

“THE DEPENDABILITY OF GOD”

DANIEL 2:1-23

Theme: Those who turn to God find that He is always dependable to work what is best.

I. God's Dependability Is Emphasized through Man's Failure -2:1-11

A. *THE FORTHRIGHTNESS OF MAN'S FAILURE – vv. 1-6*

1. We move from the discussion of God's blessings on their lives because of their faithfulness and devotion to a crisis they faced at the very beginning of their careers.
2. The situation surrounded a dream by Nebuchadnezzar that was given by God revealing the ultimate fate of kingdoms and empires constructed by man with dependence upon human strength and ingenuity.
3. Before the dream was ever understood, God created a situation within the court of the King to underscore the significance of the dream – ***an inability to rely upon human ability.***
4. ***“Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, [he] had dreams, and his spirit was troubled, and sleep left him.”*** – This would have been just after Daniel had been appointed to his position in the court just as the three year probation period ended (since you don't count the Babylonian “Year of Ascension” in the tenure of his reign).
5. Having been so troubled by what he dreamed, Nebuchadnezzar ***“gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the King his dreams.”***
 - a) ***“magicians”*** [תַּרְטָמִם] for the world “stylus” and referred to those who were involved recording what were considered sacred or hidden writings.
 - b) ***“conjurers”*** [אַשְׁפֵּי] – those who were involved in the demonic practice of contacting the dead.
 - c) ***“sorcerers”*** [כַּשְׁפֵּי] – referring to those who were involved in drugs, potions, and other forms of sorcery.
 - d) ***“Chaldeans”*** [כַּשְׁדִּים] – referring to those involved in astrology – the traditional “wise men” of Babylon.
6. ***“They came in and stood before the king”*** – this seems to be an unusual setting – with all these special interest groups – each

committed to a different approach to the supernatural, gathered for a joint audience before the king.

7. He explains why: his *“spirit is anxious to understand the dream.”*
8. However, instead of volunteering the details of the dream, he places a test before these self-professed specialists of the paranormal – in essence stating that if you can supernaturally come up with interpretations to a dream revealed by some “higher power,” then reason suggests that you ought to be able supernaturally to come up with the dream itself.
9. The king makes this request and indicates extreme consequences will result either toward wrath or blessing:
 - a) *“If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap”* – essentially, you’ll be tortured, killed and your property will become an outhouse.
 - b) *“If you declare the dreams and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor.”*

B. THE FRUSTRATION OF MAN’S FAILURE – vv. 7-11

1. Of course, they were unable to comply with the king’s requirements – appealing for the king to share the dream so that they could formulate some interpretation through their “disciplines.”
2. They kept pleading with the king – *“They answered a second time and said, ‘Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation.’”*
3. But, in frustration, the king *“replied, ‘I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm.’”*
4. He then expresses that he believes that they think he’s just in a bad mood and that the time they seek will make it possible for his mood to pass.
5. He identifies them as renowned for speaking *“lying and corrupt words”* – a reference to the farce that they have become – v. 9.
6. Their response hangs them: *“there is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king,”* and suggests that he is being unreasonable.
7. They said that the only ones capable of doing what he is requesting are *“the gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.”*
8. How correct they were while incorrect! Their inability provides the backdrop by which the power of God can be magnified in the eyes

of the king and his followers who are serving the king.

II. God's Dependability Is Entreated through Man's Faith – 2:12-18

A. *THE ASSURANCE IN GOD'S DEPENDABILITY* - vv. 12-16

1. The king's reaction to the failure of man's abilities was he *"became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon."*
2. *"destroy"* [דָּבַח] – caused to be destroyed or become passed away.
3. Because Daniel was newly appointed, and perhaps had not yet demonstrated the superiority described in v. 20 – or perhaps this is the occasion by which this reputation was established.
4. At any rate, Daniel was not included among the "upperclassmen" of the advisors to the king.
5. Nevertheless, since the best of the best couldn't perform, all "underlings" or rookies would suffer the same fate – *"so the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them."*
6. When faced with this crisis, Daniel displayed a calmness and wisdom that displays his awareness and confidence in God's sovereignty over his life.
7. He responds by evidencing no panic, no despair, and no frustration, only he spoke wise words in response: *"Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon."*
8. His discretion and discernment were God-given and obviously softened the heart of this executioner who thought Daniel's objection contained enough merit to warrant an audience with the king ... which he then arranges.
9. God prospered Daniel's appeal for an opportunity to seek his God – since He was different from all the other wise men by reputation and conviction, the king granted his request *"that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king."*

B. *THE APPEAL TO GOD'S DEPENDABILITY* - vv. 17-18

1. *"Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, about the matter."*
2. He immediately calls upon his friends to pray for the situation with him – *"In order that they might request compassion from the God of*

heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”

3. It seems from this prayer that the execution of the other wise men was ongoing while Daniel was given a stay to pray and come back.
4. However, if he couldn't “come through,” his life and his friends' would be required as well.
5. They trusted in the dependability of God to provide them the supernatural means by which they might be delivered – having already been preparing His servants for this hour – cp. [1:17](#).

III. God's Dependability Is Extolled through Man's Focus – [2:19-23](#)

A. *THE FOCUS ON GOD'S WORTHINESS* – [vv. 19-20](#)

1. *“Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.”*
2. God came through and Daniel's response was to *“bless the God of Heaven”* through worship for His worthiness as His God.
3. *“Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever”* – he who has truly sensed the greatness of the Lord will be desirous of having His praise sound on to eternity.
4. He indicates the reasons for the worthiness of God to *“... be blessed forever:”*
 - a) *“for wisdom ... belongs to Him”* [חֵכְמָה] – God knows all things – not only of what has been and what is, but also what will be and therefore ought to be trusted – *proper application of knowledge*.
 - b) *“for ... power belongs to Him”* [גְּבוּרָה] – or better: “might” - not only does God know all things, but also has the ability to bring to pass what will be and likewise ought to be trusted – *proper application of power*.
5. These matters are key to the remainder of the book as God provides Daniel with the insights necessary to see God's purposes throughout the end of the ages.

B. *THE FOCUS ON GOD'S WORKS* – [vv. 21-23](#)

1. In demonstration of His worthiness, Daniel then focuses on some of the things that were revealed in the prophetic dream concerning what God would be doing in the future.
2. God *“is He who changes the times and the epochs”* – referring to periods of time throughout the balance of history that would be under the direct sovereign control of God's hand – including those of [2](#)

Timothy 3:1.

- a) ***“times”*** [תָּמֵיךְ] – definite chronological periods
 - b) ***“epochs”*** [מְדִינָה] – appointed times or a specified time.
3. In addition, God ***“removes kings and establishes kings”*** – the rise of leaders and rulers are not the result of the sweeping, uncontrollable pressures of humanity, they are directly exalted and humbled by the hand of God.
 4. ***“He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding”*** – perhaps a reference to his immediate situation as well as similar situations to follow.
 5. He finishes his praise by addressing the deliverance he had just experienced – vv. 22-23 – ***“It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power; even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king’s matter.”***