

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Famous Believers

Daniel the Prophet

Reading:
Ezekiel Chapter 14: 1-23

1. Rightousness

The dictionary defines the word '**righteousness**' as doing what is morally right and '**unrighteousness**' as doing what is morally wrong. In Scripture '**righteousness is keeping the Almighty's commandments and unrighteousness is breaking them.**' (Psalm 119: 172, 1 John 3: 4) This Sabbath I shall preach concerning a man of righteousness, the man **Daniel**.

Preaching '**righteousness**' (doing right) is frowned upon these days. The emphasis is on **faith**. '**Doing right**' is looked upon as trying to get to heaven '**by works!**' In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Protestant Reformers popularized two phrases: '**justification by faith**' and '**justification by works.**' What do these phrases mean?

2. Justification by Faith

'**Justification by faith**' means that in order to be pardoned of sin and be allowed to enter the Kingdom of Heaven all one needs to have is **faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**. In other words: *believe in Him, confess your sins to God, request His mercy and accept His free offer of salvation made possible through the death of His Son.* That is all that is necessary to be '**justified by faith**' and to stand sinless in God's sight! These are all actions of the mind, they will cost you nothing; but they are all absolutely necessary for salvation. The truth about '**justification by faith**' is one of the most precious truths the Scriptures teach and which our Protestant forefathers bequeathed to us.

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."
(Acts: 16: 31)

This was and still is the basic Protestant position. How privileged **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** is to believe and preach it; because it's so true and so necessary for our day.

3. Justification by Works

By the term '**justification by works**' the Protestant Reformers meant *attempting to earn or pay for one's salvation by doing something*. The idea of earning or attaining salvation by human effort was borrowed from

paganism, where sincere devotees pay sums of money to gain God's favour, or punish themselves in different ways in order to purge themselves of sin. The futility of **'justification by works'** is still seen in the fallen church where sincere believers:

- **Do Penance:** a form of punishment imposed by a priest or one's self in order to cleanse the soul of sin and thereby obtain mercy.
- **Turn Rosary Beads:** in order to keep a count of the number of prayers said. A **rosary** is a string of 55 or 165 beads.
- **Pay for Indulgences:** whereby sums of money are paid into church coffers for the privilege of doing something normally considered wrong.
- **Pray for the Dead:** whereby - for a fee - a priest will pray that a deceased relative's stay in **purgatory** is shortened.

These and other similar actions carried out in order to win the Almighty's favour are what the Protestant Reformers meant when they used the phrase, **'justification by works.'**

In **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** writings the word **'works'** does not mean these things. When we use the word **'works'** we mean a *person's life, his/her thoughts, words and deeds as they relate to God's law*. We mean *actions of obedience (righteousness) or disobedience. (unrighteousness)* **Are Works Important?** Yes they are vitally important; because the Scriptures tell us that we are all going to be judged according to our **'works.'** To be sure no one will enter the Kingdom of Heaven other than by **'faith.'** But for **faith** to be reckoned as being **'alive'** it must be reflected in **'righteousness;'** that is in **'good works.'**

Ezekiel 14: 12: *"The word of the LORD came again to me, saying,*
13: *Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send **famine** upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it:*
14: *Though these three men, **Noah, Daniel, and Job,** were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD.*
15: *If I cause **noisome beasts** to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts:*
16: *Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver **neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered,** but the land shall be desolate.*
17: *Or if I bring a **sword** upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:*
18: *Though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver **neither sons nor daughters, but they only shall be delivered themselves.***
19: *Or if I send a **pestilence** into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast:*
20: *Though **Noah, Daniel, and Job,** were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver **neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness."***

In the Bible reading you have just heard the names of three men of righteousness are mentioned: **Noah, Daniel** and **Job**. Let us very briefly consider these three men as regards the particular **tests** each faced and wherein lay their righteousness.

4. Noah's Test

Noah's test was to stay faithful to God and his family when all the world was given over to faithlessness, illicit sex and violence.

Genesis 6: 9: *"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and **perfect in his generations,** and Noah walked with God.*
10: *And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*
11: ***The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.***
12: *And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, **it was corrupt;** for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."*

Matthew 24:
37: *"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*
38: *For as in the days that were before the flood they were **eating and drinking, marrying***

and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.”

