

Slide 1

Our God Is Wise

DANIEL 2:20-22

Introduction

1. What does it mean to say that God is wise?
2. What did Daniel mean when he said that wisdom belongs to God?
3. The wisdom of which the Bible speaks has both a moral and an intellectual quality to it.
4. To be truly wise from the Bible's perspective, we must be able to harness our intelligence and our cleverness and utilize them for the right purpose.
5. Wisdom is the power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, along with the surest means of attaining it.
6. Wisdom is our moral goodness put to practical use.
7. Having said all this, wisdom in its fulness is found only in God.
8. God alone is entirely and consistently wise.
9. Just as power, truth and goodness are integral elements of who God is, so is wisdom.
10. Tonight, as we seek to better know the God we serve, I would like for us to examine His wisdom . . .
 - a. The fact that it accomplishes His purposes in our lives.
 - b. How He accomplishes those purposes.
 - c. How God's wisdom is at work in our lives today.

Slide 2

I. God's Wisdom Accomplishes His Purposes In Our Lives

A. THE POWER BEHIND GOD'S WISDOM

1. Man's wisdom can often be frustrated by circumstances outside his control.
2. Take the example of Ahithophel, a man, who at one time, was David's counselor.
 - a. In 2 Samuel 17:1-4, we read of some sound advice which Ahithophel gave to Absalom.
 - b. He urged him to finish David off before the king had a chance to recover from the initial shock of Absalom's revolt.
 - c. However, Absalom listened to the advice of another counselor, Hushai, over that of Ahithophel.
 - d. This wounded Ahithophel's pride, causing him to go home in despair and take his life (v. 23).
3. It is impossible for us to frustrate God's wisdom in the way that Ahithophel's "good counsel" (v. 14) was, because God's wisdom is tied to His omnipotence.

2a

4. God's omnipotence, His infinite power, is ruled by His infinite wisdom:
 - a. He is "wise in heart, and mighty in strength" (Job 9:4)
 - b. "With Him are wisdom and might" (Job 12:13a, NASB95)
 - c. "He is mighty in strength of understanding." (Job 36:5, NASB95)
 - d. He is strong in power . . . "His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40: 26, 28)
 - e. "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel . . . to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen" (Romans 16:25a, 27, NASB95).
5. Only God is worthy of our complete trust, because His boundless power and endless wisdom are united.

Slide 3

B. GOD'S WISDOM IS ACTIVE AND UNFAILING

1. It is on constant display in His creation, His providence and His grace.

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.”
(Psalm 19:1–2, NASB95)

2. However, it is impossible for us to recognize God's wisdom unless we know what He is working to accomplish.

Slide 4

3. In 1 John 4:8, the apostle John wrote that “God is love.” To understand, we must look at this statement in context:

“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:8–10, NASB95)

4. It does not mean that God intends for us to live trouble-free lives regardless of the spiritual state of our lives.
5. God's wisdom never intended to keep us happy in our sinful state, or to make ungodliness comfortable.
6. He has other goals in mind and is constantly working to meet those goals.

Slide 5

C. THE GOAL OF GOD'S WISDOM

1. When God created Adam and Eve, His purpose was that they should love and honor Him.
2. Even though they fell because of sin, God did not abandon His first

purpose.

3. His ultimate goal is to bring each of us to the point where we faithfully praise and serve Him.
4. While this is something which will only be fully realized in our eternal home, God continues to work toward it.
5. At present, His objective is to draw each of us into a relationship that involves faith in Him, hope in what He has promised, and love for Him and one another.
6. He seeks to deliver us from our sin and show in our lives “the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7).
7. He also works . . .
 - a. to defend His people “against the spiritual forces of wickedness” (Ephesians 6:12).
 - b. to spread the gospel, which is His “power . . . for salvation” (Romans 1:16), throughout the whole world.
8. Central to all of this is Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, our Savior and Lord.

Slide 6

II. What Does Such Wisdom At Work Look Like?

A. CONSIDER ABRAHAM

1. Abraham was a man who was . . .
 - a. Capable of repeated deceptions, deceptions which put his own wife’s purity in danger:
 - 1) He had her lie to Pharaoh and tell him that she was Abraham’s sister (Genesis 12:10ff.)
 - 2) He had her repeat that lie many some years later to another king named Abimelech (Genesis 20).

- b. Anxious about his own personal security, and lacking in moral courage.
 - c. Vulnerable to pressure.
 - 1) Sarah pressured him into fathering a child through Hagar (Genesis 16:2).
 - 2) He later let Sarah drive her out of his house (Genesis 16:5-6).
2. Abraham needed to . . .
- a. See all of his life in relation to God.
 - b. Look to God as His shield and the One before whom He faithfully walked.
 - 1) Following his rescue of Lot, God said to him, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” (Genesis 15:1, NASB95)
 - 2) One year before Isaac was born, God appeared to Abram and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless” (Genesis 17:1).
- 6a**
- c. Again and again, God confronted Abraham with Himself and led him to the point where his heart could say with the psalmist, Asaph, “Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Psalm 73:25–26, NASB95)
3. Notice how Abraham changed:
- a. Imagine the humility required for him to respond to God’s call to leave his home and travel to the land which his descendants were to eventually possess (Genesis 12:7).
 - b. Humility is again present as Abraham allowed his nephew, Lot, to have the greenest pastures (Genesis 13:8f.).

