

Daniel 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon:

Analysis

Daniel's response to the execution decree demonstrates wisdom and grace: "Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon." The phrase "counsel and wisdom" (Aramaic: eta vetehum, אֶתֶּה וְתַהּ) means prudent discretion and sound judgment. Facing death, Daniel doesn't panic, rage, or despair but responds with measured wisdom. This models faithful response to crisis—combining urgency with self-control, seeking solutions rather than succumbing to fear.

Daniel's gracious approach to Arioch, the executioner, demonstrates that believers should treat even those implementing unjust decrees with respect and wisdom. Arioch was following orders; Daniel doesn't attack him personally but seeks understanding and opportunity. This prefigures Jesus's teaching to love enemies (Matthew 5:44) and Paul's instruction to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). Wisdom distinguishes between systems and individuals, opposing injustice while treating people with dignity.

Theologically, this demonstrates faith's practical wisdom. True spirituality isn't mere mysticism or passive resignation but includes practical intelligence in navigating crises. Daniel's wisdom came from God (1:17) but expressed itself in shrewd, practical action. Similarly, Jesus calls believers to be wise as serpents yet harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16). Faith engages real-world problems with God-given wisdom, not escapist spirituality that ignores practical realities.

Historical Context

Arioch, as captain of the guard, bore responsibility for executing the king's decree. His position required carrying out even harsh orders. Daniel's respectful engagement with him, rather than hostility or manipulation, created opportunity for dialogue. This wisdom enabled Daniel to request audience with the king (verse 16), ultimately saving all Babylon's wise men. His approach influenced how later Jewish communities engaged hostile authorities—combining principled conviction with practical wisdom, seeking to benefit even those implementing opposition.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Daniel's wise and gracious response to Arioch model how believers should engage those implementing unjust policies?
2. What does his combination of urgency and self-control teach us about faithful crisis response that avoids both panic and passivity?
3. In what ways does this scene demonstrate that genuine faith includes practical wisdom for navigating real-world problems?

Interlinear Text

רְבָבָּן לְאַרְיִוָּן וְגַתְּנִי אַל בְּאַדְיִוָּן
Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain

H116 H1841 H8421 H5843 H2942 H746 H7229

לְמִכְפִּים וְלְקַטְּלָה נְפָקֵד טְבַחְתִּי אֶת מֶלֶךְ אֶת טְבַחְתִּי אֶת
guard of the king's of which was gone forth to slay the wise

H2877 H1768 H4430 H1768 H5312 H6992 H2445

בְּרַלְיָה:
men of Babylon

H895

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 2:24 (Kingdom): Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

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