

# Corona Chronicle

West Worthing Evangelical Church. Rugby Road.

**Being Church during lockdown.**

**Sunday February 28th**

## **Every Knee Shall Bow**

*Exploring the Book of Daniel*

*Please read Daniel 2*

What in the world is going on in the world?! Question which often haunts us, particularly this past year. But it's not just the current situation; there is so much uncertainty, so many problems. How to make sense of it? History shows that too often we fail to learn its lessons and so repeat the devastation and anguish in our world. Are we then doomed to ignorance and fear? Where will it all end? Here we see the relevance of this chapter.

### **1. Nebuchadnezzar's Challenge**

The King goes to bed and is confronted with a king-size problem! And he is not enjoying it one little bit! He's having a bad night – a dream that won't go away v1; it keeps repeating and he tosses and turns and worries. And he's right to be concerned because this dream is God knocking at his door; when we talk of Nebuchadnezzar's challenge it is first of all **Nebuchadnezzar's challenge from God!** So what's the problem?

The Babylonian empire was in the ascendancy. As Crown Prince, Nebuchadnezzar had led his forces to victory over Assyria, Egypt and Judah. While in the field of battle he heard of his father's death. Now as king he heads up a powerful, prosperous, cultured society. He's complacent, satisfied but tonight can't sleep and begins to think and worry about the future v29(a). He's done all this but what will happen to it all? This dream is God's way of jolting this man's self-sufficiency, pulling him up short.

Nebuchadnezzar is not unique! Rulers, politicians, leaders - good or bad - concentrate on here and now, their strategies and plans until something stops them in their tracks. This human trait is in all of us, we get on with our lives, caught up in our ambitions, plans. Until God challenges us. How?



Have you found yourself in recent days made to wonder where this world is going, what life is really about? We have been brought face to face with the fragility of human life again and again, our vulnerability. God challenges us to face the ultimate futility of life if all it does is end in death and the grave. This truth is so important God spends a whole book in the Bible on it (Ecclesiastes). Of course, life is or can be sweet and fulfilling but are these few short years all that there is? And what then? God challenges us to face this question and explore his answer.

Nebuchadnezzar was not prepared to ignore his fears. So, here we see, in the face of his challenge from God, **Nebuchadnezzar's challenge to his advisers vv1-2**. He didn't waste time; if the king is going to have a broken night so are his advisers! He outlines the problem v3, so far so good but then v5-6! The advisers display some consternation, attempt further negotiation v7, then are stung to protest! vv10-11. Can't help having some sympathy with them – the demand seems a tad unreasonable, doesn't it? This is the difficulty with having position and prestige in Nebuchadnezzar's court if the king throws a paddy! Like all despots, you can't negotiate, he can be illogical, unreasonable, demand what he likes and if he doesn't get it not only throw his toys out of the pram but everyone else. But what else can you expect? A tyrant's gonna do what a tyrant's gonna do!

But perhaps I'm not being quite fair to the king. It wasn't that he had forgotten the dream – otherwise how could he check what the advisers might say? From vv8-9 he seems to have a shrewd suspicion that if he tells them the dream they will come up with some soothing, encouraging and royal ego-stroking meaning for it. And tonight Nebuchadnezzar doesn't want sycophantic sucking up, this is too serious for that. He wants the truth!

He was right there, of course. And we can learn from him. If God is challenging us we need to make sure we go for the truth. There are plenty of voices out there which will make us feel good and not upset the rhythm of our life. Sadly, in some churches even, there will be those who present us with a message that effectively tells us that all God wants of us is that we should just be decent human beings. And that leaves us exactly where we were before. This God apparently never has different ideas to us about what we should be and do! That's the approach of the King's Chaldean cheer leaders. But that solves nothing; what we need is to hear the authentic voice of God, to face what he has to say, to find the reason he has brought us up short. And that means finding a church that takes God seriously, that takes the Bible seriously, that takes human sin and need seriously, that takes heaven and hell seriously and that takes the merciful love of God found only in Jesus Christ seriously and that lays it out clearly, relevantly, faithfully and lovingly.

