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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

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**Daniel's Dream Interpretation**

**Daniel 2:28-45**

**Prayer:** *Father, I just again thank you for the fact that we are redeemed by the blood of the lamb. I just praise you for that incredible gift. Thank you for sending us your son, thank you for sending us your word as well, Lord. Again, as we open up your word, we just once again want to pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit, guide us, take us into your word, give us understanding of what it is that you have for us there and enable it to become a permanent part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, Nebuchadnezzar, that's who we're looking at right now, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, has had a very troubling dream. And he demands that the wise men not only tell him the interpretation of the dream but he wants to know the details of what the dream consisted of as well. And when they proved themselves incapable, he becomes enraged. And so he sends out an edict to have all of the wise men in Babylon killed, and at this point we know Daniel is one of those wise men. So Daniel seeks out the fellowship of his fellow believers, Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego and together they come before God in prayer. God miraculously answers the prayer by providing all of the details of the dream as well as its interpretation.

And so we pick up on the story of Daniel as he begins to detail this interpretation. And he starts out by giving an introduction. He tells the king in this dream that God has given him, that this first of all is a dream about the future. Now, only Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, and God knew that. He starts out in *Daniel 2:29* says: *"To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be."* Then he goes on to tell the king that he Daniel was chosen not because he was particularly wise but because he was uniquely appointed by God to make the dream understandable. He says in verse 30: *"But as for me, 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."* And then Daniel goes on to do what no one else could ever hope to do, and that is to give an accurate description of what the dream consisted of. And because of that, Daniel has established without a thought his legitimacy as a wise man in Babylon. Just imagine if you are king Nebuchadnezzar and after all of the excuses and all of the failures of all the otherwise men, here is someone telling you

in exact and in particular detail precisely what you know the dream is all about. Well, that alone should be enough give Daniel enough authority in laying out the interpretation of the scripture. But one of the things that we've seen is as the world looks at Daniel, they see him as someone who has no authority, because for centuries now, critics have assailed the book of Daniel as a fake, as a forgery. They claim it's a forgery because the description of the historical events that follow was so accurate they're just -- they just assumed that Daniel faked the account and that -- that he tried to make it seem as if it was far older than it actually was. They claim he was a simple observer of history who was actually a fraud and tried to design his observations of history as if they were prophetic.

Well, Daniel's description of the dream is this. This is starting at verse 31. He says to the king: *"You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, altogether were broken in pieces, and became*

*like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Well, having given Nebuchadnezzar an accurate description of something that only he and God knew, Daniel then goes on to interpret the dream. He says in verse 36: "This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all -- you are the head of gold."*

Well, Daniel acknowledges what everybody else including the king already knows but he does it with a little twist, he tells him he's king only because God has given the kingdom to him. But then he lays out a grand plan for the future describing four different empires including Nebuchadnezzar. He says: *"Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these."* Well, Daniel could only describe them but history has named them. We know the king who was gold was followed

by the Medes and the Persians who were silver who were then followed by the Greeks and Alexander the Great who was -- Alexander the Great would was bronze, and finally by Rome which was the kingdom of iron. Now that fourth kingdom Rome ruled for centuries with an iron fist and then it degenerated, fracturing into many smaller kingdoms some of which were iron, some of which were soft clay. Verse 41 says: *"And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay."*

Now it's during this kingdom of iron that the most significant event in the history of mankind takes place. In a town in Bethlehem in a barn or a cave, we don't know which, a peasant woman named Mary along with her husband Joseph oversaw the entry of God himself into the world of flesh and blood. Verse 44 says this: *And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. Daniel's beginning to describe a kingdom like no other, an eternal kingdom that's going to be turned over to*

no other. Not only will this have no end, but he goes on to say that it will completely and utterly overwhelm and destroy all of the other kingdoms of the earth. He says: *"It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."*

