

Daniel 05-10-02b

Let's pick up our study in the book of Daniel. We are at the intersection or at the juncture, it's probably more accurate, between chapter 1 and chapter 2. Having seen that Daniel and his three friends are expert in all the wisdom of the Babylonians. And a lot of this wisdom has its foundation and its assumptions, its frame of reference in Babylonian mythology.

Every system of organization of knowledge has to have some sort of a foundation to rest on, some sort of viewpoint. If you are a secular humanist, if you are a materialist, then all of your observations are sourced in the grand idea that life miraculously invented itself out of inanimate component parts and then just spontaneously started copying itself and improving itself and expanding itself and designing itself into vast complex forms just because there was some as yet unobserved, unproved, untested property of matter that just causes it to sort of glom together and get smart. That's your assumption, that's your world view.

If you're a Christian and you believe the word of God is to be taken for truth, you believe that, as it says over in Hebrews, by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by God, that the ages were framed by God, that everything we see around us was designed by God and it reflects Him. Romans chapter 1, what may be known of God is manifest in creation and to deny that there is design and to deny that there is a designer behind the design is the response of the negative heart to the convicting ministry of God the Holy Spirit. That's what it is.

You might as well call it what it is. If you look at creation and say, this invented itself, there is no designer behind the manifest, obvious signs of design, you are an unbeliever. Well, so it's interesting to find out what some of this wisdom is that Daniel and his three friends learned ten times better than any of their contemporary students.

We've already seen the sort of creation story of Apsu and Tiamat and the Genesis of Ea and the Genesis, the beginnings of Ea and Marduk and some of the rest of them. But all of this came down, you remember there was a point at which you have the gods saying, let's get rid of mankind, but you have the one sympathetic god saying, well, let's preserve Utnu-Napishtim and teach him how to build a boat and survive. Well, there is a companion legend that follows hard on the heels of this in Sumero-Akkadian myth.

By the way, I had a good question during the break. What is the descendancy? Where do the Babylonians, where do the Sumero-Akkadians come from? And if you look back in Genesis chapter 10 and read it carefully, you find that these are the Hamitic peoples, the ones who settled in the land of Shinar and built Nineveh and so on, Kush, Nimrod. That's all Hamitic.

But of course, Ham was an eyewitness to the flood. Ham survived the flood on the Ark. It's natural that he would tell his grandkids and great-grandkids the story which would then be corrupted over time and modified to suit the ever-increasing level of unbelief that would characterize the population of that area.

But when you get to the time after this flood, Ut-Nun-Napishtim, remember he was given the gift of eternal life for his labors in surviving the flood. Well, you may have heard in the past when people start talking about the biblical flood story and so on about the Epic of Gilgamesh. Well, Gilgamesh is, to the stories we saw in the first patch of this, he's the follow-on.

He comes right after that. So, he was originally a king in Sumer. S-U-M-E-R.

This is where you get the Sumerians and the Sumero-Akkadians. Akkad was one of the sons of Ham, the grandsons and so on. So, a Sumerian king, he ruled over the city of Uruk, U-R-U-K.

It may look vaguely familiar as the place where Abraham departs from. Sumerian city of Uruk, wise, powerful, tyrannical king. He was two-thirds god and one-third mortal.

Now, this is a pretty good trick. If you think about the laws of descendancy, how do you get to be two-thirds god and one-third immortal? You get three parents. If one parent is a god and the other one is half god, half mortal, what do you get for children? You get a three-fourths, one-fourths thing, right? I mean, it's weird.

Nobody can quite figure out how they got the two-thirds, one-third thing. But he was two-thirds of god, one-third immortal. He was very famous as a warrior.

He was famous as an unbeatable wrestler. He was also a ladies' man. And he had an eye out, a leering eye for any young maidens in the area.

It didn't matter if she was married or single or whatever. He would have his way with her. Well, the people of Uruk became somewhat distressed over this because the king was too powerful to overcome.

He was this big wrestler and warrior. And he was having his way with all the women. So they prayed to the goddess Aruru to fashion a man who could overpower Gilgamesh so that the women would be left in peace.

So Aruru creates a big hairy man named Enkidu with legs like a bull. Enkidu roams with the wild beasts and frees them. The hunters go out there and set traps.

