



The Babylon Posture Pt. 4: Walking in Godly Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment

Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023

Holy Text: Daniel 1:17-21

For the last 3 weeks, we've attempted, by God's grace, to paint a picture of our spiritual climate. Our goal here has not been to discourage, but to greatly encourage? Why?

Because even in Spiritual Babylon, based on Jeremiah 29:5-6 and many New Testament passages (Romans 12:9-21, Romans 13, Ephesians 5-6, Colossians 3, Hebrews 12-13, and all of 1 Peter!), we believe God wants His people to:

- Build godly houses!
- Dwell in them with hope and joy!
- Plant gardens...that is...be active and productive!
- Eat the fruit! Be physically nourished and strong. Don't waste away in Babylon!
- Take wives. Create new, godly households!
- Begat sons and daughters. Think generationally. Be fruitful and take dominion in Babylon!
- Increase in the midst of captivity!

CRC...this vision is God's! Therefore it is for His children...YOU! It requires faith, but it is possible! It is needed! It brings Him glory!

But given our environment and the level of spiritual warfare we are currently engaged in, to do these things, we'll need great wisdom and spiritual discernment.

Background

The Book of Daniel was written around 530 B.C. by Daniel himself. Daniel chronicles the geopolitical climate and spiritual activity of God throughout Judah's 70-year captivity in Babylon.

William MacDonald writes, "Daniel is one of the most fascinating and also among the most crucial books in the OT. Due no doubt to its precise predictions, messianic prophecies, and inspiring example of clean-cut separation from apostate world religion."

Further, he says, "Daniel was one of the intelligent and attractive young Jewish captives carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar when Jehoiakim was king of Judah (about 604 B.C.). His name means *God is my Judge*. His character and behavior show that he lived in the light of that fact.

As to office, Daniel was a statesman high up in the administration of Nebuchadnezzar's and Belshazzar's courts. When Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, Daniel was made the first of three presidents under Darius. He also served under Cyrus. Daniel's *ministry*, however, was that of a prophet, and our Lord so labeled him (Mat 24:15 and Mar 13:14). Daniel is not unlike those who hold a "secular" job and still give much time to Bible study and preaching."

Thoughts on the Text

1. Daniel, along with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were specially selected to serve to "stand in the king's palace" because of their "well favour, skill in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding of science." (Dan 1:4, 6) Their Babylonian names were Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Dan 1:7)

- **Point: Somehow, their “wisdom” and “knowledge” stood out, even to pagans!**
- **Question: Is this our testimony in Babylon?**

2. Although the king gave them special food, Scripture says of Daniel his friends:

***Daniel 1:8 (KJV)** But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

***Daniel 1:12 (KJV)** Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.*

***Daniel 1:15 (KJV)** And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.*

- They refused to “defile” themselves. Perhaps it was the type of meat: maybe it was outlawed in God's law. Maybe it was the preparation of the food. Maybe it was idolatrous.
 - **Point: But the spiritual principle here is obvious: there are some things in Babylon we should not do.**
3. Because of their faithfulness, “God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” And they all would need such gifts! (v.17)
- **Point: God can and does equip His children for the battles they will face in hostile territory! We can be confident that God will supply all our needs that we might be able to stand firm and build.**
4. The Hebrew boys time of testing WOULD come. They eventually stood before the King. A pressure-packed environment to be sure. There was no place to run or hide. (v.18)
5. Not only did they stand before the king, but the king “communed” with them. There was an opening running dialogue between Babylon God’s boys. They were in the world and had to interact with the world but they were not of the world. (v.19)
- **Question: Do you recognize the critical nature of this distinction? Do you have the wisdom you need in such an environment?**
6. God used them so that even pagans recognized the power of God upon them! Their heavenly wisdom far outclassed the king’s demon counselors realm-wide. (v.20)
7. And Daniel, who was young when he was taken to Babylon, saw and served under the reign of Cyrus as an older man. He managed to, by God’s grace, prosper under the pagan rule of four different kings!

