

Daniel 05-10-16b

We're ready now to resume our study in the book of Daniel. We're in chapter 2. King Nebuchadnezzar has had a dream. One of the misconceptions that arises in this story is the idea that Nebuchadnezzar really could not remember his dream.

This comes from the Old King James translation, which hopefully you don't have in front of you. The New King James does an admirable job of correcting the misapprehension. This is in verse 5. We already saw the king say, I have had a dream.

Not exactly a Martin Luther King speech, but close. It is a dream about the future, but it's a lot more likely to come true than the one from back in the 60's. The king said to them, I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream, to understand the dream, to find the interpretation of it.

The Chaldeans speak up on behalf of the group. They probably got together ahead of time and said, okay, you loony bin types just keep quiet. We'll do the talking.

You'll get us all killed. And so the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, and right there, Aramaic begins. And this is what we're going to talk about here in just a moment.

O King, live forever. I like Vernon McGee's comment on this. He says, you know, the Chaldeans speak and say, O King, live forever.

I want to read you what he says. To me, that seems to be about the silliest thing they could ever say. But that was the way they flattered the king.

O King, live forever. I am sure that many a king who sat there on the throne had a heart condition and might well have said, well, boys, you're wrong. I'm not going to live forever.

I'm going to have a heart attack one of these days, and I won't be around. However, they seem to have avoided that issue. O King, live forever.

Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, in the old King James, The king answered and said, The thing is gone from me. The thing is gone from me.

In both Hebrew and Greek, you have either the word tabar or the word logos or something of that word group, and it is used in those languages for both word and thing. And so the old King James translators, they said, well, the thing is gone from me. What Nebuchadnezzar is saying is, the proclamation has gone forth from me.

I have made myself clear. He's not saying, I can't remember it. Perfectly good word in Aramaic for I don't remember.

He says, he's already said, I want you to tell me the dream. He says, this is my proclamation. 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, it says in Ash Heap, this is a dunghill.

Your houses will be made a dunghill. This is going to be the chamber pot dumping area. Ash Heap is pretty euphemistic here.

Your house will be a dunghill. Now, again, we're not in the age of perfume and deodorant here. Things are raw, and Nebuchadnezzar is not a guy to fool around.

If he says you'll be cut in pieces and your house will be made a dungheap, that's exactly what's going to happen. Well, these are the wisest and prominent statesmen and elders and cabinet ministers and all that. To be chopped up like a piece of meat and have your former residence turned into a garbage dump is a pretty graphic indication of the level of the king's concern.

So, this is the thing that has gone from him. This is the edict. This is the command.

He knows full well what he dreamed. That's why he knows when Daniel tells it to him that that's the real deal. But this dream has troubled him to such an extent and he has lost sleep over it.

I talked last time about the role of dreams and the revelations that come through dreams in Babylonian culture and in the Babylonian mind. Nebuchadnezzar knows that this is a supernatural dream, the first one he's ever had in his life. He may have had other dreams.

He may have had Babylonians. Maybe he got a bowl of bad stew or something the night before and had some weird dream and the Chaldeans have made much out of it. Oh, king, you're going to prosper and blah, blah, blah.

Well, he knows that this is a genuine divinely inspired dream and he doesn't want to take any chances on them getting it wrong. He figures, if you can tell me the dream, you can tell me what it actually means. Unprecedented.

These people say, you've never asked us to do this before. Nobody's ever asked anybody to do this before. But Nebuchadnezzar knows that he's never had a dream like this before.

And he believes in the light of all of that ancient Sumero-Akkadian mythology that the gods have spoken. And Daniel's about to straighten him out on who has spoken. He says, however, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor.

This is do or die. This is either peg the meter in the good stuff or peg the meter in the bad stuff. You will never be the same after this day, Nebuchadnezzar says.

You're either going to be honored or you're going to be chopped up on the dung heap. And there's no third option. It's one or the other.

At least in their point of view, at this point, there's no third option. Therefore, tell me the dream and its interpretation. They answered again and said, I'm sure in more trembling tones, let the king tell his servants the dream and we will give its interpretation.