And these men can't do it. A telling illustration of the poverty and limitations of human abilities to work out for ourselves what God is saying and doing! So Nebuchadnezzar issues the death warrant – things look black. But God still has his men in Babylon!

Concluded next week

Dennis Read.



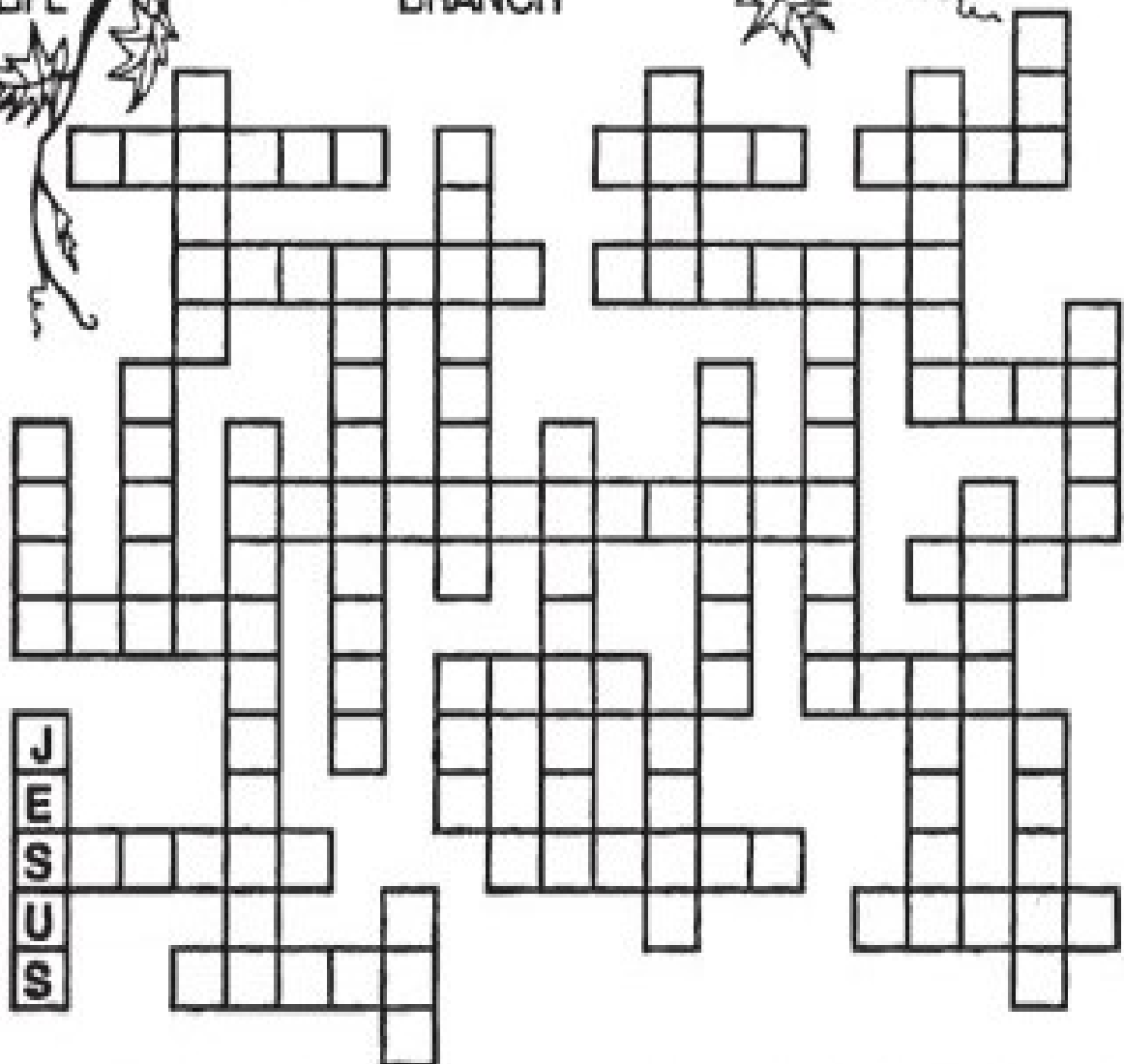
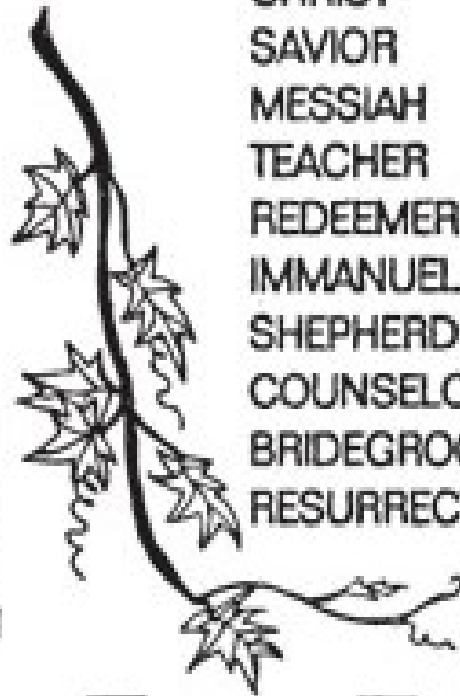
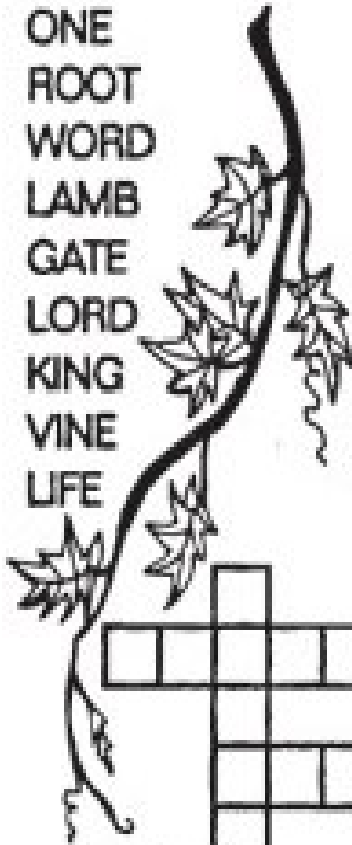
# And His Name Shall Be Called . . .

