

21.03.2020 FROM THE DUST TO STARS

“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” Daniel 12:3

Daniel chapter 12 is the last chapter of Daniel. Throughout the book, God reveals to Daniel that those who are wise will understand this book in the time of the end. This last chapter has wonderful insights for God’s people who live in the end time. It is the climax of a lengthy vision extending from Daniel 10 to Daniel 12:1-3.

The first 4 verses describe the culmination of the vision that began in Daniel 10. The vision of the great war lasting centuries and affecting God’s people described in Daniel 11 culminates in Daniel 12:1-4 with the rising of the great Prince Michael.

Daniel 12:5-12 describes waiting for the end.

Daniel 5:13 gives the promise that Daniel will rise again. It is a promise to all who are faithful to their God.

Michael, our Prince

At that time Michael shall stand up (arise), the great prince who stands watch (guard) over the sons of your people (12:1)

‘At that time...’ refers to the time of the end described in Daniel 11:40-45.

And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him. Daniel 11:45

The King of the North – the power that fights against God – will ‘come to his end and no-one will help him’. **Daniel 12:1 is the climax of the vision of Daniel 11:40-45; at that time, Michael the great Prince will stand up for His people.** Michael is seen at the beginning of the vision (Daniel 10:8) and is described again by Gabriel in Daniel 10:21 as *‘Michael, your Prince, who upholds me against the Princes of Persia and Greece’*.

Michael (who is like God!) is the One who stands watch over His people to protect them. At the time of the end He will arise (stand up) to intervene on their behalf.

Then there will be a time of anguish (trouble) greater than any since nations first came into existence.

Distress, trouble and anguish will mark this time when the contemptible King of the North will *‘go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many’* – the ‘many being God’s people. For God’s people, this will be another test of their trust in God. Living in the antitypical Day of Atonement, they will humble themselves in repentance and rest by faith in God’s promises that He will put an end to the work of the Enemy. They will keep looking unto Michael, their Prince who is now not just their Saviour and Redeemer, but also their Defender.

Many times in the Bible, God’s people undergo trouble and persecution before they are delivered by God. The outstanding example is that of Israel in Egypt. At that time God saw their bondage and *‘brought them out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm’ Deuteronomy 5:15*

“By delivering us in trouble rather than saving us from trouble, God is most honoured and His people most blessed.”

The prophet Jeremiah called this time of distress "Jacob's trouble." This expression alludes to the crisis in the patriarch's life when he was returning from the land of Aram and preparing to meet his brother Esau. Genesis 32 tells the story that lies behind Jacob's new name, Israel. In Jeremiah's prophecy, Jacob’s trouble and triumph are projected into the future:

“How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).

If the distress is without a parallel, so is God's power to deliver. Michael's name ("Who is like God!") directs the reader's attention to God, whose power in the conflict between good and evil is incomparable. He promises to use His power to deliver all those whose names are written in the book of life.

“In those days and in that time,” says the Lord, “The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; for I will pardon those whom I preserve.” Jeremiah 50:20

And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book...(12:1)

‘And at that time’, the time that Michael stands up, Daniel’s people (God’s people) will be delivered; every one whose name is in the Book of Life.

The Book of Truth (Daniel 10:21) informs us that the vision is true and Michael will be triumphant at the end of the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. The Book of Life assures us that God’s people (their names are in the Book of Life) will be delivered. (Other references to the Book of Life are found in Exodus 32:32, 33; Psalm 69:28; Revelation 3:5; 17:8; 21:27).

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. (12:2)

All commentators agree that this is the only text in the Old Testament that specifically teaches individual and bodily resurrection from the dead. ‘Sleep’ is used in the Bible to refer to the first death i.e. death that is not eternal death.

‘The Many’ in Daniel and Isaiah refer not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles to accept God. See also Isaiah 2:3; 26:19; 66:24 and Daniel 9:27.

