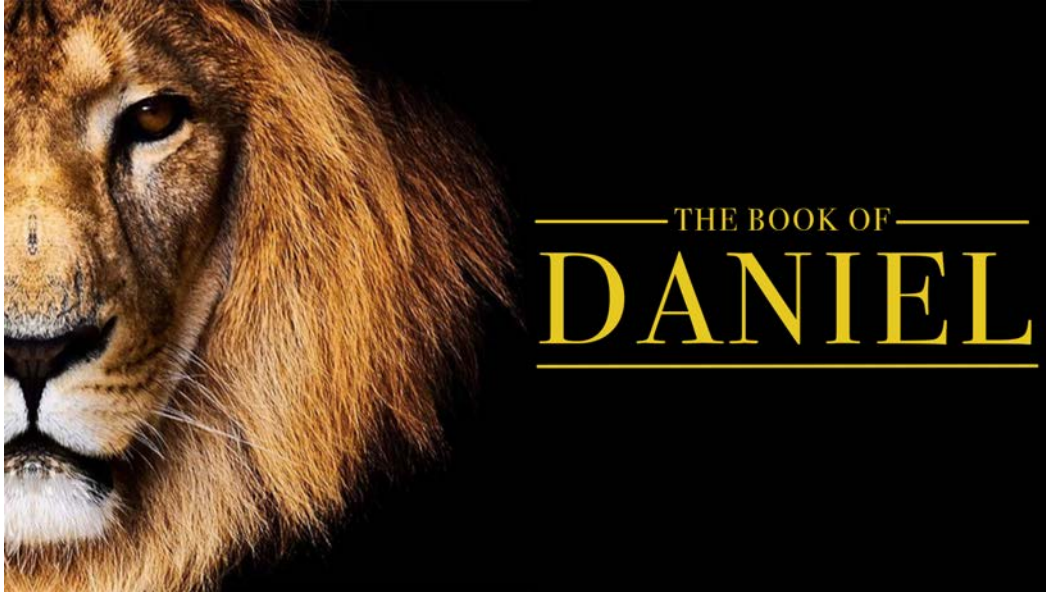


We’ve all heard the statement, “God works in mysterious ways.” Why do you think that’s so? Well, there’s a lot of reasons. But I believe one of the main reasons He works in mysterious ways is because when we see what happens...how strange or mysterious it is...then, God gets the credit when it’s accomplished, because you and I couldn’t have accomplished the feat on our own.



As we continue in our series in Daniel today, we’re going to see how God revealed dreams to Daniel...mysterious things to the King of Babylon...but “known” to Daniel...a teenager or perhaps a young 20-21-year-old at most. Today, we’re going to see how God works in mysterious ways. The title of the message this morning is: “Watching God Work.”

Now before we begin, let’s do a quick review. You will remember, last week we talked about compromise and the fact that Daniel and his three friends refused to defile themselves and eat the King’s meat. This could have cost them their lives; yet, they were resolute and resolved in their minds that they were not going to go against God’s Word, even if it meant death. Ultimately, because of their obedience and God’s hand of favor upon them, they were able to go against the grain and overcome!

Now, as we pick up in our passage in chapter 2 this morning, we’re going to see a long narrative. One that’s fairly easy to follow. Let’s look at the first six verses.

**Daniel 2:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup>Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup>And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.” <sup>4</sup>Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic,<sup>[a]</sup> “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” <sup>5</sup>The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. <sup>6</sup>But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.”

Wow, this is quite the challenge. The King has had a dream and has frightened him (and we'll see why next week...it's about his future and the future of his kingdom) and you'll notice that he's asked men to interpret the dream, yet he never told them what he dreamed. Do you understand? He's had a dream, but he's not going to tell them what it is...and yet, they have to not only interpret the dream, but tell him what the dream was. Impossible, right?

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I want to draw your attention **back to chapter 1, verse 17**. Go back there with me.

**Daniel 1:17**

<sup>17</sup> As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

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Well, that's helpful, now isn't it. God has given to Daniel, this teenager (20-year-old) the unique ability to reveal visions and dreams. This is a God-thing...but before we get to Daniel, we've got to watch these other guys give the king's dream a stab...because they're already fumbling around with excuses. **Back to verse 2:7**.

**Daniel 2:7-9**

<sup>7</sup> They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." <sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— <sup>9</sup> if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation."

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So, these magicians, enchanters and sorcerers, they're our modern-day side-of-the-road Tarot Card Readers, Fortune-Tellers, Palm Reader, Telephone a Psychic, pull out a Ouija board, check your horoscope...and I want to tell you something, all of these can be used as tools of the devil. You don't need to try to read in the stars what's going to happen to you...you just need to pray to the One who made the stars and has plan and purpose for your life.

