

Dreams and Visions

Daniel Ch 6 v 25-27 and Ch 7 v 1-8 and 15-18

Over the many years that I have been writing these Devotional papers I have learnt much. I have researched into 'friends', 'gardens', 'mountains', 'journeys', 'living water', 'light' and of course 'how wonderful women are' (as if I didn't know!) They each have a written message and are part of the great message that the Bible imparts. This new theme is again making me think. The main thing I remember about Daniel is the story of Daniel in the lions' den. A scary account, but a gripping one for children as it is recounted in many children's books. Of course it has a happy ending showing how God protected Daniel so that he wasn't eaten by the lions. Because of his faith in God and obedience to him, Daniel and his friends triumph over their enemies - a story of good overcoming evil, of hope in even the darkest situations.

The second part of the book of Daniel is even more gruesome and bizarre in some ways. It documents a series of visions that Daniel experiences – winds blowing the surface of the ocean, four huge beasts appearing looking like a lion, a bear, a leopard and the last one with iron teeth and a myriad of horns. Terrifying indeed! What on earth was the message here? In a nut shell it predicts the rise and fall of several empires and the eventual victory of God's people. The same, in principal, as the thoughts behind many modern day films; Harry Potter wins through because of love and friendship, Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader in Star Wars show that hope goes a long way and even The Lion King expresses the power of love when Simba returns to face his calling. Once more the theme is the victory of good over bad, triumph for those who go the right way and follow a good path. The whole Bible Story is just that, isn't it? Triumph for those who try to live out God's instructions, follow Jesus' ways and pursue 'righteousness' in all its forms.

Daniel was one of those people that we talked about last month, who had a deep relationship with God and could be trusted to pass on God's message in order to continue with his plan for the world.

Some of us are still struggling to 'get back to normal' –in our daily life and in our church life. Many are thrilled to be singing again and meeting face to face for our social and fund raising events whilst others are more cautious and have lost their confidence and enjoyment in life. Be determined and keep going! Your enthusiasm will return! We now, even more than before, need to show those around us that despite problems and pitfalls life goes on. Life is full of ups and downs but having just encountered a down we are now on the up! How long did the Israelites travel before they reached their goal? Did Moses give up? There is still plenty to live for and much more work to be done in God's name to bring his kingdom to earth. Just look at the sparkle in the eyes of the youngest generation as the lights of Christmas begin to shine. Even the mere glow of the bonfire and the gasps of amazement as the fireworks set the night sky alight show us that there is still light to be found. These are things that should set us ablaze once more and encourage us to look forward – to urge us to have a new vision for the future.

The book of Daniel ends with the words: 'And you Daniel, be faithful to the end. Then you will die, but you will rise to receive you reward at the end of time.' Of course we will all die but let us hope that we will all be promised the same end as Daniel.

For Discussion

1. Does our vision for the future included things that we have learnt through lockdown?
2. Are we renewing our determination to grow as a church?

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