



# Finding hope as we trust our Sovereign God

CALNE FREE CHURCH

Charlie Fadipe | Our Sovereign Lord Reigns | During the Covid19 lockdown

## Welcome

Dear Friends

In this time when we are locked down so as to slow the spread of the Covid19 virus, it is worth us looking up and remembering/realising that the Lord God Almighty reigns! And wonderfully, He knows, cares and loves you. That's why looking at how Daniel, a teenager who trusts the LORD in the most treacherous and life-threatening time of the life of his country, is such a good thing for us to focus on.

In this devotional, there will be a passage to read, a simple message for you to explain to children in your house and a section where you can go deeper, if you wish to further study this subject. The idea is that the study is supposed to take about 10 mins and can be done with all your household. At the end of each study ask the questions: "What does this show me about God?" and therefore, "How am I supposed to respond to Him in this situation".

I pray this will be a blessing to you and all in your house during this time.

## Prayer:

You may like to use this prayer (or your variation of it) at the start of this study:

*Heavenly Father,*

*Blessed be your name for ever and ever. To you belong all wisdom and power. You change the times and seasons; You remove rulers and countries and empires. Yet Your Kingdom endures forever and ever. Please help me to trust You and live with Jesus as my King. Amen*

## Reading 6

## Daniel 4:1 -27 □

This chapter is very different. It's written in the first person as a confession by Nebuchadnezzar.

Kids questions: Here is King Nebuchadnezzar frightened again by another dream given to him by God! What does he do? What is his dream and what does it mean? Do you think he believes what the dream means?

In your own words, give the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream that Daniel says comes from God?

What's the reason the Angel in Nebuchadnezzar's dream gives, for all this happening to Nebuchadnezzar?

What is the hope offered to Nebuchadnezzar?

So what does this show you about God?

Think this through: *Nebuchadnezzar's pride and glory in his own circumstances led to his downfall. When are you tempted to commit the same mistake?*

Prayer ideas: Ask God to help you not sin the way Nebuchadnezzar did and instead rejoice in His grace shown in Jesus

Going Deeper: Here is King Nebuchadnezzar, the same king who thought himself a god to be worshipped in an image of gold, who smashed through the walls of Jerusalem, carrying off the people and vessels of God to his home country, who threatened to kill all the wise men in the land if they didn't tell him what he dreamt and give an interpretation for it; now he is humbly praising God. What has happened? What does this teach us about God's grace?

Notice also that Nebuchadnezzar is **told** that he will acknowledge that 'heaven rules'. Is this God exerting His authority over Nebuchadnezzar or showing him (saving) grace?

## Reading 7

## Daniel 4:28 - 37 □

Kids questions: A year has past since King Nebuchadnezzar had that frightening dream from God, which Daniel interprets. What does Nebuchadnezzar do that shows he doesn't believe that dream will come true? What does God do to him as he starts to boast? For 7 years the king lives like an animal and is thrown out of his palace. What does he do to regain a sane mind? So does God do all that He promised in the Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

Is there anything in this chapter that give reasons for God to judge Nebuchadnezzar? And is there anything in this chapter that shows that Nebuchadnezzar has repented?

Just in case you haven't got it yet, what fact does God decree, in v32, that Nebuchadnezzar must acknowledge? Will you acknowledge this too? (or will you have to wait till you see Jesus face to face?)

What would Nebuchadnezzar say is the moral of this sorry?

So what does this show you about God?

Think this through: *God will always do what He promises because nothing is able to stop Him as He is Almighty. And what He has promised to do is bring repentance and forgiveness of sins to the world in order to honour Jesus (Acts 1:8)*

Prayer ideas: Praise God for He is Almighty and Faithful. Praise God for all His promises to you in Christ, all of which will be fulfilled (2 Cor 1:20)

Going Deeper? The greatest, most powerful (and probably one of the most brutal) man on Earth is utterly humbled, lower than any other man – by God! Yet God restores him when He acknowledges God. God uses Nebuchadnezzar to spread knowledge and praise of God throughout the known world, the world that had been against God!

Do you see any similarities in this incident with the conversion of Paul? Just how 'Almighty' do you think God really is (Isaiah 48:13, Rev 4:13)? Why then are we still so afraid of what others might think of us or afraid of a wasting virus? Shouldn't we instead be overwhelmed with the fact that this Almighty God loves us and sent Jesus to die for us to rescue us?

## Reading 8

## Daniel 5 □

Kids questions: How would you feel if you saw a hand suddenly write on the wall? How does King Belshazzar react? What did King Belshazzar do, that was so wrong God wrote on the wall? What does God say?

