

Christ in Prophecy

Pre-Trib 27: “Daniel 5: Non-Prophetic Message”

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: People normally think of the book of Daniel as being only a book of prophecy about the First and Second Comings of the Messiah and about the Antichrist and the Tribulation. But the book also contains some great principles for victorious living. I recently had the opportunity to ask 16 Bible prophecy experts about what they believe to be the fundamental non-prophetic message of the book. Stay tuned for their fascinating answers.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy.

Over the past few weeks we have been taking a look at the book of Daniel through the eyes of 16 Bible prophecy experts whom I had the opportunity to interview. In the process, we have considered a number of fascinating questions about the book. We started out discussing the integrity of the book, considering whether or not it is a valid book of prophecy written by Daniel or whether it is a historical book, written by some imposter long after the time of Daniel. All of our experts affirmed its validity and they pointed to the fact that Jesus Himself quoted the book.

We next considered whether or not there is a time gap in Daniel's famous prophecy of the 70 Weeks of years, and, again, all our experts agree there is such a gap and that it is the current Church Age in which we are living.

The third week we took a look at God's statement to Daniel that many of his end time prophecies would not be understood until the time came for them to be fulfilled. I asked our experts if they thought we are currently living in that time, and they all agreed that we are, and they provided a number of examples to prove their claim.

Now last week I asked our experts to share with us their favorite passage in the book of Daniel and to explain why. Needless to say, we received some fascinating answers and insights.

And folks if you missed any or all of these past programs, you can find them on our website at lamblion.com.

Now this week I am going to share with you some of the answers we received when I asked our experts to identify what they consider to be the fundamental non-prophetic message of the book. As I explained at the beginning of the program, the book of Daniel is not just a book of prophecy. It is also a book that tells a fascinating story about a young man taken into captivity to a foreign nation where everything he believed was challenged.

I personally have always believed that the fundamental non-prophetic message of the book is how to live a righteous life in the midst of a pagan society. A number of the experts I interviewed came to the same conclusion. Here now are some of their responses.

Part 2

Michael Norten: I believe that it is an incredible message to show us that we can live a holy life in a wicked society. And then we can be vindicated in that and God can be glorified. Even the name of Daniel indicates a vindication of God.

Andy Woods: To me, we have to put ourselves in the shoes of the original audience, it was the Jews that had gone into the Babylonian captivity. Something had happened to them that they never thought could happen where they have been pulled out of their land. They had been pulled 350 miles over into the east into Babylon. So they needed encouragement regarding the fact that God is still in charge and in control. And God provides that because He give them a standard by which they are to live. You see the law of God only taught the Jews how they were to live inside the land. But now that they are outside of the land how do they live? Well they have role models through Daniel. They have role models through Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And the role models are simply this, put God first and He is going to take care of you during the times of the Gentiles. You know even Daniel thrown into the lion's den was protected by God. And so it's a powerful message to them that God is still in control even though you have been ripped out of your land. And so it is a tremendous testimony about God's faithfulness. How God keeps His promises. And just because you are out of your land doesn't mean that God is not watching over His covenanted nation.

August Rosado: The non-prophetic message I would have to say 2 chapters Daniel 3 and Daniel 6. The reason why I love those 2 passages, of course my favorite is Daniel 9 but in Daniel 3 it talks about these 3 God fearing Jewish boys Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael or we better know they as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, their pagan Babylonian names. You know these guys were going up against a pagan government that was forcing them to worship a 90 foot pagan idol. And these guys refused to do that, they would not compromise, they would not sell out, they would stay true to the one true God, the God of Israel. Even giving up their own lives, they said, "We're not going to bow down and worship this 90 foot pagan idol." And Daniel in Daniel 6:10 knowing that prayer was illegal at that time and yet the Bible tells us about Daniel opening his windows and praying towards Jerusalem, he prayed 3 times a day. And what I get out of Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 is that we should never, ever compromise our values to this world system today. You know 1 John 2:15-17 says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world." So we should never compromise our values with this world system. And those 3 Jewish boys did not do that, and neither did Daniel, Daniel 6:10.

Brian Thomas: Uncompromised faith. When we look at Daniel we find a boy, he came into Babylonian captivity as just a teenager, just a boy. And we find that he was faced with the proposal to eat of the food that had been presented in idol worshipping, in idolatry to the Babylonian gods. Daniel refused to do so and we find that by taking that stand for God, God blessed Daniel. He actually gave him, the Bible says wisdom ten times greater than the other so called wise men of the Babylonian Kingdom. Then if we fast forward to nearly the age of 90 we find Daniel once again was faced with a proposition to obey an order of the king that he could not pray to anyone other than the king himself. Once again Daniel refused to do so, the king

threw him into the lion's den but God supernaturally saved him. So I think when we look at Daniel we see a man of just great faith, and loyalty and dedication to our Lord. And I think it is something that today we as Christians should take note of to live the same life as well. And I think without a doubt we see just as the prophet Ezekiel stated, Daniel as being one of the 3 most righteous men to have ever live, and that is because he had an uncompromising, and unwavering faith when it comes to our Lord.

