

## Arioch

### *Daniel 2:12-19*

**2:12** For this cause the king [Nebuchadnezzar] was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. **2:13** And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

**2:14** Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to **Arioch** the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: **2:15** He answered and said to **Arioch** the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then **Arioch** made the thing known to Daniel.

**2:16** Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. **2:17** Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: **2:18** That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. **2:19** Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. . . .

### *Daniel 2:24-28*

**2:24** Therefore Daniel went in unto **Arioch**, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. **2:25** Then **Arioch** brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. . . . **2:27** Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; **2:28** But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, . . . .

### **the man who spared Daniel**

Arioch was apparently Nebuchadnezzar's chief executioner. But paradoxically he is best known for *not* killing Daniel. Though the angry king had ordered the execution of all the royal wise men, Arioch did not fully carry out the order.

Thus Arioch spared Daniel's life. Maybe that is why his name is included in the written record. Yet, there is much more to the story than what Arioch did and did not do. Daniel himself acted wisely, and ultimately it was God who saved Daniel and the others.

## negatives

One of the most important things that can be said about Arioch is that he was not a very good executioner. As far as we know, he did not kill (m)any of the king's wise men. Mostly he was just preparing to do so when Daniel (and the Lord!) stopped him.

It was Daniel rather than Arioch who was truly important. Though we should be thankful that Arioch did not kill Daniel before the prophet even began his ministry, let's not praise him too much for not killing God's servant.

Maybe the captain did not want to follow the king's orders in the first place (B-3), but if that were the case why didn't he directly challenge the king's command (B-6)? Was he too afraid to question a direct order? Probably he was, and with good reason humanly speaking.

In the next chapter, Daniel's godly friends refused to obey a sinful command from the king. (See 3:8-18.) Is any of their godly boldness seen in what Arioch did earlier in chapter two (A-4, B-3)?

*Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).*

<b>A</b>	( ) <b>Arioch was not very important.</b>
A-1	( ) He is not the main character in the chapter.
A-2	( ) He is never mentioned after Daniel chapter two.
A-3	( ) Daniel could deal with the king without Arioch (2:16).
A-4	( ) He probably did not believe in the God of Israel (2:47).
A-5	( ) He did not do anything very important (2:13-16, 25).
<b>B</b>	( ) <b>Arioch did not do his job very well.</b>
B-1	( ) He was the chief executioner.
B-2	( ) He could not interpret the king's dream.
B-3	( ) He was hesitant to obey the king (2:13-16, 25).
B-4	( ) He did not fully follow the king's orders (2:12-17).
B-5	( ) He helped Daniel instead of the king (2:14-16, 24-25).
B-6	( ) He should have openly opposed the king's command.
B-7	( ) He boasted about finding an interpreter for the dream (2:25).

## positives

According to 2:14-15, Arioch was the king's captain (C-1) rather than just an executioner (B-1). So it is not surprising that he tried to do whatever was best for the king rather than instantly executing as many wise men as possible. He was not a mindless swordsman.

Moreover, the fact that Arioch is mentioned at all, shows that he was somewhat important (C). Though verse 16 implies that Daniel was able to approach the king without Arioch's help (D-3), for some reason Arioch was still included.

Rather than compare Arioch unfavorably with Daniel's three prayerful friends (C-4), it is much more helpful to compare him with Nebuchadnezzar (D-7). The king was much more powerful than Arioch (A), of course, but Nebuchadnezzar also apparently had a much bigger problem with anger and pride. (The king's anger is evident in chapters two and three, and his pride is the subject of chapter four.) Some believe that Arioch was boasting in 2:25 (B-7), but if that were true then Daniel also would have been boasting in 2:24.

*Mark the points below as correct (C), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).*

<b>C</b>	( ) <b>Arioch was somewhat important.</b>
C-1	( ) He was in charge of an important group (2:14-15).
C-2	( ) He was like Pharaoh's butler in Gen. 41:9-16.
C-3	( ) Like Daniel (2:27-45), he said a lot (2:15, 25).
C-4	( ) He was as important as Azariah (2:17-19).
C-5	( ) He was not an anonymous servant.
<b>D</b>	( ) <b>Arioch helped Daniel.</b>
D-1	( ) He listened to Daniel (2:14-16).
D-2	( ) He answered Daniel's question (2:15-16).
D-3	( ) He allowed Daniel to approach the king (2:15-16).
D-4	( ) He probably joined Daniel's prayer meeting (2:17-23).
D-5	( ) He risked his own life by introducing Daniel (2:16, 25).
D-6	( ) He treated Daniel fairly, much like the steward in 1:11-14.
D-7	( ) He was not hotheaded like Nebuchadnezzar (2:12, 16, 3:13, 19).

## conclusions

### worksheet answers

Several worksheet lines are clearly incorrect. Two of the most important of these are the false claims that Arioch did not do anything very important (A-5) and that he helped Daniel instead of the king (B-5). What Arioch did (and did not do) was very important and helpful to both the king and Daniel. Therefore it is also at least partly incorrect to say that the king's captain did not do his job very well (B). Though he was an executioner (B-1), he was also much more.

It is highly unlikely that Arioch joined Daniel's prayer meeting (D-4), but he probably did give Daniel permission to ask the king for more time (D-3). If he did not approve of granting Daniel time to seek the Lord, he could have killed him immediately.

Unlike the prophet, Arioch did not say very much (C-3), and he endangered his life each time he did speak (D-5, D-7). No wonder he did not directly oppose the king's command. And who are we to say he should have done so (B-6)? It was also wise for Arioch to stay away when Daniel asked the king for an extension. The king was not angry at Daniel for asking (2:16), but he may have reacted differently to Arioch at that point.

### So what?

Arioch shows that there is more than one way to oppose a bad law, rule, or command. First, he simply did not carry out the king's command immediately. Instead, he cautiously allowed Daniel to seek an alternative solution. This is like what was done through the steward regarding the diet of Daniel and his three friends in chapter one (D-6). Then later, after God gave Daniel special insight into the king's dream, Arioch boldly took him directly to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel probably could have gone to the king without Arioch in 2:24-25 (A-3) like he did earlier in 2:16. Why then did he include the king's captain the second time around? One possible reason is because Daniel was trying to save the lives of all the wise men and not just himself and his three friends. His urgent "Do not destroy the wise men." line in 2:24 supports this view, though 2:18 perhaps does not. By going to the king with the chief executioner, Daniel would have been more sure of instant relief for everyone. That may be what Arioch wanted as well, since he was a reasonable man. Later he may have become a true believer. (See 2:46-48.) Perhaps that is another reason why he was not left anonymous (C-5).

### applications

*Apply the points which you believe are most important or seem most needful.*

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