What God is saying through Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, something that I've spoken about over and over and over again, Daniel is simply telling him that there are two kingdoms that are operating at present. There's a visible kingdom that Daniel is a part of and Nebuchadnezzar is temporarily the head of, and there's an invisible kingdom that sits high and above all things including all earthly kingdoms that God has dominion over. He says Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of gold would be replaced by Persia only to be replaced by Greece, who will then be replaced by Rome, and during Rome's rule, the king of the universe will enter into planet earth. Daniel made this interpretation of the dream even though he lived over 500 years before Christ was born. And again, you have to remember the context that Daniel is operating in here, he is standing before Nebuchadnezzar who was at the peak of his power, he reigns over the

entire world, and he's telling him that not only is his kingdom going to come to an end but that it's going to be replaced by three subsequently different kingdoms, each of lesser quality as it goes along, from gold to silver to bronze to iron. And that during the reign of the iron kingdom, power would be splintered and divided and then the King of the universe would arrive. Now folks say this is an out and out fraud, and the reason why critics of the book of Daniel claim it's a fraud, that it's written ahead of time and then faked to have been written beforehand is because what Daniel predicted to the last detail is exactly what is unfolding. The reasons why such predictions are so threatening is not because they are so accurate but because of what they are predicting. Again, verse 44 says: *"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever."* Like I say, there's two different kingdoms that are operating here and the Kingdom of heaven which rules over all of space and time and the kingdom of earth which is temporary and locked into a timetable that will end in its complete and utter destruction. Now if you're ever wondering why it is that people have such a visceral gut reaction of, to be plain, to be simple, of hatred towards Christianity, you're going to find your reason right here. Again, this is *Daniel 2:34*, it says: *"As you looked, a*

stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, altogether were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Well, the stone that Daniel is talking about is Jesus Christ. I mean, he's the conquering lion who will grind the kingdoms of this world literally into a powder that is just blown away by the wind. What he's saying is there's not going to be a cease fire, there's not going to be a truce, there's not going to be a negotiated settlement, instead there's going to be complete and total victory for one kingdom and utter destruction for the other. In other words, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world are never going to make nice with one another. Jesus is its worst nightmare. That's why the people of this world have a gut level hatred of the gospel even though many of them don't even realize it. I mean, Jesus made that clear when he was explaining how this world works to his disciples. He said this in *John 15:18*, he said: "*If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*"



Now according to Daniel, Jesus is the stone that after crushing the kingdoms of the world is going to become this great mountain that's going to fill the entire earth. Is it any wonder that he's going to be hated by that earth, by that kingdom that he's going to overwhelm? Jesus acknowledged as much in a conversation he was having with the religious leaders who had soundly rejected him as Messiah because he didn't fit their image of what the Messiah was supposed to be, and so the very ones who were supposed to welcome Messiah with open arms are those who were already committed to his destruction and to them Jesus referred to himself as the stone who would break them in pieces. This is *Mark 21:42*, it says: *Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."* What Jesus is saying here is that he poses an existential threat to virtually all of the kingdoms of the world, I mean, there's no truce, there's no cease fire that's ever going to take place between these two kingdoms. They are both committed to the other's destruction. One represents light and truth, the other represents darkness, destruction and lies. The king who Daniel says is going to be born during the reign of the rule of iron will

be the one responsible for the utter destruction of the kingdoms of the world. That's why Daniel describes it as a stone. Verse 45: *"Just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."*

Well, here's where Daniel's word begins to speak to us. See, every one of us in this room has been born first and foremost into that kingdom that is headed for absolute and utter destruction. *"The dream is certain, its interpretation sure."* But if you are a child of God, that is if you by faith have asked Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior, and that he who is God in the flesh then will stand in your place before God. I mean, God's justice has no choice but to condemn sin, and *all we like sheep have gone astray*. All we are sinners, every single one of us. And as Isaiah says: *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned -- everyone -- to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all*. And because God has laid on him our iniquity, we can now stand spotless and clean before God. We now stand as his children. And so if you are a child of God, you are born a citizen of planet earth. You are born again a citizen of the kingdom of God. In other words you hold dual citizenship in two different kingdoms.

And this is how it plays itself out in our life. You see, one kingdom wants your undivided horizontal attention. It wants you focused on the temporary and on the meaningless and it spends all of its energy convincing you that that's what really matters. Scripture speaks to that specifically in *Philippians 3:18*, it says this, it says: *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame -- who set their mind on earthly things.* Well the other kingdom wants your attention devoted vertically. *Colossians 3:1* says: *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Well now there's an awful lot of folks who understand that these two kingdoms exist, there's the horizontal one, there's the vertical one and they try as much as they can to serve both. Christ tells us, no, it doesn't work that way. Christ tells us you have to make a choice. He says in *Matthew 6:24*: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* Daniel is telling us what's going to become of God's kingdom and of mammon's. You see, Daniel is our link to

