This God is not limited to Jews. This God is the God of Nebuchadnezzar as well. That had to be a bit hard to take, seeing that the King has been doing his best to brainwash Daniel into serving **his** gods. Remember that the names the Hebrews were given were names glorifying Bel, their god.

Now Daniel has told the King what the King’s part was in it.

Now he tells the King about Daniel’s part in it.

30 But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

Daniel is displaying the mindset that every Christian should have when God chooses to use them. Even when God is using them for something miraculous.

Daniel came to the King telling the King he was able to tell the dream and the interpretation. But he did not want the King getting the wrong idea. So Daniel gives him the proper perspective.

Yes, the God of heaven and earth **did reveal the dream** to me. That part **is true**. But before you start thinking I am something special and that is why God used me, I need to explain something.

This is not about me. Granted I am in the **right place** at the **right time**. And granted I am **one of God's children**. Those things are true. But I am not special. There is nothing about me as a human being that is different than any other human being.

I do not have super powers. I do not have an innate talent for knowing dreams. This is not a **human feature**. No. I am being used for a **higher purpose** of a **higher power**.

God wanted some things done. I was in the place to do it. And God did it.

King, do you know what God **really wanted**?

He wanted **you** to know something that **you do not know**. And He wanted **you** to know that this information was **given to you by the one true God**.

I **represent** that one true God. So it makes sense He would send the information through me. But ultimately, I was just a messenger boy. It is **you** that God wanted to communicate with.

This is true humility. It is always so sweet when we encounter real humility. It is the kind that comes from a person who **knows him or her self** and **tells the truth about him or her self**. It is from a person that does not let his flesh convince him of his own specialness or superiority or entitlement. Flesh is always saying that kind of stuff. But a humble person knows not to believe it. A humble person does not believe **his theories** about himself and his past. He believes the truth he sees. He believes what the evidence proves. And the truth he sees always reveals a fallen human who is blessed beyond measure to have a God who loves Him.

That is one of the beautiful things about the Christian message. No human would have come up with it because it robs humans of any credit. All other religions are man's attempts at reaching God. And they are attempts that they can slap themselves on the back for.

Our good news is different. It begins with us as enemies of God, dead to God, rebels against God. God sent His son to a planet of underserving people. He lived a perfect life. He died, taking upon himself all the wrath of God for the sins those undeserving people had committed. Then He rose from the dead, proving that all His claims were true. Now we are invited to come to Christ. All we bring is our sin. We come to Him saying, yes Lord, you are right about me. I am the sinner. I have no merit at all. We ask for forgiveness by appealing to what Christ did for us and we place our faith in Him. We give all that we know of ourselves to all that we know of God.

A Christian has nothing to brag about. He can only brag about his God. Arrogant Christians are an oxymoron. They do not understand the good news. The humble truth is that God deserves all the credit for anything in us that looks like Jesus. And while Daniel lived before Christ, much about him looked like Jesus. That was Daniel's story.

Now next week, Lord willing, we will see the dream that the Lord had given to the King and revealed to Daniel. And it is ultimately about the reign of God over all creation forever.

Some applications for this week could be to examine our lives to see how our reactions to life differ from Daniel's. Do we really trust that our God loves us and will use our misfortune for good in our lives? Is that how we react?

Another might be, do we make time to give God the praise and thanks He deserves for all the wonderful things He is **to** us and **does for** us?