

THE KING OF KINGS

DANIEL 2:1-30

OUR KING COMMUNICATES WITH US



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Freedom of speech is a treasured American right, secured by the First Amendment. We're seeing this fundamental American value under attack as tech companies de-platform and silence those who voice certain opinions. Even the President of the US has been silenced on various platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others). Mainstream media outlets have refused to broadcast his speeches for many months. Many of the President's supporters have also been de-platformed and silenced.

The American President is the most powerful man in the world and he yet cannot communicate to Americans. His opponents think it's an appropriate punishment for the President abusing his freedom of speech. His supporters worry that our most fundamental value is being murdered and that our great country will die in the silence. The era of mass communication has turned into mass censorship. The information highway has closed a major lane. The man who could tweet to 80 million people in a second cannot be heard no matter how long and loud he shouts. The king of constant communication has had his fingertips guillotined.

In the midst of frustration and fear about all this, Daniel 2:1-30 reminds us to **Find life in God's voice because human voices are silenced**. The King of communication can be cut off but the King of kings is always broadcasting and cannot be censored.

BACKGROUND

The theme of Daniel, set in 600BC Babylon, is **The King of kings is still King**. The book divides into two main sections:

- **Faithful living in hostile times (1-6)**
- **Forward looking in hostile times (7-12)**

Chapter one encouraged us to **be faithful because our King cares for us**. Chapter 2 encourages us to **be faithful because our King communicates to us**.



What's the worst kind of silence?



1. GOD'S SILENCE IS DEATH (1-13)

The *Washington Post's* masthead is 'Democracy Dies in Darkness. It's saying that without enlightening communication our nation will die. King Nebuchadnezzar's masthead was something like, 'Directors die in Darkness.' His closest counselors and advisers are about to lose their lives because they cannot enlighten the king about his dream.

A troubling dream (1-3)

For a while, the king had been having a number of scary dreams, so scary that he was afraid to sleep anymore (2). But even when he was awake the dream continued to trouble him (3). We'll look at this specific dream next Sunday evening, but suffice to say that he knew it predicted something bad in his future. The most powerful man in the world is terrified of the dark and therefore asks for light. Shaking like Jell-O, he called his spiritual advisors to ask them what this troubling dream meant.

A deadly dream (4-13)

Initially the magicians and wizards are pretty confident. **"O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation"** (4). That confidence turned to dust when the king asked them to tell him not only the interpretation but the dream itself.

It's not the Nebuchadnezzar didn't know the dream. It's that he suspected his advisers were untrustworthy scammers. If they knew his dream, he'd know they were genuine, and therefore could interpret the dream too. As a measure of how significant he knew the dream was, he promised great rewards, gifts, and honors if they got both right, but death and destruction if they got it wrong (4-9).

After failing to persuade the king that his request was totally unreasonable, the magicians protested, **"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. 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"** (10-11). This was perhaps the truest statement they had ever spoken. Their only hope of light was a God who dwelled with men and women.

The king refused their protests and appeals and commanded the destruction of all the wise men. Not long after, Daniel and his friends heard a knock at the door. They opened it and there was the chief executioner. This could only mean one thing: death (12-13).



CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Spiritual silence is death. To be saved we need to know truth that only God can reveal, only God can make known. Indeed our only hope is that God would come to earth, dwell among us, and speak to us essential truths in a way that we can understand and act upon. Without that, like Nebuchadnezzar, we will be nervous wrecks, terrified with a sense of foreboding, unable to sleep.

Spiritual hostility is death. After the devil failed to take Daniel out in chapter one, he tried again in chapter 2. He tried with diet and now with dreams. It was yet another attempt by the evil one to extinguish the godly remnant that would lead to the Messiah. It was another fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. What side of Genesis 3:15 are you on?

GOD'S SILENCE
IS GRAVE SILENCE



So, where do I get life-giving truth?



2. GOD'S VOICE IS LIFE (14-30)

Daniel arranged an appointment with the king (14-16), then had an appointment with the King of Kings (17-18) There's no panic here, just calm organized prayer in the face of a crazy demented king. But while one king is tormented with silence, another king is stirring to speak. The King of kings is going to speak to Daniel because Daniel spoke to the King of kings.

God speaks in mercy (17-18)

Daniel got his three friends together to ask God to speak to them. But they don't demand it. It's not a right God owes him, but a mercy they beg for. They sought God's mercy before they sought God's message (17-18).

God speaks to teach (19-20)

The God who spoke to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, spoke to Daniel in a vision. We're not told here what God said, but the rest of the chapter explains that God taught Daniel about his sovereignty over the nations, and his kingdom being the most powerful and permanent kingdom of all.

God reveals and teaches what could not be discovered by intuition or research. Whatever else this chapter reveals, it reveals that God is the revealer! Look at the number of verses about revealing the king's dream: *tell* (2, 9, 36), *reveal* (19, 28, 29, 30, 47), *show/declare* (4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 24, 27), and *make known* (5, 9, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 45). 'Revealing' verbs occur over 30 times. Daniel rejoiced: **Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might** (20).

God speaks in power (21)

What does God teach through this dream? We'll look at the dream next Sunday, but it's summed up in Daniel's spontaneous praise here: **He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings** (21). The power of the King of kings and true religion is contrasted with the King of Babylon and false religion. The King of Babylon's words cannot accomplish anything. But God speaks in power and can accomplish everything.

God speaks to save (21-24)

Daniel records what God did for him, his friends, and the magicians. **He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter** (21-23). The result of God's speaking is humans breathing. Daniel tells the chief executioner to stop the killing because God has spoken to show him all he needed to know (24).



God speaks to warn (27-30)

Daniel is anxious to ensure that the king doesn't give him any credit, but only God. He opens with, **"No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries"** (27-28). He closes with, **"This mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind"** (30)

In between he tells the king that God used the king's dream to tell him what would happen in the **"latter days"** (28), **"what would be after this....[and] what is to be"** (29). Judging from Nebuchadnezzar's initial reaction to the dream, he suspected it was something like this. It looks like he was wondering about the future as he was going to sleep, and God spoke to him through this dream to warn him.

We'll study that warning in detail next week, but, before we close, let's remember that the phrase **"the latter days"** is usually used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the period from Christ's birth to the end of the world (e.g. Deut. 4:30; Acts 2:17; 1 Pet. 1:20; Heb. 1:2). It's the time from Bethlehem's manger to the great white throne.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

God's Word speaks life into our lives. In his mercy, God teaches us through his Word, empowers us through his Word, saves us through his Word, and warns us through his Word. All facets of his Word are life-giving. We don't need any dreams or visions, for all we have is a sufficient revelation of God. Are you listening to God or silencing him?

God's Word came down into our lives. Our God does dwell with us (Isa. 57:15; Matt. 1:23). Jesus is the perfect Daniel who revealed God's deepest secrets and most profound wisdom with the greatest clarity and power (Isa. 11:2-3; John 1:14). He not only risked his life for others, he gave his life for others. Praise God for our communicating King.

WHEN GOD BREATHES OUT
WE BREATHE IN.



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: Great Communicator, thank you for speaking life into my deadly silence. Help me to hear your voice in your Word and find life in its light. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe times of spiritual silence in your life, times when human voices failed you.
2. What ways are we seeing Genesis 3:15 acted out today in the area of communication?
3. How can we cultivate the quiet calm of Daniel when threatened with death?
4. Why is it a mercy if God speaks to us? How does that change the way you hear sermons?
5. What is God revealing to you these days?
6. How has God used his description of the latter days to impact your present day?

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