

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MBC:

1. Our monthly church workday is this Saturday, September 12th at 8:30 am.
2. Paul Seitz will be teaching two classes on Personal Finance on September 13th and 20th during the Sunday School hour.
3. We are having our Fall Women's Conference on September 18th & 19th. All women may register online at: <https://makakilochurch.org/resources/registrations>
4. To prepare for the preaching of the word on this coming Lord's Day, we would encourage you to meditate on the passage ahead of time. This Sunday's sermon will be from 1 Timothy 1:18-20, and the Evening service sermon will be from Genesis 19:1-33.

WHAT WE BELIEVE: *Of the True God* - We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. We believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; 83:18; Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10; Exod. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:6-8; Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12-13; Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7; John 10:30; 5:17; 14:23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5.

WISDOM: "From this life of misery, a kind of hell on earth, there is no liberation save through the grace of Christ our Savior, our God and our Lord. His name is Jesus; and Jesus, we know, means Savior. And, above all, it is his grace which will save us from a worse life, or rather death, after this life; and that death will be everlasting." - Augustine

WORD: "Our Only Savior", Daniel 6:1-28

Suggested questions:

1. Read Daniel 6:1-28. Was there anything that particularly challenged, impacted, or confused you from this Sunday's message?
2. Why does Daniel teach us to not only not fear men (as he does in Ch. 3), but also not to trust in men for salvation as he does in Ch. 6? What are some situations in which we are tempted to trust in men rather than God?
3. What practical lessons can we take from Daniel's prayer life?

DIGGING DEEPER: Daniel's Heavenly Hope
<https://wm.wts.edu/read/daniels-heavenly-hope>

Daniel's Heavenly Hope

Iain M. Duguid

When we read the account of Daniel surviving the peril of the lion's den in Daniel 6, it is important that we don't miss the significance of the closing note of the chapter: "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (Dan. 6:28). This rounds off the story of Daniel's life, and puts his experience in the lion's den into broader context. It reminds us that Daniel's entire life was spent in exile, in the metaphorical lion's den. Yet as the closing note of chapter 6 reminds us, God preserved him alive and unharmed throughout the whole of that time, enabling him to prosper under successive kings, until the time of King Cyrus, when his prayers for Jerusalem finally began to be answered. Cyrus was God's chosen instrument to bring about the return from the exile, when he issued a decree that the Jews could return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem (see 2 Chron. 36:22–23; Isa. 45:1–4).

As far as we know, Daniel never returned home to his beloved Judah. His reward would have to wait until the Jerusalem that is above. In the experiences of Daniel and his three friends, God demonstrated that he could keep his people safe in the midst of their enemies. Life in exile would never be easy, nor would it ever be home. However, through God's faithfulness, it was possible for his people to survive the exile as strangers and aliens, serving the earthly empire in which they found themselves, even while they looked for another city that was yet to come (Heb. 13:14).

This is how Daniel 6 addresses us as well, for we too are strangers and aliens in this world. We should learn from Daniel's experience that the world in which we live is a dangerous place. This world is not our home and never will be. Yet at the same time, we must also recognize that the enmity of the world can never hurt us beyond what the Lord permits. The Lord is our true judge: his verdict on us is the one that really counts. Therefore, in the midst of the greatest of trials and suffering, even when we are persecuted for the faith, we can have a peace that will astound the world, for the Lord holds even our oppressors in his hand, and says, "Thus far and no farther."

The Lion's Den and The Way of The Cross

But does Daniel 6 really give us a realistic perspective on persecution and suffering? Isn't it true that for every Daniel, whom God delivers from the lion's den, there have been hundreds of nameless martyrs whom God did not deliver? Haven't God's faithful ones suffered terribly over the centuries, sometimes at the mouths of lions, or being burned alive in the fire? Aren't believers still suffering terribly around the world today? Where is God in these situations? Were these believers less faithful to God or less important to him than Daniel was?

To answer these questions, we need to see that Daniel 6 provides something more than simply a model of how God deals with suffering believers, or how, like Daniel, we are supposed to stand firm under trials. Rather Daniel 6 is foreshadowing in history the verdict that will be delivered on all believers on the final judgement day. Daniel endured the test of the lion's den, emerging safely out the other side, because God judged him and found him

not guilty; as a result, the lions, which acted as God's agents of judgement, did not harm him. However, the unbelievers who plotted against Daniel were found guilty and crushed by God's judgement. They and their families were sentenced to death in a foreshadowing of the final covenantal judgement, like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), the swallowing alive of the families of Korah, Dahthan, and Abiram (Numb. 16), and the extermination of the inhabitants of certain Canannite cities (e.g. Josh. 6). On the last day, all those who are in Adam will be declared guilty and will share their fate of destruction, while all those who are in Christ will be found not guilty and will share Christ's glory and exaltation.

This also points us to the way in which Jesus fulfilled Daniel 6. Like Daniel, Jesus was falsely accused by his enemies and brought before a ruler, Pontius Pilate, who sought unsuccessfully to deliver him from his fate, before handing him over to a violent death. Like Daniel, Jesus was condemned to die, and his body was placed into a sealed pit so that his situation could not be changed by human intervention. Jesus' trial went even deeper than Daniel's, however: he did not merely suffer the threat of death, he went down into death itself. Although Jesus was innocent, he suffered the fate of the guilty ones. There was no angel to comfort him with the presence of God in his pit: on the contrary, he was left in the blackness utterly alone and abandoned by God, suffering the fate that we, the guilty ones, deserved. His body was left entombed in the icy grip of death for three days before the angel finally came to roll away his stone.

Yet Jesus' experience was itself a foreshadowing of the final judgement, a declaration ahead of time of the verdict of the heavenly tribunal. Jesus died for our sins, not his own, and so death had no ultimate power over him, as a truly innocent man. Jesus did not remain in the grip of the tomb: God raised him from the dead precisely because the heavenly tribunal found him not guilty.

What is more, when Jesus emerged alive from the tomb at daybreak on the first Easter Sunday, he brought with him God's stamp of acquittal not only on himself but on all those who are joined to him by faith. When Daniel came forth from the lion's den, he came out alone. No one else was saved by God's deliverance of him. But when Jesus came forth from the tomb, he came out as the head of a mighty company of people who have been redeemed from the pit through his death. Whoever believes in Jesus will receive the same verdict from the heavenly court as he did, for his righteousness is counted as theirs. Because of the work of Christ on behalf of his people, the divine judge says: "Not guilty! You may go free!" Now we too can find favor with God through the cross of Christ.

The people that Jesus redeemed through his death and resurrection are not all super-believers like Daniel. Most of us are ordinary sinners, people who cave in constantly to the unrighteous demands of the empire. From our earthly perspective, it may not seem to us that the motley assortment of deeply flawed humanity that makes up the church has much to commend it. What kind of a reward is this for Christ's suffering? Yet Jesus does not hesitate to call us beautiful! Even someone deeply sinful can be found beautiful before the perfect and holy God because he sees the end of the process, the glorious church that he will present to himself without flaw or wrinkle. My salvation rests not on my ability to "Dare to be a Daniel," but solely on Christ's perfect obedience in my place. In the midst of

a world of trials and tribulation, that is where my peace and comfort rest. In the world to come, that will be all my glory: the righteousness of Christ, given to me.