I can see the sweat stains even on the manuscript here. The king answered and said, I know for certain that you would gain time because you see that my decision is firm, just like he said before. The thing has gone from me.

It's gone forth. I've made the decree. If you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you.

Remember, decrees from the throne of Babylon are irrevocable. This is going to come into play later in the story, as you know. Cannot be revoked.

The whole idea that you can only worship the image and you can't pray to anything else and Daniel is brought before the king because he's praying three times a day and the king says, I can't revoke the decree. I got horn-swoggled into it. I didn't realize it was a clever ploy to politically assassinate you and I can't take it back.

The decree, there's only one decree. You have agreed, you have conspired, would be a better translation. You have conspired to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the time has changed, until I get distracted.

There's an incursion across the Euphrates or something and I get busy thinking about something else. You're hoping I'll forget. You're stalling.

You're hoping it'll blow over. Therefore, tell me the dream and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar remembers vividly every detail of this dream.

He's not in a fog. The Chaldeans answered the king and said, There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter. This is the opinion of science, is it not? The wisest university professors have come together and said, There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter.

And they are just as wrong as they can be. You know, in the modern day, the debate between evolution, which has prevailed as the mindset in the scientific community, versus creationism or intelligent design or whatever form you want to take of the fact that God created the universe and the world and life on this world. And the accusation comes back, well, your view is unscientific.

Science allows you to make predictions. What kind of prediction are you going to make on this intelligent design that there's an intelligence that created life and so on? Well, I'll make a prediction. Creator's coming back.

There's a prediction for you. And, boy, you're going to be sorry on the day that that prediction

comes true. I can make lots of predictions.

I can predict that the quote-unquote junk DNA, where they've mapped the genome, they say, well, you know, there's vast, you know, millions of bits of information here. They're just useless. It's just junk.

And this is the detritus and the garbage left over from the evolutionary process. Evolution discarded big chunks of the genome and just turned it off. It's wasted code.

It doesn't do anything. Well, an intelligent designer would not create a DNA database that's full of garbage. One could argue that to the extent there is garbage, it's a result of the fall.

But I predict on the basis of intelligent design that science, if it survives for any length of time, is going to discover that what they thought was junk is actually important. For example, they've mapped different portions of the genome that control different physical aspects. Where is your hair color determined? Where is your, you know, the configuration of various parts of your body and your hormone levels and one thing or another? They can check specific genes within the genome and say, you have a genetic disposition toward this particular syndrome or disease or problem.

Then they say, well, this stuff here, we play with it. We chop in and out and we don't see anything changing. It's just junk.

It's junk DNA. Well, let me ask you this. Where is the gene that makes you yawn? Is yawning an acquired trait? It's built in to us, isn't it? Now, where's the gene for whether you yawn or not? They don't know where it is.

I can tell you where it is. It's in the quote-unquote junk section. Where is the genetic map for music appreciation? Where is the genetic information for how you sleep? Where is the genetic information for a lot of the soft behaviors that we have? The responses that they don't test for.

All they're doing is looking at a physical body and they're saying, yep, ten fingers. Oh, I take this gene out and you don't get the ten fingers. Oh, here's a body that's got all the internal organs.

I hit this gene and the spleen is gone. I hit this gene and it's cleft palate. I hit this gene and it's club foot.

I hit this gene and it's something else. They can map physical attributes of the body. How about the DNA of a songbird? Where do songbirds get their navigational ability to go down to South America and learn songs and come back and sing them? Where do they get their preening behavior? Where do they get their singing behavior? Why does a mockingbird turn backflips while he's singing? Where's the gene for that? Science can't tell you.

They say, oh, there's a lot of junk in here that just doesn't do anything. They're bleeding ignorant. Intelligent design will tell you that that DNA, only accepting the areas that have in fact

been corrupted by the fall, is the product of design and it's tight code, as a programmer would say.

It's meaningful. It has purpose. I can make a prediction, which is scientific criteria for having a valid theory.

I predict that they're going to find that more and more of this quote-unquote junk actually does something. They're just too ignorant to recognize it. Well, why am I even talking about this? The wise men say there is no man on earth that can interpret this dream and they're just as wrong as they can be.