And Enkidu goes out and frees them. He's got a big heart for the animals because he's sort of an animal-like man himself. Well, eventually all the frustrated hunters come to Gilgamesh and say, Hey, this Enkidu is out here spoiling our efforts in the hunt.

So Gilgamesh says, I've got to get rid of this Enkidu guy. He's messing up the economy. So he gets a courtesan, one of the most beautiful young ladies in the area.

He says, You've got to go out here and waylay this Enkidu and get him to stop messing with the hunting. So the courtesan goes out and she finds Enkidu and she disrobes. And Enkidu gets all distracted and has his way with her.

So after this, all the animals look at Enkidu and say, You are no longer innocent. You're no longer pure. Boo on you.

We don't want you helping us anymore. And they shun him because he's lost his natural innocence and his virginity and so on. So the courtesan says, Look, the animals don't like you anymore.

You might as well come back with me and team up with Gilgamesh. So he does. He leaves the forest.

He comes back to the palace. And while he's on the way with the courtesan, Gilgamesh has a dream. Now I want you to pay attention to the reason we're going through all of this specifically is the place of dreams in Babylonian mythology.

This is the foundation. This is the frame of reference. This is what Daniel and his three friends have learned.

And this is the specific part of the mythology that we want to pay close attention to. Back in the palace, the courtesan and Enkidu are still out there someplace. Gilgamesh has a dream.

He dreams that he's struggling with a powerful man who is able to defeat him. And of course, he's never run into that. This dream troubles him, so he goes to his mother.

And he says, Mother, I don't know, maybe he had two mothers. He's one third. I still haven't figured that out.

But he goes to his mother. Her name is Ninsun. N-I-N-S-U-N.

Ninsun. He says, Ninsun, my mother, I've had this dream. I was struggling with a powerful guy, and he beat me.

Well, she says, this is the meaning of your dream, son. You and Enkidu are going to become best friends. Sure enough, Enkidu comes back.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu have a big wrestling match. And they become great friends. So Enkidu's invited to live in the palace and shares honor and fame and glory with Gilgamesh.

One night, Enkidu has a dream now that he's living in the palace. Enkidu has a nightmare. He's snatched up by a strange, terrible creature with eagle claws, who picks him up, carries him out of the palace, and tosses him down into the underworld of death.

Well, he's a little unnerved by this. So he goes and tells Gilgamesh, Hey, Gilgamesh. Maybe he called him Gil for short.

Hey, Gil. You'll never guess what I dreamed last night. Well, when Gilgamesh hears of the dream, he goes and offers a sacrifice to Shemash, the sun god.

The sun god Shemash tells Gilgamesh, Look, you've got to go fight Kumbaba the Strong, the king of the Cedar Mountain. Sorry, that's the legend. I'm just telling you what they believed.

You've got to go fight Kumbaba the Strong, the king of the Cedar Mountain. So, Gilgamesh says, I'm going. Well, everybody finds out about this.

Ninsun, his mother, Enkidu, his friend, the people of Uruk. They all say, Oh, Gilgamesh, don't go, don't go to fight Kumbaba the Strong, the king of the Cedar Mountain. But they can't talk him out of it.

He's got to go. So, he makes this long, arduous journey. Enkidu says, Well, if you're going, I'm going too.

So, both of them go. They travel northwest. If you think about northwest from that region, you're heading up into the nastier parts of Europe.

Think of your geography up there. He's going northwest, leaving the fertile land behind. They cross a vast desert.

They reach the Ammanus Mountains. And they finally arrive at this Cedar Mountain. Big, stocky, resplendent, palatial dwelling place for this monster, Kumbaba.

Well, Enkidu turns yellow, sort of. He sees this and he says, This is a big mistake. But Gilgamesh goes forth boldly and issues a challenge to Kumbaba.

No answer, no reply. So, Enkidu and Gilgamesh sit down and make a big sacrifice to the gods and sit down to wait. During the night, Gilgamesh has a dream.

In the dream, he wins. So, he's greatly encouraged. In the morning, Kumbaba charges down there and there's this big, massive fight.

Gilgamesh knocks Kumbaba to the ground and Enkidu cuts his head off. Now that the monster is dead, Gilgamesh cuts down the sacred cedars, drags them back, and they build the temples in Uruk. Drags it all back, kind of like Hiram bringing all the cedars from Lebanon down.

Remember, though, this is more than a thousand years before David. Well, so, this has been a lot of work. So, Enkidu and Gilgamesh take a bath, get dressed, make another offering to the gods.

