

Text: Daniel 2

Theme: Series-Faith Under Fire: Know Whom You Serve

Sermon delivered by Reverend Dele Agbelusi during Holy Communion Service on 12/03/2017 at 10.30am

We started a new series on Daniel last week and we looked at Daniel 1. It was as if the God of Daniel had a lot to prove that He was still in control, in spite of the fact that He declared that he was the one who delivered the king of Judah and his people to the Babylonians. The ravaged temple was no testimony to the power of Yahweh. The Babylonians were having a swell day as they displayed consecrated temple utensils before their gods! However, God started to show that he was a living God who could act anywhere as he intervened in the progress of Daniel and his three friends who decided to stand alone with and for God. God gave them wisdom and understanding more than their peers and he gave them very good health.

Now enter Daniel 2. **We are going to see what a difference belief and unbelief in the one true God makes in the lives of two individuals. One has a mind devoid of God, believing only in himself, the other a mind drenched in God. One is a tyrant, the other a servant, and in one or the other of these two men we see a reflection of ourselves.**

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanter, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means." Then the astrologers answered the king, "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it." So the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Syriac ([Dan 2:1-4](#)).

At this point from chapter 2 v. 4 on to chapter 7 v. 28, this book is written in Aramaic.

Unfounded Fear

Verse 1 - The greatest king of that time was afraid of a dream, afraid of something that isn't tangible, something he doesn't even remember. You see how true the word of God is: **"A king's heart is a water stream that the LORD controls; he directs it wherever he pleases" (Proverbs 21:1). This is a king with absolute powers and yet he lost his sleep and peace because of a troubling dream.**

He called all the so called wise men of his realm, excluding Daniel, Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego. Having watched their progress and sensing that they were different, coupled with his self-inflicted fear of an unknown future, he wanted to keep his humbling experience within trusted circles. Why should these Hebrew slaves know that a Babylonian king is afraid of something!

Undeniable Failure

Vs 3 - The king told the wise men he could not remember the dream, yet he wanted them to tell the dream and give the explanation! This had never happened. Even in the case of Joseph, the dreamers relayed their dreams.

Acknowledgement of a power that rules the universe

Vs 10,11 - The king's wise men were right to say; "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. ¹¹What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

Out of their own mouths they condemn themselves and unknowingly prepared the way for the God of Daniel to show that He dwells and walks with His own people – that He is a living God. And this experience prefigures the Incarnation – when God in Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, dwells with us.

Now, they were dealing with the wrong man because Nebuchadnezzar was a hothead. He was prone to becoming angry and furious. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain (Dan 2:12-13).

When the so called wise men were called in privately, Daniel and his three friends were not there. But now that there was a sentence of death, the lot fell upon them. What would you do if you were caught in such a dangerous web. You are upright in serving the Lord, denying yourself of anything that would smear God's name, and you are just on a high as God came very powerfully on your behalf. You ate mere vegetables and you proved more intelligent than your peers. Why would God allow this type of trial? This is too much for me! Can God do it again? Our lives are in danger here.

So what did Daniel do? Let us see the contrast between the behaviour of the one (Nebuchadnezzar) who saw himself as a god and the one who saw himself as a servant of God - Daniel.

First of all, did you notice that **Daniel is tactful-** v14? He doesn't overreact when Arioch gives him the news of their impending demise. He courteously asks what is happening and respectfully approaches the King to ask for time. His confidence in God doesn't make him complacent – 'whatever will be will be'- it makes him active.

Secondly, **Daniel is prayerful- v18.** He calls his friends together, not to form a committee to look into the problem, but to form a prayer group to ask God to solve the problem.

In the third place **Daniel is thankful-** vv. 19-23. This is a man who has a grip on reality because he, unlike the King, is in touch with the ultimate reality - God. And what a God. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven ²⁰ and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.²¹ He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. ²² He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him. ²³ I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

This is the all-knowing, all powerful, all prayer hearing God. GOD OF HEAVEN. Could I ask: is that your God?

As we look at the increasing descent of our culture into paganism, the challenges which our politicians face are endless. It simply leaves them feeling helpless and hopeless and they do not know where to turn. More plans, new initiatives, compromising the Christian message perhaps to make it more acceptable? That is what we are tempted to do. Well, following Daniel's example wouldn't be a bad thing would it? We turn to the same God in *prayer* and plead for.... mercy for that is what our country desperately needs. So what is the truth which the dream contains and which Daniel explains?

We have a giant statue which is a mixture of great glory and crazy instability, full of inner contradictions, being made partly of costly and useful materials and partly of stupid and impossible pottery. And then in v 34 a rock appears which is not quarried by mere men, only to smash the feet of clay resulting in the frightening collapse of the whole edifice. Then

everything is reduced to dust and blown away by the wind - but not the rock; this takes on a life of its own, expanding and expanding until it fills the whole horizon like a mountainscape. Praise the Lord!

I do not intend to dwell on the academic exercise of describing the various kingdoms as the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire. Rather my focus is on the future when a heavenly intervention turned all the world gods and empires into rubble and established a kingdom which would last forever- the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As believers, we do have a secure future which even death cannot snatch from us. Our faith in Jesus is enduring, and time and circumstances cannot ruin or take it away. Any other false gods, like family, wealth, health, which we give ourselves to will collapse and only the Rock from the heavenlies will stay- and that rock is our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who came from above.

The career, the family, even our bodies and good looks. I am not saying these are unimportant but they have only a *relative* importance. "God's purposes however, the purposes of saving people from hell and for a love relationship with him for ever in which all these other things become enriched, that is of absolute and eternal importance." Daniel knew that.

Daniel Interprets the Dream (vv24-30)

²⁴ Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him." ²⁵ Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."²⁶ The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" ²⁷ Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸ but there is a **God in heaven** who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these: ²⁹ "As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. ³⁰ **As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.**

Now, first of all, take note that Daniel does not take personal credit for the interpreting of the dream. When the king said, "I understand you can make known to me the dream and the interpretation." Daniel said, "Look, the wise men, the astrologers, none of them can do it, but there is a God in heaven who reveals things." And he gives credit to God for the interpretation, for the understanding and the interpretation of the dream. I think that this is something that if anyone is at all interested in becoming involved in the work of the Lord it is important to note this particular aspect of Daniel. That he was not about to take credit for what God had done. He immediately points to God as the source and he gives credit to God. He does not let the king give him credit or give him honor, but he points the king to God. "There's a God in heaven who reveals things and He has made known."

Secondly, the dream is for the latter days. So it is a dream that has prophetic significance. The things that are going to come to pass here on the earth.

Now he tells the king what he dreamed. ([Dan 2:32-35](#)).

So this was the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had that troubled him.

Before Nebuchadnezzar had gone to sleep, he was wondering in his mind, "What's going to happen to the world? What does the future hold?" And so this dream pertains to the future. God is in this dream giving him history in advance, as He lays out the kingdoms that would rule over the earth.

⁴⁴ "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

⁴⁶ **Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."** ⁴⁸ Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. ⁴⁹ Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained.

Tell me, is God in control? Can you see proud and absolute king Nebuchadnezzar prostrating before nineteen-year-old Daniel? When god is with you and your heart is purposed to serve the Lord in humility, even your enemies shall fall before you. The king of kings has demonstrated once again that his rule and power are not confined to the four walls of a temple. He is a living God and He is in perfect control of things around His people.

Tell me, what have you learnt about God in this chapter? He was under test in the last chapter to prove himself. How has he done so in this chapter? How does this chapter prove to you that Jesus is the ultimate reality? His kingdom will last forever. Are you a citizen of the kingdom Jesus came to usher in?