

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

Volume 25, Number 27

November 29, 2009



Conclusion: The "Big Picture"

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. (Daniel 12:9-13)

Prior to receiving the amazing revelation recorded in chapters 10-12, Daniel had been fasting with a pressing thought on his mind – what would happen with the Jewish people? In response to Daniel's heart-felt concern, God revealed to his faithful servant some of the events that would occur in the near future. Those events revealed a period of ongoing conflict wherein the Jewish people and the land they inhabited would be torn by wars and strife. This wouldn't have been at all a comfort to one like Daniel who desired for the Jewish people to repent, follow God, and be blessed.

Can you imagine if God gave you insight into what would happen with your nation in the near future? What if you had been concerned about such things at the turn of the 20th century, and God had revealed that there would be a world war, followed by a depression, followed by another world war? Knowing that thousands would die and many more thousands would suffer, I believe that I would have shrunk in gloomy despair! I wonder if that is what Daniel felt as he received and understood the vision given to him. I think he must have, and thus asked that question, "O my Lord, what shall be the **END** of these things?" (emphasis added) I can imagine Daniel thinking along these lines: "God, I was taken captive as a young teenage boy; I remained faithful through several kings and threats even to my own life; I stood firm in my convictions and my service; and now, as I stand here an old man having lived my life away from the promised land, I am told that the suffering of my people will continue! What is to be the outcome – the FINAL outcome – of all of this? What hope is there?"

I can relate to Daniel in this thought process. Though not nearly as faithful as Daniel, I look at the events and circumstances of this world and wonder just how far away from God we will drift. In fact, drift is even too nice of a word for a people that are willingly plunging headlong toward

ungodliness! As the world becomes more and more accepting of such behavior, while condemning and even punishing godly behavior, we increasingly look to God for a deliverance from this place, asking "What is there after this, for if our hope lies only in this world, then we are doomed!"

Thankfully God gives both Daniel and us an answer to this seemingly hopeless situation. He does not leave us without hope! For Daniel, God encourages him to continue his faithful journey of life – "Go thy way, Daniel" – and to be assured that God is still sovereign – "...the words are closed up and sealed." We can take this same message for our life. In spite of what seems like an out-of-control situation where the godless are taking over and Satan seems to be winning the war, we should continue to trust in God and not in our own understanding. We should run patiently the race that is set before us, laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us, while looking unto Jesus and pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God our Savior. Continue faithful, God may say unto us, for "I am"! He is still God; He is still sovereign; He is still on His throne; He is not ignorant of the work of Satan; He is not asleep at the wheel; He is not dead. And He will deliver in His own timing, just as He told Daniel.

Notice the language used in verses 9-10 compared to that in verse 4. Both state that the words are to be preserved and kept; however, in verse 4 God encourages Daniel to do so, while in verse 9 God assures Daniel that they will be. I think this is God's assurance to Daniel of God's sovereign power and authority. Daniel was charged to keep and preserve, but Daniel is still wary because he knows that he is at the end of his life. So what will be the end? Don't worry, Daniel, God has it under control; the words are preserved and sealed all the way to the end of time. And just as assuredly as the vision of the

next few years shall come to pass, so also will the vision of the end, when the Messiah shall come not just the first time to save but also the second time to deliver. In the meantime, from man's standpoint (v.4) many will be running around trying to increase their knowledge (i.e. save themselves), but from God's standpoint (v.10) many will be purified and made white (i.e. regeneration) even though they will still suffer tribulation (i.e. they will be tried). Yes, wickedness will continue, and those wicked will not understand their contribution to the decline of the world nor their end. However, those who are wise will understand because they have a respect for God, a desire to follow Him, and hunger and thirst after righteousness. They will understand that things will wax worse and worse until the end, but they will not lose their hope because they will understand the answer to Daniel's question, "what will be the end?" And the answer to that question is deliverance from this world and deliverance to an eternity in heaven with God. They will understand that although God's people – the spiritual Israelites – will be subjected to many tribulations, strife, and conflicts, yet in the end God will take them to their long-sought home, a place that Jesus said was prepared for them. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!!

But Daniel, know this, that you will enter into your rest, and you shall stand in your place – your lot – in that eternal place called heaven. And so also dear reader, if God has blessed you and me with His Spirit of life, we can also know that, though this world continue down the road of Godlessness, yet we shall enter into our rest and stand in our place, receiving that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is reserved in heaven for us. Daniel, we'll meet you there!

