

Grace to you and peace ... from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

Daniel 6:16-17, 19-24 <sup>16</sup> So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” <sup>17</sup> Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring.... <sup>19</sup> Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. <sup>20</sup> And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice, ... “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” <sup>21</sup> Then Daniel said to the king, ... <sup>22</sup> “My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” <sup>23</sup> Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. <sup>24</sup> And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions – them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

Mark 16:1-8 <sup>1</sup> Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. <sup>2</sup> Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. <sup>3</sup> And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away – for it was very large. <sup>5</sup> And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” <sup>8</sup> So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

A Easter 4/1/18 Isaiah 53:10-12 Acts 2:22-24 Psalm 96 Responsive Reading from Psalm 118  
Hymns: 190, 199, 200, 732

### **THE LIONS’ DEN TO THE TOMB**

Christ the Lord is ris’n again! Christ has broken death’s strong chain!  
Hark, the angels shout for joy, Singing evermore on high: Hallelujah!

He who gave for us His life, Who for us endured the strife,  
Is our Paschal Lamb today. We, too, sing for joy and say: Hallelujah! (TLH #190:1-2)

Dear fellow believers in Christ, our resurrected and living Savior,

Daniel was a faithful Old Testament believer who was among the Jews taken into captivity in Babylon. As time went on we’re told, “*Daniel distinguished himself*” above the Babylonian

government officials, and the king thought about putting him in authority over all of them. Some of them were very jealous of Daniel and came up with a plan to have him put to death.

God the Father said of Jesus, *“This is My beloved Son in whom I well pleased”* (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). Jesus said, *“I have come down from heaven ... to do ... the will of Him who sent Me”* (Jn. 6:38). Jesus faithfully carried out the work His Father had sent Him to do as the promised Messiah/Savior, preaching of forgiveness for sins and eternal salvation in Him. The people loved Jesus, but many of their leaders were jealous of Him, hated Him, and plotted to kill Him.

Daniel’s enemies tricked the king into passing a law that would result in having him sentenced to death. Jesus’ enemies put tremendous pressure on the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to have Jesus put to death.

Daniel continued to openly worship and serve God, willing to die for the Lord’s sake. Facing the ongoing efforts of His enemies to put Him to death, Jesus continued to carry out His Father’s will, openly proclaiming the truth about Himself and the world’s salvation in Him.

The king tried to spare Daniel’s life, but Daniel’s enemies made sure that he was condemned to die. Pontius Pilate tried to spare Jesus’ life, but Jesus’ enemies finally got Pilate’s permission to have Him crucified.

When the time came for Daniel to face execution, he didn’t renounce God and beg to be released. When Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to die, He willingly let His enemies take Him away and crucify Him: *“He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth”* (Is. 53:7).

The king didn’t want Daniel to die, but he couldn’t prevent it. As he gave the command for Daniel’s death sentence to be carried out he said to Daniel, *“Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”* God the Father loves His Son with a perfect love. He knew that the only way our sins could be paid for was by the death of His Son – the sacrifice of the sinless One for our world of lost sinners. So God willingly sent His Son to die. And God Himself carried out the death sentence.

After Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den we’re told that *“a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring.”* After Jesus’ lifeless body was laid in the tomb, Matthew tells us *“they made [it] secure, sealing the stone”* (Mt. 27:66).

When Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den *“the king spent the night fasting.”* He couldn’t sleep, worried sick that Daniel was dead. When Jesus was laid in the tomb His followers were heartbroken, and full of confusion and fear. One of them said about Jesus, *“The chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel”* (Lk. 24:20–21a).

After Daniel spent the night in the lions’ den *“the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice, ... ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to*

*deliver you from the lions?’ Then Daniel said..., ‘My God sent His angel’ (“His angel” most likely refers to the Angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Son of God) ‘and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me.’ Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.”*

We’re told, *“Very early in the morning ... [the women] came to the tomb when the sun had risen,”* fully expecting to see Jesus’ dead body. *“The stone had been rolled away.... And entering the tomb they saw a young man”* (an angel) *“clothed in a long white robe.... He said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here.’ ... And ... [the women] trembled and were amazed.”*

After he knew that Daniel was alive the king ordered that those who had wanted him thrown into the lions’ den be thrown into the lions’ den themselves, along with their families. The very thing that Daniel’s enemies thought would destroy him ended up destroying them, and their families!

Satan hoped that death would defeat Jesus. But by His death Jesus defeated Satan, and Satan’s fellow demons, and sin, and death, and hell! God had promised Adam and Eve that He would send the Savior who would crush Satan (Gen. 3:15). Scripture says that *“through death [Christ ... destroyed] him who had the power of death, that is, the devil”* (He. 2:14). *“O Death, where is your sting? O Grave, where is your victory? ... Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1Cor. 15:55, 57).

The pre-incarnate Son of God had said To His Father, *“You will not leave My soul in hell; nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption”* (Ps. 16:10; Ac. 2:25-27). When the resurrected Jesus appeared to His followers and left no doubt that He has risen from the dead, He filled them with joy and peace. They knew they believed in and lived for the living Savior. They knew that all of their sins were forgiven. And they knew that when they died Jesus would take them to heaven.

Our risen Savior fills you and me with joy and peace as well. Scripture says, *“Jesus Christ ... was ... declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead”* (Ro. 1:3-4). *“Jesus ... was delivered up”* (on the cross) *“for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification”* (Ro. 4:24-25). Jesus assures us, *“Because I live, you will live also”* (Jn. 14:19b).

He who slumbered in the grave Is exalted now to save;  
Now through Christendom it rings That the Lamb is King of kings. Hallelujah!

Now He bids us tell abroad How the lost may be restored,  
How the penitent forgiven, How, we, too, may enter heaven. Hallelujah!

Thou our Paschal Lamb indeed, Christ, today Thy people feed;  
Take our sins and guilt away That we all may sing for aye: Hallelujah! Amen.