

Daniel 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

Analysis

The Chaldeans answer desperately: "There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any wise man, or astrologer, or Chaldean." Their response reveals two truths: first, absolute human inability to know hidden things apart from divine revelation; second, the unprecedented nature of Nebuchadnezzar's demand. By claiming no king ever made such a request, they inadvertently admit their profession's fraudulent nature—previous kings accepted unverifiable interpretations, allowing deceptive manipulation.

This confession sets up Daniel's triumph beautifully. When Daniel reveals both dream and interpretation, it demonstrates conclusively that Israel's God surpasses all pagan alternatives. The Chaldeans are correct—no human can do this. But God can, and does, through His prophet. This contrast between human inability and divine capability runs throughout Scripture: humans cannot save themselves, but God saves; humans cannot know the future, but God reveals it; humans cannot conquer death, but God resurrects.

Theologically, this moment prefigures the gospel. Humanity stands helpless before divine requirements—we cannot satisfy God's justice, achieve righteousness, or overcome sin and death through human effort. Religious systems (like Babylonian divination) promise solutions but fail when tested. Only divine intervention saves—

God accomplishing what humans cannot. Daniel's Spirit-enabled revelation points to Christ's Spirit-empowered redemption. Both demonstrate that salvation belongs to the Lord alone.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern divination relied on elaborate but ultimately fraudulent systems. Dream interpretation manuals (like those found at Nineveh) provided symbolic correspondences—snakes meant enemies, water meant prosperity, etc. Diviners consulted these texts, offering interpretations kings couldn't verify. Nebuchadnezzar's innovation—demanding dream content first—exposed this fraud. His unprecedented requirement inadvertently created conditions for God's glory. Daniel's success validated biblical revelation's superiority over pagan alternatives, a truth that sustained Jewish faith through centuries of exile.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the Chaldeans' confession of human inability prepare for demonstrating God's supernatural power through Daniel?
2. What does their admission that previous kings accepted unverifiable interpretations teach us about religious manipulation when accountability is absent?
3. In what ways does this scene prefigure the gospel truth that humans cannot save themselves, but God saves what we cannot accomplish?

Interlinear Text

עַנּוּ	וְכַשְׁדִּי:	קִדְּם	מֶלֶךְ	וְאָמַר יוֹ	לֹא	אֵינִי י	אָנֹכִי
answered	The Chaldeans	before	king	and said	not	There is	a man
H6032	H3779	H6925	H4430	H560	H3809	H383	H606
עַל	יְבִשְׁתָּהּ אֶ	דִּי	מַלְּהָ	מֶלֶךְ	יֻכַּל	לְהַחֲזִיךָ	לְכָל
upon	the earth	H1768	matter	king	that can	shew	at any
H5922	H3007		H4406	H4430	H3202	H2324	H3606
לְכָל	דִּי	לְכָל	מֶלֶךְ	בַּ	וְשָׁלִיט	מַלְּהָ	כְּדֹנָה
therefore	H1768	at any	king	lord	nor ruler	matter	such
H6903		H3606	H4430	H7229	H7990	H4406	H1836
שָׂא ל	לְכָל	חֲרֹטִים	וְאִשְׁרָף	וְכַשְׁדִּי:			
that asked	at any	magician	or astrologer	The Chaldeans			
H7593	H3606	H2749	H826	H3779			

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