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Now some may ask, "Does God still use dreams to communicate His will to us?" Well, I'm not saying He can't...but, I will tell you this...in our day...today...we have the Word of God...which is lamp to our feet and a light to our path...and we have the Holy Spirit living within us to teach us and guide us and give us discernment. Warren Wiersbe says it this way:

**"God guides His children today by His Holy Spirit as they pray, seek His face, meditate on His Word, and consult with their spiritual leaders. The danger is that our dreams may not come from the Lord. The human subconscious is capable of producing dreams... It's dangerous to accept dreams as messengers of God."** Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*

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So, these fakes know they can't interpret the King's dream, if they don't know the dream. And I would argue, they can't interpret the dream correctly either. They lie for their position and money, prestige.

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Church...if you go to a soothsayer, a palm reader, a fortune teller, and they look into a crystal ball and they start chanting, calling up the dead... It's all smoke and mirrors. Church, when someone dies, their spirit goes to heaven or hades, that's what Scripture teaches. For the believer, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. For the lost, their souls go to Hades.

You understand, people's spirits are not floating around somewhere here on this earth. You say, "Well, who are these Palm Readers talking to if it's not your dead aunt's spirit? I'll tell you who they're talking to...they're talking to a demon that watched...that saw your dead aunt (when she was alive)

and chronicled her life and this demon tells the Palm Reader, and you sit there and are amazed by something they tell you that happened at your aunt's house when you were a kid. They must be talking to my aunt. No, they're not, they're talking to a demon who watched your aunt's life.

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There are demons watching all of our lives. Trying to influence our lives...lost and saved...don't you ever forget:

**Ephesians 6:12**

<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

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Nebuchadnezzar was on to these fakes and now they're scrambling...

**Daniel 2:10-11**

<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

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Can you tell...these charlatans are sweating bullets. They admit they can't do this...they're trapped in their human deficiency. And we all are. For them, they knew this thing was too hard for them. They admitted it: "We can't do this...it's too difficult...no man can figure this out...we need a 'god' to figure this out." Well, hold that thought...because GOD is going to show the interpretation of the dream to Daniel...but for now...let me tell you this about these men.

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This is so interesting...the Chaldeans had a system they had developed to interpret dreams. Archaeologists have discovered "manuals" that they used to interpret dreams. Here's how it worked: A man would have a dream...they would record it...write it down and they would watch what happened to the man, after the dream. They charted the "outcome," if you will. Thus, if someone had a similar dream, they would consult the manual...and say...yep...this is going to happen to you next. It's like weather forecasting in a way...this has happened in the past...so, we develop an analog, and if we see a similar pattern or set-up and this is what we think will happen.

Is the weather-man always right? No. Certainly not foolproof, and the same was true, if not more so, for people's dreams. The point is...these guys wanted time to go consult their manuals. But Nebuchadnezzar has had it with their excuses...

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**Daniel 2:12**

<sup>12</sup> Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

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Church, just a side note here... Do you see what anger can do to a person? Is this a rational decision the King is making? **KILL THEM ALL!** Wait a minute...Daniel and his friends aren't even there and they're going to die too? That's not fair, but that's what happens when people lose their cool and anger takes over. They make irrational decisions.

Do you have anger inside of you? Let me be blunt: You've got to let it go. You've got to ask the Lord to take it from you...and I know all the excuses that can be made... YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO ME. Right...I get it...we've all been hurt...badly...and maybe that's you today, but anger and frustration will eat you up and if you let it fester...you'll be like this little guy:



ANGER... Remember him from the little movie: "Inside Out?" Scripture is clear:

**Ephesians 4:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil.

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Don't give the devil an opportunity to wreak havoc because of anger. **Let it go.** For Nebuchadnezzar...he's not letting it go...the decree goes out...

**Daniel 2:13**

<sup>13</sup> So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

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You might ask, "Why weren't Daniel and his friends in the room if they were part of the King's court of 'wise men?'" Well, the answer seems to be because they were considered to still be apprentices, very young...in training. Well, Daniel is brought in and arrives at the palace, (and it appears, by himself...and I'll show you why in a moment):

**Daniel 2:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. <sup>15</sup> He declared<sup>[b]</sup> to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.

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This is such a great set-up for Daniel...God is getting ready to go work, through him. Only God could reveal this. This is supernatural stuff, it's all beyond what a human could know or do. Therefore, only God can get the credit. So, Daniel is talking to the Captain of the King's army...and scholars tell us that would have likely been the one who would be in charge of the executions. And yet, Daniel is unflappable...so calm...

**Daniel 2:16**

<sup>16</sup> And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

What amazing composure Daniel was showing. Remember, Daniel is a teen at worst and around 20-21 at best. Such calmness in the midst of such a tremendous crisis. But he's been here before. He was told to eat the King's food and he refused...knowing he could have been killed for refusing...but God had favor on him for his obedience.

Church family, let me tell you something...when a crisis hits, you'll see really quickly who is prepared for it. Some fall apart. Some slink into the shadows. But others step up and bring order to the chaos and seem undaunted. Does that mean there's no fear, of course not. Having courage doesn't mean you don't have fear...it's facing your fears in the strength of the Lord...and it's from the strength of the Lord...that's what your courage comes from.

