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The Lion's Den and the Way of the Cross

In his commentary on *Dani'el*, Iain Duguid asks the question, "Does **Dani'el 6** really give us a realistic perspective on persecution and suffering?" He goes on to ask, isn't it true that for every **Dani'el**, whom **God** delivers from **the lion's den**, there have been hundreds of thousands of nameless martyrs whom **ADONAI** did *not* deliver? We can plainly see the answer to this in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. Haven't **God's** faithful ones suffered terribly over the centuries, sometimes at the mouth of **lions**, being beheaded, or being burned alive? Aren't believers still suffering terribly around the world today? Where is **Ha'Shem** in these situations? Were these believers less faithful or less important to **Him** than **Dani'el** was?



As Duguid goes on to answer these questions, he helps us to see that **Dani'el 6** provides something more than simply a model of how **ADONAI** deals with individual suffering believers, or how, like **Dani'el**, we are supposed to stand firm under trials.

Rather, **Dani’el 6** is a foreshadowing of the destiny of all believers (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Cc - We Must All Appear Before the Bema Seat of Christ**). **Dani’el** endured the test of **the lion’s den**, emerging unscathed because **Ha’Shem** found **him** not guilty; as a result, **the lions**, which acted as agents of **God’s** judgment, did not harm **him**. Believers are never judged because **there is no condemnation for those in Messiah Yeshua (Romans 8:1)**. However, the **unbelievers** who plotted against **Dani’el** were found guilty and crushed by **God’s** judgment. **They** and **their families** were sentenced to death in a foreshadowing of that final judgment, like the destruction of **Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)**, the swallowing alive of the families of **Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16)**, and **the extermination** of the inhabitants of certain **Canaanite cities (Joshua 6)**. On that last day, all **those** who are **in Adam** will be judged, declared guilty, and will share in **their** fate of destruction (see **Revelation Fo - The Great White Throne Judgment**). While all **those** who are **in Messiah** will be found blameless and will share in **Messiah’s** glory and exaltation.

This also points us to the way in which **Yeshua** fulfilled **Dani’el 6**. Like Dani’el, Yeshua was falsely accused by **His** enemies and brought before a ruler, Pontius Pilate, who sought unsuccessfully to deliver **Him** from **His** fate, before handing **Him** over to a violent death. Like **Dani’el**, **Yeshua** was condemned to die, and **His** body was placed into a sealed pit so that **His** situation could not be changed by human intervention. **Yeshua’s** trial went even deeper than **Dani’el’s**; however, **He** did not merely suffer that threat of death, **He** went down into death itself. Although **Yeshua** was innocent, **He** suffered the fate of the guilty ones. There was no angel to comfort **Him** with the presence of **ADONAI** in **His** pit; on the contrary, **He** was left in the blackness, utterly alone and abandoned by **God**, suffering the fate that we, the guilty ones, deserved. **His** body was left entombed in the icy grip of death for three days before **the angel** finally came to roll away **His** stone.

Yeshua’s experience was itself a foreshadowing of the final verdict, a declaration ahead of time of the decree of **the heavenly tribunal**. **Yeshua** died for our sins, not **His** own, and so death had no ultimate power over **Him**, as a truly innocent man. **Yeshua** didn’t remain in the grip of the tomb: **YHVH** raised **Him** from the dead, precisely because **the heavenly tribunal** found **Him without spot or blemish as the Lamb of God**.

What is more, when **Yeshua** emerged alive from the tomb as **the First Fruit** of more to come (see the commentary on **Leviticus Ea - Resheet**), **He** brought with **Him God’s** stamp of acquittal, not only on **Himself** but on all **those** who are joined

with **Him**, and **in Him**, by faith. When **Dani’el** came out of **the lion’s den**, **he** came out alone. No one else was saved by **God’s** deliverance of **him**. But when **Yeshua** came out of **the tomb**, **He** came out as the head of a mighty company of **people** who had been redeemed from **the pit** through **His** death. **Whoever believes in Yeshua will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16); they** will receive the same verdict from **the heavenly court** as **He** did, for **His** righteousness is counted as **theirs**. Because of the work of **Messiah** on behalf of **His people**, **He** can say, “**Not guilty! You may go free!**” Now we too can find favor with **ADONAI** through the cross of **Messiah**.

The people that **Yeshua** redeemed through **His** death and resurrection are not all super-believers like **Dani’el**. Most of us are ordinary sinners, people who cave in constantly to the unrighteous demands of the empire. From our earthly perspective, it may not seem that the diverse assortment of deeply flawed humanity that makes up the Church is worthy of eternal life. What kind of a reward would that be for **Him**? Yet, **Yeshua** does not hesitate to call us **His children (John 1:12)**! Even a crass sinner can be **a child of God** because **Yeshua** sees the end of the process, the glorious Church that will be presented to **Him** without spot or blemish. Our salvation does not rest on our ability to “Dare to be **Dani’el**.” But rests solely on **Messiah’s** perfect obedience in our place. In the midst of a world of trials and tribulation, this is where our peace and comfort rest. In the world to come, that will be all of our glory: all the righteousness of **Messiah**, given to us, minus **His** deity.³⁵⁴