

Daniel 05-09-25b

Let's resume our study in Daniel chapter 1. We've, I think, read ourselves into the historical picture pretty extensively. We know where Daniel is. We know why he's there.

We know what's going on in the world around him. And all of that is very significant because this isn't just a story about a young man of faith. God has assigned him a place in a much larger plan.

Think what the Bible would be without the book of Daniel. Think what the Bible would be without the life of Daniel, without these very extraordinary stories of faith, of deliverance, of God's active intervention in human history. And it all hinges on whether or not Daniel can be a vessel fit for the Master's use.

If Daniel had said, I'll just eat the king's diet, the book of Daniel would not exist. It would have somebody else's name. God would have had to work through some other person because this was the initial qualifying test.

God had to have a man who would not defile himself in the king's environment. Today, it's the diet. Tomorrow, it's the political policy.

The next day, it's the agenda for the subjugated peoples. This is a symbolic test. Who is Daniel going to serve? Even though he's a captive, even though he is programmed into this education of the Chaldeans, who is Daniel going to serve? That is the fundamental question for him.

That is the fundamental question for us. Who are we going to live our lives to please? Who are we trying to serve? We are either putting ourselves on the throne or we are recognizing that God is, in fact, on the throne. And there just is no other option.

There's no other choice. It's either us or God. We either live to please ourselves or we're living to please God.

People say, oh, I'm living altruistically to serve mankind or to please some other person. No, you're not. Nobody is.

People who live to serve mankind are serving themselves because it is a self-fulfilling thing. I think the greatest thing a person can do is to serve others, so I am going to serve others. Then I can look at myself and say, I have done the greatest thing.

Now, don't kid yourself. Altruism is selfishness. Much of what passes for and is called love in the world is selfishness.

I love you because you make me feel good. I love you because you provide me security. I love you because I feel good about myself.

How many times have I quoted you that Barbara Streisand, when I hear this song on the radio, I tell you, I almost run off the road. I love the way he makes me feel. I mean, that's it in a nutshell.

That's what a lot of secular, non-biblically based, non-divinely empowered and motivated love is. I love the way you make me feel. I feel good around you.

That's selfishness. Did Jesus feel good on the cross? Did Jesus feel good going through the scourging? Oh, you know, I love being the savior of the people. It makes me feel so good.

Love has to transcend ourselves. Genuine love transcends self and looks at the benefit of others. That's why we say love is sacrificial.

Love is beneficial. Genuine love is a sacrifice to self and a benefit to someone else. Genuinely sacrificial, not secretly gratifying.

There is gratification, there is reward in love, but that's not why we love. So, God is showing in the first chapter of Daniel that Daniel is the man qualified to fulfill and execute God's plan in the remaining eleven chapters of the book because he is not a compromiser. He isn't a weaseler.

He doesn't fade when things get tough. The guy that I've got favor with still tells me I can't live my life the way God has commanded, so what choice do I have? No court in the land would convict me. Not a jury of my peers would find me innocent by reason of extenuating circumstances.

It's not my fault. I'm not accountable. I didn't set up the rules.

I don't want to die. What good will I be to God if I die because I refused to eat the king's food? How many rationalizations could Daniel have perpetrated on himself to just take the easy way? Daniel loves God. Daniel says in his mind, life is not worth living if I can't live it to please God.

God says, don't eat this off-limits food. I believe God will bless me if I follow his commands even at the risk of my life. We very seldom face a decision or a difficulty where our life is on the line.

Daniel did. And even under that kind of pressure, he makes this decision. So, Daniel in verse 11 said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, please test your servants for ten days.

Now, these three friends, we've mentioned them. They were mentioned up in verse 6. Sons of Judah. The tribe of Judah is the leadership tribe in Israel.

These men are all from that tribe. Daniel, we know what his name means. Dan is judge.

E is my. L is God. God is my judge.

How about these others? Hananiah. Hananiah, his name and biblical names are always

significant. Hananiah's name is formed from the word *kanan*.

