

God is Set Apart

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- [0 : 0 0] In the spirit of soccer camp, I thought I'd use an illustration that was used on Tuesday related! to our passage for the day. We find ourselves in Daniel chapter 2. I would encourage you even now to open up to Daniel chapter 2.
- It's on page 737. And if Daniel's dream is illustrated by this box, the contents of the dream are also kind of representative of what we find in our story today.
- But I need two volunteers. Two volunteers. All right, two right in the back, right behind Mr. Hill. Okay, come on up. Yeah, you too. Come on up. Come on up. Great.
- Okay, so this is Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Come on up here with me. All right, good. All of you are also volunteers. You are the wise men, okay? The wise men who Nebuchadnezzar has called into his palace.
- He's asking for an interpretation to his dream. And so those of you who are wise, and I know this is a room full of very wise people, what is in the box? That's what I'm going to ask you in just a moment, okay?
- [1 : 3 4] What is in the box? All right? But then, why don't you come over here for just a second, okay? All right. Why don't you take a look and see what is in the box? Don't say. Don't say what's in the box yet, okay?
- And then, for you, I'm going to tell you what's in the box. All right. Okay, good. So, all of my wise sages here, the wise men that I've called, what?
- What is in the box? What's that? Rubber duck. Good, good thought. No, no.
- Somebody in the first service said donuts, and they had dreamed about donuts last night. I think that's probably a good dream, too, but not what's in the box, okay?
- Of these two, who do you suppose is going to be able to tell me what is in here? The person who looked inside the box, what did you see in the box? A picture of a statue with a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, a metal part of bronze, and the legs and feet were made of metal and clay.
- [2 : 5 6] You are amazing. Good job. Very descriptive of what she saw in the box was a bag, but of course, that is incomplete.
- It's just part of the picture, but I told you what was in the bag. What is in the bag? A Bible is in the bag. The Word of God had come to Nebuchadnezzar, and God's Word is on display through this dream, but especially through Daniel, who reveals that Word to Nebuchadnezzar.
- Thank you for your help. Good job. You can be seated. Thank you. This morning, we're learning about the distinctiveness of God, and maybe it would have been better to title this not just God is distinct or God is set apart, but that God is a God who reveals His message, His Word to His people.
- We have a God who sets Himself apart as one who desires for His creation to know His revealed Word.

And so here are these captives, eight or 900 miles away from home, and they're in a different place, and this pagan king who doesn't even acknowledge God, who thinks that His gods have conquered the God of Israel, and yet God Himself, the God of heaven, revealing His Word to Nebuchadnezzar.

[4 : 38] And this morning, we're going to see what that Word is, and then next week, we're going to come to understand what that Word means, as Daniel will interpret that. But especially, I want us, as we're looking at this passage today, to recognize the amazing privilege of the revealed Word of God, that God has instrumentally revealed Himself to His creation.

Not just so they know who He is, but so they can respond to what they know and come to worship. That ultimately is what God is after. God is after worship.

The Father seeks such to worship Him. That's what Jesus told the woman at the well. That's what God's objective is in giving His Word, to welcome us into worship, into love of Him.

Of course, we see the revealed messages of God, even as we look at creation. We call that general revelation. That God has revealed Himself in what we see, in what we observe, in what we experience.

Even just on Friday, John mentioned the thunderstorm. And as the thunder was thundering, I was inside the house and just thought to myself, I just love thunderstorms.

[5 : 59] There's something about the thunder and the lightning that reminds me of the power of God. And of course, I'm sure if I were to ask you, what really stands out to you about God's creation, you would talk about the special things like the stars or the trees, or some of you who have ever lived near the ocean.

You enjoy the mountains and just the benefits of what God has given to us through general revelation of calling attention to Himself. We see so much about God in creation.

Matter of fact, Romans chapter 1 talks about the fact that all of the divine attributes are clearly seen in what we observe in creation. His majesty, His wisdom, His power, even His eternality, that He is a God who is so infinite, so magnificent, so magnificent, so large.

It's beyond our comprehension in His ability to show compassion in the order of things that He has made and how He takes care of His creation. It demonstrates a God who is overall.

But we know that general revelation by itself is insufficient. While it is clear, and those who see God in creation know there is an all-powerful, almighty deity, but they don't know who that deity is or how to respond to that deity.

