

Reaping and Sowing

Daniel Chapter One

As we begin our study on Daniel chapter one, which is the introduction to the whole book of Daniel, we want to remember that our focus is on character development. We will be looking for the principles of the everlasting kingdom found here in chapter one, the kingdom that will soon fill this earth, as is prophesied in chapter two.

God's Kingdom Principles

Verses 2, 8, 9, and 17 in Daniel chapter 1 well illustrate the biblical principles that God's laws are perfectly calculated to only bless and to prevent harm if we will but believe in His goodness and obey His laws.

Daniel 1:2 "The Lord Gave"

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

We will find by examining the following Bible verses examples of the biblical principle that effect follows cause, whether that cause is a direct consequence of natural law, or the necessary turning away of a merciful God when rejected by His people. God shows no partiality and "is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34) If Israel insisted on going her own way God would have no choice but to let her suffer the natural consequences. This is what is meant by the Lord gave.

Psalm 81:11-13 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!

2 Chronicles 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

Hosea 11:8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. (Admah and Zeboim were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Deuteronomy 29:23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath:

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Proverbs 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

1 Samuel 2:30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before Me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.

Jeremiah 18:7-10 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

Deuteronomy 31:16-18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

Deuteronomy 32:20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.

Deuteronomy 32:29 O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

Deuteronomy 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. 36) For the LORD shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. 37) And He shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, 38) Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.

Judges 10:13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. 14) Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

Historical Facts of Reaping and Sowing

The Bible records just why “the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.” Israel had played the harlot and had sought after other gods which could never save them. God had sent many warnings through His prophets to admonish them to turn from their wicked ways that they would not have to suffer the results of their wrong choices. But the warnings went unheeded and Israel fell captive to their enemies.

In Isaiah chapters 38 and 39 we read of the account of King Hezekiah’s illness and how the Lord healed him and gave him 15 more years to live. When the marvelous healing became known, ambassadors from Babylon came to see the Mighty God who could heal, but instead of glorifying God Hezekiah gave way to pride and revealed to them all his riches including the treasures of the temple. God sent Isaiah to warn Hezekiah that Babylon would come and take away not only the treasures but also his sons and would make them captives and eunuchs.

Isaiah 38:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for

thou shalt die, and not live. 2) Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, 3) And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. 4) Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, 5) Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. 6) And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. 7) And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; 8) Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

Isaiah 39:1 At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. 2) And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. 3) Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon. 4) Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: 6) Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. 7) And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

The ambassadors carried to Babylon the report of Hezekiah's riches, and the king and his counsellors planned to enrich Babylon with the treasures of Jerusalem.

When Manasseh was born to Hezekiah, he led Israel into great apostasy and built high places for the worship of Baal and the host of heaven. (2 Kings 21:1-3). But the prophesy of the captivity did not happen until after Manasseh had died. We read of Manasseh's change of heart after he had been taken captive and sought the Lord with repentance. (1 Chronicles 33). God continued to prevail with Israel sending warnings through His prophets.

In the days of Josiah, Manasseh's grandson, the Lord prophesied through Jeremiah of the impending doom of Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 5:15). Josiah was spared this evil because he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. (2 Kings 22:16-20).

Finally, in the days of Jehoiakim, who did evil in the sight of the Lord, the Lord could not spare Judah any longer because she refused to listen to the prophets and return unto Him.

Jeremiah 25:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; 2) The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 3) From the thirteenth year

of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. 4) And the LORD hath sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. 5) They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: 6) And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.

7) Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. 8) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, 9) Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10) Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. 11) And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12) And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

Daniel 1:8 “Daniel Purposed In His Heart”

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 1:9 Daniel Finds Favor

Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

This officer saw in Daniel good traits of character. He saw that he was striving to be kind and helpful, that his words were respectful and courteous, and his manner possessed the grace of modesty and meekness. It was the good behaviour of the youth that gained for him the favor and love of the prince.

Proverbs 3:3,4 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Daniel 4:8 But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying,

Daniel 4:9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

Daniel 4:18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.

Daniel 5:11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Daniel 6:3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. 4) Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

Daniel 1:17 “God Gave Them Knowledge & Skill”

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Only by faithfulness in the little things can the soul be trained to act with fidelity under larger responsibilities. God brought Daniel and his fellows into connection with the great men of Babylon, that these heathen men might become acquainted with the principles of true religion. In the midst of a nation of idolaters, Daniel was to represent the character of God. How did he become fitted for a position of so great trust and honor? It was his faithfulness in the little things that gave complexion to his whole life. He honored God in the smallest duties, and the Lord co-operated with him. To Daniel and his companions God gave ‘knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.’ Dan. 1:17

Purposing in Our Hearts

Notice in these verses how seriously God intends for man to honor the laws that govern our health in order to protect us from the consequences of sickness, suffering, and death in this life, while fitting us to live harmlessly throughout eternity.

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Exodus 15:26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.