

God is Wise

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles, if you would please, to Daniel chapter 2.! It's on page 737. We'll continue our study this morning in the book of Daniel,! Looking at the life of Daniel.

Now, I wonder this morning if, like me, sometimes you wonder, well, I love the story of Daniel.

It's one of my favorites. I love learning about Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and how God used them. But I wonder, really, what is the connection?

I mean, after all, Babylon is literally thousands of miles away, and in a time that was a couple thousand years from today, how relevant, really, is the message and the life that we learn about in this book?

So as we look into the Word of God, as we come to understand the God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, really the purpose of looking at the Old Testament is for us to come to terms with the fact that the God of Daniel in 600 B.C.

[1 : 20] in Babylon is the same God of 2024 here in America. And the truths and the principles of that God, the character of that God, the things that were true for Daniel, in helping him navigate the situations and the circumstances that he encountered, are the same truths that we need today.

And the God who was evident in the life of Daniel in seeking to reveal himself to King Nebuchadnezzar is the same God who seeks to make himself known through your life, your witness, your testimony in the here and now.

I think about today we're going to learn about the God of wisdom, the God who is wise. And as I consider the fact that God is wise, and especially as it relates to our culture today, I think about the fact that there could be no greater truth for our culture today than understanding a God who is wise, a God of wisdom.

After all, the world wants answers. The world wants to make sense of the things that are happening in their here and now. The world wants to know where they belong.

They want to know how to find happiness in this life. And even in this week, as I was kind of considering and researching some of the main questions that are asked of contemporary culture, here are some of the questions that this world is seeking to find answers to.

[3 : 08] First, how did life begin? What is the purpose of life? Are we alone in the universe? What makes us humans? What is consciousness?

Can we live forever? What happens after you die? And of course, as the world is searching for answers to these important questions, we as God's servants, as God's people, have those answers because we know the God who authored it all.

The God who is all-wise. The God who is over all. And as agents of God's revelation, the word of God that comes through the lips of his people, we are able to be the gateway, as it were, to help point and direct people to come to see and to understand and encounter in some way the God who is all-wise, who is over all.

We have this incredible opportunity, this incredible privilege, as Daniel has and his friends had, to be the catalyst for the gospel, as it were, the catalyst for bringing the understanding of who God is in contemporary culture.

There is something that we would be familiar with as it relates to conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom is defined this way, quote, the body of ideas or explanations generally accepted by the public and or experts in a field.

[4 : 50] And so there is conventional wisdom as it relates to things like health and parenting and investment and education and business or employment. But there is a wisdom that is settled.

There is a wisdom that is sure, a wisdom that is fixed, not the conventional wisdom that changes in generation after generation, but a wisdom that is firm because it is a wisdom that comes from the unchangeable God.

And it is a wisdom that this world can only come to understand and know as the people of God. Embrace the wisdom of God and reflect that wisdom to the world.

Paul speaks about that wisdom in 1 Timothy 1, verses 15 and 17. When he says this, This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

However, for this reason I obtain mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

[6 : 03] Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. And then as Paul will say in Romans, chapter 16, verses 25 to 27, he says, Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages, but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ.

Amen. The wisdom that is available to the world is a wisdom that comes from God alone and it only comes through the gateway of the gospel.

We are the conduit of wisdom to the world through the message of wisdom that is the gospel of God. Do you know the wisdom of God?

Do you know the God of wisdom? And is your life so centered, so aligned to the wisdom of God that it is evident in how you live?

[7 : 27] It's evident in the decisions you make. It's evident in the priorities that you set that when people see you, they see the wisdom of God. The challenge so often is that our lives seem so unsettled in following after the wisdom of this world rather than following after the wisdom of God.

And we're going to see from the life of Daniel that Daniel becomes a faithful servant of God to Nebuchadnezzar by helping to point and direct Nebuchadnezzar's heart to see the one true God, the God of wisdom through his life.

And it comes, we're going to see this morning, through a character that believes in God and reflects the character of God in the world.

And as Daniel believes and trusts in the wisdom of God, and as he embraces that wisdom and applies it to his life, he becomes a gateway for Nebuchadnezzar to actually see God and God's wisdom.

