

## Daniel 05-10-02a

This is Sunday the 2nd of October 2005. We're in the book of Daniel as we continue our worship this morning. Let's take a moment as we approach the formal study of the Word of God to ensure that we have exercised our priesthood, that God the Holy Spirit has room to maneuver in our souls, that he can teach us.

Thankfully, I think all of us are grateful that he in fact is the teacher, not me or anyone else. And as the waiter who brings the food from the kitchen to the table, all I am doing is putting something in front of us that God the Holy Spirit can use to build up our souls and prepare us for God's plan and purpose both in this age and in times to come. So it's important that we be sitting at the table and ready to receive the things that God has for us and we do that by ensuring that we have focused our attention on spiritual things through prayer.

Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful that we have the opportunity and the access that allows us to learn from your Word. It is unparalleled, it's unrivaled any time in history. The access, the understanding, the resources that we have at our disposal to understand the import and the meaning of your Word, not just the words on the page, not just the content of stories and prophecies, but the truths that build up our souls, the truths that prepare us for eternal life.

We ask your blessing on us as we fellowship and study together. We are grateful for all of the grace that you have bestowed on our nation and on our community and on our individual families so that we can pursue our Christian life in peace and without fear of persecution. We ask your blessing on those that have the rule over us, our President, his cabinet, all of those who are in leadership positions throughout our military and our civil government who are seeking to please you in the performance of their duties and preserve the Christian values upon which our nation was founded.

We ask your blessing on us individually as we study. May we find in your Word those things that we need in the days and weeks ahead and in the eternal future ahead to be able to fulfill your plan and purpose in our lives. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our scripture reading this morning comes from the first half of Proverbs chapter 3. Proverbs chapter 3. In the book of Daniel, in the first chapter which we have now completed, we've seen that one of the major issues that has been introduced, you expect to find an introduction at the beginning of the thing, right? And what is the theme, one of several, but what is the major theme that we find in the first chapter? We understand that the setting is captivity. We understand that the setting is adversity for Daniel and his three friends, but what has been proved out as we finish chapter 1? What is sort of the major impression that you're left with? Daniel is a man of faith and the wisdom of God surpasses the wisdom of men.

If you wanted to sum up chapter 1, men say you've got to eat diet A. People who understand God's plan and purpose for them say we must, to honor our God, eat diet B. Wisdom of man

versus the wisdom of God. Power of men versus the power of God. And at the end of chapter 1, what do you find? By faith, the wisdom of God has been vindicated.

By faith, the people of God have been vindicated. Wisdom of man versus wisdom of God. That conflict can only be successfully engaged by people of faith.

If we are not faithful people, the wisdom of God does not get vindicated in our lives. Saying it in those terms is sort of patently obvious, isn't it? If we're not implementing the wisdom of God, it is not going to be vindicated in our lives. But that's what faith does.

We say, oh, have faith, brother. Well, if you say, well, I think I'm having faith. I'm trusting God and so on.

Well, how does it prove out? How does faith manifest itself? Well, we've got a great book largely devoted to that subject over in the New Testament, don't we? Paul says, we walk by faith and not by sight. James says, you have faith and I have works. I will show you my faith by my works.

What's he talking about? That you can't really be credited with righteousness unless there are works that accompany your faith? Not at all. The message of James is the same as the first chapter of the book of Daniel. If we are people of faith, the wisdom of God will be vindicated in our lives.

Now, how do you measure vindication? That's the big question. Because the earthly standard of measure says, well, if something is a success, it's going to advance me in human terms. If I am John the Baptist and I am vindicated in human terms, then when I accuse Herod for marrying his sister-in-law, God is going to strike and blight him and I am going to glow in the dark or something.

I will be proven right, he will be proven wrong in some very obvious human physical way. What actually happened? John got his head cut off and Herod went on to survive for many more years. Marriage was not dissolved, etc.

