

Hold on it really is happening

We read the first chapter of Daniel too quickly. We treat it as a warm-up, a story about a young man who politely refuses the king's food and gets a glow-up for his trouble. But look again. Daniel is a teenager who has watched his city burn, been marched hundreds of miles from home, been stripped of his name, and been enrolled in a programme designed to erase his identity and remake him as a Babylonian (Daniel 1:3-7). Everything that anchored him has been taken. And it is precisely there, in the wreckage, that God begins to do something.

Hold on. It really is happening.

I want to say that to you today, because I suspect many of you are living in the gap between the promise and the evidence. You sensed God stir something in you. You felt a shift you cannot quite name. And yet your circumstances look stubbornly unchanged. The door has not opened. The healing is still pending. The vision God gave you years ago is sitting in a drawer marked "one day", and you have begun to wonder whether you invented the whole thing.

Here is where Keller would press us to be honest about our assumptions. We instinctively read delay as a sign of God's absence or displeasure. We assume that if God were really at work, we would see it, feel it, measure it. But that assumption is not biblical. It is cultural. It comes from a world that worships the visible, the immediate, the trending. Scripture tells a different story. It insists that God is most often at work underground before He is at work in the open, that He forms in secret what He will one day reveal in public.

Daniel understood this. When Nebuchadnezzar's dream left the wise men bewildered, Daniel did not panic and he did not perform. He gathered his friends to seek mercy from God, and the mystery was revealed to him in a night vision (Daniel 2:17-19). Notice the order. The revelation came in the dark, in the waiting, in the company of people willing to pray. We want the platform first and the intimacy afterwards. The Kingdom works the other way round. God shapes the character in the hidden place before He entrusts the influence in the public place (Psalm 75:6-7).

So if you are in a concealed season, do not despise it. You are not being overlooked. You are being prepared.

And here is the deeper thing, the gospel logic underneath the moral. When the answer finally came, Daniel did not run to leverage it for his own advancement. He stopped to bless God, declaring that wisdom and power belong to the Lord, that He changes times and seasons, that He removes kings and raises them up (Daniel 2:20-21). Before he interpreted Babylon's culture, he settled the question of whose culture it truly was.

Daniel could worship in exile because he knew that his security did not rest on his circumstances but on the God who rules over them.

That is the difference the gospel makes. The person who is trying to secure their own significance cannot afford the waiting, because every delay feels like a threat to the self they are building. But the person who has found their security in God can hold the promise loosely and faithfully at the same time, because their identity is already settled. They are not waiting to become someone. They are already loved, already His.

So hold on. The things God has whispered to you are not fantasies. That sense of "surely this is coming" is not wishful thinking. It really is happening, even now, even in the dark, even while the outward evidence lags behind the inward witness. Remember that the same God who met Daniel in the night is at work in your mystery too, and He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion (Philippians 1:6).

Do not lay down what He has given you. Gather your friends, seek His face, worship the answer before it arrives, and give Him the glory when it comes.

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Questions

1. Where might God be working in the wreckage of life, not in spite of it? **(Daniel 1:3-7)**
2. Who do you turn to when you need to seek God together? **(Daniel 2:17-19)**
3. What is God forming in your hidden season? **(Psalm 75:6-7)**
4. Have you settled whose kingdom it is before stepping into influence? **(Daniel 2:20-21)**
5. What promise are you tempted to let go that He is asking you to hold on to? **(Philippians 1:6)**