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All of these other men...these fakes...were shaking in their sandals...in a total state of panic. Not Daniel. No panic in him. He knew his destiny rested in God's sovereign will, and that's where his composure and strength came from. When you rest in the Lord, He will compose you in the crisis.

Well, Daniel was granted his request, most likely because Nebuchadnezzar remembered how these young Hebrews (apprentices) were 10 times smarter and wiser than the other, older guys. So, Arioch must have known Daniel to be different...trustworthy, courageous, (refusing the King's food, which he probably ate himself) and honorable in all things.

**Daniel 2:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, <sup>18</sup> 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.

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They prayed. It's instructive to note: in the midst of the crisis Daniel and his friends had a prayer meeting, not a business meeting. Yes, they prayed! You say, "Why'd they pray? I thought Daniel had this gift of interpreting dreams?" Yeah, he does...but, he wasn't resting on his own laurels...he wasn't cocky. Daniel's confidence was in God, not himself. But how often do we just run off, half-cocked and never pray? Oh, we mustn't get cocky. Cocky in our gifting. Listen, your gifts, your abilities could be taken away today...in a heartbeat. Your next breath is a gift from God. Never forget that. Rejoice in your gifting and acknowledge everything you have is from the Lord.

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No, Daniel didn't expect to be able to interpret the dream because it was owed to him or he deserved it. He wasn't entitled, as so many people are today. No, it would be a mercy from God. They must pray!

As I was studying, I read where Mary, Queen of Scots said, "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than an army of 10,000 men." They laid hold of God in prayer and He answered. And in the middle of the night, God gave Daniel the answer. The dream was made clear.

**Daniel 2:19**

<sup>19</sup> Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

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Hallelujah! He got it! It's so fantastic isn't it...when we see the Lord do something in answer to our prayers...something that seems impossible. We've all experienced that in our lives and when it happens...it seems almost too good to be true...and that's because it is... God is so good to us and so merciful and gracious that it is "TOO GOOD..." He's so good to us! WE WERE SINGING THE GOODNESS OF GOD! And so, we give praise to God for His goodness, and that's what Daniel did...

**Daniel 2:20-23**

<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. <sup>21</sup> 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; <sup>22</sup> he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. <sup>23</sup> 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."

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Fantastic, isn't it! Before Daniel went to the King...he took time to praise the Lord. Listen, when you pray, don't just ask for things...tell God how good He is and be thankful and count your many blessings...and you will find in praising the Lord, your soul will be flooded with His presence, because He inhabits the praises of His people.

Well, Daniel's off...off to the King...

**Daniel 2:24-26**

<sup>24</sup> 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." <sup>25</sup> 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." <sup>26</sup> 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?"

Now let's think about this again: Who is Daniel? See this depiction of him before the King...



He's some kid, some Hebrew slave who's popped out of nowhere and he's totally in control. Only God can do that! Take a kid and put him before the most powerful man in the world and yet, Daniel, a "kid" is in total control!

**Daniel 2:27-30**

<sup>27</sup> 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, <sup>28</sup> 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: <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> 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.

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Do you see what Daniel did? He, flat-out, called out the lies of these men. He didn't hold back and he wasn't worried about hurting feelings...he told the truth...these guys are liars and they're worthless. **And the liars of our day must be called out as well.** They're in academia, the media, they're athletes, musicians, rock stars...politicians and they need to be called out. Daniel set God against the lies of these fakes and all of their false deities. Paul said it this way:

**1 Corinthians 1:20**

<sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

**1 Corinthians 1:25**

<sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

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Daniel, this teenager, 20-something, is in total control. Can you fathom that? And you see dear people, my prayer is that our teenagers would have this kind of courage and first-hand understanding of who God is. Daniel wasn't describing some story of his parent's faith...he was describing his own faith. That's...

**1 Timothy 4:12**

<sup>12</sup> Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

That was Daniel...he was setting the example; he was setting the tone! Teenagers...you can do that too...but you have to know the Word of God...you have to have time with Him in prayer. Do you? Are you? There's nothing better that you could do with your time. You've got to make 10-15 minutes a day to do this...

And I know some who are and they blow my mind...they're here...right here in this church and there are Daniels in this room and they show up and work in the church and give testimony of commitment and dedication to Jesus and I'm proud of you!

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Did you catch the part in verse 28 about the latter days?

**Daniel 2:28a**

<sup>28</sup> 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.

Do you know when that is? It's now! Right Now!

**Hebrews 1:2**

<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

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Since Jesus has been on this earth, we've been living in the last days and in God's sovereignty he's going to show a pagan, Gentile, King, the end times through Daniel. Prophecies that will encompass all of history that remains right up to the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus.

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Listen, as we close...I don't know your situation...I don't know if you're troubled...I don't know if you're happy? I don't know if you're satisfied...if you're miserable. But I know this...God knows. And as sure as He knew He would place a teenager in the palace of the most powerful man on earth and as sure as He knew He would place a dream in that man's mind...a dream that only God could make known to Daniel...He knows everything about you and He loves you and He will take care of you, just like he did Daniel, if you'll let Him. I pray you'll trust Him today! He's so good!!

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