

Daniel 4:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

Analysis

Daniel's response to the dream interpretation reveals his character: he's 'astonied' (Hebrew דָּחַם/daham, stunned/appalled) for 'one hour' (brief period), and his thoughts 'troubled him.' This distress isn't due to interpretive difficulty—God had revealed the meaning—but to the message's severity. Daniel must tell the king who had honored and promoted him that devastating judgment approaches. The king, perceiving Daniel's distress, reassures him: 'let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee.' This shows Nebuchadnezzar's regard for Daniel and desire to hear truth even if unfavorable. Daniel's tactful response—'My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies'—expresses genuine wish that this judgment might fall on the king's enemies rather than the king himself. This reveals Daniel's compassion even for a pagan ruler, echoing Jeremiah's instruction to exiles to 'seek the peace' of Babylon (Jeremiah 29:7).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern court culture made Daniel's position precarious. Bearers of bad news to kings risked death—tyrants regularly executed messengers announcing military defeats or unfavorable omens. Daniel's year-long troubled

state shows his awareness of this danger and genuine care for the king. Nebuchadnezzar's reassurance ('let not the dream...trouble thee') reveals his development since chapter 2, when he nearly executed all wise men. Decades of Daniel's faithful service had built trust. This historical context heightens the scene's dramatic tension: will Daniel speak truth risking royal anger, or soften the message to preserve position? His choice to interpret honestly demonstrates prophetic integrity.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does Daniel's distress before delivering judgment teach about balancing prophetic truth-telling with pastoral compassion?
2. How does Daniel's wish that the judgment might fall on the king's enemies rather than the king himself demonstrate Christian love for adversaries?
3. Why is speaking difficult truth an act of love, even when it risks personal consequence?

Interlinear Text

כַּשֶׁעַ הַ	אֲשֶׁתּוֹמָם	בִּלְטַשְׁאֲצָר	שְׁמֵהּ הַ	דָּי	דָּנִי אֶל	אֵד יִן
	was astonished	Belteshazzar	whose name		Daniel	Then
	H8075	H1096	H8036	H1768	H1841	H116
וְאָמַר	מֶלֶךְ אֵ	עָנִי הַ	יְבֹהֵל וְ	וְכַעֲיֵן הִי	חֵד הַ	
and said	him The king	answered	thereof trouble	and his thoughts	for one	
H560	H4430	H6032	H927	H7476	H2298	
עָנִי הַ	יְבֹהֵל וְ	אֶל	וּפִשְׁרֵהּ הַ	חֵלֶם אֵ	בִּלְטַשְׁאֲצָר	
answered	thereof trouble	let not	or the interpretation	the dream	Belteshazzar	
H6032	H927	H409	H6591	H2493	H1096	
לְשׁוֹנָא יִן	חֵלֶם אֵ	מֶרֶ אִי	וְאָמַר רַ	בִּלְטַשְׁאֲצָר		
be to them that hate	the dream	My lord	and said	Belteshazzar		
H8131	H2493	H4756	H560	H1096		
לְעֵרְוָהּ:	וּפִשְׁרֵהּ הַ					
thereof to thine enemies	or the interpretation					
H6146	H6591					

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 8:27 (Kingdom): And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Daniel 7:28 (Parallel theme): Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

Jeremiah 4:19 (Parallel theme): My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

1 Samuel 3:17 (References Lord): And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

Daniel 4:24 (Kingdom): This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

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