

# A WORD TO THE WISE

## Returning to Daniel

A Study through Daniel  
Spring Series, 2024

**Text: Daniel 9:19, 21; 12:8-10**

### Daniel 9:19, 21

*And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." **And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."** . . . But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. . . .*

### Daniel 12:8-10

*I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" He said, "**Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked will act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.**"*

I want to review the reasons the elders and I believe we should take time to think deeply about Daniel's words.

1. ***We live in uncertain times*** and we must learn to live confidently and joyfully for God in the face of an uncertain future.
2. ***We live in a secular and immoral culture*** where we must speak truth and defend righteousness courageously and graciously.
3. ***We live in spiritually dark times*** where we are called to display the beauty of the gospel by living graciously and faithfully.
4. ***We live in desperate and confusing times*** and we must strive to live humble, prayerful, and Bible-shaped lives that please God, advance His purposes, and display His power ***for the glory of His name and for the good of the nations.***

As we return to Daniel, we need to make sure we understand the contours of the book ***so that we don't miss the wisdom God intends to impart through the unusual structure and design of the book.***

- ***The book mentions nine important dates in Daniel's lifetime*** under at least four different monarchs who ruled at least three different world kingdoms.

- ***The book is intentionally written in two languages – Hebrew and Aramaic.*** The Aramaic portion of the book is written to the Gentile nations by whom God is disciplining His sinful people. The Hebrew portion is written to His faithful servants about the future discipline He will bring on these Gentile kingdoms as He subdues the nations, defeats their hostile rulers, and restores the fortunes of His people.
- ***The first half of the book is artfully designed around a set of paired visions and court stories*** intended to help God’s people live faithfully among the pagan nations where God has scattered them.
- ***The second half of the book is intentionally structured around four prophetic visions*** designed to encourage Israel by the hope of the coming of the Kingdom God promised to establish for them.

Perhaps the best way to survey this body of divine wisdom is to look at it from three perspectives:

## **I. A Word to the Nations about Sovereignty – God Rules**

### ***A. He orchestrates the human history in which His people are called to live (1:1-2).***

*In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.*

### ***B. He controls the boundaries and shapes the destinies of powerful nations (2 and 7)***

Chapters 2 and 7 contain very similar visions that describe an image representing human government throughout the ages until an anointed and appointed Champion appears to establish the Kingdom He has been given and to rule the nations with the authority He has been granted by the Ancient of Days.

***Listen to Daniel sum up this word of wisdom:*** “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belongs wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes

*kings and sets up kings: he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding" (2:20-21).*

**C. He preserves the lives and elevates the honor of His faithful servants in the midst of pagan hostility and malicious opposition (3 and 6).**

In chapter 3 God preserves the life and promotes the honor of three of His faithful servants who are cast into a fiery furnace for refusing to bow down to the golden image (3:1-7). In chapter 6 God preserves Daniel's life when he is cast into a den of lions for refusing to pray to Darius instead of to God (6:4-28).

***Listen to Nebuchadnezzar give praise to the God of heaven as a result of what he witnessed at the furnace that day:*** *"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who can rescue in this way.' Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon" (3:28-30).*

**D. He humbles the proud and arrogant kings of the earth (4 and 5).**

***God humbled Nebuchadnezzar and granted him repentance that led to forgiveness and restoration.***

***Daniel 4:24-27*** *this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king,<sup>25</sup> that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.<sup>26</sup> And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules.<sup>27</sup> **Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.**"*

***God humbled Belshazzar by hardening his heart and bringing him to divine wrath and utter destruction.***

***Daniel 5:22-28*** *And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this,<sup>23</sup> but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine*

from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored. <sup>24</sup> “Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. <sup>25</sup> And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN. <sup>26</sup> **This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end;** <sup>27</sup> **TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting;** <sup>28</sup> **PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”**

## **II. A Word for God’s Servants about Kingdoms – His Kingdom Matters More (7 – 12)**

A second word of wisdom is directed to God’s faithful servants, who are often called to live their entire lives among the kingdoms of the world, enduring faithfully and waiting patiently for the arrival of the Kingdom of God’s Son.

### **A. The appearing of the Son of Man to receive a glorious, eternal Kingdom (7:13-14)**

*“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

### **B. The rise of satanic rulers who oppose this Kingdom and persecute the saints to whom this Kingdom belongs (7:19-22)**

*<sup>19</sup> “Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet, <sup>20</sup> and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. <sup>21</sup> As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, <sup>22</sup> until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.*

### **C. The revelation of a cosmic war between the kingdom of the serpent and the Kingdom of the Son of Man (7:25-26)**

*He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. <sup>26</sup> But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end.*

### **D. The certain victory of the Son and the future establishment of His glorious Kingdom on earth (7:27; 12:1-3)**

*Daniel 7:27* And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; **his kingdom** shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.'

### **III. A Word to the Wise About Wisdom – Live According to His Revealed Word in the Kingdoms of the World While Waiting Patiently for the Kingdom of His Son**

#### **A. Ask for wisdom and understanding prayerfully (9).**

*Daniel 9:20–23.* While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God,<sup>21</sup> while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.<sup>22</sup> He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding."<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

#### **B. Receive and embrace that wisdom humbly even when it is not what you expected or desired (10-12).**

*Daniel 10:18–19* Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me.<sup>19</sup> And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

#### **C. Live according to that wisdom confidently, obediently, joyfully, and redemptively (12:10).**

*Daniel 12:10* Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

### **Conclusion: Responding to the Wisdom of Daniel (10:19)**

*Daniel 10:19* And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

This book was not given to confuse us, confound us, trouble us, or divide us. Sadly, God's people have failed to use the wisdom in this book wisely and have suffered all of the above for their foolishness.

May that never be true of us. May we come before the Lord with grateful hearts eager for His Spirit to strengthen us through the word He gave to Daniel many centuries ago. Let us determine to

- **receive it thankfully**
- **read it thoughtfully**
- **interpret it carefully and understand it prayerfully**
- **apply it personally**
- **live it faithfully**
- **model it graciously and humbly**