



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA

By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

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Daniel 1:1-21

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English Standard Version

“By the Waters of Babylon”

This is the 1st sermon in the series on the book of Daniel entitled,
“A Broken World and a Sovereign God.”

Daniel 1:1-21

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² 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. ³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king’s palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. ⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king’s food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, ¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king.” ¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given

vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." ¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. ¹⁶ So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. ¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. ²¹ And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus."

Heavenly Father, once again we have come to Your Word and we ask that You would enable us to come with interest and attentiveness. These are hard passages to understand, and so we ask that by the power of Your Holy Spirit, open our hearts to hear the Scripture, so much so that it profoundly affects our lives. Do this in each of us, this morning, in Jesus' name, and for His glory, Amen.

INTRODUCTION: *Alternative Histories* ¹

There is a fascinating genre of literature that goes by the name "Alternative Histories." The novels imagine what life would be like if history had turned out differently than it actually did. Some of the leading writers of this genre are Newt Gingrich (yes, that Newt Gingrich), whose book *Gettysburg* explores what would have happened if Robert E. Lee won the pivotal battle of the Civil War.

Another writer, Harry Turtledove, has written a series of books, beginning with a Southern victory in the Civil War, carried through American history. He gets to World War I with the United States and the Confederate States taking different sides and tries to imagine what that would be like.

Probably the most famous alternative history book came from the spy-thriller writer Len Deighton. His book *SS-GB: Nazi Occupied Britain* tries to answer the question, "What if Adolf Hitler hadn't started a second front against Russia and focused all his attention on invading Britain in 1940?"

Very possible, he would have made a successful assault, and the result would be a very different place for Britain and all of Europe today. In all likelihood, people in those countries would have grown up in a repressive police state, living in constant fear of the authorities. He imagines that many British citizens would have been forcefully moved to other parts of Europe and the best of their youth taken back to Germany for training in service to this new empire.

Of course, that never happened in Britain, but because Hitler did open a second front against Russia and drew them into the war, it did happen in much of Eastern Europe. And for years, when people rose up in those countries, they were brutally repressed, and any potential leaders were either executed or exiled to some distant part of the then Soviet Union.

¹ The Introduction is adapted from *Daniel: Reformed Expository Commentary* by Dr. Ian Duguid, pages 3-4.

In many parts of the world today, in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, in particular, those harsh realities still exist.

Can you imagine what it must be like to be exiled in a foreign city, alone and scared, a long way from familiar surroundings?

This week, in the weekly events email that goes out to the church, I listed some challenging questions for us, "How do you cope in the midst of the brokenness and alienation that is life here on earth? What truths can you cling to when the jagged edges of existence are twisting against you? What do you need to know to live a life of faith in an alien world, a world that is frequently a place of sickness and pain, broken relationships and bitter tears?

And even if you think these are hypothetical questions for us today, I don't think they will remain so in our lifetimes. They weren't hypothetical questions for most of 20th Century Eastern Europe. They're not hypothetical questions for millions around the world today. And they certainly weren't hypothetical questions for a young man named Daniel some 2,600 years ago.

So before we get too far into the text, we need to know a little of ...

BACKGROUND: *The Exile*²

The context of this book is **the Babylonian exile**. The people of God have, by the very beginning of this book, begun to reap the harvest of bitterness that Isaiah and Jeremiah and the other prophets had told them they'd experience if they turned their backs on God, if they didn't follow His ways. The Exile was one of two defining events in the history of Israel, with the Exodus being the other.

If you remember some of your Old Testament history, if you've been attending Rich's Sunday school class on the Old Testament, you'll know that there was one constant problem confronting the people of Israel ... **idolatry**. Over and over again, Israel turned away from God and turned to idols. They had a long series of evil kings who led them astray. They also had a series of prophets who, over and over again, called them back to worship the One True God. The 8th Century prophets — Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Micah (who preached in the 700's B.C.) — constantly warned the people of God, but they were largely ignored.

Then the prophets of the Exile, primarily Jeremiah and Ezekiel, preached a message of judgment for disobedience and hope for obedience. It took almost 30 years for them to be taken into exile ... and after the exile; their return was spread over another 90 years (Ezra and Nehemiah tell us the story of their return).

However, many never returned at all, after they were defeated in 722 B.C, we have no record of what happened to the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom. They didn't return and we assume that they were assimilated into the cultures that captured them.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah was different. And they did learn — after they returned from the exile, starting in 538 B.C. and they took the name Israel — they did learn and they **never fell prey to idolatry again**.

