***Daniel 2:1-12 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 2Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.” 4Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “Oking, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.” 5The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.” 7They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.” 8The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.” 10The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” 12For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.***

We’re back with Daniel this week. Recall that we left Daniel and his friends approved for service to the king – Nebuchadnezzar found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers – and remember that magicians and astrologers are those who studied the natural world and the things that happened in it. Daniel and his friends were better than “all his realm” – all those who served him. They’d just completed three years of training….

 So, in verse 1 of our scripture tonight, why does it say *Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him?* In chapter 1, three years of training had been completed… intellects far greater than mine have debated this for centuries. But there was a priest of Marduk named Berosus, a Chaldean priest and historian, writing in 361 BC that said – *Nebuchadnezzar’s father, Nabopolassar, was aged and infirm, and gave up a part of his army to his son, who defeated the Egyptian host at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and drove Necho out of Asia. The victorious prince then marched directly to Jerusalem, and Jehoiakim surrendered to him; and this was the beginning of the seventy years captivity. The period of father and son reigning together was two years, and the second year of his single reign would be the fourth of his entire reign.* Since it’s the 4th year of his entire reign, this presents no contradiction to verses 5 & 18 in chapter 1.

 Nebuchadnezzar had dreams and they troubled him so that he couldn’t sleep. The Hebrew word for troubled has the idea of very, very agitated and very upsetting.

 Verses 2 & 3 *Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”* Recall again that magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and the Chaldeans are the most educated in the kingdom. Later in verse 13, they are called wise men. The king calls and they came. The king tells them he is anxious over a dream, and he wants to know the meaning. The suggestion is that he awoke and remembered the dream in part’ and it troubled him greatly. All of us have had dreams that we remember in part, but not all.

 Verse 4 *Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “Oking, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”* The Chaldeans were the priests and learned religious men. They spoke in the kings native Aramaic or Chaldee. *O king, live forever* – like saying Long live the King or Queen. *Tell your servants the dream and we will give the interpretation.* There is nothing in the ancient text that suggests they are insincere. Dream interpretation was common then and is common even today. Whole fields of study and dozens of books have focused on dream interpretation.

 Verse 5 & 6 The king throws a wrench into the works – Maybe because he doesn’t trust their abilities or perhaps because he doesn’t recall the whole dream clearly. *The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm:* ***(in the KJV this is rendered – the thing is gone from me)*** *if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”* This suggests that the king was vague on all the details, but the Aramaic can be rendered – the thing has been decided and I will not change my mind. Regardless, the men are told to not only interpret the dream, but tell the king what it was. If they do, they will be rewarded. If not, they will be utterly destroyed.

 Verse 7 *They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.”* The Chaldeans try again. Tell us the dream and we will interpret.

 Verse 8 & 9 *The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”* The king has not slept well, his spirit is troubled and now he is doubting the wisest of his court standing before him. The king is saying - You’re trying to buy time. If I tell you anything, you will speak lies and make up words. The only way I can know for sure that you are giving me a true interpretation is if you tell me the whole dream AND it’s meaning. If you can tell me the dream, I will trust what you tell me about the meaning.

 Years ago, I watched a show where a detective was able to tell how a supposed psychic was able to tell things about a mother’s dead son. It was amazing the clues the mother gave and the psychic exploited. Nebuchadnezzar will not be exploited here.

 Verses 10 & 11 *The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”* The Chaldeans now admit defeat – they admit they have no connection with the supernatural. The word difficult in Chaldee means rare, unusual, peculiar. The Chaldeans and all the wise men standing there are in a fix!

 Verses 12 & 13 *For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.* The king becomes furious. He sees the lies and deceit. I can imagine that there have been other times he sought advice and now understands that the advice then was a pack of lies too. Notice who is NOT there… Daniel and his companions – the four that were 10 times wiser than all the others in the Kingdom. The king makes the decree and they (his officers) begin killing the wise men… and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. God kept separated Daniel and his companions to create a clear difference.

 In the next verses, we’ll see once again Daniel being focused, faithful, and fearless when the captain of the guard comes to kill him and Daniel trusts God to deliver him. We have to stay tuned – God is getting ready to deliver a miracle. The Chaldeans said – there is no man and there is no false god that can deliver the answer. Daniel will deliver the dream and interpretation, while giving God all the credit, praise, and glory.