



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 7



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

DANIEL EXTOLS THE NAME OF THE LORD

Dan 2:19-23 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰ Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: ²¹ And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: ²² He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him. ²³ I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter. ^{KJV} (Daniel 2:19-23)

INTRODUCTION

The circumstances are being orchestrated in order that God may make known His determined purpose. That purpose has a direct bearing upon the kingdoms of this world and their rulers. It also relates to the ministry of comfort and encouragement to succeeding generations of believers. The manner in which this remarkable revelation is given fulfills many objectives, and serves to shed light on a variety of earthly circumstances. This record will:

▣ **Unveil the relative impotence of**

all earthly power. The most influential and powerful king in the world had to acknowledge he was helpless in this matter.

▣ **Humble earthly dignitaries.** The king had to ask help of those over whom he reigned, and who were in his service.

▣ **Encourage hope in those who put their faith in God.** Future generations of believers would draw strength from this event.

▣ **Reveal the utter weakness of worldly wisdom.** The most astute empire in the world, noted for its wisdom, could find no person within its borders who could unravel the Divine mystery.

▣ **Make known the limitations of demonic wisdom, which issues from the lower and rejected regions.** Although the wise men of Babylon consorted with the nether world, the regions of spiritual darkness were impotent to help them

OUTLINE

- ▶ THE SECRET IS REVEALED (2:19a)
- ▶ HE BLESSED THE GOD OF HEAVEN (2:19B)
- ▶ WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS (2:20)
- ▶ HE CHANGES TIMES AND SEASONS (2:21a)
- ▶ HE REMOVES AND SETS UP KINGS (2:21b)
- ▶ HE GIVES WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE (2:21c)
- ▶ HE REVEALS DEEP AND SECRET THINGS (2:22a)
- ▶ HE KNOWS WHAT IS IN DARKNESS (2:22b)
- ▶ THE LIGHT DWELLS IN HIM (2:22c)
- ▶ THANKING AND PRAISING (23a)
- ▶ WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE GIVEN (23b)

in this matter – even though their lives depended on being able to please the king.

- ▶ **Confirm the destiny of the world, and those in it, are in the hands of the Lord.** In clear and concise words, the Lord speaks of what He will do, bringing down the world's kingdoms with all of their pomp and splendor.
- ▶ **Substantiate that asking for wisdom normally precedes its conferment.** Although the world does not view "asking" as a powerful means of appropriation, it is a fundamental approach to the Living God. The four children of Judah asked, and they received.
- ▶ **Calmness can be possessed in the midst of great threats.** Daniel responds to the king's edict with the calmness of faith. It is not the person of Daniel that enabled him to do this,

but the faith he possessed.

- ▶ **Being found among a group that has been condemned does not mean those who believe must also perish.** The environmental hypothesis of the worldly-wise is not true. There could not have been a more unfavorable environment than that of Daniel. He not only survived in Babylon, but was blessed there.
- ▶ **God will hear some prayers while He refuses to hear others.** Some prayers are inappropriate – such as Jeremiah praying for the good of Israel (Jer 14:11), or a believer praying for someone who has sinned in order to death (1 John 5:16). Daniel not only knew **how** to pray, but **when** and **what** to pray.
- ▶ **Time can be given to those with faith, while no time is allowed for those without it.** When the wise men of Babylon asked for time, they were condemned. When Daniel asked for time, Nebuchadnezzar granted it.

ONLY GOD CAN DO THIS!

Only "the God of heaven" can accomplish so much with His Word and His answers! His Word is thorough, leaving no aspect of His character neglected. Not one word from God is in any way impotent, irrelevant, or ineffective. This is an aspect of His wisdom: it proliferates into every aspect of life, and serves all generations. Whatever the Lord says blends with everything else He has said. He never speaks in a contradictory or unprofitable manner.

All Scripture Is Profitable

This is one of the reasons why "all Scripture" is profitable. No part of it is

written with only a certain society or a specific time in mind. The Word of God is not limited to a certain generation or geographical area. It is a Word that "shall not pass away" (Matt 24:35). It is "settled in heaven" (Psa 119:89), and thus is forever linked with God, not circumstance. It is ever true, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet 1:25). It "liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet 1:23). As Isaiah said, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa 40:8).

This is precisely why it is such a grievous sin to neglect the Word of God. Those who are content to remain fundamentally ignorant of what the Lord has declared do great harm to themselves. They do not realize that men live "by every word of God" (Lk 4:4). **The spirit of man cannot be sustained independently of the Word of God.**

Understanding the Word of God

The great secret to understanding the Word of God is not found in the arena of academics. Having a working familiarity with the original language, historical backgrounds, and contextual considerations, do not unlock Divine meanings! Daniel excelled in all of these areas. He possessed "aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand" ^{NIV} (Dan 1:4). After being questioned extensively by Nebuchadnezzar, it is said of Daniel and his three companions, "And as for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm" (1:20). Their fields of expertise included "the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (1:4b). **Yet, all of this academic efficiency yielded not one weightless mote of spiritual**

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understanding!

These circumstances by no means suggest we ought to look on academic excellence with disdain. **What it does**

His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous”(Prov 2:5-6).

▢ *“Give me understanding, and I shall*

give thee understanding in all things” (2 Tim 2:7).

▢ *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).*

HOWEVER, AS WE LIVE BY FAITH, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHALLENGES WILL ARISE THAT EXTEND BEYOND THE WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE WE POSSESS.

THE POINT

The point to be seen is that Daniel and his companions conducted themselves in a godly manner. This is what faith compels the individual to do – to seek answers from the Lord when they are not otherwise apparent. This does not mean nothing can be known without particularly seeking an answer from the Lord. It is possible to be among those who, “*who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*” (Heb 5:14). A working acquaintance with the Word of God will also yield a certain understanding that will constrain the believer to “*hate every false way*” (Psa 119:103).

However, as we live by faith, it is inevitable that circumstances and challenges will arise that extend beyond the wisdom and knowledge we possess. That does not mean such things are not to be known, although that is a distinct possibility. The believing soul takes up such issues with the Lord, seeking appropriate wisdom and understanding from the Fountain of all wisdom and knowledge. Such pursuits bring great glory to the Lord.

mean, is that it is of no profit whatsoever when it comes to knowing the mind or purpose of the Lord.

The sons of God must not allow any form of knowledge to dominate their thinking that excludes the Lord, or discourages going to Him for understanding. Obtaining an understanding of the Word and purpose of God cannot be realized independently of the One who spoke and determined them. This is made clear by the following expressions.

keep Thy law” (Psa 119:34).

▢ *“Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments” (Psa 119:73).*

▢ *“I am Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies” (Psa 119:125).*

▢ *“The righteousness of Thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live” (Psa 119:144).*

▢ *“Let my cry come near before Thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to Thy word” (Psa 119:169).*

▢ *“Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart” (1 Kgs 3:9).*

▢ *“For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of*

▢ *“Consider what I say; and the Lord*

THE SECRET IS REVEALED

^{19a} **Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision.** All four men prayed, but only one received the answer! Daniel is the one who had been given the ability to interpret dreams and visions (1:17), but he was helped along in this ability by the prayers of his brethren.

When one is given an ability from the Lord, that ability requires (1) the help of the Lord Himself, and (2) the support of the people of God. God has placed no one in the body of Christ to stand alone. Thus Paul urged believers,

▢ *“Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” (Rom 15:30). And again, “for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you” (Phile 1:22).*

▢ *“Praying for . . . me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:18-19).*

▢ *“Brethren, pray for us” (1 Thess 5:25).*

▢ *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” (2 Thess 3:1).*

▢ *“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly” (Heb 13:18).*

▢ *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all*

perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph 6:18-20).

AGREEING IN PRAYER

I am persuaded that many noble aspirations come short of fulfillment because they are never shared with men and women of prayer. Jesus has promised, "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven." (Matt 18:19).

Some may conclude Christ's words applied only to the Apostles. It is true, this chapter was spoken to Christ's "disciples" (verse 18:1). The word "disciples," unless preceded by "the twelve" (Matt 10:1; 11:1; 20:17; 9:1), is not always confined to the twelve. The sermon on the mount was spoken to Christ's "disciples" (Matt 5:1). On another occasion, when Jesus was speaking to a house filled with "people," He referred to them as His "disciples" (Matt 12:46,49). John 6:66 mentions an occasion when "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." The word "disciples," therefore, is not always restricted to the twelve.

