

## **The Courage to Speak Truth to Power** **Daniel 2:1-28a**

With the increasing militancy of atheism and secularism, Christianity is being pushed out of the public square and into the private sphere. Atheism views the universe as a closed system. It's that world-view that Daniel 2 challenges.

### **A Restless Heart**

Nebuchadnezzar is the most powerful man in the world, but his heart is restless. A dream has left him feeling haunted and threatened. Despite every he has, he does not have peace. In our day, our consumer culture has not made us happy, and success can seem empty.

Nebuchadnezzar was a religious man – but his religion added to his burden. He knew he needed to appease the gods, but he didn't know how. He is caught in the trap of religion. He needs help, so he asks his wise men to tell him, and interpret, the dream. They admit they cannot. Their world is a closed universe. Their materialistic, rationalistic world view has no word of peace for the king's troubled heart. Neither religion, nor atheism, can answer our inner restlessness.

Only a God who speaks into our world can do that. He has done that in Christ: the word become flesh, the very thing the wise men said could not happen.

### **A Courageous Faith in A God who Speaks**

Daniel's life is at risk. But he doesn't hide. Despite living under an opposing world-view he has not been cowed into quiet submission. He speaks calmly with Arioch. He is not a hot-head. He goes to the king because he knows he can get an answer. He is a man of courageous faith: he believes God can do this. He does not buy into the world-view of a closed system. That takes courage.

There is a courage that comes when you know that God has spoken, and still speaks, through his word, and supremely through Jesus. Like Daniel you can speak truth to power when you know that the 'power' you are speaking to is not *the* power. Daniel could speak the truth to the king because he knew who the real king was. He also knew that everywhere else the king looked for inner peace and security would fail him. Only God could do it. When you know that, you can have a self-assurance that comes from outside you, that means you can speak the truth, even under threat.

### **The Fellowship of the Cross**

Under threat Daniel does two things. First he goes to his friends. He's a man in community. If our faith is to survive in Babylon, if we are to speak the truth and challenge the culture, we must be too. We need the fellowship of the cross, knowing that Christ is the one who gathers us. Secondly Daniel prayed. He knew they needed God. He was self-assured, but he was not self-reliant.

### **When Victory Comes**

Daniel saved the lives of the wise men – men opposed to his own world-view. We can love those who hate us, when we know Christ loved us and died for us when we were his enemies. When he goes before the king, Daniel reflects all the glory to God. If our faith is to thrive in a pagan culture, and if we are to speak the truth, we must resist the desire to draw attention to ourselves.

But whilst Daniel is humble he is also clear and points the king to God. We must do the same. Only the gospel can give us this combination of courage and humility. And that's why we can speak the truth to power, and do so in love.