The evolution people, talking against creationism and intelligent design, say, you know, you're just stuck in the mud. You're like the people that believed in a flat earth and wouldn't ever figure out that there's a solar system that goes around the sun. You know where the flat earth idea came from? Science.

The Egyptians and the Hebrews understood that the world was round and understood that we had a heliocentric system in ancient days. And you know who changed it? Greek scientists. The Greeks, who invented science, invented the flat earth and invented the terra-centric model of the solar system.

You go back to the ancient Egyptians, they had a better grip on it than the Greeks. Science invented the flat earth thing and now they're trying to pace religion and creationism with the flat earth. The scripture talks about the circle of the earth.

The Hebrews knew the world was round. They say, oh no, look, it talks about the four corners of the earth. That's not talking about the shape of the globe.

That's talking about... It's a shame that science dumbs down things that are higher and greater than their understanding. So here's the opinion of science. No man on earth can tell the dream and what they fail to take into account is the presence of the Lord God.

Let me give you my 15 second opinion of science. Science says, I will only believe what I can experimentally verify. This is like a man saying, I will believe only what I can see with my eyes.

What does sight leave out? Do you believe that Beethoven wrote great music? I can't see it with my eyes. That comes by another avenue. That comes through the hearing.

You can look at the notes on the page. You can tell that Beethoven did something. He did a lot of scribbling, put a lot of ink on paper.

But is the Fifth Symphony a great piece of music? Is the Moonlight Sonata a beautiful piano piece? Is Fur Elise a wonderful little tribute to a lady named Therese? Someone that says, I only treat as reality what I can see with my two eyes is deaf. To some of the most beautiful things that have ever been done in terms of music and art and literature, the spoken word, singing,

opera, gospel music. Oh no, if I can't see it with my eyes, I don't believe it exists.

I don't believe it has any reality. That's these men's problem. Nobody on earth can tell an experience that happened inside your cranium last night.

You're the only one that knows it. There's no way that mortal man could possibly deduce or derive or otherwise come up with what you dreamed last night. It's impossible.

Well, this is operating in the sphere of mortal man. And it is possible because there is a God. And we as thinking, intelligent people recognize that science does observe.

And that the observations of science are valid, just like the evidence of the eyes are valid. But we also hear with our ears. We have a spiritual sense.

God has manifested himself in creation and in the word of God. And to say, I'm not going to take the word, I'm only going to take creation. That's like looking and not hearing.

You're denying yourself the sense that only human beings have of the divine and of the transcendent and of the eternal and of that which goes beyond the physical perceptions. Do you want to be deaf? Become a scientist. They are deaf to the spiritual sensitivity, the spiritual recognition that is just as valid as anything your senses can tell you.

Did you know that there is a theory? This is a little, not much, but a little off my subject. Did you know that there is a theory called simulation that says it's not only possible but probable that we're not really living an actual life. It's basically the premise of the movie series, the trilogy of the Matrix.

That if your life is based on what you sense, those senses can be fed information. And given the age of the universe and so on, it's probable that somebody has already gotten there ahead of us and has created a simulation. We're all living in a big video game.

And independently of ever hearing this from anywhere else, long before the Matrix movies ever came out, I would stare up in the sky and think, how can I prove that I'm really here, that my brain is getting input actually through my eyes and my retina and I'm seeing these clouds, and that I'm not really a body on a table someplace hooked up to a bunch of sophisticated computer inputs that are feeding me video, feeding me audio, feeding me tactile sensation. How do I know that I'm not going to wake up from this and find out that I paid 50 kroners or something for some immersive experience and that I've just temporarily forgotten who I am and I'm in a total immersion video game? You can't prove it, can you? This idea of simulation treats this as a probability that we are probably not really here. And of course the beauty of it is, any evidence to the contrary, if you could ever come up with any evidence that said, you know, this really is just a simulation, like you're looking at the sky and suddenly you see a little flashing and behind the grid you see little green men or something and then it closes back up and there was like a glitch, some bad RAM they had to swap out or something, and the simulation fails momentarily, or you're déjà vu, or you think you're experiencing something that

you dreamed or had a premonition about before and that that's a glitch in the system, you've sensed something outside the normal sequence.

