



# Potomac Hills

## Presbyterian Church, PCA



By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

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Daniel 2:1-23

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English Standard Version

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### ***“The Wisdom and Power of God”***

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> sermon in the series on the book of Daniel entitled,  
***“A Broken World and a Sovereign God.”***

#### **Daniel 2:1-23**

*“In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, “I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.” <sup>4</sup> Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” <sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. <sup>6</sup> But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.” <sup>7</sup> They answered a second time and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.” <sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, “I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— <sup>9</sup> if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.” <sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king and said, “There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” <sup>12</sup> Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. <sup>13</sup> So the decree went*

out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. <sup>14</sup> Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. <sup>15</sup> He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. <sup>16</sup> And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king. <sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, <sup>18</sup> and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. <sup>19</sup> Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. <sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. <sup>21</sup> 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; <sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. <sup>23</sup> To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter."

*Heavenly Father, once again we have come to Your Word and we ask that You would enable us to come with ears that hear and hearts that are open to receive. The events of this passage are recorded for us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and so we ask that by the power of that same Holy Spirit, You enable us to understand what is happening in this text and why it's important for us to read it and hear it again. Do this in and for each of us, this morning, in Jesus' name, and for His glory, Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: *Interesting Times***

There's an old Chinese saying that goes like this, "May you live in interesting times." First question ... Is that saying a blessing or a curse? I'm not sure. Most young people I know tend to dream of living in "**interesting times.**" They hope ... to find a place in life and in history where they'll be able to make a difference in the world. But as we grow older, sometimes we wish that the times in which we live were a little less "**interesting.**" Living in "**interesting times**" can often be challenging and even painful.

For better or worse, however, it was Daniel's calling to live in interesting times. At least, that's the impression we get from this book of the Bible that bears his name and tells us of the challenging situations he faced.

Of course, it's easy to overstate the case. After all, Daniel lived a long life, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of the Babylonian exile to the days of Cyrus at the end of the exile, probably living into his early 90's. Much of that time probably wasn't very interesting at all ... just the regular routine of trying to live out the difficult task of being faithful in a faraway land, trying to balance the competing demands of his two masters, the Babylonians and the Lord God.

We don't have a record of those ordinary times though. The times in Daniel's life that are recorded in Scripture are most definitely the "**interesting times.**" What we read about are the times when Daniel's two loyalties clashed sharply with each other or when his life was threatened somehow. It wasn't as if God wasn't with Daniel in the ordinary times, but it was during these special times of trial, that it became obvious to those working and living with

Daniel that the Lord was working in and through his life in a special way.

Of course, the same can be said of our lives as well.

Do you want your family, your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors to be able to see the difference that being a Christian makes? That's really the prayer to live in "**interesting times**," because it's usually in our trials and hard times that having faith in God makes enough of a difference that it's evident to others.

For example, it's been said that the reason God sends cancer to Christians as well as to non-Christians is so the world can see how **differently** they handle it. Certainly, times of trial provide an opportunity for our faith to make a visible difference in our lives. Because as long as the world can find a perfectly good explanation for our peace in the midst of difficult circumstances, it won't be at all puzzled by us. But when we have a peace that is clearly **NOT** the result of comfortable circumstances, a peace that transcends what the world gives, then the world is forced to sit up and take notice.

Let me give you a clear example of this. A few years ago there was a horrible tragedy in an Amish schoolhouse where a number of children were killed. The whole world noticed how **amazingly gracious** the Amish people were in the midst of a horrible, horrible situation.

The Apostle Peter said about this, **1 Peter 1:6-7**, "*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

It is in the "**interesting times**" that God puts the genuineness of our faith on open display. Daniel 2 certainly qualifies as one of those "**interesting times**." Here God puts on display the faith difference in Daniel's life as compared to the Babylonian wise men. In fact, the primary point of this chapter is not the content of the dream itself nor its interpretation, which we'll get into more next week. No, not at all. The primary point of Daniel 2 is seen in the conflict between Daniel and the Babylonian wise men ... and it's seen the triumph of Daniel's wisdom, which comes from God, over the wisdom of the wise men.

The point of this chapter, and the reason I split it into two sermons, is **NOT** that Daniel's really cool and really great because he can interpret dreams. The point of this chapter is seen in the title of this sermon. The point of this chapter is that we'll see and acknowledge **the wisdom and power of God**.

But before we get too far into the text, we need to be reminded of the context here, and, of course ...

### **BACKGROUND: *The Exile***<sup>1</sup>

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.

God brought about the Babylonian exile as a means of God's **judgment** because of **unfathomable**, repeated 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

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<sup>1</sup> The Background is adapted from *Daniel: Reformed Expository Commentary* by Dr. Ian Duguid, pages 3-16.

