

The Narrative Flow

Introduction:

- intro from "Daniel" Lifebuilder study book to this section, on the **dream island** from CS Lewis' "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader"

What is happening in the story...

- **vs.1-3:** Nebuchadnezzar has disturbing dream; appears to have doubts about the "magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers"; so he is testing them....
 - note that this is happening before Daniel has finished his 3 years training
- **vs.4,7,10-11:** can you feel the panic rising? Whether they made great show of their "knowledge" or were more circumspect, they are beyond their limits...
- **vs.4-6, 8-9:** Nebuchadnezzar is determined not to tell them; does **v.9** suggest there is some history to this? Have the magicians been seeking to influence the king in ways he's not comfortable with, and here is his chance to bring them down a peg or two?
- **vs.12:** defying the king readily meant death
- **vs.13-16:** clearly some time here, and Daniel still gets to go in and see the king - is it because he is just a student? Nebuchadnezzar was new to the job too...
- **vs.17-18:** priority of prayer, together
- **vs.19-23:** **first**, God answers! **second**, Daniel's Psalm of praise - note emphasis on God being (a) in control, and (b) knowing hidden things (wisdom, future)
- **vs.24-28:** thread of Daniel's **courage** running through; note also his **humility** - not him, but God, who reveals this mystery
- **vs.29-30:** overview of purpose of dream before the details come out - that Nebuchadnezzar might understand - not just the details of this dream, but understand that God is in control, reveals himself....

...the gods... do not live among men (v.11)

- *What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men.* (v.11)

- Do the people you know believe in God?
 - in what sense?
 - the wise men and magicians of Babylon believed in Bel and Nebo, Babylonians gods, but not ones who lived among men....
 - do "the gods live among men" as far as your contacts are concerned?
- *Discussion...*

there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries (v.28)

- *Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these: (vs.27-28)*

First, this is the reality

- whatever it feels or looks like, whatever the grind of daily reality says, **there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries**
- supreme mystery he has revealed is himself, in Jesus Christ, and salvation through him - the real reality of sinners needing a Saviour, as we were thinking about this morning...

Second, this is our confidence

- Because God is **real**, and a God who **reveals**, then we can have confidence even in our feeble attempts to speak of him - for it is he who reveals, not our cleverness!

Third, this is our opportunity

- Nebuchadnezzar was looking for something beyond daily experience, something of God to break in

Fourth, this is our challenge

- to speak into spiritually charged situations, perhaps ones beyond our rational view of the world