Further, the explanation for the promise was not confined to the Apostles: "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (verse 20). He did **not** say "Where two or three of **you** are gathered," but "where two or three are gathered together in My name." This is a principle that is operative wherever faith moves people to gather together, agree, and pray.

Besides this, if these verses are applicable only to the Apostles, what must be said of the rest of the chapter? Are these words not applicable to all who follow Jesus?

- ▣ "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 4).
- ▣ "And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me"

(verse 5).

- ▣ "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (verse 6).
- ▣ "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast

brother their trespasses" (verse 35).

One might counter that verse 18 surely was limited to the Apostles: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." However, I am not sure that postulate can be supported. This was our Lord's elaboration on treating an unrepentant offender as a heathen and a publican. It is as though He said heaven would honor their obedience to His word.

LIVED OUT IN OUR TEXT

Of course, these brief explanations are confirmed by the very circumstance of our text. Here were four young men who agreed on a matter – to desire mercies

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into hell fire" (verses 8-9).

- ▣ "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (verse 10).
- ▣ "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (verses 15-17).
- ▣ "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his

from the Lord. God honored their prayer, thus substantiating the principle further expounded by our Lord. Here is an area the contemporary church would do well to explore and enter into more fully.

THE SECRET WAS REVEALED

"... the secret was revealed to Daniel." ^{NKJV} Other versions read "the mystery was revealed to Daniel." ^{NASB/NIV} Both Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the meaning of it had been hidden, and none could make them known but God Himself. Both originated with the Lord, and only through Him could they be understood.

A Cardinal Principle

This is a cardinal principle in matters pertaining to life and godliness. **What God has given requires God to comprehend.** I understand this is a matter hotly disputed in the Christian community. Some argue that once a thing has been generally revealed, as in the Scripture, it only requires attentiveness

on the part of man, together with the employment of natural capacities, to understand what has been revealed. This view is defended with aggressiveness, even to the point of mocking those who insist Divine influence is required to comprehend what has been revealed. This view, however, cannot be successfully defended. A cursory consideration of Kingdom realities will serve to confirm this is the case.

- ▣ The Son of God was revealed in His conception (Lk 1:35; Matt 1:20-21), to Elizabeth (Lk 1:43), in His birth (Lk

- ▣ Jesus said things God has made known, He has also deliberately *“hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes”* (Lk 10:21).

- ▣ On the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly announced the salvation of God was for the Gentiles, *“those who are afar off”* (Acts 2:39). Yet, over ten years later, God gave Peter a special vision and special words that enabled him to understand the truth of what he had himself said under the inspiration of

perplexed,”^{NIV} until the Lord made the matter known to him (4:5-19). Later, Daniel himself had a vision of profound implications. The vision greatly troubled him because he did not understand it – even though God had given him *“understanding in all dreams and visions.”* It was not until he *“asked,”* that through a heavenly being the understanding was given to him (7:2-16).

This is why our text refers to the dream and its interpretation as a *“secret,”* or *“mystery.”* God had already given it. It was given to a man who, though a heathen, was noted for astuteness of thought. Yet the king could not remember the dream, much less comprehend what it meant.

Daniel was not dealing with something that was simply difficult to understand, requiring extensive calculations and contemplations. He did not waste his time trying to conjure up what the dream might have been. Instead, together with his companions, he prayed. As a result of their prayers, God pulled back the curtain of obscurity showing Daniel what was otherwise locked in Divine secrecy.

Was given to know. Daniel was *“given”* to know both the dream and its meaning – a dream he had not even had. Both his knowledge and his understanding were gifts from God. Here, then, is an early example of how a person can be *“given to know”* things relating to Divine intent and revelation (Mark 4:11). This knowledge was apart from books, study, or other natural forms of the communication of knowledge.

Became clear through faith. From another vantage point, the faith of the young men was the vehicle through which Daniel received his knowledge and understanding. God works through appointed means. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah approached the Lord in faith, and thus were well pleasing to Him. It is, after all, *“by faith”* that we *“understand”* (Heb 11:3).

Confidence. There is also the element of confidence. These young men were not stabbing in the dark in their prayers. Daniel had already told the king he would tell him both the dream and its

SETTLE IT IN YOUR MIND, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE FACET OF SALVATION, INCLUDING THE UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE, THAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED INDEPENDENTLY OF THE LORD.

2:11), His dedication (Lk 2:30,38), His young life (Lk 2:49), His baptism (Matt 3:17), by His own words (John 6:38; 6:38 8:23; 10:36), and His prodigious ministry (John 2:11). Yet, when Peter confessed Jesus was *“the Christ, the Son of the living God,”* Jesus said the Father had revealed it to Him (Matt 16:16-17).

- ▣ The holy Prophets were given revelations concerning *the “sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”* For those with understanding, they seem to be quite clear. Yet, the very ones to whom the revelations were given were told it was not for them to understand them (1 Pet 1:11-12).
- ▣ The Gospel of Christ has been revealed prophetically, in the Person of Christ, and through inspired writers. This Gospel is preached to men *“with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.”* Yet, as evident as that Gospel may appear to those in Christ Jesus, the holy angels, who are *“greater in power and might”* (2 Pet 2:11) cannot comprehend it. To this very day, they *“long to look into these things”* (1 Pet 1:12). If any could know on their own, it would be angels.

the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:1-16).

Settle it in your mind, there is not a single facet of salvation, including the understanding of Scripture, that can be accomplished independently of the Lord. Were such a thing possible, man would have whereof to glory. It is most unfortunate that this erroneous line of reasoning has become so prominent in the Christian academic community. The fruit of such a misconception is testimony enough that it is wholly fallacious and without value.

Even More Evident In Daniel
In the case of Daniel, this truth becomes even more evident. He has been given *“understanding in all visions and dreams”* (1:17). The ability was not a natural one, but was given to him by God. His thinking and perceptive processes had been endowed with supernatural abilities, far above that or even extraordinary men. Yet, Daniel had to get both the dream and its interpretation from the Lord. If one argues that this case was different because the dream itself was not known, I affirm that makes no difference. Later, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that he DID remember. When he told the dream to Daniel, the prophet was *“greatly*

interpretation when he returned (2:16). The faith these young men had kept and nurtured enabled them to be confident in the hour of trial. This is an example of *“the full assurance of faith”* (Heb 10:22).

God can bear witness with the human spirit. This is a sterling example of how the Lord communicates with the human spirit. This communication defies human explanation, but should not surprise us. An even higher example of this is experienced by those who are in Christ Jesus. It is said of them, *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* (Rom 8:16). That witness also involves both knowledge and understanding.

TWO PRAYERS

“Grant, Almighty God, since we are in danger every day and ever, moment, not merely from the cruelty of a single tyrant, but from the devil, who excites the whole world against us, arming the princes of this world, and impelling them to destroy us, — Grant, I pray thee, that we may feel and demonstrate, by experience, that our life is in thy hand, and that under thy faithful guardianship thou wilt not suffer one hair of our heads to fall. Do thou also so defend us, that the impious themselves may acknowledge that we do not boast this day in vain in thy name, nor invoke thee without success. And when we have experienced thy paternal anxiety, through the whole course of our life, may we arrive at that blessed immortality which thou hast promised us, and which is laid up for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. — Amen.” (1561 A.D.)

“GRANT unto us, O LORD, to be occupied in the mysteries of thy Heavenly wisdom, with true progress in piety, to thy glory and our own edification..” (1617 A.D.)

JOHN CALVIN

It is these remarkable spiritual parallels that gives our text edifying power. This is precisely why *“all Scripture”* is *“profitable”* (2 Tim 3:16). The profit, or benefit, derived from historical incidents like that of Daniel is not found in the mere acquisition of knowledge. Rather, in these incidents the realities that are embraced by faith are lived out, confirming to our hearts their effectiveness.

