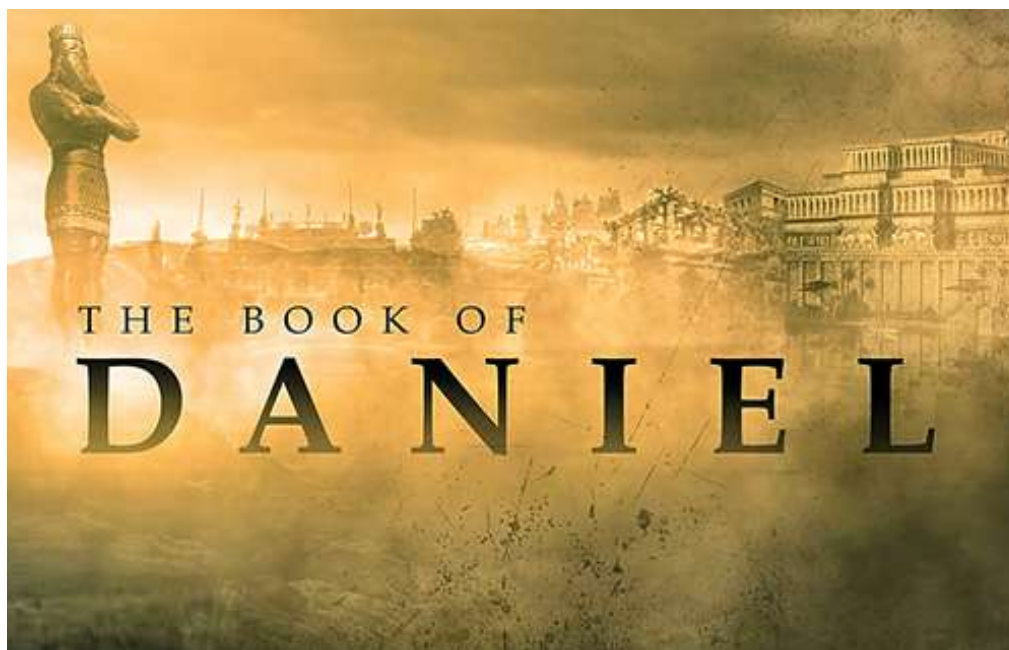


Let's Worship God

22nd-27th November 2021

Daniel



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Monday - Daniel 6:11-18 - What Daniel Teaches Us About the World

Not only is Daniel 6 an inspirational story, it also helps us to better understand the world in which we live. Let's look at two lessons it brings to the fore.

First of all - the world hates us. I realise that this can sound somewhat hysterical when life is comfortable for many, but it is undeniably true. Jesus himself said that it was so (John 15:18). Many things have changed during Daniel's time in captivity - the Babylonian Empire has crumbled and Darius is a very different ruler to the men who came before. Things have changed in Daniel's personal life - he is now one of the most prominent men in the entire country. And yet one thing that has not changed is the hatred and animosity of God's enemies towards his faithful followers.

If Daniel had turned a blind eye to corruption and if his three friends had bowed the knee in chapter 3, they wouldn't have found themselves facing grisly execution. If the Scottish Covenanters had just abandoned their principles they wouldn't have been hounded through the moors. Of course, we shouldn't go out of our way to seek persecution (as some professing Christians appear to do in 2021) - notice that Daniel didn't engage in any grandstanding whatsoever (v10). Yet this account warns us that currying favour with the world is an impossible dream for a follower of Christ who also remains faithful to his king.

The second lesson - the world can't save us. In Darius, Daniel had a friend in high places who was desperate to save the prophet's skin. Yet notice how feeble this ruler truly was as he desperately scrambled around to no avail (v14).

This is a lesson we desperately need to learn. It is folly to place our trust in the man in the Oval Office, in any political party, or in any charismatic spokesman. God warns us of this very trap - "Put not your trust in princes... blessed is he whose hope is in the LORD his God." (Psalm 146:3 & 5).

Questions

1. Are there human leaders or organisations whom you have been trusting to accomplish what only Christ can accomplish?
2. How does putting our trust in the wrong place dishonour Christ?

Prayer Points

1. Repent of times you have "put your trust in princes".
2. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to fix your trust in the Saviour who is worth trusting.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate." Daniel 9:17b

Praise: Psalm 40 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Tuesday - Daniel 6:19-28 - An Epic Own Goal

Sir Robert Watson-Watt is sometimes called “The Father of Radar”. His pioneering work made a massive contribution to the Royal Air Force’s victory over the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. Years after the war he was pulled over by a policeman and issued with a ticket for speeding. But how did the policeman manage to calculate his speed? Because he had a speed gun which made use of a now commonplace technology called... radar! Watson-Watt’s wry comment: “Had I known what you were going to do with it, I never would have invented it!”