Then, Ishtar shows up, Queen of Heaven. And she tries to seduce Gilgamesh. He's a big noise now.

He's defeated this monster. He's pretty hot stuff. He's two-thirds of God.

So, she wants to come down and have her way with him. But, he says no. He says, look, I know about you and anybody that you take as a lover winds up having a bad fate.

And I don't want to be another notch on your belt here. I don't want to be another silhouette on your fuselage and then find out that I get shot down later. So, she doesn't take this well.

Hell hath no fury. So, when Gilgamesh and Enkidu get back to Uruk and bringing all these cedars back to build the temples with, Ishtar gets Enu, another one of the gods, and the two of them loose the Bull of Heaven against the whole city of Uruk. The Bull of Heaven just starts stomping it into splinters.

Well, in the course of wrecking the city, the bull gets caught and slaughtered. Gilgamesh and Enkidu, two big boys on the block, get the bull, kill the bull, stop the bull from messing up the city. Well, Enkidu's feeling pretty sassy now.

He was kind of cowardly when he went up to the Cedar Mountain, but he's feeling pretty happy with himself. So, he skins the bull and he takes the bullskin and he throws it in Ishtar's face and says, I would do the same to you if I could. I'd defeat you and skin you alive.

Well, she doesn't take to that too hot. She doesn't like that. So, she lays a mortal curse on Enkidu and twelve days later he dies.

Well, Gilgamesh is just distraught. His best friend Ishtar has slain him. He's inconsolable and he figures, you know, I've got this mortal part of me.

I'm going to die too. So, he says, I've got to become immortal so that I can't get killed. Now, bear with me.

I know this is a long, kind of strange story. But, he's got to find the secret of immortality. So, he thinks back and he says, you know, when it comes to immortality, you've got Utnu-Napishtim.

Remember him? The guy who survived the flood. He was given the gift of immortality. I'll go see Utnu-Napishtim and find out how to be immortal.

So, he goes to find Utnu-Napishtim, the one that Enlil had given everlasting life. He goes west to the far off Mount Mashu, which is guarded by scorpion men. With a trembling heart, he approaches the chief scorpion man and the guy says, hey, no problem.

You want to see Utnu-Napishtim, just go right through. He doesn't have to fight the scorpion man. He just gets a free pass.

He wanders around in a tunnel for a long time. He finally comes out into a garden. And there's a goddess in the garden.

And the goddess says, hey Gilgamesh, what you ought to do is just go home and enjoy your life. You know, what are you doing wearing yourself out on this quest? Just accept death gracefully. Gilgamesh says, well, it's easy for you to say.

You're a goddess. I don't want to die. I've got to have this immortal life thing.

So, the goddess says, all right. You're hard-headed. Go see this boatman.

This boatman will carry you across the turbulent waters of death and take you to Utnu-Napishtim and give you eternal life. So, he finds the boatman and the boatman says, you don't want to be crossing these turbulent waters of death. It's dangerous.

But Gilgamesh will have none of it. He's got to go. So, with the boatman's help, he gets across the perilous waters.

At last, he arrives at the home of the immortal Utnu-Napishtim. So, Gilgamesh says, hey, Utnu, you're immortal. I'm only two-thirds immortal.

I'd like to take care of this other third. So, Utnu-Napishtim laughs and says, son, you don't know what you're asking here. And he tells his story.

He tells the whole story of the flood and how Enlil gave him immortality. So then, Utnu-Napishtim says, look, you stay awake for a week. You stay awake.

Don't sleep for six days and seven nights. You'll be immortal like I am. How long was Utnu-Napishtim in the ark? Six days, seven nights, seven days.

So, Gilgamesh would have said, hey, no problem, except that while Utnu-Napishtim was telling him this, he fell asleep. So, he didn't get that particular path to immortality. Well, Mrs. Utnu-Napishtim feels sorry for him.

She says, look at the poor guy. He's knocked himself out. Come all this way.

You laugh at him. You tell him to stay awake. He's already snoring to beat the band here.

He's a great advertisement for Surda mattresses or something. He's no good as an immortal. So, the wife takes pity on Gilgamesh and says, look, Utnu, you've got to help this guy out.

You need to reveal the secret. So, they wake him up and they tell him, look, there's a cactus type of a thing that grows at the bottom of the ocean. It's this prickly plant down there.

