

# DEEPER

## Daily Bible Study

Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

### From the Lions' Den to the Angel's Den

2020, Quarter 1, Lesson 7

#### Sabbath (February 8): From the Lions' Den to the Angel's Den

The lessons this week conclude our study of Daniel 1-7, what is often referred to as the narrative portion of Daniel. We have seen repeatedly that the stories in these chapters contain remarkable parallels with many of Revelation's prophecies. That pattern continues in these lessons. The parallels between Daniel 6 and the Third Angel's Message in Revelation 14:9-12 are striking:

- Daniel is filled with the Holy Spirit (Daniel 6:3), just like the saints in Revelation have received the seal of God through the Holy Spirit (Revelation 7:1-3 and Ephesians 1:13).
- Daniel keeps the law of God (Daniel 6:5) and demonstrates unshakeable faith, just like the saints "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).
- Daniel's enemies cannot find any fault in Daniel (Daniel 6:4), just like the saints stand without fault before God's throne (Revelation 14:5).
- Daniel's enemies choose to attack him based on his observance of God's law (Daniel 6:5), just like the saints pressured to receive the mark of the beast, which will be another end-time attack on God's law (Revelation 13:15-17).
- Daniel is pressured to participate in false worship of the king (Daniel 6:6-8), just like the saints are pressured to participate in false worship (Revelation 13:15 and 14:9).
- Daniel is condemned to death for remaining faithful to God (Daniel 6:13-16), just like the saints are (Revelation 13:15).
- God delivers Daniel from the plots of the wicked (Daniel 6:21,22), just like the saints will be delivered (Revelation 15:1,2).
- Daniel's enemies suffer the same fate that they had intended for Daniel (Daniel 6:24), just like those who receive and enforce the mark of the beast will be destroyed (Revelation 14:10,11).

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read 1 Corinthians 10:11 and Romans 15:4. For what reasons has God provided historical "pictures," or types, of end-time events? How has understanding these parallels helped you grow in your own faith in God? (Answers will vary.)

#### Sunday (February 9): Jealous Souls

Daniel 6 records a plot to destroy Daniel, a prophet of God and the Persian Empire's highest ranking administrator under Darius. The plot, concocted by Daniel's jealous colleagues, aimed at Daniel's political demise and his complete destruction. As we discovered in yesterday's lesson, the plot against Daniel contains many parallels with Revelation's prophecies surrounding the mark of the beast. Today, we will look more closely at the intense investigation that Daniel's enemies launched against him, how he was found blameless, and what that means for us today.

## Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 6:1-4. How significant is it that Daniel's enemies could find no fault in his work, loyalty to the king, or even in his private life? What does this reveal about Daniel's character? (Daniel was a genuine and authentic servant of God, which also made him a faithful, committed, trustworthy, and efficient worker. The fact that his enemies could find no fault in him after days, weeks, or even months of scrutiny testify to the purity of his character. Compare Daniel's experience with what we are told will happen to God's faithful people at the end of time: "All who in that evil day would fearlessly serve God according to the dictates of conscience, will need courage, firmness, and a knowledge of God and His Word, for those who are true to God will be persecuted, their motives will be impugned, their best efforts misinterpreted, and their names cast out as evil" [*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 431,432].)
- Read Daniel 6:5. What was the only thing that Daniel's enemies could finally find to use against him? (His loyalty to God and obedience to God's law.) What promise and encouragement does Daniel's experience leave for us today? (It should encourage us to know that it is possible, with God's help, to live in such a way that our private and public lives can stand up to the closest scrutiny—and pass the examination even of our enemies.)

Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. They will be accused of disaffection toward the government (*The Great Controversy*, p. 592).

- Read 1 John 4:17. What does this Bible promise mean to you? What does it reveal about how we should be living our lives every day, not just when people are looking closely? (Answers will vary.)
- Read the statement below and discuss what it reveals about how God's church should be preparing for the crisis ahead:

For the outpouring of the Spirit every lover of the cause of truth should pray. And as far as lies in our power, we are to remove every hindrance to His working. The Spirit can never be poured out while variance and bitterness toward one another are cherished by the members of the church. Envy, jealousy, evil surmising, and evilspeaking are of Satan, and they effectually bar the way against the Holy Spirit's working. Nothing else in this world is so dear to God as His church. Nothing is guarded by Him with such jealous care. Nothing so offends God as an act that injures the influence of those who are doing His service. He will call to account all who aid Satan in his work of criticizing and discouraging. {6T 42.1}

## **Monday (February 10): The Plot Against Daniel**

When Darius signed the decree drafted by Daniel's enemies, he not only "set in stone" a blasphemous human law, but also directly attacked God's law. In today's lesson we will look at the plot against Daniel and its parallel attack on God's law.

## Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 6:6-9. How would you characterize the law that was drafted in an effort to destroy one man? (In their hatred for Daniel, his enemies unwittingly created a situation that would bring the entire empire—or at least those within the empire that obeyed the law—into violation of God's law. In their effort to destroy the servant of God, they were willing to condemn themselves and everybody else who might obey their law.)
- Read Daniel 7:23-25. In what ways are the attacks against God and the saints at the end of time similar to those brought against Daniel? (They both involve an attack against the law of God. The question seems to be: Are God's laws or man's laws more important, more powerful, and more enduring?)
- Read Daniel 7:26,27. What comfort and encouragement should we draw from these verses? (God will prevail in the conflict with sin and the powers that oppress His people and His law.)
- Read Psalm 119:121,122. How do these verses explain Daniel's commitment to, and faith in, God? (Daniel had "purposed in his heart" to obey and serve God, and now in this time of crisis he entrusted his fate to the God that he served.)
- Read Psalm 119:126. In what way was this verse fulfilled for Daniel? In what way will it be fulfilled for all of God's faithful people at the end of time? (Answers will vary. While God sometimes allows His people to be persecuted because of their obedience to Him, He frequently comes to their rescue when the forces of evil make it illegal to serve Him. Examples include Pharaoh's persecution of the Israelites, Haman's efforts to annihilate the Jews, and the stories found in Daniel 3 and 6. Revelation's prophecies reveal that at the end of time, God will again work to deliver His people just before they are destroyed.)

## **Tuesday (February 11): Daniel's Prayer**

When Daniel was faced with a decree prohibiting worship of the true God, he simply continued living, and praying, as he always had. The lesson is a simple yet powerful one that every Christian today should emulate.

## Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 6:10. How did Daniel respond to the worship law that had just been passed? (He essentially ignored it and continued praying and worshipping as he always did.) Was this a wise move on his part? (Not according to human wisdom, but Daniel was not depending on human power to save him.) Did Daniel expect God to deliver him? If not, what would have been the motivating factor in his decision to violate Darius's law? What does his example mean for us today? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Psalm 55:16,17. Did Daniel's three-prayers-a-day regimen begin in his time of crisis, or was this a habit that he had formed before this? (Compare Daniel 6:10. Daniel had been praying three times a day "aforetime," and he simply continued this habit when the crisis struck.) What very practical lesson does Daniel's commitment to daily prayer hold for us? (His daily prayer and time with God was the source of his courage and faithfulness.)

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17. What did this advice mean for Daniel? What should it mean for us today? (Answers will vary.)
- Read the statement below and discuss the various aspects of Daniel's character and lifestyle that are good role models for us:

The case of Daniel was presented before me. Although he was a man of like passions with ourselves, the pen of inspiration presents him as a faultless character. His life is given us as a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength and wisely improve the opportunities and privileges within his reach. Daniel was an intellectual giant; yet he was continually seeking for greater knowledge, for higher attainments. Other young men had the same advantages; but they did not, like him, bend all their energies to seek wisdom—the knowledge of God as revealed in His word and in His works. Although Daniel was one of the world's great men, he was not proud nor self-sufficient. He felt the need of refreshing his soul with prayer, and each day found him in earnest supplication before God. He would not be deprived of this privilege even when a den of lions was opened to receive him if he continued to pray. {4T 569.1}

### Wednesday (February 12): In the Lions' Den

God's preservation of Daniel in the lions' den is one of the most dramatic revelations of God's power in the entire Bible. The impact of this miracle was demonstrated immediately as the pagan king Darius referred to Daniel's God as "the living God." As we have been seeing throughout this lesson, this entire story—and the revealing of God's power in it—are types of what will happen at the very end of time.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 6:11-23. For what reasons did God allow Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den, rather than intercede for him prior to this? (God allowed this for the same reasons that He allowed Daniel's three friends to be thrown into the fiery furnace—their deliverance was more dramatic, God's power more clearly seen, and their faith strengthened and purified to a great degree, by trusting God to the point of death.)

God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den; He permitted evil angels and wicked men thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was that He might make the deliverance of His servant more marked, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness more complete. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Psalm 76:10), the psalmist has testified. Through the courage of this one man who chose to follow right rather than policy, Satan was to be defeated, and the name of God was to be exalted and honored. {PK 543.3}

- Read Daniel 6:20 again. What is so significant about how Darius refers to Daniel's God? (He refers to Him as "the living God." This is a title that, other than in this story, is always used by worshippers of God [compare Deuteronomy 5:26; Joshua 3:10; 1 Samuel 17:26; and 2 Kings 19:16].) What does this suggest about the impact of Daniel's deliverance on Darius? (He had to acknowledge that Daniel's God was "the living God.")
- Read the passage below and discuss any similarities that you see between Daniel's experience and the events that will take place in the closing scenes of earth's history:

When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof. {GC 635.1}

The people of God—some in prison cells, some hidden in solitary retreats in the forests and the mountains—still plead for divine protection, while in every quarter companies of armed men, urged on by hosts of evil angels, are preparing for the work of death. It is now, in the hour of utmost extremity, that the God of Israel will interpose for the deliverance of His chosen. Saith the Lord; “Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth ... to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.” Isaiah 30:29, 30. {GC 635.2}