In the same way, we can be the same catalyst, the same gateway for the people of this world to encounter and experience the God of wisdom as we follow Daniel's example.

[8 : 54] So I hope you're already there. Turn with me to Daniel chapter 2. We're going to begin our study this morning in verse 16. And we're going to see that Daniel will consistently point to the God of wisdom.

Our first point this morning is that Daniel's, excuse me, God's wisdom is made known through Daniel's faith. God's wisdom is made known through Daniel's faith.

Notice in verse 16. And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time that he might show the interpretation to the king.

Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. We see in this short couple of verses we see the faith of Daniel in his friends.

[10 : 02] First, the faith of Daniel in standing before the king. Daniel has committed himself to see that God is in these circumstances.

God is in this vision. He recognizes that God is orchestrating even these very events to showcase the wonder of who God is, the wisdom of God.

And Daniel sees and understands and is willing in faith to be a representative of the God of wisdom by standing before the king. If you were here last week, you recognize or know that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream.

That dream begins there in the first parts of the chapter. And Nebuchadnezzar has come to appreciate or recognize the fact that this dream is not something that is of himself.

It is something that is significant. He recognizes that this dream has come from beyond, from the gods as it were. And actually, it came from the God of heaven.

[11 : 05] And so he calls in his counselors, his magistrates, he calls them in and asks them to tell him what the dream is so that he can know for sure that they also understand the interpretation.

The king understands and knows that his request to the counselors is impossible. But he doesn't want an approximate answer.

He wants the message from God. He wants to ensure that these wise men not only know what the dream is, but they can accurately tell him what the dream means.

So he sends for these experts and he commands them to tell him what the dream is. But of course, the experts can't do this.

They tell the king in verse 10 and 11, the Chaldeans answered the king and said, there is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand. For no great powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean.

[12 : 10] The thing the king asks is difficult and no one can show it to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh. You see, God is setting up a showdown.

God is trying to help Nebuchadnezzar to recognize his place. Nebuchadnezzar who believes that he is the most powerful, that he is the most wise emperor who's ever lived.

his kingdom is now set against the backdrop of the true king, the true, all-wise, and powerful God. And so to establish his servant, God is calling out Daniel and his friends in this unique way so that Nebuchadnezzar can see who is truly the God of heaven.

For all of Nebuchadnezzar's military might and his engineering genius, he is helpless to find the answer to this dream. The power and wisdom of God versus the power and wisdom of man.

Nebuchadnezzar did have power and did have a measure of wisdom but it was limited. Evident in the massive walls of Babylon that some historians say were 300 feet tall and 85 feet wide.

[13 : 30] likely an exaggeration but it was meant to convey this impenetrable nature of the walls, how formidable they were, how invincible they seemed.

But also the hanging gardens which were considered one of the ancient seven wonders of the world, this engineering genius of King Nebuchadnezzar and his associates.

And already throughout this short book of Daniel we've seen this call or attention given to wisdom going all the way back to chapter one. In Daniel chapter one verses three and four we find the king who commanded Ashpenaz to bring some of the people of Israel used without blemish and of good appearance and skillful here it is in wisdom endowed with knowledge understanding learning.

And then in verse 17 of chapter one as for these youth God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom. And then Nebuchadnezzar in chapter two verse two the king commands that the magistrates enchanters sorcerers and Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king the dream.

And then verse 12 because of this the king was angry and very furious and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. There was attention given to wisdom and God is calling attention to their deficiency and his absolute supremacy as it relates to wisdom.

[15 : 06] And in one event all of the accumulated wisdom of Babylon the brightest minds in the ancient world trained at the best schools of Babylon were to be completely wiped out.

A huge loss for a proud king but a necessary price to save his empire. But God was getting Nebuchadnezzar's attention.

God's wisdom and power will put Nebuchadnezzar in its place. God will do this through the testimony of Daniel his servant and through his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Daniel stands before the king which gives Daniel an opportunity to convey his faith in the God who is able to reveal this mystery to the king.

Daniel's faith in God was meant to help Nebuchadnezzar understand that God alone is the God of wisdom and Daniel was willing to stand in this place.

[16 : 12] But Daniel doesn't rely on his own wisdom. As soon as he gains time we find in verse 17 and 19 he not only stands before the king but his faith is expressed now in kneeling before the Lord.