- c. The courage which revealed itself as he set off with only 300 men to rescue Lot from the combined forces of four kings (Genesis 14:14ff.).
- d. The dignity he displayed as he refused to keep the spoils, lest it should seem that the king of Sodom rather than God Most High had made him rich (Genesis 14:22ff.).
- e. The patience which developed within him as he waited 25 years for the birth of his promised son (Genesis 12:4; 21:5).
- f. The result of God's wisdom in His life was a man . . .
 - 1) Utterly devoted to God's will.
 - 2) Confident that God knew what He was doing.
 - 3) Willing at God's command to put his own son to death, the son for whom he had waited so long (Genesis 22).

Slide 7

B. CONSIDER JACOB

- 1. As you will remember, Jacob was the younger of two sons belonging to Isaac and Rebekah.
- 2. He was a self-willed mother's boy and an opportunist with ruthless tendencies.
- 3. However, God had a plan for Jacob.
 - a. Jacob was to have the firstborn's birthright and blessing, so that he might become the recipient of the covenant promise (Genesis 25:23; 28:13ff.).
 - b. It included Jacob marrying his cousins Leah and Rachel and becoming the father of the twelve patriarchs, to whom the promise was to be passed on (Genesis 48, 49).
 - c. God would change Jacob's attitude toward life, weaning him away from his own cleverness to dependence upon God.
 - d. In order to accomplish all this, Jacob must be made to feel his own utter weakness and foolishness by being brought to a point where he

would no longer try to exploit others.

4. How did God bring all this about?
 - a. For the first 20 years, God allowed Jacob to weave his own webs of deceit, by acquiring his brother's birthright and blessing (Genesis 25:29ff.; 27).
 - b. Through his experiences with his father-in-law, Laban.
 - 1) The marriage to Leah instead of Rachel (Genesis 29:15-30).
 - 2) The manipulation of the breeding of Laban's sheep and his eventual journey back home (Genesis 20:25; 31).
 - c. Through his despair over the news of Esau's approach.
 - d. Through his wrestling with God at the ford of the Jabbok (Genesis 32:24ff.)
 - 1) His unscrupulous and cynical ways were now coming home to roost.
 - 2) He finally recognized his complete inability to handle things.
 - 3) Never again would he try to live by his wits.
 - 4) God lamed Jacob as they wrestled (v. 25), serving as a perpetual reminder of his own spiritual weakness, and his need to always lean upon God.
 - 5) Jacob refused to let God go until God blessed him (v. 26).
 - 6) God was finally able to bless him because he was now humble and dependant enough to be blessed.
 - e. The wisdom of God had done its work.

Slide 8

C. CONSIDER JOSEPH

1. Joseph's plight
 - a. At the age of 17 he was sold by his brothers into slavery.

- b. In Egypt he was falsely accused by Potiphar's spiteful wife.
 - c. The next 13 years he spent his life in an Egyptian prison.
 - d. Finally, at the age of 30, he rose to the position of second in command of all Egypt.
2. God had a purpose for Joseph
- a. The Psalmist tells us that "the word of the Lord tested (refined) him" (Psalm 105:19).
 - b. He was being taught both as a slave and a prisoner to . . .
 - 1) Depend upon God.
 - 2) Remain cheerful and charitable in frustrating circumstances.
 - 3) Wait patiently upon the Lord.

8a

- c. His words to his brothers when he revealed his identity to them reveals his understand that God had been at work the whole time.

"God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God . . ." (Genesis 45:7-8a, NASB95)
3. In His wisdom, God was ordering the events of Joseph's life for a dual purpose:
- a. Joseph's own personal sanctification.
 - b. That Joseph might serve God's purposes in the life of God's people.

Slide 9

III. God's Wisdom Is Still At Work Today

A. HE CONTINUES TO ORDER OUR LIVES AS CHRISTIANS

- 1. In Romans 15:4, Paul tells us that "whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction . . ."

2. The same wisdom which ordered the paths of God's saints of old continues to order our lives today.
3. You and I should not be surprised when we encounter unexpected, upsetting and even discouraging things in our lives.
4. It may be that God is working to develop patience, compassion, humility or meekness in our lives.
5. Perhaps there are some new lessons we need to learn in self-denial and misplaced trust.
6. It is possible that He wishes to break us of our complacency or pride and conceit.
7. Have you ever considered that He simply desires to draw you closer to Himself in sweet communion.
8. Ultimately, God could be preparing us for forms of service of which we have no knowledge at the present.

Slide 10

B. A FAMILIAR EXAMPLE

1. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, the apostle Paul tells of an affliction, a thorn in the flesh which He called a "messenger from Satan."
2. Three times he asked God to remove it.

Slide 11

3. God's only response was "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness" (v. 9).
4. It was then that Paul understood the reason for the affliction: it was to keep him humble.

"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself . . ." (2 Corinthians 12:7, NASB95).

5. As a result, Paul's final response was "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2

Corinthians 12:9, NASB95).

Slide 12

C. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WISDOM AT WORK IN OUR LIVES?

1. When confusing and trying situations enter our lives, how should we respond if we cannot know in the moment God's purpose in them?
2. First, see these situations as being from God and ask yourself, "How can I react to them and in them in such a way that God is glorified?"
3. Second, go to God in specific prayer about them.
 - a. Ask Him to help you see His purposes in your trials.
 - b. Ask Him to help you respond in the appropriate way.

Conclusion

Slide 13

1. Long ago, in his letter to the believers in Philippi, the apostle Paul, after instructing them to "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling," added "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12b, 13, NASB95).
2. God's wisdom is always at work in our lives to accomplish what His purposes desire.
3. Let us learn to humble ourselves so that God's power is seen in us and He is glorified.
4. May God give each of us the grace to trust His wisdom in all our troubles knowing that His goal is to bring us to perfection and ultimately to glory.