

Message Series: The Whole Counsel of God, Message 33  
The Unlimited Resources of God. The Book of Daniel  
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There are certain historical stories that have captured the attention of men, women, and children of all ages; incidents of great courage and faith. Most of us know about the Alamo. Most of us know about George Washington and the crossing of the Delaware. And most people, whether they go to church or not, know the great stories of the Old Testament book of Daniel. Although recorded so long ago, they still hold tremendous lessons for us today. There are especially three lessons I want to bring to your attention.

### **I. Man's Wisdom is Limited, But God's Wisdom is Unlimited!**

The first lesson we learn in the book of Daniel is that man's wisdom is limited, but God's wisdom is unlimited.

Have you ever had a dream that you wanted to remember, but when you woke up no matter how hard you tried, you simply could not remember it! Frustrating, isn't it?

In Daniel chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which so wonderfully illustrates the shortcomings of man's wisdom, as well as the sufficiency of God's wisdom. When Nebuchadnezzar could not remember his dream he put all the wisdom of his world to the test. He called upon all the wise men of his kingdom. If they could tell him his dream they would be greatly rewarded, but if not, all of them would lose their lives. How would you liked to have been in their place? Probably none of us would. They didn't like it either. They didn't think it was a fair test. They immediately recognized the shortcomings of their wisdom.

Here's what is emphasized in the chapter. (1) Man cannot know even the secrets of his own heart. (2) If we cannot know the secrets of our own heart, then we certainly cannot know the secrets of another's. (3) In ourselves we cannot understand the secrets of the world we live in either.

Who, how, why, and what; these are the basic questions of life. We are ever learning but still unable to answer the basic questions of life. Where do we go for the answers? Look at Daniel 2:24-23...

Daniel and his friends went to God. That's always going to be the best response for us as well. Look also at 2:24-30...

God alone is the revealer of deep and secret things. He knows what is in my heart and your heart, and He knows the secrets of this world. He knows the answers to the questions we are asking.

What God revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was a panoramic view of the whole of world history from then, to Jesus Christ, and beyond us, through the millennial Kingdom.

Where should we go for wisdom? Look at verse 47...

Proverbs 1:7 affirms the same, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*"

When we recognize and have respect for God we gain wisdom this world can never give. And so, whenever you and I have the opportunity to gain God's wisdom, let's make the most of it so that, like Daniel, we can walk and live in His sufficiency!

## **II. Man's ability is Limited, But God's Ability is Unlimited!**

Another lesson we learn from the book of Daniel is that man's ability is limited, but God's ability is unlimited.

There's an idea in our country that has been around for a long time: we can accomplish whatever we set out to do. It seems to be part of the American Dream. It implies that our personal abilities and resources are unlimited. Two stories in the book of Daniel teach otherwise.

The first is found in chapter 3. It is the story of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and the great golden image built by Nebuchadnezzar. Why did Nebuchadnezzar build such an image? It was a god he could control. The image put the focus on Nebuchadnezzar's ability, illustrated by his command that all should bow down and worship it. But three did not: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They had risen to great positions by God's ability and wisdom, and did not forget it. When put on the spot, they

affirmed their faith in God's ability regardless of the outcome. Look at 3:16-18...

Well, all three were thrown into the fiery furnace, and all three survived! What God did for them, He will not always do, but that does not change the fact that He is able. That was their testimony and should be ours.

Something interesting happened. Look at verses 24-25...

Who was this fourth person? Most agree he was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ! When you and I stand on God's ability, regardless of the outcome, one thing we can always count on is, just when we need Him most, Jesus is there!

The second story is found in chapter 6. It is the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den. Like Joseph in Egypt, Daniel had become the top man in the kingdom next to the king. Not everyone liked the idea. His enemies sought to dig up dirt they could use against him. It is interesting what they found. Look at verse 5...

If only that were true of all of us! Daniel's enemies used his prayer life against him in a tricky way, and Darius the king fell for the trick. However, it did not change Daniel's trust in God's ability. Along with this, I find the relationship Daniel had with Darius to be interesting. Look at verses 14-16...

Because of Daniel's testimony, Darius was learning about God's ability. What do people learn about God's ability by listening to us and watching us? Do they learn He is all-powerful?

After Daniel spent a night in the lion's den, in the morning, according to verse 20, Darius had the cover removed and shouted inside...

Daniel's response in verses 21-22 was, "YES!" No matter what we go through, no matter what the difficulties or challenges are, that needs to be our testimony. God is able!

There's a song that was popular some time ago entitled, *Will You Be the One?* The chorus asked the question, "*Will you stand when those around*

*you fall?"* The answer will always be yes when you and I trust in God's ability rather than our own.

### **III. Man's Control is Limited, but God's Control is Unlimited!**

The third lesson we learn from the book of Daniel is that man's control is limited, but God's control is unlimited.

When was the last time you sat down and planned what you would like to be doing ten years, five years, next year, or even next week? We all like to think we are the master's of our own destiny. More often than not however, life seems to provide a good dose of realism. Sudden changes in our circumstances, pressing difficulties, and the death of a loved one all shocks us into reality.

The book of Daniel, as originally given, was a book all about tomorrow. It is full of prophetic visions for the future. But today when we read it, many of its pages are about yesterday because so many of its prophecies have been fulfilled. As a result, it illustrates perhaps better than any other book of the Bible who really is in control. We see this in Daniel's testimony in 2:28...

We find the same in Nebuchadnezzar's testimony in 4:34-37...

This was also a hard lesson that Belshazzar had to learn. Look with me at 5:18-31...

Belshazzar thought he was on top of the world, in control of the world, but that very night, not only was his life taken, the whole kingdom was taken. Belshazzar learned, as surely as it can be learned, how limited his control was and how unlimited God's control was.

His circumstances remind me of the story Jesus told in Luke 12:16f of the rich farmer who thought he had his future all figured out. But God said to him, "*Thou, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.*"

In James 4:15 we find some excellent advice. Instead of our plans, we need to think about the Lord's plans for our life.

God is the one who is in control of our life and destiny. We must never forget that.

The book of Daniel teaches us that while man's wisdom is limited, God's wisdom is unlimited; He is all-knowing! It teaches us that while man's ability is limited, God's ability is unlimited; He is all-powerful! And it teaches us that while man's control is limited, God's control is unlimited; He is sovereign!

So, in whom will we put our trust? In ourselves, the wise men of our world, or will we like Daniel and his friends say, "*There is a God in Heaven, and in Him alone will I put my trust!*"