

Study of Daniel – Part 1

Written and typed: 3/10/24

- Let's begin a brief character study of Daniel – one of the prominent prophets in the OT
- Mentions of Daniel in the Bible
 - Book of Daniel
 - 12 chapters
 - Speak to the life of Daniel of course – how he was a righteous and a wise man
 - I would say that the main theme is the fact that God is in control – God is in control of nations is something we see throughout the book of Daniel
 - A fact that is reiterated for us in Romans 13:1 – *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*
 - The fact that God controls nations is a fact that we must accept and let God execute His will for nations
 - Romans 9:20 – who are you O man to talk back to God?
 - I don't know why God controls nations in the way He does - His ways are better than my ways (Isaiah 55:8-9), where was I when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4)
 - I don't know why God does some of the things He does, but I'm glad He does and I'm glad He's in control
 - A big message of the book of Daniel and I would say that probably the main one is that God is in control – specifically of nations in this book
 - Daniel was a prophet and the book of Daniel is full of prophecies and each one seems to be about how God brings this nation up to conquer another, but there's going to be a point during the rule of one of these nations that God is going to raise up a kingdom that will never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44)
 - All these other kingdoms, they'll come & go
 - **But not this kingdom – we all likely know what this kingdom is (the Lord's church of course) and we'll talk about this more in Part 2 of our study**
 - References outside the book of Daniel
 - **Ezekiel 14:12-23** – God is passing judgment upon Israel (specifically Jerusalem in vs 21) and says that due to persistent unfaithfulness, His hand is against it
 - He is going to send famine, cut off man and beast from it
 - And not even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it would it be spared – only themselves would be spared
 - Daniel was clearly a righteous man
 - **Ezekiel 28:1-10** – the prince of Tyre considered himself to be a god, therefore God is bringing judgment upon him
 - God speaking through Ezekiel in vs 3 saying that the prince of Tyre thinks himself to be wiser than Daniel
 - Daniel was clearly also a very wise man
 - **Matthew 24:15-20** – Jesus speaking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives

- Mount of Olives was just East of the city of Jerusalem
- From their vantage point, they could see the temple (Mark 13:3)
- The Mark 13 account also specifies that Jesus is speaking specifically to Peter, Andrew, James, and John
- If you remember, earlier that day – Jesus was delivering His woes to the Pharisees (Matthew 23) and as He was leaving the temple, He said *“Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”* Matthew 24:2
- When was the temple destroyed? 70AD of course – so Jesus is clearly speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem for a portion of Matthew 24
- And in vs 15 – He gives His disciples and all who would later read this the cue to get out the city before the Romans get there and before the rebel Jews who were in the city totally take over
- Vs 15 – *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand),”*
- So first thing to notice – if we didn’t already know that Daniel was a prophet, he is because Jesus calls him a prophet
- Goes onto tell them to get out of the city in vs 16-20
- Notice their sign though – Daniel spoke of it – the abomination of desolation
- Abomination – something God hates, specifically in reference to something or someone that takes people away from God in a faithful sense (It’s no secret that many of the first several emperors of Rome thought themselves to be a God and demanded to be worshipped, thus becoming an abomination to God)
- Desolation – totally deserted, unoccupied
- So by definition – the abomination that caused desolation in Jerusalem at this time was the Roman army
- But if you didn’t want to piece that together - just go to Luke 21:20 – *“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.”*
- I know there are a lot of crazy ideas out there about Matthew 24, but let’s not overthink what the Bible clearly identifies for us
- And Daniel speaks of this
 - This language is used in Daniel CH 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11
 - Your Bible may point to Daniel 11 & 12 in the footnotes, but if I’m reading the prophecies correctly (which I do not claim to understand these prophecies 100%, so my point is – I could certainly be incorrect about this), but to me it makes the most sense that the abomination of desolation spoken of in Matthew 24 actually points to the Daniel 9:27 reference

- The Daniel 11 & 12 references seem to speak of a man named Antiochus Epiphanes and some of the things that he did to the people of Jerusalem
- But the CH 9 reference seems to fit Matthew 24 a little better
 - Gabriel is talking to Daniel beginning in vs 24 and he says Jerusalem is going to be rebuilt but after that, after the 70 and the 62 weeks (according to vs 26), the Messiah is going to be cut off and the people of the prince (Satan is referred to as the prince of the power of the air, the prince of this world in Ephesians 2:2) – those people are going to come and destroy the city again
 - And the people who bring the desolation will come on the wings of abomination
- So the CH 9 reference seems to be the reference that Christ is using
 - So the main point to note here is that Jesus refers to Daniel as a prophet
- **Revelation 13:1-10** – describes a beast risen out of the sea
 - This beast is described almost identically to the beast described in Daniel 7:7-8
- I would encourage you to look for more references to Daniel in the Bible and let me know what you find! Email (covingtonchurchofchristva@yahoo.com), message on Facebook, etc.
- Key stories of Daniel from the book of Daniel
 - Can you think of anyone who Daniel reminds you of?
 - His life bears a remarkable resemblance to the life of Joseph. Both were taken captive in their youth, were Godly & righteous men, and managed to find employment in a king's court
 - Furthermore, they were both unjustly punished which eventually led to greater honor later in their lives
 - Both made an impression on the earthly rulers they were under by God interpreting dreams through them
 - In the midst of corrupt, earthly kingdoms – both men lived Godly, righteous lives
 - **Daniel 1:1-6** – Daniel was an exile
 - The Babylonian Captivity happened in 3 stages, likely in order to spare lives (Matthew 24:21 – the second destruction of Jerusalem would be worse than the first, and I think this is one of the reasons why)
 - 1st stage (606BC-605BC) – 2 Kings 24:1 (under Jehoiakim' reign as king)
 - Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego exiled during this stage (Daniel 1:1-6)
 - 2nd stage (597BC) – 2 Kings 24:8-17 (under Jehoiachin)
 - During this stage, Ezekiel was exiled (Ezekiel 1:1-3)
 - 3rd stage (586BC) – 2 Kings 25, Jeremiah 52 (under Zedekiah)
 - This is when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem

