

The Adventures of Daniel and Friends

Part 2

Chapter 3

The Forgotten Dream

BANG! BANG! BANG!
BANG!

Daniel stirred sleepily.

BANG! BANG! BANG!
BANG!

“Open up in the name of
King Nebuchadnezzar!”

Daniel yawned as he awoke
from a midday rest. His eyes
widened as he heard voices
and soldiers’ boots downstairs.
Then for the second time in his
life, Babylonian soldiers piled
into his room. This time they
were led by Arioch, captain of
the king’s guard.

“You and your three
Hebrew friends are under
arrest. The king has ordered
that you be put to death.”



“But *why*? What have we done?”

“You’re one of his wise men, aren’t you? My orders are to put to death every wise man in Babylon.”

“*Wait*,” pleaded Daniel. “Why did the king make such a harsh decree?”

“Because he’s fed up with the lot of you. He called you ‘a bunch of man pleasers, phony tricksters, and charlatans.’”

“Look, Arioch, my friends and I have barely begun our service as wise men, and we were not even in court this morning. So at least tell me what happened.”

“Well, the king had a dream last night that disturbed him deeply, and he called his most senior advisers to interpret it. The only problem was that he could not remember the dream. He promised them that if they could remember the dream for him and tell him what it means, then they would receive gifts and

rewards and great honor. But if they couldn’t, then they would be killed. That is how desperate the king is to know the meaning of the dream.”

“I see. So, what did the wise men tell him?”

“They insisted that there was not a man on earth who could do what the king asked. No king, however great and mighty, had ever asked such a thing of a magician, enchanter, or astrologer. They protested that what the king was asking was much too difficult, and that no one could reveal the dream to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men. This put the king into such a rage that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon—and I’m sorry, young Belteshazzar, that includes *you*.”

“*Wait*,” Daniel said again, as the guards came forward to take him. “Arioch, please allow me to speak to the king. I want him to know

that the God whom I serve is able to show me his dream and to interpret it for him.”



“What good are wise men if they’re not wise enough to tell me what I want to know?” said the king, slamming his wine goblet on the table. He was still fuming as Daniel was escorted in.

“Well, Arioch? Is it done?”

“Er ... n-not quite, O King. Here is one of the captives of Judah who says that he is able to tell the king what his dream means.”

“Verily? Is he sure?”

“Yes, O King,” said Daniel. “Give me time and I will tell you what you have dreamed.”

“Time? Why should I give you *time*? I have already asked all the magicians, enchanters, and astrologers, and they couldn’t help me, so how can you?”

“O King, I have only just heard of this matter.”

The king, recognizing Daniel as being one of the four Hebrew boys that had so impressed him, relented a little.

“Very well then, Belteshazzar. You have until tomorrow at this hour. But not a single minute more.”



Daniel rushed back to his living quarters to tell Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego the king’s time limit.

“But Daniel,” said Meshach. “No man on earth can do what you have promised to do.”

“You’re right. No *man* can do it, but *God* can. We will ask Him to reveal this mystery to us. He *must* do it, otherwise tomorrow at this time we will be executed along with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”

Then the four of them knelt and beseeched God.



Daniel had difficulty getting to sleep that night. He tossed to and fro, trying not to worry about when or if God would show him the dream. Even after managing to sleep, he kept waking up, trying to remember whether he had dreamed anything during his fitful slumber.

“Oh, God,” he finally prayed, “please help me to relax and trust that *You* know what *You*’re doing even if *You* don’t reveal the king’s dream.”

No sooner had Daniel surrendered himself to whatever the will of God might be, than he saw a vision glowing in the surrounding darkness. He gaped in wonder as the vision unfolded and its meaning became clear.

As the vision faded, Daniel shouted for joy

and praised God for His unending faithfulness.

“I thank You, O God of my fathers, for having shown me the king’s dream.”⁴



“So, what was it?” Nebuchadnezzar asked, as Daniel came before him early the next morning. “Remember, you need to tell me both the dream *and* the interpretation.”

“There is not a wise man, seer, enchanter, or magician on earth who is able to explain to the king this mystery,” Daniel answered. “However, there *is* a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has revealed this mystery to me, not because I am wiser than other men, but so that you, O King, may understand the meaning of your dream and know what will happen in days to come.”

King Nebuchadnezzar sat upright, his interest

aroused. He was impressed by the authority and quiet assurance with which Daniel spoke.

“Do not miss writing even one word of what he says,” the king instructed his scribe.

“Go on,” he said to Daniel.

“You looked, O King, and there stood before you an enormous, dazzling statue. The head of the statue was made of pure gold; its chest and arms were made of silver; its belly and thighs of brass; its legs were made of iron; and its feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s eyes widened. “Y-y-yes,” he stammered. “Yes, I *remember*. That was it *exactly*. But then something happened....”

“While you were watching,” Daniel continued, “a rock was cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands. The

rock struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, smashing them, and the entire statue crumbled to pieces, becoming like chaff on a summer threshing floor. A wind then swept the chaff away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.”

