

THE LIONS OF GOD

Dan 6:1-10,16-23

21 May 00

Intro: 1) Lkng bk Daniel clues how liv as belivrs in only 1 true God in a pluralstc soc commtted princ many gods/religs/moralities, equally valid. For tht is wrld liv in Westrn soc today **2)** Tod 1st/mst fam Dan narrats-- Dan Lions'Den. **3)** I thnk illustrs conctr wht JC says lif wrld: **Mt.5:11-16**, "*blessed you whn peop persec you falsely say all kind evil vs. you...*[then] *you salt earth...*[then] *You light world--city on a hill.*" Three things tht JC calls us to be and expect our lives in the world-- salt, hurt, light.

I. SALT - (Read) *vv.1-4*. 1st grt princ Xn life in wrld: against sep fr world. We're cld to be salt of earth--deeply with peop wrld, deep engaged earthly city. **A. Text. 1)** v.1 Dan high posit pagan govt.**2)** Wrk3quals: **a)** *incorruptbl* (v.4) in system full corrupt **b)** *disc/* v.4-diligent, **c)** bt possib both honest, hrd-wrking, nt effect--*exceptional!* v.3. **ex.** tuf trans: *lit. excellent spirit in him*. Hebr expts: *quality of doing thngs such excellce ev arnd fell into line, inspird did best*. **2)** See again: casestudy lettr Jerem29 Jewsh exiles: **a)** 1st exiles--dnt assim, sep! Stay out big city, live in own clsd commun, form own littl wrld, own music/art, own scholarship, own assocs, own ev! **b)** Jer: *neith assim nor sep!* 3--(1)movin/deep engagd econ/cult/life, soc; (2)yt maint identity my peop; (3)seek nt peacprosp peop, whol city! **c)** Dan--all 3! (1) tho hd gifts be prph, nt full-time Jer, exprssd devot king God sec job! (2)yt both incorruptb, see-publ ident GodIsr, (3) fin, nt jst own trib/persnl advancm, *so king nt suffr loss--sought commn good, peac city*. **B. Salt!** How illust JC means metaphr "saltearth" **1)** Salt *disperses*--it gets out, gets in. Nt jst stay togeth safe enclaves. **2)** Main anc, preserv, kept meat, etc. whol wld othrwise go bad. **a)** **ex**Gen11:4-Twr Babel, com tog use techn, do archt proj--**b)** bt purp? *let mak nam selves!* w/o God hums self-namers! Get ident, sens uniqu, signif thro accomp, wrk. **c)** reslt story--nt surprs: Disuni, fight/content, conflct! if going gt very identity how high go, money, recogn, pwr accrue, lead--decay, brkdown, disintegr: (1) conflct empt insecur insid; (2) disord rac/class/grp outside! **d)** Bt Xns salt! name fr God! his grace/don for us/in us--sourc ident, uniqu, signif! We int city, *nt* driven job, *nt* traml get up! **ex1** Whn do art, nt abt makng name, recog, delight art its own sake! work work's sake! **ex2** Meet need customers busnss--*their* sake! **Sum:** Salt! Like Dan--disperse, music int mus wrld, art artwrld, busi, business wrld-gov't wrld, academ wrld--there, name/God able wrk w/justic, poise, peace, love, wholsom, vital infl--vs. deconstructing forces of self-nam, self-glorific. *****Ha!** Simp? Abs nt! Bt wht vision! Ther's vision! **B. APPLIC: 1)** To wht Xn do in wrk! career choices--cuts 2 ways: **a)** 1hnd, went say if really use gifts God, go full-tim min/missionary. Dan nt **b)** 2hnd, nt self-namng job, Xns who know *cld* get int highstat grad, highstat job (min nt anymore) shld consid **2)** To wher Xns do wrk! **a)** Salt goes wher thngs tend fall apart. **b)** Dan corrupt uppr echels govt. **c)** U.S.Xns too mch lik ev els: choose mst comf, mst funct places--schools fine, streetssafe, peop

