

# TRUSTING GOD FOR WISDOM

## Daniel 2

As we gather this morning to spend time in God's Word, I want to remind you that we come with great expectation. Not because of the charm and ability of the speaker...certainly not that. We arrive with great expectations because we worship a great God who has provided for all our needs – physical, emotional, and spiritual – through His Son Jesus Christ **and** because He has also provided us with the Holy Spirit, who is present with us this morning and is our teacher from His Word, the Bible, the Holy Scriptures. What a privilege! We should be anticipating more excitement from our Sunday worship than our lunch, our NFL games, the NASCAR Cup championship, or our movies and music. Father, open our hearts to hear from your Spirit this morning as we open your Word.

Have you slowed down enough recently to step back and look at the world we live in today, November 6, 2022, particularly the many challenges we face?

Recovery from Ian  
Elections in 2 days  
Ukraine/Russia  
Border/Immigration issues  
Degrading morals – same sex marriage/legal pot/  
gender issues  
Did I forget anything?

Conflict in our families  
Conflict in our schools  
Economy/Debt/Jobs/Inflation  
Our health/those we love

What is our response?

Pull our hair out  
Get angry/mad  
Get even

Worry/anxious  
Give up and disengage  
Give in to pleasure

**“Where is God?”** That was a question we began to ask ourselves two weeks ago when we looked Daniel chapter 1. Today, we ask that same question. “Where is God” and “what is He up to” during everything we must deal with. If you have your Bible with you, open it up to the book of Daniel. Remember, it’s the fifth big book of the prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel. Two weeks ago, we spent some time putting the events of the book in their historical context. It is about 600 years before the birth of Jesus, when the events of Chapter 1 begin. The nation of

Israel, having achieved its greatness under King David and his son Solomon, has already split in two – 10 tribes to the north made their capital Samaria and 2 tribes to the south kept Jerusalem as their capital. God had predicted this would happen because the nation was unwilling to worship God alone and began to worship idols, the gods of the heathen nations. This led to sin abounding and eventually God had enough and, after warning them, brought judgement. Did his judgement get their attention? Not really, because idolatry and sin continued to abound among His chosen people. He sent prophets to tell them of even greater judgement – losing their land, but that didn't help. They continued to thumb their nose at God and eventually the 10 northern tribes were exiled to Assyria. Even after that, the two tribes to the south continued to disregard the Lord and 120 years later, God fulfilled another promise and brought the Babylonians and King Nebuchadnezzar to begin His judgement on Judah and Jerusalem. Daniel and his three friends, Hanniah, Mishael & Azeriah, were among many of the nation's best and brightest who were taken to Babylon to be brainwashed to serve the pagan king and nation.

So, it was a time of turmoil as we come back to Daniel this morning. Turmoil that in many ways connects to the day and age we live in. They were trying to follow God in a country that really didn't want the God of the Scripture. They were under pressure to conform to the society around them where toleration was practiced by many – at least toleration that keeps your religion private. The world seemed to be winning – even objects were taken from the temple in Jerusalem and placed in the pagan temple in Babylon. From that perspective, you can see why I'm excited about what the Lord wants to teach us as we allow these events that occurred more than 2500 years ago to encourage us today, in much the same way in which the Jewish nation should have been encouraged and challenged back then. The same God is still on the throne and is in absolute control of the events in our lives and the world we live in. Our nation is moving away from God, the pressure to show moderation and toleration to every and any religion or non-religion challenges us every day. The way government, education, entertainment, and our pursuit of happiness, no matter what the cost, are moving us at breakneck

speed to build man's kingdom makes some wonder  
"where is God? Is there a God at all? Why doesn't He  
do something?"

In Chapter 1, we saw Daniel and his three friends draw a line in the sand by asking to be exempt from the king's food and wine during their training period. Not only did God allow them to pass the test, but also granted them wisdom, knowledge, and favor with the Babylonian officials. Because all of these came from God, we were reminded that God wants us to fully put our trust in Him, even to the point of refusing to participate in those things which will keep us from growing deeper in love with Jesus. We ask the questions, "If I do this, will it help me grow spiritually? Will it help me be a better husband, a better wife, a better grandparent, a better friend, a better follower of Jesus?" And we noticed that they made that decision at the age of 15 or 16...amazing! What a relationship with God they had developed at such a young age. And we know that their early choices to fully trust God would only give them the faith and strength to face even bigger trials in the future. So, if they made that amazing choice at that age, what about

us...at our age? We're a little older, a little more experienced, a little wiser, and have had a longer relationship with the Lord. Making good decisions that build our faith should be a piece of cake for us...no excuses 😊

