

Bible Study • By Faith – An In-depth look at Hebrews 11

Lesson #46 • Hebrews 11:33b-34

Victory Over Circumstances

“Shutting the Mouths of Lions & Quenching the Fury of the Flames”

Daniel • Part 6 of 6

• H A N D O U T •

►By the end of Part 5 of Daniel's story, we had satisfied the commendation of faith in Hebrew 11 regarding those who had “Victory Over Circumstances by Shutting the Mouths of Lions & Quenching the Fury of the Flames.” However, Daniel's story is so immense that Part 6 has been added to give a more complete ending to Daniel's story. That will be done by touching on some of the highlights of the remaining six chapters.

The Book of Daniel is divided into two main sections: Chapters 1 through 6, which describe the life and times of Daniel; chapters 7 through 12 which describe the visions God gave Daniel. These visions reflect prophetic events beginning in Daniel's time, which then extend, prophetically, into the future of Israel after the Exile, then beyond into the coming world history, and finally, into the future for which we are still awaiting fulfillment.

Most scholars agree that the Book of Revelation can best be understood by studying these visions. But, since prophecy and eschatology is not the purpose of our journey through Hebrews 11, these visions will **not** be explored in any kind of detail.

Q: Chapter 9 included a reference to Jeremiah's prophecy designating 70 years as Judah's total time in Exile. Jeremiah is in Jerusalem and Daniel is in Babylon and there is no record that they were friends. So, what is significant about the fact that Daniel refers to Jeremiah's writings?

Q: Our last study ended with a scriptural end-note: **“So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.”** What do we know about Cyrus the Persian?

Q: Just as Daniel was familiar with Jeremiah's prophecies, he would have been familiar with Isaiah's prophecies as well. What did Isaiah have to say about Cyrus?

Isaiah 44:28-45:4 • When I say of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd,’ he will certainly do as I say. He will command, ‘Rebuild Jerusalem’; he will say, ‘Restore the Temple.’”

This is what the Lord says to Cyrus, His anointed one, whose right hand He will empower. Before him, mighty kings will be paralyzed with fear. Their fortress gates will be opened, never to shut again. This is what the Lord says: “I will go before you, Cyrus, and level the mountains. I will smash down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness – secret riches. I will do this so you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name. “And why have I called you for this work? Why did I call you by name when you did not know me? It is for the sake of Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one.

Q: What makes this prophecy so astounding?

Q: What does it mean that Cyrus was anointed by God? Does that imply that he was part of the covenant of faith?

Q: What are the three responsibilities God gave to Cyrus?

1.

2.

3.

Q: In addition to the responsibilities given to Cyrus, what will Cyrus accomplish because of God?

Q: What does it mean that God would give Cyrus “...treasures hidden in the darkness – secret riches?”

Q: The Lord asks this question: *why have I called you for this work? Why did I call you by name when you did not know me? God answers: “it is for Jacob's sake.” What does that mean?*

Q: Even though we understand it was a way of referencing “Israel,” what caused God's chosen people to be referred to as “Jacob?”

Q: Did Cyrus ever understand that he was being controlled and everything he had came from the Most High God?

Ezra 1:1-4 • In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:

"This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any of you who are His people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you!

"Wherever this Jewish remnant is found, let their neighbors contribute toward their expenses by giving them silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a voluntary offering for the Temple of God in Jerusalem."

Q: How was Cyrus' decree fulfilled?

Q: Since the total Judean population were given permission to return to Judah, why did only a remnant actually go?

Q: How many did end up going back to Jerusalem in the Nation of Judah?

Judeans:

Servants:

Singers:

Q: Did Daniel return with the Remnant?

Q: Since Daniel didn't return with the Remnant, what happened to him?

What do we know about the rest of Daniel's story?

► The chronology of Daniel's life was covered in chapters 1-6. Chapters 7-12 records the various visions that God gave Daniel. Though they are listed in sequential order several of them occur during the times reflected in the first six chapters. Daniel's final vision begins in chapter 10 and covers the remainder of the book of Daniel. This final vision takes place in the third year of the reign of Cyrus and after Zerubbabel has left Babylon to lead the returning Remnant to Jerusalem.

Daniel begins to describe this final vision by stating it took place on April 24th in the 3rd year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia. Daniel reveals his identity by both his Hebrew name of "Daniel" and his Babylonian name of "Belteshazzar." The vision took place on the banks of the Tigris River. For some undisclosed reason, Daniel had been in a time of fasting and prayer when heavenly being appeared to him. Though his companions did not see what he saw they felt terrified and they ran away and hid.

This Heavenly Being began by telling Daniel that he was **"very precious to God"** and that he had been sent to him to give Daniel understanding about the future – the time yet to come.

Q: How does it strike you that the “*Man – the Heavenly Being*” begins disclosing information about the future of Israel by first telling Daniel that he is “**very precious to God?**”

▶ Even though we already stated that this study was not going to include an examination of the vision God gave Daniel, it will help us finish Daniel's story if we make a few generalizations of it.

▶ Chapters 10-12 is one single vision. Much of the language in this vision is either symbolic or written in a mathematical code. Consequently, there has been a lot of heated discussion among scholars regarding the specific meaning of some of the details represented. However, the purpose is stated with clarity. It reveals the future rulers beyond the Persian Empire and provides the exact time, to the actual day, of Messiah's arrival on Palm Sunday and His sacrifice the following week. But the vision goes even beyond that and reaches into our future and the “End Times.” This includes the time of the Seven Year Great Tribulation. Despite the terrors of the Tribulation, the vision, and the book of Daniel, ends with a great promise: All whose name is found written in the Book will be rescued.

The book of Daniel closes with an instruction to man, Daniel:

Daniel 12:9-10a; 13 • But he [*the man, the Heavenly Being*] said, "Go now, Daniel, for what I have said is kept secret and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined by these trials..."

"As for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days, you will rise again to receive the inheritance set aside for you."

Q: What four things does this final statement to Daniel tell us about the spiritual journey of those who have said yes to the Lord and are part of the community of faith?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Q: Considering this entire six-part study of Daniel, what action or decision best reflects the character of Daniel?

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Next Time ◆ Lesson #47
“The Widow of Zarephath”