2 Peter 2: 5: **“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.”**

Noah preached righteousness at a time when, like today, **faithlessness, illicit sex and violence** were rampant. Noah preached righteousness in a day when most people scoffed at the idea that God could or would destroy the earth. Noah preached righteousness for 120 years before Yahweh wiped out the ancient world with a flood. For all his preaching Noah could only number 8 souls saved, including himself! See Sermon 91 which is about **Noah**.

5. Job's Test

Job's was a test of **faith in God** even when overwhelmed by **personal disaster**, the loss of all his children and finally the loss of his own health. Pause awhile and consider Job's testimony amidst his great sufferings. The name Job means **'hated.'**

Job 1: 12: *“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*
13: *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*
14: *And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:*
15: *And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*
16: *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*
17: *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*
18: *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:*
19: *And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*
20: *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, **and worshipped,***
21: *And said, **Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.***
22: *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”*

Job 2: 4: *“And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*
5: *But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.*
6: *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*
7: *So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*
8: *And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*
9: *Then said his wife unto him, **Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.***
10: *But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”*

Job:13: 15: **“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:”**

(See Sermon Note 133 which is about **Job**.)

6. Daniel's Tests

Daniel was born into a noble Jewish family and was carried to Babylon as a young man by Nebuchadnezzar's army in about 605 BC. The brutality of the conquering army, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the horrible massacre of thousands of his kinsfolk, all were fresh in Daniel's mind as he was dragged off to Babylon in the prime of his life. A more depressing start to life can hardly be imagined. Nevertheless the LORD God of Israel was with

Daniel and because of this fact he was selected for special training in Nebuchadnezzar's court. The story of Daniel begins in that strange setting.

A Scriptural Key

Before we briefly consider Daniel's tests, we will remind you of a text which for over many years we have used as a spiritual key in our understanding of Scripture. This text links the experiences of the characters in Bible times with all of us living in this 21st century. Here is the text:

1 Corinthians 10: 11: ***“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”***

In other words: **all the experiences** recorded in the Old testament are ‘**real-life models,**’ ‘**types,**’ ‘**shadows,**’ ‘**prophetic signs**’ and ‘**dramatized forecasts**’ of great spiritual realities due to take place on a world scale in our day! With this idea in mind we will now look at the tests the prophet Daniel faced, because soon we believers are going to face similar trials.

7. A Test of Appetite

Daniel 1: 8: *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he **would not defile himself** with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”*

Daniel was not a vegetarian; (Daniel 10: 3) but he did obey **Yahweh's law concerning unclean meats** which were being served at Nebuchadnezzar's table. Therefore, even though a captive in a foreign land, Daniel resolved to obey God's commandments and refused to partake of **Forbidden Food**.

As with Adam in the Garden of Eden, food and other physical appetites are usually the first test people face. Other examples are:

- **Jesus:** Matthew 4: 3: *“And when the tempter came to him, he said, **If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.**”*
4: *But he answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**”*
- **Joseph:** Genesis 39: 6: *“And he (Potiphar) left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.”*
7: *And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, **Lie with me.***
8: ***But he refused...**”*

8. A Test of Understanding

Daniel's second test was a mental one. Would Yahweh tell him what the king had dreamed. (Chapter 2) Daniel had absolutely no doubt that the Most High could tell the dream; but would He tell Daniel? After much prayer Daniel passed this amazing test. Prayer is a believer's most powerful weapon. Sad to say few believers pray for understanding and wisdom.

James 1: 5: *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”*
6: *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”*

Daniel 2:

17: *“Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:*
18: ***That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.***
19: ***Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision.** Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*
20: *Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: **for wisdom and might***

are his:”

Note that when the answer came, Daniel didn't take the credit for himself. He **blessed the name of God, (Yahweh) for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are His.** On another occasion Daniel was given a message which he couldn't fully understand; yet he persevered with **prayer, repentance** and **supplications** to God. As a result the archangel **Gabriel** was sent to enlighten him.

Daniel 9: 20: *“And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;
21: Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man **Gabriel**, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.
22: And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.
23: At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.”*

9. A Test of Courage

Daniel's next test was to have the **courage** to stand before a king and point out his sins, in front of all his courtiers! Most people would have miserably failed this test. How frightened people (and preachers) are of pointing out the sins of society. Most of us keep quiet. It's more convenient and more practical not to get involved. But the Scriptures advise us preachers to **“Cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and shew my people their transgression.”** It's a thankless task I can assure you. If there are going to be rewards, it will certainly not be in this lifetime.