IN A NIGHT VISION

“... the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.” ^{NKJV} A *“night vision”* is not a special category of visions, but simply refers to the time during which the revelation was given - *“during the*

GOD CAN BEAR WITNESS WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT. THIS IS A STERLING EXAMPLE OF HOW THE LORD COMMUNICATES WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT. THIS COMMUNICATION DEFIES HUMAN EXPLANATION, BUT SHOULD NOT SURPRISE US.

night.” ^{NIV}

By calling the revelation a *“vision,”* the text does not mean Daniel only saw something. The extent of his knowledge will confirm there was some form of verbal communication or writing. For example, the Lord *“spoke”* to Paul *“in the night by a vision”* (Acts 18:9). God has declared He can *“speak”* to men in a dream (Num 12:6). When Habakkuk received a vision from the Lord, He was told, *“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it”* (Hab 2:2). When the Lord called Ananias to set Saul of Tarsus apart to the Apostleship, He spoke to Him in a *“vision”* (Acts 9:10). **When, therefore, we think of “visions,” they should always be associated with a message – with making something known.**

Sometime during the night hours, when natural capacities are generally at their lowest level, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its meaning were made known to Daniel. There was no guessing about what had happened. **Faith brings a unique confidence that removes all doubt, assuredly convincing the heart and mind.** This is a most remarkable thing. To know something is one thing. To be able to explain it is something else. Both facets of knowledge had been given to Daniel.

The revelation came to Daniel alone, even though his companions prayed with him. Having prevailed in prayer, the answer was graciously given. Initially, their prayer was lifted up *“so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon”* (verse 18). **The answer, however, will go far beyond the mere sparing of their lives.** There will be a higher purpose served than the protection of these four godly young men. They were protected because they were in the heart of God’s will, living by faith,

refusing to be conformed to the world, and seeking to understand what God had given. God has a message to give that will impact human history. It will unveil the beneficent reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will confirm the demise of the most powerful kingdoms in all of history – to say nothing of lesser ones.

The Lord has often given insights to His children during the night. Ancient Job spoke of God speaking to His people *“in a vision of the night”* (Job 33:14-15). Eliaphaz the Temanite spoke of something *“secretly brought”* to him in *“thoughts from the visions of the night”* (Job 4:13-14). The Lord spoke to Jacob in *“visions of the night”* (Gen 46:2). Daniel himself had other visions in the night (Dan 7:2,7,13). Paul also had *“visions in the night”* (Acts 16:9; 18:9). David confessed the Lord had instructed him *“in the night seasons”* (Psa 16:7), and *“visited”* him *“in the night”* (Psa 17:3). When, therefore, worldly activities subside, God can speak effectively to His people, opening hidden matters to them. Such is occurring in our text.

I assume that the *“night”* during which the *“secret”* was revealed to Daniel was the very one following their immediate petition for understanding. That would make it the night after Daniel appeared before Nebuchadnezzar, receiving some allotted time to obtain what the king required.

Not All Answers Are Instant

Not all answers are received so quickly. Later, while waiting for understanding, *Daniel “was sick for days,”* astonished by a vision he had received (8:27). Still later, he patiently waited for three full weeks before receiving an answer from the Lord (10:2). **Strong faith does not necessary bring immediate answers!** Some prayers must be importunate, with the petitioner continuing to ask without

fainting. In such cases, God is said to “bear long” with the petitioners (Lk 18:7), patiently waiting to answer them.

However, this is not such a case. The circumstance did not allow for a lot of time. **Thus faith, adapting to the**

situation, earnestly sought, and effectively received, a life-saving and revealing answer.

HE BLESSED THE GOD OF HEAVEN

^{19b} **Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.** Other versions read, “Then Daniel praised the God of heaven,”^{NIV/NIB} and “And Daniel gave blessing to the God of heaven.”^{BBE}

Faith’s Priority

Notice the priority embraced by the man of God. It is a precedency driven by faith. He does not run quickly to Nebuchadnezzar to give the answer the king so earnestly sought. **Rather, he first turns his attention to the God who had heard their prayer and revealed the secret.** As Anna, a prophetess who would appear many centuries later, Daniel was “instant” to give “thanks” (Lk 2:38). **One of the sure evidences of living by faith is being able to quickly give thanks for answered prayer.** Such individuals are NOT “slow of heart to believe” (Lk 24:25).

The Word “Bless”

The word “bless” does **not** come from the same root word as “praise.” Later in Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar will say, “I **blessed** the most High, and I **praised** and honored Him that liveth for ever” (4:34). Two different English words are used (“blessed” and “praised,” and they are translated from two different Hebrew words (“blessed” = בָּרַךְ [berak – the same word used in our text], and “praised” = בִּרְכָה [shebach]).

There is a twofold meaning to the word “bless.” One has to do with physical posture: **to kneel.** The other has to do with utterance: **an act of thanksgiving to God for His mercies.**^{McClintok and Strong}

The Scriptures frequently speak of men thus blessing God.

Before the Law

▣ **Noah.** The first words attributed to Noah are these: “Blessed be the LORD God of Shem” (Gen 9:26).

▣ **Melchizedek.** “And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine^(Abraham’s) enemies into thy hand” (Gen 14:20).

▣ **Eliezer, Abraham’s servant.** “And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and **blessed the LORD** God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master’s brother’s daughter unto his son” (Gen 24:27,48).

themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they **blessed the LORD**: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day” (2 Chron 20:26).

▣ **Hezekiah and the princes.** “And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they **blessed the LORD**, and his people Israel” (2 Chron 31:8).

▣ **Ezra.** “And Ezra **blessed the LORD**, the great God. And all the people

THERE IS A TWOFOLD MEANING TO THE WORD “BLESS.” ONE HAS TO DO WITH PHYSICAL POSTURE: TO KNEEL. THE OTHER HAS TO DO WITH UTTERANCE: AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS MERCIES.

▣ **Jethro.** “Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians” (Ex 18:10).

During the Law

▣ **Ahimaaz.** “Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king” (2 Sam 18:26).

▣ **David.** “Wherefore David **blessed the LORD** before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever” (1 Chron 29:10).

answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground” (Neh 8:6).

▣ **Zechariah,** father of John the Baptist blessed the Lord. “**Blessed be the Lord God** of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people” (Lk 1:68).

After the Law

▣ **Peter** also blessed the Lord. “**Blessed be the God** and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pe 1:3).

▣ **Jehosaphat and the people.** “And on the fourth day they assembled

▣ **Paul** broke forth in blessing God in

First Corinthians 1:3. **“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.”**
 Ephesians 1:3. **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”**

There are **also frequent exhortations** to “*bless the Lord*” (Neh

9:5; Psa 103:22; 134:2; 135:19,20). Scripture also contains self-exhortations to bless the Lord: i.e., “*Bless the Lord, O my soul*” (Psa 103:1,2; 104:1).

In all of these cases, thanksgiving is being offered – thanksgiving that has been prompted by the perception of faith.

BLESSING GOD

The spiritual sensitivity of Daniel is revealed in his quick blessing of God.

He knows he can now describe Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and give the interpretation of it as well. There is no question about **why** he is able to do this. It is because “*the God of heaven*” has made these things known to him, and he knows it.

Thus he blesses God, not in the sense of adding any advantage to the Lord, but by quickly giving insightful thanks to Him.

WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS

“²⁰ Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His . . . ”

DANIEL ANSWERED

In Scripture, the word “*answered*”

situation by speaking to the people in parables (Matt 22:1).

▣ **Jesus answered the disciples thoughts.** Matthew records Jesus answering the thoughts of His disciples, without them ever saying a

from death. His thoughts do not turn to standing before the king of Babylon, or to being able to clearly articulate what God has shown to him. **Rather, he is as quick to glorify the Lord as to petition Him** – a rare quality, indeed.

“The Name”

The phrase “*the name of God*” refers to the part of Himself that He has revealed. It is another way of saying “what is known about Him.” From still another point of view, “*the name of God*” speaks of His Person – who He really is. This expression is **not** referring to a Divine title or appellation, like “*Jehovah*” (Ex 6:3) or “*Jah*” (Psa 68:4). Ponder how the “*name*” of the Lord is used.

WE CAN ANSWER, OR RESPOND, TO A BLESSING, TO THE GRACE THAT HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO US, TO DIVINELY ORCHESTRATED OPPORTUNITIES, AND TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

often means the person is responding to a circumstance, as well as responding to an interrogation. In this text, “*answered*” refers to Daniels response to the revelation that has been given to him. We can answer, or respond, to a blessing, to the grace that has been extended to us, to Divinely orchestrated opportunities, and to circumstances.

▣ **Jesus answered a work of God.** After Jesus had denounced Chorazin and Capernaum, perceiving God had hidden the truth from them, He “*answered*” the working of His Father by thanking Him He had hidden these things from the wise and the prudent (Matt 11:21-26).

▣ **Jesus answers a situation.** On another occasion, Jesus “*answered*” a

word (Luke 5:22).

