

1) Daniel in the Lions' Den paintings →

2) Handel's Messiah: Bringing Scripture to Life, Week 6 of 7, John Kincaid, Autumn, 2018

3) Daniel in the Lions' Den has given the same amount of Scripture as chapter 7 (28 verses in each chapter). Dan.7 is God's overview of *world history*. From God's viewpoint, the lions' den was *very significant*, for Daniel & for us. Why did the lions' den mean so much to God? →

4) **The darkest hour.** Daniel's enemies set a trap to kill him. They tricked the king to make a law against true prayer. Daniel obeyed God rather than men (like John & Peter in Acts 4:19-31, 5:29, the setting for today's 1st song) The king *wanted* to save Daniel but legally he *couldn't*.

The king came at dawn & found Daniel alive. Like the day Abraham took his son Isaac to be sacrificed & the day Jacob realized his son Joseph was still alive. The greatest example is the 1<sup>st</sup> Easter, when the women went to the empty tomb, and discovered Jesus was alive. →

5) Why should we care about Daniel's story? Christians in the early church were *still* being fed to the lions, 600 years after Daniel. Today, believers are marked for the "lions" because we are *out of step with the world*. Daniel's 3 friends *stood* while everyone else *bowed* to the golden image; Daniel *kneeled* in prayer to God while others *stood* watching. We live *every day* in a lions' den; we call it the *world*. Satan prowls like a roaring lion; he wants to devour our soul →

6) The king thought Daniel would die; Abraham thought Isaac would die; Jesus really died. Compare King Darius coming at dawn, and his joyous reunion with Daniel, to Matt.28:1-9. The lions' den is important to God because it foreshadows ***the resurrection of His Son***. The king destroyed Daniel's enemies, then proclaimed God throughout the kingdom. The return of Christ will destroy God's enemies, and the glory of God will be proclaimed throughout the world. →

7) The lions' den is also important to God because it foreshadows ***the return of His Son***. The 2 greatest events in Scripture: Christ's resurrection & return, at His 1st & 2nd Comings. Daniel's lions' den is a picture of Easter & Armageddon, salvation or condemnation. What determines our eternal destiny in heaven or hell? Faith in Christ, the only way to be saved. →

8) In His 1<sup>st</sup> Coming, Jesus was the suffering servant of Isa.53. In His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, He will return to the Mount of Olives in power & great glory as King. The *last* time the unsaved world saw Jesus, His body was being carried from the cross to the tomb. He was apparently defeated. But the *next* time unbelievers see Him, He will be coming as King of kings to judge. →

9) God spoke the universe into existence. He breathed the breath of life into Adam. The risen Christ breathed on His disciples; they received the Holy Spirit. All Scripture is **God-breathed**. In Dan.2:31-35, the rock is the returning Christ. He crushed the statue (world empires) like chaff. The wind swept the dust away, without leaving a trace. Antichrist will be the most powerful & evil king in history: Hitler & Pharaoh & all the others rolled into one – Satan's masterpiece. Christ blows him off the stage of history with a *puff*. →

♪ 10) Why do the nations (Psa.2:1-2) so furiously rage together, and who do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed.

[4:43] Let us break their bonds asunder (Psa.2:3) and cast away their yokes from us. →

♪ 11) (4:37) He that dwelleth in heaven (Psa.2:4) shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.

[4:52] Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; (Psa.2:9) Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. →

12) Roubiliac carved a marble statue of Handel in 1738 for Vauxhall Gardens, London. Life-size statues of someone still living were only made of kings or great leaders. This is the earliest-

known work by Roubiliac; it established his reputation. He went on to be the greatest sculptor in the history of England. He carved statues of King George 1 & 2, Sir Isaac Newton, William Shakespeare, & the monument at Handel's grave in Westminster Abbey. →

**13)** Similar story in the history of USA: Ralph Waldo Emerson commissioned a young sculptor to create the Minuteman statue at the Old North Bridge in Concord, for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Revolutionary War. This statue established the reputation of **Daniel Chester French** at age 25. His greatest work was the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. →

**14)** Handel was partially paralyzed by a stroke 4 years before he wrote Messiah. During the last 7 years of his life he was blind. After his eyes failed, *Samson* was scheduled to be performed, but the once-mighty organist was unable to play. The tenor sang Handel's text, about Samson's blindness: *All dark, amidst the blaze of noon*” The irony of blind Samson & a blind composer, both men were once mighty, but now no longer able to perform, moved the audience to tears. →

