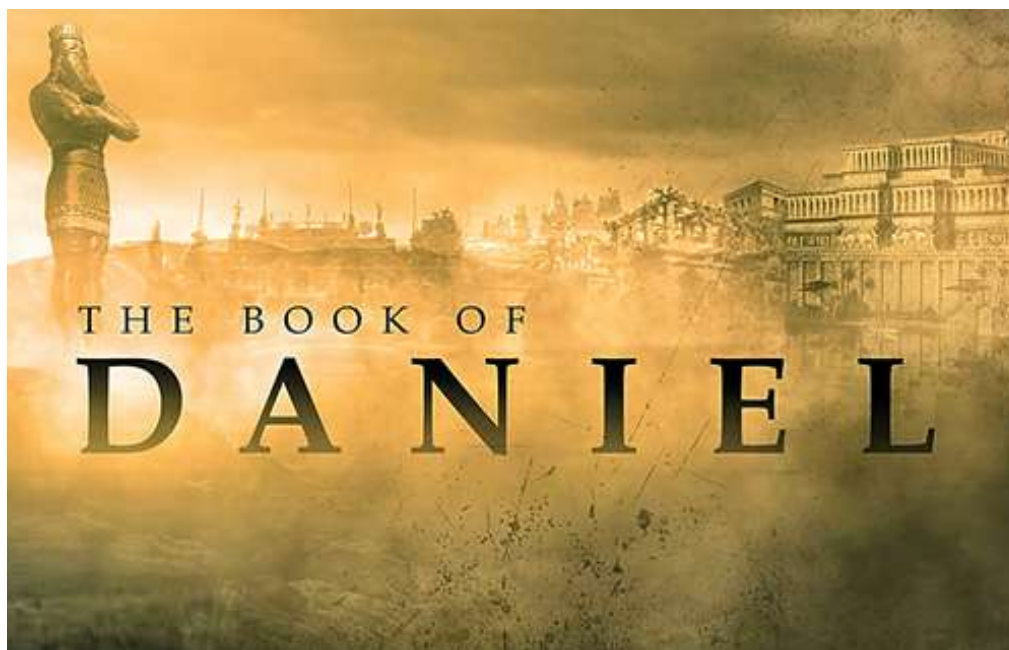


# Let's Worship God

8th-13th November 2021

Daniel



# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Monday - Daniel 3:19-25 - He is With Us in the Furnace**

It doesn't take much to blow out a candle. Just one tiny little puff and the flickering flame is gone with a wisp of smoke. Nebuchadnezzar's blazing hot furnace is a different matter of course - it was so fierce that it roasted the very men who cast these three believers into the blazing heat.

Yet, God delivered his followers. By the end of our passage the soldiers lie dead while these three men are completely unharmed. What a miracle! Yet it also raises an interesting question: why didn't God simply snuff out the flames? Surely he could have extinguished the blistering heat of the furnace as easily as you or I blow out a tiny candle? The answer is that God chose to do something better - something that would help and strengthen these three men; something that helps and strengthens us.

Notice that three men were cast into the flames but when the king looked there were very clearly four inside (v25). I believe that this fourth man was the Son of God himself, appearing on Earth hundreds of years before he came as the baby in the manger in Bethlehem. Rather than just blowing out the fire, God came and stood with his people in the fire. That is the key to his deliverance. It was surely designed to bring to mind Isaiah 43:2 in which God tells his people "when you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched; the flames will not set you ablaze."

Yet don't miss the most important phrase that anchors that whole verse... "I will be with you". The promise is just as certain for God's followers today. When you pass through the fire, Jesus Christ is there with you. He sits by your side in the consultant's waiting room. He is with you in your silent, lonely living room. He is with you whether you stand in the benefits queue or by the side of a grave. "I will be with you to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

### **Questions**

1. Can you think of any times in your past when you have been particularly conscious of God's presence with you?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for a believer you know who is going through serious trouble. Pray that they would be keenly aware of Christ's presence.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." Daniel 2:22

**Praise: Psalm 28 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Tuesday - Daniel 3:26-30 - Exodus Part 2... and 3**

Let's spend one final day on this story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. As we consider it one more time we will hopefully see that God provides us with a model of our own deliverance in Jesus Christ.

