

Donnybrook

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Welcome

Our strange first reading is closer to our experience than you might think. The first part of Daniel 1-6 is made up of exemplary stories of resilience and faithfulness, as we have been hearing all week. It is not the powerful who have the last word but the wise and the faithful. At the time, it must have seemed an unbelievable as it does today.

Topic

In chapter 7, the gloves come off and we shift into a very different, both more oblique and more direct, world.

Steps

Behind the weird and wonderful world of apocalyptic stands a very human question and very Christian conviction. The very human question is: where is God in the mess? A double answer is given. Even through we cannot see it now, God will eventually show himself to be powerful, just and compassionate. Because of that future hope, we are invited now to steadfastness, a kind of holy resilience. But there is more. In the vision of Daniel and people who write apocalyptic, it is important to see that the present trials are not just challenging now; instead they are really labour pains (they use the image), leading to a birth and new life. In other words, we encounter God not in spite of the mess but through it.

Conclusion

Such a spiritual configuration might seem brave *and* *escapist*. The difference between us and the time of Daniel is this: Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. And we believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, the son of Man, risen from the dead. As we face trauma and trial and as we wonder where is God in all this, we know Christ is with us through it all.

Finding God in the mess: meditations for mindful living

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