They had learned their lesson. And, in fact, over time, they developed a group of religious leaders to oversee the spiritual health of the people and to keep the people from idolatry. They were powerful and effective in this ... and we know them today as ... the

² The Background, Exposition of the text, and Conclusion are adapted from *Daniel: Reformed Expository Commentary* by Dr. Ian Duguid, pages 3-16; *Preaching the Word: Daniel* by Rev. Rodney Stortz, pages 11-26; *The Communicator's Commentary: Daniel* by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson, pages 17-45; the sermon, "Take Time to be Holy" by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS.

Pharisees.

But prior to that, we have **unfathomable**, repeated sin that would bring the exile as a means of God's **judgment** against sin. And that's where this story starts. You see, by the year 605 B.C., **six centuries before Christ**, the deportation to Babylon had already begun. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, a Chaldean by blood, had an expansionist plan to take over as much of the Ancient Near Eastern world as he could ... and Jerusalem was one of his first targets.

This exile, though it may have looked like God was out of control, was in fact, according to God's own prophets, **His punishment** against Israel's sin and rebellion. That is **a key**, by the way, to understanding the book of Daniel and his whole view of the sovereignty of God. The exile into Babylon functionally meant **the end of Israel as a nation**. Yes, it's true that after Israel came back after a period of time, there were a series of monarchs in the land of Judah known as the Hasmoneans, and we enter into what was known as the Maccabean period. **But Israel was never an independent nation again**. She was always a tributary to some larger nation. And so the captivity into which the children of Israel began to be taken in 605 B.C. was the end of the nation of Israel.

And that's where our story starts.

The Book of Daniel is both familiar and unfamiliar to most Christians, and because of that it poses some unique challenges for us. The stories of Daniel in the Lion's Den and of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego in the fiery furnace are staples of Bible story books and Sunday school classes, and are still fairly well-known even in an age of Biblical illiteracy.

And so we've all been taught that Daniel is about how to live faithfully in the midst of an unbelieving culture. And that's true – Daniel does teach that. But if I see one more sermon with the title, **"Dare to be a Daniel,"** I'm going to puke.

Because that's NOT the main point of the Book of Daniel. We see that, somewhat, in the first six chapters of Daniel, but the last six chapters are a series of **apocalyptic visions** that are meant to **encourage** believers living in hostile times. Much of the Book of Revelation is based upon the Book of Daniel, which is why we're going through this book first, before we get to Revelation next September. We're going to be reminded that there is the One greater than Daniel, the One who perfectly lived the exilic life of service and separation for us, the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the high point of the Book of Daniel comes in chapter 7 with a heavenly vision of the exalted Son of Man who took flesh among us in the person of Jesus Christ. The Book of Daniel is not about us, and it's not about Daniel, but it's about **a Sovereign God and the coming of the Kingdom**.

And so, with that in mind, let's begin our study of the Book of Daniel by first seeing that God is ...

v. 1-4: FAITHFUL IN JUDGMENT

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² 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. Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace."

To live faithfully in exile, we first need to know God's faithfulness. This isn't as

comforting a truth as you might think, since the first aspect of God's faithfulness we see in this book is God's faithfulness **in judgment**.

As verse 2 makes clear, the exile came upon them because the Lord handed King Jehoiakim over to the power of Nebuchadnezzar.

God gave His people into the hand of their enemies.

The Lord had warned Israel of the consequences of sin all the way back in Leviticus. In Leviticus 26, God made a covenant with them that included blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. And if they persisted in their disobedience, God said, **Leviticus 26:33, 39**, *"And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste. ... And those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies' lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them."*

And this is exactly Israel's fate as it unfolds. Because of their persistent disobedience and rebellion against God, over many generations, God handed them over to their enemies and so they went into exile.

It's also the specific fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in 2 Kings 20 and Isaiah 39. King Hezekiah had received envoys and gifts from the King of Babylon. In response, Hezekiah showed him all his treasures. And for this, he was **condemned** by the prophet Isaiah. Hezekiah hadn't just received a gift from the King of Babylon, but rather this was a request from Babylon to become an ally with them against Assyria. And when Hezekiah opened his treasure house, he was showing Babylon that he had the resources to be a useful ally against Assyria.

Despite the Lord's miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem from the armies of Assyria in 2 Kings 19, Hezekiah was now embarking on a political solution through an alliance with Babylon. Politics has replaced trust in the Lord. And Isaiah said that because you trusted in Babylon instead of God, Babylon would come get all the treasures. Not only that, he said, **2 Kings 20:18**, *"And some of your own sons, who shall be born to you, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."* [Also in Isaiah 39]

It is **this specific word of judgment** that is fulfilled in the opening lines of Daniel, verses 2-3, *"And he ...placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. ³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility."*

Yet the recognition that their fate came from the hand of God as a faithful act of judgment was itself an encouragement to the exiles. The future was not controlled by Babylon or its gods, but by the Lord, the God of Heaven. The One who had sent them into exile also promised to be with them in exile, and ultimately, to restore them from exile.