The old Scottish scientist may have been able to laugh about his misfortune, but Daniel’s enemies were certainly not laughing about their situation. Having manipulated the king into throwing Daniel to the lions (v7, 12), they were now about to be tossed in themselves. God may have miraculously protected his faithful servant; they could expect no such salvation. Predictably enough, they were torn to tiny shreds.

In Daniel’s story we see a taster of the even more glorious story of Jesus Christ redeeming his people. Both Daniel and Jesus faced persecution for their faithfulness, both were sentenced to death, both were placed in the tomb, and both rose triumphantly “from the dead”.

Perhaps even more strikingly, Daniel’s enemies sealed their own fate as they lashed out against God’s servant and doomed themselves to the lions’ razor sharp claws. Does that not point us forward to Satan’s epic own goal as he lashed out at our Saviour who went to the cross?

In Genesis 3, God described how Satan would bruise the heel of the promised Messiah, but the Messiah would crush Satan’s head. This is exactly what our saviour accomplished as he died in our place and rose from the grave - Satan may have lashed out, but Christ secured the victory once and for all.

Daniel 6 is a wonderful story of God rescuing his faithful servant. Just don’t forget that it points forward to a better servant and a greater salvation.

Questions

1. Can you think of any other ways that Daniel points us forward to Jesus Christ?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for how, by going to the cross, Jesus won victory over Satan once and for all.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.” Daniel 9:17b

Praise: Psalm 41 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Wednesday - Daniel 7:1; 8:1; 10:1 - The View from the Map Room

A soldier in the trenches knows the battlefield like the back of his hand. He knows what high ground the enemy holds. He knows how much ammunition his platoon has left and which sniper position is his biggest threat.

Yet even as he and his comrades are hemmed in and beaten down, he can be completely unaware of developments in other theatres. He can be ignorant of the fact that the enemy is losing ground elsewhere and that his allies are advancing at a break-neck speed. The war is bigger than one soldier's experience.

I think that's a helpful way of thinking about the Book of Daniel. The first 6 chapters and the last 6 chapters have very different styles. One focuses on stories, the other on surreal visions. One is familiar, the other is not. Yet, it helps to realise that they are both describing the exact same thing - the war between the Kingdom of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of Darkness.

Chapters 1 to 6 give us the view from the trenches. We stand with Private Daniel and his comrades as they are bombarded by enemy forces. We are heartened as we see God giving them victory, yet their lives are but one battlefield in a far larger war. Chapters 7 to 12 complete the picture. It is like we are stepping into the map room at Command HQ. We see the full devastating extent of the forces of darkness as they strike out in various theatres of war.

We realise that they are far more powerful than we ever thought possible and yet we also see something else: as the Commander in Chief moves the symbols around the map, we realise the outcome is certain. Satan's strategic position is hopeless and Christ's armies have him in their grasp.

Yes, there are many skirmishes to be fought, including ferocious battles in your own life. But the winning side is not in doubt. Satan and his minions cannot win. King Jesus has triumphed and will triumph. Jesus Christ wins.

Questions

1. What, if anything, do you know about the second half of the book of Daniel?
2. If all Scripture is given by God and is useful for us, what does that say about Daniel 7-12?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to grasp the message of these chapters over the next few weeks.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate." Daniel 9:17b

Praise: Psalm 42 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Thursday - Daniel 7:1-8 - Four Beasts

As we look at this dream let me offer two warnings for as we read this style of writing. Firstly, be very wary of those who claim to know the precise meaning of every minute detail. Secondly, run a mile from anyone who claims they are specifically or primarily referring to 21st century events. That is not how this style of writing is designed to work.

The most important thing to realise about this dream is that it is a parallel of Nebuchadnezzar's in chapter 2. Each of these four beasts corresponds to one of the four kingdoms we have already discussed (v17). Let's briefly mention each.

The first beast (v4) is Babylon. It is ferocious as a lion, swift as an eagle, and as scheming as a human.

The second beast (v5) is Persia. It crushes and devours its enemies and it is given a blank cheque to go on the rampage.

The third beast (v6) is Greece. It is as ferocious as a leopard, but it boasts even more speed as it has four wings, not just two.

