



THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO STAND UP

REFLECTION POINTS 21 JUNE 2020

READING – DANIEL 10

“ In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. The word was true, and it concerned a great conflict. He understood the word, having received understanding in the vision.

2 At that time I, Daniel, had been mourning for three weeks. ³I had eaten no rich food, no meat or wine had entered my mouth, and I had not anointed myself at all, for the full three weeks. ⁴On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris), ⁵I looked up and saw a man clothed in linen, with a belt of gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶His body was like beryl, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the roar of a multitude. ⁷I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; the people who were with me did not see the vision, though a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled and hid themselves. ⁸So I was left alone to see this great vision. My strength left me, and my complexion grew deathly pale, and I retained no strength. ⁹Then I heard the sound of his words; and when I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a trance, face to the ground.

10 But then a hand touched me and roused me to my hands and knees. ¹¹He said to me, 'Daniel, greatly beloved, pay attention to the words that I am going to speak to you. Stand on your feet, for I have now been sent to you.' So while he was speaking this word to me, I stood up trembling. ¹²He said to me, 'Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and

I have come because of your words. ¹³But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. So Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia, ¹⁴and have come to help you understand what is to happen to your people at the end of days. For there is a further vision for those days.'

15 While he was speaking these words to me, I turned my face towards the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶Then one in human form touched my lips, and I opened my mouth to speak, and said to the one who stood before me, 'My lord, because of the vision such pains have come upon me that I retain no strength. ¹⁷How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For I am shaking, ¹⁸no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.'

18 Again one in human form touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹He said, 'Do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous!' When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, 'Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.' ²⁰Then he said, 'Do you know why I have come to you? Now I must return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I am through with him, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹But I am to tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. There is no one with me who contends against these princes except Michael, your prince.'

REFLECTION POINTS

This is the second half of the book of Daniel. No longer a narrative about his career, we are moving into the section where Daniel speaks sharing his visions.

We have only scratched the surface of Daniel here – be brave and read on so we're ready for the Book of Revelation!

- Can you see any connection between the story of Daniel, the wording of the Lord's prayer and the image of Jesus as the ox?
- Have you ever reached the end of your tether like Daniel but touch and healing words have supported you to get to your feet again?
- Have you experienced such a vision or dream which has given you the support you needed at the time?
- How do you feel about the angel's words – do not fear, you are safe, have courage?
- What are your thoughts about pastoral care? What is the role of pastoral care in church life? In wider community life?
- How can we offer healing touch in safe ways at this time of physical distancing when literal touch is inappropriate?
- What will we mourn when we do finally regather physically? What would we miss about worship either before COVID-19 or from the online services?
- How can we support each other through this time?

THE FINAL BLESSING FROM TODAY'S SERVICE:

So now we leave this space of worship
And while so much of the road ahead is uncertain,
the path constantly changing,
we know some things that are as solid and sure
as the ground beneath our feet,
and the sky above our heads.

We know God is love.
We know Christ's light endures.

We know the Holy Spirit this there,
found in the space between all things,
closer to us than our next breath,
binding us to each other,
until we meet we again,

Go in peace.
Amen