



ST. MATTHEWS
Experience God's Family

Sermon Title: **Daniel part 7**
Sermon Date: **23 October 2011**
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Who wants to be healthy?

Well, today I have some good news and bad news for you...

- Good news: Bacon has been found to be good for you.
- Bad news: Only if boiled.
- **Good news: There is a new diet out which allows you to eat as much as you want.**
- **Bad news: You are not allowed to swallow.**
- **Good news: It has been discovered that there serious health benefits to being overweight.**

A new report suggests that being overweight is not as harmful as is commonly believed, and actually confers some surprising benefits.

Being five to ten pounds overweight could protect people from ailments ranging from tuberculosis to Alzheimer's disease, research indicates. Those carrying 15 to 25 extra pounds are better able to recover from adverse conditions such as emphysema, pneumonia, and various injuries and infections, states the report.

Thirty to forty pounds of flab could help fend off breast, kidney, pancreatic, prostate, and colon cancer. And an extra fifty pounds on the scale may improve eyesight, reverse baldness, cure the common cold, and reduce global warming.

In general, the report concludes, overweight people are happier, more successful in business, smarter, and friendlier.

- **Bad news: The study was funded by a research grant from McDonald's, Steers, Spur and Kentucky.**

Good news and bad news...

It's like the woman who after going on a diet, felt really good about herself, especially when she was able to fit into a pair of jeans she had outgrown a long time ago. "Look! Look!" she shouted while running downstairs to show her husband. "I can wear my old jeans again!"

Her husband looked at her for a long time, and then he said, "Honey, I love you, but those are my jeans."

What makes good news / bad news jokes so funny is that they bring out the inevitable "two sides to a coin" element of life in a way that we can see the humor. Either by tainting a happy thought but in a fun way... or by bringing some hope, through fun, to a struggle.

In Daniel 10 – 12 we have a good news / bad news situation...

And the main aim is to bring hope to a seemingly hopeless situation. Good news to a bad news situation.

Main point of message: No matter how bad things get, the good news is that God has a glorious eternal inheritance planned for His people.

When we began this journey in the book of Daniel in chapter 1, Daniel was 14 years of age living under the Babylonians. Now in chapter 10 he is 70 and living under the Persians. He has been through a lot. Daniel has learned how to live faithfully trusting in God in a hostile foreign land. **But Daniel and some of God's people that still longed to return home.**

In Daniel 10 we are told that Cyrus is the Persian ruler. And it is this Cyrus that had decreed this in Ezra 1: 2 – 4: ***“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. ³ Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. ⁴ And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.”***

And so God made it possible for His people to go home – But for some reason not Daniel.

And Daniel was probably wondering what the future would be for God's people even beyond going back home. And that is what the vision that Daniel is given in these closing chapters of the book are about.

First there is bad news:

What is laid out for Daniel is the future of the Persian and Greek kingdoms. Daniel is given a fairly detailed account of what was going to happen just off that corner of the Mediterranean Sea over the next 300 or 400 years.

But it is not the detail of the vision that would have worried Daniel. He's seen kingdoms come and go. He has lived under four kings and two different empires during his captivity. He knows that God has got all that under control. It was the future of God's people Israel that was of interest to him.

Sadly the news is not good. They are in for a difficult time. They may have returned to the land – but their life will not be peaceful.

A fair amount of the vision is taken up with what seems to be a description of the brutal reign of Antiochus Epiphanes – with only brief resistance from God's people.

But there is good news

After Daniel has been shown the vision of the struggle between the Greek and Persian empires he is given one final glimpse into the even more distant future [Daniel 12:1b – 2](#).

Beyond all the political pushing & shoving Daniel is shown that God still has all things under control. His people are not forgotten. His people are not abandoned forever.

Daniel is shown that there will be a resurrection and final judgment.

There are two things to note from this vision:

Everyone will be raised – but some will be raised to life and others will be raised to what Daniel calls everlasting contempt.

The basis for being given life is that you have your name written in the book

No matter what may happen in the future, Daniel – and all God's people – can be assured that those who trust God can look forward to spending eternity with him.

More than that, Daniel is told that there will be an inheritance for those who trust in God [Daniel 12:13](#).

If Daniel were to compare the difficulty that may be faced by God's people with the future that God has in store at the end of time then there is no comparison.

The apostle Paul says the same thing in [Romans 8: 17 – 21](#) (Only happens in Christ!).

For rugby lovers it is amazing to see the level of intensity go up at the world cup.

Players put their bodies on the line – they go off with gashes, have them stitched in the changing room, come back and play! The blood literally flows and you have to drag them off the field.

But if you were to ask them if the pain is worth it, they would all reply that it is.

They are happy to go through all that pain because for the reward and glory!

And that is what Daniel is shown in this vision. That is what Paul is saying in Romans. That is what we need to have clearly in our minds.

As people who trust in Jesus we have a wonderful future ahead of us.

The day will come when Jesus will return to this earth. He will come to judge. He will come to reward those who have placed their trust in him. He will come to punish those who have ignored him and shut him out of their life.

Knowing that should lead us to do two things:

Hope:

- As people who trust in Jesus we have an incredible hope. We look forward to the day that Jesus will return to take us to be with him. Our future is not uncertain – it is guaranteed.

Probably some of the most comforting words in the bible are found when Jesus is talking to them about their future – [John 14:1 – 3](#).

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for all those who have their trust placed in him. This is no small matter. This should shape who we are. It should shape how we live

Perseverance:

- Knowing this should also help us to persevere. We can know for certain that nothing we face in this life will compare to what God has in store for us in heaven. When you face those seemingly insurmountable problems then you need to remember that.

Our present difficulties don't even compare to what God has in store for us. When we face a time of pain or suffering we need to remember that it doesn't compare to what God has in store for us. It doesn't compare to the reward that God has for those who trust in his son.

I don't want to downplay how serious some of the things are that we face in this life. I have no doubt that many of us will face great tragedies and hardships in life. I know that there are many in our church who have already had to face great suffering. I don't want to trivialize those problems.

But I also don't want to trivialize what God has got in store for us in heaven. God has prepared eternity for those who believe in Jesus. He has promised that he will take us to be with him forever to a place where there will be no more suffering or pain.

Knowing that should help us to persevere as Christians – to keep going, to keep on believing and to keep on living out of faith in Jesus.

Let's finish by reading an amazing bible passage where God describes what he has in store for those who have their trust placed in his son Jesus. Read [Rev 21:1 – 4](#).

No matter how bad things get, the good news is that God has a glorious eternal inheritance planned for His people (Those who have trusted in Christ).

- **We can trust in God in a hostile world – happened with Daniel and his fiends... God was shown to be in control for their good.**
- **We can trust in God in a hostile world – happened ultimately with Christ – showed us how that even there God was in control for us (Gospel).**

But only benefits us if we trust in Him!