

## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

July 11, 2021

### Keep The Faith – A Series on the Book of Daniel “The All-In-One God”

Daniel 2:1-23

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In his book, *Knowledge of the Holy*, A.W. Tozer states an extremely important point for us, “The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of him and of her. In all her prayers and labor this should have first place. We do the greatest service to the next generation of Christians by passing on to them undimmed and undiminished that noble concept of God which we received from our Hebrew and Christian fathers of generations past. This will prove of greater value to them than anything that art or science can devise.” We are privileged in worship today to do just that, to meet the One and Only True God that revealed Himself to Daniel then and to us today. There truly is no greater task that we have as the church than to know who the all-in-one, sovereign God really is and then praise and worship Him.

#### **DANIEL 2:1-23:**

*One night during the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had such disturbing dreams that he couldn't sleep. <sup>2</sup> He called in his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers, and he demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed. As they stood before the king, <sup>3</sup> he said, “I have had a dream that deeply troubles me, and I must know what it means.”*

*<sup>4</sup> Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic, “Long live the king! Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means.”*

*<sup>5</sup> But the king said to the astrologers, “I am serious about this. If you don't tell me what my dream was and what it means, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be turned into heaps of rubble! <sup>6</sup> But if you tell me what I dreamed and what the dream means, I will give you many wonderful gifts and honors. Just tell me the dream and what it means!”*

*<sup>7</sup> They said again, “Please, Your Majesty. Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means.”*

*<sup>8</sup> The king replied, “I know what you are doing! You're stalling for time because you know I am serious when I say, <sup>9</sup> 'If you don't tell me the dream, you are doomed.' So you have conspired to tell me lies, hoping I will change my mind. But tell me the dream, and then I'll know that you can tell me what it means.”*

*<sup>10</sup> The astrologers replied to the king, “No one on earth can tell the king his dream! And no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, enchanter, or astrologer! <sup>11</sup> The king's demand is impossible. No one except the gods can tell you your dream, and they do not live here among people.”*

*<sup>12</sup> The king was furious when he heard this, and he ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be executed. <sup>13</sup> And because of the king's decree, men were sent to find and kill Daniel and his friends.*

*<sup>14</sup> When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, came to kill them, Daniel handled the situation with wisdom and discretion. <sup>15</sup> He asked Arioch, "Why has the king issued such a harsh decree?" So Arioch told him all that had happened. <sup>16</sup> Daniel went at once to see the king and requested more time to tell the king what the dream meant.*

*<sup>17</sup> Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. <sup>18</sup> He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of Babylon. <sup>19</sup> That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. <sup>20</sup> He said,*

*"Praise the name of God forever and ever,  
for he has all wisdom and power.  
<sup>21</sup> He controls the course of world events;  
he removes kings and sets up other kings.  
He gives wisdom to the wise  
and knowledge to the scholars.  
<sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and mysterious things  
and knows what lies hidden in darkness,  
though he is surrounded by light.  
<sup>23</sup> I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors,  
for you have given me wisdom and strength.  
You have told me what we asked of you  
and revealed to us what the king demanded."*

## **ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

One night God gave King Nebuchadnezzar's a very memorable, disturbing dream. It was so upsetting that the King called all his advisors from all different disciplines and asked them to interpret the dream. The advisors then said, ok, please tell us the dream and we will interpret it. The King shocked them when he said that not only are they to tell him what the dream means but they are also to tell him what the dream was. To make matters worse the King said that if they are not able to do so he would have them literally torn limb from limb. I cannot imagine the anxiety the advisors must have felt. I would not have wanted their job. Again, they begged the king to tell them the dream and they will interpret it. The king told them that he is going to make sure they tell him the truth by telling him what the dream was. The advisors said this is impossible and no king has ever demanded such an impossible task as this. The advisors said only the gods could do this and the gods do not live among them, nor do they communicate truths to them. The king was so upset about this that he then ordered his officials to execute all his advisors throughout his kingdom which included Daniel and his friends. When Arioch the official came to Daniel to kill him, Daniel was blindsided as he had no clue what had happened. After hearing what had happened Daniel then approached the king and asked for more time to do what the king asked. Daniel then went home and told his 3 friends what had happened and asked them to join him in turning to God in prayer for the answers to the king's demands. Sure enough God came to Daniel in a vision that night and told him what the dream was and what it meant. In response to

God doing the impossible for him and the boys, Daniel praised God by focusing on who God is.