the past, the present and the future of both of those kingdoms, and the more we understand the wisdom that God has placed in Daniel, the easier it is to see the wisdom in living your life for the kingdom that he lived for. You see, Daniel lived in a culture that's very similar to ours. You know, he too -- he had ample reason to wonder if God was still as powerful or even as interested as he had been in the past. Remember what's happened now, Jerusalem has been invaded, the temple itself has been violated, the sacred vessels which used to be in the temple in Jerusalem are now sitting in the treasury of a foreign God. Terrible stuff has happened. God's been mocked, God's been challenged and seemingly defeated by a monstrously cruel and evil people. That's not too far from what we have today, I mean, God is certainly mocked by our culture every single day, whether it's in movies or stage shows or television. And every day or so, science and culture challenges even the most basic premises of the gospel. We have authors like Dawkins and Hitchens and the like who've made a living out of attacking Christianity and they routinely make it to the best seller lists. And the public square seems to be systematically and systematically rooting God out. We know he's no longer welcome in our schools, he's no longer welcome at our athletic events, he's not welcome in the military. And so it's easy to start thinking that, well, we Christians, we're now in full retreat. Well, you know, Daniel could have thought of that just as easily. Or not.

And he chose to not. Daniel chose not to set his mind on earthly things and instead he set his mind on things above, not on things of this earth.

Well, how did he do that? We want to know how he did that because we want to be able to do that ourselves. And to do that he enlisted the grace of the past, the power of his present, and the wisdom of his future. See, Daniel's faith was not just a shot in the dark. It was based on his past knowledge of the history that his people had been through and what God had done in bringing them to where the temple of Jerusalem was before it was invaded. Daniel knew that his people's past was marked by a whole series of spectacular miracles that God did in freeing his people from slavery under the Egyptians. But here's the point. Those miracles belonged to Daniel and those miracles belong to us as well. You see, we, too, need to rely on the history of God's miracles not only in the lives of his people in scripture, but in our lives as well. Daniel knew that he had a past that was full of miraculous proof that God was real. He also knew that he had a present that was full of God's miracles that proved God's presence and power as well, and we need to have that as well.

I spoke last week about this idea of a celestial bank account, that's your own personal history, your own account of the things

that God has done in your life to prove to you that he's not just some nice religious theory but that he's real and substantive, that he's an actual personal God reveals himself to those who diligently seek him. Every single child of God needs to have some distinct connection to what God has done in their lives, from their salvation and their past to what God is doing today in their present. And if the only thing that connects you to God is the religious training that you received as a youth, then you have a very tenuous connection indeed. I spoke last week about God more often than not meeting us in our times of crises, and if you can honestly say or think that I've never, never had a meeting with God or even a crisis of any sort, I would say you're either very, very young in the faith or so strong in your commitment that you don't even know a crisis when you're in one. The bottom line is that God reveals himself more often than not just like he revealed himself to Daniel in a time of crisis. You know, perhaps you think God's revelation of himself has to consist of these overtly spectacular miracles that Daniel experienced. Well, I can tell you that more often than not God engages in quiet miracles, miracles that can be so easily overlooked and easily forgotten because I know that and I know that well because I'm guilty of doing just that. You know, someday I think every one of us are going to see reproduced for us every one of the miraculous things that God has done in our lives. My guess is I'll be astounded to see that I knew only about

one-tenth of the things that he did and of that one-tenth, that I remembered less than half. That doesn't make them all the less real. I tell people all the time when God does something wonderful in your life, write it down. Make a record of it because you will forget, you'll move on to something else. It just won't stay in your consciousness.

I had a dear friend that wrote me this past week an email about one such quiet miracle that he had. He was a very successful businessman and he left his business because there were some things going on that he just didn't approve of, and so he'd been working for the last couple of years on start-up businesses, bringing in very little money for almost three years now and he and his family are going through a considerable financial hardship, and in the middle of this, he rediscovered a faith that he had embraced but let slip for almost 30 years. He now finds himself once again passionate about his relationship with Jesus Christ, and its interesting to me that it required a mental, physical, and spiritual crisis for this to take place. I mean his wife and his family can't imagine what in the world has come over him. He's talking about Jesus all the time. And he expressed to me in his email how his wife is deeply depressed over the fact that they could very easily now lose their house and over the fear that one of their children who is struggling with mental illness is never