Daniel 4: 19: *“Then Daniel, whose name was Beltshazzar, was astonished **for one hour**, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Beltshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Beltshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.
20: The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;
21: Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:
22: It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.
23: And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, **Hew the tree down, and destroy it;** yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;*

Verses: 24: *This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, **which is come upon my lord the king:**
25: That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, **till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.**
26: And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.*

Verse: 27: ***Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”***

No doubt a deathly silence fell on the throne room as king Nebuchadnezzar's officials stared in stunned silence at the young man Daniel and then at the king. How would that cruel monarch react? Would he order Daniel to be put to death for having had the apparent effrontery of speaking to him like that? It was a great test of courage on Daniel's part. He passed it.

10. A Test of Faith

The story of Daniel in the Lion's Den is well known. In it we find Daniel faithfully saying his daily prayers, three times a day! How few believers pray even once a day, let alone three times. To be sure millions of believers have no trouble believing in God and even saying their prayers. But when it comes to testifying of God's goodness, His mercy and grace, they are silent. They have nothing to say. They are too shy to even admit that they believe in Jesus Christ. The Bible says:

Romans 10: 9: ***“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.***

10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

*11: For the scripture saith, **Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**”*

Are you ashamed of telling others that you are a believer and follower of Jesus Christ?

The Saviour says:

Matthew 10: 32: ***“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.***

*33: **But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.**”*

By any standards that is a sobering statement. Bear it in mind. Daniel was not afraid to say his prayers right there in front of an open window. He wasn't afraid to confess his LORD. When the king visited him the next morning, his words were:

Daniel 6: 21: *“Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.*

22: My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:

forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

*23: Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, **because he believed in his God.**”*

11. Daniel's Reward

Daniel died in a ripe old age. He was a young man when captured and taken to Babylon; **but he outlived kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and probably even the Persian king Darius.** His prophecies concerning the end-time are extremely important to us and, God willing, we shall be writing about them in the future. But for the moment let us remember that even though the prophet Daniel is mentioned only twice in the New Testament he is a person who ranks very high in the Almighty's opinion; for he is teamed with **Noah** and **Job** in the table of righteousness.

Mark 13: 14: *“But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by **Daniel the prophet**, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:”*

Modern translations omit Daniel's name in (Mark 13: 14). It is a serious error by any standards.

If the **'Bible'** you are using does not have **Daniel's** name in this verse, you can be certain it's a counterfeit posing as the **Real Word of God.**

Daniel will rise from his grave at the end of the **1335 day prophecy** mentioned in:

Daniel 12: 9: *“And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the **time of the end.***

*10: 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.***

11: 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.

*12: **Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.***

*13: **But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end***

of the days.”

12. Summary

We live in an evil age; a violent, wicked and faithless generation. Constantly we should be assessing our progress, checking our stand. The Apostle Paul writes:

2 Corinthians 13: 5: ***“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”***

These awesome words recorded in (Ezekiel 14: 20) should also be kept in mind.

“Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.”

The Almighty means what He says; so we cannot afford to neglect our salvation. I'll summarize with these thoughts:

1. **Righteousness** is doing what is morally right. **Unrighteousness** is doing what is morally wrong. Only God is qualified to define moral behaviour and He does so in His law.
2. **Believers are Justified by Faith in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ;)** not by the works of penance, the turning of beads or payments of any kind. These are pagan attempts to get right with God. **Righteousness**, (another word for obedience to God's commandments) must nonetheless follow faith. Righteousness is evidence of living faith.
3. Noah's act of righteousness was to stay true to his wife in a sex-crazed, violent world.
4. Job's act of righteousness was to maintain his faith amidst total disaster: the loss of all his children, his possessions, wealth and health.
5. Daniel's righteousness manifested itself in the control of his appetite, his constant prayer life, his amazing courage and his great faith.
6. Daniel will rise to eternal life at the '**end of the days;**' which could coincide with the return of the Messiah. Daniel's prophecies are a master key to understanding end-time events.
7. Every believer is admonished to live a righteous life independent of mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter. Because even though Noah, Daniel and Job were alive, their righteousness will not suffice to save their families.

“They shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.”

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

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