**Where to Seek Godly Wisdom: Part 1.**

**Daniel 2:1-16**

 Good morning! Please open your Bibles to the 2nd chapter of the Old Testament book of Daniel. Today we are beginning a two-part message addressing this question: Where should we seek Godly Wisdom? We live in a fallen world where there are so many sources out there trying to provide people with wisdom so that they will make wise choices in life. As we will find out over the next two weeks, not all sources of wisdom are credible and we need to practice discernment when choosing who to listen to. The 2nd chapter of the book of Daniel begins the account of when Daniel served as a counselor to the King of Babylon. He had completed his training and was now on the king’s council. The King is going to have a very complicated dream, which is going to startle and stress him. In his desire to know what the meaning of the dream was he is going to take some very extreme measures to get an answer from his wise men. In part 1 today we will be looking specifically at verses 1-9 of the account and then we will finish our discussion over the passage next week. For the sake of continuity, we will read the entire passage today as well as next week. Please read with me Daniel 2:1-16

**“Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So, they came in and stood before the king. The king said to them, ‘I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.’ Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: ‘O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation.’ The king replied to the Chaldeans, ‘The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore, declare to me the dream and its interpretation.’ They answered a second time and said, ‘Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation.’ The king replied, “I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore, tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation.” The Chaldeans answered the king and said, ‘There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.’ Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So, the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them. Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king’s bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; he said to Arioch, the king’s commander, ‘For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?’ Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. So, Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.”**

As we begin looking at the first half of this passage it is worth noting that the book of Daniel is very unique when comparing it to other books of Scripture. From chapter 2 verse 4 up through chapter 7 the book transitions from being written in Hebrew to Aramaic, which was the language of the Babylonians. This transition is important because it adds credibility to the text by using the language of the kingdom in which these events took place. When the wise men speak to the King in Aramaic, they are speaking their native tongue. I just wanted to provide that for context as we move forward.

 As the passage begins, we see that the King of Babylon was a dreamer and had a couple of these as the pages of Daniel proceed. These dreams were not just a man having random thoughts during his sleep, these were visions that had been provided to him from God. God was sending him a message regarding the future that he needed to know, which would impact the way that he would govern the kingdom. This vision that the king had was so troubling to him that it caused him to wake up in the middle of the night and summon all the wise men of the kingdom. This dream, as we will see later, is very complicated and needed to be interpreted by someone who had the ability to decipher it from God.

 This dream was so disturbing to the king that in verse 2 he calls in all of the wise men from the kingdom. We are given a list of the different magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and finally the Chaldeans. Each of these advisors claimed to have divine connection with the gods and could use those connections to interpret anything the king needed to know. When the wise men arrive, they stood before the king wondering what exactly he would order them to do.

 In verse 3 the king shares with them that the dream was so disturbing to him that it was causing him anxiety. This is understandable because as a king there are always things that are causing anxiety in life. We know that anyone who is in a position of power is always concerned that someone on their staff will try to kill them and take over or that there might be an insurrection among the people to overthrow them from power. This obsession with power and prestige leads to a constant stress that comes out many times in compulsive behavior. The king wanted an interpretation badly because he wanted to know if this vision had anything to do with his kingdom or him losing power. This would most assuredly cause him anxiety.

 In verse 4, where the book transitions to Aramaic as we previously said, the wise men tell the king that if he explains the dream to them, they will give him an interpretation. As we continue in verse 5 we see, however, that the solution these men offer is not acceptable to the king. Not only does he desire an interpretation, but he wants for someone on the council to explain his dream to him. This is a very unique and difficult order and we see that if someone does not do that for the king very quickly it will cost the lives of all of these wise men. A question that the reader might ask at this point is why does the king need to have the dream told to him when he was the one who had it? Would anyone like to offer a suggestion as to why? Have you ever had a dream and then forgotten later what you dreamed, but you knew that it was a very complicated dream? It is very possible that the king did not remember all of the details of the dream, but if he was so anxious about it, he must have remembered quite a bit. Another option is that he remembered the dream, but there were so many details in it that he was overwhelmed at what he saw. This, to me, seems to be the better explanation because the dream was so disturbing to him that he did not want to have to explain it himself. No matter the reason, the king tells the wise men that if they are unable to do it, they would meet a very gruesome death and have their homes destroyed.