Well, the problem with that is, any such evidence would also be a part of the simulation and you can't prove that any evidence you get is not simulated evidence instead of real evidence. And it's kind of a vicious mental circle. Why do I even bring that up? We are unique in living creation because we are sentient and because we have the ability to perceive that which does not depend on our senses.

The classic example that everyone immediately thinks of is Helen Keller, who after her teacher, you've seen what was the name of that movie and the book, *The Miracle Worker*, you've got Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft, you remember it recreates the actual experience of Helen Keller who had no outside communication whatsoever and by the time her teacher, through signing into her hand, established a means of communication and the lady was a Christian and began to give her the gospel after there was sufficient vocabulary built up to do so and she said, I want to tell you that there's a creator, there's a God and Helen Keller said, Well, I know that. I've known that for a long time. How could she have possibly known? She had no sensory input.

What may be known of God is manifest in creation. What can she see of creation except by touch? She's limited to basically two senses, touch and smell. How can she derive the conclusion? How can she deduce that there is a creator? God has put the knowledge of himself in the heart of every man and that is transcendent.

It goes beyond the senses and we need to remember that we are people of God and that is our most reliable sense. Our spiritual sense is more reliable than what we see. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it hasn't even entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him because they are of a transcendent, eternal, beyond this universe, beyond comprehension nature.

That's where God dwells. We have a citizenship in that realm and we need to pay attention to the spirit of God as it ministers eternal truths to us and not say, I'm just a scientist and I'm only going to believe what I can see. Sight will deceive you.

These people that say, you know, if God would work a miracle, why, I could believe. No, they wouldn't. Jesus made this point clear in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Oh Lord, send Lazarus back to my brothers so that they may believe. Look, if they don't believe Moses and the prophets, what do Moses and the prophets minister to the rich man's five brothers? Is Moses alive? It's information off a page, isn't it? It ministers to the heart. Moses and the prophets talk to the heart and Jesus, through the parable, says if they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, if their heart will not respond to that communication that is from the transcendent to the transcendent part of them, no physical evidence is going to convince them.

And I promise you, the Lord Jesus Christ could walk into the bedroom at 2 a.m. of any atheist

and say, hello there, I'm Jesus, and I just came to grant your request that if I would show up and do a miracle, you would believe in me. That person would still die an unbeliever. Why? What's he going to do the next morning? Oh, well, I must have ate something.

Disagreed with me. That could not have been a real experience. I hallucinated.

I have no independent verification of it. I can't prove it. It's only an episode in my memory.

It was a vivid dream. I had a chemical imbalance. I better go down and get checked out.

I better go down to the lab and get my blood tested and see if somebody slipped me a Mickey or ingested some LSD or something because that couldn't be the Lord Jesus. There's no physical evidence that can convince you of the transcendent. It is our response to the transcendent ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

So, this is a big thing. When the Chaldeans answer and say there is not a man on earth who can tell the kings matter, they're wrong. There is a man on earth who is about to tell the kings matter.

What have they left out? The transcendent, the divine, which is a greater reality than they have ever known. And they are the wisest men on the planet. They are the scientific community.

They are the de facto authority on all things to do with life on earth. And they're wrong. They are dead wrong.

Almost literally dead wrong here. Right? So, do not let yourself be deflected by those who say, look at geology, look at the fossils, look at the DNA, look at the genome. Our genome is 96% the same as a chimp.

So, we came from the same place. Look, 96% of the vocabulary in 2 John is mirrored in 1 John. I don't think that 1 John created 2 John.

The same guy authored them both. I can draw a picture on the computer and save it, and that's version 1 of that picture. Then I can stretch it and modify it and add to it and save a second version, and that's version 2. Version 2 did not spring from, on its own, spontaneously, version 1. I authored version 1. I modified version 1 to make version 2. Do you not think that God, as he creates, isn't going to make a big template and say, alright, here's my genetic template.

