

## **The D(aniel) Factor**



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### **The 'D Factor' talk is from Daniel chapter 2.**

This is what the talk is about: Daniel could have been a big cheese, a big hero trying to promote himself. But he didn't. Time after he looked to God, he was faithful, he was humble and he pointed to God.

We're surrounded in a world that makes people into celebrities and then worships them; a world where people want to be a celebrity and worshipped.

Daniel was counter-cultural. He didn't need worship and pointed people to worship God alone. If you don't learn anything else, learn this.

### **Daniel 2**

(Quite a long reading, though we've edited out a fair bit).

1-6. 12-13, - In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them, 'I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.' Then the astrologers answered the king, 'May the king live for ever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.' The king replied to the astrologers, 'This is what I have firmly decided: if

you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.' ... This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

14-28 - When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king's officer, 'Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?' Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said: 'Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: you have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.' Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, 'Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.' Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, 'I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.' The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), 'Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?' Daniel replied, 'No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these...

44-49 - 'In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands – a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. 'The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and

its interpretation is trustworthy.' Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honour and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, 'Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.' Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego chief ministers over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

## **The Talk**

We know from Daniel 1.4 that Daniel (and his friends) were *"without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace."* Then in Daniel 1.17, *"To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds."*

So basically Daniel was the kind of person who was good looking and pretty much good at everything! In Daniel 2, when Arioch came to Daniel, Daniel could have really been the big man, could have made a real name for himself, knowing that he'd been given the ability to interpret dreams. At the least he could have got something out of it by saying to the King, 'I'll let you know but you give me X, Y and Z...' You could argue that this attitude wouldn't have worked in front of the King, but Daniel was wise enough to choose his words carefully. But he didn't do this. Instead, as we'll see, he told the King to ask for time, got his friends praying with him and then told the King it was God who had spoken, not Daniel.

We can imagine many people not behaving like Daniel. Lots of people would try to see what they can get out of the situation, wanting a reward, some recognition or maybe even a knighthood! The media would be all over the story - 'Man interprets dream, saves wise men from death' The 'Daniel dream interpreting services company' would be launched, with a 'DD' clothing range, cups and 'Daniel tours' arranged by local tourist companies. Daniel would be on chat shows, launching his 'dream scrolls' and DVD 'dream interpretation course', like we often see even on Christian TV.

But Daniel was a humble servant of God. He was a living testimony to the words of Micah 6.8 (written around 100 years before Daniel), *"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."* This should be one of our motivations too - acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God. If you could have something inscribed on your grave, this would be one good option!

Daniel wisely spoke to the head of the guards, then went to see the King to ask for time to interpret the dream. Remember that Daniel and all the other wise men's lives were in danger here. The astrologers had rightly told the King that no man could know and then interpret the King's dream. But Daniel knew that God could. He didn't tell the King that God would sort it all out. Instead, he asked for time and then asked his friends to pray with him that God would interpret the dream. Sometimes we need to be practical in our faith, not get ahead of God and not assume anything of God. He is God and we're not!

So Daniel prayed to God with his friends and overnight, God gave Daniel the interpretation. Daniel then praised God, declaring who God was, God's power and hand over the world. He then wisely first went to the head of the guards to stop any executions of wise men, then went into the King. When Daniel spoke to the King, he showed what the true 'D Factor' was about. He didn't go in with any other attitude than to let the King know that God was the revealer of the dream, that it was God alone and not Daniel. Wow. We need to learn from this. So often we want to take credit, even when we should get credit. But let's remember where the true credit comes from - God. I often say to people if something's a great idea it's from God, if it isn't great it's probably from me or I've got God's great idea wrong! Just think about your motivation when you want people to notice you - is it you that you want noticed or do you want God to get the glory!

Daniel then declared this to the King in verse 45: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

What was the result of this? The king actually honoured Daniel and fell down before him! That was amazing and shows how grateful the King was. Then the King confessed who God was (the King wasn't yet a believer but his eyes were being opened by God).

"Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

What happens when we give credit to God is that God gets the credit! A pretty obvious statement but it's true! The King started to praise God because Daniel told him it was God who'd revealed the dream. If Daniel hadn't said this, the King may have given Daniel his reward, but it wouldn't have had the same impact, the King wouldn't have known about God and the future would have been very different as well. If you keep reading Daniel, you'll find that the King did eventually believe in God! As you praise God, you will see lives changed for and by God. Your impact on the world will be much greater and you will benefit too...

... The King also placed Daniel in a high position and gave him many gifts. He made Daniel the ruler of all of the province (area) of Babylon and put Daniel in charge of all the wise men. Daniel also remembered his three friends - the King appointed them as administrators over the province of Babylon. Daniel remembering his friends was another great thing. Too often people don't just want credit, they want to hog the headlines, be on the front page, have their name up in lights. "It's all about me" is the motto, or "I did it my way". But 'my way' is never the way. God's way is the way as he is 'the way' (John 14.6). So Daniel saw his friends were put into the right positions where they too could serve God. His faithfulness meant that God's kingdom was extended. The same will happen with you as you act right with God. As I often like to say, 'your way Yawheh' (Yahweh is a name for God).

Time after time in the Bible and in the Christian life we find that it is always right to give glory to God because he's the one who's worthy. Be willing to accept praise but know where your success comes from! Then you too will earn the 'D Factor'. Yes, it's a bit cheesy but it's totally true. The story of Daniel shows this to be true and your life can too :)