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 whole book of Daniel and his view of the sovereignty of God. The exile into Babylon ... the captivity into which the children of Israel began to be taken in 605 B.C. ... was the functional end of the independent 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 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 Daniel, chapter 2 by first seeing ...  
v. 1-3: **THE DREAM OF THE KING**<sup>2</sup>

*"In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.<sup>2</sup> Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.<sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream."*

This conflict is initiated when King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. In the ancient world, such dreams were thought to be shadows that the future cast in front of itself, tipping its hand to show what lay ahead. The interpretation of the dream was important then, because it gave the king a chance to take whatever steps are needed to counteract the events of the dream, or at least to be ready for them.

And so, it was pretty common for kings in the Ancient Near East to have specialists in dream interpretation on the payroll. Supposedly, by understanding dreams, these people could see into the future, and tell the king what was coming, and what action he needed to take.

And before you laugh at the absurdity of it all, we have a very similar thing in our own day and age, except that now we call them "The Council of Economic Advisors."

And so, after Nebuchadnezzar wakes up from his dream, true to form, he summons the

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<sup>2</sup> The Outline is taken from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, pages 1332-1334. The Introduction, Exposition of the text, and the Conclusion are largely adapted from Duguid, pages 17-30; a small part comes from the sermon, "The Dream Which Nearly Became A Nightmare," by Rev. Bob Deffinbaugh, Community Bible Chapel, Richardson, TX.

wise men. At this point, however, he introduces **an extraordinary complication** ... which brings about ...

#### v. 4-11: **THE DESPERATION OF THE WISE MEN**

*“Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, ‘O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.’”<sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, ‘The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.’<sup>6</sup> But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation.”<sup>7</sup> They answered a second time and said, ‘Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation.’”<sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, ‘I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—<sup>9</sup> if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation.’”<sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king and said, ‘There is not a man on earth who can meet the king’s demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.’”*

So ... this is an interesting twist. Instead of telling the wise men the dream, which they could then interpret by consulting the latest text on dream interpretation, the king declares that they would have to find out the dream itself, **as well as** its interpretation. If they succeeded, then they’d be given great rewards. However, if they failed, then they, verse 5, *“shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins.”*

So, the prospects for the Babylonian wise men are looking pretty bleak right now. It’s as though Nebuchadnezzar suspected all along the emptiness of their alleged ability to foretell the future and he was determined to put them to the test.

The Babylonian wise men were horrified at this demand because they couldn’t meet it. After all, while being magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, diviners, and economists ... they obviously were not **prophets**. While they sought to discern patterns in events and dreams that foreshadowed the future, they had no direct access to the mind of their gods, let alone to the mind of **the** God. They say it’s too difficult and admit they can’t do it, verse 11, *“The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”*

Unlike the God of Israel, the gods of the Babylonians weren’t so accommodating as to reveal their plans ahead of time to their representatives here on earth. As far as they were concerned, what the king asked for was beyond human wisdom. And they were right. And here we see the uniqueness of the God of the Bible, who is both able and willing to reveal His plans and purposes to man, **Amos 3:7**, *“For the Lord God does nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets.”*

Their response, however, don’t go over too well with Nebuchadnezzar because the next thing we see is ...

#### v. 12-13: **THE DECREE OF THE KING**

*“Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed.”<sup>13</sup> So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.”*

Nebuchadnezzar is infuriated by this response, so much so that he says, “kill them all.”

As it's become clear, Nebuchadnezzar doesn't do things halfway. His normal reaction is to overreact. After all, the fiery furnace is still to come. And we know from Jeremiah 29 that he roasted Zedekiah and Ahab in the fire as well.

In fact, his decree to execute these men includes way more people than those he asked to interpret the dream. Perhaps he concluded that if the wisdom of the wise men was insufficient for this crisis, what good was it in any situation? And so the failure of the wise men to reveal his dream and its meaning resulted in a death decree for all the wise men, including Daniel and his friends.

Put yourself in Daniel's shoes for a moment. At first glance, the decree must have seemed proof positive of the monumental meaninglessness of life. Daniel and his friends have been preserved out of the holocaust of the destruction of Judah — miraculously protected in the king's court despite their commitment not to eat his food, but now they're condemned anyway. They've been sentenced to die along with all the rest of the wise men ... simply because the king had a bad night and rash of unreasonableness.

But when the bad news came to Daniel, he responded with a wisdom and faith in God well beyond his years. And so we see ...