So, God granted them, at the age of 15 or 16, wisdom, understanding and favor. So much so that they were identified as being ten times better than all the other wise men. That's all they need, right? They are set. No problems, no worries. Everything is cool. We arrive at chapter 2. It's short time later and Daniel and his friends have joined the group of wise men who served Nebuchadnezzar. The king has a dream. As was probably his typical response, he called a group of his wise men in to find out the meaning. But this time there was a twist. Not only did he ask them for the interpretation of the dream, he wanted them to describe the dream itself and then tell him what it means. And, if that wasn't a big enough challenge, if they failed, they AND THEIR FAMILIES would be killed. (Explain that one to your wife!) Whoa, wait a minute, King. "You want us to do what – tell you what you dreamed and then tell you what it means...and if we

don't, we and our families will be put to death? Let's be reasonable King Nebuchadnezzar. If you tell us the dream, we'll tell you what it means." But Nebuchadnezzar didn't budge. Before we look at their response to the king, for a moment I want to look at the king. Here he is, the absolute ruler of the whole kingdom, who has everything he can possibly have and can do anything he ever wanted to do, and anything he said would be done, giving his wisemen an absolute impossible challenge under the threat of their lives. Can we say he had some issues going on inside of him? Is it too much to say that the absolute ruler of the known world was a fearful little boy? Look how insecure he is. He has a dream that obviously disturbs him greatly and he turns into a worried, anxious little man. That's what happens when we build our lives on position and accumulation of things – a target that is always changing. If you have a lot, you're worried that it's not enough or that you will lose it. If have little, you may be unhappy until you get what you think you need. But not only was he insecure, but he was hostile to everyone else. When you are not at peace with yourself, because of your insecurities, you are not at peace with others as well. I think he had may have

figured out that his wisemen had probably not been honest in the past by giving him what they thought would make him happy. In his mind, he couldn't and didn't trust them, so getting rid of them was no big deal. "Ah, King Neb, these are your right-hand men, you are a team, the ones who were the best and brightest. You take them out, who do you depend on, O King?" Not very smart. But what a picture he becomes for us of someone completely engulfed in self-worship, afraid of everything and everyone. The Apostle Paul was right when he wrote in **Romans 1:25** *"they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator."*

Okay, back to the king's throne room where the wise men are completely lost and backed into a corner with their lives on the line. Let's look at **verses 10-12** to see their amazing final answer to the king. Read...what a glimpse into their theology. "This is too much, king. What you are asking is impossible for a human. Only the gods could give you what you want. And they don't live here/we don't have access to them." When man makes a god, there are always limitations. He is



confined to one place and so you better take him with you or make more gods because there are a lot of places where the gods are needed. And the god of man's creation doesn't talk. All throughout Scripture, the writers point this out time and time again, but to seemingly no avail. And, help me out on this, if he doesn't communicate with me, what do I really need him for. My response to the wisemen would be "and that's where you are wrong. The God of scripture, the one true God, does live with man." In fact, Scripture teaches us in **Psalm 139** that wherever we are, whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, God is with us. And boy did He make a special appearance for us when He took on human flesh and walked among us, forever linking the Creator to His creation. That's a truth we can hold onto dearly. God is always with us – we truly are never alone. Satan might try awfully hard to convince us differently, but the truth is the truth. As **Hebrews 13:5** reminds us, "*Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.*"

So, the king gives the order to kill all the wise men. Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, heads out to do what the king ordered and runs into Daniel, who

was on the list. That's right. He'd just received a death sentence through no fault of his own because he must not have been in the king's throne room with the rest of team. He deftly finds out the problem and asks Arioch to take him to see the king. With God's favor on Daniel, Arioch agrees and takes him to the king, where Daniel asks for more time, because he thinks he might be able to give the king what he is looking for. The king agrees and Daniel high tails it out of there to find his friends. "We have got to pray; otherwise, our lives are over." At their hastily called prayer meeting, it is interesting to see in **verse 18** what they decided to ask God....not for the dream and interpretation, but for mercy from the Lord. "We don't want to die. We are here for a reason heavenly Father. Please pour out your mercy on us. Change the king's mind. Make the guard forget us. Maybe even give us the info we need Lord. But please, put your mercy on display, God." And voila, God gives Daniel the king's dream and interpretation...during the night in a vision. And so, Daniel runs right out to find the guard and to get the king so he can tell him what he desperately is looking for? Wrong! Daniel, and I believe his three friends with him, decided to have a time of worship and praise.

