



Thriving in Babylon / Book of Daniel
Wk. 2 "A Dream for Some and a Nightmare for Others"
By Pastor Jody May

PRAY

Thriving in Babylon; What do we do now?

In starting the book of Daniel last week, we discussed what is the essential truth for the book of Daniel so it is pretty much the main thread that runs through every sermon we will have in the book of Daniel and that is:

God has chosen this point in history, the next 70 years of world/biblical history, to show the world He is sovereign, and He is in the middle of all things!

Even when it looked like the Babylonians have all the cards stacked in their favor, God on purpose had picked a fight. He made the Babylonians pack His bags and He had them put His things in the Master Bedroom.

Daniel, when faced with the challenge of being reindoctrinated with occultic dogma, religion, food & culture, he responded in a way that we should emulate for we also see that is how **Jesus Himself responded in His 33-year confrontation with the world.**

Optimism, Humility, Wisdom

"for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." – 2 Timothy 1:7 ESV



Living with Optimism in a fallen world helps us to see that the victories of the world are always short-lived because those events are wrapped up in a bigger scheme where **God will ultimately be the victor!**

Lastly, what that means for us as we saw and will see Daniel live out today, is to embrace a principle; that **we are called to infiltrate not isolate**, we are called to be displayed not dismayed, we are to invade not evade, you get the point!



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To help us grasp this principle I want to state the main point today, so you can watch it unfold through chapter two, you can ponder how grand God's Sovereignty is in all things, you can find rest even in dark times, and if you fight to embrace it, it will change how you look at everything!

Main Point:

God's Wisdom and Power is what Supervises Human History.

3 Responses to God's Interaction:

1. The Dire of World Leaders come from the revelation that they are not in control (v.1-11). *(It is the subplot of every James Bond movie ever made)*

2 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. ²Then 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. ³And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." ⁴Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." ⁵The 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. ⁶But 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." ⁷They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." ⁸The 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— ⁹if 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." ¹⁰The 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. ¹¹The 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."

We pick up this week to find that the man that had everything going his way, the guy on top of the world, is a miserable wretch. It has been three years since the boys have come to Babylon for their reconditioning. They have now since



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graduated and are in service in the palace along with the rest of the wise men. So that we are not all confused, in Babylonian record keeping, a King did not officially count the first year of his reign until the year was completed by the former king. Meaning, when Nabopolassar died, and his son Neb. came to the throne, they would not count that year until Nabopolassar's year was up. So, King Neb 2 yr. reign along with the completion of a three-year education correlates fine.¹

We find in Chp. 2 that Neb is having a problem with sleeping. He has had a reoccurring nightmare, and whatever it was has shaken him up so much that he is unable to find untroubled sleep, he is **suffering from insomnia**. I will not be getting too much into this dream today we are saving that for next week actually, but I will mention that both chapters 2 & 7 have to deal with the present king of Babylon and the course of that empire. Each dream describes the future of the Empire along with what God is going to do to that empire. Both dreams demonstrate the **Supervising nature of God among the Kingdoms of the world**, and when He is done using them, because of their wickedness, He allows their destruction.

This is not a new concept; it is something Christians should always remember. Daniel shows that. Starting in Dan. 3:2 the story is recorded in Aramaic, which was considered the official language of the Babylonian empire. Daniel was allowed to record these events not just for the Jews but for historical records for those in the Babylonian empire, meaning He records the events for the entire world; that God, YHWH, is controlling all things. **Daniel's allowance to write this means that the greatest empire in that day believed it.** God is truly the supervisor of all history.

Neb is so troubled by the dream that he calls for the wise men (enchanters/magicians) these Chaldeans. You see dream mapping, or the divination of dreams, was an ancient practice and was one of the sweet spots for Wise men. Wise men had been recording dreams for centuries because dreams are informative to a person's life and the lives of those they are involved with. And if you are the king then your life concerns everyone around you.

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/27-06/the-forgotten-dream-and-the-unforgettable-daniel>



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They wanted to write down his dreams, take them to the archives, run them through their computer, and look at what correlates with his dreams, to that of past rulers. Perhaps they will see patterns in political upheaval, of patterns rulers and the things they dreamt of, that lead to war. The problem is Neb. is too far gone, there is too much fear, and he doesn't even want to wait on them:

⁵The 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. ⁶But 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."

"No, if you are real wise men, you will not only tell me the meaning of it but specifically what I actually dreamt. If you, don't you and all those you represent are going to be torn apart. Then I will tear down your houses, and back in that day a popular form of punishment was to tear down your family home and make it a public latrine, bearing your name on it.