All humanity, both the righteous and the wicked, experiences the first death. The righteous will rise to everlasting life.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.” John 5:25

The wicked who arise at this time will rise to everlasting contempt. Jesus refers to this group as those who were responsible for His death.

And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:63, 64

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. Revelation 1:7

Jesus refers to Daniel 12:2 when He said: *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” John 5:28, 29*

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. (12:3)

Here is described the blessed state of those who are ‘wise’. Throughout the book of Daniel, God’s faithful people are described as ‘the wise’. The wise also turn many to righteousness.

Dwelling **by faith** in the presence of God, in the Most Holy Place, their faces shine as Moses' did in the presence of God.

Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai...that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with God. Exodus 34:29

Jesus described the righteous at the Second Coming:

Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Matthew 13:43

The Culmination of the Prophecy

"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." (12:4)

Gabriel has told Daniel that the vision is for the future (Daniel 8:14, 26; 9:24, 11:40) and so he is asked to seal the book 'until the time of the end'.

The temporary sealing of the scroll is necessary for preservation and also for authenticity because the time of the end is some distance away in the future. (In contrast, John the Revelator was told not to seal up the prophecy, for the time of its fulfillment is near (Revelation 22:10).

At the time of the end, there will be an intense interest in the prophecies of the end-time. With their eyes, the many (God's people) will go here and there (run to and fro) seeking to understand the end-time prophecies. The knowledge that will be increased is primarily prophetic knowledge and secondarily, knowledge in a general sense.

Waiting for the End: Daniel 12:5-12

Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfilment of these wonders be?" (12:5, 6)

The Man clothed in linen is the Man Daniel saw at the beginning of the vision in Daniel 10:4-9. He is Christ Jesus.

Two other beings stood on either bank.

The River...the Hebrew word *ye'or*, "river," in this verse is often used in the Bible in reference to the Nile. In Daniel 10 the River Tigris is described; here it is the Nile. The Northern Kingdom of Assyria sat on the banks of the Tigris River and Egypt the Southern Kingdom was on the Nile. All the enemies of God's people will be subdued by Michael (Christ Jesus).

"They [the remnant] will pass through the sea of trouble; the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria's pride will be brought down and Egypt's sceptre will pass away." Zechariah 10:11

The Man is asked 'How long till the fulfilment of the end of these wonders?' This refers to the events at the end of the long war of Daniel 11 which concludes in Daniel 12:1-3.

Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever... (12:7)

The Man makes a solemn oath 'by Him who lives forever'. It is reminiscent of the oath of the mighty angel of Revelation 10, who also swears by Him who lives forever and ever...*'that there should be delay no longer'* Revelation 10:5

...that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. (12:7)

God's people will be defeated by a persecuting power for three and half prophetic years (1260 years) but God will break the power of the persecutor.

Daniel's Question:

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" (12:8)

Daniel is not interested in the interpretation of the vision. He wants to know what the final outcome of this long conflict will be.

Heaven's Response: Daniel 12:9-12

And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

'Go your way' should be understood as meaning "Do not worry!" or "Go on living!" The words of the vision are sealed till the time of the end.

Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

The many who have accepted God will be purified and made white by Him. Through persecution, they will be refined. In contrast, the wicked will continue in their wickedness.

Because they are wise, they will be able to understand God's ways just as through the vision of Michael, Daniel was able to understand the revelation about the long war. The wicked ones, on the other hand, will not understand but will go on in their wickedness to the end, just as Belshazzar did in his revolt against God. The term 'many' is used here in parallel with 'the wise' (as seen in the chiasmic structure of the verse).

- A. **Many** will be purified, made spotless and refined,
- B. the **wicked** will continue to be wicked.
- B'. None of the **wicked** will understand,
- A', but those who are **wise** will understand.

