

Daniel 2:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

Analysis

Nebuchadnezzar's question tests Daniel's ability: "The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" Calling him "Belteshazzar" (his Babylonian name honoring Bel/Marduk) emphasizes the king's perspective—Daniel remains a subject named for Babylon's god. Yet Daniel will prove that Yahweh, not Bel, reveals mysteries. The irony: a man named for a false god will demonstrate the true God's supremacy.

The king's question "Art thou able" tests Daniel's confidence. This is the moment—can this young Jew accomplish what all Babylon's wisdom failed to do? The question's phrasing allows honest answer; Daniel could admit inability without shame since everyone else already failed. Yet Daniel's coming response will demonstrate that while he personally isn't able, God is. True humility admits human inability while confidently asserting divine capability.

This question parallels many biblical tests: Can these dry bones live (Ezekiel 37:3)? Can anything good come from Nazareth (John 1:46)? Is anything too hard for the Lord (Genesis 18:14)? The answer always demonstrates God's power exceeding human expectation or capability. Daniel's moment prefigures countless situations where believers face impossible demands, discovering that what humans cannot do, God accomplishes. This points to Christ who accomplished impossible salvation

—conquering sin, death, and Satan through apparent weakness (crucifixion) that became ultimate power (resurrection).

Historical Context

Royal testing of advisors was common—kings demanded demonstration of claimed abilities. Nebuchadnezzar's test was unusually severe but strategically brilliant—it prevented fraud while providing absolute validation of genuine supernatural knowledge. His question created conditions for undeniable demonstration of Yahweh's supremacy. Throughout Scripture, God orchestrates circumstances that maximize His glory—Goliath's taunts heightened David's victory, Pharaoh's stubbornness magnified exodus miracles, Christ's death on cross became instrument of salvation. Daniel's moment followed this pattern.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the king calling Daniel by his Babylonian name while Daniel demonstrates Yahweh's superiority teach about ironic providence?
2. How does the question 'Art thou able' create opportunity to demonstrate that human inability highlights divine capability?
3. In what ways does this testing moment prefigure countless situations where believers face impossible demands that God accomplishes?

Interlinear Text

בָּלְתֵשָׁazzָר שְׁמָה הִיא מֶלֶךְ אָמָר לְדִנִּי אֵל עָנָה הָעָגָן
was Belteshazzar whose name was Belteshazzar
H1096 H8036 H1768 H1841 H560 H4430 H6032

תִּתְּרַאֲמָת אֲלֵיכָהּ כִּי בְּאֵיתְךָ יְהוָה לְהַזְּעֵת נִיְּתָן
which I have seen unto me the dream to make known thou able art
H2370 H2493 H1768 H3046 H3546 H383

וְפִשְׁבָּה:

and the interpretation

H6591

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 1:7 (Parallel theme): Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

Daniel 5:12 (Kingdom): Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Daniel 4:8 (Parallel theme): But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

Daniel 5:16 (Kingdom): And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.