If you get that plant and eat of it, you'll be immortal. If you eat this vegetation, you'll live forever. If you eat this vegetation, you will live forever.

So, Gilgamesh says, hey, I've got to find that. So, he comes to the ocean, ties rocks to his feet and jumps in. You've got to give the guy credit.

He knows how to get where he wants to go. So, naturally, he sinks to the bottom. He finds this prickly plant.

He plucks it. He unties the boulders. Swims up to the surface with the plant in his hand.

Hooray, I have got the secret of immortality. It's right here in my hand. He says, you know, this

won't just be good for me, but all the people of Uruk.

I'll give it to them and we'll all live forever. So, I'll carry it back and we'll have a big feast. We'll eat the prickly plant and we'll all just be immortal.

He crosses back over the waters of death, goes back through the garden of the goddess, goes back through Mount Mashu, back out from the scorpion man, goes back across and travels eastward. He's almost home, but he's pretty sweaty by this time. He's been working hard.

So, he stops. He lays the plant down on a rock and he dives into a lake to take a bath. While he is swimming, a snake approaches and eats the plant.

Gilgamesh comes out, towels off, looks for the plant. It's not there. The snake ate it.

He weeps long and bitterly to think that he's wasted all this enormous effort to gain eternal life and it just didn't pan out. The snakes will live forever, but human beings must die. Gilgamesh returns to Uruk with a broken heart.

He knows what a miserable existence the dead live in the netherworld. Enkidu has revealed it to him. His only consolation is that the walls of Uruk will outlast him as monuments to his reign as king.

That's the epic of Gilgamesh as we've been able to reconstruct it from the tablets that were found in Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh. Well, this too is a part of the wisdom that Daniel and Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah learn in their three-year college education. Their university diploma is based on learning the details of all of this stuff.

Now, do these four young Jewish noblemen have any familiarity at all with the book of Genesis and with the actual truth? Of course they do. How could they be men of faith and not know the Bible as it exists in that day, which is essentially the books of Moses, the writings of David, and a few early prophecies from Jeremiah, right? That's about all they've got. They've got the wisdom literature of David and Solomon.

They've got the Pentateuch. Chronicles and the rest of that has not yet been written down and circulated. That's basically what they've got, is the law of Moses and some stuff from David and Solomon.

So, they know the truth of how creation came into being, what happened in the flood and all the rest of it, but this is what they are taught in the Babylonian palace. Now, think about this. This is my whole point.

I read you all of that to make this point. What if Daniel and Azariah, Hananiah and Mishael, had sat there and daydreamed and said, this is the biggest point. What do you mean the scorpion men? Ah, come on.

And had sort of blown it off. Two things. One, they would not be where God wants them to be

because they would not be elevated to the position that they are going to enjoy in the government of Babylon.

They would not receive their university diploma. They would not be ten times better than the other wise men. And they would not be in the place where God can use them.

Does that make sense? They have to learn this nonsense to be in a place to fulfill their destiny in the plan of God. They have to be faithful students of what they do not agree with and do not believe is true. But that is their task.

That is what they are called upon to accomplish and that is what they do. Secondly, by learning this information, what do they know about the place of dreams in Babylonian thinking? Gilgamesh has a dream about Enkidu. Enkidu has a dream.

Everybody and his mother and brother are having dreams about one thing and another in this legend. And this is the way great affairs are guided. This is how divine revelation comes, is through dreams.

What other means of revelation is there in these stories? When the gods want to impart information to humanity, they do it through dreams. This is the Babylonian understanding. This is the framework.

This is the window from the real world to the divine world. The interface, the communication booth is dreams. So, having learned this wisdom, and of course you can endlessly think about the twists and contortions and distortions of truth that are embedded in those myths.

But when you get to Daniel chapter 2, what do we read? Daniel chapter 2 and verse 1 says, In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. Nebuchadnezzar is the latter day Gilgamesh. He is the most powerful king in the land.

If he has a dream, this is something of divine import. This is something that can guide his future, just like it did for Gilgamesh. Right? So he has a big problem, because not only does he not know what his dream means, but he can't quite remember it, or so it would seem.

His spirit was troubled, his sleep left him. The king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Now you get the idea that when this group is called, this is very early, this is probably very shortly after university graduation. Daniel and his three friends have not graduated very long ago, because when all of these wise men are called, Daniel is not in the group. So he has not yet been sworn in, it would be the assumption.