Daniel is answering, or responding to, the Lord’s merciful revelation of a secret that could not otherwise be known. He provides some insight into how faith reacts to Divine interpositions.

BLESSED BE THE NAME OF GOD

“*Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever . . .*” Other versions read “*Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,*”^{NASB} “*Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever,*”^{NIV} “*Blessed be the name of God from age to age,*”^{NRSV} “*May the name of God be blessed from everlasting and to everlasting.*”^{Septuagint}

At once Daniel’s thoughts turn fully to the living God. His first thoughts are not concerning his own safety, or the deliverance of himself and his companions

▣ “*For the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*” (Ex 34:14).

▣ “*For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy*” (Isa 57:15).

▣ “*Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know Mine hand and My might; and they shall know that My name is The LORD*” (Jer 16:21).

▣ “*As I live, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts*” (Jer 46:18).

▣ “*Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts*” (Amos 5:27).

In this sense, the name of the Lord is His Person – who He is, and the qualities He bears. This is made known by revelation, not human deduction.

The Experience of Moses

When Moses asked God to show him His glory, the Lord said He would “proclaim **the name of the Lord**” to Moses. He would put Moses in a cleft of a rock that was by Him, and pass before His servant, proclaiming His name (Ex 33:19). The record of that proclamation is worthy of much consideration. God did not declare a title by which He was called, but revealed who He Himself was. “*And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation*” (Ex 34:5-7).

The Lord, in fact, made His Person known to Moses, giving Him an understanding of His ways.

Now Daniel blesses “*the name of the Lord,*” extolling Him for making Himself known to Daniel. We will see in the interpretation of the dream that Daniel was shown what God was going to do. What Daniel received was infinitely more than the meaning of a dream, although that was included. He was given to see something of the Lord Himself. That is precisely why He speaks in the following manner.

FOR EVER AND EVER

“*Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever.*” Other versions read “*from age to age,*” ^{NRSV} “*from eternity and to evermore,*” ^{DOUAY} and “*from everlasting and to everlasting.*” ^{Septuagint} The phrase “*for ever and ever*” is used at least forty-six times in Scripture (Ex 15:18; 1 Chron 16:36; 29:10; Neh 9:5; Psa 9:5; 10:16; 21:4; 45:6,17; 48:14; 52:8; 111:8; 119:44; 145:1,2,21; 148:6; Isa 30:8; 34:10; Jer 7:7; 25:5; Dan 2:20; 7:18; 12:3; Mic 4:5). This

provides a perspective for faith.

This is an expression that pushes our thoughts beyond the constraints of time. It declares there is no time or future in which the Lord will not be Sovereign and duly honored. His judgments cannot be voided or interrupted. His will cannot be dashed to the ground by those who are created.

At some point, those who would live by faith must think beyond time and circumstance. Their thoughts must be within the framework of “*for ever and ever.*” **It is not possible to bless God acceptably apart from this perspective.** Daniel now makes the

(Rev 7:12). His is a “*manifold wisdom,*” with various facets that are employed to fulfill His will (Eph 3:10). **In particular, God’s wisdom involves knowing all things, determining what will best bring honor and glory to Himself, and making determinations that do not violate His character or contradict His purpose.**

The reason Daniel ascribes wisdom to the Lord is because He has received wisdom from Him. How frequently God has revealed Himself as imparting wisdom. This is His manner.

- ☐ Joseph was given wisdom (Acts 7:10).

AT SOME POINT, THOSE WHO WOULD LIVE BY FAITH MUST THINK BEYOND TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCE. THEIR THOUGHTS MUST BE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF “FOR EVER AND EVER.” IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BLESS GOD ACCEPTABLY APART FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE.

association of God with eternity, and with Divine qualities that have neither beginning nor ending.

WISDOM IS HIS

“*... for wisdom ... [is] His.*” The ONLY reservoir of valid wisdom resides with God. There is, of course, a wisdom that “*does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic*” ^{NKJV} (James 3:15). By saying it is “*earthly,*” the Spirit means it proceeds from the world, and is temporal in nature. Such knowledge is “*sensual,*” or rooted in the natural senses and appealing to man’s lower nature. It is “*demonic*” because it is promoted by the forces of evil – “*the rulers of the darkness of this world*” (Eph 6:12). This is the kind of wisdom Babylon’s wise men possessed, and it proved to be their undoing.

True “*wisdom*” is ascribed to God Himself. He is the fountain, or source, of wisdom. “*Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen*”

- ☐ God filled Bezaleel with wisdom (Ex 31:3; 35:31).
- ☐ God put wisdom in the heart of Aholiab and his coworkers (Ex 31:6; 35:35).
- ☐ God gave Solomon wisdom (1 Kings 4:29; 2 Chron 9:23).
- ☐ Ezra received wisdom from God (Ezra 7:25).
- ☐ Such wisdom is not reserved for only a select few of God’s people, but is for all who are in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:17; Col 1:9; 2:3).

Daniel has asked for wisdom, as we are told to do (James 1:5), and has received it. Now He acknowledges its Source, confessing it has come from God.

It is important to note that this wisdom cannot be acquired from any other source. That is precisely why Daniel confesses “*wisdom*” is “*HIS.*” The glory of the matter is found in the Lord’s

willingness to impart this wisdom to those who, like Daniel, walk by faith.

MIGHT IS HIS

“... for ... *might* [is] *His*.” What a rare thing it is to behold the amalgamation of wisdom and might. Among men, these qualities are rarely joined. In God, they are ALWAYS found together. Thus we twice read of “*wisdom and might*” (Dan 2:20,23). Twice we read of “*wisdom and strength*” (Job 12:13; Rev 5:12). Twice “*wisdom*” is joined with “*power*” (Jer 10:12; 51:15). “*Wisdom*” relates to developing a purpose. “*Might*” relates to carrying out that purpose.

Fifty-seven times God is referred to as “*Almighty*” (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25; Ex 6:3; Num 24:4,16; Ruth 1:20,21; Job 5:17; 6:4,14; 8:3,5; 11:7; 13:3; 215:25; 21:15,20; 22:3,17,23,25,26;

23;16; 24:1; 27:2,10,11,13; 29;5; 31:2,35; 33:4; 34:10,12; 35:13; 37:23; 40:2; Psa 68:14; 91:1; Isa 13:6; Ezek 1:24; 10:5; Joel 1:15; 2 Cor 6:18; Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:15; 21:22). **It is clear that from the beginning, God has desired to be known as a mighty God.** With Him all things are possible (Mark 10:27), and nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37).

Faced with something utterly impossible with men, Daniel and his companions go to the Lord for wisdom. They sensed the truth of something that would be declared with greater clarity in succeeding generations: “*The things which are impossible with men are possible with God*” (Luke 18:27).

One Further Observation
By acknowledging that both wisdom and might have their source

in God, Daniel is also admitting it requires Divine power to get Divine wisdom into the hearts of His people. This fact will be further amplified in the tenth chapter.

I cannot help but note how Daniel excels in insight and thanksgiving. Although those in Christ Jesus have received much more than Daniel, they too often come far behind him in the matter of blessing God. This is an area in which, by the grace of God, considerable improvement can be realized. Godly assemblies should have much of this.

Let the people of God view circumstances that confirm the poverty of human wisdom and might as occasions to seek those indispensable virtues from the Lord of glory. When it becomes evident we are powerless, God will go to work.

HE CHANGES TIMES AND SEASONS

“^{21a} **And He changeth the times and the seasons . . .**” Most versions read exactly the same: “*He changes the times and the seasons.*” Some variant versions read, “*who changes the times and the epochs,*”^{NASB} “*He changeth times and ages,*”^{DOUAY} “*By him times and*

things. By this, two things were intended. **First**, there are times and seasons God has determined that are not revealed to men. **Second**, no Divinely appointed times and seasons can be known by men unless they are revealed.

introduced to the Thessalonian brethren. Unlike the times and seasons the disciples were not intended to know, Paul spoke of some that could be known. “*But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night*” (1 Thess 5:1-2). While every aspect of our Lord’s return has not been revealed, some things have. Paul confirmed it would take place in a time and season when unregenerate men least expected it.

FIRST, THERE ARE TIMES AND SEASONS GOD HAS DETERMINED THAT ARE NOT REVEALED TO MEN. SECOND, NO DIVINELY APPOINTED TIMES AND SEASONS CAN BE KNOWN BY MEN UNLESS THEY ARE REVEALED.