With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objects of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness. {GC 635.3}

### Thursday (February 13): Vindication

Psalm 7:15-16 reads, “He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.” The somber reality of these verses was played out in the destruction of Daniel's enemies as they suffered the same fate that they had intended for Daniel. At the same time, Daniel—and his God—is vindicated, and he enjoys the prestige and power that they had hoped for.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 6:24. While the execution of Daniel's enemies and their families is difficult to read about, what important realities should this story remind and warn us of? (Several lessons stand out. First, it is ultimately futile to fight against God and those that serve Him. Second, every act will be brought into judgment. Third, sin leads to destruction. Finally, the wicked will be “recompensed in the earth,” that is, in the same place that they plotted and committed their sins [see Proverbs 11:31].)
- Read Daniel 6:25-27. What do you make of Darius's second decree in this chapter? Is it any more just than the first decree? Why or why not? (Enforcing worship of God is no more just than prohibiting worship of God, for any effort to compel the conscience runs contrary to the principles of heaven.) Unjust though it may be, what does Darius's second decree reveal about lessons he has learned about “the living God”? (He has learned that Daniel's God is the only true God. His decree is also an expression of praise, sifted though it may be through a pagan and autocratic mindset.)
- Read Daniel 6:28. This is the last historical glimpse we get of Daniel. We aren't told how long Daniel lived after this, or how long he served the king. But we are told that he “prospered.” How do you think this was true for Daniel? (Answers will vary.) What promise does Daniel's “prospering” give to us today? (If we are faithful to God, we too will experience His blessing and prosper—if not in this life, then certainly in the next.)

### Friday (February 14): Daniel, the Mark of the Beast, and Justification by Faith

Earlier this week we noted numerous parallels between Daniel 6 and the Third Angel's Message of Revelation 14. While the Third Angel's Message warns against receiving the mark of the beast, its

core message focuses on what we should receive—the righteousness of Christ. Consider this statement that reveals the connection between Revelation 14:9-12 and justification by faith: “Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, “It is the third angel’s message, in verity” (*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890; 1SM 372.)

In the Bible, the term *justification* refers to a judicial act of God in which He pardons the sins of those who believe in Christ and treats them as righteous in the eyes of the law. As *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* explains, “It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law (Rom 5:1-10).”

In printing terminology, the word *justification* refers to the aligning of text within the margins of a page, and this use of the term illustrates well the practical results of genuine conversion and justification. God’s Word is creative and powerful, and when He declares a person justified, His Word also begins a transformation in that person’s life that brings them into alignment with the holy law of God. *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* points out that “[j]ustification is not the forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness which perfectly and forever satisfies the law, namely, Christ’s righteousness (2Cr 5:21; Rom 4:6-8).”

This helps explain how “justification by faith is the third angel’s message.” As the final conflict between God’s law and man’s law develops at the end of time, and as the mark of the beast is enforced, the decision each person makes will determine whether they possess Christ’s righteousness—and His power to live in fulfillment of God’s law—or their own faulty “righteousness,” which is really no cleaner than filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

### Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 12:3. What does this verse reveal about the witnessing and lifestyle of God’s saints—those that are “wise”—at the end of time? (They will be living with Christ’s righteousness, and will be teaching others how to claim God’s power to live lives in harmony with God’s law.)
- Read Daniel 12:10. The importance of “understanding” God and His Word occurs repeatedly in the book of Daniel. What does this verse imply the wicked—those who do not understand—will not experience? (They will not be “purified, and made white, and tried.” In other words, they won’t receive Christ’s righteousness.) Within this context, what is true understanding? (To experience Christ’s righteousness in one’s life is to truly understand.)

Those who presume to think that the law of God has been done away, and that it no longer exists, have set up an imperfect standard of their own. Measuring themselves by their own finite standard, they pronounce themselves pure and perfect. Satan has just such a standard, by which he declares that he is righteous; but these false standards cannot compare with God’s unerring standard of righteousness. No one who has an appreciation of the verity of the law of God will claim an exalted character for himself. Our true position, and the only one in which there is any safety, is that of repentance and confession of sins before God. Feeling that we are sinners, we shall have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is able to pardon transgression, and impute unto us righteousness. When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, then the sins of the repentant soul who received the grace of Christ and has overcome through the blood of the Lamb, will be removed from the records of heaven, and will be placed upon Satan, the scapegoat, the originator of sin, and be remembered no more against him forever. The sins of the overcomers will be blotted out of the books of record, but their names will be retained on the book of life. The True Witness says, “He that

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overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." When the conflict of life is ended, when the armor is laid off at the feet of Jesus, when the saints of God are glorified, then and then only will it be safe to claim that we are saved and sinless. True sanctification will not lead any human being to pronounce himself holy, sinless, and perfect. Let the Lord proclaim the truth of your character. {ST May 16, 1895, par. 4}