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DANIEL 11:20-35 POWER AND WISDOM

²⁰ *"His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.*

²¹ *"He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue.* ²²

Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. ²³ *After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power.* ²⁴ *When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time.*

²⁵ *"With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him.* ²⁶ *Those who eat from the king's provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle.* ²⁷ *The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time.* ²⁸ *The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.*

²⁹ *"At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before.* ³⁰ *Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.*

³¹ *"His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.* ³² *With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.*

³³ *"Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered.* ³⁴ *When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them.* ³⁵ *Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.*

The powerful of the world come and go, make alliances and break them, lust after more power and are surrounded by insincerity. The wise are those who depend on God, live in integrity, base their lives on the truth and are not distracted by the world around them. It is inevitable that the powerful and the wise will come into conflict in this life. Like the proverbial bully on the playground, those who lust for power must feed their lust by establishing power over any who have not yet yielded to them. And, like the bully, when their attempts are thwarted they turn to violence and ultimately extermination. We see this in the sad and meaningless violence of Ahab and Jezebel against Naboth (1 Kings 21).

In reality, true power is in the hands of the wise. Just by existing they frustrate the corrupt power of the world and evil. Since their power comes from the truth, the wise are also teachers in that through word and deed others are instructed in the truth. The inherent power of truth causes growth, while the corrupt power of the world results in destruction. The multitude of martyrs is our witness. This reality is also evidenced in the

secular world by figures like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. The wise are transformed and their witness has the power to transform others, even institutions and cultures.

Make me wise, O Lord. Give me the wisdom that is based on the truth of your Word and the knowledge of my total dependence upon you. Strengthen my resolve and help me to stand firm in the faith regardless of the worldly powers that surround me. Amen.