God’s Revelation to Daniel

The second chapter of Daniel confirms that God has revealed to Daniel a matter involving times and seasons. Unlike men, God does not merely diagnose the times. He changes them!

CHANGETH

The word “*changeth*” has to do with Divine intervention. Although God Himself does not “*change*” (Mal 3:6), He is engaged in the work of changing.

☐ God will “*change*” the entire natural order. “*Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the*

years are changed,”^{BEBE} “*He is changing times and seasons,*”^{YLT} “*He determines the course of world events,*”^{NLT} and “*It is he who controls the procession of times and seasons.*”^{NJB}

Jesus to His Disciples

Jesus spoke of “*the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power*” (Acts 1:7), declaring it was intended that men should not know such

When Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “*Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*”, He replied this was something that was not given to them to know. There were, indeed, “*times and dates*” that God has “*set by His own authority.*”^{NIV} The ones pertaining to the restoration of Israel, however, were not for them to know.

Paul to the Thessalonians

Another circumstance was

heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou **CHANGE** them, and they shall be **CHANGED**" (Psa 102:25-26).

▣ God sent an angel and "changed" the edict of Nebuchadnezzar, who decreed the death of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. "Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have **CHANGED** the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God" (Dan 3:28).

▣ God "changed" the heart of Nebuchadnezzar to that of a beast. "Let his heart be **CHANGED** from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him: and let seven times pass over him" (Dan 4:16).

▣ God will "change" the bodies of all men. "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **CHANGED**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be **CHANGED**. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor 15:51-53).

▣ In salvation, God, through His Holy Spirit, "changes" the saved from one stage of glory to another. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **CHANGED** into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18).

▣ God "changed" the priesthood that He Himself ordained. "For the priesthood being **CHANGED**, there is made of necessity a **CHANGE** also of the law" (Heb 7:12).

▣ God can "change" the glory of people into shame. "As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I **CHANGE** their glory into shame" (Hosea 4:7).

▣ Faith and hope confirm to the heart that God will "change" the very bodies that presently cause us great difficulty. "Who shall **CHANGE** our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil 3:21).

The Word of God is filled with examples of Divine change – when He intruded into the affairs of men and altered what occurred among them.

▣ He changed the location and status of humanity when Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden.

▣ He changed the career of Cain.

destruction of Nebuchadnezzar, and later when the Roman armies brought it down to the ground.

▣ In redemption God has changed our hearts, our minds, our desires, and our status.

▣ In the New Covenant the Lord changes both the times and the seasons, opening the prison created by sin, and raising up a highway to glory. He gives mercy to those who formerly did not obtain it, and writes their name in the book of life. Salvation is all about change.

TIMES

"... He changeth the times." God changes times, so that opportunities can be granted that were once withheld. The word "times" refers to set, or designated,

THE PROPHETS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE NOT GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST AND THE GLORY THAT SHOULD FOLLOW – YET THOSE IN CHRIST DO UNDERSTAND THEM (1 PET 1:11). THE TIMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED!

▣ He changed the populus and appearance of the world in the flood.

▣ He changed the building plans of the people in the plain of Shinar, dispersing them through the world in a state of confusion.

▣ He changed the presence of Sodom and Gomorrah.

▣ He changed the enslaved condition of Israel, delivering them from Egypt.

▣ He changed the natural flow of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, allowing His people to cross through them on dry ground.

▣ He changed the status of Joseph, elevating him to the throne of Egypt.

▣ He changed the status and appearance of Jerusalem in the

times. The idea is that when God's appointed time arrives, the times are changed, or altered, to suit His appointed purpose. God declares this aspect of His character. "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa 46:9-10). That involves changing the times.

The Prophets, for example, were not given to understand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow – yet those in Christ Do understand them (1 Pet 1:11). **The TIMES have been changed!**

The Gentiles, who were not a people, have now become the people of God (1 Pet 2:10), and those who were afar

have been made nigh Eph 2:13. **The TIMES have changed.**

Divine mysteries that have been hidden from the foundation of the world

he was told the time of Babylon's glory would change. The pomp and splendor of Nebuchadnezzar would change. Empires that ruled the world would change. These things would not happen by human

remission of sins, and realize the imputation of the righteousness of God.

In the revelation given to him, Daniel was told of the termination of Babylon's "season" of glory. The "season" of world empires would be brought to halt, and God's everlasting kingdom would fill all the earth.

IN THE REVELATION GIVEN TO DANIEL, HE WAS TOLD THE TIME OF BABYLON'S GLORY WOULD CHANGE. THE POMP AND SPLENDOR OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR WOULD CHANGE. EMPIRES THAT RULED THE WORLD WOULD CHANGE. THESE THINGS WOULD NOT HAPPEN BY HUMAN INGENUITY, BUT BY THE GOD OF HEAVEN.

DIVINE DESTINY

Behind the changing of both times and seasons, there is a Divine purpose. All valid change is driven by a Divine agenda. What God works is "according to His will" (Dan 4:35), and is driven by His "eternal purpose" (Eph 3:11). The summation of that purpose is exceedingly large, and is stated in these words: "Having made known unto us the mystery of **His** will, according to **His** good pleasure which **He** hath purposed in **Himself**: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times **He** might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in **Him**" (Eph 1:9-10). It is difficult, if not impossible, for the honest and good heart to miss the obvious emphasis upon Deity.

have now been revealed to the saints (Col 1:26). **The TIMES have changed.**

In speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dominance of the Gentiles over it, Jesus declared the situation would change when "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk 21:24). Paul affirmed the role of the Jews would change when "the full number of the Gentiles has come in" ^{NIV} (Rom 11:25). **God changes times!**

God appointed, or "set," a time when barren Sarah would have a son – the child of promise (Gen 17:21). When that time arrives, the time of Sarah's barrenness ended and she "conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him" (Gen 21:2). **God changed the times.**

In the revelation given to Daniel,

ingenuity, but by the God of heaven. He would change the times according to His own good pleasure. It is ever true, God "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan 4:35).

SEASONS

" . . . He changeth . . . the seasons." The word "seasons" has to do with epochs, ages, or periods. "Times" have to do with WHEN those periods begin, or the initial change take places. "Seasons" have to do with the whole period itself.

For example, under Christ Jesus we have a new season. It is referred to as "the day of salvation," "the accepted time" (2 Cor 6:2), and "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk 4:19). It is also called "times of refreshing" (Acts 3:19). This is the appointed time to come to God through Jesus Christ, obtain the

Our text blends with the purpose that has been most fully revealed in Christ Jesus. In the demise of worldly empires, God is not merely responding to their ungodliness, ruthless rule, or spiritual obtuseness. Rather, He is preparing the world for the everlasting kingdom of His Son, and our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord. He is setting the stage for the exacting fulfillment of His own immutable purpose.

HE REMOVES AND SETS UP KINGS

" ^{21b} . . . **He removeth kings, and setteth up kings** . . . " Other versions read, "He removes kings and establishes kings," ^{NASB} "He sets up kings and deposes them," ^{NIV} "by him kings are taken away and kings are lifted up," ^{BBE} "He is causing kings to pass away, and He is raising up kings," ^{YLT} "He appoints kings, and removes them," ^{Septuagint} and "who makes and unmakes kings." ^{NJB}

It is important to understand these are **not** things God CAN do. Rather, this is the enlightened acknowledge of what the Lord DOES. Even though men may not detect what the Lord is doing, or may even refuse to acknowledge it when told to them, yet these are the facts in the case. In our assessment of worldly governments and rulers, we do not want to be found with less knowledge than Daniel.

The Lord has unquestionable dominion, and is "the Governor among the nations," or "He rules over the nations" (Psa 22:28). He is the "King" who reigns over the earth's "kings," and "Lord" who exercises complete Sovereignty over the "lords" of this world (Deut 17:10; Psa 136:3; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16). The mighty God is even over the gods of this world, who manipulate wicked rulers under the

auspices of God Himself. He is appropriately called “*the God of gods*” (Deut 10:17; Josh 22:22; Psa 136:2; Dan 2:47; 11:36). In this very chapter, Daniel will refer to the God of heaven as “a Lord of kings” (2:47).

With all of the tumult in our present world, this is good to know. Things are not as chaotic as they may seem. God is bringing down some kings and governments, and raising up others. His uncontested rule is even seen in the demise of some spiritual empires, like the Roman Catholic church that is presently reeling under a moral earthquake.