He's graduated, they find him ten times wiser. You would think if Nebuchadnezzar considers this dream most important, and Daniel had any sort of standing, and any sort of time in office,

why he'd be the first one to be called. But instead, everybody else.

It's said in verse 20 of the previous chapter, he found him ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm, but when he has this dream, he calls the magicians and astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans, to tell him his dream. They come and stand before the king, Daniel and his three friends are not in this group. The king said to them, I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.

The Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, O king, live forever, tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation. Now, verse 4 is where the Aramaic part of Daniel starts. It just switches over to Aramaic here.

It says, said to the king in Aramaic, Hebrew stops, Aramaic picks up. And it's going to continue all the way through chapter 7, verse 28. Everything from this point forward is Aramaic.

Have you ever seen a movie where initially you're, it's a World War II movie, and you're in Germany, and the Germans are talking to each other, and they're speaking their German stuff, and it's in subtitles. I saw this, one of these, it was the Hunt for Red October, I think, where Sean Connery is a Russian sub-commander. Am I right on that? And initially, they're saying, you know, talking all this Russian, and it's subtitled in English, and then it just sort of seamlessly switches over, and now they're all speaking English, because we're sick of reading subtitles, and so it just switches over.

And no explanation, no, they just magically start speaking, and you understand that they're still speaking Russian, but for convenience, we're not going to keep going through this artifice of making Sean Connery learn Russian. Well, you have that same sort of seamless transition here. He says, they said in Aramaic, and then he just starts telling the story in Aramaic.

The original recipients of this were Aramaic speakers, and the Hebrew part of this was going to be difficult for them. The Aramaic is easy. And so there's actually an increase in the comfort level here.

Why would the first part be in Hebrew? Why would chapter one up through two, three and a half, be in Hebrew? What are all the other scriptures, the inspired word of God, what are they written in? What is their stamp of similarity? They're all in that language of God, in the language of the original people of God. And this establishes in the minds of the hearers the credibility of this as scripture. It's not just a serial running in the daily newspaper.

It's not the common vernacular. Why is it that when we have ceremonies, weddings, swearings, in and so on, you find a lot of archaic language? I plight thee my troth. Why do we say that? And a lot of people don't anymore, but up until recently, long after that kind of language went out of fashion, people would say, I plight thee my troth.

It sounds official. It sounds like this has the roots that go into history. This is a marriage bond that has been recognized for centuries upon centuries.

Plight thee my troth means I pledge you my truth. I pledge you my sacred honor. I make these promises on the basis of my character.

Well, same sort of thing. When this book starts out in Hebrew, that identifies it as scripture in the minds of people who are now all speaking Aramaic. And the only thing they know of in Hebrew by way of literature is scripture.

But now, to tell the story in its context and in its time, switch right over to Aramaic. This is where it does it. O King, live forever.

Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, My decision is firm. If you do not make known the dream to me and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.

I've had a dream. You tell me what it was. And if you don't, I'm going to slice and dice you and burn your house down, is what Nebuchadnezzar says.

On the other hand, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you'll receive gifts, rewards, and great honor from me. Tell me the dream and its interpretation. Well, this creates an understandable level of consternation on the part of the Chaldeans, magicians who are not mind readers.

You know, you can make a case for almost any allegorical reading of a story if you know the story. If you don't know the story, what sort of a dance are you going to do? So they say again, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation. The king answers and says, I know for certain you're stalling.

Look, my decision is firm. If you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the time has changed.

The mood has changed. The occasion has passed. You're going to stall and hope I forget about this and get busy with other matters.

No, no, no. Tell me the dream, and I will know that your interpretation is valid. If you're keen enough to tell me the dream, I'll have confidence in your interpretation.

Well, the Chaldeans answer the king and say, There is not a man on earth who can tell the king this matter. No king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. Remember what we were talking about earlier about the wisdom of men, the frame of reference of men, what men think, what men understand.

In history, this has never happened. Where somebody had to play guess your dream or die. Monty Hall never brought this before the networks.

We'll bring somebody in that's had a dream. We'll bring in three contestants. And if they guess

it, we'll give them a prize.

And if they don't guess it, we'll chop them in pieces and burn their house down. It's never happened in history. What kind of a concept is this? That's the human wisdom.