False prophets in the Bible have always had the same destiny. Remember Elijah and the prophets of Bael? Remember, King Josiah even dug up false prophet bones and burned them on their own holy grounds? God is declaring in their own language, I am the true God, all others will be put destroyed and ground out of existence, and I will do it by the subjects of these foreign gods. **Truly, God's Wisdom and Power Supervises History.**

These magicians, warlocks, powerful men have to admit, it has been recorded for all to see in Aramaic, that there is no one that could do what the king wanted:

"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. ¹¹The 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."

"No one on this side of heaven can do what you want, only the gods."



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The dire of this king, and the trouble of these court magicians, all comes from this fact, **they cannot control this situation**. Sleep will not come for the king, the dream cannot be made known for the Chaldeans, and because these leaders lack control it has caused the more powerful of the two to destroy that which he can control, his court.

Imagine if you lived in a land where your government officials felt like they were out of control of their destinies, and you saw them go at each other, saw them threaten each other, saw them put their heads in holes in the ground and refuse to acknowledge the coming immediate and future problems.... Right? The people in Babylon are in a predicament, their government was collapsing, even though everything is good, their congress was going to be destroyed and their executive leadership was losing his mind, I wonder what that feels like? (smirk)

It's a sobering moment when kingdoms and governments come face to face with their future, when evil has become your game, when you realize it can no longer save you, it will drive you to despair and make troubling decisions for everyone. Now, if that seems unhelpful wait till point two but first let's talk a little about dreams.

Dreams are interesting for they reveal several things.

- Dreams reveal what is important to you.
- Dreams reveal what you are afraid of.
- Dreams reveal where you are at odds with God.

As a kid, a toddler, I had this reoccurring dream about floating hands that chased me and stole my parents away from me, leaving me all alone. I had an overwhelming fear of desertion, it caused lots of fear in me as a child, and in almost a self-fulfilling prophetic way, I loose both my parents in the same week at a relatively young age in my life.

Dreams are interesting things. Perhaps you have had a dream that has woken you up at night. I know for a while I kept waking up at 3am, which was peculiar until I learned that the body goes into its deepest REM after so many hours. It is where you have your most vivid dreams, which if you are anxious about anything,



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those thoughts come to life in your dreams, and if they are in any way scary it spikes your adrenaline which wakes you up.

Here's what dreams mean I think for Christians. Your most vivid dreams are where your unconscious personality, your character will and mind, in your dream they want to do what they automatically want. What happens for the Christian, is that when we have been immersed in God's Word, through reading, preaching, group discussions on it, the onslaught of God's will is ignited then by His Spirit so our conscience is fighting it out. It is as if Paul's dilemma is being lived out in your mind.

Romans 7:19 ESV

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

So, if you are having dreams like that let me recommend just keep a piece of paper and a pen by the bed. When it happens write down what you see and then talk to someone about it, mentioning your personal struggles, what God's Word has been saying to you recently at the time and see if it makes sense to you.

But this is not time for just psychoanalytical help **we need to continue to a more practical help from God's Word** and that is what do we do when it starts looking bleak? What do we do to keep us from acting like Neb here?

2. When it gets dark don't give in to fear but put faith in God's impeccable timing (v.12-18).

¹² Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. ¹³ So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. ¹⁶ And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream



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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.

Daniel again employs that God given Optimism and chooses fear over faith, and you know that by how this section ends; v.19 **Daniel takes a nap...** (who else do you see taking a nap in the Bible when all heck is breaking loose) And it is in the middle of this crisis, with his life and his friends on the line that Daniel goes to sleep and in this dark night God delivers Daniel.

Many of God's greatest miracles happen in the dark, even at Midnight, at the most urgent of times. You see at midnight, under God's supervision, is when things get settled, His people are delivered, and the world is left in Chaos.

- Pharaoh too was plagued by dreams and upon threatening death to Moses and the Jews it was God that sent the angel of death to convince Pharaoh he had been beaten. ([Exodus 12:29-32](#))
- The Assyrian army was decimated at night and King Hezekiah and Jerusalem were delivered and hundreds of thousands of the enemy were killed. ([2 Chron. 32:20-23](#))
- It was at midnight when an earthquake shook Paul's and Silas' jail cell and caused a Philippian jailer to almost take his life but instead God saved him and his family. ([Acts 16:1-40](#))
- Paul told the Romans to abandon ship and put their trust in His God, at midnight, for all were going to make it to shore alive. ([Acts 27:27-44](#))
- This week that made me think about what we had discussed in Luke. Do you remember what we said about the tomb? When they had found the empty tomb, the stone had been rolled away not to let Jesus out but to show them He was gone already. I looked at Heather and told her, "I bet it was midnight, the Lord was done with tomb, it is time to start preparing the church's future and the world's end." ([Luke 24:1-12](#))

Church family, and those of you that may not quite believe yet, our God always works like this, it is His calling card. When it starts to get real dark, when it seems like it is getting bleak, we are not supposed to lose hope, but we remember God has got some **impeccable timing**. God is in the habit of showing up right at the



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best moment, for His purposes, showing the world the consequences of not following Him and He extends rewards to His people for their faith in Him.