Part 3

Dr. Reagan: Righteousness in the midst of paganism that, my friends is a message that is very relevant today as we find ourselves living in a society that is rapidly becoming more secular and pagan in nature. Several of our other experts expressed the same concept in slightly different terms. They did so by stressing Daniel's character, emphasizing his faithfulness to God.

AI Gist: The fundamental non-prophetic message of Daniel in my mind is seen in the character of Daniel. Here's a man that was taken captive in his teen years and carried away as a slave to a foreign country. And his test, his faith was tested severely on numerous occasions. And yet through all those occasions God was with him, God saw him through ever situation. And ultimately blessed him to become a very powerful man in that foreign empire. And so I think the non-prophetic message we see in the character of Daniel is that he was a man who was committed to prayer. He was a man as I've already mentioned who was very humble. And I could be corrected but as far as I know there's not one negative word anywhere in the Bible concerning the prophet Daniel. He was a man who loved God, who lived for God, who was obedient to God, and God took care of him. And I think that would be the non-prophetic message; that God has not forsaken us; He said He would never leave us or forsake us. And if we'll live for Him and serve Him He'll take care of us, just as He did with Daniel.

Don Perkins: Well I think and I had to go to the first few chapter of that book, character, we look at Daniel and the Hebrew boys, those were men of integrity. I love the first few chapters when you see Daniel and the Hebrew boys, you know they come under great tests but they are faithful to God. And as a result their character comes through. And that character was already there, they wouldn't comprise with the king even if it meant unto death. So I really love that, there have been many times as I study Daniel that part of the book of Daniel strengthens my own resolve as a Christian. You know there are times I am challenged to make a decision and I think about Daniel and the Hebrew boys.

Gary Frazier: Well first of all Dave that is a great question and I tell you the thing that I remember about Daniel first and foremost, even before the prophecy contained in the book, and it is without a doubt in my opinion if you don't understand the book of Daniel, you're never going to understand Bible prophecy. By the way I think that it was you that taught me that, but that said the fact is that the message that speaks to my heart, the non-prophetic message is this: faithfulness to God, living a holy life, God always honors that, always has, always will. And no matter what may happen in the world in which we live. No matter how difficult things may get. We have no idea how bad things may get before the Groom comes for His Bride and takes us out of here. But the fact is it has always been in style to live a holy life, to be a person of prayer, and to trust God and walk by faith. And the book of Daniel when you look at it, not only Daniel's life but also Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah being cast into the fiery furnace. You look at Daniel in the lion's den. But it all started with Daniel and those three Hebrew children saying, "We're

not going to go the way the rest of the world goes. We are going to eat vegetables, we are going to eat fruit, we are going to drink fresh water, because that's what we believe will honor God." So it's a book really about faithfulness and trust, and being a holy man of God, and God honors that and always will.

Randall Price: Certainly I think it is probably staying true to what you know is true. Daniel despite all of the peer pressure, the being out of his element, certainly being free to do whatever he wants to do because you know his life as he knows it is over. No one would care he needs to elevate himself in the power structure of the Babylonians and later the Persians. He could just go with crowd, but he doesn't, he stands alone, he stands committed to what he knows that the God of Israel would have him do. And you know he is God's man in God's hour, and I think we need to have more people like that.

Nathan Jones: Be faithful, and you could tack on, be faithful like Daniel. You know Daniel didn't eat the special foods. Daniel stuck to the law. Whenever he was asked to pray to foreign gods or to the king he refused to do it, not matter if it even cost his life. When they threw him say in the lion's den he was faithful. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego his three friends they refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image, they remained faithful to God even to death. Nebuchadnezzar, it took a lot to get him and his massive ego in check, but at the end he proclaimed God and he stayed faithful to God after God punished him. Then you get anti-characters we've got Belshazzar who wasn't faithful whatsoever and he lost an entire empire in one night over a drunken party. So again and again I believe Daniel is teaching us to be faithful no matter what the adversity, and we can take that as an example today. We face adversity as Christians all the time. In some countries Christians are getting murdered. Other countries like here we are losing our freedoms, we need to remember to stay faithful and be like Daniel.

Part 4

Dr. Reagan: For those of you who may have tuned in during the middle of our last section of interviews, let me explain that we are interviewing a forum of 16 Bible prophecy experts about what they believe is the fundamental non-prophetic message of the book of Daniel, and the nine we have interviewed thus far have put the emphasis on how to live faithfully for Christ in the midst of a pagan society.