Nebuchadnezzar sat speechless as Daniel continued, “That was the dream, and now I will tell you the interpretation that God gave me for the king.

“*You*, O King, are the king of all kings. The God of heaven has given you great power and might and glory. He has made you ruler of *all* the people, as well as of the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, He has made you ruler of all. *You* are that head of gold.”

“Excellent! Excellent!” exclaimed the king. “Please tell me more.”

“After you, another kingdom will arise, represented by the breast and arms of silver, not as great a kingdom as yours, of course. After that, a third kingdom, one of brass, will rule over the whole earth. And finally, there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron. And just as iron breaks and smashes everything in pieces, so this kingdom will crush and break all others.”

“And what about the feet and the toes?” the king asked breathlessly, “and the *rock*?!”

“Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of clay and partly of iron, so this *final* kingdom will be a divided kingdom, partly strong and partly weak. The people of this kingdom will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. And during the time of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will *never* be destroyed. And this kingdom will not be left to

other people, but it will break in pieces and consume all these other kingdoms, and it will stand forever.

“That, O King, is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, not by human hands, the rock that broke the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold to pieces.”

The king stayed deep in thought as Daniel concluded. “God has shown the king what will take place in the future.”

As King Nebuchadnezzar pondered all that had been told him, Arioch, who well knew how unpredictable the king’s reactions to things could be, held his breath. At last, the king rose from his throne and descended to where Daniel was standing. Then those present in the court gasped in astonishment as they watched the unthinkable happen. The great and mighty King

Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylon and the whole world, sank down to his knees before Daniel and lay prostrate before him on the floor.

“Surely *your* God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries,” said the great ruler, “for you were able to reveal this secret.”

King Nebuchadnezzar then announced, “You, O Belteshazzar, shall be the ruler of the entire province of Babylon and over all the wise men whose lives you saved today.”

Chapter 4

Trial by Fire!

The wise men’s thankfulness to Daniel for saving them from the wrath of the king did not

last long. It soon turned to bitter jealousy, especially when they heard that the king had also promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to important government positions at Daniel’s request.

“It is unbelievable that the king would put this young foreigner over us,” murmured one of the older magicians. “We must get rid of him.”

“Easier said than done,” muttered an astrologer. “He’s too powerful.”

“But,” whispered another, his eyes darting to make sure that no one could overhear their plotting, “if we can turn the king against Daniel’s friends, we might be able to bring down Daniel as well.”

Their chance was soon to come.



One fine day, King Nebuchadnezzar burst into

his royal throne room with a new idea.

“I’m going to have a giant image made!” he announced. “It will be something like the one I saw in my dream, only it will be *all* gold. I want it to be 27 meters high and 3 meters wide and set up on the plain of Dura for all to see.”

“And what would be the purpose of this great image, O King,” inquired Daniel, who was present in court.

“To worship it, of course.”

“Are there not enough gods already in Babylon?”

“Enough gods? How can we ever have enough gods? The more gods we have that can bless us, the better. Now summon my chief craftsmen. I want them to start work on this immediately.”

Daniel sighed, knowing the king had acknowledged the true God, but now, because of his pride, Nebuchadnezzar wanted

this image of himself built to be worshipped.

And so, on the orders of the king, a great golden image was soon erected on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. When it was finished, the king invited princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counselors, sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces to its grand opening ceremony and dedication. This included Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but not Daniel, who could not attend because the king had sent him on other business that day.

When the crowd had finished assembling in front of the image, the king’s herald stepped forward and proclaimed: “Hear the decree of the king. To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that when you hear the cornet, flute, harp, trombone, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you will fall down and worship the golden image that

King Nebuchadnezzar has erected.”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were looking at each other with concern, but worse was to come.

The herald continued: “And whoever does not fall down and worship, will at that hour be thrown into a fiery furnace!”

“What shall we do?” whispered Meshach. “We cannot bow down and worship that abomination.”

“We could quietly leave and hope that nobody notices,” said Shadrach.

“No chance of that,” replied Abednego. “Look. The musicians are picking up their instruments.”

“O God,” Meshach implored, “we know that You will stand by us as we make this stand for You. Please use this situation for Your glory.”

Suddenly a blast of cornets, flutes, harps, trombones, psalteries, and

other musical instruments rang out over the sandy plains of Dura. Not wishing to be fuel for the king’s furnace, thousands of people fell to the ground and groveled before the great golden image. All, that is, except Meshach, Abednego, and Shadrach, who remained standing.

As the last notes of the music died away, the crowd of idolaters rose once again to their feet.

“Praise God,” whispered Shadrach, “because everybody else had their heads bowed to the ground, I don’t think anyone noticed we were still standing.”

However, they were wrong.



“We’ve got them!” one of the magicians cackled, as the jealous advisers rushed back to the palace to report to the king about what they had seen.

