Daniel - Commentaries by Paul L Johnson

Chicago Conference: 1984, Continue with the Lord

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

Address—P.L. Johnson

I'd like to read a few scriptures and before I get into the portion that I'd like to take up more in detail. First of all, I'd like to read in the. First epistle to Timothy. First Timothy 4 and verse 16. Take heed unto thyself and under the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. And in the second epistle. To Timothy, Second Timothy, chapter 3. And verse 14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and has been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And another verse in the 14th chapter of Acts. Acts 14 and verse 21. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra and to Iconium and Antioch. Confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that with much that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. Now, as I said, I read these verses, not that I desire to speak on the verses that we've read, but I read them to bring before us the thought of continuing. I was thinking in regard to as our brother was bringing before us in connection with Elijah. How that Elijah did not continue in that that pathway and that mission and we see that he was turned aside. You know, sometimes I get the the impression. That we do not realize. That to continue in the things of the Lord, continue in the things that we have learned, to continue in company with the Lord. And in the faith. Requires much more exercise and diligence. And such a path or such a course is indeed more difficult for. We think of perhaps the pathway or the life of one who goes out into a foreign field and into remote areas where they are deprived of perhaps some of the comforts that we enjoy and normally have in this country as being very difficult and perhaps we're not aware of the fact. That to continue for the little while that is left to us, till the Lord comes to continue. Is it requires diligence and exercise and a dependence upon the Lord and we might say, and I believe this is the important point, we need the help of the Lord. You know, the apostle Paul says to King Agrippa. Therefore, having obtained help. Of the Lord I continue under this day. And I believe the Lord wants to help us in that. I believe the Lord wants to help us because He he desires that we would continue in the faith, that we would continue in the things that we have learned. Knowing of whom we have learned them, and that we might continue with him. In the 22nd chapter of Luke. Even when the disciples were there with their vying for the chief place. Considering who might be the greatest, the Lord says to them, Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptation. He took note of the fact that they had continued. We had brought before us in the reading on an occasion in John's Gospel, when many of the disciples went back and walked no more with him. But the Lord takes note. Ye are they who have continued with me. And I emphasize that last verse that I just referred to in Luke, because the continuance that I have before me that we might obtain help from God to to do is not a continuance in some outward association with the Lord's people. I mean by that one might go on outwardly.

In association with the Lord's people and not be continuing with the Lord personally. Going on with the Lord and continuing with me. I was thinking of Joseph and Mary. When they returned from Jerusalem, having gone up to the feast. And Jesus had been with them, and as they journeyed a day's journey, he was not with them. And it says that when they went this day's journey that they supposed that he was in the company. They were not personally in company with him, but they had supposed that he was in the company. And I thought of that. You know, it's, it's one thing perhaps to say, well, I'm in fellowship with those who are gathered to the Lord's name, and the Lord is in the midst. Whether two or three are gathered together under my name. But what about our going on, as it were, a day's journey without that continuing with him personally? And I believe the Lord takes note of that. And the Lord desires that we might continue, and He gives us that help in His precious word. And I trust that this afternoon we might, in considering Daniel as one who continued, that we might have something that would help us to continue, not only in that association with the Lord's people. In the company that the Lord owns. But that we might have that continuance with himself personally going on with the Lord, because there are many things that come in to. Wear the Saints out. I think there was a brother that mentioned that some years ago that the effort of the enemy was to wear the Saints out and to cause them to become weary in the way. And their trials and their testings and I believe one of the things that was a trial and a test to. Elijah that we've had brought before us was the state of the Lord's people, and what a test. And what a trial this can be, but the going on or continuing? With the Lord, I'm sure that all of us have had the the sad experience of knowing those who were once going on not just in fellowship, they were in fellowship, but they were perhaps going on to in a way of they appeared to be enjoying the Lord and going on with the Lord. But they're no longer going on with the Lord, and they're no longer going on with the Lord's people in the truth and the testimony. So I'd like to turn back to Daniel, if you will, first to chapter one. And we'll just touch on a few points in connection with Daniel that might help us. In an exercise to continue. With the Lord. I refer to the last verse of the first chapter first Daniel one and verse 21. To bring in the connection with the thought of continuing. And Daniel continued. Even until the first year of King Cyrus. Well, you will remember that Cyrus was the king who issued the decree. That allowed the little remnant to return back to the divine center that had been destroyed. And in a sense you might say that that terminated the captivity because Jeremiah had prophesied, of course, that they would, that they would be carried away into captivity for 70 years, and that period was terminated. In the first year of King Cyrus. And perhaps this would be a suggestion. That Daniel continued right through that period of captivity. Which I believe would be a little picture of the ruin and failure of the church.

