

2026 TALK – DANIEL 2, 25.10.26

PRAYING TO GOD WHO REVEALS MYSTERIES...

We started this series on Daniel last week, when Chami gave a full & insightful reflection on the opening chapter. He reminded us that Daniel's story is an encouragement to us to be faithful to God, no matter what happens in our lives. To be faithful even unto death, as Jesus was & as many of our fellow believers have been in the past. As we approach the celebration of All Saints at the end of this month, we have much to be thankful for. So much to celebrate about the positive example of the many saints who have gone before us.

Now, as we can see, Daniel Chapter 2 is a longer chapter. Rather than have the whole chapter read, I have chosen some excerpts. Therefore, I will fill in the gaps of this story. So, here is a brief overview of the whole chapter.

King Neb. has a disturbing dream which he can't recall when he wakes up. Troubled by this, he calls his closest advisers & demands that they both tell him what he dreamed & then interpret it. And if they don't do this, they will be executed. The King's advisers tell him what he is demanding is impossible. The King then decrees that all Babylon's wise men be executed, including those, like Daniel, who weren't summoned by the King in the first place.

Daniel gets a knock on his door from his executioners. Instead of panicking, Daniel gives a tactful, wise response. What Daniel then tells the King secures a stay of execution. He says that the God he believes in is able to reveal all mysteries. Daniel assures the King that his God will reveal both the King's dream & its interpretation. Daniel then calls his friends to prayer. To 'plead for mercy...'. A mercy he doesn't see in the King, but knows lives in God.

And the God of heaven answers their prayers. Overnight, God reveals the King's dream to Daniel. So, Daniel praises & thanks God in a wonderful prayer. He shares the dream with the King, along with its interpretation. So, he & all Babylon's wise men are saved. And Daniel & his friends are given positions of great authority in Babylon.

Daniel & all the Jewish exiles in Babylon were already acutely aware of how insecure their situation was. They were, it seems, the newest exiles forced into the service of this vast Kingdom. A Kingdom ruled by a man who seemed to

have ultimate power over everything. Someone who, in an instant, could order the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

But Daniel & his fellow Jews **also** knew that they were in God's hands. They prayed not to the assorted 'gods of the nations', but to the God of heaven, who ruled over all the earth. They prayed to someone who they trusted to hear & answer prayer. Someone who they knew, from the past, would be able to reveal this mystery.

One thing to note here, is that the King, in his irrational anger, thinks nothing of extending the sentence of death to every wise man in Babylon. And Daniel, before he calls his friends to prayer, is simply hoping that he & his friends will receive a merciful stay of execution, unlike the other wise men (v.18). But once Daniel & his friends have sought God, they realise God's mercy extends also to the other wise men of Babylon - even though they include magicians, sorcerers & astrologers. As we sang earlier, 'God's mercy is more'. So, Daniel appeals to the King on behalf of all the other wise men. God's mercy extends to even those who use all sorts of 'dark arts' to try to hear from the gods. Of course, once Daniel is appointed as leader of all the wise men, he is then able to teach them of the God of heaven he believes in. How wonderful is God in his mercy!. How far-seeing are God's purposes.

Talking of seeing ahead. I have left out the details of the King's dream itself and it's interpretation. But here, briefly, is a visual summary of that dream & its subsequent interpretation. (SHOW **PICTURE OF STATUE**. We will leave this picture on the screen). As we can see, the King dreamed of a statue, which Daniel tells him, speaks of the Kingdoms that will succeed King Nebuchadnezzar. The gold head represents King N's kingdom. The silver chest of the statue, the Medes & the Persians. The bronze middle of the statue represents time of Alexander the Great & the Greeks. While the iron legs represent the Roman Empire. The clay & iron of the feet could represent the divided nature of Roman Empire at its end. (Some see the toes as representing the governments of the end times). And the rock of heavenly origin, which strikes & destroys the statue, Christians believe, represents Jesus. And the mountain the rock grows into represents the Christian church, across the whole earth. This is what is generally agreed by most commentators.

As Daniel himself comments, what he shares with the King is 'trustworthy'. This dream-prophecy has come true & been realised in real time. Likewise, we trust & believe that, because of Jesus, the vain-glorious kingdoms of this world will be brought to nothing. But the truly glorious Kingdom of God, with Jesus' reign of peace, will extend across all the earth & last forever. Alleluia!

