

The Corona Chronicle.

Being Church in Partial lockdown.

Sunday June 20th

West Worthing Evangelical Church.

Rugby Road

Every Knee Shall Bow

Exploring the Book of Daniel

Please read Daniel, chapter five

Graffiti gets everywhere, scribbled on walls, placards, notice boards. Sometimes it is funny; often it is perceptive. But surely the most famous graffito of all must be that recorded in Daniel 5:25. It certainly should grab our attention because the writer is none other than God! Whenever God communicates with us we need to sit up and pay attention and that applies here. It came to one man in Babylon but holds challenges for us all.

The events in Daniel 5 took place about seventy years on from chapter one. Nebuchadnezzar is dead and the empire he ruled for forty-three years has gone downhill in less than twenty-five years as politicking and brute force rapidly remove his successors. The present king, Nabonidus, has been absent from Babylon for years and Belshazzar holds power as a kind of junior king. (That's why he can only offer promotion to third ruler in the kingdom.) So what can we learn about this man, Belshazzar? Nothing good.

1. Belshazzar's failure. We meet the king in the midst of a gigantic dissolute booze-up which tended to be the norm, yet the Medo-Persian army was threatening the very city! But worse was to come (verses 1-4). These holy things which were to be used in the worship and service of God he used wrongly and by despising them he despised and rejected God. He was deliberately showing what he thought of God.

Are we guilty of doing the same thing? What are the holy things he entrusts us with? What about **our life** itself? He created us and then at great cost to himself provided a way to redeem our life from the consequences of our sin. So how do we use that life; how is that life expressed through our bodies? Look around our world and see what happens when we get it wrong!

Or what about the means of grace God has provided to help us in our Christian journey?



We can misuse them; **baptism** by relying on the rite rather than having the reality of a living faith in Jesus, or not living out its implications – or even ignoring an ordinance that God gives and commands. Then there's **the Lord's Supper** if we take it without a heart knowledge of Christ's salvation, or while harbouring known and unconfessed sin, or without approaching the Table with reverence.

The **Bible**, of course, can be misused if we neglect it or if we are content to learn what it teaches without turning that into obedience. **Prayer** is abused if we neglect it or never pray for grace and mercy, while the **church** itself and **worship** can be neglected or descend into mere formalism. We can see there is a very real and terrible danger of using holy things wrongly.

2. Belshazzar's folly. What a change occurs in this carousing, idolatrous man (verses 5-6)! He hits the panic button but to no avail (verses 7-9). So how can he discover what it all means? Alerted by all the turmoil the Queen Mother appears and speaks sense into the confusion (verses 10-12). So it is left to Daniel, this aged man of God, to spell out what is going on. Why? Because in the end only God's man can speak to the situation with perception and authority. And that is still true today. Amidst all the theories and philosophies and claims prevalent in our age it is still only the Christian message which makes sense of the human situation, warns of its dangers and points us to our Creator, Judge and Redeemer. So Daniel highlights the king's folly and madness.

(a) Belshazzar has rejected and mocked God, has set in his place that which could do nothing! And so today men and women raise up their own gods – money, position, achievement, other people – and turn their backs on God.

(b) Belshazzar refused to learn from what God had revealed of himself. It was not that Belshazzar didn't know better (see verses 18-22). The evidence stared him in the face – yet he refused to accept it. This is not a unique attitude; in our society we close eyes and minds to the evidence – creation itself, Scripture, the Lord Jesus Christ, his cross and resurrection. The pandemic we have been experiencing has emphasized our mortality but how many have, as a result, faced up to eternal issues, asking what comes next, how can I be ready to meet God?

(c) Belshazzar failed to respond to God's message of judgement. He carries out his promise to Daniel (verse 29) but that's all. He doesn't see the grace of God to him in warning him of his impending doom. He doesn't seek God in repentance. So it is today; we can rush past God's red lights, his stop lights - conscience, his law, his warnings, the cross, his love – till eventually there's nothing left to stop us. We don't need to be a blatant Belshazzar; we just have to go on ignoring God's gracious warnings.

3. Belshazzar's fate. The three words are all different weights and this mysterious message contradicts everything he thinks about himself and reveals God's estimate. **(a) He is subject to God's authority.** The king is used to giving the orders but Mene (verse 26) means "numbered" and shows his days are numbered, he has run out of time. God is saying, "Your number's up!" With all of us God can say this at any time. **(b) He is subject to God's assessment.** Tekel means "weighed". Belshazzar has been making it clear what he thinks of God, now the boot is on the other foot! God has weighed him and he amounts to nothing, he is without substance. **(c) He is subject to God's judgement.** Peres (verse 28) means "divided" Again, Belshazzar is used to being the one who judges and decides people's fate but now he learns God has passed sentence; Belshazzar's kingdom will fall into the hands of the enemy at the gate, the Medes and Persians.

So Belshazzar loses his kingdom but more, loses his soul and is shut out from the only kingdom that ultimately matters – God's eternal kingdom. This is a wake-up call for everyone.