So how do you measure vindication? This is where the study of the word of God gives us a frame of reference. What is the true measure of value? What is the true measure of wisdom? What is the true measure of vindication? I trusted God. Humanly speaking, the circumstances, people look at it and say, whoa, that didn't turn out well for you.

Look, you trusted God and you lost your job. You trusted God and your family member still died or your illness was not healed or whatever it may be. Well, what is the measure of vindication? What has value and what does not? If you just step back and look at the big forest in terms of the theme and the meaning of the word of God, what does the Bible say about what counts and what doesn't count? Where do we lay up treasure? On earth or in heaven? Is it the earthly, visible, humanly measured success or is it the heavenly, God evaluated, eternal weight that matters? The trouble with this system of vindication is that it doesn't work for unbelievers and it doesn't work for faithless believers.

If you hang around with ungodly people, you will never find yourself vindicated in their eyes. Why? They haven't got the first shadow of the disappearing vapor of a clue about heavenly things, heavenly values, spiritual realities. It is like describing the color green to a blind man.

It just does not compute. They can't perceive it and because of that they are going to measure in human terms and say you are a failure. You can look at Daniel and his three friends in human terms and say you were a great big man on campus back there in Jerusalem.

You were on the fast track. You were born into the nobility. You were born into a rich family.

You are on the upward way there in terms of human success and now look at you. Your city is destroyed. You are a prisoner of war.

You are hauled off over here and your biggest decision is what am I going to eat today? Failure. Look at your nation. Your pathetic little Judean kingdom is wiped out.

Nebuchadnezzar has tromped on you like a bug and you are just one of an innumerable number of hostages out here. So what can you possibly accomplish? Your ability to influence politics, to influence people, to have sway in government, to make a mark in the world is over. You are a captive.

You are a prisoner. Somebody could decide you looked at them cross eyed and cut off your head, could execute you at any moment. You are the lowest of the low.

You are in effect a slave in bondage in a foreign land. Your potential is nil. Of all of the people that lived in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, of all of the people who had their offices in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, the great ministers, the great movers and shakers of the world, who has had the most impact of anybody in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar? The captive, Daniel.

Why? Because in the long term, in the spiritual measure, he was a man of faith and he was a man who lived by God's wisdom and not human wisdom. There is a big panic because of the recent hurricanes and there has been and it has been waxing and waning for some time now about global warming. You have probably heard about this, read about this.

The polar ice caps are melting. Oh no, the ozone is this, that and the other. Global warming, we are all going to die.

Man has polluted the planet. Man has cut down the rainforest. Blah, blah, blah.

Two degrees difference in temperature and we are all going to drown. All the ice will melt and life as we know it will cease. What is this based on? We are looking at weather patterns over the last 40 years.

Look in the last 40 years at the trend. It is all upward. Look at the temperature going up.

Look at the ozone going down. So in this little short view, you see this trend. If you have ever

seen a spiky graph with things that go up and things that go down, your electrocardiogram or something, anything.

If you have ever done like I do and record an old scratchy vinyl album into your computer and then look at the resulting graphic representation of the waveform, it is all these little ups and downs. If you narrow down and pick a very narrow range and just look at that, you can find a slope that is just going way up like this. Of course if you pick a different section, it is going way down like this.

Short term view, myopia, all I can see is this little piece right in front of me leads to false conclusions. That is what we tend to do in this life. It would have been easy for Daniel and his three friends to look at their situation and say, look at this downturn.

Look at what I have lost. Look at where I was five years ago and where I am today. Look at where I was two years ago, three years ago, four years ago and where I am today.

There is a massive downturn in my standing, in my fortunes, in my potential, in my opportunities. One of the major differences between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God is its scope of view. The wisdom of man tends to be very short term.

Why? Because man has no concept of anything beyond this life. So whatever wisdom you have has to fit into your three score and ten if you are lucky. It is all about what happens to me in the next few years where the wisdom of God is eternal and has a very long view.

So as we look at Proverbs chapter 3, Solomon speaking here, either to his son or I tend to think he is recording the teaching that David gave him. But this is fatherly advice to a son here. My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands.