In which we find ourselves even today. That is that the church is not in its pristine condition. It's not in that condition that it was has set up in this world according to the mind of God. It's in ruin and failure. Daniel was taken into captivity because of that ruin and failure of God's people. But he continued. He continued with the Lord until the termination of that captivity. And I suppose that would correspond to computers thought of the rest of our time, the little while that's left to us, because the only way that we will ever get out of the ruin of the church is when the Lord comes for his own. I remember seeing a little tracked by Lord Cecil and the title of it was the Ruin of the Church and the Believers way out of it. And that struck me and I thought, well, I'd like to read that. I want to read that and find the way out of this ruin. But he had the right idea. I believe from scripture that the believers way out is the coming of the Lord. No, we will never get out of the ruin. We are part of the ruin, and it's only when the Lord comes. But here, as we see with Daniel, that he continued. He continued until that first year of King Cyrus and I turned to the 6th chapter. And the last verse of that chapter, verse 28. So this Daniel prospered. In the reign of Darius

and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian, he not only continued, but we read that he prospered. Oh, what a word this would be for us. To not only continue, but to prosper. This is what the Lord desires, that we might prosper in our souls. I'm sure we understand that the prosperity that the Lord would desire for you and me is not that material prosperity, but prospering in our souls, that we continue. Not just in an outward way, but to be prospering as well. So if we want to continue and prosper, the Lord would give us help. Now we notice back in the first chapter of Daniel that the first thing. In regard to Daniel's exercises in this book was that he would not be defiled with the King's meat. When he was taken into captivity there, the king was ready to furnish food for Daniel and his companions. And he offered them the food of Babylon. But Daniel refused it. That's the first thing I believe in being able to continue and prosper in our souls till the Lord comes is that we take a firm stand in regard to separation from this world, this world and and all that it has to offer. And I suppose this food that was offered would represent that. Food is that by which people live. And he would speak of the things by which this world lives. And of course we know that this world is the fashion of this world, and this world system is built up. To supply everything that the natural man, the heart of man, that man in the flesh would desire the things by which he can live in this world. And I'm not talking about making a living. I'm talking about the things that the desires of the flesh and the mind, the things that that. The will of man goes after. Not only its entertainment. But it's positions of of power, dispositions of of reputation and its religion. We find that this world in which we live, and of course the elements of this world are made-up of things that come out of the heart of man.

Angels never formulated this world, man formulated it, and everything formulated in this world that constitutes the world system has come out of the heart of man. And so everything there is in this world is constituted to to feed. And to sustain the man in the flesh man, a natural man in this world. Well, Daniel took a stand and he says we're not going to eat that meat. He says just give us pulse and water. And I'm sure that those who brought that fair to Daniel and his friends thought, my, my, what a thing to give him to eat. And they weren't interested in that. I suppose they looked upon them with pity. And we find that those in the world, they have no real appreciation of what we can enjoy, of the things of God, what God supplies for his people. Of Christ and of divine things, eternal things. Things that are unseen, you know, these are the things that God feeds our souls with. Paul says while we look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are unseen, they're divine, they're eternal, they're spiritual and that's what God would feed our souls. But we find that the the food of the world will rob us of the of an appetite and rob us of the enjoyment of that. And I believe that the reason that. Daniel and his companions here. We're able to thrive on this fair is because they rejected the other and if we reject the world's food, then we will have an appetite and we will find that the food that God provides will build us up and it will it will enable us and help us to continue and to prosper. Now in the second chapter. We read in verse 18 after Daniel had made known. Of this dream of Nebuchadnezzar to his friends. In verse 18, it says that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret. Well, they, they had to do with the God of heaven. I know that this expression, the God of heaven has a connection with the, the times of the Gentiles and the fact that God had had, as it were receded from the earth and he's now the God of heaven, not the God of heaven and earth. And I was thinking of it in this regard, that as as we have had before us. And the readings in Philippians 3. We have there the that we'd have before us. One who is gone not only in the heavens, but through the heavens. And made higher than the heavens, and everything is made subject to him. We read in first Peter that one who is, who is made gone up into the heavens. And every read that angels and principalities and powers are subject to him, the God of heaven. And everything is in his control. And that's where our interests should be. So what we find in Philippians 3, is it not? You know what he says there are citizenship. Is in heaven as it was quoted, I know. And the King James, it says our conversation. The word literally means Commonwealth. It means that that's where all of our interests lie. Everything that really belongs to us lies in that region. In the heavens. We read there in the Philippians of those who mind earthly things. Earthly things, well, I'm sure that that would not include our livelihood, for the Word of God makes it very plain how that we're to work with our hands that not only provide things in honest the sight of all men, but that we might even have to give to those that are in need. That surely wouldn't be that. But minding earthly things, it means having this earth as the circle of your interests. Where are your interests? Are your interests in what is going on in this world? I'm not talking about now, just the base things. For we find that generally speaking, the Lords people are repulsed by the the base things of the world. But there are things that are respectable and there are things that in the in this world and the course of this world that.

