

Daniel 2: “19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. 23 "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."... [Daniel goes before the King]

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ... 31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image!

This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."”

"Sent Into Battle: Our Commissioning"

This week we come to our final message on worship learning how and why we are commissioned: A portion of the service that can be seen, just as we do the Advent season, as both an end and a beginning!

Most churches end their service with a benediction or blessing which should be seen as not only the end of a worship service, but the beginning of a new week of service to our King!

- **To see the importance of our commissioning we must step back & see the big picture, something we certainly saw in the morning text:**

God is always future oriented and the chart in the order of worship can help us understand that. On the left side we see the covenantal pattern where God takes hold of something or someone, to change or reorder them, to speak instructions to them and bring about maturity. God then confirms the covenant with signs & seals [often a meal]... And finally, God looks to the future & the purpose for which He took hold of something or someone in the first place.

Looking across the bottom of the page we see that with creation in general & Adam individually the purpose was to have the earth full of Godly people who have become mature stewards of God's creation.

- **With the calling of Abraham, we note that he was to be fruitful and become a blessing to many nations.**
- **God's people were delivered out of Egypt so they could possess the Promised Land.**
- **The nation of Israel was restored after the Babylonian captivity so they could prepare for the coming of the Messiah Who would bring a Kingdom that would fill the earth as Daniel's interpretation of the King's dream foretold.**
- **The whole purpose of the New Covenant is given in the Great Commission, which is why we end our service with our commissioning and a blessing from God!**

So as with the Advent season, the commissioning portion of our service is both the end and the beginning...

- **It is the proper end of our Covenant Renewal Worship service...**
- **AND it is the beginning of our new week of service in the Kingdom of Jesus as it fills the whole earth!**
- **We have gathered together in response to God's call**
- **We have remembered that we belong to Jesus, wearing His white robes of righteousness!**
- **We have matured in our faith as we have been instructed by God's Word and brought forth our worship, gifts and prayers.**
- **We have been given food and drink indeed as we partook of the body & blood of Jesus at His Table!**

And now God desires to bless us with much fruit in the work of His Kingdom.

- **Our Covenant God has a plan and a purpose for us experiencing such renewal during the worship service each & every week!**
- **Through it we are properly prepared to serve His purposes!**

This is why we do more than just say a benediction to bring an end to our service.

- **After we have celebrated at the Lord's Table together we are reminded about how important our commission really is with another reading from the Scriptures...**

Often it is the Great commission, but we also use other references relating to the expansion of God's Kingdom. Then we read together another portion of Scripture and sing a Psalm or one of the great hymns of the faith like A Mighty Fortress is Our God or Joy to the World focusing on our commission.

- **One last time we are allowing the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God to shape and mold our thinking as we prepare to go forth...**
- **It is important that we consider carefully what we are hearing and reading and that we once again sing heartily before our Covenant God...**

We need to stay focused on what is being taught and not be distracted by thinking we need to get to the restroom or how really ready for lunch we are...

Again, this is God's Word that we are reading, that powerful sword wielded by the very Spirit of God, and we are singing in the presence of God lifting up our right worship.

Then we pronounce the benediction, the blessing God gives to the people:
using Aaron's blessing or one of several New Testament passages w/ blessings.

- This is a blessing from God that we are to receive!

[It is appropriate to have our hand or hands outstretched to receive such a blessing: Catching as opposed to throwing.]

And finally, just as we always begin with the same song of adoration, O Worship the King, we end our service with the singing of Simeon's Song and the Doxology. While many of the songs that we sing in the service can be difficult for our younger members, we provide various places where they can heartily sing along...

- Parents you should be diligent in making sure that they know these songs AND that they participate.

Simeon's song is a fitting way to end our covenant renewal service:

- God had promised Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah...

So, in Luke's account we read that [Simeon] took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said:

29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

- We are to be prepared to go forth and serve Jesus with the same faith that Simeon had, as he believed that this tiny six-week old baby could & would bring such momentous changes to a very needy world.

With our hands once again lifted up, we proclaim with Simeon's faith... "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever more shall be, world without end, AMEN.

- We join with the Saints who have gone before and the hosts of heaven in declaring the glory of God with the New Song believing that God has a plan and purpose for all of history!

Again, we see our commissioning is both the end and the beginning:

- We have concluded the divine worship service and are now ready to begin our divine service to God throughout the week.

As we have reviewed each portion of our worship service here at Church of the King, we have asked if we believe the reality of what is taking place.

-- We were challenged to believe that God REALLY calls us into His presence to renew covenant with us each Lord's Day.

-- We were challenged to believe that Jesus REALLY came to save His people from their sins and that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

-- We were challenged to believe that God REALLY changes us with the Word of God, the sword wielded by the Spirit of God to shape and mature us for right service, demonstrated as we respond with our singing, praying and giving.