For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. This is going to benefit you in earthly life. Let not mercy and truth forsake you.

Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart. And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths. This is one of our memory verses.

Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones.

Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first fruits of all your increase. So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord nor detest his correction.

For whom the Lord loves he corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her proceeds are better

than the profits of silver and her gain than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies and all things you may desire cannot be compared with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her and happy are all who retain her. You can point to many examples in history and say well here is somebody that was living a life of faith and obedience and these promises did not come true. One of the most annoying things, one of the most irritating statements I ever heard in seminary was when we got to the book of Proverbs, the professor saying well you know this is not, this is a special kind of literature that you can't really take as true in every case.

These are general principles that are generally true, but there are lots of exceptions to them. Now think about that. That is why they are called Proverbs.

Proverbial wisdom is sort of a general trend, a tendency. What? Now listen, I heard this in one of the most conservative seminaries in the country, that the book of Proverbs cannot be taken at face value, that the statements God makes in here are just generalizations that might not have any applicability in your case. I find this to be just jaw-droppingly stunning.

So God is speaking in generalities, but this might not really be true. Maybe I can't, why should I memorize anything out of the Proverbs? I don't know if it is going to happen or not. Maybe that is just for the other guy, the other believer who in the inscrutable ways of God is going to have length of days and long life.

Which ones do you decide are always true and which ones are only sometimes true? It says that if you find wisdom and gain understanding, her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. So what? All her paths are not peace sometimes? Sometimes her ways are not ways of pleasantness? This is a direct, although unwitting, attack on the inerrancy and infallibility of scripture. God doesn't really mean what he says.

It's not actually true all the time, it's just true sometimes. You say, well, but Sam, you know, plenty of examples. You can look at scripture and see where prophets of God were hounded and lived in caves and holes in the ground.

That doesn't sound like a way of pleasantness or a path of peace to me. Look at David, living out there in the cave of Adullam, hounded and being chased to and fro by Saul. Look at Joseph while he was imprisoned and enslaved and so forth.

Plenty of examples of the people of God suffering and they were obviously people of faith. So aren't these people right? Isn't this wisdom of God got some problems with it in terms of its actual truth in real life? One of the advantages that we have currently of having three separate prophetic book studies all going at the same time is that we've got our minds all and our souls all pointed in the direction of future things, don't we? Ezekiel is talking about the future. Daniel

is going to be talking about the future.

Revelation is certainly talking about the future. And one of the things we discover is that when you think about that graph with the up and down blips, this human life that we live isn't the whole graph. You see what I'm saying? If God says that the ways of wisdom are pleasantness and all her paths are peace, that does not have to be fulfilled within the limits of my life.

Because in God's mind, that's just a little segment. That's a section. It's a little tiny blip.

There's a lot more. These people in the Old Testament to whom these words were originally addressed are all going to live again in the Millennial Kingdom, aren't they? They are going to be raised. They are going to go into the land.

It's a promise of God. Paul says all Israel will be delivered. All Israel will be saved.

Daniel himself in verse 1 of chapter 12 is going to start talking about the resurrection. Those who sleep will awaken. Some to a resurrection of life.

Some to a resurrection of shame and contempt. But an Israelite who took this to heart and didn't see the fruition of it in his earthly life is going to see it in the Millennial Kingdom. So there is no case in which this truth is not true or in which these proverbs are not applicable.

You're looking at too small a sampling. You're panicking over global warming when you're only looking at the last few decades instead of looking at the great sweep of geological history that's available to be studied. People realize, who look at the past in the earth, that we've had lots of times where there were these cycles of warming and cooling and the ozone comes and goes.

And the impact of man on the environment is minuscule. One volcanic eruption can do more than everything the industrial age has done in the last hundred years and more. We've seen that in our study of Revelation, what's going to happen in the latter part of that 70th week of Daniel.

