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DANIEL THE MAN – LESSON 5

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DILEMMA

We now come to chapter two of the Book of Daniel. The young men had completed their three years of training and gained Nebuchadnezzar's favor upon examination. We now see what happens as the King has a mysterious dream that troubled him.

Verse 1 says Nebuchadnezzar had this dream in his second year of reign, although Daniel was at least now four years in Babylon. How do we reconcile that; we look at history.

Nabopolassar had conquered Assyria in 612 B.C. and established the Babylonian empire. There were no more adversaries to conquer, so he turned the reigns of the military to his son Nebuchadnezzar who then took to expanding the empire by defeating smaller non-adversarial nations like Judah and others from 607 to 605 B.C. as he jointly ruled as the "new" king along side his father. When Nabopolassar died at some later date after 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar then became sole ruler of Babylon, most likely around 600-601 B.C.

It was in Nebuchadnezzar's second year of rule following his father's passing when this dream took place. Henry H. Halley (Halley's Bible Handbook pg. 342) says, "This was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as sole ruler."

Such "joint rule" of father and son was not unheard of. King David also anointed Solomon as King even as David still was king. This was to ensure an orderly succession. We read of it in I Kings Chapters 1 and 2.

I touch on this for the simple reason that some might point to "the second year" as an error in scripture. It is not.

Now that Nebuchadnezzar was the sole ruler, God gave him a dream that profoundly impacted him in such a way that sleep was taken from him. He called all the wise men of his father (2:2) the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, all the Chaldeans. He demanded that they show the king the dream and its interpretation. They asked him to tell them the dream, then they would give him the meaning of it. This is what they were known for, and why Nabopolassar had them in his court.

Nebuchadnezzar told them that he could not remember the dream. They continued to insist that he describe the dream to them. Verses 8-9 show that the King did not trust his father's wise men. He accused them that they would "make up" an interpretation just to "save their skins" or to "gain" credibility by lying and corrupt "interpretations." He was letting them know that if they were truly gifted in dreams then they would also know the dream itself.

They answered him in verse 10, ***“there is not a man upon earth that can show the kings matter”*** and again in verse 11, ***“there is none other that can show it...except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh (of any man).”*** It is important here to note their claim that only a god could tell him what he had dreamed. This made the King very furious to the point that he ordered the captain of the King’s guard to round up all the wise men (the “pretenders”) and execute all of them.

Now enters Daniel’s role which we will examine tomorrow.