

April 29th Readings

[DANIEL 6:1-28](#)

[2 PETER 3:1-18](#)

[PSALM 119:129-152](#)

[PROVERBS 28:21-22](#)

Ever been “thrown under the bus?” Perhaps your colleagues or “friends” were jealous of your achievements, or your relation with the “higher ups.” Likely they felt insecure and warranted in their attempts. How did you feel? Angered? Sold out? Seeking revenge?

“Daniel and Lion’s Den” (Chapter 6 of Daniel) is one of our most familiar stories from the Bible—odds are we heard it before we went to grade school. Daniel wasn’t just thrown under the bus, he was thrown into a den of hungry lions.

Daniel’s enemies used one of the established concepts of Persian law to entrap Daniel and outmaneuver King Darius. The king was actually fond of Daniel and wanted to save him (Daniel 6:14-15), but could not change his previous decree. Even though the king was compelled to have Daniel thrown into the lions’ den, God miraculously spared Daniel’s life. As Daniel told the king the next morning, “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me” (v. 22).

Daniel’s enemies did not prevail against this servant of God. We should also note that only the true God has unchangeable laws, purposes and promises.

April 30th Readings

[DANIEL 7:1-28](#)

[1 JOHN 1:1-10](#)

[PSALM 119:153-176](#)

[PROVERBS 28:23-24](#)

Dreams . . . they often perplex me. Sometimes I’m a traveler. Sometimes I’m running for my life from somebody or something. Sometimes I wake up tired because I’ve dreamed so much

I'm exhausted. But most of the time I just know I dreamed something; it seemed indelible as it was happening, and then I can't remember any details when I awake for breakfast.

Daniel details a prophetic dream in Daniel 7:1-28? This dream was a doozy, but Daniel had the wherewithal to write down the details of his dream (v. 1). He dreamed of four different beasts arising from the ocean, each more fierce than the previous one. Chapter 7 introduces the theme of the "four kingdoms", which is that Israel would come under four successive world-empires, each worse than the last, until finally God would end oppression and introduce the eternal kingdom.

It is one of the chapters that lays out for us God's incredible, unchangeable, redemptive plan for human history. The major point of this vision is the coming of the King and the establishment of his eternal kingdom. Jesus Christ, in speaking of his second coming, called himself son of man (v. 13). He didn't call himself King of kings, or Lord of lords, or some other term. He called himself son of man because he was connecting himself with the prophecy of Daniel to show that he, in fact, was its fulfillment.

May 1st Readings

[DANIEL 8:1-27](#)

[1 JOHN 2:1-17](#)

[PSALM 120:1-7](#)

[PROVERBS 28:25-26](#)

I John 2:1-17

I must admit I've listened to more rock-n-roll music than gospel music over my life. One song whose lyrics are appropriate for this passage is that of the Doors "Break on Through." "The day destroys the night, the night divides the day." Light overcomes darkness, but darkness (sin) separates us from God. Much of this passage defines, in black and white, the consequences of being in the dark vs. the light.

⁹ *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness.* ¹⁰ *Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble.* ¹¹ *But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.*

God is very clear... if there is hatred in our hearts there is darkness in our hearts.

- darkness will cause us to stumble;
- darkness brings confusion;
- darkness brings blindness.

The answer is love. Walking in love is walking in the light! (No more stumbling, confusion or blindness).

Indeed the day destroys the night.

May 2nd Readings

[DANIEL 9:1-11:1](#)

[1 JOHN 2:18-3:6](#)

[PSALM 121:1-8](#)

[PROVERBS 28:27-28](#)

1 John 2:18 - 3:6

In today's lingo, this passage might be summarized as "if all else fails, read the directions." John is clear in his warnings to those who are either undecided about Jesus or who are living in sin and yet claim to know Him. We can't say we know Jesus and not obey Him.

In this passage, the apostle John has revealed the true secret of the wonderful life in Christ, a life so glorious that it is appropriately described as a transfer from darkness to light. The basics of it are profoundly simple. These are: the acceptance of Jesus Christ as God's only

begotten Son, the confession of his name, being baptized into him, abiding in him, and having him abide in us. Such a life is the greatest adventure that human life on earth can offer, and those who dare to accept the challenge shall receive a final reward of eternal life with God in heaven.

If this sounds like a wake-up call for us . . . it is.

May 3rd Readings

[DANIEL 11:2-35](#)

[1 JOHN 3:7-24](#)

[PSALM 122:1-9](#)

[PROVERBS 29:1](#)

“Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.”

Proverbs 29:1 (NIV)

“Stiff-necked” in this passage is a metaphor taken from oxen, which kick and toss about and will not suffer the yoke to be put upon their necks. The phrase occurs at least four times in the book of Exodus, and also Acts and II Corinthians.

I have a stiff neck (it feels like a rusted steel cable); it limits my ability to turn my head, especially to the left. Neck surgery 15 years ago didn’t do much to improve it, and my kidneys won’t permit me to use anti-inflammatory pain relievers. I just have to live with it “without remedy.”

But hopefully I’m not “stiff-necked” as noted in this passage. Often, stubbornness is the reason behind the termination of one's employment, or confrontations with others, which are potentially violent. Today’s proverb, however, deals with one's spiritual growth. It is the failure to heed the reproof and gentle instruction founded upon God's Word that can damage and even destroy the soul.

The apostle Paul chided such people in Acts 7:51 “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.”

Turn your head, limber up your neck, and heed the warning in this proverb.

May 4th Readings

[DANIEL 11:36-12:13](#)

[1 JOHN 4:1-21](#)

[PSALM 123:1-4](#)

[PROVERBS 29:2-4](#)

Psalm 123

I really do not like it when someone treats me with contempt. As if I am a mere impediment to their otherwise wonderful stroll through life. A piece of trash to avoid on the sidewalk.

When this happens, I find myself developing elaborate plans for retribution. Something that will make the other realize I have value. Something that will cause that person to wonder why they ever thought I was less than an equal to them. I do not want these feelings to control me. They distract me from serving God, they keep me from seeing opportunities to help others. Even if I don't dwell on these thoughts, they distract. Thankfully, I do not act on these plans. The same active mind that plans the retribution also remembers God's words, “Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.”

I want acknowledgement for the little kindnesses I do. I want appreciation for the time I spend serving others. I want recognition for the effort I put into knowing and serving God. Our Father is aware of this. If I turn to God with adoring eyes and obedient faith, He will show mercy.

May 5th Readings

[HOSEA 1:1-3:5](#)

[1 JOHN 5:1-21](#)

[PSALM 124:1-8](#)

[PROVERBS 29:5-8](#)

1 John 5:1-21

John says he is writing these things so that we may know we have eternal life. (1 John 5:13) Isn't that a huge problem for us most of the time – knowing that we have eternal life? Oh, we hope we will have eternal life. We hope, but John says we can KNOW. I think this 'not knowing, but only hoping' is a result of my own insecurities, my acute awareness of the sin in my life. The sin that seems to come despite my best intentions and efforts. I must keep reminding myself of the words John wrote earlier: *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* (1 John 1:7-10)

I can know I will have eternal life, but John says I have it now. How can that be? Our eternal life starts when we accept and obey the will of God. Our bodies are not yet transformed for an eternity with God, and I believe there is a real threat that Satan can ensnare me and once again I can be entangled in the cares of this world. But God has already won the war, He has already provided everything for my future with Him. The only thing that remains, is for me to endure to the end of this life. If I believe this, then living becomes more than merely enduring, but rather fuller, and more fruitful for the God whom I love and serve.