So what's the point here from our scripture reading? We have to make a choice day by day of which wisdom we're going to live by, which standard of measure we're going to use. Is it human wisdom based on a short sample of time? Well, I prayed and God didn't answer my prayer. I trusted God and things didn't turn out too well.

So boo on the wisdom of God. I'm going to see if I can start sampling all of the different varieties of the wisdom of men and find one that works. That's not a valid comparison.

The wisdom of God is eternal. The end of the world is eternal. The impact on our life of the wisdom of God is eternal.

Do you think John the Baptist who preached and lost his head is sorry? If John had it to do over again, would he go back and say, you know, Herod, I've come to a new understanding of this whole marriage thing and your sister-in-law marries. Thumbs up on that. Good job.

You know, I can see the political value of it. I can see how you consolidated and it's okay. If John the Baptist had his life to live over again, do you think he would do anything any different? From a human perspective, he's a failure.

From a human perspective, that was unwise. His friends and followers were telling him, John, you really ought to shut up on that whole Herod marriage thing. You're going to get yourself in trouble.

That's unwise from a human point of view. But it is the wisdom and the power of God. Look at his example.

Look at the place that his life has in the unfolding revelation of the plan and purpose of God and the introduction of the Lord Jesus Christ and the foreshadowing of Herod as the king of the Jews and his treatment of John the Baptist as a beautiful picture because the king represents the people and he is fascinated by John. He keeps him captive for a while. He listens to him, but he won't believe him.

But he's fascinated. He finds him interesting. He looks at him for a while, but when push comes to shove, the whole dance of the seven veils and so on, then he kills him.

When he's forced to a decision, he kills him. This is exactly what the people of Israel are going to do and it's foreshadowed before Jesus' ministry ever really gets started. You can see it's like warning music in a movie.

I was thinking about this the other day, watching something and you see somebody running along. Just build a scene in your mind. It's just a city sidewalk and somebody is running along.

They've got a package in their hand. Now, in that scene, play some music underneath it. Play the theme from Leave it to Beaver.

You know, a little happy bouncy tune. Somebody is running along. You get the idea, well, this is going to be funny.

He's going to trip or he's going to run into a bicycle and drop the package. It's all nice and positive. Now, play the theme from Jaws under that.

You know, same scene, but you have this anticipation of some disaster. If this guy runs into something, it's probably going to be fatal. It's going to be ugly.

I'm going to have to avert my eyes. Well, people look at John in his life and when he's preaching, when he's doing his mission, when he is fulfilling God's purpose for his life, everybody around is playing warning music. Oh, John, this could cost you your life.

This is no laughing matter. This isn't a matter of being ridiculed. This isn't a matter of being dismissed as fluff and unimportant and as a crazy man living out there.

You will die over this. It's an ugly scene to have your head chopped off. I mean, that's not Leave it to Beaver music there.

They're serious when they say, John, this has consequences and rationalization. You're a priest. You are a prophet of God.

You're the voice of God to these people. If you get killed, then who's going to lead us? What about this following you've built up? What about all of this great work that you're doing for God? You're endangering it all. You're putting it all at risk just because you feel like you have to tell Herod that his marriage is evil.

Why risk it? Why preach sin when you can just preach the positive side? If you're going to go evangelize, don't tell people about sin. Don't tell people about hell. Don't tell people about eternal damnation.

Just the Jesus of love, the Jesus of light. Love one another. Do unto others.

There's a positive side. Draw them with honey. Don't throw the vinegar at them type of thing.

Listen, do you think John the Baptist would go back and do anything different in his life? Do you think looking at the record of his ministry and the gospel of John, he would go back and do something different? He's a flaming, blazing success. Jesus Christ says of John, of man born of woman, up to this point in history, there is none greater than John. What do you want for a measure of success? Do you want the opinion of people whose robes are flapping in the breeze and the high Judean winds saying, oh John, watch out? Or do you want the opinion of the eternal everlasting Son of God saying, you're the greatest that's walked the planet? We have to ask ourselves this question.