In Daniel's praise to God he gives us a glimpse of who God is. Daniel points out that God is everywhere even in the darkest places of the universe shedding the light of His glorious presence. Daniel especially points out that God is all-powerful, all-wise and all-knowing. God knows everything there is to know and God even reveals all knowledge and deep mysteries to humanity.

The Library of Congress was established by an act of Congress in 1800. In 1815 the Library accepted 6,487 books from the library of Thomas Jefferson. According to the Library of Congress' website, as of 2020 the Library of Congress Recorded a total of 171,636,507 items in its collections. Of those items, they had more than 25 million cataloged books, more than 15.5 million items in the non-classified print collections, including books in large type and raised characters, incunabula (books printed before 1501), monographs and serials, music, bound newspapers, pamphlets, technical reports and other printed material, more than 131.1 million items in the non-classified (special) collections, including: 4.2 million audio materials (discs, tapes, talking books and other recorded formats), 74.5 million manuscripts, 5.6 million maps, 17.4 million microforms, 1.9 million moving images, 8.2 million items of sheet music, 17.3 million visual materials, 2 million other items (including machine-readable items). To add to all this, each working day the Library receives some 15,000 items and adds more than 10,000 items to its collections. In 2012, James Billington was the 13th Librarian of Congress, which meant he had the overwhelming task of overseeing this largest library in the world. In the midst of managing this enormous collection, Billington argued that while our nation has collected all this information what is most difficult for us is knowing what to do with all of this information. Describing the contemporary world as "an info-glut culture," Billington asks a probing question: "But have we become any wiser?" What is astounding is that God knows all the information found in the Library of Congress, what is found on the internet, and God has the perfect wisdom to know what to do with all this information.

### ***SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD***

Daniel not only points out that God is all-wise, all-knowing, all-present, but that God is also all-powerful and as such God is ultimately in control over all events of history and is over all the leaders of the world. Daniel is trying to encapsulate in just a few verses how vast and great God is. All the gods of the king's advisors couldn't give the king the information he wanted because they did not exist as they were all imposters. Daniel wants us to understand that there is only one God, and He is far beyond our comprehension.

Did you know that there are well over 900+ names and titles for God in the Bible all given to God in an attempt to describe who God is. The more God's people came to know God down through history the more names and descriptions they've given Him. When Moses was tending to his sheep out in the wilderness, a unique phenomenon

caught his attention, a bush that was on fire and yet not burning up. To make the scene even more amazing, all of a sudden Moses heard God speaking to him from the bush. God gave Moses a mission to go to Pharaoh to demand the release of the Israelites from slavery. Moses was flabbergasted with God's mission for him, and *Exodus 3:13-14* tells us, "<sup>13</sup> *But Moses protested, 'If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what should I tell them?'*" <sup>14</sup> *God replied to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.'*" Moses is saying, who should I say has sent me and God gives Himself a very interesting name, "Yahweh", or also translated as, "I Am". As I understand it God is saying to Moses, you tell them the all-encompassing, sovereign creator and ruler of the ends of the universe, the only God, the eternal God, the God who is unlimited in power, presence, love, holiness, truth, knowledge, wisdom, and so much more. This God is far beyond our comprehension. That is who God was saying that He is to Moses and through Daniel to us today. Hildebert of Lavardin all the way back in the 11th century tried to state how great God is as he said, "God is over all things, under all things, outside all; within but not enclosed; without but not excluded; above but not raised up; below but not depressed; wholly above, presiding; wholly beneath, sustaining; wholly without, embracing; wholly within filling." I especially love how Paul put it in *1 Timothy 1:17*, "*All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen.*" We cannot put into words any kind of adequate analogy or description of who God truly is, so I think, "I Am" works really well as a summary.