Jesus had many names. All the words below were used to refer to Jesus in the Bible. Fit the names into the puzzle. (Hint: Start with the longest names.)

GOD  
SUN  
WAY  
ONE  
ROOT  
WORD  
LAMB  
GATE  
LORD  
KING  
VINE  
LIFE

SEED  
STAR  
RABBI  
BREAD  
LIGHT  
TRUTH  
ALPHA  
OMEGA  
STONE  
FATHER  
PRINCE  
BRANCH

CHRIST  
SAVIOR  
MESSIAH  
TEACHER  
REDEEMER  
IMMANUEL  
SHEPHERD  
COUNSELOR  
BRIDEGROOM  
RESURRECTION



# Hymns Prayers and Bible Readings

O Lord, enable us this day to reveal Your glory in all we think, and say, and do; that Your presence may bless and strengthen us all the day long, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Bible Reading

### Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

**2** In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." <sup>4</sup> Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." <sup>5</sup> The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. <sup>6</sup> But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation." <sup>7</sup> They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." <sup>8</sup> The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm— <sup>9</sup> if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation." <sup>10</sup> The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. <sup>11</sup> The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

<sup>12</sup> Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. <sup>13</sup> So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. <sup>14</sup> Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. <sup>15</sup> He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?"

Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel. <sup>16</sup> And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

## GIVING THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS GREATNESS

*From Psalm 8*

O Lord our Lord, we thank You that Your name through all the earth is majesty, that You have set Your glory in the skies, yet receive praise from the lips of children. We gaze at the work of Your hands - the moon and the stars which you have set in place, and we praise You that you even think of us; You make us lower than the angels, only to crown us with glory and honour. O Lord our Lord, we thank You in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## Hymn

Come, thou long expected Jesus  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in Thee  
Israel's Strength and Consolation  
Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear Desire of every nation  
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver  
Born a child and yet a King  
Born to reign in us forever  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley

## Prayer

Lord of the church, enable your people to be the Church:  
a redeemed people;  
a holy people;  
a united people;  
a missionary people;  
and, in all things, a people gladly submissive to the truth as it comes to us in Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.