Now one of our respondents, Tim LaHaye, turned the emphasis around. Instead of talking about the faithfulness of Daniel, he talked instead about the book's underlying theme concerning the faithfulness of God.

Tim LaHaye: God is faithful. David, my mother was a godly woman, she was left at 28 years of age with an infant child 7 weeks old, my sister was 5 and I was almost 10 and my father at 35 died of a heart attack. And she had no one to trust but God. And she hadn't even finished high school and she had to work in a factory. In fact she started at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit folding sheets in the laundry just to keep us alive. And when she died at 81 years of age after putting herself through night school at Detroit Bible College and became a Child Evangelism Director and was just a great personal soul winner. And when she died, we knew she was going to be because her blood got thick, it was before they invented Coumadin you know to thin out your blood. I take it every day because I inherited it from both my mother and father. And anyway when I said, "Mom what do you want us to put on your tombstone?" Just like that she said, "God is faithful." I think a widow woman with all those problems who could after all those years say, "I learned God is faithful." We ought to pay attention to that.

Part 5

Dr. Reagan: What a moving testimony! Gary Fisher spotlighted another strong theme of the book of Daniel that focused on God rather than Daniel. He talked about the way the book emphasizes the sovereignty of God.

Gary Fisher: I really enjoyed laboring over this question. And I came to the conclusion, it suddenly dawned on me that the book of Daniel to me means that nothing takes God by surprise, just plain and simple. We have these big powerful guys, Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, and this coming Antichrist and so forth. And God is sitting on the throne going, "Oh, really? I got a King coming that is going to take all these peoples place." God is not intimidated by any of these power brokers in the world, especially today we hear nuclear this, and bomb that and God doesn't care. In fact Psalm 2 says, "He sits in the heavens and laughs as He considers all of that." And so nothing takes God by surprise. He is unquestionably sovereign as is demonstrated Daniel 2:20-22, God sets up kings, He takes down kings. God is in control.

Part 6

Dr. Reagan: One of our forum members, Daymond Duck, mentioned a rather unusual non-prophetic theme of Daniel, and as he points out, it is one that is seldom ever mentioned. It is the reality of the supernatural.

Daymond Duck: Well I would suggest that the fundamental non-prophetic message of the book of Daniel is the existence of a spiritual world of good and evil beings that are very involved in events here on this earth. Concerning good beings for example, Daniel revealed that there are angels, a council of angels, called watchers or holy ones that announce that God raises up kings and kingdoms. Daniel revealed that mysterious hand that wrote on the wall the night that Babylon failed, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, thou are weighed in the balances and found wanting." Daniel revealed that an angel shut up the mouths of the lions when he was thrown into the lion's den. And that there are 1,000's and 1,000's and 10,000 x 10,000 angels in heaven serving God and ministering to God, and before the throne of God. And he revealed that the angel Gabriel gave him the prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel. And he revealed that the Archangel Michael will stand up for Israel at the end of the age. Concerning evil beings, he reveals that there is a Devil. He revealed the Antichrist; that he will have satanic powers. That he would oppose Messiah the prince, that he would oppose God's people. He also revealed a mysterious figure, and I think it is a demonic figure called the Prince of Persia that hindered his prayers on one occasion. So this is a teaching that I think the Church has abandoned about these evil forces. And what God gave them, it is very important and I think the Church ought to go back to that.

Part 7

Dr. Reagan: Another of our forum members, Ed Hindson, responded with an answer that summed up the themes of the faithfulness and integrity of Daniel and the faithfulness and sovereignty of God. I'd like to conclude our responses with what he had to say.

Ed Hindson: I think the key comes in that very first chapter in the 8th verse, “he purposed in his heart.” Some of the newer translations put it, “he determined,” which in an essence he did. But I love the Hebrew original and the King James follows that, uses the term, “in his heart.” In the “lev” in Hebrew. It’s a heartfelt decision and determination. It is a reminder to us that the religion of the Old Testament is not just a religion of laws and rules and regulations and externals of ritual and sacrifice, but it a religion of the heart. The Old Testament says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind.” It reminds us again, and again that God looks on the heart of an individual. And Daniel determines in his heart that he is not going to defile himself, he is going to stand up, do the right thing. A good Jewish boy is going to hold to his kosher dietary restrictions. And it doesn’t matter what the implications of that are, or what the penalty maybe. But he doesn’t do it in a wild eye protest, he simply asks for the creative alternative, let me try something else, see if that works and give us an opportunity to stand by these convictions. His convictions as a young man, probably only about 15 or 16 years old carry through his entire life. So that when he is an older man in his 80’s at the end of the book and he has lived all the way through the Babylonian captivity he’s still a man of integrity. What he was as a young man, ultimately helped determine what he would be as an older man. And I think from a non-prophetic stand point that’s the spiritual lesson that is taught in the book. I think it is also clear that the sovereignty of God is clear in the book too. God raises up and takes down kings. God is on the throne even when an evil Nebuchadnezzar rules, or an Antiochus Epiphanies is coming in the future. The reminder in the book of Daniel is God is on the throne of Heaven. God will overrule even human kings to accomplish His purposes.