#### **v. 14-16: THE DECLARATION OF DANIEL**

*“Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. <sup>15</sup> He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, “Why is the decree of the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. <sup>16</sup> And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.”*

Now, in the midst of really adverse circumstances, Daniel doesn't panic. He understood that in spite of all appearance to the contrary, this bizarre event was under the sovereign control of a sovereign God, who had a sovereign purpose for it all. And this purpose wasn't just to show Nebuchadnezzar the future through his dream, but to clearly demonstrate the difference between **Daniel** and the wise men of Babylon ... and to clearly demonstrate the difference between **Daniel's God** and the gods of Babylon. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar's dream and his decree of death wasn't just another meaningless tragedy; but instead, it set the stage and provided the context **for God to publicly display His sovereign power**.

For starters, God showed His Power by granting Daniel an initial round of mercy from the king. The king's already accused the Babylonian wise men of trying to buy time back in verse 8, yet when Daniel asks for more time to interpret the dream, the king gives it to him.

And with this time, Daniel doesn't try to figure out the dream by his own wisdom, but his first response is to go to the Lord. And so next we see ...

#### **v. 17-18: THE PRAYER OF DANIEL**

*“Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, <sup>18</sup> and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”*

In the meantime, realizing that the delay is merely a stay of execution, Daniel goes to his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Here they're given their Hebrew names, rather than their more familiar Babylonian names. Perhaps this is because, as they seek mercy from the God of Heaven, they'll need to remember the Lord's grace, uniqueness, and willingness to help His people — attributes to which the meaning of their names attests, as we saw last week.

In searching for an answer to their situation, they plead for mercy from the God of Heaven that they, verse 18, *“might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”* In making this request, they’re echoing the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, **1 Kings 8:50**, *“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.”*

And so they plead with God to be faithful to His Word and to deliver them in their hour of need. With the clarity that such **“interesting times”** bring, they knew that their hope rested in God alone. If God doesn’t reveal the dream to them, then there’s nowhere else to turn. No other wisdom could deliver them.

And it’s particularly amazing that they echoed Solomon’s prayer, because the temple which Solomon had dedicated some 400 years earlier now lay in ruins, abandoned by the Lord and utterly destroyed by the Babylonians. Yet even in this complete absence of any earthly sign of God’s favor, nevertheless they totally trusted in God’s promise, in God’s Word, to be their God in the midst of their distress, no matter what situation they found themselves in, to be their deliverer.

As we saw in our responsive reading this morning, **Psalm 97:7-10**, *“All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship Him, all you gods!<sup>8</sup> Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of Your judgments, O Lord.<sup>9</sup> For You, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.<sup>10</sup> O you who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the lives of His saints; **He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.**”*

Trusting in God like this is never a comfortable situation to be in, because it means that there’s no other support, no other help, no other wisdom, nowhere else to turn, and no one else to turn to.

And yet what could be better to turn to in than **the Wisdom and Power of The Sovereign God**? Who is like the Lord as a helper and deliverer? God is both faithful and able to support us in **“interesting times.”** Not always the way we plan or want, sometimes He delivers us by walking through the fire with us, as we’ll soon see. Yet the Lord is always faithful to His Word, and so whenever we find ourselves at wits end, it’s always a good idea to gather our friends and flee to the wisdom and power of God. It’s never a bad move to go to God in prayer, pleading His promises and trusting in His faithfulness.

In this case, the Lord answers Daniel’s prayer by revealing the mystery. And yet Daniel doesn’t rush off to Nebuchadnezzar with the answer. Even with his life hanging in the balance, he stops to take the time to give thanks to God for the answer. Sometimes in our eagerness to get on with our life, we forget to stop and thank the One from whom the answers came.

Not so with Daniel. He immediately stops and looks to the God of Heaven. And so we see ...

#### v. 19-23: **THE PRAISE OF DANIEL**

Look at this prayer of praise. What is Daniel saying here?

He’s stopped and praises God for His wisdom and His power. *“Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.<sup>20</sup> Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.<sup>21</sup> 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;<sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and hidden things;*

*He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.* <sup>23</sup> *To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter."*

The Lord alone has the power to control world events. The future doesn't rest in the hands of the Babylonian gods, to whom the wise men looked. Their gods were proved to be empty idols with no power or wisdom. They can't see the future, let alone affect it, since as **Isaiah 44:17-18** says, "*And ... he makes [it] a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"*" <sup>18</sup> *They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand."*

The Lord is the One who sets up kings and removes them. And yet He doesn't merely control the future, He **reveals** the future to His servants the prophets. He gives wisdom to the wise and reveals mysteries as He's done here for Daniel. This is precisely what the Babylonian wise men said was impossible, because they have gods, verse 11, "*whose dwelling is not with flesh.*"

Yet Daniel's God, the God of Heaven, even though He's transcendent and exalted high above the heavens, does dwell with flesh, **Isaiah 57:15**, "*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite."*

This assertion that the God of Israel is the One who possesses all wisdom and power is an important reminder for those who hear Daniel. As exiles in Babylon, they were surrounded by alternative religions that claimed to offer access to the hidden mysteries of the universe. The events of this chapter exposed the emptiness of those claims. There's only one God who reveals the future, because there's only one God who controls the future. The wisdom and power of the world may, from time to time, seem impressive ... but it has no substance.