- Babylon camped outside the city for 2 years with intent to starve the remaining inhabitants out (2 Kings 25:3, Ezekiel 4, Ezekiel 5)
 - Finally laid siege to it (2 Kings 25:4-25)
- **Daniel 1:1-21** – Daniel (with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) would not defile himself with the king’s food or drink (vs 8)
 - Not only was God with them (vs 9), but they also were healthier after not partaking in the king’s food and drink (15)
 - So in the face of temptation, we need to stand firm – because in the end, we’re going to come out better
 - In life, there are 2 roads that you can travel
 - Matthew 7:13-14 describes a wide gate/broad road, and a narrow gate/difficult road
 - You wouldn’t even have to try to do anything and you’d be walking down the broad road – how easy would that be? Give into every temptation you ever face, participate in worldly activities, etc. – that road leads to destruction though
 - We need to be travelers of the narrow road – though it may be difficult, it leads to life
 - We need to stand firm in the face of temptation just as Daniel did here
- **Daniel 4:19-27** – Daniel prophesies of the downfall of Nebuchadnezzar
 - He shall dwell with the beasts of the field
 - He would eat grass like oxen
 - He’ll be wet with the dew of heaven
 - Sure enough, it happened (Nebuchadnezzar thought a little too highly of himself in 4:28-30 and God took his kingdom as a result until Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and acknowledged God)
- **Daniel 5:13-31** – Daniel prophesied directly of the downfall of Babylon
 - The writing on the wall – MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN
 - The days of your kingdom are numbered, you’ve been weighed and found wanting, and your kingdom has been divided amongst the Medes and the Persians
 - That very night, it happened (vs 30-31)
- **Daniel 6** – Daniel was cast into the lions’ den and was saved from it
 - Vs 5 – *“Then these men said, ‘We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.’”*
 - That’s absolutely awesome – let’s live our lives in a way that others could say that about you and I
 - We aren’t going to find anything wrong with this guy, we’re going to have to put something into law that goes against the law of his God – that’s the only way Daniel is going to get in trouble with the government
 - Darius really liked Daniel – he was in distress when he had to throw Daniel into the lions’ den – fasted, couldn’t sleep
 - And that’s exactly what they did – they made a decree stating that you couldn’t pray to anyone other than the king of Persia

- Of course, Daniel violated this and was thrown into the lions' den, but was spared from the mouths of the lions
 - We mentioned earlier in referencing Ezekiel 14 – Noah, Daniel, and Job were categorized together there in that chapter. So what do they have in common?
 - Noah was spared from the filth that was in the world at the time by the flood waters (1 Peter 3:20)
 - He survived those waters, he rose up from those waters via the ark that God told him to build
 - Why did he build the ark? Because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8)
 - He didn't have this grace in the eyes of the Lord and say "that's all I need, I'm not going to build this ark like God told me to – that is teaching works salvation"
 - If he'd have taken that attitude, he and his family would have died
 - He demonstrated his faith by his obedience to God's commands because he found grace in the eyes of the Lord
 - Job was spared and you may say from what?
 - Job 2:6 – God told Satan not to take Job's life
 - Job's life was spared and despite the poor advice of his friends and even his wife – he would not curse God and die
 - Now he questioned God – he clearly didn't understand what was going on, but he never cursed God
 - Daniel here of course was spared from the mouth of the lions
 - Similarly, we read of the exiles who were spared from the first destruction of Jerusalem and we read of the Christians who were spared from the second destruction of Jerusalem by heeding Jesus' words in Matthew 24
 - God knows how to save His people, doesn't He?
 - But only His people
 - The people of Noah's generation – all but Noah and his family, destroyed by God's wrath via the flood
 - The people who conspired against Daniel – destroyed by God's wrath via the lions
 - The rebellious people left in Jerusalem in 586BC after the first waves of exiles – destroyed by God's wrath via the Babylonians
 - The rebellious people who did not heed Jesus' words in Matthew 24 – destroyed by God's wrath via the Romans
 - You should be sensing a theme here – if you are not one of God's people, you have God's wrath to look forward to
 - If you are on the fence about becoming a child of God, I would recommend you get off that fence and submit your life to Him according to Romans 12:1-2

- Look for Part 2 of the Daniel study next week as we look at some prophecies in Daniel – chapters 2, 7, and 8 specifically