### **WORSHIP OF GOD**

As I said earlier, when God gave Daniel the details of the dream and its meaning, Daniel was blown away by how great God was which led Daniel to praise God for His greatness. Daniel was filled with wonder and awe for God and couldn't help but express it.

Joshua Harris, in his book, *Dug Down Deep* said that he knew a girl who used to think the stars were tiny specks of light just over her head. He said that she was not just a kid but was actually in college and didn't realize the stars were much farther away and much greater than just tiny specks of light just over her head. He said that she was a really sweet, kind, redhead who spoke almost perfect Spanish. She was very intelligent in many ways but somehow missed it concerning the stars. Harris said that one day in a conversation she mentioned that she had finally learned that stars in the night sky were actually really far away. Harris then writes saying, "I asked her what she meant. She said, 'You know, they're not just right up there. They're not just tiny dots. They're really far away.' I was incredulous. 'What did you think they were before?' I asked. 'I thought they were, you know, just right up above us.' If you were to ask me why it matters that we study the doctrine of God, I'd say for the same reason that it's worth knowing that stars are not tiny pinpricks of light just above our heads. **When we know the truth about God, it fills us with wonder. If we fail to understand his true character, we'll never be amazed by him. We'll never feel small as we stare up at him. We'll never**

**worship him as we ought. We'll never run to him for refuge or realize the great love he's shown in the measureless distance he bridged to rescue us."**

When we glimpse who our infinite God really is, it leads us to worship God as God fills us with awe and wonder of who He is. We then are amazed as we realize how small and limited we are compared to God's infinite presence. We then run to God for all our needs, depend upon Him for everything and give our lives to Him in praise and worship as we are overwhelmed with His love. We then can't help but echo the words of *Psalm 8:3-4* that says, "*When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—<sup>4</sup> what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?*"

For me, worshipping God is very much like what happened to Missy, myself, and her family as we travelled a few weeks ago on vacation to 3 National Parks: Grand Tetons, Yellowstone, and Glacier. As we drove in the national parks Missy was taking pictures as fast as she could out the car window not wanting to miss the scenery. We were constantly pulling over getting out of the car and taking pictures of breathtaking views. Then when we hiked, the hikes took longer than normal as we constantly stopped, and we took more pictures and commented on the marvels of what we were seeing: Seeing the sun set over the Grand Tetons when visiting Mormon Row. Then as we took in the vast expanse of the Yellowstone Grand Canyon with Upper and Lower Falls. When we saw the many wonders of Yellowstone's beautiful thermal pools of waters and geysers we just stood in awe. When we walked on a hike on the Avalanche trail in Glacier National Park and stood next to the beauty and power of this cold rushing stream of melting snow we were blown away. Then we saw the breathtaking beauty of Avalanche Lake and the many waterfalls. When we saw our first moose in the wild or the first grizzly, we couldn't take our eyes off of them but just watched in amazement. As I took in the sites, I kept saying such theologically profound phrases such as "Wow", "Cool", "Unbelievable", "No words", "Oh my" and all my words fell far short of what we saw and heard. All the pictures we took and all the words we uttered didn't come close to do just to what we experienced. My sermon, all the sermons of the world, the Bible itself does not come close to doing justice to God's vastness, His beauty, His knowledge, His wisdom, His presence, His love, His holiness, His perfection, His power, His presence, and so much more we don't and can't fully know about God. All we can do is respond to what we do know about God in awe and worship as Daniel did.

It amazes me more than anything that this infinite God of Daniel is the one who loved us so much that He came and became one of us through Jesus in order to reveal Himself to us.

**BENEDICTION:** *1 Timothy 1:17, "All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen."*

Icebreaker I – Do you remember your dreams? Have you ever wondered what your dreams meant?

Icebreaker II – What is the most amazing view of nature you have ever experienced on a vacation? What words would you use to describe it?

1. What does the king ask of the astrologers and why is he testing their competence?
2. In his fury, what does the king decide to do and how does Daniel respond to this edict?
3. Embracing the death-defying dare to interpret the dream, what role is played by Daniel's personal faith?
4. For what gifts does Daniel praise God? What does that say about God? About Daniel? About intercession, thanksgiving, and counting our blessings?
5. How can this group pray for you?