 However, in verse 6 the king also offers a very generous reward to the one who could explain the dream and interpret it. He offers riches and honor as well as a high-level position in the king’s court. With this offer being put on the table all of the wise men wanted to receive it and therefore would do whatever they could to get it. In verse 7-9 the wise men repeat their request that the king tell them the dream so they could interpret it. His response is very interesting because it makes him angry and then he says he knows they are doing what they can to buy time because his order is firm. The reason he is so frustrated with them is because they claim to have divine connection with the gods and can predict the future as well as interpret signs from the gods. When they tell the king they cannot do it and that the request is too hard he calls them out as being frauds and then says that he knows they are trying to use their positions to deceive him so that they can benefit from it politically. His demand for them to tell him the dream is a test of their loyalty. Would they tell him what he wanted to hear or would they tell him the truth even if the news was not good? The king was not looking for a yes man in this situation, he wanted someone to be blunt with him and tell him the truth of the vision. This is where we will end our analysis of the passage for today.

 As we review the first 9 verses of the passage let us consider 2 applications that we can use as we are choosing where to receive wisdom from today. The king sought his answer from his wise men, but as we have seen these men were filled with human knowledge, not endued with Godly wisdom. Therefore, their knowledge had limits and there were things they would not be able to do. They also answered the king in a way he liked so their honesty could also be called into question. Just like King Nebuchadnezzar we live in a world where we are surrounded by human knowledge and thousands of sources of information that can be useful but should not be substituted for Godly wisdom.

 Our first application today is that we must carefully choose who we listen to today because not all sources of knowledge are credible or trustworthy. How can we make better choices when it comes to choosing who to listen to when we need wisdom in our lives? Let us allow Scripture to explain the process to us. In **Proverbs 24: 6** we read **“For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in an abundance of counselors there is victory.”** The war being referred to here is spiritual warfare. We wage war against the demonic spirits by using wise guidance from the Holy Spirit. The first point we need to make is that surrounding ourselves with wise counsel is very important. Also, when we do surround ourselves with wise counsel, we must be willing to listen to the counsel they provide. I can have access to the best advice around, but if I am unwilling to listen and humble myself to receive that advice it is no good to me.

 Another way to choose Godly counsel is found in **Proverbs 13:20** which reads **“One who walks with wise people will be wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm.”** Solomon is instructing his son that he needs to surround himself with people who are wise, not fools. Now what is a fool? A fool is someone who thinks they are wise in their own eyes but rejects the wisdom of God. We must seek counsel from fellow believers who will guide us into the ways of God. A nonbeliever might desire to help us, but the solution they offer will not be based upon the same worldview as a believer, so we need to keep that in mind. The solutions that man offers are based on human knowledge, not Godly wisdom. Seek advice from other believers, especially those who are mature in the faith so that they may guide you into the truth.

 Our second application from the passage today is that we must turn to God in order to receive answers to life that we seek. When we don’t seek counsel from God, we will always be left empty and still seeking answers. In **Exodus 8:18-19** the magicians of Pharaoh tried to emulate the plagues of God but were unable to do so. They tried to use their manmade magic and skill to accomplish this task. What we learn is that anyone who claims to be wise in their own eyes is not wise at all, but rather a fool who refuses to accept the wisdom that comes from God alone. The knowledge of man is flawed and will ultimately let us down.

 We have to guard ourselves against those in the world today who try to use fancy speech and clever words to lure others into accepting their misguided counsel. The wise men of Babylon made their living and kept the support of the king by using deception. They were like politicians who use words that their listeners want to hear. The king finally called them out on it! Jesus gave a warning to His disciples regarding deceivers, which is found in **Matthew 24:24**. **“For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”** We have to be aware that there are many false teachers in the world today trying to deceive the people of God. We must not be lured in by their money, success or promises of prosperity. Since we are aware of that fact, what can we do to make certain we are not being manipulated by these false teachers? Let us share together the instructions from the Apostle John who makes this test for false spirits very simple. Please turn with me to the New Testament epistle of **1 John chapter 4 verses 1-6**. We will use this passage as a way of conclusion today.

**“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore, they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”**

John provides four ways for us to test the spirits:

1. The spirit must confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. If it does not it is not from God. Anyone who says that Christ is not both divine and man is not in the truth.

2. The spirit of the antichrist desires to mislead, deceive and cause division in the church. If we listen to false teachers, they will distort the truth and led us astray.

3. They will speak as the world speaks, not of God. They will attract many who will not seek God, but worldly things that do not last! (the prosperity gospel for example)

4. Those who love God will listen to Scripture and obey it as the authority in life. Those who reject God’s Word and rely on human knowledge are not of God. It really comes down to authority, is man the authority or is God?

 Today we have seen that when we are in a situation like King Nebuchadnezzar and need wise counsel in our lives, we need to choose very carefully who to listen to. God’s Word provides us with instruction on how to do that. Just as Jesus said that if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, that everything we need will be provided for us. Therefore, if we seek wisdom from God and pray for it, He will provide it (James 1:5). May we be people of the Word who strive not only to heed what it says but to live it out for others so they may also be able to have the truth guide them in their lives. As John wrote **“greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”** We can overcome the lies of Satan when we equip ourselves with God’s wisdom. Amen.