

Jesus BC: Lions' Den

Have you ever thought about Jesus...before Christ? For those who do not know, Jesus is eternal, He was not created. When He came as a baby, born of the virgin Mary, miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit....that was just the beginning of His time on the earth as a man who was named Jesus.

But He existed before this. John 1 tells us that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created."

"The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

We are told in other scriptures that He is before all things. And that by Him all things were created in heaven and on the earth.

Jesus is not just the God of the New Testament. He is God, eternally, not just going forward but also going backward. He is the beginning and the end. So He is the God of the Old Testament He'd just not called Jesus, that was the name given to Him at His human birth.

Many Christians ignore the OT, they see it as the creation story and then some pretty cool stories to tell kids. But what we need to know is that ALL scripture is about Jesus. He is the main point of the ENTIRE bible.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, we see this account of a couple of guys walking down the road talking about everything that just happened and Jesus shows up:

Luke 24:27 (HCSB)

Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

All scriptures including the OT explain at least one of the following truths.

- The Messiah would suffer/die
- The Messiah would rise from the dead
- We must repent of our sin and be forgiven
- This message must be preached to all the nations

But before you can connect a passage to Jesus, you must understand the main point of the passage. Jesus is not in every single detail but His message is there.

Over the next several weeks I'm going to take some well known OT stories and break them down to show Jesus in them in a series I'm calling "Jesus BC".....Jesus before He was revealed as the Christ....He's all over the scriptures.

This morning we're going to look at Daniel in the Lion's Den found in Daniel chapter 6. Many of you have heard this story, it's used to show great faith in God, faithfulness to God, trust in God, and God's protection, His power.

1. In this story you have a powerful king, one who rules over the known world, with final say over who he puts into positions of authority. He has the final say in all matters. There is no one above king Darius.
2. This king decides to put Daniel in charge of all others who oversee his kingdom. Daniel is unlike any other, he has fantastic character and leadership qualities. The king is so please with what Daniel does that he give Daniel the authority to oversee all the affairs of the kingdom, second only to the king.
3. All of the king's other leaders are jealous, they had overseen the daily workings of the kingdom but the king makes them all subject to this Daniel's oversight. So they try to find a reason to charge Daniel and remove him from authority.
4. Daniel is blameless, full of integrity, loyal to the king. Since there is nothing to charge him with, they devise an evil plan to get rid of him.
5. The other leaders trick the king into instituting a law that can't be broken. This law says that anyone in the kingdom that prays to a God or anyone besides the king in the next 30 days must be executed. Those leaders knew that Daniel prayed to his God and would be guilty of breaking this law.
6. Because Daniel broke the king's law, he must be put to death. The king was burdened by his servant facing death, it's said he make every effort to save Daniel but the law was irrevocable.
7. So Daniel is found to have broken the king's law and is sentenced to death.
8. Daniel is put in this lions' den....a hole in the earth, with a stone rolled over the hole and the king's seal placed on it so it will not be moved.
9. The king has a restless night thinking about the fate of his faithful servant. At the break of dawn, you see the king calling out past the stone to see if somehow, Daniel has overcome death.

10. And he has! He is pulled from this pit of bloodthirsty lions with no wound found on him, completely whole, not even a scratch or any signs of battle. And this wasn't just a lions' den like the cage at the zoo....it was a pit of lions used for executing people, they were killers....
11. Then we see Daniel's enemies are destroyed, those who plotted his death were put into the lions' den and they were destroyed..
12. Word goes out to all nations and people that Daniel's God who saved him, should be served by all. He is declared as the living God whose kingdom is unending!

WOW....what a story. Read Daniel 6 today, there's so much more and many details I don't have time to cover. This is true, it's real...God protected Daniel in a pit of killer lions. And what God did, changed the world.

I shared the things from the story that I did, because they are the things that parallel with the story of Jesus. They tell what would happen to Jesus long before He came to earth that first Christmas morning. Stories like this are what He would have used to tell of the plans God has for the Messiah. Look at the similarities in the story of Jesus....

1. There is a Ruler over all the earth Who has all power and authority to accomplish His will. All nations and peoples are subject to Him. Nothing is outside His dominion. This of course is God, the Father.

Psalm 24:1 (HCSB)

The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord;

2. Jesus is unlike any other, literally perfect in character. God places Jesus in the position of authority and power over all the earth. He in a sense is second only to the Father as we see He only works in line with the Father's will.