The fourth beast (v7) is Rome. It is a killing machine that crushes, devours, and tramples underfoot.

Space won't allow me to go into specifics, but let me make two very basic points. The first one is this: God's enemies are scary. There's no point in pretending that they aren't. They're strong, they're cruel, and they love to hurt God's people. The opposition we face in this world really does hurt.

Yet the second lesson is this: God is in control. We see a hint of that in v5 for example - who gives this beast permission to devour? Who stirs up the sea in v2? Even more fundamentally, how could God give us all these details, centuries before they happened if he had not plotted them out in advance? I don't know how much pain the next hundred years will hold but I do know that God is in control of every last second. Praise him for his sovereignty!

Questions

1. Which detail from this passage do you find the most frightening?
2. What part of the world's opposition do you find most difficult to deal with?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for God is in control, even over the opposition and enemies we face as believers.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate." Daniel 9:17b

Praise: Psalm 43 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Friday - Daniel 7:9, 15-26 - Don't Miss the Director

A number of years ago, the police in one of Northern Ireland's seaside towns received a terribly disturbing phone call. The man who phoned was hungry so he went to one of the local takeaways to order a burger. But when he got there, he got the fright of his life - there was an armed robbery in progress! Thinking quickly, he darted away from the door before he was spotted and dialled 999.

The armed police arrived within minutes and when they got there, they saw a chaotic scene. A man with a mask, brandishing a gun, was holding several people hostage. These officers drew their guns and persuaded the armed robber to drop his weapon and get down on the ground. It's only at this point that they discovered things were not what they seemed - the gun wasn't real. This young man was a film student and the "hostages" were film students too. They were doing an assignment and they had arranged with the restaurant to film this dramatic scene.

I sometimes think of the terrified man who understandably phoned the police. His actions were understandable, but what if he had simply looked in a slightly different direction? What if he had looked beyond the "gun" and the frenzied "robber" and had fixed his eyes on the camera, boom mic, or director? He would have realised that behind the scenes, someone had things completely under control.

I'm not suggesting that the kingdoms described in Daniel 7 aren't real. They were real and they were terrifying. Yet, we need to get the dangers in perspective. There is someone behind the scenes, a great director who has everything in control. What a help that must have been to Daniel's first readers who faced intense persecution! What a help it should be to us as we face opposition too. Over the next few days, we'll see more of this great director. Let's learn the lesson now though: lift our eyes from the beasts, fix them on the one who's in control. (v9)

Questions

1. When are you most likely to forget that God is directing all things from heaven?
2. What happens to you when you forget this?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would give you a Christ-centred calmness amidst the turmoil we see on Earth.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate." Daniel 9:17b

Praise: Psalm 44 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Saturday - Daniel 7:9-12 - The Reaction in Heaven HQ

What is the reaction in Heaven HQ to these four dreadful, incredibly frightening beasts? That's what we discover today as we catch our glimpse of God himself - the Ancient of Days.

Rather than focusing on the immense glory of our God (v9-10), let me note two surprises. Surprise number one is that God is sitting down (v9). That may not seem significant, but think about it: what would you expect to happen given the turmoil and violence of these four beasts?

You would expect drama and tension in Heaven HQ. You would expect angels to be scampering about, taking messages from place to place. You would expect papers and dispatches to fly through the air as a sense of panic sets in. You would expect any other commander to be frantically pacing the room, trying to digest the horrifying news from Planet Earth. But not God. Note that there is no nail biting, no arm waving, no flapping around. God is completely calm and completely in control. He simply stays in his seat.

The second surprise is the battle itself. It feels like it's going to be a final showdown for the ages. We expect an epic war where both God and the beast have to pull out their very biggest guns; a monumental struggle that swings back and forth until eventually God vanquishes his foe. Yet, there's none of that. It could never be made into a movie because it's a total anticlimax, "The beast was killed and its body destroyed" (v11). God deals with this terrifying enemy as easily as a human being could swot a pesky fly.

This passage should be terrifically encouraging for all of us who are Christians. God's master plan is in no way threatened even by the most powerful of enemies. All it takes is one click of God's fingers and those same powerful enemies are toast. So don't lose your head when things seem to go wrong. Never, ever forget that you're on the winning side.

Questions

1. Verses 9 and 10 describe God's incredible glory. What stands out most for you?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would give you a bigger view of him and his glory.
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

"O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate." Daniel 9:17b

Praise: Psalm 45 - See 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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