C-H-A-N-A-N. *Kanan*. You have *Yohanan* as a name.

And that's just taking the *Yahweh* element and putting it in the front. *Yohanan* is *Yahweh* is gracious. If you say *Hananiah*, my grace is from the Lord.

Same thing. *Hananiah*. Depending on who you talk to, *Yahweh* has been gracious.

The Lord has been gracious. The Lord is my graciousness. *Hananiah*.

That's his name. Now, he's going to be renamed, isn't he? It was a custom that they would get new names. And so, the name given to *Hananiah* is *Shadrach*.

Now, what on earth does *Shadrach* mean? Does it have any significance that we should know what this name means? Well, if you go to the Sumerian, because this is not Hebrew now, we're looking at the Sumero-Akkadian roots of these alternate names. To cut a long story short, the best guess is that *Shadrach* is probably the Sumerian form of *Ba-Kuduru-Aki*. So, there you go.

It helps a lot, doesn't it? *Ba-Kuduru-Aki*. Servant of *Sin*. S-I-N, capital S, but not servant of *sin*, like, oh, I'm a slave to *sin*.

This is seen in the ancient Near Eastern idea. This would be like the wilderness of *Sin*, or *Sinai*, and the common roots of these languages. Even Sumero-Akkadian goes back to old Semitic roots.

And so, this would be, you know, servant of the thorny one, or some such thing. That doesn't really compel. When you bite it, it dents.

It doesn't really seem to be the real McCoy. I think there's another suggestion that is more compelling. Instead of *Shadrach*, this may have been *Merodach*, originally.

Merodach, M-E-R-O-D-A-C-H. The old Hebrew had no vowels. You know, the vowel points were added later.

The symbol for *sheen* and the symbol for *maim*, M, are virtually identical in the old Hebrew alphabet. They are often confused. I can show you other places in the Bible where you have parallel passages, and they have been confused.

One was read for the other. Same thing for R and D. R and D, the only difference in them is a tittle. The jot over tittle will not pass away.

Well, a tittle is just a little sharp corner on a letter. A *raish*, in Hebrew, looks like an upside-down L pointing to the left. Well, if it's got a corner on it, it's a D. If it's got a round angle, it's an R. Somebody writing in a hurry, they're easily confused.

So, if you swap out the *maim* and the R, I would never do this in a Biblical text to suggest

something different, but it's possible that this name... And the Hebrews were also fond of, especially the early scribes, were fond of getting rid of pagan references in Scripture. Many times where you have somebody like Ishbaal, man of Baal. Well, Baal is a Canaanite deity.

We can't have that, so they'll change it to Ishbosheth, where bosheth means foolishness. And they substitute a word that is similar or has some sort of a kinship. Worshipping Baal is foolishness, so he's a man of foolishness.

He's not the man of Baal. And you can find in the Scriptures, Ishbaal or Ishbosheth, referring to the same man. So here, Shadrach becomes sort of just a foreign word that means nothing, but Merodach, everybody knew who Merodach was in the ancient world, and this is part of the old pagan pantheon.

So, he is a name that means, that talks about the grace of the Lord. The Canaan of the Lord is turned into something that refers to a pagan deity in the Babylonian, Sumero-Akkadian pantheon. Well, the same happens with Meshach and Meshael.

Meshael has his name changed to Meshach. What's going on with that? Well, Meshael is the hardest of the names to decipher. It seems to be composed of three separate elements.

M, main, which means from. Asher, which means who, or who is like. Mi, if it's not just the name, but the mi, then it can also mean who.

There's like a double who there. Mi is who, Asher is who, and then El is God. So, who is like the Lord, or who is the Lord, would be sort of a literal translation.

This is where we get the name Michael. Mi-ka-el. Ka means like.

So, mi, who, ka, like, el, God. Who is like God. Michael.

And, of course, that's the name of the angel assigned to the nation of Israel. But, there's also a possibility that this name derives from a completely different root, and I want to just suggest this. It's not bulletproof, but it's interesting to me.

