

Theme: God is the source of wisdom and power, His kingdom is everlasting, and He will give wisdom and power to His exile people as they walk with Him.

## I. Intro - You're Playing with the Big Boys Now

- A. A great scene in *Prince of Egypt*
- B. Based on Moses, Pharaoh, and magicians showdown
- C. Daniel 2 recounts a similar event as Joseph, Moses
- D. Where are true wisdom and power found?

## II. Human Wisdom and Power (vv1-13)

- A. Act 1, Scene 1 - Nebuchadnezzar's troubling dream  
In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep.<sup>2</sup> So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king,<sup>3</sup> he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means." Daniel 2:1-3
  - 1. Early in Nebuchadnezzar's reign he has a dream
  - 2. He calls for his wise men to interpret the dream
  - 3. This is a typical event in the ancient world
- B. Acts 1, Scene 2 - wise men can't help, King's harsh reply  
Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."<sup>5</sup> The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble.<sup>6</sup> But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me." Daniel 2:4-6

- 1. Aramaic; "Tell us the dream and we will interpret"
- 2. King - You tell me the dream and then interpret
- 3. This is a HUGE unexpected twist - and problem!  
Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."<sup>8</sup> Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided:<sup>9</sup> If you do not tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me." Daniel 2:7-9
- 4. "Tell us the dream, we will interpret"
- 5. King - You will tell me the dream or be punished!  
The astrologers answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.<sup>11</sup> What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."<sup>12</sup> This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.<sup>13</sup> So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. Daniel 2:10-13
- 6. Wise men - "no one can do this! Unreasonable!"
- 7. "Only the gods could do this and they do not live among men! (We know better - the Incarnation!)"
- 8. King - then I will have you all killed!
- 9. This seems crazy (and it is) but this happened a lot
  - a. Nebuchadnezzar is new in his reign; vulnerable

- b. If Nebuchadnezzar did not remember - bad omen
- c. He might be testing their loyalty or suspecting them
- d. The wise men - including Daniel and friends - are in deep trouble! This is worse than the exile!

### III. God's Wisdom and Power

#### A. Daniel's wise, tactful response to the death order

When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, **Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.** <sup>15</sup> He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. <sup>16</sup> At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. Dan 2:14–16

1. Daniel hears and responds with wisdom and tact (unlike the Babylonian wise men) - and is given time
2. Perhaps Daniel realizes he is in the place of Joseph and this gives him calm assurance in the face of danger - or maybe he just has great character!
3. Perhaps Daniel remembers God's Word in Isaiah 40-55 where he taunts the gods and wise men of Babylon who can't tell the future - but He can!
4. We again see that wisdom and tact are essential for God's exile people
5. Also, note Daniel's humility and compassion in the rest of the story! Character is essential for exiles!

#### B. Daniel's response of prayer

Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>18</sup> **He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery,** so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Daniel 2:17–18

1. Daniel immediately gathers his friends to pray!
2. Daniel is seen as a man of constant prayer throughout the book (her; chapters 6, 9; 10:12)
3. Prayer is the lifeblood for God's exile people; it must be our first action, not our last resort after other actions have failed.

#### C. God's answers - and Daniel gives thanks!

During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven <sup>20</sup> and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. <sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. <sup>22</sup>He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. <sup>23</sup> I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king." Daniel 2:19–23

1. God does what the astrologers said could not happen - He reveals the mystery to Daniel!
2. Daniel does not just rush off - he immediately takes time to give thanks to God.
3. The prayer is a beautiful expression of biblical prayer, showing how steeped Daniel was in the word of God and prayer.
4. Daniel's prayer life shows he prepared for this crisis long before the actual crisis arose. Exiles do not wait for a crisis to walk with God!

D. The heart of Daniel's prayer - God of **wisdom** and **power**  
During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven <sup>20</sup> and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; **wisdom** and **power** are his. <sup>21</sup> **He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.** <sup>22</sup>**He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.** <sup>23</sup> I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me **wisdom** and **power**, **you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king.**" Daniel 2:19–23

1. God is the God of **wisdom** and **power**
2. God has wisdom and gives it to His people
3. God has power and controls the events of earth
4. Because God is the God of wisdom and power, He has revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel.