GOD REMOVES KINGS

Mighty rulers are not deposed by accident, or by the wisdom or power of men. God, and God alone, “*removes kings.*” It is not that He removes some kings, while others are deposed by lesser means. The meaning of our text is that God is the ONE who “*removes kings.*”

In blessing the Lord, Hannah said of Him, “*The LORD killeth . . . He bringeth down to the . . . The LORD maketh poor . . . He bringeth low . . .*” (1 Sam 2:6-7). David said, “*God is the judge: He putteth down one*” (Psa 75:6). Here are some examples of removal.

- ▶ **Pharaoh.** “*But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever*” (Psa 136:15).
- ▶ **Sihon and Og.** “*And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed*” (Deut 31:4).
- ▶ **King Saul.** “*And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?*” (1 Sam 16:1). “*I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath*” (Hos 13:11)..
- ▶ **Ahab.** “*So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according unto the word of the LORD which he*

spake” (1 Kgs 22:37-38)

- ▶ **Sennacherib.** “*Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria... So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech*

arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died”^{NKJV} (Acts 12:21-23).

GOD SETS UP KINGS

Here are some examples of raising up kings.

MIGHTY RULERS ARE NOT DEPOSED BY ACCIDENT, OR BY THE WISDOM OR POWER OF MEN. GOD, AND GOD ALONE, “REMOVES KINGS.” IT IS NOT THAT HE REMOVES SOME KINGS, WHILE OTHERS ARE DEPOSED BY LESSER MEANS. THE MEANING OF OUR TEXT IS THAT GOD IS THE ONE WHO “REMOVES KINGS.”

and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword” (Isa 37:21,37-38).

- ▶ **Nebuchadnezzar.** “*And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws*” (Dan 4:32-33).
- ▶ **Belshazzar.** “*God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it . . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting . . . Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians . . . In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain*” (Dan 5:26-28, 30).
- ▶ **King Herod.** “*So on a set day Herod,*

- ▶ **Joseph.** “*And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house*” (Acts 7:9-10).
- ▶ **Saul.** “*And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people*” (1 Sam 9:17)..
- ▶ **David.** “*Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel*” (2 Sam 7:8).
- ▶ **Nebuchadnezzar.** “*O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor: and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he*

slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down” (Dan 5:18-19).

- ▶ **Cyrus.** “. . . the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of

heaven given me” (2 Chron 36:22-23).

- ▶ **Pilate.** “Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin” (John 19:10-11).

It is ever true, “The LORD . . . He . . . maketh alive . . . **bringeth up**. The LORD . . . **maketh rich**: He . . . **lifteth up**” (1 Sam 2:6-7). Part of our Lord being “King of kings” is the ability to raise up kings and put them down. Daniel saw this, and confessed it as he blessed the Lord. This was not a Divine option exercised only during a certain period of history. Rather, this is God’s nature, revealed in all periods of time, including our own.

HE GIVES WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

^{21c} “. . . **He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.**” In blessing the Lord, Daniel speaks to the Him of what He has been given to see with greater clarity. The things that have been revealed to him have accented the

Acknowledging Divine Qualities

Frequently men and women of faith acknowledge Divine qualities in their prayers. Some, who are spiritually naive, stumble over this, thinking it serves no purpose to tell God what He already knows. Such souls are not mindful of the

since they are coming from a race that has fallen into sin and death!

I want to emphasize this is insightful acknowledge, not something that is performed by rote. Lifeless routines have never touched the heart of God, especially since the Sun of righteousness has risen with healing in His wings (Mal 4:2).

Ponder some of the *acknowledgments that have been recorded for our learning.*

I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THIS IS INSIGHTFUL ACKNOWLEDGE, NOT SOMETHING THAT IS PERFORMED BY ROTE. LIFELESS ROUTINES HAVE NEVER TOUCHED THE HEART OF GOD, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS HAS RISEN WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS

nature of the God who revealed them. Although the revelation was an exceedingly large one, the God who gave it was even more prominent. When that is recognized and verbalized, God is being “blessed.”

Having given due attention to the raising up and casting down of the rulers of this world, Daniel now gives attention to the dispensing of wisdom and knowledge. He has already acknowledged that wisdom belongs to the Lord (v 20). Now he will confirm that wisdom is dispensed to men by the God to whom it belongs.

vast congregation that are privy to the prayers of the saints. The book of the Revelation suggests that holy angels are somehow involved in the prayers of the saints. Their exact role is not known, but it seems clear our prayers are in some way familiar to them. As it is written, “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand” (Rev 8:3-4). How must such holy recognitions sound to these lofty heavenly intelligences? – particularly

- ▶ “Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him . . . ” (Neh 9:7-8).

- ▶ “Thou art my hiding place” (Psa 32:7).

- ▶ “Thou art my King, O God” (Psa 44:4).

- ▶ “Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah” (Psa 77:14-15).

- ▶ “Thou art my portion, O LORD” (Psa 119:57).

- ▶ “Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth” (Psa

119:151).

- ▶ *“O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out”* (Psa 44:1-2).
- ▶ *“For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried”* (Psa 66:10).
- ▶ *“O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah: The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel”* (Psa 68:7-8).
- ▶ *“Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary”* (Psa 68:9).
- ▶ *“Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done”* (Acts 4:24-28).

Such perceptive acknowledgments are the wrapping in which effective intercessions and thanksgivings are offered. Let no person deceive you into thinking praying in the language of Scripture is a sign of weakness, or is a useless formality.

WISDOM TO THE WISE

“He giveth wisdom unto the wise . . .” Other versions read, *“He gives wisdom to wise men,”* ^{NAS} and *“who confers wisdom on the wise.”* ^{NJB}

Elsewhere this Divine manner is proclaimed. *“For the LORD giveth*

wisdom” (Prov 2:6). James reminds us that He will give wisdom *“liberally,”* not upbraiding or finding fault with those who ask for it in faith (James 1:5-6).

One might imagine this verse **should** read, *“He gives wisdom to those who have no wisdom.”* After all, they are surely the ones who need it! **However, Daniel confesses the Lord gives wisdom to those who are already wise.**

KNOWLEDGE TO THEM THAT KNOW

“. . . and knowledge to them that know understanding.” Other versions read, *“knowledge to those who have understanding,”* ^{NKJV} *“knowledge to men of understanding,”* ^{NASB} and *“knowledge to the discerning.”* ^{NRSV}

Once again, it might appear better to say the Lord gives knowledge to those who do not already possess it. That such a

ONE MIGHT IMAGINE THIS VERSE SHOULD READ, “HE GIVES WISDOM TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO WISDOM.” AFTER ALL, THEY ARE SURELY THE ONES WHO NEED IT! HOWEVER, DANIEL CONFESSES THE LORD GIVES WISDOM TO THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY WISE.

Those who are wise enough to ask for wisdom have, by that very deed, displayed uncommon understanding. If God gives wisdom *“liberally”* (James 1:5), it is because it is needed in abundant measures.

Daniel had already been given wisdom (1:17,20). Now he is given more because a matter had arisen for which he was not yet suited. He therefore acknowledges the wisdom that he has already received, and the fact that *“whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance”* (Matt 13:12).

At no point is our wisdom sufficient. Just as surely as wise Daniel confronted a circumstance in which more wisdom was needed, so you will also face situations that require a greater supply of graces you already possess. Thank God it is written, *“But he giveth more grace”* (James 4:6).

situation exists, I do not deny. But it is certainly not the pinnacle of blessing to be totally bereft of knowledge. God, Daniel confesses, gives knowledge to those who already possess understanding and are discerning. That is, they not only have knowledge, they are in the process of using it. It is possible, as the Spirit says, *to “have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Heb 5:14).

The *“new man,”* received when we are born again, is *“renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him”* (Col 3:10). That knowledge, however, is more introductory than thorough. As with Daniel, we must seek specific knowledge and discernment during particular tests and opportunities. The people of God can *“abound”* in knowledge (2 Cor 8:7).

Blessed is the persons who, when facing challenges like Daniel, know they can still obtain wisdom and knowledge from their God. This, like the wisdom that has been mentioned, can only be acquired from the Lord. It cannot be drawn from

the broken cistern of nature, or drawn out of the earth's bag with holes. Further, it is

the kind of knowledge that directly relates

to your role in the kingdom of God.