CRC, I believe this is what we are called to as well. Yes, the church will suffer persecution. Indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Tim 3:12).

However, there will be seasons of building, planting, nourishing, establishing, and seeking peace.

We must endeavor to these things regardless of what's going on around us! Like Daniel and his friends, for to us assume this “Posture,” we desperately need God's wisdom!

What is Wisdom?

The right use or exercise of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them. This is wisdom in act, effect, or practice. If wisdom is to be considered as a faculty of the mind, it is the faculty of discerning or judging what is most just, proper and useful, and if it is to be considered as an acquirement, it is the knowledge and use of what is best, most just, most proper, most conducive to prosperity or happiness. Wisdom in the first sense, or practical wisdom, is nearly synonymous with discretion. It differs somewhat from prudence, in this respect; prudence is the exercise of sound judgment in avoiding evils; wisdom is the exercise of sound judgment either in avoiding evils or attempting good. Prudence then is a species, of which wisdom is the genus.¹

Some of what Scripture says about Wisdom

(Keeping in mind our “Babylonian” Context)

- **Proverbs 2:10-15 (KJV)** *When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: 12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; 13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; 14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; 15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:*
- **Proverbs 16:16 (KJV)** *How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!*
- **Ecclesiastes 7:12 (KJV)** *For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*
- **Ecclesiastes 7:12 (NLT)** **Wisdom and money can get you almost anything, but only wisdom can save your life.**
- **Matthew 10:16-20 (KJV)** *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*
- **Luke 16:8 (KJV)** *And the lord (“rich man” NLT) commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*
- **James 1:5 (KJV)** *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*
- **James 3:13-17 (KJV)** *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

¹ 1828 Webster Dictionary

Point: not only do we need knowledge concerning what Scripture says and the environment in which we live, but we also need to be able to rightly apply that knowledge. We must ask the Holy Spirit to help us!

What is Discernment?

The act of discerning; also, the power or faculty of the mind, by which it distinguishes one thing from another, as truth from falsehood, virtue from vice; acuteness of judgment; power of perceiving differences of things or ideas, and their relations and tendencies. The errors of youth often proceed from the want of discernment.²

- *Discernment is a synonym for Discretion and Prudence.*

Some of what Scripture says about Discernment

- **Psalms 112:5 (KJV)** *A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*
- **Proverbs 19:11 (KJV)** *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.*
- **Matthew 16:1-3 (KJV)** *The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. **2** He answered and said unto them, **When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. 3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?***
- **Romans 12:2 (KJV)** *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*
- **1 Corinthians 11:29 (KJV)** *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*
- **1 Corinthians 2:12-14 (KJV)** *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. **13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
- **1 Corinthians 12:10-11 (KJV)** *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: **11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*
- **Philippians 1:9-10 (KJV)** *And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (ESV: discernment); **10** That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;*
- **Hebrews 5:14 (KJV)** *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*
- **1 John 4:1-3 (KJV)** *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. **2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: **3** And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is*

² Ibid.

that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Point: being able to tell the difference between the right decision in the wrong decision is essential in Babylon! Being able to discern what spirits are at play to some degree can also be incredibly helpful while navigating pagan waters. The war is spiritual!

Developing Wisdom and discernment

1. Constantly read and review Scripture!
 - **Colossians 3:16 (KJV)** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*
2. Guard your tongue...pray often before you speak!
 - **Psalms 141:3 (KJV)** *Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*
 - **James 1:26 (KJV)** *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*
 - **Colossians 4:6 (KJV)** *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*
3. Pray for spiritual eyes to see!
 - **Psalms 119:18 (KJV)** *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*
 - **Ephesians 1:15-18 (KJV)** *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, **16** Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; **17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: **18** The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*
4. Be led of Holy Spirit!
 - **Luke 12:11-12 (KJV)** *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: **12** For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*
 - **Romans 8:14 (KJV)** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
5. Fast!
 - **Matthew 17:17-19 (KJV)** *Then Jesus answered and said, **O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. 18** And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. **19** Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*
 - "...There are some instances where "more" will be required. The implication of the Text seems to be that "This kind," (which in context, is an especially entrenched demonic entity) needed a "a different kind" of preparation. Success here means comfortable ways must be abandoned for uncomfortable ones. More difficult devils require higher dedicated levels. More fevered battles need further focused soldiers!"³

