**Salendine Nook Baptist Church – Church Together**

**Sunday 20th July 2025 – Feet That Are Made Of Clay**

**Welcome**

In today’s Service we will be looking at: **Daniel 2 v. 1 - 30**

The theme for our service today is: **Feet That Are Made Of Clay**

Today our service also includes: **Communion**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today’s service and that you would be able to **Know That Our Actions Have Consequences!**

**Call To Worship**

**Psalm 108 v. 1 - 5 NLT**

My heart is confident in you, O God;

No wonder I can sing your praises!

Wake up, my soul!

Wake up, O harp and lyre!

I will waken the dawn with my song.

I will thank you, Lord, in front of all the people.

I will sing your praises among the nations.

For your unfailing love is higher than the

heavens.

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.

May your glory shine over all the earth.

**Opening Prayer**

Thank you for the freedom to be amongst your family here in this church today, meeting together in your presence. Gracious God we thank you for the past week, for the many conversations we have had and the tasks that we have been able to carry out.

We thank you that we are able to come to you just as we are, some today maybe weary, others tired and looking for direction. All of us are imperfect and have many faults, but even so you accept us just as we are and you love us just the same. We thank you that we are still able to come before you in the busyness of our lives, to worship you, and to offer ourselves in service to you.

Thank you that we can bring to your feet all the hurts and fears that trouble us, and leave them

there, knowing that your strength and assurance are all that we require. Help us to encourage each other Lord, and not to criticise, to build up and not to knock down, to develop and move forward on our journey of faith together.

We ask these things in the precious name of Jesus.

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

In Christ Alone My Hope Is Found

**Offering**

If you feel that you are able to, then please keep on giving to the work of the church here at Salendine Nook, with a generous and cheerful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.

**Moment Of Reflection**

“Anything under God’s control is never out of control.”

**Bible Reading**

**Daniel 2 v. 1 – 30 NIV**

**Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream**

2In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. 2 So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, 3 he said to them, “I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.”

4 Then the astrologers answered the king, “May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

5 The king replied to the astrologers, “This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. 6 But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me.”

7 Once more they replied, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it.”

8 Then the king answered, “I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: 9 If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me.”

10 The astrologers answered the king, “There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. 11 What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.”

12 This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

14 When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. 15 He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. 16 At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

17 Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 18 He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven 20 and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;

wisdom and power are his.

21 He changes times and seasons;

he deposes kings and raises up others.

He gives wisdom to the wise

and knowledge to the discerning.

22 He reveals deep and hidden things;

he knows what lies in darkness,

and light dwells with him.

23 I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:

You have given me wisdom and power,

you have made known to me what we asked of you,

you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

**Daniel Interprets the Dream**

24 Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

25 Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

26 The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

27 Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

29 “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. 30 As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

**Moment Of Reflection**

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” **Romans 8 v. 28**

**Song Suggestion**

Meekness And Majesty

**Communion**

Jesus said: ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty’. ***Romans 5 v. 8*** also tells us: ‘God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us’.

**An Invitation to the Table:**

Come to this table, not because you must but because you may, not because you are strong, but because you are weak. Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because you need mercy and help. Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come, because he loved you and gave himself for you. Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body, his People.

**A prayer of Approach:**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secret is hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

**As we prepare to receive the bread and the cup, we hear the words of The Institution:**

The Apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, when he says: ‘For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night that he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me’. In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me’. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11 v. 23 ***-*** 26

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving before we eat the bread and drink the cup:**

Loving God, we praise and thank you for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you for his life and ministry, announcing the good news of your kingdom and demonstrating its power in the lifting of the downtrodden, and the healing of the sick, and the loving of the loveless. We thank you for his sacrificial death upon the cross, for the redemption of the world, and for your raising him to life again, as a foretaste of the glory we shall share. We give you thanks for this bread and wine, symbols of our world and signs of your transforming love. Send your Holy Spirit, we pray, that we might be renewed into the likeness of Jesus Christ and formed into his body. This we pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

**WE NOW SHARE AND EAT OF THE BREAD AND SHARE AND DRINK OF THE CUP**

**A Final Prayer of Acclamation:**

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we confess. Your final coming we await. Glory be to you, O Christ.

**Amen**

**Church Together Thought**

**Matthew 5 v. 13, 14** tells us that Christians are urged to be ‘salt and light’ to those around them; people who make a positive contribution to situations, and who live as godly examples. It’s one of those biblical truths that we know well, but we might struggle with what it means for us in practical terms.

In the ancient world people longed to be able to understand what the gods were saying. Leaving Israel to one side, the common perception was that the gods were far removed from humanity and not knowable by humans. Something like hints or whispers could perhaps be overheard by specialists using divination and astrology. But even then, the perceived messages were often vague, open to interpretation or even deliberately misleading.

There are many stories from among Israel’s ancient neighbours of the gods deliberately deceiving humans for their own divine sport. This was one explanation in those religions for the suffering in the world. When the superpower might of Babylon suddenly expanded throughout the region, most captives who were taken to Babylon probably had little difficulty in transferring their allegiance to the gods of Babylon.

Partly, no doubt they were fearful of their conquerors, but they could probably also see little real difference between their gods and the gods of Babylon. The one exception was the tiny nation of Judah. Despite being conquered they still insisted that their God was different. They claimed unusual things about him: that although far removed from humanity in one sense, he also cared for his people and interacted with them. He revealed his will to them in clear unambiguous ways, didn’t deceive them and could be known by them.