HE REVEALS DEEP AND SECRET THINGS

^{22a} ***He revealeth the deep and secret things . . .*** Other versions read, *"It is He who reveals the profound . . . things,"*^{NASB} and *"who uncovers depths."*^{NJB}

DEEP THINGS

"He revealeth deep things." There are matters that are too deep for the

itself and its meaning were buried in the depth of Divine mystery. Even though he already had wisdom, Daniel knew not the dream or its meaning. Even though he had been given the ability to interpret all manner of dreams and visions, yet he remained totally ignorant in this case.

Yet, Daniel did not conclude it was

knowledge. You should be able to take his words and apply them appropriately to your own quest to know the things that are freely given to you by God. *"All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness"* (Eccl 7:23-25).

That was exactly the circumstance in which Daniel found himself. The matter he was required to know was *"too far"* from him. It was too deep, and he could not reach it – even with his Divinely expanded capabilities. He knew the Lord revealed deep things, so he sought to know them. His prayer was answered.

SECRET THINGS

"He revealeth . . . secret things."

Secret things are hidden things that **can** be known, if only men will seek them. God has gone on record on this matter. *"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant"* (Psa 25:14). Again it is written, *"His secret is with the righteous"* (Prov 3:32). Jesus said to those following Him, *"it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 13:11).

If God could say, *"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?"* (Gen 18:17), what will He say of those who have believed the record He has given of His Son? (1 John 5:10-11). Will He not be eager to share His secret with them? Will they not be *"taught by God?"* **It is the nature of God to reveal deep things, and make secrets known.**

IN THE CASE OF DANIEL, GOD HAD SENT A DREAM TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR THAT HE WANTED MEN TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND. HE WANTED YOU TO UNDERSTAND IT, FOR THAT DREAM CONTAINED THINGS "PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS."

natural mind. They extend beyond human abilities, and yet many of them must be known. These are matters that God intends for men to know. However, they cannot be known independently of Himself. Paul calls them *"the deep things of God,"* and declares that the Holy Spirit searches them out (1 Cor 2:10). The idea is not that the Spirit simply is astute in comprehending these things. Rather, He searches them out for men – to show them what pertains to them, yet cannot be known unless He shows them to the sons of men.

In the case of Daniel, God had sent a dream to Nebuchadnezzar that He wanted men to know and understand. He wanted YOU to understand it, for that dream contained things *"pertaining to life and godliness."* However, both the dream

something that was not intended to be known. Instead, he sought knowledge of the *"deep things"* from the One who reveals such realities.

When the Scriptures exclaim, *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* they do not intend to stifle the quest to know such things. Rather, such expressions are meant to stir up our faith so that we will inquire into these mysteries. Paul was given to see somewhat of this deep reservoir of knowledge, and, in your measure, so can you.

Which one of us cannot confess with the Psalmist, *"Thy thoughts are very deep"* (Psa 92:5). In a very limited sense, Solomon introduced the quest for Divine

HE KNOWS WHAT IS IN THE DARKNESS

^{22b} ***... He knoweth what is in the darkness . . .*** From one standpoint | there are critical matters that are very

The Fervent and Effectual Prayers of Daniel and His Companions Avail Much, by Given O. Blakely

deep. From another point of view, they are secret. Now, from yet another view, these things are pictured as surrounded with impenetrable darkness. This darkness is not owing to what surrounds the throne of God, but the environment surrounding *“this present evil world.”* There is *“no darkness at all”* in the Lord Himself (1 John 1:5). Those outside of Christ are pictured as sitting *“in darkness”* (Matt 4:16). Salvation is, in fact, turning men *“from darkness to light”* (Acts 26:18).

Job once said of the Lord, *“He reveals mysteries from the darkness, And*

brings the deep darkness into light”^{NASB} (Job 12:22). That is the same thing Daniel is saying. The idea is that God shines the illuminating light of understanding upon things that have been hidden by earth’s darkness.

Although Daniel had been given wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, he remained in a world covered with moral and spiritual darkness. **That darkness was so thick that no natural ability could uncover things God had made known in that very realm.** God had revealed something to Nebuchadnezzar in

a dream – something that was highly relevant. Yet, both the dream and its meaning were hidden in darkness – and nature cannot see in the dark.

Daniel knows the king’s dream contains things that can and must be known. He knows he has no ability of himself to obtain that meaning. However, God has no such restraints. He can look into the darkness of this world and tell men what is there, so they can appropriate it. There is no darkness to Him – it is darkness to men. Therefore, they must call upon the Lord to show them what they themselves cannot see.

THE LIGHT DWELLS WITH HIM

“^{22c}... and the light dwelleth with Him.” Intellectual, moral, and spiritual light dwell with God. Only He can open man’s understanding, and He has a heart to do so for those who delight in Him. In the days of wicked Belshazzar, his wife told him of Daniel. She described him as *“a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him”* (5:11). Where did that *“light”* come from – that remarkable understanding and discernment? It came from God, for *“the light dwells with Him.”*^{NIV}

I am reminded of a word written by the Psalmist. It says the same thing as our text. *“For with thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light”* (Psa 36:9). Because the light *“dwells with”* God, the closer we are to Him, the more light is shed upon our way. The closer we are to the Lord, the better we understand Him – and the better we understand Him, the more we comprehend His Word, His ways, and matters that concern us.

When one chooses to dwell at a distance from God, he shuts himself away from the light. It simply is not possible to

know the Lord, His Word, or His ways while walking at a distance from Him. As it is written, *“They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens”*

they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid” (Mark 16:8).

WHEN ONE CHOOSES TO DWELL AT A DISTANCE FROM GOD, HE SHUTS HIMSELF AWAY FROM THE LIGHT. IT SIMPLY IS NOT POSSIBLE TO KNOW THE LORD, HIS WORD, OR HIS WAYS WHILE WALKING AT A DISTANCE FROM HIM.

(Psa 65:8). That is, one of the effects of being far away from God is that His works tend to frighten, rather than comfort and encourage. Thus, when those who did not know Jesus saw the healed Gadarene demoniac, *“they were afraid”* (Mark 5:15). Prior to their illumination, when Jesus told the disciples He was going to suffer, die and rise again, they were *“afraid to ask Him”* what He meant (Mark 9:31-32). When the women came to the tomb in which Jesus was buried, hoping to anoint His body with spices, they confronted a holy angel. When he told them Jesus had risen from the dead, directing them to go and tell His disciples, *“they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for*

However, once the light of God fell upon these same people, and the eyes of their understanding were opened, they saw things plainly, and were no longer afraid. In His light, they saw light.

By confessing the light dwelt with God, Daniel was acknowledging his understanding had come from the presence of the Lord. As the mind of the Lord was revealed, it clarified what God had sent. There was not a man upon earth who could illuminate what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed, or provide an interpretation of it. However, a single night in the presence of the Lord made everything clear to Daniel.

THANKING AND PRAISING

“^{23a} I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O thou God of my fathers . . . ”

As Daniel nears the end of his prayer, he erupts in thanksgiving to the God of heaven. His words are most precise, reflecting insight as well as adoration.

THANKS AND PRAISE

“I thank Thee, and praise Thee.”

Thanks and praise blend well together. They are a spiritual mixture that brings a sweet fragrance into the courts of the Lord. Thanks expresses appreciation for what God has given. Praise is the expression of adoration and reverential

*trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in **praising and thanking the LORD**” (2 Chron 5:13).*

- ▣ Nehemiah reminded the people that *“in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and **songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God**” (Neh 12:46).*
- ▣ David himself wrote, *“I will **praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with **thanksgiving**”***

designed to describe special times. It almost exclusively is used to portray singing – not singing in general, but a special kind of singing. I certainly do not intend to judge the hearts of those who give themselves to this activity. In fact, it is commendable to aggressively seek to offer God sacrifices of praise.

It is questionable, however, that any activity that is short on **insightful** thanksgiving and praise reveals any special closeness to the Lord. Daniel had received something. That is why he gave thanks to God and praised Him. He had received understanding. That is why he gave thanks and praised. He was not expressing something he had learned from Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, but something his heart and mind had perceived. God had been good to him, and he knew it. The prayers of the four companions had been heard, and they knew it. Where such knowledge is not in possession, thanksgiving, praise, and worship, are not even possible.

GOD OF MY FATHERS

“ . . . O thou God of my fathers.”

Here Daniel acknowledges the godly heritage he had – one that was by Divine appointment. The *“fathers”* to which he refers were primarily Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Secondly, they were the Jewish progenitors to whom God had revealed Himself.