God's Wisdom and Power is what truly Supervises Human History.

We do need to remember though, that part of the hope of the gospel is that it is a message best served in times of stress so that God receives ultimate recognition and creates in you the heart of a worshipper.

God is not trying to stress you out by making you wait for deliverance, instead He is growing your faith, increasing your prayer life, and firmly placing your dependence on Him. **Stress from dark hours is what helps God's people cling to their Hope in Christ.** And when Jesus becomes your everything that is usually when you are reading the Bible like Daniel did, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."* – Rom 8:28 ESV That verse lacks a lot of power until our God lets the valley of the shadow of death loom some in our lives, not to destroy us but to preserve us, by building Faith.

But what do we do with Faith grown, this fruit of our trials and belief?

***"This also comes with a warning, when Kingdoms start to crumble, the saints had better step forward and speak, or they will die with the kingdoms."*²**

So lastly, let's talk about what it looks like when we step forward and speak:

3. Faith in God's Sovereignty is rewarded with joy and displayed with praise (19-30).

¹⁹Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰Daniel answered and said:

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

² James B. Jordan, *The Handwriting on the Wall: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision Press, 2007), 172.



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- 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."

Daniel, we know now, knows the dream and what it means. That means Daniel has had a tremendous revelation from God! All the things he had chosen to believe upon coming to Babylon, the teachings of Jeremiah and Isaiah, he has taken as real. He has been moving through his life praying and believing but not fully knowing what his role is in all of this yet. Then one night Daniel gets that thing we all want, along with the revelation of what the dream was and its' meaning, he knows now that God loves him, and He has chosen to make Daniel a part of the story! **You want to know where Daniel gets his strength from for the Lion's den, right here, for he knows his God is with him.**

Friends this is where I want to encourage you today. Daniel spent three years of life practicing his faith, practicing the belief that God will redeem through using a foreign dictator and people. All in the midst of kidnapping and leaving everything he ever knew.

Some of you are still waiting on God to deliver you. Some of you want to know what it feels like to be on God's side. The problem is not that God has forgotten you but that you have chosen not to believe that God's Wisdom and Power Supervise all of history. Therefore, you don't like to accept things:

- You get a 'no' to a relationship you wanted badly, so you force it.
- You get a 'no' to a possible position in ministry, so you walk away from serving God.
- You get a 'no' for a chance to continue in education, so you never go back.



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- You get a 'no' about spousal reformation, the way you want them, so you get a new one or you shut down your heart for the one you have.
- You get a 'no' to that career you were hoping for, so you stop living to glorify God where you are at now.

Jesus got a 'No' in the garden and was told to wait on being the victorious Messiah, for there was a better plan by a Sovereign God that supervises all of time. Did not God prove that to you already?

Families, 'Nos' from God many times mean stop asking for things you are not ready for and practice what you already know to be true – God reigns, be Optimistic, humble and wise and then wait for God for further instructions.... Daniel got his instructions and off he went:

²⁴Therefore 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."

²⁵Then 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." ²⁶The 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?" ²⁷Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, ²⁸but 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: ²⁹To 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. ³⁰But 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, had a great job! He goes to the king and he gets to explain the vision, when it will happen, and now **God gets the credit for it!** Daniel's patience is rewarded first with joy for learning in his patient optimism, and secondly God has given a heart that knows now how to praise God even in dark times!

Perhaps your learning, with how to deal with dark times now, is so that you will learn how to worship in darker times later. But the place we have to start is remembering and fighting for the faith to believe that God's Wisdom and Power is



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what supervises all of History. If God can orchestrate Jesus' life so that it had an eternal victory over sin and death, then it can definitely orchestrate yours so that you too can praise and worship God as you should.

PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that through His Wisdom and Power supervises our lives.

Go in the name of the Son, that allowed the will of the Father to control Him so that we may be saved.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that reminds us not to fear in the night for joy comes in the morning, propelling us to praise God in front of those that need Him the most.