[7 : 28] So God has also given to us special revelation. His revealed Word, His prophets, His Word, the Word of God itself, and then coming to us through His own Son, Jesus, who was the Word of God made flesh.

In this way, God is distinct. God is set apart. God is separate. Entirely different from all other things in creation, all other powers, all other authorities, all other beings.

God is distinct in that He demonstrates His interest in revealing Himself to His creation. We'll observe this quality of God in our passage today, especially from Daniel 2, verse 11.

Look there just for a moment. This is where I'm drawing out our point that God is distinct, and we're going to apply this to the passage at large. It says this. These are the wise men who are responding to the king.

It said, This thing that the king asked is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. And now drop down to verse 19.

[8 : 35] Then this mystery was revealed to Daniel. In a vision of the night, then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel's God as separate, as distinct, as set apart from all other gods, all other powers, all other authorities, because God reveals His Word to His people.

He does that to draw us in to worship of Himself, and that's what God is beginning to work in Nebuchadnezzar's heart. So, beginning in verse 1, we're going to see that God is set apart in giving revelation.

God is set apart in giving revelation. This is part of the nature of who God is in revealing Himself to His creation. He sets Himself apart this way.

Notice in verse 1. In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. His spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

God is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. We're going to just talk about this for a little bit. But before we get there, notice the response of Nebuchadnezzar. He's troubled.

[9 : 49] His sleep leaves him. God speaks to Nebuchadnezzar in a way that is recognizable. He gets his attention. He is seeking to draw the attention to Nebuchadnezzar that this revelation is not coming from within Nebuchadnezzar.

It's coming from without. And so, Nebuchadnezzar takes it seriously. He recognizes this is coming from outside of himself. This opening phrase, in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, it's my conviction that this is actually a part of the flow of this narrative.

And it would find itself within Daniel chapter 1. So this three-year training process that is taking place there in Babylon where Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel are all part of this training process.

And so, chapter 1 kind of deals with the start and completion of that process. But inserted in that, I believe, is this story of Daniel chapter 2 where Daniel is able to interpret the dream of the king.

Which helps us understand in Daniel chapter 1 verse 17 how Daniel knew that he had this ability. As for these youths, God gave them learning and skill and all literature and wisdom.

[11 : 13] And Daniel had understanding and all visions and dreams. How did he know that? Well, he knew that because of Daniel chapter 2. And I think it also helps to explain why Daniel wasn't a part of this assembly of counselors that come before the king here in our narrative this morning.

God had given Nebuchadnezzar a dream. He had revealed a message to him. And as a result, Nebuchadnezzar is troubled. His mind is, his spirit is struck.

The root word that is here means to strike as with a hammer on an anvil. Or to strike a bell. There was this pounding that was taking place.

It was recognizable. It got his attention. It created alarm in his heart. He knew something significant was taking place. Perhaps even refers to the rapid heartbeat that was taking place while he was dreaming.

Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night after a very hard dream? This cold sweat that you have and their heart is racing? That's the kind of response that Nebuchadnezzar is having to this dream.

[12 : 26] We also find that his sleep left him. His sleep was done. We would call this a nightmare. His heart is racing. He's scared.

Any of you kids who've ever had a bad dream, maybe what you would tend to do, what I did when I was a kid, I would get up and I would run to mom and dad's room and ask to lay in the bed with them.

Ever? I won't ask you to raise your hands. You know what I'm talking about. This is what's going on for Nebuchadnezzar. And what's interesting is it says not only did he have a dream, but he had dreams, which means it was likely this recurring event that would happen night after night after night and it continued to torment him.

He recognized that God was at work. Of course, dreams in the ancient world were considered significant. They were considered indicators of what was yet to happen.

And Nebuchadnezzar knew that this was no ordinary dream. It arrested his attention. And in fact, God was speaking to Nebuchadnezzar. God was doing here what he did repeatedly throughout the Old and New Testament when prophets were not present.

[13 : 40] We find 21 times throughout the Old Testament that God speaks to various individuals through dreams. So that in Genesis chapter 20 to King Abimelech.

Abimelech, if you remember, took Abraham's wife Sarah to be his wife, to be a concubine. And God shows up to King Abimelech in the night and says, you are a dead man because the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife.