.... I've just come back from a Baptist ministers' conference. And I was greatly encouraged to hear a presentation there by Wycliffe Bible Translators. Something I already knew is that more & more people are hearing about the love of God in their own language. But there's something I didn't realise until the conference the other week, is this: The goal of God's Word being translated into every living language on this planet, is now a lot closer than just a few years ago. Did you know that just in the last year 98 new Bibles or NTs were published for the 1st time?. That's a rate of one every four days!. At conference we watched wonderful videos of joyful believers in parts of Africa & Asia, for the first time, receiving scriptures in their own languages, this year. **(PHOTO)**

Now, around 25 years ago there were over 5,000 languages which had no scriptures. That's well over half of all the world's languages. Today, that number is down to just 543. WOW!... In less than 30 years that is nothing less than miraculous progress. Alleluia!

... But Wycliffe were very honest. The rate of progress in Bible translation is likely to slow down. That's because many of those languages are in the most inaccessible nations, many of which are hostile to the gospel of Jesus... But right now, many teams of Bible translators are working night & day, for years & years - often in very difficult conditions - to bring the good news of Jesus to another people & language. God's Kingdom is growing at an amazing rate. The word of God *is* going out to the ends of the earth! Alleluia!

That's a bit of digression. But one that confirms this dream of King Neb. But let's return to our story. It reminds us once again of the faithfulness of Daniel & his friends. Facing the imminent sentence of death, Daniel & his friends call on God. They trusted God to hear & answer their prayers. How will we respond to the many dangers & threats which seem to surround us this day? We are called to trust in God & pray with faith as Daniel did. In the words of Daniel: 'Our God is a God of heaven'. But since the time of Daniel, there is so much more to rejoice in & give thanks for.

The wise men of Babylon (& even Daniel too) were in agreement that: both the gods of the earth & the God of heaven, 'do not live on the earth, among humans'. But the rock of Jesus not only smashes worldly empires, but it also confounds our expectations. Because the God of this universe chose to visit this planet in the person of his chosen & anointed One, Jesus. God **has** chosen to come & live among us. God has chosen to reveal mystery upon mystery in Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

So, even more than Daniel & his friends, we are able to approach God in prayer, in freedom & confidence. Because of Jesus, we have a much clearer understanding of who God is. Because of Jesus, we have a much better picture of who God is. Because of Jesus, we can call God 'Abba, Father', an idea which was clearly alien to Daniel. But in the words of Jesus – "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more does your Father in heaven know how to give good gifts to his children?"

As we approach another Budget Day - I call our church to prayer, for our government & nation. As we approach another Halloween - I call our church to prayer, on behalf of the people around us. As we approach Remembrance Day & recall past wars & present conflicts - I call our church to prayer, for the nations. Ahead of our Carey's AGM next month - I call our church to prayer for our church. And in view of the needs of our fellowship – I call our church to prayer for one another. We will pray along these lines in a moment, but I would like to make a special appeal to you all...

As we enter these darker months, we need the light of God don't we?. Yes, we need outward light to make sure we don't lose our way. But we need God's inner light even more, in these days of heightened anxiety. So, I would call you all here, to learn from Daniel & his friends. Give more time this week & in the coming days to seek God's face & to pray. To the God of heaven. To the God of all the earth. To the God of all dynasties & eras. To the One who has shown God's very nature to us in the person of Jesus. Alleluia!

Who knows what dangers & difficulties you might face this week. Who knows how God will show abundant mercy to you this week? To our church? To our nation? To all the nations? What could be better than for us to be involved in God's plans & purposes for blessing our world this week? What could be better than for us to call on God, who is abounding in love, who is able to reveal

mysteries to us?... As we face the many mysteries of life & death, we can know that God is with us & will hear our prayers of faith. Praise the LORD...!

What better way to conclude my talk, than with the prayer of Daniel here?

(READ Daniel 2:20-23)

(Time of quiet – perhaps God might be calling you to devote more time to prayer & Bible reading this week? Perhaps God might be leading you to share your faith with someone this week? Perhaps God might be calling you to take a step of faith, to offer to serve in your church or community in some new way?)