

Daniel 6: Where Heaven and Earth Meet

Read Daniel 6

1. (10) Daniel is oriented in prayer toward Jerusalem, or more specifically toward the temple in Jerusalem. The place where the glory of God descended, the meeting place of heaven and earth. What impact do you think orienting himself toward that three times a day would have on his life?

His primary allegiance would have been to his God such that when there was a conflict between the law of the medes and Persians and the law of God – civil disobedience was a must.

He would be in the midst of suffering, strive, and persecution shaped by a hope in the promises of God to restore all things.

As we will look at in the next question he would live in obedience to the commands of God.

Forgiveness of sins was brought about through the sacrificial system in the temple – this orientation would have brought humility and a reliance upon the grace of God.

2. Read Jeremiah 29:4-7 How is Daniel's life and work a faithful embodiment of God's command through Jeremiah?

He turned all of his competencies over to serving the best interests of Babylon and excelled at it.

His primary aim was the full flourishing of Babylon so he was not seeking personal advancement, wealth, power, or acclaim.

With his motivations not focused on power prestige or wealth he would be less susceptible to bribery.

3. How did his orientation to where heaven and earth meet, and his faithful embodiment of God's command to Jeremiah lead to his persecution?

His character would expose any self-serving dishonest scheming in his contemporaries. They would desire to rid themselves of the exposure.

There is evidence here that some of their jealousy is fueled by racism. His orientation toward his God rather than full assimilation with Babylonian culture would have only heightened that anger.

His appeal to a higher authority than the law of the medes and Persians would have led to mistrust, a fear that he would undermine the authority of the state.

4. *Read Isaiah 11:6-7. The miracles of scripture are rarely if ever naked displays of power but rather are signs of God's future reign over all things. What does Daniel's night in the lions den, and its comparison with Darius' night tell us about God's future reign?*

Uninhibited communion with God – as "his" angel is probably a pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus – the living word of God.

The nature of the lion is transformed in the encounter as Isaiah 11:6-7 points toward.

The desire of God in creation was to have peace between the animals and humanity – we see that in the lions den.

5. *Read Matthew 27:57-66 What parallels do you see between this story of Daniel and Jesus' death and resurrection? What do you think this parallelism is telling us?*

Hated without cause – arrested on trumped up charges motivated amongst other things by jealousy – did not protest – was arrested while in prayer at a private location – put in a cave – a stone rolled over the entrance – the entrance sealed.

I believe this ultimately tells us that heaven and earth will meet in and through the work of God in Jesus' death and resurrection.

6. *Read John 2:13-22. Jesus refers to himself as the temple, the meeting place between heaven and earth. What would it look like practically in our lives to be oriented toward where heaven and earth meet in Jesus?*

Tim looked at the earlier Christians who stood against ancient evils such as infanticide and gladiatorial contest. The work of MLK in standing against racial injustice with the methods of Jesus – not overcoming hate with hate but rather meeting hate with suffering love. Also the life of Cicely Saunders whose orientation toward where heaven and earth met in Jesus sparked the hospice movement. These examples could be a great starting place for discussion – as we live in light of the future Jesus has won for us.