Those referring to *“my fathers”* include Jacob (Gen 47:9,30; 48:15-16), Elijah (1 Kings 19:4), Nehemiah (Neh 2:3), and David (Psa 39:12).

In history, there was a Divinely selected race to whom heavenly things were vouchsafed. Paul refers to these things as *“the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever”* (Rom 9:4-5). Paul also called this body of people his *“fathers.”* *“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets”* (Acts 24:14).

In this confession, Daniel sides

IT IS INTERESTING THAT THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE ARE NOT COMMONLY JOINED TOGETHER IN OUR DAY. WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN A NEW VOCABULARY IS BEING FORMED – ONE THAT DOES NOT HAVE ITS ROOT IN THE WORD OF GOD. HENCE, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR IT TO EXPRESS A TRULY SPIRITUAL IDEA.

fear. The answer received by Daniel prompted both to flow from his great heart.

Thanksgiving and praise are brought together several times in Scripture.

- ▣ Knowing the God of heaven, David *“appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record [commemorate], and **to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel**”* (1 Chron 16:4).
- ▣ The Levites were *“to stand every morning **to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even**”* (1 Chron 23:30).
- ▣ When David blessed the Lord before the congregation, he said, *“Now therefore, our God, we **thank thee, and praise thy glorious name**”* (1 Chron 29:13).
- ▣ When the ark of the covenant was positioned in the Temple, *“the*

(Psa 69:30).

- ▣ Again he said, *“Enter into his gates with **thanksgiving**, and into his courts with **praise**: be thankful unto him, and bless his name”* (Psa 100:4).
- ▣ And again, *“Sing unto the LORD with **thanksgiving**; sing **praise** upon the harp unto our God”* (Psa 147:7).
- ▣ In the time of Ezra *“they sang together by course in **praising and giving thanks** unto the LORD”* (Ezra 3:11).

Praise and Worship

It is interesting that thanksgiving and praise are not commonly joined together in our day. We live in a time when a new vocabulary is being formed – one that does not have its root in the Word of God. Hence, it is not possible for it to express a truly spiritual idea.

Today it is fashionable to speak of *“praise and worship.”* The phrase itself is not found in any translation of Scripture. It carries with it a special meaning

with all who saw, heard, and followed, the living God. He identified with the covenant people, owning them as his own people. What he had received came from the same God who revealed Himself to the “*fathers*.” He no doubt knew that, in some significant sense, he was blessed

“*for the fathers’ sakes*” (Rom 11:28). He did not receive this revelation simply for his own sake, but because he was part of a blessed people. Though they had been chastened, they had not been forsaken. He gladly called them “*MY fathers*.”

In his thanksgiving and praise, Daniel also acknowledges that “*the God of the Jews*” is separate from the Babylonian gods. This is not a god of wood or stone, but the one who is in heaven! He sees, speaks, and works among men.

WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE GIVEN

“^{23b} . . . **who hast given ME wisdom and might . . .**” Daniel began this prayer by saying, “**wisdom and might are His**” (verse 20). Now he acknowledges that **both** have been given to him! He has received wisdom to know, and might to declare. He has received wisdom to comprehend, and might to proclaim. Wisdom that is received, yet cannot be declared, is of little or no value. Further, the understanding Daniel has received will require great boldness to declare.

These graces have been “*given*” to Daniel. **He has not received them because he has conducted himself in a disciplined manner, but because he has asked in faith.**

A word about this “*might*” or “*power*”^{NIV} is in order. This was not military power, like that to which Babylon was accustomed. Daniel commanded no army or fought in any battles. This was power or might to stand against the forces

of darkness, and proclaim the truth to political dignities. He will speak in high places for a mighty God. It is written, “*He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth*

Here was a man Babylon could not conquer. The king could not make him eat food unlawful and defiling to him. The king’s edict that all wise men in the empire be destroyed could not be executed

HERE WAS A MAN BABYLON COULD NOT CONQUER. THE KING COULD NOT MAKE HIM EAT FOOD UNLAWFUL AND DEFILING TO HIM. THE KING’S EDICT THAT ALL WISE MEN IN THE EMPIRE BE DESTROYED COULD NOT BE EXECUTED AGAINST DANIEL.

strength. *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint*” (Isa 40:29-31).

against Daniel. He came into the king’s court and asked for time to give the king an answer. Now, he will be bold enough to give a message that would mean the death of any one but a man of faith. Where did this “*might*” come from? It came from the Lord, who made him stand during a moral tornado in Babylon!

MADE KNOWN TO ME

“^{23c} . . . **and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter.**” The petition the four presented to the Lord was described in these words. “. . . in order that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon”^{NASB} (verse 18). Now we learn their request more particularly was that God would show them mercy by revealing “*the king’s*

matter.” Remember, this was something no mortal knew, including the king himself. The curious arts of the magicians could not uncover it. The vast intellectual and historical expertise of Babylon’s wise men could not discern it. There was not so much as a hint of what the dream contained, its general nature, or whether it was a warning or a blessing. A person without faith would have concluded the matter was not intended to be known. And, indeed, if the young Judean men had not prayed for the matter to be made known to Daniel, it would have seemed as though

such conclusions were justified. However, their faith made them bold enough to ask. It also made Daniel confident enough to receive, and bold enough to speak.

It is still true that many do not receive needed benefits from the Lord simply because they do not ask. As James said, “*yet ye have not, because ye ask not*” (James 4:2). Others do ask, yet because they have basically fleshly motives, they do not receive what they so sorely need. As it is written, “*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may*

IT IS VITAL TO NOTE THAT FOUR YOUNG MEN, IN A HEATHEN EMPIRE, AND FAVORED BY THE KING, MADE THEIR OWN WILL SUBORDINATE TO THAT OF GOD. DANIEL'S THREE COMPANIONS DID NOT PRAY FOR THEMSELVES, BUT THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL THE SECRET TO DANIEL. DANIEL, ON THE OTHER HAND, GAVE THE CREDIT FOR THE ANSWER TO THE PRAYERS OF ALL FOUR.

consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

It is quite possible for Christians to overestimate their wisdom, strength, and abilities. In such a case, they will not bring their case to the Lord because they do not see the seriousness of their need, or their own poverty to meet it. Secondly, it is also possible for Christians to have their own will out in front of the will of the

Lord. When this happens their covetous spirit withholds good things from them.

It is vital to note that four young men, in a heathen empire, and favored by the king, made their own will subordinate to that of God. Daniel's three companions did not pray for themselves, but that God would reveal the secret to Daniel. Daniel, on the other hand, gave the credit for the

answer to the prayers of all four.

ME AND WE

There is something interesting in this prayer. First, Daniel confesses, "*hast given ME wisdom and might, and hast made known unto ME now what WE desired of thee.*" Then, he applies the revelation to all four: "*for thou hast now made known unto US the king's matter.*"

First, Daniel is the one who received the required knowledge. Second, the other three shared in the benefit of the revelation. I also do not doubt that Daniel shared the answer with his companions, giving due credit to the God who gave it. Thus God also revealed the secret to the others, choosing to do so through Daniel, rather than in a night vision. For all of them, however, the Source of the knowledge was the Lord.

CONCLUSION

God has provided us a most excellent example of how to respond to crisis. **First**, it is good to inform the parties involved that we are seeking the Lord, as Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar. **Second**, it is comely to share the matter with kindred spirits who share our interest in the glory of God. **Third**, it is also profitable to place personal interests in the background, making them subordinate to the greater good. **Fourth**, when our prayers are

answered, let us be swift to give thanks and praise to the God we serve. Ever remember, God's glory means our good.

We also see that God will not allow His children to be tempted above their ability. His faithfulness will provide a way of escape, that they may be able to bear the trial. In our text, that way was the provision of knowledge and understanding. It did, in fact, deliver them from death, opening the way for the

future productive ministry of Daniel. Just as the turning of water into wine was the beginning of Jesus' miracles, so this will be the beginning of Daniel's extended and prolific prophetic ministry.

Who knows what threshold you may be occupying at this time? Perhaps there is some great work for which you are being readied. Be alert and faithful, redeeming the time. You may have come to the Kingdom such a time as this.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/19/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 24-30 of the second chapter. The lesson is titled, "**DANIEL BOLDLY STANDS BEFORE THE KING.**" There is a certain boldness and confidence in faith that is most marvelous. We will behold the outworking of these spiritual fruits as Daniel stands before the political ruler of the world. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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