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Nightmares! Dreaded dreams. Horror in your mind. Cold sweat. Short sharp breaths. Dark shivers. They seem so real.

The knock on the door, troops outside waiting to bundle you away, along with 100s of others. This nightmare has faced many in Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Russia, China etc. It is a political solution for unwanted people. And it faced Daniel and his 3 friends in ancient Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar decided to kill all his wise men.

But why? He was ruthless, but enlightened. He trained the cream of defeated countries, to benefit from their wisdom. He was ruthless, but rarely rash. What changed him? Why kill Daniel and the others? Because of his own nightmare. He knew the fear of sleep, dreaded dreams. In agonising frustration he reached for help & found only lies and fraud.

Have you ever wondered what dreams mean? Have you searched for their meaning? Elusive dreams can haunt. Far from being a sleepy area of research, dream readers are up, dressed and publishing. The New Age has spawned 1000's of dream books.

It is not new. Dreams have intrigued people as far back as history can record. There have been myriads of books interpreting dreams. Astrologers, enchanters, and wise men of ancient Babylon had 100s of them too.

Their libraries were like a solicitor's library, full of case studies. When they heard a dream, they would check their books to find a similar one, and work out the meaning of the dream according to the books.

But Nebuchadnezzar refused to tell them the dream. He wanted the unknown nightmare explained. Panic!! How could they interpret what they didn't know? Be reasonable! *Tell us what it is!* He adamantly refused: *If you don't tell me the dream, I will have you cut in pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.*

The wise men made a fatal mistake. They interpreted stars and knew magic and secrets. They had the gods' wisdom. But they goofed by saying *No man on earth can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they don't live among men.*

That was fatal. They had blown their cover. Their job was to reveal what the gods said. Now they had admitted that they could not contact the gods at all. The gods did not live among men, and the wise men were fakes.

In fury, Nebuchadnezzar got rid of the charlatans and liars around him. His test had shown them to be religious frauds.

His outrage is exactly the same as many have today about religion. They claim it is a fraud. Many who claim to know God or gods don't know them. They have projected some truths about humans and our world into a god. And we can feel the anger too of the futility of much that passes for religion, including New Age, sterile Christianity, Islam and Eastern religions.

But Nebuchadnezzar was mistaken. Yes, there are many frauds, but not all are fake. When the troops bashed on Daniel's door, God was ready to protect His wise saviour of those times, and to glorify His own name in that powerful kingdom.

He would make it clear that our God lives, dwells with men, and is no fraud.

Daniel's appeal for 1 day to interpret the dream was granted. He did not scan books, but went to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, and asked them to pray for God to reveal the dream to Daniel. Then he went to bed. During the night, God revealed it to him.

God preserved the saviour-like hero from the threat of death, just like he had saved the boastful Joseph, and saved the babies Moses and Jesus.

In the morning, Daniel glorified God, gave Him the credit, and told the king his dream and its meaning. It was of an enormous, dazzling statue which had a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of clay and iron. The feet of this huge statue were hit by a rock (which had been cut out, but not by human hands). The whole statue crumpled into dust blew away. But the rock grew into a huge mountain which filled the world.

That was the haunting nightmare. But what did it mean? Daniel showed him it was the battle of history. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. His reign was the most glorious of any on earth. It was the crowning glory of mankind. He used human wisdom to its greatest extent and glory.

3 other less glorious kingdoms would follow. The final one was like iron, hard and unyielding, yet also brittle, as if mixed with clay.

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During that reign, something would happen. A supernatural rock would smash it, and it would show that all kingdoms of man are like dust and easily blown away. They would be blown away no matter how glorious and great they were.

But the supernatural rock would grow and never crumble or be blown away. That huge mountain is the Kingdom of God. God's kingdom would be set up and His reign would have no comparisons. The amazing human kingdoms are like dust next to it.

Nebuchadnezzar said *Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.*

The wise men were spared and Daniel was given great power with his 3 friends.

God rescued the one he had raised to be a wise saviour of his people. The tyrant who boasted of defeating Jerusalem and its God, now bowed in adoration to the "God of gods & Lord of kings."

Jews reading this back in the promised land after the exile, saw God's power, even while earth's nations triumphed. It fortified their belief that kings are in God's hand, but a time was coming when their glory would be swept away like dust. That time did come. The rock did shatter the kingdoms of men. It shattered it when Jesus persevered obediently to death, even death on a cross, and rose again.

God's kingdom has been growing steadily ever since, and our King is in glory and the place of all power now.

In our Lord's kingdom, we belong to the only truly glorious kingdom which lasts for ever and ever, and will never be overthrown. So do not be fooled by the present glories of any powerful reign here, whether it be political, financial, technological or social. For we belong to God's eternal kingdom. See through the folly of this world, and its fake claims to know the purposes and meanings of life, for they are mere nightmares compared with the glory of His kingdom.

Be faithful to our glorious king, for that day is coming soon when He will show to everyone his hidden power, glory and majesty.