Doesn't that all sound somewhat familiar?

We too live in a day and an age when we're surrounded by the wisdom and power of the world. And sometimes it takes a religious form and promises us enlightenment through New Age meditation or Eastern philosophy. Sometimes it takes the form of an explicit denial that God knows and controls the future, imagining an "open" God who's struggling his way through the process like the rest of us. Sometimes it comes to us in secular forms, promising power and wisdom through the application of success strategies for our work and our relationships. It presents impressive credentials, and like the Babylonian wise men, comes with the strong endorsement of our society. However, when the interesting times are upon us, it has no power, it has no wisdom, it has no substance.

Once again, there's a final note that we **can't** afford to miss in all of this. And that's the reminder that Jesus is ...

### **CONCLUSION: *The Wisdom of God***

Simply living his life wisely wouldn't have saved Daniel by itself. After the decree for his death went forth, nothing but the direct intervention of God could save him. If God had remained at a distance and revealed nothing, Daniel would have **died** with the wise men. But God didn't remain at a distance: God came to Daniel and revealed the mystery, delivering him from death.

This part of the book of Daniel points us forward to Christ. In Christ, God came to live

among men definitively, thereby disproving once and for all the theology of the Babylonians that gods don't dwell among flesh.

In Christ, God became flesh, **John 1:14**, "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

Jesus came and lived the perfect life of wisdom, the perfect combination of obedience to God's Word and constant dependence on the Holy Spirit. Just as Daniel gave thanks and praise for his deliverance, Jesus modeled for us an entire life of thanks and praise, even thanking God for a trial from which there would be no deliverance for Him. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave thanks for the bread when He was about to break it — an action that symbolized the breaking of His body for our sin. When He took the cup, the cup that would mean life for us but death for Him, He gave thanks for it. Jesus gave thanks for the cross because He knew it wasn't a random, meaningless trial; but He saw ahead to its great reward.

Jesus Christ gave thanks for the cross because He knew that **by it** God would redeem for Himself a holy people for all eternity. **By the cross**, God would deliver us from a sure and certain death.

And even though He asked for deliverance, Jesus didn't receive it and in his hour of need He suffered the injustice of an undeserved death. And yet He died so that we might be delivered in our hour of need and might receive undeserved mercy from the divine king. Through His death, we live.

But Daniel and his friends weren't the only ones delivered by the intervention of God. The unbelieving and ungodly wise men of Babylon were delivered as well. What did they do with their stay of execution? We have no idea, the text doesn't tell us, because God deemed it not important for us to know the rest of their story.

But what **is** important is what we will do with **our** stay of execution.

What will we do with the Good News of the Gospel of God's Grace as it's found in Jesus Christ? We need to respond to the news that someone, a Savior, has come to bear our sins and to freely give us the righteousness that we need to stand before a holy God. We must repent and abandon our love affair with the gods of this world and the wisdom and power they offer ... and bow to Christ, and Christ alone. We must throw ourselves on the mercy of God and ask for the death of Jesus to cover our sins. It's the only way to receive the life that He offers.

Because we're not much like Daniel, but we're much more like the Babylonians who were wise in their own eyes. However, as the Apostle Paul teaches us in **1 Corinthians 1:18-25**, "*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* <sup>19</sup> For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." <sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The good news of the Gospel is that **a Savior has come** to deliver foolish and weak saints like us. Our salvation doesn't rest on the wisdom and power of the world, but rather it rests **alone** on the Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. **The cross** is the

means by which God's power **redeems** the weak and God's wisdom **saves** the foolish.

Preach to yourselves this Gospel! Fix your eyes on Christ crucified. And as we live through our "**interesting times,**" be dependent on Him and trust in His wisdom and power. **That's** what the Book of Daniel's about. **This is a Gospel book and it's about the Wisdom and Power of the One True King, the God of Heaven, and the coming of His 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 all wise and powerful word ... it is a grand and wonderful word. As we continue to 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 interesting times. Help us to do this by the mercy and grace of Christ ... the power of God and the wisdom of God, for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for His glory. Amen.*

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### **1 Corinthians 1:22-24**

*"For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**"*