

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part XXIX: Daniel - God's Hope For Today's Disillusioned Youth"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Many of our youth start out in life with 3 strikes against them:

(a) The April 15, 1996 issue of USA Today ran a story about several youngsters who survived the Oklahoma City bombing last April 19th. One child in that blast was "P.J." Allen. P.J. was 20 months old at the time and he loved baseball. His right arm was broken in three places, and he suffered 2nd and 3rd degree burns over 55% of his body. He had breathed flames directly, destroying much of his lung tissue and scarring his vocal chords. P.J. Allen recovered, but he can't go out and play baseball like he used to because the dust alone could kill him. P.J. Allen is alive, but his dream of playing baseball is **over at less than 3 years of age!**

(b) But, as Anne Kitchin, relative of Norm Kitchin in our church wrote in a letter to the editor of the Torrington Register-Citizen on January 25, 1996, in speaking of the Oklahoma City toddlers, she noted: "The sad reality is that if they had chosen to do so, the(ir) parents could have legally aborted these same children . . . We are a double-minded people. We esteem children and yet we deny the high value of the life of a child." **Some children have an uphill battle even to be BORN--let alone to reach their dreams!**

(c) According to David Blankenhorn in the Feb. 24-26, 1995 issue of USA Weekend of the Torrington Register-Citizen, **40 percent** of American children will go to bed tonight in homes where a father (**either** their own **or** any **other** father) does not live. Blankenhorn adds that "Fatherlessness is the engine driving our most urgent social problems, from crime to adolescent pregnancy to domestic violence." **If fatherlessness drives our "most urgent social problems," and 40% of our children don't have any father-figure at home, what about their FUTURES?!**

(d) A 17-year-old who once attended our Vacation Bible School and is a friend of a teen in our church was arrested this week for embezzling almost \$7,000 from Torrington's PriceBuster. Personal problems combined with a temptation to steal, and now she has a record that will follow her for life. **Is there any future hope for her?!**

Where can America's youth find hope worth living for?!

(We turn to the "Need" section of the message . . .)

Need: ***"With all of the disenchantments our youth face in growing up in today's very flawed world, is there any HOPE for them to have about their FUTURES so they can have a PURPOSE in living?!"***

- I. **When Israel failed in her world mission to counter Nimrodian apostasy, even adopting its error until God judged her by captivity, her YOUTH faced great disillusionment about their futures!**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noachic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on earth, Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
 - E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation failed to curb Nimrod's error, and God had to send it into captivity, Gn. 12:4-Ezekiel.
 - F. When Judah's captives started to flow into Babylon, Israel's **youth** were challenged with disillusionment and purposelessness about living:
 1. Babylon's king set their temple's vessels in an **idol** temple, 1:1-2.
 2. Then, he practiced "religio-ethnic cleansing" on Israel's youth:
 - a. He forced them to be his officers, 1: 3-4. **B.K.C., O.T.**, p. 1330.
 - b. Then he renamed them after his pagan gods, Dan. 1:6-7.
 - c. He fed them food offered to idols opposite Ex. 34:15 and taught them the ways of Babylon, Dan. 1:5, Ibid., **B.K.C., O.T.**
 3. Thus, Judah's youths were pressured to reverse their loyalties, goals and dreams, tempting them to be disenchanted about their futures!
- II. **Some of these youths stayed loyal to God, so He rewarded them by supplying for their current livelihoods AND their future dreams:**
 - A. God met their daily provision needs regardless of great odds:
 1. For their refusing to eat idol foods, God changed the heart of Babylon's **leaders** to **condone** their diets and honor them, 1:8-21.
 2. For their refusing to worship an idol and being thus thrown into a fiery furnace, God rescued and elevated these youths, Dn. 3:1-30.
 3. Late in life, one of them named Daniel was rescued from a lion's den by God when persecuted for his prayer life, Dn. 6:1-28.
 4. Meanwhile, God **encouraged** the captives that He was **sovereign**:
 - a. He forced Nebuchadnezzar to give up on his pride for conquering Judah through giving him insanity, Dn. 4:1-37.

b. God let Babylon be conquered by the Medo-Persians for misusing the captured Jewish temple vessels, Dan. 5:1-31!