This is important. During its hardest moments, life often seems out of control. Our fate sometimes seems to be in the hands of hostile people, or in the outworking of some kind of impersonal force we don't understand.

Yet the reality is that every experience we have in this world, from the apparent coincidence at one end, to the determined acts of the wicked at the other, lies under the control of **our Sovereign God**. For the believer, every circumstance is the Lord's means of furthering His goals of sanctifying us, of making us holy, of making us more like His Son Jesus.

So it was that Daniel and friends found themselves in exile in Babylon.

But while there, they were not forgotten by God, and they did not forget they were God's children, so they were able to remain ...

v. 4-7: FAITHFUL IN REMEMBERING

“... and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.”

The four young men were probably teenagers at the time, and arriving in Babylon, they were exposed to an intense program of reeducation.

First, their names were changed. And this is significant.

The name Daniel means “*Elohim* is my judge.” *Elohim* is one of the Hebrew names for God. The name Belteshazzar means “May the lady of Bel protect his life.” Bel is one of the gods of Babylon.

Hananiah means, “*Yahweh* is gracious.” *Yahweh* is the personal name of the God of the Bible. Shadrach means, “Marduk is exalted.” Marduk is also called Aku, and he was a sun-god, or moon-god, it’s a little unclear.

Mishael means, “Who is what *Elohim* is?” while Meshach means, “Who is what Marduk is? Or “Who is like Aku?”

Azariah means, “*Yahweh* is my helper,” and Abednego means “The servant of Nebo,” another Babylonian god.

Second, the four young men were instructed in the literature and language of the Babylonians, so that its myths and legends would take the place of the Scriptures as the source of their wisdom and worldview.

Third, they were supplied with food and wine from the king’s table, so they would become accustomed to a life of dependence on their new master.

And so, at the end of their three-year training period, as they entered the service of Nebuchadnezzar, their new king, their previous identities would be obliterated. The fundamental goal of the whole program was to erase all memory of Israel and Israel’s God from the lips and minds of these young men, and to instill in them a sense of total dependence on Nebuchadnezzar for all of the good things in life.

Isn’t this how Satan still operates today? He may violently persecute believers in some parts of the world, yet often the majority of people are far more easily assimilated if they’re well fed and provided for. Ultimately, he works more effectively by deceiving us into forgetting God and thinking that our blessings come from somewhere else.

He wants us to forget the truths expressed in those Hebrew names, that God is our judge, and well as the One who shows us His grace. He wants us to forget the uniqueness of our God and the help that only He can provide. If he can instill in us a dependence on the material comforts that make up our way of life, than he can more effectively draw us away from the Lord.

Just like Nebuchadnezzar, he wants us to forget, to forget, to forget. And if he can get us to forget God, then we no longer pose a threat to him, and he can ignore us. But that doesn’t always happen, and it doesn’t happen here, because they resisted the pressure to forget God.

First, while they didn’t refuse to answer to their Babylonian names, they also continued to answer to their Hebrew names. They kept their real names as a reminder of who they really were.

Second, they didn’t forget the traditions, the laws, the worship, or the celebrations of

their homeland. That's true for all exiles or expatriates. They cling to the ways of their mother country. And that's why St. Patrick's Day is celebrated with more enthusiasm in Boston than it ever is in Dublin. Exiles relish opportunities to celebrate their true identities.

And so, as citizens of **Heaven**, we need to take every opportunity to gather with our fellow exiles, to remind ourselves of our true home in Heaven, of our true identity in Christ, and our true priorities in worship.

As we sing praises, we're singing the songs of the Lord in a foreign land. As the Word is proclaimed, heavenly wisdom is learned. As we celebrate the sacraments, the sign of heavenly citizenship is placed on us and our children in baptism, and the sign of the great cost of our citizenship and the benefits it brings is given to us at the Lord's Supper.

God has promised never to forget us in our exile here on earth, and we have been called by Him never to forget such a great salvation. And that's what's happening here because Daniel was ...

v. 8-16: FAITHFUL IN DEPENDENCE

"But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself."⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king."¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,¹² "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink."¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see."¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food.¹⁶ So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables."

The next way in which these four young men resisted assimilation into the Babylonian system was by resolving not to take the king's food and wine. The issue here was not simply that the Babylonian food was not kosher, nor was it that the food had been first offered to idols, for that would have been the case with the vegetables as well. If the Babylonian food was intrinsically evil, then Daniel would have to abstain from it permanently, and we know that's not the case from later on in the book. So ... what **is** the issue here?

I think that the key to understanding why they choose such a simple lifestyle is simply to be dependent on the Creator God for their food, and not on King Nebuchadnezzar. Dependence on Nebuchadnezzar's food would have been defiling because it would have repeated in their lives the sin of King Hezekiah that had brought this judgment upon God's people in the first place.

