

Daniel 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

Analysis

The king continues: "But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed." Nebuchadnezzar accuses them of conspiring to deceive—"prepared lying and corrupt words" means rehearsed deception, coordinated fraud. He recognizes that given time, they'll fabricate plausible-sounding interpretation that he can't verify. By demanding dream content first, he prevents this manipulation.

"Till the time be changed" means until circumstances shift—they hope political situations will change, he'll forget, or his mood will improve. But the king insists on immediate accountability. This reveals wisdom in testing claimed supernatural knowledge—requiring what only genuine divine revelation can provide, not accepting smooth words that might be mere human invention. Discernment demands verification, not naive acceptance of religious claims.

Spiritually, this prefigures biblical tests for prophets. Deuteronomy 18:21-22 establishes the verification principle—genuine prophecy demonstrates fulfillment; false prophecy fails. New Testament teaching requires testing spirits (1 John 4:1) and examining fruit (Matthew 7:16-20). God doesn't require blind faith in

unverified claims; He provides means to distinguish truth from error. This protects believers from deception while establishing confidence in genuine revelation. Christ welcomed scrutiny of His claims, offering resurrection as ultimate verification (John 2:18-22).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern courts relied heavily on omens and divination for decision-making. Kings employed multiple classes of diviners to ensure reliable guidance. Yet Nebuchadnezzar's demand exposed systematic fraud—when truly tested, pagan divination failed utterly. This scene became legendary in Jewish tradition as demonstrating Yahweh's superiority. The story encouraged covenant faithfulness by showing that God's revelation surpasses pagan alternatives. Early Christians similarly demonstrated gospel truth's superiority through Spirit-empowered witness that confounded pagan philosophy and religion.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Nebuchadnezzar's insistence on verification before accepting spiritual claims model healthy discernment?
2. What does the Chaldeans' rehearsed deception teach us about religious manipulation that appears impressive but lacks substance?
3. In what ways does biblical instruction to test prophecy and examine fruit protect believers while validating genuine revelation?

Interlinear Text

הָ יֵאֵלֶּהּ וְאֵיכָּא לֹא חֲלֹמָא הֵן דִּי
that But if me the dream ye will not and I shall know H2298 there is but one
H1768 H2006 H2493 H3809 H3046 H1932

אֲמַרְוּ הִזְדַּמְנִיתוּן וְשִׁחִיתָהּ כְּדָבָר הָ וּמַלְּהָ דְתִּכּוּן
decree words lying and corrupt for you for ye have prepared tell
H1882 H4406 H3538 H7844 H2164 H560

אֲמַרְוּ חֲלֹמָא לֵהּ וְיִשְׁתַּנֵּי אַ עֲדָנָא דִּי עַד קֳדָמִי
before me till that the time be changed therefore me the dream tell
H6925 H5705 H1768 H5732 H8133 H3861 H2493 H560

לֵּי וְאֵיכָּא דִּי פִּשְׁרֵהּ תִּהְיוּנִי
and I shall know that me the interpretation ye can shew
H0 H3046 H1768 H6591 H2324

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 41:23 (Parallel theme): Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

Daniel 7:25 (Word): And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Daniel 2:21 (Parallel theme): And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Esther 4:11 (Word): All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

Isaiah 44:25 (Parallel theme): That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

Ezekiel 13:6 (Word): They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word.

Daniel 3:15 (Parallel theme): Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Daniel 5:28 (Parallel theme): PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.