-- We were challenged to believe that Jesus is REALLY present with us at His Table where we feast together with God receiving food and drink indeed!

- Now we are challenged to REALLY believe that God is moving in history AND that He wants us to be a part of His work!

This is why I chose the long passage from Daniel chapter two as our morning text: We heard Daniel plainly explain that God had revealed secrets of His plan that spanned thousands of years of history.

He outlines the history of the great empires, beginning with Babylon as the golden head, then the Persian Empire as the chest of silver, followed by the Greek conquests as the thighs of bronze & finally the early & later Roman empire as the legs of iron and then iron feet & toes, mixed with clay as a divided Kingdom.

- As the King dreamed on, a stone cut without hands destroyed these Kingdoms leaving only chaff to blow in the wind.
- But that uncut stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
So there is no doubt about what this means, Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream:

Daniel 2:44 “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

There is some confusion today about this dream, so let me ask the children to help us understand it properly:

- What was established when Jesus came? That’s right a Kingdom!
- How big will this Kingdom become? That’s right it will fill the whole earth.

Now there are many today in the church who argue that this is all stuff in the future, taking place in some future millennial reign of Jesus from a throne in Jerusalem. Their BIG problem is that it does not fit what is plainly taught in Scripture. We know that God’s command to Adam and Eve was to fill the earth and take dominion and that this mandate was spoiled by their sin. However, God shows that He has not given up on His plan to fill the earth with His Kingdom when He says again in blessing Noah after the flood, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

We have often cited the promises to Abraham that his descendents would bless the nations of the earth.

We know the promises to King David that His Son would rule the earth from his throne and how Jesus explained this could only be speaking of Him.

I would not have time this morning to review the many parables & teachings of Jesus during His earthly ministry where He explained the growth of His Kingdom or to review how the Book of Acts is the story of how the Spirit is carrying out the plan to have the Kingdom of Jesus fill the earth!

But we can see how the Apostle Paul explains to the Church at Corinth that what Daniel had said about the growth of the Kingdom, was in fact “certain and sure” just as he had said it was!

I Corinthians 15:24 “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

- Both Daniel and Paul plainly teach that the Kingdom of Jesus began at His first coming which we celebrate in the coming weeks!

Jesus came to save His people from their sins, was raised in power and ascended to God’s right hand as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Spirit was sent at Pentecost to comfort and empower us as the Body of Christ as we carry out the Great Commission that our Lord gave us:

Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- What a promise and what a commission!

So we are left with two important questions: Do we believe Daniel's dream to be certain & sure and that the Great Commission actually calls the Church to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus? I trust I have made the case from the Scriptures that the answer is a resounding YES!

- IF we do believe this how do we know what our role in God's great plan is going to be?
- As we have often pointed out, the Great Commission is a tall order, but one that is accomplished by God as He uses simple acts of obedience. Just as we walk a mile one step at a time!

We are to remember and believe the great promises of God and then we are to simply be those who trust & obey. We are to believe that God really is taking history where He wants it to go, that the earth will be filled with the Kingdom of His Son and that He has a role for us to play in the advancement of that Kingdom! And as Nate Wilson often points out, it is a good practice at times to step back and ask if we like our character in God's story [*can be pretty humbling*] So just how do we trust & obey in the week ahead? Jesus rightly brought everything back to the two great commandments:

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.

The Ten Commandments explain what this means: We are to cast aside ALL idolatry and respect God's name, which represents His authority & power, as well as His Day, which represents His control of all history. Then we are to respect our parents as the earthly picture of God's rule and to respect and love those made in the image of God by not killing them, not committing sexual sins with them, not stealing from them, not bearing false witness against them and not coveting their possessions.

So how do we know if we are doing this right in the life we are living today?

- In short, we need to know our Bibles well and to practice what we learn by faith!
- God's Word teaches us how we are to grow and mature as young people.
 - God's Word teaches us how we are to faithfully serve God as single people or married couples.
 - God's Word teaches us about the joy and beauty the world should see in our marriages.
 - God's Word teaches us about the worth and importance of our calling in our homes and to the world.
 - God's Word teaches us about the wisdom of age & respect for our elders
 - God's Word teaches us about the importance of raising Godly children, both as their parents and their sponsors or examples.
 - God's Word teaches us about the priority of caring for widows & the poor among us.
 - God's Word teaches us about the importance of sharing the Good News with others, being those beautiful feet who bring the message of hope!
- And I hope & trust that we have learned in these past few weeks how God's Word teaches us to rightly worship our Triune God!

Communion Meditation: Revelation 19:

"13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."