Because Daniel knew where wisdom was going to come from. Notice verse 17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel goes home. He gathers his friends to pray.

Daniel demonstrates that his faith is dependent not on himself but his faith is dependent upon God. God alone who can answer his prayer.

You find this is built in to the normal routine of Daniel's life. This daily regular commitment to seek the Lord in faith as we'll find several chapters later in Daniel chapter 6 verse 10.

[17 : 28] Daniel knew the document had been signed. He went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open towards Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he had done previously.

I want you to appreciate the magnitude of what is happening in our text this morning. As I have studied and I would welcome other study as well but as I've studied through the Old Testament this past week I believe this is the only time in the entire Old Testament where God's people come together to pray in this kind of way.

Now there is corporate prayer in the Old Testament. It happens very seldom throughout the Old Testament but in every single one of those examples it is led by a leader either by a priest or a prophet or a king but not the kind of prayer that we see happening here in Daniel chapter 2 where Daniel goes back and his friends and the three of them unite in aligning their hearts in yearning and asking God for prayer this is a special occurrence that we find in our chapter this morning.

It demonstrates that faith can happen independent of age and I want to just encourage the students who are here and the children who are here you don't have to wait until you grow up to be a person of faith you can be a person of faith at age 14 15 16 as we're finding here and even earlier and God can use your faith as a means by which the world around you can see the wisdom of God the power of God as you anchor your heart to trust him in this way of course we believe that God is wise of course we believe that wisdom only comes from him and so as we believe those things to be true the heart of one who believes is the heart of one who shows faith Hebrews 11:6 says without faith it's impossible to please him for whoever would draw near to

God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him we cannot please God without faith and so we cannot be a gateway for others to see who God is unless our own lives demonstrate a commitment to God in faith whatever situation you're in right now whatever challenge you're facing whatever crisis is happening in your life right now it is a unique way for God for you to demonstrate your faith in God in this moment and thus put a smile on God's face you will get other opportunities you will God will provide other avenues for you to express faith but you will never get this specific moment to demonstrate faith in God than you have right now this specific instance to demonstrate that you believe

[20 : 53] God in this moment with this particular crisis you can please God through your faith and it can be a way a means by which you can invite others to see the God of wisdom the God who is trustworthy the God who is faithful to be believed in you see we don't have to we don't have to defend his principles we don't have to soften his gospel we can preach the word and the word of

God is able to transform is able to save we don't have to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes we live in an age of deconstruction!

the word of God and seek to turn them upside down seek to reconfigure them and to paint them in a way that would make God look oppressive and immoral Christian deconstruction is described as the process by which Christians critically reevaluate the tenets and doctrines of traditional Christianity and emerge with a different perspective on their faith which turns out to be completely abandoning the faith altogether but those of us who believe in the wisdom of God those who believe in the sufficiency of the scripture those who believe that what we have been given is not only sufficient but authoritative for life and we don't have to explain it or excuse it or accommodate it to our world we can trust that the word of God is living and active that it will pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart it alone can transform and we can trust the wisdom of

God we don't have to make excuses for it and that's what Daniel does Daniel is committed to a God who alone is wise and he stakes his claim and he wants Nebuchadnezzar to know that God is trustworthy so he stands before Nebuchadnezzar and then he kneels before his God and pours out his heart and wouldn't you know that the God who says that he will answer did that very thing ask and you receive seek and you find to the glory of God Daniel asked and God answered God revealed the mystery as God alone can do God was able to answer Daniel's request for his glory so the wisdom of God might be made known to Nebuchadnezzar but Daniel doesn't stop there Daniel is not only a man of faith but

God's wisdom is also made known by Daniel's praise made known by Daniel's praise notice verse 20 to 23 here's what it says Daniel answered!