We have a choice between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God. If we live by the wisdom of God, there are people who will say, listen to that music. Dun, dun, dun, dun.

I don't see the point in listening to that music. I don't see anything good coming from your faith. I don't see any success and happiness coming from your sticking with the Word and the plan and the purpose of God here.

I mean, look at these people over here. They're not doing it. And look at how they're flowering and blooming and, you know, springing up in a day.

And look at you. You're trusting God and what are you getting for it? Well, perspective. Are you looking at the little short blip on the graph or are you looking at the great span that goes beyond this life into the millennial kingdom, into the kingdom of the Father? What is your standard of measure? Do you measure with the wisdom of men, with the viewpoint of men, with the definition of what constitutes success of men or do you look at all of those things as coming from God? We have to bring ourselves back to this because our nature, our default, I was explaining, I gave a little computer class yesterday talking about the defaults.

What are the defaults? Just a simple example. When you pull up on a computer, whether it's a Mac or Windows or whatever, you look at the desktop there and there are icons scattered around. Well, you have a thing called auto-arrange.

You can right-click and choose arrange icons, auto-arrange. And when you click it, they all line up in neat little rows and columns, right? Well, back in ancient times, in Windows 3.1, it could be a big problem doing that because depending on the way your screen was set up, the icons were too big and the spaces were too small and they would, if you said auto-arrange, they would overlap. On the contrary, if you had a big, expensive, at the time, Hercules monochrome graphics card and you could get higher resolution on your amber screen, they would be too far apart and there would be all this space.

And so you would actually have to go in and change the grid that it snaps those to, which is a default. I would bet that nobody on the planet anymore goes in and you can still do it. You can go in and change the default distances between the rows and columns for auto-arrange on your desktop, but nobody does it anymore.

The default is fine. Everybody accepts the default now. Okay, the default is good enough.

And nobody goes, very few, unless they're just, you know, weird, go in and change that. But you can go in and spend a day customizing your desktop and saying, I don't want the default font. I don't want the default color.

I don't want the default screen saver. I don't want the default this or the default that. I'm going to customize this to my own peculiar tastes, right? The default in human thinking is short term, what does everybody else think? That's our default.

That's what everybody goes by. And it takes work to change the default. You've got to go in and in many cases, consciously identify where thinking is of a default nature and isn't suitable for a Christian.

It's not suitable for us to measure success in our daily life the way everybody tends to measure it. The default is wrong for a believer because it's short term, it's temporal, it doesn't reflect any spiritual understanding whatsoever. It doesn't matter if we are famous.

It doesn't matter if we are rich. It doesn't matter if we are considered by those around us to be a stellar success or a dismal failure. It doesn't matter if we are exceedingly poor.

It doesn't matter if we are unsuccessful in and of itself. It can matter if you're unsuccessful because you're under discipline and you're failing to be obedient. But these things are not the measure.

The measure is divine wisdom. Now, why is this important? That's Proverbs chapter 3, the first half. Let's go back now to Daniel chapter 1. We have completed this chapter and the very last section of it here makes this point.

Verse 20. In all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. Now ten times, we've already had the ten come up once in this chapter, haven't we? Test us, ten days.

Ten is the number of human measure, isn't it? How many fingers you got if you're normal? Ten. What's our counting system? Our entire mathematical inverted pyramid is based on the number ten. So it's a number of human measure.

Ten times better is a figure of speech that means way better, immensely better, much better. Way better is, for an English major, that just makes me cringe, but that's what you hear people say. You might as well just say it's way more gooder.

Ten times better. In literal terms, think about this. If Daniel and his three friends are getting 100% on the test, what are the other guys getting? A ten? This is a perception.

These guys are ten times as good. I don't think we're expected to take this literally, that everybody else got a ten or below. Daniel and his three friends aced the test.

But think about this. In all matters of wisdom and understanding, about which the king examined them. Now, I've just spent most of our first session this morning contrasting the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God.