And Abimelech's like, what? God speaks to Abimelech in a dream. Of course, God speaks to Jacob who is running to Laban's house.

And God reveals to Jacob through angels ascending and descending on this ladder, this confirmation of the covenant promises that he had made to Abraham and also to Jacob's father Isaac and now were extended to him and to his children.

God, of course, would give dreams to Joseph. Joseph, who would have a dream of the sheaves that were bowing down to him and also a dream of the sun and the moon and 11 stars that were all bowing down to Joseph.

[14 : 57] God would speak to his people through dreams. It was meant to get their attention. It was meant to be this vivid picture, this message, this revelation of God to his people to give them this repeated understanding, this stressing the significance of what was about to happen.

God is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar as well, revealing the future to Nebuchadnezzar, warning him, helping him to take notice. Not only does he have this dream, but this dream is not enough.

While it is revelation, Nebuchadnezzar understands that it's significant, it's come from God and he doesn't leave it there. He wants to know the interpretation and that's where we turn next. Nebuchadnezzar, he seeks an interpretation.

He's kind of moving our way through this narrative, helping to draw attention to the transitions that are taking place. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes that this dream is important. He wants to know what it means, so he sends for an interpretation.

It says in verse 2, then the king commanded the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king and the king said to them, I had a dream and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.

[16 : 15] Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever. Tell your servant the dream and we will show the interpretation. Of course, Nebuchadnezzar wants to know what this dream means.

So he sends for the experts in the kingdom so that he might know what this dream means. There are four distinct groups that are present.

Magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and Chaldeans. Magicians would be those who meticulously chronicled the configuration or the constellation of the stars, the movement of the heavens as it were.

And as significant events would take place, they would capture those and chronicle those events so that any time that event would reoccur, they could have a way to interpret the current events that were taking place before them.

Enchanters were also astrologers or conjurers. These were those who used magic spells and incantations were believed to be able to communicate with the other world, the spirit world.

[17 : 22] sorcerers were those who were thought to speak to the gods. They used omens and studied them to understand the future.

They used astrology and even used techniques like using a sheep's liver to decide what was going to happen in the current situation.

These Chaldeans are also astrologers. These are the ones who were priests or astrologers or magicians or soothsayers. These are the ones who were called in who were expected to be able to communicate with the spirit world and bring an answer.

There's one thing that's common to all these groups. Their association with the spirit world, with the supernatural. We tend to dismiss the supernatural as being either irrelevant or bogus or unimportant.

But the scripture would teach otherwise. Ephesians chapter 6 verse 12 says this, We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against rulers, against authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

[18 : 40] There is a battle, a struggle that is taking place and it is not a physical one. It is a spiritual one. It is not a one that you can see. It's a one that's invisible to you.

The real struggle, the real conflict, the real battle that is happening in this world is a battle that's taking place in the invisible realm. And God has entrusted spiritual forces with real spiritual power.

Make no mistake. So then in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 and 2 we find you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you walked, once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

There is delegated power that God has given to Satan and also to his demonic forces. That power is real power. power. So that even Moses, you remember the story, you've watched the movie, the power that Moses wields in Egypt is a mimicked power that is also reflected in the wise men of Pharaoh's court.

So that in Exodus chapter 6 verses 10 and 11, excuse me, 7, 10 and 11, it says this, So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just what the Lord commanded and Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a serpent.

[20 : 13] Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. It's real power.

It's delegated power. Power that God has delegated to spiritual forces to carry out the plans that they have in this world.

Then Moses turns the water of the Nile into blood and we find that in Exodus chapter 7 verse 20. Moses and Aaron did what the Lord commanded in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants.

He lifted up his staff and struck the water in the Nile and all the water in the Nile turned to blood. Then in verse 22, but the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts.

This is sobering. Miracle after miracle that Moses performs, it is emulated and mimicked by these wise men.

[21 : 16] So that even bringing the plague of frogs that we find in Exodus chapter 8. So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt, but the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Miracle after miracle, power after power was reflected in these wise men until the third plague of gnats in Exodus chapter 8 verses 17 to 19.

Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt.