#### IV. The Dream and Its Meaning (vv24-45)

A. Daniel recounts the dream (vv31-35)

1. A massive statue of 4 parts - head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron with feet of iron and clay mixed.
2. A stone cut out without human hands strikes the feet of the statue and the whole thing crumbles to dust and is blown away like chaff.

B. Daniel interprets the dream (vv36-45)

1. Note: Daniel will have a vision in chapter 7 that has the same meaning, so we will discuss it in detail there. (Note chiasm of chapters 2-7).

2. Nebuchadnezzar/Babylon is the head of gold; given authority over humans and beasts (vv36-38)
3. The other three parts represent three future kingdoms that will arise (vv39-43)
4. The value of the materials seems to decrease, but their strength and ability to destroy seems to increase with each kingdom.
5. These other kingdoms are Medo-Persia, Alexander/Greece; and Rome, who dominated the next 600 years of Israel's history. (More in chapter 7).

C. The focus - the kingdom of God

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. <sup>45</sup> This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands — a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy." Daniel 2:44–45

1. In the time of those kings - during the time of Rome
2. God will set up His kingdom - and it will not be replaced like these other kingdoms!
3. God's kingdom will grow (v35) and will endure forever, while the other kingdoms are blown away like chaff
  - a. This should remind us of Psalms 1 and 2 - God's King is installed, and those who reject Him will be blown away like the chaff!
  - b. The key is embracing the Son/King/Messiah!!

D. Brief word about Nebuchadnezzar's response (vv46-48)

1. Nebuchadnezzar is understandably awestruck!
2. Once again, Daniel is rewarded (and he asks for his three friends as well). He is thriving in exile!

**V. Applying the Word**

A. Do I see that God is the God of wisdom and power?

1. Babylon seems the epitome of wisdom and power
2. But their wisdom failed - and their power did too!
3. Kingdoms come and kingdoms go - but God's Kingdom rules forever!
4. What a comforting message for exiles - like us!
5. Do I see that God is wise - and the kingdoms of this world are full of foolishness?
  - a. Our age thinks we are wiser than God Himself!
  - b. We judge His wisdom by our own - foolishness!
  - c. Proclaiming ourselves to be wise we have become fools (Romans 1)
  - d. Don't follow the wisdom of the world - trust God's Wisdom as given in His Word!
6. Do I see that God is Almighty - and the powers of this age will fall?
  - a. The powers of our age can seem invincible!
  - b. They are sure of victory and tell us to "get on the right side of history" - which is submitting to them
  - c. But this is the way Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome thought - and they have all crumbled to dust!

- d. Jesus has come and set up the kingdom, it continues to grow and fill the earth, and it will rule for all eternity! This is the right side of history:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." Revelation 11:15

- e. Exile - remember that Your King reigns and He will rule forever and ever!

B. Christ - the Wisdom and Power of God!

We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

1. He is the Rock cut out with hands!
2. He has established the Kingdom and it is growing and taking the Gospel to all nations!
3. He is the very Wisdom of God Incarnate, Who has brought the wisdom and power of God to us!
4. The world denies and mocks this, but it only proves their folly and weakness!
5. All the kingdoms of the world will see and admit His wisdom and will submit to His rule!
6. I urge you - embrace Christ, the God of Wisdom and Power!

C. The Table of God's Power and Wisdom

1. Christ displayed the wisdom and power of God on the cross!
2. Broken Body and shed blood seem foolish and weak to this fallen world but are wisdom and power!
3. Come and be nourished for the journey!

## The God of Wisdom and Power

Daniel 2

July 11, 2021

Communion

1 Corinthians 1:24, 30 paraphrase

Teaching keywords: Sovereignty of God; wisdom and knowledge; kingdom of God; exile and return

To you whom God has called Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God...<sup>30</sup> In Him you are given righteousness, holiness and redemption. Go forth, filled with the blessings of His wisdom and power and be a blessing. Based on 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30

During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven <sup>20</sup>and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. <sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. <sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. <sup>23</sup> I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king." Daniel 2:19–23