nice/like me, no conflu. **d)** Xns shld be--lik salt--lik incarnat J--attrctd to plac's hurt. Go cities--w/o thm far worse off! Nt jst get resume, seek prosp city! **3)** To how Xns do wrk. **a)** nt enuf jst work well, excell--need ident cult appopr way, tht faith base wrk **b)** easy miss princ fr meth: Dan prayed wind open, seen! Wrng emulat--lunch employee café sprd Bib head-outloud. **c)** Princ: he wrkd *pwrfl* city, daily shwd *ult alleg God's city*. Tho pwr, daily peop knelt him, in cult bodylang hug, knelt *real* king. **d) Pt:** *Shwd not ult!* In NYC, show nt ult alleg? Nt greedy, nt sacrif body, health, fam, nt scared/anxious/tens; Or nt treat *imperially*, nvr use cut off (bus wrld here--peop nt face you fire, take out); zillions ways. Findthm

II. HURT - (Read) *vv.4-8*. 2nd princ Xn lif wrld: vs assim towrld, warng too close identifca. **A. Text.** **1)** Fact--deep tens oft hostil betw insid/outs church cents! Both sides expln oft self-serv, simplistic **a)** Thos insid oft expln: **ex.** as here--we more incorrupt, wrld nt like exposd. **Prob:** mst Xns not as excell Dan. flawed ordinar in charac. **b)** Thos outsid oft expln: **ex.** Xns narr-hypocrts opprss peop. **Prob:** Jst maj Xns nt Dans, nt Elmr Gantry. maj Xns *nt* peop pwr opprssd downtroddn, havenots, thmselvs **ex.** DWM stereotyp: maj Afr/Lam/Asia! **2)** Clues: **a)** 1sttriggr: "at this"--king's promo. Nt surpris. Othr 2 admns wld down notch. prof jealousy. **b)** 2ndtriggr: v.4, thoro dig dirt fnds *abs* noth bt sterling charac--bt alldoes, get *mor* intent, todepr schemng. **c) Why? Pt:** Investig--shows expctd jst lik thm! Mor find *nt* like us--strange! Unpredict, alien, othr--mor resent.

Sum: Ther's irreduc, unavoidable, evn understandab strangeness abt Xns fr wrld's persp--maks at least uneas, oft host. Xns nt surpr it. Unpack.

B. Strangeness. **1)** L/Rings sick. **a)** coupl ord, pedestr characs quiet littl countr ThShire they love all hrt, **b)** caught up epic advent ord sav ThSh, win thro, save it, return, **c)** Facd paradox: (1) 1hnd, leadrs! Thng confus, ovrwhlm inhabs snap them! hav courg, lov, wisd, evn sadnss, deepr oths--mor effectiv, (2) YT own peop find strang, chngd. Unabl undrst say, mov them. **d)** Ans--why both mor effect in land, yt alien, *roots souls shiftd new land*. (1) on advents, transfrmd by contact peop distnt land ovr Westrn seas--fnd their heart's true country/hom, (2) Now, as Dan, mst effect city of man bec daily opn window yearns city God--they shore, hear music wavs othrs nt **Q#1. e)** Irreduc parad! Reasn othr Shire ovrwhlmd, Shire all hav! Maps--jst white spaces! all hav, anything goes wrong, overthrown! My money onl wealth hav! My looks onl beauty hav! My frndsfam onl lov hav! Ones gottn anoth country--find very thng more effectiv here, also, made strang, rest inhab. **2)** exact, JC: **Q#2.** Very thng makes blessing thos arnd--able wrk poise, unselfish lov, nt need stnd on yr dignity, nt need prov self/ nt mak wrk a get-a-name project//so able deal justice, so nt need put down othr peop, races, classes assur selves righteous--VERY sam allow this, unavoid makes seem dis/unpred, app/arrogant.

a) Distressngly Unpredictib. **(1) ex.** imag com room frnd--you see 75 peop, she 25. going thnk strng! **(2)** thngs bothr Xns, nt bothr. wht scare/ cntrl peop w/ofaith, Xns stride. Xns operate diff premises--deep hiddn.