There is a Hebrew word called Mush. Mush. M-U-S-H.

One of the features of Hebrew, and I'm just going to tell you this without documenting it, is that depending on how you play with words, a U can turn into a Y. A Yod and a Waw are just two different lengths of the same letter. If it's got a short stem, it's a Y. If it's got a long stem, it's a U. Those are also confused, and they also contract into one another based on just the nature of the language. So, sometimes Mush will turn into Mish.

Well, what does Mush mean? Mush in Hebrew means to withdraw, to pull away, to depart. Mush. So, Mush-el would be the departure of God.

Now, you think about the parents of this young man, in the latter days of the ministry of

Jeremiah, hearing the prophecies, hearing about the idea that the land is going to be taken away, you're going to go into captivity, you're going to lose everything if you don't turn, and they see no signs of turning. Instead, violence and depravity are increasing in the land. And so, here comes their son, and what do they name him? Sign of the times.

Departure of God. God's going to depart. And yet, there are promises that say that God will never depart.

And you have God-el, that's his formal name. This is God in the sense of almost his office. His official dealings with the world.

God in the impersonal God-ship. We have this even in English. When you talk about God, it seems to be a little bit more abstract, and more general.

When you talk about the Lord, it's more personal. And this reflects the usage in Hebrew. Yah, or Yahweh, is God's personal name.

His name that he's known by in Israel. El was a universal name for God, just as it is in English with a small g. And you have people in Canaan who worship El, who is a Canaanite deity that has nothing to do with the God of Israel. So, Mishael, I would suggest, may in fact come from the idea of God withdrawing.

Not the Lord withdrawing. It's not Yamush or Mishayu or something like that, or Mishayahu. It's Mishael.

God in the sense of God's overarching plan and purpose has removed his grace and removed his blessing from Israel, from Judah in particular. And this reflects the times. And yet, even in that withdrawal, there is grace.

And you have that with Hananiah. God is still gracious. There is a remnant that will return.

One of the sons of Isaiah has that name. A remnant will return. Well, that's Hananiah and Mishael.

What about Azariah? What does his name mean? Ezer in Hebrew means help. E-Z-E-R means help. We have that hymn, Here I raise my Ebenezer.

Eben is stone or rock. And Ezer is help. It's a stone of help.

My Ebenezer, the rock that commemorates, here's the place where God helped me. You can go read about Ebenezer. Not Ebenezer Scrooge, but the original Ebenezer.

And well, you know, Dickens was a scholar. And Dickens knew what Hebrew words mean. Why do you suppose he named the main character Scrooge Ebenezer? It's a forecast.

It tells you at the beginning, if you know, if you're reading the secondary language of literature,

that Ebenezer is going to ultimately be that rock of safety and stone of help to Tiny Tim and bless us everyone and that whole thing. But in the beginning, his name is an ironic twist because he is anything but. And yet in the end, he fulfills the meaning of his name.

It's another level at which literature works. The Bible does this all the time. And that's why we're looking at these names.

Azariah. So what does this mean? Ez-er-ee-yah. You should be able to figure this out.

My help is the Lord. The Lord is my help. Azariah.

Now, what does his name get turned into? Remember these three names now, looking at the significance in terms of history that we reviewed in the first session this morning. God's withdrawing. The Lord is gracious.

And the Lord is my help. The Lord is my grace. The Lord is my help.

God, El, in the impersonal sense, the nation is undergoing discipline, but individuals still have access to grace. Individuals still have access to help. These are individuals experiencing national discipline and yet still rich in individual grace and help from God.

So these names really mean something, the Hebrew names especially. And you look at what they're trying to be turned into. What I find most fascinating is Meshach.

He's got the snappiest name. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. That's why they write songs about it.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It's a lot easier to rhyme something with that also. But what does Abednego mean? We've already talked about the word servant in Hebrew in our scripture reading over in Jeremiah, right? What's the Hebrew word for servant? Everybody remembers.