We've seen it in Proverbs chapter 3. You've seen it deductively, inductively, every way you can bake it, fry it, slice it. They contrast. They're different.

We all agree in principle, it's another thing to put it into practice, but we all agree, I think, in principle that we ought to be living by the wisdom of God. That's what counts. That's what to focus on.

So, what role does the wisdom of men play in our lives? Somebody comes up and says, oh, life evolves. Oh, you know, we're all stardust. We're, you know, it's all natural processes from the goo to you by way of the zoo.

It's, you know, from the muck to mice and all this kind of thing. That's the wisdom of men. So, I eschew that.

I push it away. Boo on that. It's nonsense.

I'm going to go with Genesis chapter 1 and forget all of that. Same thing with other areas of life. Read this verse again.

In all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them. Now, is the king giving them Bible 101 exam? Is the king saying, all right, now what did Moses say about dot, dot, dot? What's the king examining them on? Let me give you a little sampling of what the king is examining Daniel and his three friends on. This is sort of a summary of Babylonian

mythology.

Everything originated, talking about creation now, everything originated with water. Two different kinds of water. Fresh water and salt water.

Fresh water has actually got consciousness. It's a deity called Apsu, A-P-S-U. So, artesian well, you know, up from the ground comes bubbling fresh water.

That's Apsu. Salt water is a different deity. Tiamat.

T-I-A-M-A-T. Tiamat. Everything starts with water.

You get the fresh water, Apsu. You get the salt water, Tiamat. Well, from these two getting together, you get the pantheon of Babylonian deities.

Apsu and Tiamat give birth to Mamu. Mamu is the tumult of the waves, M-U-M-M-U. And twins, Lakmu and Lakhamu, big gigantic serpents, twin serpents.

Lakmu and Lakhamu, that's L-A-K-H-M-U, by the way, and put an A in the middle of it for the other one. These serpents get together and produce Anshar, the heavens, Kishar, the great gods, Anu, Enlil, and Ea, and other gods of the sky, earth, and underworld. So it starts with water, you start getting serpents and land, and then they get together, and then these other things.

It's like generational. They're all giving birth to each other. Well, you remember the original ones, Apsu and Tiamat, the water? With all of these children and grandchildren running around, they got real noisy.

They started making a lot of racket and it really ticked off Apsu and Tiamat because they couldn't get any sleep. So these primordial goddesses, they're both considered to be female, by the way, the waters, were getting into conversation saying, you know, we ought to just wipe them all out. We made them, we can eliminate them.

You know, what's the problem? Well, Ea, the sort of great grandchild of Apsu and Tiamat hears about this because Ea is all-knowing. So Ea learns of Apsu's plan to destroy the gods. He uses his magic to capture her and Mamu.

Remember Mamu, that was the tumult of the waves. Tiamat was furious that Apsu and Mamu got captured by Ea, so Tiamat creates a monstrous army of gods and freak creatures to punish Ea and his cohorts. Now listen, this is given as fact.

This is what they teach in second grade in Babylon. Ea goes to his father Anshar. Anshar advises him to send Anu to fight Tiamat, but Anu and Ea are afraid of the goddess and her army, so Ea calls Marduk forth.

Marduk promises to conquer Tiamat if he's given supreme authority over the gods. This is

where Marduk is one of the big cheese Babylonian gods. So he says, look, I'll come in and lick all these for you, but you've got to give me the crown over all the gods.

So the gods agree that he will have lordship and they give a big feast in his honor. Marduk is invested with the scepter of the throne and an invincible weapon. Armed with bow and arrows, lightning, the winds, a hurricane, and a special net, Marduk rode forth to meet Tiamat in his chariot, which was a tempest, drawn by four fearsome steeds.

Let me read that again. Marduk rides forth in a chariot, which is a tempest, drawn by four fearsome steeds. They clash.

Marduk catches Tiamat in his net. When Tiamat opens her mouth to swallow him, Marduk lets loose a hurricane, which fills her jaws and belly, and she's sort of stunned. Then Marduk shoots an arrow into her belly and kills her.

