

DANIEL (part 3)

How Nebuchadnezzar found the true God – *without* help from the ‘true religion’!

DANIEL'S DOUBLE TEST: *Or, If you're not inspired, why should I trust you?*

The book of Daniel makes a claim for Daniel similar to that which *The Watchtower* claims for itself [1:17]. But would JW's pass the test of *secular, practical* wisdom that initially impressed Nebuchadnezzar? [1:20] It was Babylonian, ‘worldly’ wisdom that brought them into Nebuchadnezzar’s ‘inner circle’ [1:19]

[1:17-21] Instruction in the wisdom of the Chaldeans was, besides, for Daniel and his three friends a test of their faith, since the wisdom of the Chaldeans, from the nature of the case, was closely allied to the Chaldean idolatry and heathen superstition, which the learners of this wisdom might easily be led to adopt. But Daniel and his friends learned only the Chaldean wisdom without adopting the heathen element which was mingled with it, is evidenced from the steadfastness in the faith with which at a later period, at the danger of their lives (cf. Dan.iii.6), they stood aloof from all participation in idolatry, and in regard to Daniel in particular, from the deep glance into the mysteries of the kingdom of God which lies before us in his prophecies, and bears witness of the clear separation between the sacred and the profane. But he needed to be deeply versed in the Chaldean wisdom, as formerly Moses was in the wisdom of Egypt (Acts vii.22), so as to be able to put to shame the wisdom of this world by the hidden wisdom of God. [Keil 82]

WHO REALLY FORESHADOWED WATCHTOWER LEADERS?

Daniel occupied a high position in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. What did that show? It pointed out how Jehovah's anointed witnesses in this day for salvation would have a prominent position and be known throughout the world ... Jehovah requires his witnesses in modern days to live in purity as part of their preaching ... They are like Daniel, FAITHFUL to their God and TRUE to whatever trust may be put in them ... Jehovah's anointed witnesses foreshadowed by Daniel will prosper ... [*Watchtower* Nov.15, 1953, pp.691,692,701]

We know how liberal in words those impostors always were; according to the language of an ancient poet, they enriched the ears and emptied the purses of others. And truly those who curiously court the breeze with their ears deserve to feed upon it, and to be taken in by such deceits ... When the Chaldeans thus boldly promise to become good interpreters of the dream, they not only betray their rashness, but become mere impostors, who pretend to be proficients in a science of which they know nothing ... [John Calvin, *Daniel* tr. Myers 123,124]

[2:1-9] So far Nebuchadnezzar had been impressed by the Jewish lads' *secular, ‘natural’* wisdom, but they had not yet exhibited clearly *supernatural* wisdom. Nebuchadnezzar's first dream was Daniel's opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge that **ONLY GOD** can demonstrate -- **OMNISCIENCE**.

ASK JW: Would WT leaders be willing to subject themselves to either of Nebuchadnezzar's tests? (vv.5,6)

[2:3] The magi boasted that by the help of the gods they could reveal deep and hidden things. If this pretence is well founded -- so concluded Nebuchadnezzar -- then it must be as easy for them to make known to me my dream as its interpretation; and since they could not do the former, he as rightly held them to be deceivers, as the people did the priests of Baal ... because their gods answered not by fire. [Hengstenberg in Keil 89]

[2:10,11] Notice the Chaldean ‘wise men’ try the rear exit: “After all, we're only human ...” (But isn't that precisely the point of Nebuchadnezzar's test -- to identify *superhuman* wisdom? The ‘wise men’ had tried to set a (safer) standard of qualification already (v.4)

[2:10,11] In reply to the king, the wise men openly admitted their inability to tell the king's dream. They tried to temper the confession by asserting that no one else could tell it either. In other words, the king was simply unreasonable to require it. They were correct in stating that “not a man upon the earth” could do this, but ... Only superintelligence, belonging to deity, could reveal this kind of information. Actually, this was a major confession on the part of these men – admitting they could not do what they were supposed to do. Their business was to make contact with the divine realm and find out such information. [Wood 54]

[2:12,13] **Nebuchadnezzar is unimpressed by the modest ambitions of his ‘wise men’:** He declares religion useless if it can't get us in touch with God (remind JW that PART truth is the characteristic of FALSE religion; Deut.13:1-5; 18:9-14 -- OCCULTISTS can foretell SOME events, but not INFALLIBLY)

[2:14-23] **ASK JW: How do we know for sure that Daniel and his friends had God's blessing?**