What they don't know is that there is a God in heaven who has control of dreams, who can reveal dreams and their interpretation. Daniel and his three friends know not only the mythology of the Babylonians and that dream theme, they also know Genesis. And they know the story of Joseph who was gifted in the interpretation of dreams.

And that gift came from God. And the same God who gives the interpretation, if He reveals the interpretation, He can reveal the dream. It's no more difficult for Him to do one than to do the other.

Wisdom of God versus wisdom of men. Wisdom of God makes no sense to the wise men. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

And the wisdom of men is foolishness to God. It's one of those great reversal themes you find in the Bible along with the elder serving the younger and the last shall be first. Foolish things wind up being really wise and the wisdom of this world winds up being really foolish.

So, they say in verse 11, it's a difficult thing that the king requests. There is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods whose dwelling is not with flesh. What gods are they talking about? We just read about them.

They're saying, you know, you need to do like Gilgamesh and go back to sleep and wait for the gods to come talk to you. This is a task for the gods. There's actually a kind of truth in this, isn't there? It is going to have to be divinely revealed, supernaturally revealed.

Well, Nebuchadnezzar gets upset. He's angry and very furious and he gives the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. He just says, kill them, kill them all.

So, the decree goes out and they begin killing the wise men. Actually, some of them start to get executed. Of course, this news spreads like wildfire through the community of wise men and they start going down the list, names and addresses.

And the freshest ink at the bottom of the list is Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. It's kind of like, I just got here and now I'm going to be killed. This is my big reward for graduating and joining the group.

The whole group is now going to be slain. This is like taking your first trans-oceanic ride on the Titanic. Well, verse 14 says, with counsel and wisdom, Daniel answered Ariok, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon.

He answered and said to Ariok, the king's captain, why is the decree from the king so urgent? Ariok makes the decision known to Daniel. So, Daniel went in and asked the king to give him

time that he might tell the king the interpretation. Remember, the decrees of the king of Babylon are irrevocable.

Once they are issued, they cannot be retracted. He is Gilgamesh. He sits on the throne of the demigods.

I mean, this has ever been a theme in ancient monarchies and dictatorship that the king partakes of divinity in some form. Caesar is a god and that kind of thing. So, it's like the pope.

You can't speak and it's wrong. So, once you speak, that's it. It's irretrievable, irrevocable, cannot be changed.

And he has said all the wise men must die. So, Daniel says, okay, I'm not asking you to set some kind of precedent and change the decree. Delay the execution of the decree.

This, by the way, is the very same tactic he used in chapter 1. You say we have to eat the food. Let's delay the implementation of that for 10 days. Not arguing with you, but give me some time to demonstrate another option.

Now, this is a good biblical negotiating technique. Ask for time. If you find yourself in a bind, in a conflict with the world or the forces of the world or the unbelieving factors that make up a lot of our circumstances, ask for time.

If you face a decision and you're not sure which way to go, and you say, should I go to college A or college B? Should I marry person A or not? Should I move? Should I stay? Should I jump? Should I stand? Should I sit? Am I supine? Am I prone? What should I do? I've got this decision. Well, in the absence of clear guidance, in the absence of clear provision, wait. If you need to wait and people are pressing you, ask for time.

What does time give us? What does it give Daniel? What did the 10 days give Daniel in chapter 1? Opportunity for the power of God to manifest itself. We can eat vegetables and water and look better than all the rest of you guys. It's the power of God in my life manifest.

What does waiting on the Lord do? Wait on the Lord. Be of good cheer. He shall strengthen thy heart.

Don't let people pressure you into precipitous decisions. Ask for time. Wisest man in the ancient world, Daniel, that's what he did on two occasions now and we haven't even gotten more than a little over a chapter into the book.

When faced with a crisis, when faced with pressure, when faced with seeming disaster, time. Wait on the Lord. Go to the Lord.

Get time for the power of God to manifest itself. He will strengthen our heart. So, Daniel asks for time and that's what he does.

Well, we'll stop here at the end of this paragraph, verse 16. We'll pick up in verse 17 next time and see what happens. When Daniel is granted the time, what does he do with it? And what is the outcome? That's what we'll pick up next time.

Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word. Thank you for the truth that equips us to live both in this life and in the life to come. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress these things on our hearts.

Help us as we meditate on them to find their applicability in our particular circumstances. We pray that we can live in a way that is pleasing in your sight, glorifying to our Savior. We ask it in his name.

Amen.