

Text: Daniel 2

Discussion Questions:

Just over a year ago, my wife gave me a Fitbit as a gift. A Fitbit basically functions like a watch with a whole bunch of bells and whistles. One of those “bells” is the fact that—if you wear it to bed—it can “track” how you sleep. For all of you skeptics out there...I totally get it. I was skeptical at first as well. But, I’ve become convinced that it’s accurate. It somehow measures your heart rate and breathing and movement, and gives an accurate picture of your various sleep cycles—going so far as to assign a “sleep score” to each night’s sleep.

One of the keys to achieving a high sleep score is to have a higher percentage of your sleep fall in the category of REM sleep. REM stands for “rapid eye movement,” and it’s a phase of our sleep cycle when our brains are on super high alert—apparently causing our eyes to dart back and forth rapidly. The experts say that there are many health benefits to more time in REM sleep. At a very simple level—I think it’s a built-in “safety release valve” for our emotions. It’s a way that God allows us to “burn off” extra emotions—so that they don’t build up and become destructive.

It’s also in REM sleep that we dream. It’s interesting that on morning’s when I wake up having dreamt a lot during the night—sure enough...my Fitbit reveals a higher percentage of REM sleep (often in the hour or so right before I wake up).

Let’s talk a few minutes about dreams:

- Do you find that you dream often?
- Are you able to remember your dreams when you wake up in the morning?
- What recurring dream(s) or nightmare(s) did you have when you were young?
- What recurring dream(s) do you have now?
- Why do you think some people have frequent (and strange!) dreams while others don’t seem to dream all that much?

Dreams play a central role in the Book of Daniel (much like in the account of the life of Joseph back in Genesis 37-50). Chapter 2 describes for us an enormous crisis in the royal palace of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar (I’ll call him “Neb” as we move through this study) had a disturbing dream that he couldn’t understand. This dream, though, must have gone far beyond your run-of-the-mill “weird” dream that we can sometimes have. It was clear to Neb that this dream was actually a message—a message from God. But, which God? The Babylonians had more than 50 “gods” that they worshiped.

What Neb did next was very interesting. Instead of telling the dream to his “staff” of sorcerers and magicians and “religious” experts—Neb required that they tell him what he had just dreamed. Neb was so sure that this dream was a message from “God”—that he fully expected “God” to communicate the same message to his spiritual advisors.

- Why do you think Neb did this? Why didn’t he just tell them the dream?
- What do you think his team of advisors would have done if Neb had told them the dream and asked them to interpret it? Would they have said, “I don’t know?”
- How did this situation open a door for God to reveal Himself as the one, true God?

Examination:

- Read **Daniel 2:1-16**

We see in these sixteen verses how God creates impossible situations to reveal His greatness. Make no mistake—this was a situation that God created. It was God who gave Neb the dream. God knew exactly what Neb would do following the dream. It was God who had just “elevated” Daniel and his three friends into these “high” positions—which instead of being a good thing...actually put them right in the crosshairs of Neb’s rage.

- Have you ever found yourself in a seemingly impossible situation that, as you look back on it, was actually God specifically placing you in a very specific place for a very specific reason?
- I think a key to understanding this situation is the fact that Neb was convinced that his dream was given to him by a “higher power.” And here he is—surrounded by “religious experts” who claim to know this “higher power” far better than he does. Was it unreasonable for him to expect this “higher power” to reveal to these spiritual leaders the very same thing that had been revealed to him?
- How do the astrologers (spiritual advisors) answer the king in verses 10-11?
- Verse 11 should jump off the page for us. Read Exodus 25:8, and John 1:14. What do these verses have to say about a God who lives among humans?
- What do you think it means that Daniel “spoke with wisdom and tact”? (v. 14)

- Read **Daniel 2:17-23**

- It’s hard to imagine a more fervent and passionate prayer meeting. These four young men knew that if God didn’t “show up” and reveal to them the king’s dream—they were dead. Have you ever prayed these kinds of desperate prayers?
- How significant is the detail, stated in Daniel 1:17, that Daniel had the God-given gift of understanding visions and dreams of all kinds? Describe a situation in your own life when God used a gift/talent for His glory in a unique way.
- Read aloud Daniel’s prayer in verses 20-23. What stands out to you?

- Read **Daniel 2:24-49**

- These verses describe a conquered Jewish prisoner standing confidently before a ruler in the face of his imminent execution. Does anyone else come to mind when you think about this scenario? Do you think God is using this text to point us to Jesus?
- What else in Neb’s dream points us to Jesus (hint: verses 35 & 44).
- We are told in Daniel’s interpretation that the first kingdom (the head) is the Babylonian Empire. What are the other kingdoms? Did history play out this way?
- What do you make of the fact that Neb “fell prostrate before Daniel” in verse 46?
- Who, according to verses 20 & 47, receives the ultimate praise and glory in this account?

Application:

Take some time to think about the image of the rock—that breaks all the other kingdoms of this world—and becomes a kingdom that literally fills the whole earth. Do you believe that? Do you believe that all kingdoms of this world will fail, and the Kingdom of Christ will prevail? Does this fact give you hope? Does this truth change your perspective on world events?