Tiamat's army flees in confusion at her downfall. Marduk catches them in his net, chains them, and casts them into the underworld. Hence, you have the denizens of the underworld.

As Marduk is cutting up Tiamat's body, he gets a plan. From one half of her body, he makes the dome of the heavens, and with the other half, he makes the earth. He separates one half from the other half.

He establishes the dwelling of the gods, he fixes the positions of the stars, he orders the movements of the heavenly bodies, and he sets the length of the year. Then, because he's in charge, and he wants to gladden the hearts of the gods that he now rules, Marduk creates men from the blood of Kingu, who was the general of Tiamat's army, that scattered and he caught in his net and threw him down there. When he slew the big general of that army, he got the blood and he makes men out of it.

Finally, he makes rivers, vegetation, and animals, and that completes creation. In recognition of his triumphs, the gods bestow all of their titles and powers on Marduk, making him the god of gods, lord of lords. Well, apparently, after he uses this blood and makes men, the gods get unhappy, kind of like the original two, all this noise, all this confusion.

Well, the gods hold a council, and they agree that mankind should be drowned. Drown them all. But Ea, the god of wisdom, who knows all things, you know, the one that said, hey, got the whole thing started originally, wants to spare the human beings.

So Ea tells one man, Utna-Napishtim, to build a ship for his family and all living creatures. Utna-Napishtim works diligently, and by the time the rains come, his ship is prepared. For six days and nights, a foul rain floods everything on earth, and even the gods become fearful.

By the seventh day, the winds and the rains cease. All the Utna-Napishtim and his family have become mud. The ship comes to rest upon Mount Nisir, and Utna-Napishtim sends forth birds to find out whether the waters have subsided enough to disembark.

Babylonian mythology here. When a raven fails to return, Utna-Napishtim leaves the ship and offers a sacrifice to the gods on the mountain peak. Only Enlil, the god of the tempest, is angry to see that humanity has been spared, but Ea manages to placate Enlil with soft words, and in token of his reconciliation, Enlil gives Utna-Napishtim and his wife the gift of immortality.

Well, that's enough for now. There's more. In all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers.

Daniel and his three friends, among all the other wisdom that they are tested on, know this mythology inside out. You can't stump them on Enlil, or Ea, or Utna-Napishtim, or Gilgamesh, which follows this. They've got it down cold.

What is the relationship of a believer who is seeking to live in the light of the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men? Should we blind ourselves to it? Should we stick our heads in the sand? Should we say, ooh, I shouldn't look at that, I shouldn't understand it? Not if you look at Daniel and his three friends. Truth is powerful. Jesus told the disciples, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

And it's divine truth. It's the wisdom of God. It's not just any old truth like they put it over the library.

Do not be afraid to engage the world on its own ground. Do not be afraid to engage the world on its own ground. This is the problem with the evolution proponents in public school.

Why are they so rabidly, ferociously opposing any mention? You know, there's the intelligent design movement that wants to say in textbooks, you know, there is another view besides evolution. Oh no, violation of the constitution, blah blah, we can't have that, it's unscientific, etc. They've got all their arguments.

It's God in disguise, you're putting God in the classroom, separation of church and state, smoke, ink, anything they can throw at it. What are they afraid of? Competition. I mean, it's thought control.

If you're only presenting one view, and there's millions of people that believe another view, but you're not going to mention it. That's thought control. That's what the communists did.

And that's what's happening in our country by those who have taken over the education system with the humanistic secular world view materialism and don't want to let the other side even be mentioned. Don't make that mistake as a believer. Be informed.

Sun Tzu, Confucius, all of the great secular wise guys have said you've got to know the opposition if you want to have any chance of keeping them in their place. Know your enemy. Daniel and his three friends learned the wisdom of the Babylonians inside out.

And I'm telling you, when we get to chapter 2, this is all the difference in the world. It's all the difference in the world. I'll show you why when we come back from our break.