going to return to full health. My friend's email said he was trying to comfort her a few nights ago, and he said she got a phone call. He said it was nothing less than a miracle, this was a miracle from God, it was literally God's comfort. I just edited the email a little bit but this is give you a sense of what he sent me, he says this, describing his wife, he says, Saturday she gets a call from an old friend of mine -- he calls my wife, not me -- and says when he was praying the night before he got a very strong message to call her and not me. And by the way, they live in North Carolina now and I haven't seen him in two years. This is totally out of the blue. And so he spends two hours on the phone with her telling her about their financial issues as well as their daughter's mental health. He is a deeply committed Christian, and he just gave her verse after verse to calm her down and get her back on track. God is great. Well, this is a person who's having a very tough time, but this is a person who understands what I mean when I say God loves to deliver quiet miracles. And the quiet miracle is, you know, he got a strong message while he was praying, you need to call that person and then the phone rings and that's God on the phone. That's the kind of quiet miracle that we're talking, this is God letting you know that he loves you, that he cares for you, that he is there, and that he will not forsake you. You know, it may not mirror the parting of the Red Sea or the manna that fed the Jews in the desert but don't say that to my friend. I



mean, God has proven miraculously that he's there, that he loves them, that he is there to walk with them through whatever it is that they're going through and this is the way God does quiet miracles. The great and the grand miracles of the parting of the Red Sea and the feeding with the manna, those belong to us, they belong to everybody, they belong to Daniel, they belong to us, they're part of our heritage. The miracle that my friend experienced belonged to him and his wife. I mean, those are the miracles that go into your celestial bank account. They're the miracles that give you a past, a present, and a future, knowing that God is in charge and that God is still trustworthy.

And so I want you to ask yourself, have I ever had that experience in my life? Has somebody ever touched me, have I ever had some kind of circumstance where I know God is just interacting in my life? I remember Deymiss telling me about the dolphins and how they appeared and that was just a sign to her from God that he loved her and that he cared for her. I've heard many, many stories of other people, just saying how God has in a very quiet way just touched them, and you know sometimes you seek these kind of things, often times like they did -- like it happened with my friend, they seek you. Many a times God doesn't ask for our permission for a quiet miracle or before he puts us in a crisis that's going to reveal him as more than just a theoretical God. Of course that

doesn't mean you wait around for a disaster. I mean, there's a way to increase the likelihood that a miracle like that is going to happen voluntarily. I can tell you how you can greatly increase your chances. Just put yourself in a position to be needing God's miraculous intervention. Chances are far greater you're going to receive it. You know, if you like to keep your life safe, if you like to keep your life controlled, if you like to keep your life within the boundaries of your comfort zone, well then don't be surprised if God is nothing more than a textbook subject that you file under the heading "religion." And I'm also -- I'm not saying that the more reckless and careless you are, the more God is required to intervene. What I'm saying is that God reveals himself far more readily to people who are more actively in the process of seeking him. He just reveals himself more to those who are than to those who are not. He says in *Luke 11*: *"And I tell you ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."*

You see, Daniel asked, Daniel sought, Daniel knocked on heaven's door because he was facing imminent death. His past contained all of the miracles that we have in common, his present was marked with miracles that he was seeing right in front of his eyes including the health that he and his companions enjoyed and the fact that he

now had all of the details of Nebuchadnezzar's miraculous dream. It was those miracles that made Daniel say in *Daniel 2:22*: *He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. "I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers; 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 demand."* You see, if Daniel's past has the same miracles that our past has and his present has these miracles that we're reading about happening right before his eyes, it is his future that more than anything should give us ample reason to trust God now in our present, a present that I might add looks depressingly defeatist to many. I mean, all Daniel knew about the future was what he was telling Nebuchadnezzar. You know, four different kingdoms would come and go beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's and ending with Rome's, and during Rome's iron epic, the king of the universe whose power would ultimately smash all of the kingdoms of this world into tiny little pieces, pieces so small they would blow away like the chaff on the threshing floor, you know, that king who would be God in the flesh would enter into mankind. Again, Daniel says: *"As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, altogether were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so*