The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats but they could not so there were gnats on man and beast and the magicians said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen as the Lord had said. While they do have power, there are limits, there are boundaries, there are constraints to the power that they have but they do have power, make no mistake, so that by the time we get to the end times in Revelation chapter 13 we also find this power of the false prophet who is working in concert with the Antichrist.

[22 : 41] We find this, then I saw another beast, that's the false prophet rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exerts all the authority of the first beast in its presence and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast whose mortal wound was healed.

It performs great signs even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of the people and by the sign that it allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on earth telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

Make no mistake, the spiritual forces of darkness have power. They're not to be trifled with. And here, Nebuchadnezzar calls in this spiritual group of individuals to work that power that he has seen no doubt in the past, he has recognized, he knows that this is not pretend.

Nebuchadnezzar is not interested in parlor tricks, he's not gullible, these guys are the real deal and they're not to be messed with. So Nebuchadnezzar calls them in to interpret the dream, he knows that they have some connection with the spirit world and he knows that his dream has come from the other side.

But we find in verses 4 to 11 that his counselors admit their limitation. In this case, God is preserving his word, he is preserving the integrity of the message that he has given to Nebuchadnezzar and he binds or restricts these counselors from being able to know the message that God has given to Nebuchadnezzar.

[24 : 27] Notice verse 4. Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever. Tell your servants the dream and we will show the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, the word for me is firm.

If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb and your houses shall be laid in ruins. But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor.

Therefore, show me the dream and its interpretation. They answered a second time and said, let the king tell his servants the dream and we will show the interpretation. The king answered and said, I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time.

If you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore, tell me the dream and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.

The Chaldeans answered the king and said, there is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

[25 : 41] The thing that the king asks is difficult and no one can show it to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with the flesh. Right at the outset we see in verse 4 this progression of interaction that's taking place between the king and these counselors.

First, it begins in verse 4 with great respect. Notice, O king, live forever. Recognizing his position, seeking prosperity and the continuance of his reign but then it all ends in complete defiance.

Verse 10, there is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

You're insane. This is ridiculous. Your request is impossible. You are out of your mind. What in the world are you thinking, king? What a turn.

What a change has happened. So why is the king so resolute? Well, the king is resolute because the king understands that in that era these wise men and astrologers did have some skill in interpreting dreams.

[26 : 58] There were manuals that had explained the various dream symbols. Samples of those in Akkadian dream manuals have been discovered. So all the wise men needed were to know what the symbols were, how those symbols interacted with one another.

They could look up in their index, in their manual, and they could provide some approximation of the dream and its interpretation. But Nebuchadnezzar was not interested in an approximation.

Nebuchadnezzar understood this message was from God and he wanted the real interpretation. And if they couldn't do it, the consequences were severe. I'm going to tear you limb from limb.

I'm going to burn down your houses and turn it into ruins. Why would Nebuchadnezzar be so willing to dispose of all of his wise men?

Well, I believe it's because Nebuchadnezzar understood the seriousness of the dream that he had. He recognized that in some way his kingdom or he was represented in this image and when this rock is cut out of the mountain and thrown at the statue, it blows into bits.

[28 : 10] Nebuchadnezzar has some indication that something significant is about to happen and it's not going to be good. He wants to know the specifics. He wants the interpretation to be clear.

He's not messing around. He does not want an approximate answer. He wants the real answer. And he's convinced of the integrity of this message.

And in this way, Nebuchadnezzar perhaps even here is preserving the message of the word even more than most of the captives that came out of Judah.

Those captives who had had the word of God but did not align their hearts to respond to that word and that's why they were in captivity in the first place because of their idolatry, because of the rebellion against God, their unwillingness to hear and obey the message that God had sent to the prophets.

They treated the word of God as common. But Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the significance of the word and wants to preserve the integrity of that word and demands this impossible request so that he can know for sure what God says.

[29 : 28] Although we'll see that Daniel is not a part of this group and it puts him at risk, this is another way that God is preserving the integrity of his messenger.

Because if Daniel had been a part of this group and we know that he had risen through the ranks, he had established himself as being ten times wiser than all of the wise men of Egypt, or excuse me, of Babylon.

If he had been here and been part of this group and been part of the solution of interpretation, God's word would have been corrupted in that it would have come from the collective and not come from God.

