

# Lightwave Study Series on Daniel

For small groups



## WEEK 2: Faith and a Political World

**Aim:** To consider how we can be a prophetic voice, witnessing to God's ultimate triumph over evil

### Welcome

Play clips from songs which you've brought along – each explain what you feel the song you have brought says about popular values.

When Nebuchadnezzar was troubled, he automatically turned to magicians and astrologers for a solution. Where do people look for wisdom in our world? (You may have noticed this coming out in the songs you listened to this week) How is God involved (or not) in the solutions people look for? Should Christians look for wisdom in different places?

### Word

#### Read Daniel 2

1. What are the timeless truths we can learn from Daniel's interpretation of the King's dream?
2. What encouragement do you think the Israelites will have gained from Daniel's prophesy?

#### **What is prophesy?**

Prophecy is communicating a message from God – It includes a wide range of activities recorded in scripture and experienced in the church, making a connection between today's experience and God's vital truth. These include

**The personal** - where dreams, visions, words and images give insight for an individual

**The predicative** – where themes and events in the future are brought alive in present experience

**The political** – where the plumb line of God's justice is measured against the political and social realities of the day

3. Daniel acted as a prophet in this story – hearing God's word and communicating it clearly. He explained to the King, "There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries." In what ways does God reveal mysteries today? Brainstorm all the different ways God uses to reveal his truth to individuals and the church. Share with each other some of the ways in which God has spoken to you. E.g.
  - a. What experience have you had of the written word of God being prophetic – bringing a clear, relevant word of hope to a situation in which you have been involved?
  - b. What about spoken prophesy – have you ever received a direct word from God that has provided encouragement and guidance to you? How did you respond?
4. What enabled Daniel able to speak prophetically to Nebuchadnezzar about the political future of the kingdom? (verses 19-23, 28,30). In what ways can the church be a prophetic sign and voice to the world, responding to evil in the light of God's ultimate triumph?

### ***How does Daniel's Interpretation of the dream correspond to History?***

*The large statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represented the 4 kingdoms which would dominate as world powers:*

- *Head (gold) – Babylonian empire - 606BC-539BC*
- *Chest and arms (silver) – Medo-Persian Empire - 539BC -331BC*
- *Belly and thighs (bronze) – Greek Empire – 331BC-146BC*
- *Legs and feet (iron and Clay) – Roman Empire – 146BC – 476 AD*
- *The Rock – Jesus, born in the time of the Roman Empire – The King of the coming Kingdom which will never pass away.*

### **Worship**

Close your eyes as a member of the group reads Daniel 7.9-14 – the prophesy foretelling God's ultimate triumph. Try to imagine the scene. Share your impressions of the court scene with the group and use the thoughts, encouragements and challenges this scene provides to lead you into a time of worship. Spend time thanking God for who he is, what he has done and what he promises to do. Then in twos pray for each other's present struggles and concerns – pray that you will respond in the light of God's ultimate triumph.

OR

Play some background music. From newspapers, cut out the current issues which you long for God to speak into. Stick them onto a large sheet of paper using the glue sticks. Pray for those areas. As you do so paint over and around the words with gold and silver paint as if you are painting God's words and God's perspective into the situation.

### **Witness**

Continue to pray and plan for a social outreach event or an Alpha course or whatever your group is currently seeking to do to reach out.

Continue to plan your next group social. Decide who is going to lead the various parts of next week's meeting. Let someone read out "During the Week" and make sure everyone understands what to do.

### **DURING THE WEEK**

If you haven't yet done so, read Daniel 1-7 to get an overview of the passages that we'll be studying in the next few weeks. It won't take long and there are some great stories in there. Make a note of any burning questions.

For next week, the leader of the welcome section will need to bring some playdough. The leader of next week's worship will need to read Daniel 2.17-23 and prepare carefully. Bring some worship CDs and a player or arrange for someone to lead some singing. You can get prayer materials, pictures of persecuted Christians etc from the charity Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Daniel's prayer in Daniel 2. 17-23 is a good example of how to pray

- It is good to pray with others
- We should thank God in advance for working in our situation (Daniel thanked God for revealing the dream to him even before checking with the King that it was right.)
- We need to acknowledge God's greatness and sovereign control
- We need to acknowledge that all we are and have comes from God.