Belshazzar (Nebuchadnezzar's descendant) is now in power. How does his treatment of the vessels from God's temple compare with Nebuchadnezzar's ?

*The 'Queen' mentioned in v 10 is most likely, Belshazzar's mother, as v2 already talks about Belshazzar's wives and concubines drinking with him. She is likely to remember the truth Nebuchadnezzar learnt. That could be why she is able to tell about Daniel.*

When Belshazzar makes his offer to Daniel, does he still think he is in control? Is he right?

What differences between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar are highlighted by Daniel in his speech(vv 18-23)?

What is the main accusation that he levels at Belshazzar?

So what does God's writing on the wall show you about God?

*Think this through: Here is another king who is slow to acknowledge God. Not only that, he has not learned from his predecessor's mistakes, and his actions mock God. How does your attitude and actions compare to Belshazzar?*

Prayer ideas: Ask God to help you to acknowledge Him as God and serve Him rightly.

Going Deeper: Notice here that it is not brute force that affects the king but the awesome reality of a world beyond, a spiritual realm, breaking into this world, that utterly convinces the King of his mortality and weakness. Is the Lord Jesus lord of that realm too? How do you know? Notice also, that Daniel doesn't ask Belshazzar to repent; it's too late!

In a few verses, the Babylonian pomp and circumstance is reduced to terror! In just a few days our world has gone from supreme confidence in its ability and economics, to being terrified of an organism that is a thousandth our size and killing us! Who really is (and always has been) in control of this (seen and unseen) world? Does this view tie up with our normal view of the world (as portrayed by the News and TV/Movies, for instance)?

## Reading 9

## Daniel 6 □

Kids questions: Notice it's not the King who is the main baddie here, but the king's ministers (satraps) who are jealous of Daniel and want him out of government. How do they set a trap for Daniel? Does the King want to throw Daniel to the lions? What happens to Daniel? Why? What happens to the baddies? What does this make the King do?

How does the behaviour of Darius the Mead compare with to Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar (vv 6 -9)?

What is Daniel's response to Darius' law in vv 10-11? What would you have done?

Look how Darius responds to the trap set for Daniel and how he rushes to the Den at the first light of dawn (pay attention to how he cries out to Daniel!). What's his feeling towards Daniel (and Daniel's God, that he knows so little about)? Do you think his decree in v 26 – 27 is sincere?

What does this show you about God? How does that encourage us to respond in our situation?

Think this through: *Here the wicked are punished and the righteous are saved. But the course of history has shown that faithful Christians often lost their lives at the hands of the wicked. How does knowing this affect your trust in God?*

Prayer ideas: Ask God to help you live in expectation of persecution. Ask Him to help you trust Him, whatever the outcome, by looking to His sovereignty in all things.

Going Deeper: Daniel has been in the reign of 3 kings by this stage. He is eighty years old (the same age as Moses when God uses him). What does this show you about God's timing in regard to His rescue? (c.f 2 Peter 3:8-10)

Daniel continues to give thanks to God (v10) as he had done before. Why do you think he had that habit, when he lived most of his life in captivity? Ask God to have the same attitude and thank God even in your circumstances (you can always thank Him for the future that He has promised you in Jesus).

This part of Daniel resembles the story of Joseph. The satraps wanted ill for Daniel, God used it for good and for the proclamation of His name throughout the world (again!). Shouldn't we trust God in our circumstances? What does the Lord Jesus say to His disciples in John 16:33 about them facing trouble for Him?

## Reading 10 Daniel 2: 20 – 23, 4: 3, 4:34 – 35, 6:26 – 27 □

Kids questions: When we sing some songs, often they have a chorus, that we repeat after each verse. Why do you think people put a chorus in a song? This book of Daniel has a chorus! Can you see it in these verses we've looked at? Get an adult to point out what the chorus says (in simple language!)

There are a number of 'choruses' or poems in the first 6 chapters of Daniel. Tease out what is being said about God and who is saying it.

By now, you should be able to see what has constantly been said about God, all the way through this book

Think this through: *What things about God were new to you? What things struck you afresh?*

Prayer ideas: Praise God for who He is.

Going Deeper: Notice the 3 Kings in these Chapters. They all have to acknowledge that God is Almighty and they are not. This is true for all rulers this world, past and future, whether they choose to accept this fact or not. Two of the rulers issue decrees throughout all their conquered territories and countries that praise the Almighty God of this tiny region, Judah! What does that show you about God being exalted? How should what God shows you throughout the book of Daniel affect your outlook on your life? Remind yourself of how Sovereign and wonderful God is by reading Rev 21 to 22.