B. But God went **BEYOND** sustaining these captives' current livelihoods to addressing their need for a motivating **future HOPE** as follows:

1. Early in his captivity, God **pushed** Daniel into explaining the king's dream that predicted the final triumph of his **Jewish** nation, Dan. 2:
 - a. God revealed that **after** Babylon's rule, succeeding & **deteriorating** empires would rule Palestine (Persia, Greece, Rome & the revived Roman Empire under antichrist), 2:38b-43.
 - b. That revived Roman Empire would be overcome by God Who would establish an eternal kingdom on earth, 2:44-45.
2. Throughout his captivity, God gave Daniel more visions to fill in the details about this future triumph for Israel, Dn. 7, 8, 9, 10-12!
3. Finally, God supplied **hope** to offset the discouraging current **lot** of these captives: instead of hoping for a better lot **then**, Daniel was directed to hope for it in the **RESURRECTION**, Daniel 12:13!

III. **Daniel's addition to God's "thread of redemption" is a TIMELINE that encourages us TODAY whose LOTS in life are discouraging:**

- A. Daniel predicted that Messiah would officially present Himself to Israel 483 **Jewish** years after the command to rebuild Jerusalem, Dn. 9:25.
- B. This would make March 30, 33 A.D. that date, Hoehner, Chr. Aspects of the Life of Christ, p. 139. Since Jesus rode into Jerusalem **that DAY**, offering Himself as King (Lk. 19:28-44), **He** is that **Messiah!**
- C. Because Jesus is Messiah, His crucifixion "interrupts" Dn. 9:26-27 for Church History **between** the crucifixion **and** the **subsequent** seven years of **Israel's STILL FUTURE** antichrist **trials** in Dan. 9:27.
- D. Since Dan. 2 notes that **current** world history involves the **decline** of human welfare, the (pretribulational, premillennial) view stands and shows **humanity's welfare in this life DECLINES between the cross of Christ and His Second Coming to reign as King on earth!**
- E. Thus, in **postponing** hope of a utopian lot in **this deteriorating** era **before** Christ's **return**, we are **protected** from **disillusionment** about this life's disappointments and motivated to work to lead others to believe in Christ so that **they** may enter His **future** utopia **with** us!

Lesson Application: *To counter disillusionment in this life, a youth TODAY must (1) believe on Christ for salvation and eternal life, Jn. 3:16. (2) Then, (a) he can live by faith and obey Scripture to see God sustain him IN this imperfect life as did Daniel, Ps. 23! (b) Adopting Daniel's view that human history will deteriorate until Christ's return, he can afford earnestly to promote Christ's coming, utopian Kingdom to his associates who see their hopes of a utopia NOW getting dashed!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

On December 4, 1893, three young Christian men decided that this life was not worth living for in itself, and chose to make an investment that an older man told them would cost too much. Canadian Walter Gowans, age 25, American Tom Kent, age 20 and Canadian Rowland Bingham, age 23 all set sail in a ship for Nigeria to take the gospel of Christ to the 60 million Africans in the interior known to them simply as the Soudan. When they landed at Lagos, the elderly Superintendent of the Methodist Mission for West Africa told them, "Young men, *you* will never see the Soudan, your *children* will never see the Soudan; your *grandchildren* **may**."

They decided to press on into the interior, believing that it was worth the effort for eternity. In the first year, Walter Gowans and Tom Kent both died of malaria and Rowland Bingham had to turn back to America, the effort a failure.

After talking with Walter's grieving mother, Rowland Bingham, under her urging, was impelled to try again. Mrs. Gowans felt the cause of the gospel was worth the life of her beloved son, and didn't want his death to be in vain. Accordingly, Rowland recruited another team. That team tried, but was also turned back by malaria.

Bingham tried a **third** time in 1901. This time he established an inland base. What these young men tried and Rowland finally accomplished after their deaths was a foothold of the SIM International Mission that now reaches people for Christ around the globe.

In the third generation after these men, I attended a school as a child in that "Soudan." That school is named "Kent Academy" after 20 year old Tom Kent whose body was found lying under a tree dead from malaria. Beside his dehydrated form lay his diary with this his final, triumphant entry: "I preached the gospel to the king of Ilorin."

That happened 103 years ago! Because Tom Kent invested his all at age 20 back then, today there is a Bible belt with thousands of established, missionary **sending** churches in West Africa.

That is the call that God has for our youth in a troubled world today! Live for the life to come, trusting God to use this fleeting, imperfect life as an investment, no matter the cost, and disciple others to reach Christ's Kingdom by faith in Him!