God himself is preserving his word as well. Notice as we turn to verse 12 and 13, the king's attempts to get an answer are frustrated.

His desire to understand the dream and its interpretation is frustrated. Notice, because of this, the king was angry and furious and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.

[30 : 34] So the decree went out and the wise men were about to be killed and they sought Daniel and his companions to kill them. Nebuchadnezzar is hot. We're going to see this rage that's going to come out, this violent rage of Nebuchadnezzar is going to come out time and time again throughout this narrative.

Probably not just because of the fact that his wise men let him down but also because of the insults he received. He feels a little duped.

He feels as though his power is limited. He is frustrated about the fact that a message has been given and he can't discern its interpretation.

Perhaps he also feels weak invulnerable a bit embarrassed a bit challenged a little foolish. He wants to remove this threat against him he doesn't know where that threat lies.

So he sends out this urgent command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. Babylon. And it was carried out immediately and thoroughly.

[31 : 44] And then a man named Ariok comes and begins and knocks on Daniel's door. Ariok his name means lion-like and I can imagine that he got that name for obvious reasons.

This was not a puny emaciated kind of person. He was probably renamed because of his appearance because of his job and because of the way he carried out his orders.

He was ferocious. And let me tell you Ariok didn't get this job for nothing either. He knew how to follow orders he was skilled in his craft and I think it's safe to say he was not a man of mercy.

He was cold he was methodical and he was unstoppable. You could not come against this lion-like man. He was a champion of death.

He wasn't going to be reasoned with. He receives his orders and he executes them without question. No life is spared. But he shows up at Daniel's door and the remarkable happens.

[32 : 54] Because God not only sets himself apart as giving revelation but God sets himself apart in providing a spokesman providing a servant.

The general revelation that God had given to Nebuchadnezzar was insufficient was not enough and so God has set himself a servant a spokesman to communicate his word to Nebuchadnezzar.

He desires Nebuchadnezzar knowing his word. So notice verse 14 Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Ariok the captain of the king's guard who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon he declared to Ariok the king's captain why is this decree of the king so urgent?

Then Ariok made the matter known to Daniel and Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time that he might show the interpretation to the king.

Daniel is not surprised at this opportunity that God has placed in his lap to be a spokesman for the message that God has given.

[34 : 07] Daniel sees God through this he recognized that this is God's revelation he recognizes that he has been specially and uniquely set aside for this very task Daniel knows that God provides spokesman he's seen that through the course of the history of Israel and here he rises to the occasion and recognizes that God is at work and God has chosen him to speak for God before Nebuchadnezzar there is a calmness in Daniel I imagine this commanding figure while he's still young still commands this respect he's not demanding he's not argumentative but he's confident and calm Daniel knows that God is in this he doesn't need to worry he doesn't need to run he only needs to follow God's lead he only needs to be available for the plan that God has put into place and Daniel seems genuinely interested in the king

Daniel is interested in the message that God has given to Nebuchadnezzar and you get the sense in Daniel's questioning of Ariok that Daniel is genuinely interested in the welfare of the king himself and in this way God's servants are also distinct we're going to see this throughout the narrative of Daniel that God's servants care for people not just their friends that God's servants as Jesus will say in the sermon on the mount they bless those who curse them they bless and curse not that's what Daniel is doing Daniel could have viewed this as a golden opportunity this was his ticket to eliminate the competition this was his opportunity for Nebuchadnezzar to carry out his sentence and destroy all the other wise men of Babylon but Daniel cares for them as well he cares about them even though they were mixed up in this dark arts

Daniel replies with wisdom and prudence Daniel is careful to respond to Ariok in a way that leads to the right response from Ariok one commentator puts it this way quote the word translated discretion is related to the Hebrew word taste here it conveys those spiritual instincts of judgment discernment and what we might call a sense of the realities of the situation Daniel's wisdom was well developed this shows his spiritual sense of taste end quote he knew how to talk to Ariok he had this commanding presence and was able to speak with him in a way that was convincing we're not given the words that Daniel said but perhaps something along these lines Ariok I can answer the king's impossible request and if you take me to the king you'll get the credit for finding me what do you have to lose after all