“We couldn’t have set a better trap for them if we

had planned it ourselves,” said another. “The king will be furious to know that these Hebrews will worship only their god.”

“I can hardly wait to tell the king,” said another. “They’re as good as dead.”

By the time Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego arrived back at the city, armed guards were waiting for them at the gate.

“The king is furious,” said Arioch, as they were marched towards the palace. “You’re going to have to do some fast talking to get out of this one alive. And I’m afraid your friend Daniel isn’t around to help you.”

“Well, it’s going to take a miracle,” said Meshach, amazed at how courageous he was feeling. “But our God is a God of miracles, as you have already seen, Arioch.”

“True,” said Shadrach. “I believe that God allowed us to be brought here to Babylon for such an hour as this.”

“Even if it is His will that we die for our faith,” said Abednego, “it will be a testimony of our faith and commitment to God. Whether we live or die, God will be glorified.”

Now that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego found themselves in a situation where they might actually be martyred for their faith, they found that they were not afraid of dying. However, they felt that God had something else in mind, something special that He wanted to do with them this day. All three of them could feel the presence of the Lord right there with them; they even felt as if a fourth prisoner was walking alongside them.

As they came closer to the palace and the confrontation with the king, their faith grew stronger and their faces shone bolder and brighter, until by the time they were marched into the king’s judgment hall, they felt no power on earth could stop them.

King Nebuchadnezzar was still furious as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brought before him.

“Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that in spite of all the favor I have bestowed upon you, you refuse to serve our gods and to bow down and worship my golden image?”

“It is definitely so, Your Magnificence,” said one of the wise men. “We saw them standing there with our own eyes. Even after hearing your commandment that anyone who does not fall down and worship the image will be thrown into the midst of a fiery furnace.”

The king brooded, trying to control his anger. He remembered how impressed he had been with the young Hebrews at their first meeting. They were intelligent and some of the most talented boys he had ever seen. He needed such leadership in Babylon.

“Listen,” he said. “I have shown respect for your God,

so why can you not show some respect for ours? After all I have done for you, can you not do this for me? Where’s your gratitude? If the next time you hear the musical instruments you fall down and worship the image which I have made, then very well. But if you still refuse to worship my image, then into the furnace you will go. Tell me, *what* God can save you from that?”

Meshach stepped forward, the power of God shining in his eyes. “King Nebuchadnezzar, we worship only the one, true God. Even if we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it and rescue us from your hand, O King.”

“That is true,” Shadrach and Abednego said. “But even if He doesn’t rescue us, O King, we cannot serve your gods *nor* worship the golden image you have set up.”

Arioch winced. No one had ever stood up to Nebuchadnezzar and defied him to his face like this

before. The king sat for a few moments in a state of shock, his face turning from red to crimson to purple before exploding in a roar.

“Bind them with ropes! Use the strongest men in my army. Heat the furnace seven times hotter than it has ever been heated before, then throw these men in *immediately!* And I want it done now, do you hear? *NOW!*”



Abednego cried out in pain as he landed on the furnace's brick floor, and cried out again as Shadrach landed on top of him, followed by Meshach. Shouts and screams could also be heard above the roar of the blazing inferno into which they had just been thrown. The fire was so hot and the flames so fierce that the soldiers could not get near the opening of the furnace to throw them in without themselves being engulfed in the fire. Then the three men realized...

“Look, we're *in* the furnace, but we're not getting burned!” Shadrach exclaimed over the crackle of the flames.

“This is incredible!” shouted Meshach. “We're in the middle of a white-hot fire, but we're not feeling the flames.”

“And ... the ropes. They've fallen off,” said Abednego. “This is a miracle! Praise be to God!”

“My dear faithful children,” a soothing voice said in the midst of the flames, and they realized that a fourth Person was with them in the flames, a person so pure, so lovely, so powerful, so radiant, so full of love, peace, and tenderness, that they knew that this was....



Nebuchadnezzar frantically called them to come out of the fire, and then declared: “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He has sent His angel and rescued His servants. They trusted in Him and were willing to

give up their lives rather than worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will

be destroyed and their houses made into dunghills, for no other God can save like this!”

Footnote:

⁴ Daniel 2:23, *paraphrased*

Learn More About Daniel

You can read more about Daniel in the book of the Bible by the same name where he recorded other important events that took place in his life. Daniel not only served under King Nebuchadnezzar, but he also was alive during the short rule of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar. And after Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, Daniel then served under Cyrus, the king of Medo-Persia.

In Daniel chapter six, you can find the story of Daniel's miraculous protection from lions when the king of Medo-Persia had him sent to a den of lions for defying an order to not pray to any god other than himself for thirty days. In chapters seven and eight, two other dreams Daniel has about future world empires are recorded.

In Daniel chapter ten there is record of an intense battle fought in the spiritual realm when the Archangel Michael is sent to fight off a demon that tried to stop an important prophetic message from being delivered to Daniel.