To get there we need to put ourselves in the shoes of a faithful follower of the Lord who was living in Daniel's day as an exile and prisoner in the land of Babylon. Inevitably as you longed for God's deliverance your mind would have gone back to his dealings with your ancestors - particularly how he rescued them from slavery in Egypt. Daniel and men like him were longing for God to take the people out of the land of captivity and restore them to the land of promise. They were hoping for Exodus part 2!

If you had grown up reading about God rescuing his people from Egypt, you would have been well aware that the word "furnace" had a special significance. In Deuteronomy 4:20, God describes this rescue as him "bringing you out of the iron furnace". As a faithful follower of God, this mini exodus in Daniel 3 would have reminded you of the first exodus and given you hope for the second exodus which was yet to come.

We may live thousands of years later but there is also a deep significance for us. We also live as exiles in a land where God is not honoured and his people are not valued (Hebrews 11:13). Our only hope is in the third exodus when God delivers us from our slavedriver and takes us from exile into the land of promise.

How does God do this? He stepped into the furnace in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). Jesus is the one who has set us free (Romans 6:18) and he is the one who will take us home to the land of promise (Hebrews 11:16) Oh how we should praise him for Exodus part 3!

### **Questions**

1. In what ways was the Exodus similar to Jesus Christ's rescue of his people?
2. In what ways is Christ's rescue even better?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God would help you to live with an eye on your heavenly inheritance as he takes you from the land of exile and brings you to your final home.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." Daniel 2:22

**Praise: Psalm 29 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Wednesday - Daniel 4:1-3 - An Urgent Message from Kim Jong Un**

Imagine that one day, TVs and radios all across North Korea implore everyone to get ready for an urgent message from Kim Jong Un. The announcer sets the scene by listing some of the tyrant's many different titles, "*The Supreme Commander, the Shining Sun, the Dear Respected Comrade*".

Imagine that millions of families gather around and brace themselves for what is coming next - some boastful update about the latest missile launch or propaganda about how thankful they should be for the genius of their dear leader.

Then imagine that Kim Jong Un himself appears on the screen. He begins by saying, "I may command the army, but there's someone far more powerful than I'll ever be. There's someone who will still be in control even after I'm dead and gone. Let me tell you about the one that even I have to bow down to. Let me tell you about Jesus Christ, the King of Kings - my Lord and my Saviour."

It sounds like pure fantasy, doesn't it? And yet at the start of Daniel 4 we see something every bit as astounding. Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful man on the entire planet, the man who had so cruelly savaged God's own people, the very personification of evil itself, made an official announcement.

*"I'm not the one who is worthy of your praise and admiration! Let me tell you about the one who is. Let me tell you about the most high God!"*

The egomaniac became a humble servant. He went from throwing believers into the fiery furnace to becoming a brother in the faith. We'll see more of his journey in the next few days, but for now, let's notice how it is a vivid example of the truth of Philippians 2:9-11: "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This is the glorious destiny of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nebuchadnezzar provides us with a taste of what is to come.

### **Questions**

1. Who is the very last person you can imagine bowing the knee before Jesus Christ?
2. How does it make you feel knowing that one day they will confess that he is Lord?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for the honour that will be Jesus Christ's when every single knee will bow before him.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." Daniel 2:22

**Praise: Psalm 30 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Thursday - Daniel 4:4-7, 28-30 - The King Who Wouldn't Listen**

The opening verses tell us how this chapter ends; the rest of the chapter tells us how we got there. God eventually brought Nebuchadnezzar to repentance, yet Nebuchadnezzar himself threw considerable hurdles in the way. It is important we ask, "Can I see something of myself in his rebellion?"

Am I too comfortable to hear God's Word? Nebuchadnezzar was. He had conquered kingdoms and won wars and now he was "at ease" and "prospering" (v4) and enjoying the fruit of his success (v30). No-one welcomes hardship, but comfort can be like an anaesthetic, dulling our senses and keeping us from grasping our dire spiritual state. Has your bank balance, sporting success, or comfy home dulled your senses too?

Am I too busy to hear God's Word? Yes, he was at ease in this chapter, but Nebuchadnezzar still had a kingdom to run. He had borders to secure and construction projects to plan. Sometimes when we hear God's voice, our busyness can push it straight to the back of our minds. Are there things you need to cut so you have the space for God's Word to sink in?

Am I too stubborn to hear God's Word? Just two chapters ago, these various "wise" men were completely powerless to explain the king's dream. Only Daniel, the follower of the living God, was able to provide an interpretation. Is it not absolutely bonkers that this time round, Nebuchadnezzar only turned to Daniel as a last resort? I can't help but wonder if the king grasped the basic meaning but wanted to run from its implications.

