



ST. MATTHEWS  
*Experience God's Family*

Sermon Title: **Daniel part 4**

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Last week we saw that God, in ways we sometimes can't understand and at other times in ways that we can, controls all of history for the sake of His eternal Kingdom, His King Jesus and the good of all who belong to that Kingdom. And we should take hope and comfort in that even in this hostile world.

And now in chapters 3 – 5 we start to see the dream of the statue being fulfilled by God in a bit more detail so you can see that God is in control not just a merchant of dreams.

**Main point: God is the King of kings and His people must live without compromise or fear under His rule!**

### **Pray**

**It is said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupt absolutely.**

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That is probably one of the key themes in a study of politics.

And the struggle for power is playing itself out in our country in quite a dramatic way with the goings on around Julius Malema and his followers. But we are not unique in this – every country has their own version of this in one way or another.

I suppose you could say that a study of history is really a study of power.

In any given time of history there will be different countries who at the same time think they rule the world. And within different countries different people who believe they wield the most power.

We could ask that question now – who does rule the world? Who is the most powerful leader in the world? Which is the most powerful country? Who is the most powerful person in SA?

**Well, the Bible brings a whole different perspective to the discussion and study of history or politics.**

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It says: **God has the most power. God is the King of kings and His people must live without compromise or fear under His rule!**

And that is powerfully seen in Daniel 3 – 5.

We start in chapter 3 with the account of the four men in the fire (One of the most popular children's church stories).

And just to remind us of the theme of Daniel, here again we see what it looks like in the flesh to trust God in a hostile world.

3: 1 – 6; 13. Bold response 16 – 30.

The choice for the three men was simple.

They could **(out of fear) compromise** and obey the most powerful man on the face of the earth at that time or they could be faithful to the invisible God that they by faith believed to be **King of kings!**

There is also a great lesson here for us on the issue of guidance in the way that Shadrach and his friends handle this.

They tell the king that they won't bow down to his image and have complete confidence in their God.

But what is their confidence? They are confident that God can save them from the fire – but they also know that he may not.

Their confidence doesn't come from knowing what God's plan is. Their confidence comes from simply knowing that God has a plan.

They are confident because they know that their God has it under control, He is the King of Kings, even if they don't know what the outcome will be.

And in this case they experience God not only as the King of king but also as the Savior King.

**But Nebuchadnezzar hasn't quite got the message yet.**

While he seems to have raved about what God has done in chapter 2 and 3, he is still a hugely proud king who ultimately sees himself as more important than God. He has not really seen that God is the King of kings.

And God is going to teach him this the lesson in chapter 4 in a radical way (chapter 4 letter of praise to the only true God – the God of Daniel – telling of what God had to do to teach him the lesson that God is King of kings) Note 4: 1 - 3.

4: 10 – 17; dream and Daniel interprets the dream 4: 22 – 27 then 4: 28 – 37. Gets the lesson and is saved from his circumstances. And even for this pagan king, the Savior King is at work.

**But then Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar becomes king (chapter 5).**

And he throws a party and is showing off the objects of worship taken from the temple in Jerusalem to a thousand of his nobles (the objects used to worship the "King of kings"). They (that is him, his nobles, wives and concubines) decide to use some of the goblets from the King of king's temple to drink and get even more drunk than they are and worship their gods. He obviously hasn't learned the lesson his father had.

A so a hand appears from nowhere – a real party stopper – 5: 5 – 6.

Daniel (suggested by the queen) interprets the writing on the wall – 5: 18 – 31. ("The writing is on the wall"),

And unfortunately Belshazzar learns the lesson in judgment not salvation. Whether willingly or unwillingly all rulers and people will one day have to acknowledge that the God of the Bible is the King of kings!

## So what does this mean for us?

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### **Firstly, it means that God is the King of kings.**

There is no king on a throne, no government in a parliament, no person in leadership anywhere in this country, continent or world other than those God allows. They come and go according to His will and plan!

Like last week a great comfort and fills us with hope.

But that doesn't mean (in this fallen world) that all governments and rulers are good. There are still governments and tyrants today who do evil and persecute those who stand up for God against evil, especially Christians.

Mention Open Doors list and by the way Daniel (9<sup>th</sup> October **Daniel Shayesteh!** One of the founder members of the Hezbollah in Iran and former leading Muslim political leader and teacher of Islam. Come and listen to his testimony of transformation through Christ.)

### **And secondly, His people must live without compromise or fear under His rule!**

But the world will not like that. Even some who profess to be Christians will not like that.

We (those of us sitting here today) may not be thrown into a fiery furnace but we may be one day be imprisoned, certainly ridiculed and have to suffer in other ways. The NT is clear that will happen if we live with no compromise!

And all because we live our lives in a way that shows that God is the King of kings...

Or in NT terms for living in such a way that with life and lip we declare that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords as John says in Revelation 17: 14.

And we say whether directly to the leaders or their followers that these leaders should submit themselves to Jesus who is the very God that King Nebuchadnezzar eventually submitted his life to and was rescued.

Or if not to understand that "the writing is on the wall" for them as it was for Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar and they will face judgment like he did for their rejection of the King of kings and the way that showed in their leadership!

Sometimes on a smaller scale, living like that may also cost us family, friends, business contacts, jobs and so on.

And at whatever level, will we be able to show half of the courage S, M & A had when we do face what we face. How will we live with no compromise or fear for the King of kings?

Well we don't have the power in ourselves.

It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit (prayer & Word) and as he gives us more faith through to really believe that really God is the only Super Power and we need to live to please Him above all others!

And all other powers and leaders and others (good or bad) will come and go... But God and His Kingdom will stand firm forever smashing all other kingdoms as we saw last week...

Even smash those individuals that persecute us for standing up for the King of kings and Lord of lords and being His witnesses, if they do not change and submit to Jesus!

You see we have seen the end – Daniel; rest of the Bible especially NT. And we know who wins (even if it doesn't seem like it at times).

And we who trust in Christ are on the winning team even when the world thinks we are losers!

A bit like the winning of the 1995 world cup – people were tense I was calm – video

We have seen the video – Daniel; rest of the Bible especially NT (revelation). And as D, S, M & A discovered so we to know His Word is trustworthy!

We know that once Jesus is our Savior King can save us from any trouble on this world, but even if He doesn't... when we die He will receive us into heaven to be with Him forever.

So we can by His grace and in the power of His Spirit confidently say whenever we face persecution of any sort that God is our King of kings and we His people will live without compromise or fear under His rule!

NB part of the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6.