It's almost like the word for rock. Rock is Eben. Servant is Ebed.

E-V-E-D. Ebed. Well, Abednego.

So we say, okay, servant of Nego, whoever he is. What's the problem with this etymology? Ebed is a Hebrew word, not a Sumerian, Akkadian, or Babylonian word. And so there has been a substitution here, just as I suggested for some of the other names where there's been some substitution going on.

The Hebrews have played games with this name. So let's see if we can reconstruct it back from what it originally was, because it will be informative, more informative than you think. Nebo, N-E-B-O, was a Babylonian god.

But this isn't Nebo. This is Nego. And B and G are not so easily confused as some of the other

letters, although they are confused.

The G is kind of a... Well, I won't take time to draw it, but trust me on this. B and G are... B is just a longer version. If you took a B and squashed it left to right into a tiny space, about a third of the space, it would kind of look like a G in Hebrew.

So it's a squashed one. But that's not so likely. So some say, well, this was actually servant of Nebo, but they kind of played with it so that it would be servant of Nego, and nobody knows who Nego is, so that's harmless.

But Ebed is the Hebrew word for servant. What is the Babylonian word for servant? It's Arad. A-R-A-D.

Arad. And so, Nego is probably also a Babylonian word. So his name was probably, actually, Arad something.

Well, Nego is a word derived from the root negah. Now pay attention here, I'm about to tell you something that will wake you up. You know what Nego or Nagu means in Babylonian? It's a verb that means to shine.

Negu is the shining one. Arad-Negu, servant of the shining one, was used for the morning star in Babylonian literature. Servant of the morning star.

Who was the morning star in the Babylonian pantheon, the shining one? Ishtar. Ishtar, the goddess of light. So what they have done is take the help of God here to take Azariah and say, Oh no, be the servant of the shining one.

Be the servant of Lucifer, son of darkness, who tries to arrogate to himself the title of the morning star, who masquerades as an angel of light. And this is, I think, very significant because as you look at these names and what's going on in this story, this is the big test. Are you going to be sucked in by what seems to be a shining light, what seems to be, isn't it great that I'm not down there with Ezekiel by the river Kabar, turning mud into bricks and doing a bunch of low-life blue-collar work and whiling away my days in a prison camp.

I'm up here in the palace and look at this great food they're giving me and shouldn't I take advantage of this and isn't this a deliverance and isn't this the prosperity that God is bringing me because I'm so faithful and so I should avail myself of it. Rationalization is Satan's major weapon. This is his favorite weapon of choice.

Rationalize. Hath God not said, ye may eat of every tree in the garden? Forget about that little exception. Has God not said you can eat of all the trees? Why would he pick out just one tree and say don't eat? He said you can eat of all the trees.

So, who's going to remember which tree is what anyway? Rationalize. Compromise. Seems to be a shining way.

Abednego, Arad, Nagu, Servant of Ishtar, Servant of the Shining One. That's what this name comes to mean. Well, these are significant because these are the alternatives that the satanic program constantly tries to suggest to us.

Instead of the help of God, and we know where and how that help is accessed, don't we? How does the power of God come into the life of a believer? It is the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Not one, not the other, but both. Either one without the other is going to be a corruption.

Word of God without the Spirit of God, you become a Pharisee. Spirit of God without the Word of God, you become a holy roller. Either way, you're either in the grip of wild emotion that can't think and can't chart a course, you're a ship without a rudder, blown about, or you are an academic, an ivory tower type where your faith never touches your life.

You're a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, If I have all knowledge and have not love, I'm nothing. I do nothing.

I accomplish nothing. It takes that balance. This is how the power of God comes into our life.

It is God's Spirit and God's Word. If we find ourselves powerless, if we find ourselves lacking Azariah, where should we look? Not to a shining alternative in the distance. Not becoming the servant of some false light.

We go to where we know the light is. We go to the true light. John says Jesus is that true light.

He's found in the Word. He's found in the Spirit. That's where we turn.