[2:19] The combined prayers of Daniel and his three Hebrew companions did not prove to be directed to a FALSE, MYTHICAL god ... As an excellent example for all modern-day witnesses of Jehovah, Daniel TOOK NO CREDIT to himself for what he was about to disclose ... but gave the glory to the real “God in the heavens” ... [*Our Incoming World Government -- God's Kingdom*, WTBTS, 1977, pp.42-43, emphasis added]

[2:24-28] **Note: Babylon's best ‘organizations’ can't reveal the future -- only GOD can!** (Isa.44:24-26; 46:1,7-11; and Isa.47 -- Babylon's religion not only cannot SEE, it cannot SAVE)

[2:14-30] The evidence of the wisdom and power of God is here unfolded; and first the manifestation of His power ... Thus Daniel explains the revelation regarding the dream of Nebuchadnezzar made to him as announcing great changes in the kingdoms of the world, and revealing God

as the Lord of time and of the world in their developments. All wisdom also comes from God. [Keil 99]

[2:29,30] Only God can SEE the future INFALLIBLY, and only his faithful servants willingly submit their interpretations to scrutiny (avoid prophet, where possible, and use servant or spokesmen)

PROOF OF A PROPHET, SIGN OF A SERVANT

[2:31-35] Daniel passes test # 1 -- he repeats the INSPIRED REVELATION given Nebuchadnezzar

[2:36-45a] Daniel passes test # 2 -- boldly, without hesitation, or ("We're only human") modesty or apology ("We never claimed to be infallible ..."), Daniel INTERPRETS the inspired revelation

We today, who can look back over more than 2,580 years of time from Nebuchadnezzar's dream, have far more reason to believe, than Nebuchadnezzar ever had, that the dream is RELIABLE in meaning and that ITS INTERPRETATION BY DANIEL IS TRUSTWORTHY. Hence we are LED TO BELIEVING THE WORD of "the grand God". And so, from where does the destruction of the symbolic "image" come? From "the God of heaven," the One who changes the times and seasons and who puts down kings and sets up other kings according to his own will. The fixed time for him to do so must be very near. Why so? Because back in early autumn of the year 1914 C.E., the last year of the Gentile Times, "the appointed times of the nations" ended. According to CHRIST'S WORDS in Luke 21:20-24, this meant that the time had arrived for God to stop the further trampling by the nations on WHAT JERUSALEM SYMBOLIZED. [... *World Government*, p.65, emphasis added]

[2:45b] Is the gift of INTERPRETATION any less inspired than revelation? (cf. Gen.40:8; 1 Cor.12:10)

ASK JW: Please explain to me: If God in the past took the trouble to INSPIRE those whom he sent, or to give them at least INFALLIBLE INTERPRETATIONS, why should He now ask us to trust UNINSPIRED, FALLIBLE spokesmen? Is this the Jehovah who DOES NOT CHANGE? (Mal.3:6)

... the word assures the readers of the book of the certainty of the fulfilment, since it lay far remote, and the visible course of things in the present and in the proximate future gave no indication or only a very faint prospect of the fulfilment. [Keil 112]

[2:46,47] Why did Nebuchadnezzar come to TRUST the God of Daniel?

[2:47] What was it that convinced the prophet Daniel as well as the leading politician of the day, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, that the One who could give such a preview of thousands of years of human history and thus be "declaring the end from the beginning" had to be God Almighty? (Isaiah 46:10, AV) It was the HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE requirements that stood in the way of such a revelation. ... the forgotten dream seemed to convey a

message of supreme importance to him. He put his astrologers and magic-practicing priests to an abnormal test by demanding that they should, not only interpret the dream, but, first of all, recall it to the king's mind. Because they called such a demand wholly unreasonable, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered them to be put to death AS BEING FRAUDS IN THEIR PROPHETICAL PROFESSION. [... *World Government*, pp.41-42, emphasis added]

[2:48,49] And why did Nebuchadnezzar come to believe in Daniel, even to elevate him and his friends?

[2:46-49] For Nebuchadnezzar did not pray to the man Daniel, but in the person of Daniel to his God, i.e. to the God of the Jews; and he did this because this God had manifested Himself to him through Daniel as the supreme God, who rules over kings, and reveals hidden things, which the gods of the Chaldean wise men were not able to reveal. [Keil 113]

ASK JW: Why is it that so few people respect The Watchtower's claim to speak for God?

[on 2:44] Those "kings," or whatever political rulers have since come to power on earth, have REFUSED TO PAY ATTENTION to the "good news of the kingdom" that has now been given a worldwide publication. They, or their governments, have opposed or even violently persecuted the Christian preachers of the "GOOD NEWS" OF JEHOVAH'S ESTABLISHED MESSIANIC KINGDOM. [... *World Government*, p.67, emphasis added]