

Daniel 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

Analysis

The Chaldeans' response—"There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter"—admits absolute human inability. Despite their claims to supernatural knowledge through divination, astrology, and magic, they confess helplessness when truly tested. The phrase "not a man" (Aramaic: kol-enahsh, כֹּל-עֲנַחֶשׁ) emphasizes universal human limitation. No technique, learning, or secret knowledge can access what only divine revelation can provide.

Their further admission "except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" inadvertently speaks theological truth. They correctly recognize that only divine beings could know the dream without being told, and that these gods remain distant from humanity. This pagan theology acknowledges god's existence but denies their involvement in human affairs—they dwell apart, unconcerned with earthly matters. This sets up the contrast with Israel's God who dwells among His people, reveals His purposes, and acts in history.

Ironically, the Chaldeans prophesy their own refutation. Soon Daniel will demonstrate that the living God does dwell with flesh—not physically (yet), but through His Spirit empowering believers. This prefigures the incarnation, when God literally dwells with humanity in Christ. The Chaldeans are correct that only deity can reveal hidden things, but wrong that deity remains distant. Israel's God draws near, speaks to His people, and accomplishes what pagan gods cannot—personal relationship and real revelation.

Historical Context

Babylonian religion featured elaborate divination systems—hepatoscopy (examining animal livers), extispicy (reading entrails), astrology, and dream interpretation manuals. Extensive cuneiform libraries from Babylon and Nineveh contained omen texts correlating signs with events. Yet when truly tested, these methods proved fraudulent. Nebuchadnezzar's demand exposed their impotence. This scene dramatically demonstrates biblical truth: pagan divination is empty pretense, whereas revelation from Israel's God provides genuine supernatural knowledge. Daniel's later success vindicates Yahweh's supremacy over Babylonian gods.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the Chaldeans' confession of human inability prepare for God's revelation through Daniel, demonstrating divine superiority?
2. What does pagan belief that gods remain distant contrast with the biblical truth of God's covenant presence among His people?
3. In what ways does Daniel's Spirit-enabled revelation prefigure Christ's incarnation—God dwelling with humanity to reveal truth?

Interlinear Text

עַנּוּ	תִּנָּבֵן וְתִ	יֹאמַר	מֶלֶךְ אֶ	חֶלְמֵךְ אֶ	יֹאמַר
They answered	again	and said	Let the king	the dream	and said
H6032	H8579	H560	H4430	H2493	H560
לְעַבְדֵי וְהִ	וּפְשָׁךְ הִ	נִהְיֶה:			
his servants	the interpretation	and we will shew			
H5649	H6591	H2324			

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 2:4 (Kingdom): Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.