**15)** Handel was internationally famous in his own lifetime - extremely rare in the 1700s, even in the 1800s. He dominated British music 150 years after his death. When Haydn heard Messiah the 1st time: "Handel was the master of us all." Beethoven: "Handel was the greatest composer that ever lived." Handel was **one of the first** composers to have: a biography written of him, centennial celebrations of his birth, & a complete collection of his music published. →

**16)** Handel's legacy includes: Joy to the World, Thine is the Glory (Risen, conquering Son). Handel invented a new form of music called the English Oratorio, which led to our hymns & choir anthems. Handel inspired great composers: they freely admit that they were standing on Handel's shoulders: **Beethoven**: who gave us 'Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee', 'Hallelujah' (from *Mount of Olives*). **Haydn**: *Creation* ('The Heavens are Telling'). **Mendelssohn**: 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing', *Elijah* ('Lift Thine Eyes', 'He, Watching Over Israel') →

**17)** Here is the music for Handel's song, "**And with His stripes**", a copy written by Beethoven. It shows the torch passing from the master teacher Handel to the promising young student. →

**18)** Handel's music was published in 40 volumes, larger than a set of encyclopedias. Beethoven cherished his set; he copied it by hand to unravel it. Messiah was his favorite. Beethoven quoted from Messiah as he died, the Christmas song "For Unto Us". He said "If a physician can help me now, His name shall be called Wonderful". Beethoven's hope was the Great Physician, the Wonderful Counselor who died to save us, Jesus Christ who was Handel's Messiah. →

**19)** We know that **we shall see** the great Physician. How do we know we will go to heaven? Because of the **price**: Christ died for us (why?) so that we may live together with him. The **promise**: Christ said "I am going to my Father's house (why?) to prepare a place *for you*." The **prayer**: Jesus prayed, "Father, I want those you have given me to be *with* me, and to *see* my glory". His prayers are always God's will, always Yes. *We will* see His glory in heaven. →

**20)** Our citizenship is in heaven. We are aliens & strangers in this world. For eternity, we will sing praise to God. There is a Hebrew word that means "Praise God." It appears only 4 times in the New Testament, all in the 1st 6 verses of Revelation chapter 19, describing the wedding of the Lamb to His bride the church, and Messiah's return to earth. That word is Hallelujah. →

♪ **21) Hallelujah (Rev.19:6)** For the Lord God omnipotent reigns. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah! →

**22)** Resurrection is the main reason we celebrate Easter. There are **many convincing proofs**, as Luke said, that Christ is risen. If the resurrection *didn't* happen: our faith is pointless; Christians who died are lost; *we* are still lost in our sins. But we have eyewitness testimony; it *did* happen. Christ appeared to many people during the 40 days between the 1<sup>st</sup> Easter & His ascension. On one occasion, over 500 people saw Him *at the same time*. →

**23)** *Changed lives* of the apostles are strong **evidence for the resurrection**. They experienced a radical transformation, obvious to everyone. They were hiding, then suddenly came forward as courageous leaders. They risked their lives to preach His resurrection. We read about dramatic conversions of James, Paul, many Jerusalem priests. Thousands were convinced that Christ was risen. The early church grew explosively. →

**24)** Christianity became a religion separate from Judaism. Something extremely significant caused that. Christians changed the day of worship from the Saturday Sabbath to the Lord's Day, a weekly celebration of the resurrection. Many skeptics have been saved after carefully examining the Gospel: C.S. Lewis, William M. Ramsay, Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel. →

**25)** Mary (sister of Martha & Lazarus) comforted Jesus. A woman confronted Peter when he denied knowing Jesus. Pilate's wife warned *him* about Jesus. Women observed His burial, when the men had all abandoned Him. Women were the last to leave the cross & 1st to see the empty tomb. Women were not allowed to testify in Jewish court. Yet women were the 1st witnesses of our risen Lord. If the resurrection was a fictional story, the role of women would have been far less prominent. These details would not *appear* in the gospels *unless they were true*. →

**26)** **Pietà** is a statue of the body of Jesus on the lap of his mother Mary after the Crucifixion. Michelangelo carved this at age 24. Notice the bodies are out of proportion. Mary would have been about 50 years old, but she looks young & peaceful. I see Mary holding *baby* Jesus. She sees her child, but we see her future. In Luke 2, God revealed Mary's future to Simeon. →