Like many other peoples, the Babylonians believed that dreams could be divinely inspired. But their interpretations were open to misunderstanding on two counts: firstly, the gods could mislead the dreamer or secondly, the interpreter could make up the interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar is so concerned by his dream he tries to minimise the likelihood of being deceived as we are told in **Daniel 2 v. 6 - 9**. Naturally the Babylonian diviners are unable to do as the king requires and risk losing not just their jobs but their lives too, as we read in **Daniel 2 v. 12, 13**.

When Daniel hears of the decree, he and his friends pray for God to reveal the truth, which is exactly what happens. The meaning of the bulk of the dream almost certainly relates to world powers that would follow Babylon, that is, Medo - Persia, Greece and Rome.

Let’s focus for a moment on Daniel’s communication. **Daniel 2 v. 27, 28** tells us that despite his precarious position Daniel declares right up front the nature of his God, minimising his own role.

We perhaps take for granted what Daniel says though in **Daniel 2 v. 28** which says: ‘but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:’

To his listeners it would have been stunning. Daniel’s message makes a huge impact on the king and society, saving the lives of many and bringing about much good. How does he do it? Not by forming a social action group! Not by downplaying his religious message and hoping people will eventually enquire about his beliefs! The impact he makes is a result of two things: prayer followed by unambiguous testimony, making clear why his God is different.

Is this the model that we must follow? To say that it is the only way to be salt and light would be to push this one example too far. But the challenge is not to dismiss it altogether.

Being salt and light is about making a difference in society. There are times when that difference is about declaring that God is different. Declaring things that are perhaps socially unacceptable, unpopular or even dangerous.

So, what can we learn from the passage that is before us today?

**FIRSTLY, NEBUCHADNEZZAR APPEARS TO BE OUT OF CONTROL (Daniel 2 v. 1 – 3; 12 – 13)**

Nebuchadnezzar had total control over the nation, the empire was at his feet. His word was obeyed, his will fulfilled and his armies triumphant. But inwardly, he was out of control at night, and haunted by his dreams by day, frustrated and fearful.

Many people share similar contradictions. He was made aware that power and money can’t buy everything. Terror filled the court as insecurity bred tyranny. Now a monster ruled the kingdom as gloom turned to anger. A bloodbath was in prospect for all the wise men. How insecure the king must have been, because he had no secure root in God.

**SECONDLY, NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S ADVISERS SEEMED TO BE OUT OF CONTROL (Daniel 2 v. 4 – 11)**

They try to cover up their ignorance and impotence by saying ‘give us a clue’. They can’t make something out of nothing, but God can!

They can put a spin on anything they are given by trying to ‘play by the rules’. We are not used to lateral thinking, but God is! He alone knows the answer.

**THIRDLY, WE SEE THAT DANIEL TAKES CONTROL (Daniel 2 v. 14 – 18)**

He naturally asked, ‘Why is this happening?’ We are told in **Daniel 2 v. 14 – 15** that he sought out the facts and sought to make sense of them. Daniel looked for some space as we are told in **Daniel 2 v. 16** so that he could have time to reflect and pray, then he gathered his friends and shared the news, as we read in **Daniel 2 v. 17**. He looked for their help. Together they turned to prayer, as recorded in **Daniel 2 v. 18** for they were dependent on God. Surely, this is how we should approach our dilemmas.

**FINALLY, WE KNOW THAT GOD IS ALWAYS IN CONTROL (Daniel 2 v. 18 – 30)**

He responded in mercy and answered their prayers (**v. 18**). He revealed the mystery and gave Daniel a vision (**v. 19**). God was given the glory in private by Daniel (**v. 20 - 23**). God used his servant to save the situation (**v. 24**) and God was given the glory in public by Daniel (**v. 27 - 30**).

**Song Suggestion**

My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less

**Prayers Of Intercession**

As pray together this day, we will pause between each prayer and reflect in our praying: Therefore, Let’s pray for:

Everything you give us Lord, for the sunshine and the rain and the changing seasons, and the resilience to walk with you in these times.

Those families that are known to us. For those who are young, working, elderly. Those who struggle in their mental health and their physical health. Those who are lonely and depressed.

You being there in every circumstance and situation that we find ourselves in.

Those without homes, through eviction, or the inability to pay rent, those dispossessed through migration in Europe and throughout the world, particularly those affected by wars and natural disasters in their home country.

Your kingdom that is founded on love and that you welcome all people there. We remember the promise in John 14 that your house has many rooms and we are assured of our forever home with you.

Those who are marginalised and live on the edge of society. Praying for their dignity and wellbeing.

For those schools that have broken up for the Summer holidays and those families that will struggle with child care and having enough food to feed their children during the holidays.

One another. Praying for health and strength today.

Our Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Give them wisdom and guidance in the days that are ahead.

**Amen**

**Moment Of Reflection**

Even small actions have consequences. And while we can often choose our actions, we rarely get to choose our consequences. **Brandon Sanderson**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father who art in Heaven

Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

On earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

And the glory, forever and ever.

**Amen**

**Song Suggestion**

Lord The Light Of Your Love Is Shining

**Blessing**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

Seek God’s will in all you do, and he will direct your paths.

**Amen**