

Word notes Sunday 17/06/2012 Michael Meeks
Daniel 7 take 2

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Daniel 7

Last time Michael looked at the prophecy in Daniel 7 and asked what it would mean for the history of the Jews, how it would naturally result in the people of 1st century Israel being expectant for a Messiah as the fourth beast was at that time very much upon them in the form of Rome. In this second look at the passage Michael gave an explanation for the little horn of verses 8, 20 & 24, who the “Son of Man” is and the kingdom of that Son.

The little horn speaks boastfully against the saints and so is clearly “anti-christ” and indeed scripture warns us of such anti-christs in eg 1 John 2:18. Whether you see this as a singular anti-christ or as a repeated pattern of opposition to the saints is for you to decide, however it’s true that this has been seen again and again through the history of the church. If we obsess about the beasts then we concentrate on the ugly things of life and miss the beauty and wonder of God and that are will win. Yet should we simply ignore them and just wait for the good that will come? No in Daniel 7 the people are fighting, not against the kings but against the principalities and powers as in Ephesians 6. People need to be loved and brought into the kingdom. Many Christians have different views of the end times but even those with the most pessimistic view are still active in trying to improve the kingdoms of this world in line with God’s ways and protect what we have.

The Son of Man. In Matthew 16 Jesus asks: “who do people say the Son of Man is? John has this revelation that Jesus is the Messiah the son of the living God. Why did Jesus say not to tell? Well there were many false Christs about claiming to be the messiah such that the name had lost all value and we too need to be watchful of those who spend more time talking about their own anointing than about Jesus. In using the title “Son of Man” Jesus clearly claims to be God in direct reference to Daniel 7 and the Jews of Jesus time knew it – look at the reaction he got at his trial (Mark 14:62-65). The same challenge remains today – who do people say Jesus is?

The Kingdom. Christianity is a relationship, not with a buddy or life-coach but with a King who surveys the universe, the Living God whom we are created to love and obey. We don’t join a club called the church, Colossians 1:13 tells us how we are rescued and brought into the kingdom. To become a Christian is not an understanding of arguments but a determination to be rescued by and come under a new king who knows how to lead you. Jesus didn’t say admire me or even agree with me but “repent and follow me”.

In Mark 8: 36 Jesus says “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” Isn’t the contrast between beasts and war and mayhem versus the peace and tranquillity of the Kingdom in verses 9 to 10 truly attractive and enough to sway us over to the King of kings? Who is it best to follow – the great rulers and kings of the world depicted as “beasts” or the great King, the Son of Man who rules forever?

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Do you find prophecies like those in Daniel and Revelations helpful, confusing or downright discouraging?

How did Michael’s exposition in these two sessions help you understand these and relate them to the real world in history, for now and for the future?

Who is it that opposes you and seeks to shut you up when you speak of Jesus? How do you react to them and generally to opposition?

What did or does becoming a Christian mean to you, are there parts of your life even now which need to come under the Kingship of Jesus?

What does being a member of God’s Kingdom mean to you in terms of your day-to-day actions? What about decisions you make in life about your time, your possessions and your money?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Pray for this Sunday’s Church Without Walls and invite guests along.