

A Template For Tough Times

#1 – A Story about a Famous but “Unknown” Man, and Us



We think we know his story, but what do we really know? Most people focus on the miracles in this man’s life, or his prophecies (as we try to tie his prophecies to recent events, as people have been doing for centuries!). But, what IS the main point of the book bearing his name? If we want help as believers living in a fallen culture (living in Babylon), we need to grasp the main point. **What is the book?? DANIEL.**

When you think of the story of Daniel, what comes to mind are firey furnaces, scary nights in the Lion’s Den, and a song,

“Dare To Be A Daniel”.

1. What this book is NOT.

This book is NOT an ADVENTURE/HERO story, with an assumption: “If I have enough faith and do the right thing, God will deliver me from danger and persecution. Fire will not harm me and lions will not eat me.”

The PROLEM is, this man and his friends are not EXAMPLES, they’re EXCEPTIONS! The Bible doesn’t record anybody else walking out unscathed! Including Jesus! He SUFFERED and DIED! Redemptively, but still . . .

What’s the misleading message we may get from this man’s story? “If I emulate Daniel’s example, I get Daniel’s result. If I don’t get Daniel’s result, I don’t have enough faith, I’m not committed enough; I did MY part, but God let me down... God didn’t come through for me.” In other words, I couldn’t manipulate God to do what I wanted Him to do!

Here’s the overarching message of the Bible to those of us living in a fallen world / culture:

**** God’s BEST often SUFFER the WORST this fallen world has to offer! ****

. . . a trip down memory lane . . .

Genesis 4; Hebrews 11:36-40 Bad things happen to godly people all the time. Abel, killed by a wicked brother over a dispute over how to worship, of all things! The “Hall of Fame of the Faithful” includes those who were victims.

**** Fact is, The Lord just might have another plan: Sometimes, God chooses to be WITH us IN our trials rather than DELIVERING us from our trials. **** Jesus said, “In this world, you WILL have tribulation” = you will feel as though a big boulder is crushing your chest.

Here’s a reminder from “The Rock” (not Dwayne Johnson): *1 Peter 4:12-19 = fiery trials are a normal part of living a Christian life. Conversion is NOT immunization from prosecution & trials.*

******* More often than not, our FULL deliverance will NOT take place in THIS WORLD . ******

(cf Revelation 21-22) God doesn’t promise us a smooth flight; only a safe landing in the New Heavens & the New Earth. Even our deliverance from sin is in three stages: from the penalty, then the power, then the presence of sin.

And, as far as PROPHECY is concerned, we probably need to trade in our spot on the PLANNING Committee for a place on the WELCOMING Committee! Don't read too much into "blood moons"!

2. What this book IS.

It's a DESCRIPTION of how God's Covenant People (Believers) LIVE in BABYLON. It's a realistic SURVIVAL MANUAL for the Saints. Especially as we live in a culture becoming more "Christian unfriendly" every day.

It's a helpful, practical DESCRIPTION of where 3 distinctively Christian Values come from. And, IF we embrace these values in our lives, we, the "New Israel", will be better fortified for living in BABYLON.

HERE ARE THE VALUES:

HOPE in a world where despair is sucking up the oxygen of hope.

HUMILITY in a world where swagger and self-promotion prevails. Even in "small sandboxes" of media outlets throwing sand at each other.

WISDOM in a world of foolish choices & lifestyles & people defend being stupid and foolish and criticize those who call them foolish and stupid.

EMBRACING THESE VALUES PRACTICALLY IMPACTS HOW WE RESPOND TO THE REALITIES OF LIVING IN BABYLON!

HERE ARE SOME HIGH-IMPACT QUESTIONS WE'LL BE CONSIDERING

1. **How big is our God, and how does our vision of God change our perspective?** Practically speaking, your hope will be as big as your "god".
2. **How bad can it get, and how is Babylon like/not like were we live?** Has America "moved on" from Christianity?
3. **Why do the "bad guys" sometimes win, and how do we respond?** Psalm 73 speaks to Supreme Court decisions and arrests of Christians.
4. **Why does our faith need to be tested, even when we don't like tests?**
5. **What's wrong (if anything) with having a "rapture mentality", and what's the right mentality to have about the future?** Darby and Scofield's dispensationalism. Popularized by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, has deeply affected how we live and what we're expecting to NOT have to endure in the future!