That's Azariah, not Abednego. The grace of God. What's the alternative offered by the satanic program? Shadrach, Merodach.

Some completely alternate system. Something completely away from the grace of God. Oh no, it's something of human invention.

Merodach is a human invention. He has no roots in anything biblical, anything divine, anything of God. Merodach is a completely human, humanly invented, humanly manufactured, humanly worshipped, humanly perpetuated God.

So instead of the grace of God, let's go to the artifice of man. Let's go to the techniques of man, the procedures of man, the policy and program of man. And it's a completely false solution.

You have Mishaël, Mushel. I was reminding my daughters earlier this week, in fact I think it was last night, of that old bumper sticker I saw when I was a young guy. If God seems far away, who moved? God has departed.

God is having to work discipline on a nation that has departed from Him. What about me individually? There is still grace. There is still help.

But they say, oh no, God has not departed from you. Instead of Mishael, you should be Mishak. Once again, substitution.

There's always a substitute. There's always a rationale. There's always something to take our minds away from God's word, God's spirit, God's will, and get our eyes on ourselves.

This is what I should do. This is what I need. This is where I can justify some other course of action.

But verse 8 says, Daniel purposed in his heart. By the way, what about Daniel himself? Have we talked about his new name? Daniel is renamed Belti-Shazar, isn't he? In Babylonian, this was probably Belu-lita-shari-user. Balu-lita-shari-user.

Which means, oh Bel, protect thou the hostage of the king. Did you get all that? Belu-lita-shari-user. They probably just called him Bob or something for short.

Belu-lita-shari-user. Oh Bel, protect thou the hostage of the king. Why would he get this name? He's the favorite.

Have you ever thought about Mishael or Azariah looking over at Daniel? Ashpenaz comes by and pets Daniel on the head. Good boy. I like you.

You're an up-and-comer. Here, take the day off. And you're one of the others and you're not the favorite.

It doesn't say that Ashpenaz liked all four of them. He liked Daniel. There could be jealousy.

They give him this name. Oh Bel, protect thou this hostage of the king. Here's the one.

We could lose these other three guys. This is the one we don't want to have anything happen to. He's the teacher's pet.

And yet we see no hint of jealousy. We see no hint of contention or strife or division between these four. Daniel is the leader.

He is acknowledged and recognized by the other three. And they don't begrudge him this favor that God has given him in the eyes of Ashpenaz. And it is because of that favor that they too are allowed to stay off the bad diet.

But they're not the ones that initiated it. Oh Bel, protect thou the hostage of the king. Who is it that is actually going to protect the hostage of the king? El.

He should have been Eltishazar instead of Beltishazar. But that's what his name means. All of these names.

There is no name in the Bible that is not significant. God arranged for parents to look down into the cradle and be struck with a thought and pin a moniker on a son or a daughter that would

go into the inspired biblical record for all time and all eternity. There are no accidents in the word of God.

There are no random events. And all of these names mean something. Even the pagan names.

So, this confirms what we've sketched out in terms of the situation and what the issue is in Daniel chapter 1. It's most important these aren't just neat Bible stories that you can illustrate and hand to toddlers. Daniel has to make a life or death decision here. He puts his life on the line to try to serve the Lord.

And God honors that by bringing it about. So, let our appearance be examined for you after ten days where we eat only vegetables and drink only water. Then, verse 13, let our appearance be examined before you and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.

So, he, the steward, consented with him in this matter and tested them ten days. Tested them ten days. Tested them ten days.

Why does that ring a bell? You shall have testing ten days. Seems like we read that somewhere in the recent past over in the Revelation. Testing, ten days of testing.

What is the purpose of testing? Sometimes it is not to prove something to the testee but to prove something to onlookers. There are others who are looking and seeing that a principle is vindicated, that a promise or a doctrine or a policy of God is in fact correct. These men start out at a disadvantage.

They seem to be following a policy of disadvantage. Where is the protein in a vegetable diet, etc. How can you get healthy? Wine puts color in your cheeks and so on.

You are drinking only water. You are on this radical diet. What would we call this? The Daniel diet? I wonder if anybody is going to write a book on that.

Take the Daniel diet. Eat only vegetables and drink water for ten days and then weigh yourself and look in the mirror. Ten days, classic period of testing, different than the 40 days and 40 nights of being in the wilderness.

Different kind of testing, you think? Jesus is in the wilderness facing Satan. He is out there 40 days and 40 nights. Israel is in the wilderness, 40 days and 40 nights.

This is a test of what is inside the testee. Your 40 day, 40 night judgment thing. How long is Noah in the ark? How long does the rain fall? He is actually in the ark 47 days before the rain ceases, right? Because he was in there a week before the rain ever started.

But, the rain storm tests the eight people inside the ark 40 days and 40 nights. It also tests and judges everybody outside the ark. And they don't pass the test.

Nobody can swim that long. Right? But, a 40 day period or a 40 something period looks at the testee. So, this tells us something when you go back over to Revelation.

Keep your finger in Daniel chapter 1 and turn over to Revelation chapter 2. Just as a refresher in Revelation chapter 2 verse 8. The angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things say, the first and the last who is dead and came to life, I know your works, tribulation and poverty, but you are rich. God already knows their works. God already knows that spiritually they are rich.

Right? So, he doesn't need to test them to find out what they are made of, does he? He already knows. I know your works. I know your tribulation and poverty, but you are rich.

I know the blasphemy of those who are attacking you. These Jews who say they are Jews, but aren't. They are a synagogue of Satan.

Don't fear the things you are about to suffer. The devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested and you will have tribulation ten days. This is not to prove something or teach something to the Smyrnaites.

This is to demonstrate something to people who are on the outside looking at them. That's what a ten day period of testing does. Prove something to somebody besides the testee.

God says, I will show you something about this person. Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. So, these guys are going to undergo a test for ten days to prove something to the pagans.

To prove something to Ashpenaz and his steward. So, at the end of ten days, verse 15, their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. Thus, the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

So, they're basically on a kosher diet. Once again, a diet that's in keeping with the law of Moses. The way the Babylonians cooked their meat, evidently you couldn't be sure that any of the meat wasn't tainted with something that was off limits.

Maybe they were big bacon eaters, put bacon bits on everything. Whatever it was. As for these four young men, and notice this statement is made after the ten day test, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom.

Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams, over and above the other three. God gave them the wisdom they needed. Now, think about it.

Literature and wisdom. What literature and wisdom? God gave them skill in what? Pagan subjects. This is Sumero-Akkadian Babylonian wisdom and literature.

They're reading about Bel, and they're reading about Nebo, and they're reading about Ishtar, and they're reading about all of these other myths, and they're getting tests. They have a daily

quiz. They have a weekly test.

They have a nine weeks test. They have a midterm. They have to write essays and papers.

Daniel, Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, 25 page paper on Ishtar, the Queen of Heaven, the light of all skies, due next week. God gave them skill so that they were able to satisfy their academic requirements. They didn't stand there and say, Well, I'm going to have to write a paper and tell you that only the God of Israel is the God of Heaven, and there is no such thing as Ishtar, and here's my great diatribe on why your entire religion and system of wisdom is wrong.

They didn't do that. Why? It's not the mission. It's not their calling.

God did not bring them to Nebuchadnezzar. How do these guys know that God doesn't want them to take a big stand and do some kind of a big missionary effort in Babylon? How do they know? What was our scripture reading this morning? Jeremiah 28, 27, 28. What did God say through the prophet Jeremiah? Do these men know the word of the Lord? Remember our scripture reading, Jeremiah? Amos did the following chapter of 28, because the false prophet's name, oddly enough, in Jeremiah 28 is Hananiah.

My grace is from the Lord, or the Lord is gracious. But Jeremiah 27, God says, Submit yourself to Nebuchadnezzar. That's the mission.