That that upright and moral people are interested in. Sometimes we get occupied with them. You know, the more we talk about things of the world and what's going on in the world, and the more we read about it and hear about it why, the greater our interest will be. I believe that the constant talking and conversation about just events and everything going on in the world has the effect of increasing our interest in earthly things. Well the here we see that they prayed to the God of heaven. I believe this is another way in which the Lord will help us to go on is to have our interest in heavenly things. That's where we should be looking. You know when the the next movement. When God's program is a heavenly movement, not an earthly 1. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven. That's the next movement. In God's program and it's coming out of heaven. That's why it says in Philippians 3 that we our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for the Savior. Here we see that Daniel prays to the God of heaven. I have turned over to the 6th chapter. In chapter 6 we have something of the character of Daniel brought out further. Verse 4. In the presidents and Princess sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the Kingdom, but they could find none occasion nor fault, for as much as he was faithful. Neither was there any error or fault found in him. I take it that he was characterized by practical righteousness, practical righteousness and we had much in our readings about righteousness according to the law and we had the righteousness of God. Every believer of course, is is held righteous before God, but. There's thinking of this in regard to personal righteousness. And if we're going to continue on with the Lord. Why there is a need for personal righteousness in our walk and in our ways. You know that's a word that we shouldn't be we shouldn't shrink away from that we shouldn't feel is a is not a very attractive word. Now this may sound strange, but I have found sometimes. That in the Lords people feel that righteousness is a little severe, but it's not. Righteousness is a is a wonderful truth to be brought before us. It is one of the attributes of God. I was struck one time. I know I read him many times. And this is the wonderful thing about Scripture is we can read the word over and over again, and sometimes after we've read it many times, a verse will come out to come to us in a way that we'd never seen it before. In Romans one we often quote that verse. I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. What is the power of God unto salvation? For therein is the. Righteousness of God and it struck me once. It doesn't say therein is the love of God revealed. We often associate the gospel with the revelation of the love of God, which of course it is. But there the apostle says that this gospel that he's not ashamed of in it is revealed of righteousness of God. Righteousness is a wonderful thing. God is righteous. And it's wonderful to know he's righteous, that he is, as we heard in the gospel the other evening, just and the justifier that is he is righteous and the one who makes righteous those who believe in Jesus. And I was impressed once too in reading Hebrews one in regard to the Lord Jesus. It says Thou hast loved righteousness. Now that's not the righteousness in which we stand before God, that's practical righteousness. Thou hast loved righteousness. He loved it, and he hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God is naughty, anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy foes.