Part 8

Dr. Reagan: I hope the responses we have shared with you to our question about the non-prophetic message of Daniel have been a blessing to you, and I pray they have motivated you to spend some time studying the book.

And now I would like to provide you with a special unannounced blessing. While I was interviewing the 16 Bible prophecy experts, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity to ask Tim LaHaye three personal questions. I think you will be blessed by what he has to say concerning some personal aspects of his life. My first question was, “How did you get interested in Bible prophecy?”

Tim LaHaye: Actually it happened at my father’s funeral. I was three weeks away from my tenth birthday. My father was a gregarious, lovable, wonderful personable guy and I loved him and he loved me, I grew up never knowing what it’s like not to be loved. It is a blessing from God. And suddenly he died of a heart attack, 34 years of age. And at his funeral I was devastated, I had wept so much I didn’t have any tears left, because I thought my world had come to an end. But the preacher that day, I could see him as he put his hand on the casket, and he said, “The world has not seen the last of Frank LaHaye. The day is coming when Jesus will shout from heaven and because he...” see the minister had led my parents to Christ, and he said, “because he invited Jesus into his heart, the day is coming when he will be resurrected and all of us will be resurrected and translated in the Rapture of the Church.” It was an overcast Michigan day, I grew up in Detroit, and it just seemed like the sky opened up and the sun shone through into my heart and gave me a blessed hope. And here I am 86 years of age and I still haven’t lost that blessed hope. I anticipate the day when behind Jesus at the gate of Heaven will be my dad and I will re-establish for ever and ever a relationship with him.

Dr. Reagan: My second question for Tim LaHaye was how did he get interested in writing books? Here's his response.

Tim LaHaye: I was driven with the idea of writing my messages because as a preacher I found out Sunday night back in the old days when we had Sunday night services, every Sunday night. We had crowds when other people didn't because I was preaching on Bible prophecy and people loved Bible prophecy. And so I began to notice that when I printed my messages even mimeographed them. I look at them now they were an excuse for publication. And when I gave them out I had a bigger crowd. Well if that is what works, it works, so I would print my messages. Anyway a lady in the congregation was rushed into the hospital to have surgery and she asked that I would call on her on Monday morning. And I preached that Sunday night and her family came to church and took one of those messages on the Great White Throne Judgment and the providence of God they took it to her and left it off before they went home. And she gave it to the lady next to her. So on Monday morning when I buzzed into her at Mercy, it was a Catholic hospital and I rush in there and she says, "Pastor would you like to meet our latest convert?" And I said, "Yay, I would." And I look at the lady in the other bed and she said, "She accepted Jesus last night." So we prayed with her and I gave her a little assurance. I kind of staggered out, I think I was 36 years of age at the time. I staggered outside and I leaned against the wall in a Catholic hospital, I am looking up at the crucifix of Jesus, and all the memorabilia they have. And I said, "Lord is it possible that you could use my writing?" I hadn't thought about being a writer, never took a writer course, still haven't taken one. And the long and the short is God spoke to me and I yielded my pen. And that is 80 books past. And God has, everywhere I go and I say this to the glory of God, people like here at this conference, I've had 2 or 3 people come up and say, "I want to thank you for leading my wife to Christ." I never knew them, I thought, "Gee, wonder what their name is?" I never met them, it is through the books. And I just thank God for the ministry that He's given me to write books.

Dr. Reagan: The third question I asked Tim LaHaye related to the fact that years ago when I went to Oregon to teach for a week at a Christian college, I discovered one of his first books in the college library, and to my amazement it consisted of pages that had been run off on a mimeograph machine! So, I asked him, "Early on, you did not have a publisher, did you?"

Tim LaHaye: I realized that publishing is a special art and I didn't have the gift to be a writer and a publisher and so I prayed that the Lord would help me. But nobody would take my books I was internationally unknown. And so I had them mimeographed out and when my kids were all in high school and I paid them, can you believe this? 10 cents to collate my books. And I had them all stacked up in the garage in shelves, and then one day our youngest son, Lee came in and he got hot and wanted to open, so he opened the garage door and the breeze came in and blew those things all over everywhere. And my wife said to me, "Honey, we've got to get a publisher." I said, "I couldn't agree with you more."

Dr. Reagan: Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you, and I hope you will be back with us again next week when we wrap up our study of the book of Daniel by asking our forum of 16 Bible prophecy experts what they think is the fundamental prophetic message of Daniel. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near."

End of Program