[24 : 44] and said blessed be the name of God forever! and ever! to whom belong wisdom and might he changes times and seasons he removes kings and sets up kings he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding he reveals deep and hidden things he knows what is in the darkness and light dwells with him to you oh God of my fathers I give thanks and praise for you have given me wisdom and might and have made known to me what we ask of you for you have made known to us the kings matter Daniel's faith was not a blind faith Daniel believed that God was able to reveal because Daniel knew that God was the one who gave this dream to Nebuchadnezzar and had a plan to use this dream to make much of who God was Daniel knew what God had said about the revelation of

God going all the way back to Deuteronomy chapter 29 verse 29 where it says the secret things belong to the Lord our God! but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this law Daniel knew that God could reveal these secret things and that he would do it for a purpose to make much of himself and the truth is that Daniel he recounts through this song of praise draws attention to this working God this God who is active there in Babylon we phrase after phrase that are just drawn straight from the scriptures and so as Daniel is praying this psalm of praise back to God his heart is full it's clear that his heart has been saturated by the scriptures his faith has been founded and undergirded by the truths of the scripture and so there's no surprise that as

Daniel now praises Lord he's praising God in expression of the truths that he knows from the word of God Daniel's reflex is to praise God notice he does not immediately get up and go to the king he's not immediately concerned about the preservation of his life he is concerned about the glory of God he's concerned about thanksgiving and throughout this prayer Daniel points to this active hand of God up until this point in the narrative in chapter one and chapter two it seems as though Nebuchadnezzar and the forces of Babylon are the ones who are pulling all the strings but woven throughout these two chapters we see the active hand the active working of God in Daniel chapter one verse two notice and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into Nebuchadnezzar's hand in Daniel chapter one verse nine and

God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs in Daniel 1:17 as for these four youth God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom and now prominently through this psalm of praise Daniel points to the active working of God at least ten times where Daniel is referring to this active ongoing continuous and even intensive way in which God is involved in the affairs of man I would even encourage you as I read through this again just to underline those action words so they stand out they're meant to be the forefront of your attention notice in verse 21 he changes times and seasons verse 21 he removes kings and sets up kings verse 21 he gives wisdom to the wise in verse 21 he gives knowledge to those who have understanding then in verse 22 he reveals deep and hidden things he knows what is in the darkness light dwells with him verse 23 you have given me wisdom and might you have made known what we asked you have made known to us the kings matter time and time again the active nature of God even in this distant land this is the testimony of

Daniel's faith and commitment to praise God who is active and present in the affairs of men Daniel and his friends are not victims of circumstances Daniel and his friends have been providentially placed in Babylon for this special purpose God's servants are set apart throughout history as those who will be given to praise and thanksgiving it should be the hallmark of those of us who love God and seek to draw attention to what God is about in this world as we find in Colossians chapter 2 verses 6 and 7 it says this therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in him rooted and built up in him and established in the faith just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving abounding in thanksgiving the hallmark of those who love the

[30 : 25] Lord who have enjoyed the benefits of faith in Jesus who are walking in accordance with his scripture will do so in such a way that is abounding in thanksgiving so that when the people around you see your situation and recognize that in spite of the things that you are experiencing there's still a praise and thanks to God they say he must follow the God of wisdom there's no other answer and when trouble comes and trials arise we come to understand that even those things cannot diminish the praise of those who truly follow after God James chapter 1 verse 2 says count it all joy my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds how is that possible because we know we're not victims of circumstance that God is in control and in 1 Peter chapter 4 verses 12 to 14 beloved don't be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you as though something strange were happening to you rejoice insofar as you share

Christ's sufferings you also may rejoice and be glad when this glory is revealed if you are insulted for the name of Christ you are blessed because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you hard things happen and that's when the spirit shows up in power to help carry you through the hardest of times it is through those kinds of moments that the glory of God is most evident and the power of God is most experienced and enjoyed by God's people and as we're experiencing and enjoying the power of God in our lives we allow the people around us to encounter God because there is no other explanation for power outside of the power of God working in the heart and life of a believer who's going through desperate things Daniel and his friends were committed to trusting

God in a hard situation recognizing that God was over this and looking for opportunities for their faith in God to shine so that Nebuchadnezzar could encounter God they could see God's wisdom through their life now we turn to verse 24 and we see that God's wisdom is known by Daniel's mercy God's wisdom made known by Daniel's mercy notice therefore Daniel went into Ariok whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon he went and said thus to him do not destroy the wise men of Babylon bring me in before the king and I will show the king the interpretation Daniel has just poured out his heart in his life to the God of mercy and the expression of his experience with the God of mercy extends itself in mercy to others