Elder Mike Rodgers
November 29, 2009

I am thankful for Elder Rodgers' contributions, both his specific writings through this series, and for his frequent nudging, suggestions, and reflections with me as I wrote these thoughts from Daniel. When Mike first suggested that I consider writing on Daniel, I felt wholly intimidated by the many difficulties in the book.

Over time I came to realize that few books in the Bible are more relevant to our immediate culture and time as this book. Many Christian philosophers refer to our present culture as post-Christian. One need only conduct source document research into our nation's beginning to understand the profound depth of Christianity's influence on the thoughts and institutions of government that our founding fathers created.

We may define "Christian nation" in many ways, and perhaps we should avoid taking the idea that far. The United States was not—and cannot be—God's replacement for His special nation in the Old Testament, Israel. However, much of our culture through the nation's history has been deeply touched by the Christian convictions of leading people in our culture. That fact sadly no longer dominates our nation's cultural outlook. Someone from just about any of the world's religions can claim persecution, and our institutions of government run to their rescue, but when similar—or worse—disservice falls upon Christians, those same institutions smugly look the other way and allow the bias to grow. Yes, Mike, our culture is not merely drifting slowly into ungodliness; we are racing into it.

So how should Bible-believing, godly Christian people deal with this situation? Increasingly I observe devoted Christian people speaking and acting as if they and these very institutions of government hold the solution, so they work tirelessly to move the culture back to its more Christian past. This effort can only fail. Those who pursue this method follow a flawed strategy. While godly Daniel indeed did participate in the processes of government, a unique position to which God raised him up, he never saw the solution to Judah's problems in the institutions of Babylonian government. For Daniel, first and last, God, and God alone was the only solution to his and his people's needs. I consistently urge Christians to go to the polls and vote their conviction, not the party line of either major political party. I strongly urge them to look more at the moral character of the man or woman for whom they vote than at the person's political ideology. However, the solution of our sin-rotted culture shall never appear out of the ashes of decayed government. Our answer lies only in God's wise and powerful intervention. While we should go to the polls and participate in government in every honorable and legal way, our greatest influence on a better future for our culture lies in our prayer life and in our support for godly, model New Testament churches.

Do we try to "run" our churches the way corrupted political leaders "run" our government, or do we try to make our church a model of godly, open, and cooperative service that seeks God's way above all others, even our own? Do we truly understand that the only oasis from this ungodly world in which we live is, always has been, and always shall be our fellowship with other godly believers and not in the institutions of government?

When Daniel's whole world was falling down around his ankles, Daniel looked to his God and maintained his integrity. He therein sets the noble

example for us in our own day and in our own “Babylon.” When the foundations of life and of our culture are being shaken to their foundations—and the foundations are crumbling—“...what shall the righteous do?” They can do only what Daniel did. He didn’t wring his hands and point fingers at all those depraved sinners who are to blame for all the problems. He fully saw and understood what those folks were about, but he understood something else far more clearly. The answer—the solution—to his and to his people’s problems would never come from Babylon or her leaders. They needed God and His deliverance. Nothing else would solve their problem.

Daniel likely was around fifteen years of age when he arrived in Babylon. By the end of the book, he is probably in his eighties at least. The book ends shortly before the seventy-year captivity ends.

From the First Advent, Jesus’ Incarnation, His coming to live on Planet Earth as a man, until the Second Coming when He shall return with a victorious shout to judge the wicked and to welcome His beloved children into eternal glory, finally in their resurrected and glorified bodies, there is one and only one source of comfort and encouragement. That oasis of godly joy we can only realize in fellowship with other godly people who love and worship the same God whom we love and worship. As the Lord prepared Daniel that his beloved people would suffer incredible trials before Messiah would come, so we learn from Scripture that those who live godly lives shall also suffer. What is the final consequence of this scene? It is the same for us as it was for Daniel! Yes, Mike, we shall see Daniel, and together with him, we shall realize the final chapter of God’s glorious deliverance.

In the meantime, let us all keep our hearts, minds, and eyes on God and keep our minds immersed in His Word. There alone shall we find comfort. So the next time you are sitting over the lunch table with other believers, remember the lessons from Daniel. Don’t waste your time talking about the depth of present political corruption. That is “old hat.” Invest in a brighter future for God’s people in this unfriendly world. Talk about our God and about what He teaches us in His book—His Book—the Bible. You’ll go home far more encouraged, and so will that person across the table from you.

So my concluding thought from our study of Daniel answers the question, “What shall the righteous do?” And my answer is quite simple. ***Keep on being righteous. Live your faith without compromise. Be a Daniel in your own circle of friends and culture.***

Little Zion Primitive Baptist Church

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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor