

Work that God has called people to do

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The amazing thing about life is that we all have a purpose and when we give our hearts to the Lord, He gives us gifts, talents, and a job in which to use them. Know that God knows your name and sometime in your life, you will hear his voice calling you. Hebrews 3:8 warns us not to harden our hearts when we hear his voice, but listen and obey.

There is an interesting story in Amos 7:14. Amaziah, a priest at Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam, king of Israel telling him that Amos was making evil plans against the king with the people of Israel. He accused him of speaking so much that the land couldn't hold all his words. Amos has told the people that King Jeroboam will die by the sword and the people of Israel would be taken into captivity and forced out of their country.

Amaziah approached Amos and tried to force him to leave Bethel and not prophesy there anymore. He pointed out that Judah was more suitable for him to live and earn a living because Bethel was the king's holy place and also the temple was in Bethel.

Amos answered Amaziah with these words: "I do not make my living as a prophet nor am I a member of a group of prophets. I make my living as a shepherd and I take care of sycamore trees. But the Lord took me away from tending the flock and told me to go and prophesy to his people Israel." Amos then told Amaziah that God would not overlook his error of condemning him for prophesying to God's people to warn them concerning their sins. Amos told Amaziah that harm would come to his family. His wife would be unfaithful to him and his children would be murdered. His land would be taken over by strangers and divided among them. Amaziah would die in a foreign land.

He finished the conversation with this warning. "The people of Israel will definitely be taken from their own land as captives."

God warns about people who wrongly judge his servants. Psalms 105:15 says "Do not touch my anointed ones and do my prophets no harm."

In Acts 8:1, a young man named Saul witnessed the stoning of a follower of Jesus Christ. He agreed that killing Stephen was a good thing. In verse 3, it tells us that Saul tried to destroy the church by going house to house and dragging men and women out and putting them in prison. He created havoc among the believers, but as the people dispersed throughout the surrounding regions, the gospel spread and God's work flourished. In chapter 9, Saul headed for Damascus to get papers giving him more authority to stomp out the infant church, but on the way, a great light shone around him, he fell off his horse and the light blinded him. A voice called from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the pricks." Saul asked, "Who are you Lord?" The voice said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Arise and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."

A follower of Jesus lived in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke his name in a vision. Ananias said "Here I am Lord." He was told to get up and go to Straight Street.

He was to find the house of Judas and ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarshish. He was told that Saul was at this moment praying and he had seen a vision of Ananias coming to him, laying hands on him and praying for him. God told him that Saul was blind but would receive his sight when he prayed for him.

Ananias said, "Lord, many people have told me about this man and the terrible things he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. He has come here to Damascus and the leading priests have given him power to arrest anyone who worships you." But the Lord said, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must tell about me to those who are not Jews, to kings, and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." So Ananias went, laid hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you met on the road on your way here. He sent me so you can see again and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Immediately Saul had his sight returned, he was baptized and he ate food and his strength returned.

Cyrus, a Pagan King, was called by God to help the Jews return from captivity to Jerusalem. In Isaiah 45:1-4, the prophet wrote through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. In Isaiah 44:26, God says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please." In 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, it describes the event where Cyrus declares that the God of heaven had given him the kingdoms of the earth and charged him to build him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. King Cyrus actively assisted the Jews in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem under Ezra and Zerubbabel. The building expenses were covered from the royal treasury. The prophet Daniel served King Cyrus for at least to the third year of his reign. See Daniel 10:1. The natural person to have shown Cyrus the scrolls was Daniel, a high-ranking official in Persia. See Daniel 6:26. The historian, Josephus says that Cyrus was informed of the biblical prophecies and acted accordingly.

Daniel was called by God to stand true to his godly heritage even in the face of paganism. He was taken captive at a young age, had his name changed to a Babylonian god's name, was taught the culture of Babylon and yet he stayed true to the God of Israel and never wavered in his faith. God protected him, advanced him, tried him, and proved to the heathen kings that the God of heaven is able to provide, protect and deliver his people.

Daniel was given insight into the events of his own time, into the future, and given information that has stumped scholars for many years because of the accuracy and detailed events that were described many years before they were fulfilled.

We may think that our circumstances have been difficult, our lives have been hard going, and we have nothing to offer the Lord, but I assure you that those who desire to live for God and to do a work for the building up of the kingdom of God will be given a job and be equipped to labor and be rewarded for the work of the Lord.