Look at their song to the Lord: Read **2:20-23**. Praise, adoration, and thankfulness on their behalf to the real King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Their response gives us clear picture of where their hearts were. God, once again, displayed His glory in their midst and they were excited. Just yesterday, at the Shell Point Employee Thanks Reception, I was reminded of this truth. Someone asked if we had figured out why the church was unaffected by the surge during Ian. Four or five feet of water in the parking garage and the floor of the church was dry, how could that be? Humanly speaking, there was no reason for this to happen. But God chose to put His mercy and grace on display for all to see. PRAISE GOD! As we read in **Acts 17:26**, *“God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.”* Lord, we lift your name on high!

Daniel affirmed God is the source of wisdom and power. That made him confident that he truly had received the dream and interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar from God. So, first to Arioch and then back to the king. There in his presence, Daniel told the king what we read in verse **2:27-28**. Words

that were very similar to the king's wise men pointing out a ruler greater than the king, but Daniel was shown favor. When we look at **verse 30**, we once again see a picture of the quality of Daniel's heart, using his reply to the king to put humility on display as the pathway to power from God. As **James 4:6** reminds us, "*God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.*" From there he goes on to tell King Nebuchadnezzar his dream – a large statue that may have looked something like this. **[SHOW PIC]** We are not going to spend time looking at the statue and its interpretation this morning because our time is limited. In **verses 37 and 38** he begins the interpretation speaking to the king about what he saw. What reminder to the king that Daniel's God, our God, is in absolute control over the events that happen here on this earth. I can't help but think that the king really didn't listen too much to the rest of the interpretation because he was on top – the gold – as long as everything is good with him, everything is good. How wise was Daniel to start there as he shared the meaning of his dream.

King Nebuchadnezzar finally had a chance to respond to Daniel in **verse 46** and what a response it was. He

honored Daniel and began his journey to understand who the living God, the God of the Universe, the God of the Bible, and of our lives, truly is. He then proceeded to promote Daniel to a significant position in his court and Daniel, in turn, asked that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be given leadership in the entire province of Babylon, which the king quickly agreed to.

What do we take away from this amazing chapter?

**First, our God is absolutely in control of the world** we live in. He rules the nations, he rules the kings, he rules his children, he rules even his enemies. The more we develop that truth and let it begin to control our thoughts, words, and actions, the deeper our faith will grow and the more we will be vessels fit for His service.

**And second, our God is the source of all wisdom.** God, putting His mercy and grace on display, gave Daniel wisdom, not only telling him the dream and its meaning, but also by guiding the process. Sometimes, maybe often, the greatest need we have is trusting

that our Father is in control of all the decisions that others make that affect us:

**Like** guiding our Shell Point leadership team during this time of recovery.

**Like** giving wisdom to all the employees and contractors that are working so hard to get all our displaced residents back in their homes.

**Like** being acutely aware of what is needed in Osprey and all the Eagles Preserve buildings.

**Like** giving wisdom to our medical professionals as they help us through the trials and challenges of our advancing years.

**Like** trusting Him to give us the leaders we need to accomplish His purpose in the elections on Tuesday.

**Like** being able to *“consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds”* as

**James 1:2** reminds us in his letter. **Colossians 2:3**

makes it clear: *“Jesus, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...”* James also

reminds us that if we lack wisdom, we are to ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, as we put our faith in our sovereign God. We may not have to give a dream account and meaning to the king, but

we are accountable to our Father who desires that bring Him glory in all we do.

**Challenge:** Are you living your life with wisdom that comes from God... using your time, spending your money, praying for your children and grandchildren, etc. with the wisdom of God in mind? Word – prayer – fellowship – service – obedience. Let our sovereign God give you wisdom, as He did with Daniel, as you increasingly put your trust in Him.

## **PRAY**

**COMMUNION:** We have access to that wisdom through a relationship with Him. That relationship begins when we choose to follow Jesus, receiving forgiveness that He freely offers because of His death, burial, and resurrection. As we come to His table this morning, we affirm that we are the children of God by grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ alone. We are participants not because of anything we have done but because of the Savior did on our behalf. His table is open to all who affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord.

## **PROCEDURE**