

Daniel 4:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

Analysis

The magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers enter but prove completely unable to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This failure parallels chapter 2, demonstrating the persistent inadequacy of human wisdom before divine revelation. Despite Babylon's sophisticated intellectual traditions—astronomy, mathematics, divination, and occult practices—these experts encounter a revelation that transcends their methodologies. The Aramaic text emphasizes their complete inability: the interpretation 'was not made known' (לא מודע היה/la mehodin), suggesting not merely difficulty but absolute impossibility through natural means. Reformed theology affirms this principle: natural man cannot discern spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:14). Human reason, however developed, remains darkened by sin's noetic effects. True spiritual understanding requires divine illumination—something these pagan sages lacked despite their learning. Their failure prepared for Daniel's success, highlighting that interpretive ability comes through God's Spirit, not human skill.

Historical Context

Babylon's intellectual establishment formed a professional guild with hereditary positions, specialized training, and access to vast libraries of cuneiform tablets containing centuries of accumulated knowledge. Their failure wasn't due to incompetence but to encountering truth that exceeded their epistemological frameworks. Ancient Near Eastern divination operated through systematic

observation (celestial phenomena, animal organs, dream patterns) interpreted via established protocols. When confronted with genuine divine revelation outside these systems, they had no recourse. This vindicated Yahweh's supremacy over Babylonian religion for Jewish exiles—the empire's vaunted wisdom proved impotent before Israel's God.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What modern 'experts' do people consult instead of seeking God's wisdom through Scripture and prayer?
2. How does the failure of sophisticated human wisdom before divine truth challenge secular confidence in human reason?
3. Why does God sometimes allow human wisdom to fail spectacularly before providing His answer?

Interlinear Text

פָּשָׁתִי	אַ	אַשְׁפֵּן	אַ	מְרֹטְמִיא	לִין	עַל	בְּאַד	אֵל
Then	came	in the magicians	the astrologers	the Chaldeans				
H116	H5954	H2749	H826	H3779				
וְאַנְבָּהִים	אַמְרָה	אַמְרָתִי	אַמְרָתִי	אַמְרָתִי	אַמְרָתִי	אַמְרָתִי	אַמְרָתִי	אַמְרָתִי
and the soothsayers	the dream	told	and I	before				
H1505	H2493	H560	H576	H6925				
וְפִשְׁרָה	לֹא		לִין	מְהֹדֶעֶת	לִין			
unto me the interpretation	them but they did not	make known						
H6591	H3809	H3046						

Additional Cross-References

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;

Daniel 2:7 (Parallel theme): They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

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