**27)** *Jewish* historians (hostile to Christianity) admit that the tomb was empty. No one would preach resurrection in Jerusalem unless everyone *knew* the tomb was empty. Temple authorities couldn't counteract the preaching; *they couldn't find Jesus' body*. They would have gladly paid a fortune for information. Judas proved that a traitor could be bought. They were so desperate to silence Christians that they could only resort to persecution; it was their only option. →

**28)** Paul & early Christians were absolutely convinced the resurrection was true. But there are proposed explanations from those deny the resurrection. These alternative theories are weak. They require at least as much faith as believing the resurrection. There are 6 explanations proposed by the critics of Christianity during the past 2000 years. →

**29) Theory #1:** Someone stole the body. Obstacles: Robbery of a guarded tomb required strong incentive & courage. Who had motive? The disciples were afraid & hiding; they would have been crucified. Not Pilate; he had washed his hands of Jesus. He placed the guards at the tomb, at the request of Jewish priests. The Pharisees *desperately* wanted to show an undisturbed grave on the 3rd day. If they had the body, why accuse the *disciples* of stealing it? This theory doesn't explain the appearances of the risen Lord; it only tries to explain the empty tomb. →

**30) Theory #2:** the women went to the *wrong tomb*. The burial Friday was hasty; they had to finish before the Sabbath started at 6 PM, so they forgot where He was. It was dim light at dawn on Sunday morning; they were grief-stricken. Obstacles: The 2 Mary's observed the burial and

size of the stone. *Someone* would have corrected the women within hours: Joseph, the Jewish authorities, guards, John, Peter. Even their *enemies* admitted that the correct tomb was empty →

**31) Theory #3:** the gardener was upset about curiosity seekers trampling his lettuce patch near the tomb, so *he* moved the body. This was one of the earliest non-Christian theories. Obstacles: Roman soldiers. Anyone who tried to take the body had to break the seal of Pontius Pilate. Also Joseph of Arimathea (owner of the tomb) would have come after him. How would the gardener roll away the stone, and leave the grave cloth undisturbed? →

**32) Theory #4:** Crucifixion & spear caused Him to *faint*. Later Jesus revived, pushed the stone & tiptoed past the guards. The disciples nursed Him back to health. But 40 days later He had a relapse. They gathered on the Mount of Olives to say goodbye. Jesus walked up the mountain into the fog; it looked like He was ascending, then He died in the woods. Obstacles: ridiculous! It was not even suggested by 1st century critics. Crucifixion victims did not escape with their lives. The Roman soldiers got the death penalty if they didn't finish the job. →

**33) Hallucination;** the appearances were visions, mass hysteria. The experience was contagious. It was a delusion to help believers in their despair. Obstacles: 500+ people saw Him *at the same time*. This is inconsistent with modern medical knowledge of mass hallucinations. If all these people were delusional, why did they all get better at the same time? 40 days later, the visions stopped. This theory doesn't even attempt to explain the empty tomb. →

**34) Last theory:** Jesus had a twin brother. He stayed out of the spotlight. But when Jesus died, the disciples persuaded him to pretend he was Jesus. Obstacles: No evidence for such a person. Thomas saw crucifixion wounds (was the twin also wounded?) These are the best alternatives from the most brilliant unbelievers for the past 2000 years to explain away the resurrection. →

**35) The apostles preached Christ *at the Temple*,** the most dangerous place they could have gone. *Many* people have been willing to die for something they *believe* is true. We see this with cults & terrorists, suicide bombers, 9/11 hijackers. They sincerely *believed* they were right, yet they were wrong. But there is *no* motivation to die for what you *know is a lie*. If authorities threaten to kill you or your family, you will crack & confess. But one after another, the martyrs in the early church went to their death. The apostles were in a unique position to know for sure what happened on the 1st Easter. They devoted their lives to Him; because **they knew** it was true. →

**36) For believers,** death is like sleep. The grave is a *temporary* resting place. Our word *cemetery* comes from a Greek word meaning "a place where strangers rest". The early church used this same word for 2 different places: the church graveyard, and the hotel. In hotels, people sleep for a while, and then leave. It's the same for our departed Christian loved ones. →

**37) God made us alive with Christ.** We were God's enemies; He sacrificed His Son for us. God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Christ is the firstfruits - the 1st person who received a permanent resurrection body. Firstfruits implies there will a 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. Because *He* lives, you *also* shall live. →

♪ **38) I know that my Redeemer** liveth & that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; & though worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep →

♪ **39) Since by man came death** by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, Even so in Christ shall all be made alive.