I'm going to raise up this gene and this gene and this gene and I'm going to string this and this and this together and now I'm going to modify it. And this bird's going to have a longer neck and this bird's going to have longer legs and this bird's going to have longer feathers. This one's going to have a short neck and short legs and short feathers.

This one's going to fly and this one is not. This one's going to have a purple beak. This one's going to have a yellow beak.

And he starts from the same template and he creates the individual species. And the scientist looks and says, look how similar their DNA is. Well, duh! Do you think God was going to make completely unique DNA for closely related species? It's a wrong direction conclusion to say similar DNA means that things sprung from a common origin.

What you can say, scientifically and as a Christian, is similar organisms, I predict, will have similar DNA. I can make that prediction on the basis of intelligent design and creationism. Why? The same creator created them both.

They are similar, so the database that brings them into being is going to be similar. That's a conclusion of intelligent design. It doesn't prove evolution.

It doesn't prove creationism. But they're both valid predictions that you can make. Evolutionists say, see, my prediction works.

I look at a baboon and I look at some other kind of ape or monkey and they have similar DNA. That proves evolution. No, it doesn't.

It just means that you've observed a similarity and you've predicted that there will be a similarity in another area. Well, this is like saying, I see that this animal ruminates like a cow and this animal ruminates like a cow, so this one has a second stomach. I predict this one's going to have a second stomach.

And sure enough, it does. Well, that doesn't mean that this one gave birth to this one or this one derives from this one. It just means similar things are going to have similar characteristics.

So don't be bamboozled by science who say there's no other conclusion you can draw based on geology, based on genomics or whatever else. We have a spiritual sense. We have a spiritual understanding and we need to use it.

That's what Daniel is going to do that these wise men do not do. So, no king, lord or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer or Chaldean. It is a difficult thing that the king requests and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

Now, this part is essentially correct, isn't it? And what are they confessing? The gods can tell it, but we don't have any connection with the gods. If gods exist, they're not talking to us. We're no better than you when it comes to getting the information from the gods.

Now, this is a pretty unfortunate confession for them to make at this time because nebuchadnezzar can say, well, what good are you? I mean, I can sit here and be puzzled because the gods aren't talking to me. If you're the wisest and best and I've made eunuchs out of all of you and trained you for all these years and you stand here and say, well, who knows? Only the gods know and they're not talking. Well, what are you good for? You need to be turned into a dung heap.

Their dwelling is not with flesh. Now, that's a key confession. The dwelling of the gods is not with flesh.

We don't know what's going on with them because they're not down here in the flesh. How about the God of Israel? He does fellowship with flesh. He speaks to Moses face to face.

He comes and communicates with his prophets and he is going to actually come in the flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and you don't get dwelling with flesh any more fully than Emmanuel, God with us. And this is the distinction between the Lord God of the universe and every false imitation, theory, and confabulation that people have come up with.

Well, Nebuchadnezzar in verse 12 is very angry, very furious. He gives the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And we had this question on the break.

This includes the wise men in training. The trainees weren't called before the king, but they're going to get swept up in the big clean out. You don't want to have the king say, get rid of all the wise men and then here comes a graduating class and now you've got more wise men.

The king says, where did these guys come from? So, they're going to wipe them all out. So, Daniel and his friends and the other trainees, by the way, never even had a say. They've been swept up in the judgment and they didn't even get a chance to answer the question.

So, the decree went out and they began killing the wise men and they sought Daniel and his companions to kill them. Some of these wise men actually died before this thing gets stopped because when the thing goes forth from the king, that's it. And nobody's going to say, well, maybe he'll change his mind tomorrow.

The edict has gone forth and they start carrying it out and there are wise men dying. There's butchery in the streets and there are houses being knocked down and having garbage and dung piled on them as the word comes to Daniel and his three friends. And the soldiers come marching in with their swords and say, bow at the waist, I'm going to lop your head off and I'm going to cut you into little pieces and your little dormitory here is going to be a dung heap.

Well, 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. This is sort of the appeal to Caesar approach that Paul is going to use in the New Testament. I don't think Ariok came to the student dormitory and said, where are the little budding freshman eunuchs? Let me go whack them.