ex2 C.EvKoop, Xn SurgGen--first, bec prolife, hug attacks Demos; Later, report AIDS, 1st brkthro demnd\$\$ govt test, educ. Attack Repub--"I'm SurgGen all US citizens--unborn AND gay!" Nt compute! **Pt:** Hear music others nt hear! **Why?** If identit--tribe/country (conserv societies)--no abort homosex disdained, no sex outsid marr, bec fam/race ev! Bt oft much racism, class put down. If identit--pers self-actualiz, liberation (lib societies) mch defense civil rights, good progr vs. injustic, yt fam breaks down--schools nt work, poverty grtr inequality. **Xns:** God supr, nt fam, nt national sov, nt individ rights--God, makes uttrly unpredict. As Koop--no one trusted! Ev side felt betrayed. **b) Apparently arrogant.** (1) wrld thnks 2 ways w/God. Relig irrelig. Relig--wht makes right w/God, very good, moral perform, do duties/practices. (2) Wht *maks* us Xn, puts roots heart diff soil--gosp! Relig is--accepted event thro *our* works; Xnty, gospel--accepted NOW thro His works, life,death, resu JC! Relig--good peop find God, bad out; Xnty--thos *know* nt good/save selves find God, proud out. (3) Wrld *nt* see diff Xnty relig--if saw, nt be outside gospel. So for Xn simply expres at all central, transforming truth core life--I *know* God! I *found* abs accepted now! (they *hav* thnk arrogant, claim bettr others) and say, bec all grace, hav believ X (tho tht's height of humility, admitting goodness inadeq--they see arrogant). **c) Puzzlingly inconsistent.** Add unpredict and apparent arrogan Xns at their *best*, wrld also sees Xns at worst! (1) 1st, inconsistencies of Xns. Rememb thnk if Xn, means achievd lev moral behav way abov. So norm Xn flaws seen hypocr (2) on top, real hypocrits, peop name X wolves sheeps clothing **C. APPL:** **1) 1st,** compass **a)** som Xns nat lov "salt"! JC delib touched/ate, women, lepers, taxcolctrs, trad/respe/relig soc unclean. Salt--all abt touching, going in, dispersing, embrac. **b)** Bt be careful--nt exp comp elim offensivn gosp. **ex.** Paul 2 Tim3:12--*all* godly persec. You will be misundr stood, you will be sometimes turnd on. *If not*--being cowardly or jst too nice. **2) 2nd,** militant. **a)** Som very aware of 'hurt'. Yes, we persec! Xns this count los freed!" **b)** Big subj. **Pt:** shld nt so shocked outraged--at misundrsttod. How cld not? (1) we are unpredict, (2) unavoid look arrogant, no matt how say thngs, nt get diff relig/gosp, bt thts point (3) see hug inconsists hist. So yes, protest injustice when see it, take chip off shoulder. Coms territ! *Sevnt nt abov mastr* **3)** Those here--outside Xnty, or not sure. Been offended Xns. I hope this help mak som distincts. **a)** yes, hypocrite, **b)** Test: *Do think anyone who SURE eternal life, Father--rath arrog?* nt undrstnd diff/esse gosp--*nt saying that bec HAV achieved, bt bec WERE achieved.* **c)** now Imag you believed that! Imag--see why if you did, you'd say wht Xns say abt knowGod? Want to get others see it--even if clumsily? **Transition:** To th militant-types: work to be salt. To the compass types: be willing hurt. Irreducible diff/strangness. Tht's it? Now be brav, like Daniel? Bt why aren't we? *How* can? More elbow grease? Som deeper? **III. LIGHT** - (Read) *vv.9,16-23.* **Text.** **1)** Rest story extr famill! **a)** 1,000's Sundayschools--moral story, brave like Dan! **b)** All due respct, many room