Yet, we can do the same, can't we? We feel God's word pressing against our tender consciences so we do everything we can to escape. We fill our calendars or we lose ourselves in social media all so we can drown out a message we don't want to hear. As we'll see in the coming days, God has (sometimes painful) ways to get past that hurdle. We would be wise to learn from this man's mistakes.

### **Questions**

1. Has God been speaking to you? Have you been ignoring him?
2. Do you need to make changes to the rhythm of your life so you can hear God's voice more clearly?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God keep you from the temptation to push his Word out when it rubs up against a tender conscience.
2. Pray that God would enable your pastor to preach in a way that gets beyond people's defences.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." Daniel 2:22

**Praise: Psalm 31 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Friday - Daniel 4:8-25, 28-33 - God's Axe**

He can't say he wasn't warned. Over and over again in this book, God has demonstrated to Nebuchadnezzar that he and no-one else is the one who sits on the throne. Tragically, this rebellious king has continually attempted to set himself up in God's place. He has responded to God's patience with utter contempt. It is time for the true king to take drastic steps so this lost sinner will bow the knee.

The dream is pretty straightforward. Nebuchadnezzar is the tree and, rather ominously he will be chopped down. He will suffer an extreme ordeal - God will take his very sanity from him and cause him to live in a humiliating, bestial state. The man who sees himself as superhuman will become subhuman instead.

Today's main application is a hard one to hear - it is for you if you have been ignoring Jesus Christ's call to repent and believe. This chapter shows us that sometimes God takes radical action in order to bring lost sinners to repentance. Devastating sickness, relationship breakdowns, exam failure and unemployment can all be tools in the divine lumberjack's armoury. The application is simple: bow the knee now rather than leaving God to take more drastic steps.

There may be some reading who have come out the other end of the tunnel. Perhaps as you look back at an agonising period in your life, you can see God's axe at work. Perhaps the doctor's sombre news is the very thing that caused you to lift your eyes to the one enthroned in heaven. Perhaps the disruption of Covid has caused you to reassess and reorient your life according to God's ways.

Perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, you can even thank God for the blade of his axe. Maybe those who are still in the darkness of the tunnel will reach that point in time. The axe's blade is sharp, but in the right hands it is a tool of great mercy.

### **Questions**

1. Think of some of the traumatic experiences you have been through. Could they have been God's tools to lead you to repentance and faith?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God would use your trials in order to lead you closer to Jesus Christ.
2. Pray that God would enable those who are suffering to see their trials in this perspective.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." Daniel 2:22

**Praise: Psalm 32 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# THE BOOK OF DANIEL

## **Saturday - Daniel 4:24-27, 34-37 - God's Padlock**

In 2020 and 2021 many of us have walked down streets that were once bustling but had become largely deserted. We became used to the sight of shuttered shops and locked premises. It was a similar story as we browsed news websites: closed gates and a locked padlock were seen again and again in the stock images accompanying lockdown coverage.

When you think about it, those padlocks serve two purposes. The first is restrictive one - they are a visible sign that the organisation whose gates they adorn is closed for business and that there isn't going to be a way of getting around lockdown. The second purpose is a protective one - the chains and locks are designed to keep vandals and thieves from trashing the premises while they are left unoccupied.

I think both those purposes can be seen in God's padlock - the band of bronze and iron that was affixed to the tree stump. This band demonstrated that God would not allow Nebuchadnezzar to sidestep this period of discipline that he was about to endure. Nothing in his will and no amount of outside help would cure him of his God-given insanity. God would keep pressing this rebel until "seven times" had passed - in other words, until this God appointed period was over and the king was ready to bow the knee. (The number seven signifies completion.)

Yet surely this band also demonstrated God's hand of protection upon this man? Power struggles in royal courts can be vicious and deadly and there would have been many a challenger who was eager to deal a fatal blow to Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Yet, the true King of Kings had decreed that while the tree would be felled, the stump would remain unharmed. This "padlock" reinforced that fact.

We learn something here about God's dealings with those whom he calls to saving faith. He doesn't bail out having done half a job - what he starts, he sees through, no matter what hurdles are in the way. Our salvation rests on that simple fact.

### **Questions**

1. Can you trace any of God's sustaining in your life even from before you became a Christian?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for how God always starts what he finishes (Philippians 1:6)
2. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." Daniel 2:22

**Praise: Psalm 33 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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