Christians, how do we value and treat the privileges and means of grace he has given us? Remember, this reflects how we treat him.

For anyone for whom God is a mere cipher we are challenged with the reality of his involvement with us, our responsibility to him and the inevitability of judgement. But we are also confronted with the grace and love of God that warns us and calls us to lay hold of his mercy found in Jesus Christ and his death to bring us forgiveness and acceptance.

Dennis R. Read



Names in the Bible Word Scramble

1. iashia _____
2. jsdua _____
3. nawder _____
4. bamraha _____
5. raachzaih _____
6. cjbao _____
7. imcah _____
8. entpesh _____
9. udsedath _____
10. usjes _____
11. isttu _____
12. eossm _____
13. agrha _____
14. lbaoromehwt _____
15. jeliah _____
16. ikeelze _____
17. einald _____
18. eihnaehm _____
19. htmaetw _____
20. rtpee _____



GOD OUR ROCK

Salvation	2 Samuel 22v47	Stability	Matt. 7v24,25
Security	Psalms 94v22	Shelter	Psalms 61v3
Satisfaction	1 Corinthians 10v4	Strength	Psalms 31v2
	Shadow	Isaiah 32v2	

"God's promise is better than any bond or note on any bank, financial institution, or most stable government, for all those may have to repudiate their bond; God never does so."
R.C.H. Lenski

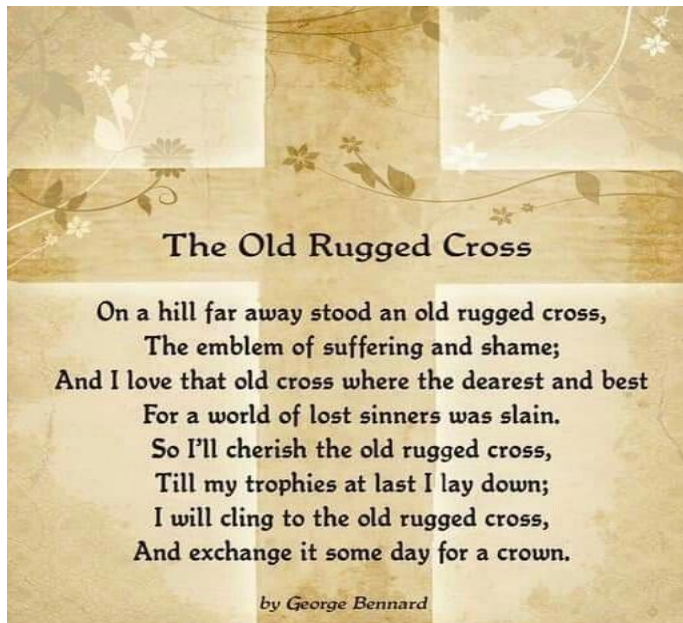
*God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

EVER EVER EVER EVER

EVER

Hymns ,Prayers and Bible Readings

Especially for those unable to get to Church.



Bible Reading Daniel 5

**1 At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him king of glory now;
This the Father's pleasure, that we call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning was the mighty word.**

**2 At His voice creation sprang at once to sight,
All the angel faces, all the hosts of light;
Thrones and dominations, stars upon their way,
All the heavenly orders, in their great array.**

**3 Humbled for a season, to receive a name
From the lips of sinners unto whom He came;
Faithfully He bore it spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious when from death He
passed.**

**4 Bore it up triumphant with its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures to the central height;
To the eternal Godhead, to the Father's throne,
Filled it with the glory of His triumph won.**

**5 Name Him, Christians, name Him, with love strong
as death,
But with awe and wonder, and with bated breath;
He is God the Saviour, He is Christ the Lord,
Ever to be worshipped, trusted and adored.**

**6 In your hearts enthrone Him; there let Him subdue
All that is not holy, all that is not true;
Crown Him as your captain in temptation's hour,
Let His will enfold you in its light and power.**

**7 With His Father's glory Jesus comes again,
Angel hosts attend Him and announce His reign;
For all wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him king of glory now.**

Jubilate Hymns version of 'At the name of Jesus', Caroline M Noel (1817 - 1877)
© Jubilate Hymns Ltd

Prayers

O thou great God of life and death. Eternal maker and mover. Whose will is the first of causes, and His glory is the last of ends. Direct our feet to the place which Thou has appointed strengthened then these poor hands too accomplished Thy pleasure. Under Your sovereign grace. Amen

Sir Henry Wooten 1568-1639

Lord, Thou have made Thyself to be ours. Therefore, now show Thyself to us in Thy wisdom goodness and power. To walk faithfully in a Christian course, we need much grace. Supply us out of the rich store.

We need wisdom. To go in and out inoffensively before others.

Furnishers with Thy Spirit. We need patience and comfort. Now Thou art the God of consolation. Bestow it upon us for Christ's sake, Amen.

Richard Sibbes 1577-1633