Daniel demonstrates a uniqueness a distinctiveness! in his concern for his enemies in that he seeks after their life it is on the forefront of his attention it's not an afterthought and he cares about them even more than he cares about himself Daniel reflects a heart of mercy that comes from the God of mercy he would in this way embody what we have come to understand as the first and second great commandment love the Lord your God with all your heart your soul your mind your strength love your neighbor as yourself and Daniel is showing in this moment his love for God by his love for others Daniel's true love for God is reflected in his interest in these wise men who by the way Daniel had every reason to want to be removed because the

Mosaic law commanded that such men be destroyed their participation in the secret arts their involvement in various forms of witchcraft targeted them as deserving judgment and then the fact that they are enemies of Israel means that they are also objects of God's curse remember God's promise to Abraham I will bless those who bless you I will curse those who curse you Daniel had every reason to allow these wise men to be totally destroyed but his heart for God led to a heart of mercy for these individuals Daniel experienced oppression Daniel experienced injustice in a world of today where we believe that those oppressors should get their just desserts Daniel as one who has been oppressed should have conveyed the same kind of attitude but in spite of all these things

[35 : 46] Daniel's interest in preserving these men pours out of his life his love for God this God of mercy pours out in a love and a mercy to others as we find in Romans chapter 12 verse 14 where it says bless those who persecute you bless and do not curse or in first Peter chapter 3 verse 9 do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling but on the contrary bless for to this you were called that you may obtain a blessing the hallmark of those who love God is that they pour themselves out in love and mercy for those around them that they do what Jesus commanded in Matthew chapter 5 verses 43 to 45 you have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy but I say to you love your enemies pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven for he makes his son to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust those who claim to be followers of

Christ will walk in the same path that Christ walked they will be those who like Christ says! Father forgive them they know not what they do a heart that seeks to bless and finally we find in Daniel's life that God's wisdom was made known by Daniel's humility it was made known by Daniel's humility beginning in verse 25 it says then Ariok brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation the king declared to Daniel whose name was Belteshazzar are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation Daniel answered the king and said no no wise man enchanter magician or astrologer can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked but there is a

God in heaven who reveals mysteries and he has made known to king Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days your dream and the vision of your head as you lay in your bed are these to you oh king as you lay in your bed came thoughts of what would be after this and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be but as for me this mystery has been revealed to me not because of my wisdom that I have more than all the living but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king and that you may know the thoughts of your mind Daniel Daniel is careful not to take credit and Daniel is faithful to point to the glory of God he sees this as an opportune moment to call attention to the wonder of who God is and to set Nebuchadnezzar in a place of recognizing that the gods of

Babylon can't do what the only God the God of heaven can do There is a God Nebuchadnezzar and you're not worshiping him he is the God the only God who revealed this dream to you and he is the one and only God who will now make the dream and its interpretation known to you he is the God who holds the present and as we're going to see he's also the God who holds the future he is the God who has revealed this dream to you!

And he's the God who desires through this revelation to set himself above all the others and to help you understand oh Nebuchadnezzar who the one true God is so you can worship him the God of heaven not just the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob not just the God of Israel but the God of heaven who desires for the nations to know him and they can only know!

[40 : 02] as they come to see and hear the revelation of God through his people and through his word are we those who are willing to capitalize on the moments that God has given to us to make the all wise God known to the world around us and do our lives today do our lives demonstrate a commitment to the wisdom that God has given to us in his word so that when the world sees how counter cultural and how counter intuitive our lives are and yet still marked by the wonder of God and the favor of God and the strength that God gives even in hard things they will say truly you know the God of heaven may God help us to capitalize on those opportunities to make much of the God of wisdom oh God I pray that you would help us like

Daniel to capitalize on the moments that you've given to us day by day to not see them as inconveniences to not see them as distractions to not see them as those crises that are uncomfortable and we want just to get out of our life but to see them as divine appointments and opportunities to make much of you and to call attention to the one true God Father I pray that you would help us help us to commit ourselves just like Peter says to recognize that when the fiery trial comes that we are blessed because the glory of God and his spirit rests upon us thank you for that hope we pray in Jesus name amen God bless you have a great week