hrd story lik this--may be one reasns nt Xn today! Plnty peop--moral/
 story apprch, found nt work! "Tried, nt keep up!" or "Good, life lots bites
 tears!" **c)** Bt nt blam Xnty--way interp if story primar teach moral be lik
 Dan--abs contrac life/messag JC: (1) Life: v.23-nt scratch! If trust God,
 innocent/good, God nt let bad thngs happn! Bt, JC mor innocent, MOR
 trustng Dan--Very hurt, COVRd wounds.(2) messg: for "I com nt call
 good/right, sinners!" Nt those thnk good, thos know not! **d)** Why thn
 here? Wht to tell us? **A. 1st, Show us beauty salv will come to us! 1)**
 Miracs Bib *nvr* nakd displays pwr ex.skywrit, volcan **2)** bt teach God's
 comng salv! whn heald, fed miracul--nt nat order suspended, restored!
 Diseas, death, demoniz nt way God mad, arrang some day back! **3)** OT,
 lions symb destruct, disharm world! (SinclFerg: chaos univ fallen undr
 sin!) **a)** Ps.7,10,57,91 symb troubles dang 'among lions' **b)** Ah! Bt Is.11:6-
 7 **Q#3**--see. then? **c)** taming lions foretas com kingd God--univs restorat-
-glimps city God! **d)** Sins forgiven, creation itself, engulfed in blaze
 purifying glorious liberty child God (Paul! Rom.8)--and then all nature
 again tog, no death, nt fall apart! **APPLY:** Prom: we some day lay down
 lions! Our bodies will work again--you thngs wrong, going wrong! Our
 world healed! And Daniel givn miraculous exper, for a moment--ptng
Future salv of God! HOW BE? **B. 2nd, show us beauty salv was don for**
us. 1) "sent his angel!" **a)** S/M/A looks like son of the gods! **b)** nt sav
 frsuffrng/ordeal, strike guards dead goes in with, saves thro it. **c)** Who
 this? wheth lit.him,(I thnk him) jst pt--here's answhy WE lk frwrd lay
 down lions! **d)** Cents later, anoth, victim unjust law, death sealed, stone
 rolled ovr him bt filld wounds! Ps.22, cents Messianic--**Q#4 e)** Lions nt
 jst OT symbol suffrng gen, Amos symbol eternal justice: *The Lord roars*
from Zion vs. violence, oppress injustice. **f)** Jesus *real* Daniel, who faced
real lions--nt at RISK of his life but COST of his life--he faced the very
 eternal justice punishment due all injustice! **C. APPLIC: 1)** Now--go int
 dens courag--bt nvr be Dans dens lives, nt see he went ult den for us! **a)**
 Nt face dis, know great disease, one really take out over! Nt face fin prob-
 -only real debt sink me dealt with! Nt fac lonelinss, only true lonelinss--
 cast away God forever, he ult den, on cross! **b)** pt "dare be daniel"--God
 my judg! 1Cor3-4! Nt car you think! **c)** **ex.** som you--psych probs, (nt
 reducing to this, I know--thousands) nt able assurd accepted. Why
 clawing to top. Why some discouragd sens failure! Old Hymn--celebrates:
 "Holy and blameless in his sight!" We w/o scratch law of God, he torn
pieces, took punishment! Well may the accuser ROAR of sins that I hav
done! I know them all--and thousands more! Jehovah, knoweth NONE! **2)**
 Dan salt, Dan took hurt, Dan light. **a)** light attracts w/beauty! **b)** notice
how king tossd turned! **Why?** He loved Daniel! Courage, his integrity--*not*
only hurt, also attracted. Both--or neither! If only attractec, entertaining. If
90only hurt, obnox sake. As Lewis--he can tame lions, bec not a tame
lion! Fear God--be in awe, amazement who is/wht done in for you--fear
 God, fear nothing else! Let us pray!

Q#1- *We remember, we who dwell
In this far land beneath the trees
The starlight on the Western seas.*

Q#2 - *If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, for I have chosen you...tht is why wrld hates you...No servant is greater than his master" Jn. 15:19-20*

Q#3- *The wolf will liv with the lamb, the leopard will lied down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child shall lead them.*

Q#4 - *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? All who see me mock me...they hurl insults, saying 'he trusts in the Lord, lwt the Lord resuce him...roaring lions open their mouths wide against me...you lay me in the dust of death...*

Q#5 - He tells us we are a 'city set on a hill' whose visible behavior shines out and shows the world the glory of God. What does it mean for Christians to be a 'city' that the world can see ('on a hill')? It is breath-taking. It means that Redeemer is to be an alternate New York City. Implications: (1) We are to reach out and bring in to our Christian communities all the kinds of people in the city. (Reminds you of the ark, doesn't it?) Anything less than the diversity of NYC will make us fail to be a 'city on a hill'. (2) We are to then model alternate ways to do *everything*--from business, economic life, sexuality, art, race relations, respect for human life, conflict resolution, material sharing--everything.