Ariok has delegated to his battalion commanders who have delegated to their company commanders who have delegated their platoons who have sent out squads, who have sent out fire teams who are down doing the dirty work of chopping up these wise men and dunging their houses. Right? So, how does Daniel get to talk to Ariok? Daniel has to work his way up the chain. He says to the fire team leader, before you do this, let me talk to your superior.

And he does it with counsel and with wisdom. He knows the law of the Babylonians. In some

way, shape, or form, he says, you better not do this unless you're sure.

Because this whole edict is based on someone not being able to tell the interpretation. What if this is not valid? What if you kill the one man who can tell the dream and you violate the king's wishes? He says something along that line. The fire team leader goes to the squad leader.

Squad leader goes to the platoon leader. Platoon leader goes to the company commander. Company commander goes to the battalion commander.

Battalion commander goes to the regimental commander. Regimental commander goes to the division commander. Division commander goes to Arioch, the commander-in-chief of all of the Babylonian armies.

And says, there's a guy here that says we ought not to kill him. And they run Daniel through platoon headquarters, company headquarters, battalion headquarters, regimental headquarters, Division Headquarters, all the way up to Arioch, and now he's standing in front of the five-star general of the Babylonian armies. Notice he says in verse 15, to Arioch's captain, why is the decree so urgent? And this works its way up the chain to Arioch himself, who makes the decision known to Daniel.

So communication goes up and down the chain. So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time. We don't have the details of how this all went about.

There was a lot of shuffling and danger at every point. At any point, somebody could say, you're a Hebrew captain, for crying out loud, shut up and bend over. I'm going to chop your head off.

But God preserves him. God gives Daniel counsel and wisdom so that he survives this communication process. How many places could this have broken down? And yet, Daniel ends up in front of the king.

And he goes in and asks the king to give him time that he might tell the king the interpretation. Now, the king has just argued to the Chaldeans, you all are playing for time, and you're hoping I'll forget. Daniel says, I need time, but not indefinite time.

Evidently, Daniel said, I need a set period of time. Give me three days. Something that gets around the king's objection that you're just going to stall indefinitely.

Daniel says, no, this is not an indefinite stall. Give me a period of time, whatever it was. It may have been as much as just a day.

He says, I will come and tell you the interpretation tomorrow, perhaps. Because the king buys this where he didn't take it from the Chaldeans. But once again, God is favoring Daniel and giving Daniel a hearing.

So Nebuchadnezzar responds and says, okay. So Daniel went to his house in verse 17 and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek

mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.

So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. It's interesting that the title used for the Lord God here is the God of heaven. Why? Look at the contrast.

What do the Chaldeans say? There's not a man on earth who can tell the king his dream and its interpretation, but the God of heaven can. And that's the contrast. It's the God of heaven.

He's not restricted. He's not bound by the limitations of things on this earth. And we, as his people, are not bound either.

Daniel, because God is with him, is not going to die with these other wise men. The secret is revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Why? He asked.

You can't stand around saying, well, you know, I'm a Christian. I don't understand why God's not guiding my life, why God's not giving me answers and providing solutions. Have we asked? Ask and it shall be given.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened. You have not because you ask not.

You have not because you ask amiss that you may consume it upon your desires. You've got to make a case to God based on his desires. Lord, got a big problem here.

You can imagine God replying, well, why should I help you with this problem? Well, Lord, because it's causing me a lot of pain and it's really, I'm sick of it and I want something to change. What is God's interest? How does Jesus pray? How do the apostles pray? In Jesus' name. It is in God's interest.

It is going to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus for this problem to be resolved. Lord, resolve this in a way that my life can reflect your glory. Resolve this in a way where people will be impressed with the reality of your power and the great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in redeeming and propitiating and reconciling that this problem will turn and redound to your glory.

I am not asking because I want a better Rose's life. I'm asking because I recognize that the reason I live and the reason I breathe is to reflect your glory. And I want your glory to be reflected in my life to a greater and greater extent.

Therefore, I ask that you will do this. Do that. We pray and we seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning the matter.