As a man here, he loved righteousness. The Lord said to the Jews, that John came unto you in the way of righteousness. O righteousness is. That which is desirable. That which in which I believe the bride is going to be. Adorned. At that wedding, when the the Lord Jesus takes his bride, he was granted unto her that she should be arrayed in that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteous acts of the Saints, the practical righteous things. And I'd like to say this, that there is nothing righteous, nothing can be righteous that does not give God his rightful place. And if we want to know what is right, we find it in the word. For instance, we read Children, Obey your parents and the Lord for this is right. That means it's righteous. It's right practical righteousness. I believe Daniel was a practically righteous man and he continued. This was one of the things that kept him on the pathway continuing, but now notice in the same chapter. In verse 10. When that decree went out, you remember by the king that none should pray unto any God. Well, Daniel in verse 10 we read when he knew that the writing was signed. He knew all about that. He went into his house. And his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem. He kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did before time. He just continued right on. But here we see that he had his window open toward Jerusalem. I believe this would, you might say, indicate that we are to be. Assembly oriented. Now let me explain what I mean. I believe that Jerusalem would represent the assembly as the divine center. The divine center Jerusalem in the Old Testament corresponds, I believe, to the Church of the Assembly in the New Testament is the divine center where the people of God go up. And even though there was a ruin and failure in captivity, he still had his eye on that place where God had put his name. That's where his interest was. His interest was there, where the Lord had put his name. Even though the conditions were not so wonderful. He continued with that. He continued. I have no doubt this was his habit. As it says here. He did it a four time every day. You have that window open toward Jerusalem. He had in his affections and in his thoughts. And in His desires, that place where the Lord is with His people, the divine center, but not only that, we see that He. Prayed. That is, he was dependent and he prayed. He committed things to. To God he was one in prayer, a man of prayer and not only that we read he was giving thanks, he was thankful or indeed what how necessary this is and sometimes we find that those who have not continued. That the beginning of the pathway that leads them astray is when they begin to complain. They complain about things in the assembly, they complain about this one or that brother, and rather than being thankful and then sometimes we then later we see that they no longer have an interest in the divine center, the place where the Lord has placed His name. Well, Daniel? Was thankful he he gave thanks, he was dependent, he prayed, and he had his interest directed toward the divine center. Turn to Chapter 9. And verse 2. In the first year of his reign, that's the reign of Darius I, Daniel understood by books the number of the years where of the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem. He understood by the books.

And he identifies that book here, the writings of Jeremiah. As he was moved of the Holy Spirit, holy men of God removed of the Holy Spirit. And we know that it was the IT was the word of God. And he, he was one of understanding. That's what I would gather from this. He was one who had understanding. I'm not just talking about knowledge. One might have. A A hidden knowledge of the Word of God. But understanding, I believe, even goes beyond that. And understanding is is the Spirit of God making known to us. The mind of God is found in Scripture. There is such a thing as just having the letter of the word. But understanding comes by the Spirit of God. John tells us in his epistle that it's the Spirit of God that gives us understanding of the mind of God in the Word of God. Not just the letter, the letter kills, but the spirit is that which gives the real understanding the the life of it. The life of the the word is found in the Spirit of God. Well, here is one who had understanding. And if we're going to continue, we need understanding of the word of God. We need understanding. And of course, this can come only as we read the Word of God and meditate on the Word of God. We become acquainted with the mind of God and we understand things. We understand things as God knows them. That's one of the most wonderful things to me about having the Word of God is to think that we here in this world. Weak and failing as we might be. Just mortals, as it were. Have the privilege, the opportunity and made available to us to have understanding of things as God understands them. Now I'm not saying in all of its extent. But we can see things as God sees them. And understand them. And that's why he's given us 66 books of the Bible. If God's thought was only to tell us how to get to heaven, we wouldn't need. All of these 66 books, but we need every bit of it from Genesis, the beginning, right through Revelation in order to have understanding. I'm not saying that we have to know everything in the book from beginning to end. No, but it's only by this precious book that we're going to get an understanding. Well, I'm not ruling out books that. God might have used men of God who had understanding from the scriptures to help us as to an understanding. But books that are written by men, that is man's thought. Will not give us the understanding that will cause us to continue. And I believe also that books. They do not contain the truth that is found in the Word of God will not give us the help we need to continue on with the Lord either. The understanding comes in the books that are true to the Word of God, the books, the word of God itself. And then we have that understanding as Daniel was one who understood. By books. Well, I believe that the Lord wants to help us. Obtaining help from God. God wants to help us in the pathway of continuance we don't have. We cannot count upon the help of God in a pathway that is not according to His mind and His will. And I would like to just say in closing that what I've had before or sought to bring before us is in connection with those who have an exercise. To continue as and Paul exhorted them to continue in the faith. The things you have learned. Those who have had a desire like Paul to press on. Toward the mark. And if so, I believe the Lord would give us the help from his precious word, and we might be able to say with Paul that obtaining help of God, we continue under this day. And may we be like Daniel, to continue and prosper right till the very end of the of the pilgrimage, until the end of the captivity, as they were, when the Lord Jesus comes to receive us unto himself.

clickbible.org