Submit, and you will be preserved. Submit. This is my will.

Nebuchadnezzar is my servant, God said. That's how they know. They have God's word, and they're following it.

That's what we have to do. Many times when we look at a situation, we're confused, and we say, Well, I'm not sure what's the right thing to do. What's the problem? We have not given ourselves all of the facts.

Not long ago, I was working with somebody on their math homework, and I said, When you're attacking one of these problems, get a blank sheet of paper, put a number on it, and write down every fact that you're given in the problem. Write down any formula or any theorem that you can think of that pertains or impinges on that. Get all of the facts out in front of yourself.

That's how you can solve this problem. It's the same exact thing in the spiritual world. Once you assemble the facts, if you are looking to God, if you're susceptible to the ministry of His Spirit, the word of God, the promises, principles, and doctrines in your soul are going to organize those facts into a coherent picture, and you're going to say, Aha! I need to give the right answers about Ishtar, the Shining One, the Queen of Heaven.

I need, in this sense, to sort of mimic Abednego. I need to do this right. They're asking, What is Ishtar's lineage? What has she done in the Babylonian pantheon? Here it is, chapter and verse.

I know your mythology inside out. I have learned it perfectly. I can spout it back to you like a priest of Ishtar.

That's how good I am. This is not a small thing for Scripture to say. God gave them skill in the wisdom and literature of the Babylonians.

If you're going to learn evolution, learn it well. Learn it as well as any diehard, flaming proponent of evolution. Know the evidence.

Know the data. Study the fossil finds. Don't just say, Well, the Bible says God created six days, so that's got to be wrong.

There's no opportunity for discussion. There's no opportunity for dialogue. There's no opportunity to make points that evolution, from a scientific point of view, is unscientific.

Scientists make their living writing papers about evolution. It's a conspiracy of agreement. Everybody has agreed, because many of them are secular humanist atheists, that it must be this way.

So let's pitch all of the evidence in this light. And it's a huge, willing conspiracy. There are no scientific facts for evolution.

None. I'm telling you this because I have studied the science. I know the facts.

And I'm telling you there are no scientific facts for macroevolution, for neo-Darwinian theory, that says that greater complexity arose from simpler animals, simpler forms of life, plants or animals. Never been scientifically demonstrated. Never been scientifically documented.

This alleged property of matter that it self-organizes and self-replicates. The DNA wrote itself. This is like saying your copy of Microsoft Word wrote itself.

Well, I started out, you know, and I had a copy of, you know, WordStar for CPM. And I left it running, you know, and I went away. And when I came back, there was Windows and there was Word.

Look at these simpler codes, you know. There was a simple spell check and now look at it. It does syntax checking and so on.

It's ridiculous. Information does not write itself. Organization and complexity and interactive, interconnected, inter, you know, support that takes place between systems doesn't happen by itself.

There's no scientific evidence for that whatsoever. Even intelligent people trying to make that happen and saying, well, let me put all this stuff in and make it go. Sometime if you're talking to an evolution person and they say, well, but you know the primordial soup, lightning struck and, you know, under the right conditions.

You know what the best possible conditions for life are for any particular organism? Find a cat that has just been killed. It's just been smothered. Smother a cat.

It died one minute ago. Every possible building block is in place. The DNA is there.

The cells are there. The organelles, all of the equipment for respiration, cardiac and everything else. All that's happened is you stopped its breath for a little while.

It's been laying there for, let's say, 15 minutes or so. You know, brain death has occurred or something. Just crank it back up.

Start it back up and it ought to go. It never happens. So you certainly can't take inanimate chemicals and make them do this.

What's the point? Know the world around you. Don't be afraid to investigate alternatives. But the truth is in the Word of God.

The saving truth, the delivering truth, is in the Word of God. It's not in the shining one that's put as a substitute. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your Word. Thank you for the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we can, like these four brave young men, live our lives to please you in the face of whatever opposition confronts us.

We pray that our lives will reflect your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name. Amen.