From: Daniel. Z. Stefanovic

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days (12:9-12)

The above two verses are not easy to interpret (see additional notes at the end for the traditional historicist interpretation). The progression of the numbers 1260, 1290, 1335 and the words, 'Blessed is he who waits' give the suggestion of a delay. You will remember that at the beginning of this portion of Daniel 10-12, Gabriel was delayed. Now at the end of the section too, we find an apparent delay.

How do we wait during the delay?

With repentant hearts...the Laodicean church is urged to zealously repent of her lukewarm attitude to God's free gifts.

In faith...Jesus said 'When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on earth? Luke 18:8 God's people in the time of the end are a people with a peculiar quality of faith – the faith of Jesus, a faith that is totally dependent on God.

Watching and Praying... *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Matthew 24:42-44*

As Faithful Servants

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.” Matthew 24:45-47

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Luke 21:34

God’s Promise to Daniel (and to all His faithful people)

“But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”(12:13)

The promise is that if we hold fast to God till the end of our earthly lives, though we will rest in death, we shall surely rise to our inheritance at the end of time. To the Jews, their ‘allotted inheritance’ reminded them of the land they had received by lots when they entered Canaan. To us, living in the end of time, the apostle Peter reminds us of our inheritance:

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5***

Conclusion:

‘The great truths revealed by the world’s Redeemer are for those who search for truth as for hid treasures. Daniel was an aged man. His life had been passed amid the fascinations of a heathen court, his mind cumbered with the affairs of a great empire. Yet he turns aside from all these to afflict his soul before God, and seek a knowledge of the purposes of the Most High. And in response to his supplications, light from the heavenly courts was communicated for those who should live in the latter days. With what earnestness, then, should we seek God, that He may open our understanding to comprehend the truths brought to us from heaven.

Daniel was a devoted servant of the Most High. His long life was filled up with noble deeds of service for his Master. His purity of character and unwavering fidelity are equalled only by his humility of heart and his contrition before God. We repeat, *The life of Daniel is an inspired illustration of true sanctification.’ The Sanctified Life: p 50, 52*

Additional Note:

The time of Jacob’s Trouble

Satan wished to have the privilege of destroying the saints of the Most High; but Jesus bade his angels watch over them, for God would be honored by making a covenant with those who had kept his law in the sight of the heathen round about them; and Jesus would be honoured by translating the faithful, waiting ones, who had so long expected him, without their seeing death.

Soon I saw the saints suffering great mental anguish. They seemed to be surrounded with the wicked inhabitants of earth. Every appearance was against them. Some began to fear that God had left them at last to perish by the hand of the wicked. But if their eyes could have been opened, they would have seen themselves surrounded by angels of God. Next came the multitude of the angry wicked, and next a mass of evil angels, hurrying on the wicked to slay the saints. But as they would attempt to approach them, they would first have to pass this company of mighty, holy angels, which was impossible. The angels of God were causing them to recede, and also causing the evil angels who were pressing around them, to fall back. It was an hour of terrible, fearful agony to the saints. They cried day and night unto God for deliverance. To outward appearance there was no possibility of their escape. The wicked had already commenced their triumphing, and were crying out, Why doesn't your God deliver you out of our hands? Why don't you go up, and save your lives? The saints heeded them not. They were wrestling with God like Jacob. The angels longed to deliver them; but they must wait a little longer, and drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism. The angels, faithful to their trust, kept their watch. The time had about come when God was to manifest his mighty power, and gloriously deliver them. God would not suffer his name to be reproached among the heathen. For his name's glory he would deliver every one of those who had patiently waited for him, and whose names were written in the book. *The Great Controversy chapter 36.*

Historicist Application of the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days (years)

The number 1,290 speaks of the setting up of the abomination of desolation. This expression describes "the union of church and state" that began in the year A.D. 508 when Clovis, king of the Franks and called by some "a new Constantine," was baptized. This period closed in the year 1798, which was marked by the end of the supremacy of the medieval church. *William Shea*

A blessing is pronounced on the one who waits and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. This period is applied to the years between 508 and 1844. *Jacques Doukhan and William Shea.*