John 17:1-2a (HCSB)

Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said:

Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son so that the Son may glorify You, 2 for You gave Him authority over all flesh;

3. Those who have been overseeing the daily affairs of God's people, the Pharisees and Sadducees are very jealous. They look for a reason to have Jesus killed to remove Him from authority.

Matthew 12:14 (HCSB)

But the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Mark 14:55 (HCSB)

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but they could find none.

4. Jesus is blameless, full of integrity, loyal to God. Since there is nothing legit to charge him with, they devise an evil plan to get rid of him.

Acts 13:28 (HCSB)

Though they found no grounds for the death penalty, they asked Pilate to have Him killed.

5. God's law is set in place, the law that the penalty for sin is death. Although Jesus never broke the law, He was set up, and falsely accused...

Matthew 26:65 (HCSB)

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? Look, now you've heard the blasphemy!"

6. Only the death of Jesus would rightly pay the price of breaking God's law by sinful men. Even though Jesus might desire another way (asking the Father to remove this from Him), His death was the only way for reconciliation.

Romans 8:3 (HCSB)

What the law could not do since it was limited by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son in flesh like ours under sin's domain, and as a sin offering,

7. Jesus is wrongly sentenced to death as one who blasphemes God even though He never did anything apart from the Father's will

Matthew 26:66 (HCSB)

What is your decision?"

They answered, "He deserves death!"

John 5:19 (HCSB)

Then Jesus replied, "I assure you: The Son is not able to do anything on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way.

8. Jesus is placed in a tomb (a hole in the earth), a large stone is rolled over the hole and the king's seal is placed on the stone so that no one will move it.

Matthew 27:60 (HCSB)

and placed it in his new tomb, which he had cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Matthew 27:66 (HCSB)

Then they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting the guard.

9. God breathes life into the body of Jesus past the rock of the sealed tomb, raising Him back to life.

Acts 2:24 (HCSB)

God raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

10. Jesus appears to the disciples after this time in the tomb no wound found on him, completely whole, not even a scratch or any signs of battle. He had the scars on his hands, feet, and side but they were before the grave. His body experienced to wounds or decay in the grave.

Acts 2:27 (HCSB)

because You will not leave me in Hades or allow Your Holy One to see decay.

11. On that day His enemy was destroyed. They are the ones who lost their position as the powers and principalities were defeated by the very thing they tried to use to destroy Jesus.

Colossians 2:15 (HCSB)

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him.

12. Now the word is going out to all nations that Jesus is Lord. He is the one whom all people should worship and serve. His kingdom is unending!

Titus 2:11 (HCSB)

For the grace of God has appeared with salvation for all people,

Luke 1:32-33 (HCSB)

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.

Jesus is all over this story of Daniel in the lions' den. It's more than just a really cool, true story! It IS a story about great faith and it IS a story about God's protection but it's so much more than that!

See we read a story like this and think, "I hope I can be like Daniel, he's a good, godly man with great faith and trust in God" But we aren't to be like Daniel because of his great faith, obedience, and trust, we are to be like Daniel because he is like Jesus!

So what do we take from this passage? What does Daniel show us about Jesus that we should desire for our lives?

Daniel was blameless. Remember the other leaders....they wanted to get rid of Daniel but they couldn't find ANYTHING to accuse him of. God affirmed Daniel's innocence with His protection.

Daniel 9:22 (HCSB)

My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths. They haven't hurt me, for I was found innocent before Him. Also, I have not committed a crime against you my king.

Daniel was blameless, and even the king believed he was....it was a foreshadowing of Jesus who would be blameless, even as He was tried and found guilty.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (HCSB)

He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus was blameless and never did anything that would bring shame upon His King, His Father in heaven.

This story of Daniel and the lions' den gave a glimpse of Jesus, undeniably righteous but falsely accused and sentenced to death, only to emerge from the tomb to once again take His place beside the King in power and authority!

Jesus was right there with Daniel in this story. Just like Jesus is right there with you in your story.

The thing is, we are not blameless on our own. But if you are IN CHRIST, if you have placed your faith in Him and live for Him, you are blameless IN HIM. When the Father looks at you, He sees blameless, innocent Jesus!

So whatever your lions' den is, whatever you are facing where it seems as though you won't make it out, whatever it is that seems like it's going to overpower you, crush you, or destroy you, I'm here to tell you that if you live for Jesus, the mouths of the lions will be shut and you will remain unharmed!

God is with you, and He will protect you.