



# God Is in Control

## RECAP

**This week's focus: Be confident, God is in control of whoever is in control.**

Most people are not forced to evaluate the accuracy of their picture of God until times of crisis when adversity hits. Adversity has a clarifying effect on our view of God. They cause us to reevaluate. We search for answers, solutions, and guides that we did not know we needed. Trials and tribulations are how God gets our attention. (James 1:2-4)

God uses all kinds of circumstances to get our attention and to shape us into who He wants us to be. When times are good, that's not a problem. However, when you are in a trial, it can be a heart-wrenching and deeply troubling experience. That is where the story of Daniel turns next. King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream and demanded answers. Through the course of the story, important questions are raised to which the king and his wise men do not have adequate answers; Who is God and how does He relate to man?

Chapter 2 in Daniel starts with a series of dreams that the king has that severely trouble him, give him insomnia, and produce great anxiety. The king summons his wise men for an interpretation and sets them up with a test that could only be satisfied if they are the real deal. They were to not only interpret the dream but tell him the dream. (v. 8-9). This extreme challenge makes it impossible for them to give an answer. The king is so upset with their inability to interpret that he decides to kill every wise man in Babylon. That is where Daniel comes in.

As one of the king's wise men, Daniel asks about the dream and requests that the king give him time to seek the answer to his problem. Daniel then goes back to his friends and asks them to join in praying for God to be merciful and give them answers that will satisfy the king's unreasonable request. Verse 19 says that God reveals to him the mystery in a night vision. The most important part of this section is v. 20-23 where Daniel praises God for what He has done. He focuses specifically on three attributes: wisdom, power, and revelation. God is in control. God knows what is best and what will happen. God is strong to do all that He wishes. He gives His wisdom and power to those whom He wishes by revealing to them things that are not understood (v.22).

Daniel miraculously interprets the dream revealing the kingdoms of this world that will in the future destroy Babylon and one another. A key element of this story is the fact that God prophesied through Daniel the coming of a heavenly kingdom not made by human hands. This was the kingdom Jesus came to establish. His kingdom has come, is coming, and will come most fully when Jesus returns and reigns over all that He has made and redeemed. But don't miss the other lessons from the rest of the story. These prophecies revealed the nature of who God is and offer Daniel as an example for what it means to serve God in a godless culture. Throughout this story, Daniel is shown as possessing attributes that make him distinctive and set apart from the other wise men in Babylon. The same distinct qualities found in Daniel's character are what make followers of Jesus different as they "shine like stars" in a dark and hostile culture.



## God Is in Control

SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: What was the hardest class you had in high school? What was the easiest?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Daniel 2 & Matthew 21:42-44

2. What stood out to you about the message on Sunday and this passage?
3. Think back to a time when you faced an impossible situation or circumstance. What did you do and how did you respond?
4. Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar asked someone to tell him his dream instead of telling them the dream first? What was he afraid of by telling them his dream?
5. Under the threat of death, Daniel remained calm and had situational awareness. He used discernment and discretion while in a crisis (v. 14-16). Why is this important? What does his response demonstrate for us?
6. Daniel didn't have the answer or the resources, but he knew God did. What do you think was his attitude towards prayer and why did he ask his friends to pray?
7. Read Daniel 2:20-23 again. What stands out to you about Daniel's praise, and how should this impact our response to God when He is at work in our lives?
8. How does our God use our situations and circumstances that seem impossible for both His glory and our good?
9. As Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he points back to God who gave him this wisdom and discernment and who is establishing His kingdom. In what ways are you showing others in your life that God is the source of your wisdom, joy, peace, and what you have currently?
10. Daniel 2 is the continuation of the story that if you want to make a difference, you must be different, "to shine like stars". How are you planning on being different this week?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Prayer Journal: Share prayer requests in your group. Consider keeping a prayer journal so that you can check back on requests in the future.

Focus your prayer time on those facing adversity right now. Ask God to give them the resources needed to stand strong and trust God. Ask for wisdom regarding the lesson He wants them to learn and praise Him for the answer that is coming.