

**DANIEL**  
**The King's Man**  
*For a Hard Time and a Dark Place*

A Study through Daniel  
Fall Series, 2023

**Texts: Daniel 5:11-12; 6:1-3; Ezekiel 14:14,20**

Two weeks ago, we began a series through the book of Daniel. At the start of that message, I mentioned that our elders believe our congregation would benefit greatly from the lessons God desires to teach His people from the life of Daniel and from the wisdom found in this book he wrote almost 2600 years ago.

1. We live in uncertain times much like those in which Daniel and his friends lived, and like them, we must learn to live confidently for God in the face of an uncertain future.
2. We live in a secular and immoral culture that has invaded the church and infected our lives, and like Daniel, we must speak truth boldly and stand for righteousness courageously.
3. We live in spiritually dark times and as the darkness deepens, like Daniel, we must display the beauty of the gospel by living graciously and faithfully.
4. We live in desperate and confusing times, and like Daniel, we must strive to live humble, prayerful, and Bible-shaped lives.

The wisdom Daniel lived and wrote is good (tov) wisdom! That means it is spiritually true, consistently reliable, and personally beneficial.

And when that wisdom came to Daniel, he was strengthened and said, *"Let my Lord speak, for you have strengthened me!" (10:18-19).*

Three texts in Scripture inform us that Daniel possessed amazing skill and wisdom from God; his life manifested the power of the Spirit of God; and he lived a consistently righteous life under some of the most spiritually dark and personally difficult situations of any biblical character recorded in Scripture.

A. The recognition of Daniel's skill and wisdom:

*Daniel 5:11-12 **There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him.** and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, <sup>12</sup> **because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel,** whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.”*

B. The source and explanation of Daniel's skill and wisdom – the Spirit of God:

*Daniel 6:1-3 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; <sup>2</sup>and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.<sup>3</sup> Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, **because an excellent [S]pirit was in him.** And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.*

C. The product of a wisdom-shaped life – righteousness before God and in the presence of others:

*Ezekiel 14:14, 20 even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives **by their righteousness,** declares the Lord GOD. . . .<sup>20</sup> even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. **They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.***

So this morning, I want us to look at the life of Daniel from three perspectives and then make an application to all of us:

**I. Perspective One: Faithful Living in His Time and Place (Daniel 1:1-7)**

**God called Daniel to live righteously and serve faithfully:**

***A. During a Difficult Time (1:1-2)***

***B. In a Dark Place (1:2b-4)***

**II. Perspective Two: Obedient Living to Make A Powerful Impact in a Pagan Culture (Daniel 1:8-21)**

Scripture repeatedly reminds us that God prepares His servants to live in His appointed place at His appointed time! This is as true for each of us as it was for Daniel and his three friends in Babylon. What are God's appointed servants to do when the place of their appointment is physically hard and spiritually dark?

Everything in Daniel's life changed when he was forcibly taken to a place he didn't want to go by a king he didn't want to serve!

- ***Removed from His family, home, city, temple, and country – he lost his national identity.***
- ***Relocated – he lost his community.***
- ***Renamed – he lost his identity.***
- ***Retrained – he was immersed in the language, learning, culture, and spiritual values of a pagan kingdom!***

And all of this happened in the providence of a good, wise, loving, all-powerful God!

1. Somehow he managed to remain faithful to God and obedient to the Torah;
2. His life made an incredible impact for God on everyone around him, including King Nebuchadnezzar himself!

So how did he do this? How did Daniel live obediently in this kind of a culture, and how did his life make such an impact on those living in that culture?

***A. Wisdom from Above (1:17; 2:26-28; 10:11-14)***

***B. Courageous Faith (1:8; 3:8-18; 6:4-27)***

1. Courageous faith to refuse food offered to idols (1:8).
2. Courageous faith to refuse to bow down to an idol (3:8-18).
3. Courageous faith to refuse to pray to someone other than the true God of Heaven (6:4-27)

***C. Bold Words (4:24-27; 5:18-27)***

***To Nebuchadnezzar (4:24-27)***

***To Belshazzar (5:18-27)***

***D. Gracious, Grace-Enabled Life***

- ***When God's Word was at stake (1:8-16)***
- ***When his life (and that of others – including his opponents) was at stake (2:12-16).***
- ***When his relationship with the king was at stake (4:19, 27)***
- ***When wealth and opportunity were at stake (5:17)***
- ***When his integrity was at stake (6:10)***

How did Daniel live this way, this consistently, under this kind of pressure, for his entire life and ministry? Where did he get this wisdom and how did he find this strength?

***Daniel got this wisdom from the Word of God!*** It is clear Daniel knew the Torah and was willing to obey its commands; was asking

God to fulfill the promises He made through Jeremiah's prophecy (9:1-3); and was diligently seeking to understand the Word God revealed to Him by divine vision (10:1-14).

***Daniel got strength and enablement from the Spirit of God!***

Daniel did not do what he did in human strength or wisdom. He was strengthened by the Lord, and it was this strength that gave him good courage to live well in Babylon! (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."

### **III. Perspective Three: Wise Living Based on Insight from God's Word (Daniel 4:24-27)**

Daniel did what he did and said what he said because he thought what he thought. And he thought what he thought because he believed what he believed about God, His Word, and the world in which he had been called to live!

Everything Daniel did . . . every word he spoke for God; every action he undertook for God; every wise counsel he offered from God; and every stand he took for God came out of a deeply rooted belief that shaped and governed his life! And that foundational belief was both astonishingly simple and amazingly powerful!

#### ***God Rules and His Kingdom Matters More***

***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."*