³ Refer to the "This Kind" series from 2021: 1. Learning from Failure. 2. Because of Your Unbelief and 3. But by Prayer and Fasting

6. Get godly counsel!
 - **Proverbs 11:14 (KJV)** *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.*
 - **Proverbs 24:6 (KJV)** *For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.*
7. Submit to Spirit-led Bible preaching!
 - **Jeremiah 3:14-15 (KJV)** *Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: **15** And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*
 - **2 Timothy 4:2-4 (KJV)** *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. **3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; **4** And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*
 - **1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (KJV)** *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **5** That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

Wisdom and Discernment in Babylon: Practical Suggestions

1. Don't be ashamed of the Gospel. This is baseline Christian courage, and it sets the stage to be able to hear and be used of God. Don't identify yourself with Babylon!
2. Be familiar with "Babylonian" policies. Exploit the double standards when you need/have to. Be watchful and sober minded! (1 Pet 5:8)
3. Again, pray before making decisions; be led of the Spirit. Don't be hasty; ask for time to think and pray. (Dan 2:16)
4. Work while at work. Be excellent. Be the best! Work as unto the LORD! (Col 3:23)
5. Be careful with whom you share your worldview. Don't cast your pearls before swine. (Matt 7:6)
6. Defy edicts that command sin. (Acts 5:29) Remember Daniel! Remember the Hebrew boys! Remember the Hebrew midwives! (Exodus 1)
7. Do what is required to ensure your children become Christians not Babylonians! (Eph 6:4)
More on this in Part 5.

Oh LORD, help us to live wisely unto Thee!

Proverbs 4:4-9 (KJV) *He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. **5** Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. **6** Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. **7** **Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.** **8** Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. **9** She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.*

Amen!

Bonus Wisdom (from a Spirit-filled believer who is crushing it in Babylon)!

We reached out to a dear CRC brother who loves the LORD and is prospering in a corporate environment like Daniel. We shared how we wanted to encourage the church to likewise prosper while remaining faithful to Christ and asked for his comments. Here is what he said:

1. At times in the workplace, I have said, "I fear God too much to do that." In many situations, that has freed me from taking part in something unbiblical. It can also lead to opportunities to share and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Understanding your company's policies on harassment and discrimination is very important. Regardless of how friendly your HR team may be, their job is to protect the company, so be careful with what you say and how you say it.
3. According to EEOC and most HR policies, Religion is a protected class. Simply saying (with a smile) that "I cannot participate in... or advocate for... due to my religious beliefs" is often enough to make your position clear. DO NOT allow the enemy to then pull you into a discussion where you now have to explain and/or defend your position. That's when it can be perceived as hostile, hate speech, etc.
4. Avoid being apart of ERGs and Committees (if you can) that appeal to worldly interest or offend our LORD (DEI, politics, cultural, etc.). When I once chaired a DEI committee, I removed the term "celebrate" from our vision and focused only on treating everyone with love, kindness, and respect (like Christ did). I also had the opportunity to define what love is according to I Corinthians 13. We did not advocate for any worldviews that were seen as ungodly, and while it was not always "fun," it kept us protected because the enemy had no seat at the table.
5. Saying "I'm a Christian" is where I often start and stop the discussion when asked about social issues. If asked to elaborate, you can defer the discussion to after work to avoid interruptions at work.
6. "Thou shalt not have any other gods before Me." Avoid participating in cultural festivals that have types and symbols celebrating other deities.
7. Be a happy Christian! :-) Not having Joy is like hiding your lamp under a bushel. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16 NKJV