

13. From Dust to Stars (1Q 2020—Daniel)

Biblical Material: Daniel 12; Rom. 8:34; Luke 10:20; Rom. 8:18; Heb. 2:14, 15; John 14:29; Rev. 11:3.

Quotes

- For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. *C.S. Lewis*
- Such are the conditions prior to Judgment Day. We need to learn from this and not fret when we see these things happening, but say: Christ predicted beforehand that the world would become so savage, coarse, greedy, and so on. Well then! That's the way it is, and it is even going to get worse. *Martin Luther*
- The apostolic church thought more about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ than about death and heaven. The early Christians were looking, not for a cleft in the ground called a grave but for a cleavage in the sky called Glory. *Alexander MacLaren*
- In His coming the “last days” to which the Old Testament looked forward arrived, but they have not yet run their course; the Christian church is still living in this eschaton. Jesus’ first coming inaugurated it; His second coming will consummate it. The coming of Jesus was, therefore, the beginning of the end. *R.T. France*

Questions

What is the main message for us here? How can we draw comfort from this conclusion to the book of Daniel? How does this parallel Revelation and the conclusion of the great controversy? In what way will we “shine as bright as the stars forever and ever”? How does this show the true character of God and the lengths he has gone to answer the problem of evil?

Bible Summary

Daniel 12 ushers in the final time of trouble, but assures us of God’s victory. God does not condemn us and Jesus speaks for us (Rom. 8:34). Our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20). “I’m convinced that what we suffer in the present is nothing compared to the future glory that will be revealed to us.” Rom. 8:18 FBV. Jesus came in human form to free us (Heb. 2:14, 15). We’re told about the future to confirm our belief (John 14:29). The 1260 days are confirmed in Rev. 11:3.

Comment

The end time is often a subject of much controversy. For some it is a time to be dreaded, for this is the time of trouble such as never was. For others it is merely the gateway to eternity. For others still it is the time to prove their characters. And for even still others, it is the time of God’s vindication and the beginning of reunion with God their friend. It all depends on how you see it—most importantly, who you think God really is and what the endtime achieves.

Is the emphasis to be on the time of trouble, or on becoming like the “stars forever and ever”? Or perhaps the real objective is to understand more of this “day” prophecies? Or is the best advice that given right at the very end of the book of Daniel? “But as for you, continue on until your life ends, and then rest. You will rise to receive your reward at the end of time.” Daniel 12:13 FBV.

As we've mentioned before, it is all too easy to become so absorbed by all the fascinating details that we miss the overall message of Daniel's book. From the very beginning as a youth, Daniel had wanted to speak well of his loving Lord, to represent him rightly. And all the way through his life experience, Daniel has continued to do just that, even in very trying circumstances and with kings who were only impressed by displays of power and majesty. Daniel's concern for God's reputation is admirable, especially as it was reflected in the circumstances of his chosen people. Yet there is more to it even than such a concern. For in all the counsel and insight Daniel receives, the primary message is that God is working through the issues in the great controversy, answering the questions and challenges, and eventually ensuring that those who trust and love him will be part of the vindication of truth and right.

That's why the end time is so important. It is the conclusion of all that God has been working towards. As Emil Brunner wrote about the second advent, without such a conclusion faith would be like a ladder which ended nowhere, steps into the void. There has to be the final consummation of the whole plan of God, which includes our salvation, but goes far beyond.

Daniel asks (12:8 FBV), "what's the final result of all this?" That's the right question—what is all this for, why is it happening, and what is the conclusion of the matter? The final conclusion is the verdict on God and his trustworthiness from the created intelligences throughout the universe. Whose side are we on?

Illustration: The day is soft, warm, bright. The date is early October—now. The time is early evening. Autumn goldness everywhere, deeper than summer and the better for being unlooked for. Searching the brambles round the lakeshore, hunting blackberries among the thorns. Man, woman, and child; a family full of life's goodness, the goodness of God.

Over the shimmering lake the sun spreads a sparkling net. Swallows and martins splash down, flittering on a thousand wings in their summer endtime—before the journey begins: migration.

The boy laughs. Eyes full of beauty: everywhere he looks life is crammed full of wonder. He stops to watch a water rat paddling towards the shore. "Look, mummy, look." A pheasant crows out in excitement, the boy points and shouts. A crab-apple to pick and taste, sharpsouring the tongue, but good for all that. Rabbits skip-scampering, prancing in the goldlight, fur ashine. Air so still, expectant, awaiting.

Ready for a better place, an earth made new. A family together forever. A time when God shall be with them and be their God. A time when even this autumn beauty will seem like faded leaves, shrivelled and brown. A time when blackberry picking will not be marred by thorns that rip and cut, wounds bleeding. A time when thorns will no longer be the crown.

The path leads on. The sun falls low among the oaks, blazing the leaves. The swallows stop their playing to gather on the wires, still chittering. Ready to leave. The berry basket is full. The sun has gone. The path leads home. The day has ended. The father calls: "Are you ready? It's time to go." Are you ready?

Ellen White Comments

As the time of the end draws near, Satan's temptations will be brought to bear with greater power upon God's workers. He will employ human agents to mock and revile those who "build the wall." But should the builders come down to meet the attacks of their foes, this would but retard the work. They should endeavor to defeat the purposes of their adversaries, but they should not allow anything to call them from their work. Truth is stronger than error, and right will prevail over wrong.... {CC 268}

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