Ariok if I'm wrong you can kill me anyway so Daniel stands before the king and what we find is fascinating notice this phrase and Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time again we see that God is working because remember the wise men had requested a time and in Daniel chapter 2 verse 8 I know with certainty you are just trying to gain time and Nebuchadnezzar says no way but here with Daniel Daniel requests a time and Nebuchadnezzar gives him time God is working and Daniel's confidence in God is coupled with faith he knows that God is able to answer Nebuchadnezzar's request he knows that God has given instrumentally this dream and desires for Nebuchadnezzar to be led in understanding of who God is and finally we find in verses 17 and 18

Daniel asks God for the answer Daniel knows where to go he doesn't go to the counselors he goes to God the dream has come from him notice then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah Mishael and Azariah his companions and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon Daniel goes home he tells his three friends they bow their hearts in their heads before the God of mercy and they plead with God to reveal to them the answer this word for mercy is the word compassion the word for kindness it's the description that God uses of himself when he shows up to Moses in Exodus chapter 34 where it says the Lord passed before him and proclaimed the Lord the Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness this is the God to whom

[39 : 27] Daniel and his friends pray this is the God they seek God delights in mercy and Daniel recognizes that God is present to show mercy not only to he and his friends but especially to Nebuchadnezzar another commentator says this I think it's helpful for us quote why this concentration on mercies were they concerned primarily for their own skins were they self centered in asking God to see them in their plight and come to their aid on the contrary they sought mercy from God because they recognized that they and perhaps they only were his appointed servants there in Babylon they were men of destiny who had been placed in Babylon for his glory to make his name known it was because their lives were so intimately intertwined with God's glory that they sought his mercy in order that his glory might be displayed in Babylon in revealing the dream and its meaning

Daniel explains that God had a purpose in Nebuchadnezzar's life as well even there he stresses that the mystery had been revealed quote for our sakes that's in verse 30 end quote Daniel recognizes that he and his friends are there in Babylon as representatives of the God of mercy they are there to reveal this dream to Nebuchadnezzar to help him to understand who God was so that Nebuchadnezzar ultimately could bow the knee before that God and could be rescued himself God has also allowed us to be agents of mercy in how we reveal the word of God to those around us and just like we find in our story we are to reveal God's gospel God's message in two different ways first we reveal God's message

God's gospel in the way that we behave Philippians chapter 1 verses 27 and 28 says this only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or in absent I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel and not in any way terrified by your adversaries which is to them a proof of perdition but to you of salvation and that from God God has called us as his children as followers of Christ to be distinct from the world as God is distinct be holy for I am holy and that's what positioned Daniel and his friends for this significant task they had resolved in their hearts that they would not defile themselves with the king's food they set themselves apart they desired to live in a worthy way and so God was able to use them we're called to the same thing we're called to have worthy lives and as Paul will pray he says

Lord that we would walk worthy so that we'd be filled with the fruits of righteousness which are to the praise and glory of God we can show the gospel through our life we must show the gospel through our life but that is not enough not only general revelation but also special revelation as we find in our final verse in Romans chapter 10 verses 14 and 17 it says this how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed how shall they believe in him on whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach unless they are sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace who bring glad tidings of good things so then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God all of us who are called to God through the word are now given the privilege of sharing that gospel word to others so they too can know the God who saves come to terms with their own sin ask for forgiveness and bow the knee to Jesus Christ and enjoy him as the one who forgives their sin and leads them to life in God have you done that this morning have you ever come to a place of recognizing yourself as a sinner and asking God for forgiveness have you ever bowed the knee to Christ and recognized that he alone is the one who can save you from your sin if not now is the moment you can believe and for those of us who have believed we have this amazing opportunity to show the gospel and to speak the gospel through our life and through our words may God help us to be faithful let me pray oh Lord we thank you for the example of Daniel thank you that he recognized that the God of heaven was over this dream and he was willing to be useful for you to trust in your revelation to him so that he could speak to the king the interpretation

God I pray that you help us as well help us not to be selfish with this word help us not to constrain that word to ourselves but help us to be faithful and gracious in distributing that word to others because we know that faith comes only through hearing and hearing through the word of God and God there is a world around us that is dying and will ultimately be separated from you and we have the words of life the words that we received from your son and so Lord I pray that you help us to be faithful help us to be faithful agents of the gospel in Jesus name amen God bless you have a great week