*that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."*

Well, wouldn't you know, history has borne out precisely what Daniel predicted. I mean, so much so that the primary cause for rejecting Daniel's prophecies is that they're too accurate. They had to have been a fake, nobody could be that accurate. You know, they're dismissed as a fraud written after the fact and faked to be written beforehand because the only way someone could be that accurate would have to have a miraculous intervention by a God that Daniel's critics detest. Daniel's simply reporting what God had spoken to him. He revealed to his king and he had no way of knowing that *"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people."* He couldn't have known that the real king was about to be crucified, died, and buried and then rise up on the third day and that from that little band of twelve that he started with, a church was going to arise, that it would grow to thousands and thousands and then begin to spread by virtue of being persecuted and that everything that the world threw at it to destroy it, the king would use to make it grow stronger and bigger and grow farther and farther until it left the Middle East and then reached throughout all of Europe and then into Africa and when persecution once again rose against it, it just moved to North

America. And from North America it grew further still into China, Africa, and Asia and even now in the Middle East as well. And anytime you focused on the particulars of whether or not this church was going to survive, when it was just getting underway in the book of Acts or when you see the great persecutions in Europe or what took place in the very beginning of this country, you see something like a church under siege, you see a church that looks like it's about to collapse. But now having had over 2,000 years of what Daniel could only glimpse at, we have seen that the enemy's desperate attempts to destroy God's kingdom have never worked. They've only served to make the church stronger. You know, ISIS loves to brag about how they're going to destroy the crusaders in God's kingdom. Well, so did the Philistines and the Huns and the Visigoths and the Nazis and Stalin's Russia and Mao's China and the Kmer Rouge and all the others down through the ages, and guess what? *All together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them could be found.* I know there's still traces of some of the these kingdoms about but they've been consigned to the dust bin of history, and the church of Christ still marches on.

So what is our past, present, and future take away from Daniel this morning? Number one, every single child of God has a legacy of a

miraculous past. From the miracles that God has done through the patriarchs and through the prophets, and we know the world has tried mightily to deny the historicity of those miracles and even more so the historicity of Daniel's book. The kingdom that Daniel spoke of was going to ultimately destroy the kingdoms of this world and that kingdom is not happy about that. And the more hysterical their attacks become, the stronger the church has always become in response.

Number two, every child of God should have a present connection to their own miracles, miracles that Daniel experienced, you and I can experience as well and often times they occur in times of crisis. And more often than not they're quiet miracles that are often and easily overlooked. When God touches your life, find a way to write it down, find a way to make it permanent. Spread it around so that other people know and can remind you when things are going badly. I can't tell you the amount of times I found myself in a crisis and I reflected back on God's faithfulness in other crises and it gave me the strength and the wisdom to go on. Each of us has a celestial bank account that God has made a deposit in. The number one and the most important deposit in this one in *2 Corinthians 1:21*, it says: *And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.* Every single

child of God has received that deposit. *Philippians 4:19* says:  
*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* And if that need is encouragement, my God will supply it, however form it takes. You know, sometimes God whispers to us through these quiet little miracles and other times he shouts with louder ones because our God is real and his love for us is just as real. He is far more than just a set of theological propositions.

And thirdly is the future. You see, what Daniel sought dimly we have the privilege of having seen over the past 2,000 years. And we see that the future is unfolding exactly as Daniel said it would and we have the privilege today of 2,000 years of hindsight. Personally when it comes to the future and how we react to it, as I said, there are two types of people in this world. There are people who live horizontally, in the here and now, and there are people who live vertically, in the kingdom to come. And God makes it crystal clear which one he wants us to be. He says in *Colossians 3:1*: *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.* So he's telling us we're to focus squarely on our future above.

I want to conclude this morning with C.S. Lewis's thoughts from

*Mere Christianity* on setting our minds on things above. Many of you have probably heard this before. It bears repetition. This is what he says, he says: "A continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you will get neither." Let's pray.

*Father, I do thank you and praise you for your goodness and I thank you for what you have given us in the book of Daniel. You have given us a past, a present, and a future that we can rely on, that we can seek for comfort, that we can seek for wisdom. I just continue to pray, Lord, that we would each understand that the past belongs to each of us, our present belongs to the quiet miracles that you are doing even now in our hearts, and our future belongs*



to the unfolding of your plan which we have seen take place for the last 2,000 years. For that we thank you, Lord, and we pray your continued grace to be able to put that into practice. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.