That's what Daniel does. And he recruits his friends to do the same. There is power in prayer, the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

There's a lot of fervent prayer, but effectual prayer from righteous people makes a big difference. God spared the entire nation of Israel from destruction. Hundreds of thousands of people were not destroyed because one man prayed and he was righteous.

And that was Moses. There is power in prayer. Do you believe it? Is it just sort of an exercise? Is it like lighting a candle or saying a Hail Mary? We walk into the very throne room of God.

We approach boldly by the new and living way. Hebrews chapter 10, we've studied it many times. It makes a difference.

Bring your case to God. Be sure you're righteous. Be sure you know what you're talking about.

That's the advantage of coming to Bible class. You can pray and know what you're talking about. You can make the case to God.

You can see it from His perspective. And say, Lord, think what a testimony it will be when your power is manifest in this situation. Impress the reality of your existence and your mercy in Jesus Christ on people who see this situation.

Demonstrate yourself, manifest yourself in my life and in the lives of these people for whom I pray. That's a powerful prayer. That's what God's purpose is in human history.

Why would He not answer that prayer in the affirmative? Lord, teach me your way. And if that means I have to walk through the valley of the shadows, so be it. I will come out of the valley knowing you in a way I could never have known you if my life was easy, if my life was simple, if my life was unchallenged.

If your goal is to know God, if you love God, you're willing to go through whatever to know Him better and to experience His presence and His power more fully and to reflect His glory more completely. What price would you not pay to be close to the God of the universe who sent His Son to die for us? Where would we draw the line and say, well, Lord, that's too much. I like you, but I don't really like you that much.

I don't really want to know you that well. It's not really worth it to me. You see, this is the attitude that Daniel has.

The secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Daniel blessed the God of heaven. By the way, Daniel had no idea at this point that his life was going to be a book in the Bible.

He's a captive. He's been made a eunuch. He's 18 years old, maybe.

Huge global forces are at work here. The king of the world has decreed his death. And Daniel says, give me some time to pray.

That's an amazing example of faith. Daniel gets the answer. He blesses the God of heaven.

He answered and said. And he composed an ode. He composed a poem.

After he got the answer, he said, well, no sweat now. Let me write a poem. Thank God for His grace and His mercy.

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever. Chaldeans come to the king and say, oh, king, live forever. Daniel says, blessed be the name of God forever and ever.

For wisdom and might are His, not the Chaldeans. And He changes the times and the seasons. The king said, you're hoping I'll forget.

You'll stall for time until the time and the season changes. Daniel says, no, you're the God who changes the time and the season. You have made a way through this seemingly impossible situation.

It is God who removes kings and raises up kings. Why would Daniel be thinking about kings that are removed? Where's Jehoiakim? How did Nebuchadnezzar prevail? Daniel says, this whole thing wasn't based on the wisdom of the Chaldeans or the military genius of Nebuchadnezzar. God raised him up.

God removed our king. God has put this king in his place. God gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

To him who has, more will be given. That's why we spend a goodly portion of our week assembling ourselves in Bible class. It's hard.

It requires managing our schedule. It takes time. It takes an effort to assemble three times a week for six Bible classes and to concentrate through them and to try to think about them in the gaps between.

Why do we do it? Are we just gluttons for punishment? God gives wisdom to the wise and He gives knowledge to those who already have understanding. To him who has, more will be given. To him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Daniel says God reveals deep and secret things. If you've been following along in our various studies, you know that God is revealing amazing things to us in all of the books that we're studying. In the book of Revelation, the book of Ezekiel, as well as here in the book of Daniel.

God knows what is in the darkness and light dwells with Him. Universal theme in the scripture, God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Daniel says, I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers.

You have given me wisdom and might and have now made known to me what we asked of you. For you have made known to us the King's demand. God is the same God yesterday, today and forever.

We just as much belong to Him as Daniel and his three friends did and He is just as willing and just as ready to reveal to us the knowledge and the wisdom that we need to live our lives for His glory day by day. We'll pick up here in verse 24 next week. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word.

Thank you for the wonderful truths that you reveal in such a dramatic fashion in this book. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.