Once again, Daniel and his friends sought to maintain their faithfulness to God by working through the Babylonian system, not against it. They asked permission from the chief official for the personalized diet.

However, the focus of this chapter is not simply the faithfulness of these four young men to their God. Rather, the focus should be on the faithfulness of God to them. It was God who caused them to find favor and compassion in the eyes of their captors. This came as an explicit answer to prayer from hundreds of years earlier. At the dedication of the temple, King Solomon

prayed that when the people ended up in exile, as they **surely would** because of their sinfulness, then the Lord would cause their captors to be compassionate, **1 Kings 8:50**, *“and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them.”*

This compassion on Daniel and his friends is actually given to them by God in answer to the prayer of King Solomon.

And that continues as we need to learn that God is not only faithful in judgment, but also exceedingly ...

v. 17-21: FAITHFUL IN MERCY

Here we see that it's God who's faithful to Daniel. *“As for these four youths, **God gave them** learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king.²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.²¹ And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.”*

God's favor on them enabled them to answer all of Nebuchadnezzar's questions, so he, verse 20, *“found them **ten times better** than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.”* God thus placed them in a unique position where they could be a blessing to their captors and build up the society in which they found themselves, while at the same time enabling them to remain true to him in the midst of extraordinary pressures.

We read these stories and marvel at the faithfulness of Daniel, when in reality, the story is about the faithfulness **of God**. Challenging people just to “Dare to be a Daniel” becomes just another meaningless plea to moralism. Go forth, do more, be better, try harder, and earn your way into heaven. **And that's not the Gospel!** The Book of Daniel is about **God** keeping these young men faithful, and that **He's** surely able to keep us faithful to Him in our trials and difficulties. It's not about how good Daniel is ... it's about how good God is.

This theme of God's faithfulness emerges again in the brief note at the end of the chapter, verse 21, *“And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.”*

The first year of Cyrus was the year in which the decree was issued that enabled the Jews to return home, **2 Chronicles 36:22-23**, *“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:²³ ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up.’ ”*

This happened some 70 years after Daniel was taken into exile and thus we're reminded that God's faithfulness proved sufficient for Daniel throughout the exile, and indeed, throughout Daniel's lifetime.

There's one final note that we can't afford to miss in all of this. And that's the reminder that God is ...

CONCLUSION: *Faithful in Our Salvation*

The reality for most of us is that when we look at our lives, we find we're not much like Daniel at all. We're far more like the nameless masses who were deported along with Daniel, who adopted foreign names, ate the king's food, and became like the Babylonians altogether. In many respects, we've been assimilated into the world system in which we live, and our futures are mortgaged to it.

If the message is just "Be like Daniel," we might as well stop now. Because the more we get to know Daniel, the more we'll realize that **we're not Daniel's**.

The reality here is that Daniel is answering the question of Psalm 137, our responsive reading this morning, "*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?*" We confronted everyday by a society, once permeated with Christian thinking, which has now become baffling to understand.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"

Are we going to sing the Lord's song because we do more, because we think we're better, because we try harder? Or do we sing the Lord's song because He has been faithful **to give it to us when we least deserved it**. The good news of the Gospel is **not** that God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him. No, not at all.

The good news of the Gospel is that **a Savior** has come to deliver faithless and compromised saints like us. Our salvation doesn't rest on our ability to remain undefiled by the world, but rather it rests alone on the undefiled offering that Jesus has provided for us ... in Himself ... in our place.

Jesus Christ came voluntarily into this world, with all of its pains and trials. He endured far greater temptations and sufferings than Daniel did, or than we ever will. Yet He remained entirely faithful until the very end, without spot or blemish, and grants the perfection of His obedience to all those who trust in Him by faith.

What's more, Jesus has already returned from His time of exile and now sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. He has prepared our places there, and His presence there is a **guarantee** that one day we'll be there with Him as His people. **The cross** is the means by which God's faithfulness **redeems** the unfaithful; the resurrection is the guarantee of our inheritance in Heaven.

Remind yourselves of this Gospel! Fix your eyes on Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected, and exalted. He's not only pioneered the way home, **He is the way home**. Ask Him to put you in places where you can be a blessing to your community. Ask Him to give you wisdom and understanding in your home, in your school, in your workplace. Be dependent on Him and trust in His faithfulness. **That's** what the Book of Daniel is all about. This is **a Gospel book** and it's about **the coming of the Kingdom**.

Think about that. You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this word ... it is a grand word. As we study it over the next few months, we pray that You would make us not simply be like Daniel, but like our Savior who was greater than Daniel and taught us how to live a kingdom life in a fallen world. Help us to do this by grace for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for His glory. Amen.

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Colossians 3:23-24

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”