



Ministry of the Word

Sunday 01st October 2017

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Scripture: Daniel 12:1-3

Subject: Chapter 12, Part 35 – Jacob's Troubles

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time. And at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise, shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever.” Verses 1-3

The final chapter in the book of Daniel, chapter 12, comes with not just warning but the with comfort of hope in the mist of much trouble and tribulation. Next to faith and love, the Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, one of the greatest realities in the world is hope. Faith, hope and love--the three most critical elements in all of human thinking. Man cannot exist without them.

As we focus on our text, the theme is hope--one of the great realities. Hope is essential to all meaningful life. Unless there is some kind of light at the end of the tunnel, man ends in despair. Unless there is some kind of anticipation for a wonderful reality in the future, man finds himself unable to enjoy the moment in which he lives. In the mist of this life's darkness's,

fears and apprehensions, the believer has an eternal spring of hope and light which is the means of having true joy and encouragement regardless of circumstances. Someone said,

"Hope in Christ is to the little world of the inner man, what spring is to the external world of nature."

For those who suffer, hope is essential; often times it's the only thing they have left floating to hold onto. Christian author, Arnot wrote many years ago,

"Hope is the tenant not of a heart that was never broken, but of a heart that has been broken and healed -and--healed- again".

Hope is often the difference between life and death. In fact, most people who analyse the problem of suicide say that people basically do not kill themselves because of their current circumstances, but they do it because they can't see any future change in that current circumstance. They have no hope that anything could ever be any different. God knows well that in order for man to endure the present stresses he must have a future hope. All throughout the Bible, God presents to man a great hope, an eternal hope, a hope in the future, as well as the present because God wants to be in relationship with you and we know this reality changes everything! A hope beyond all other hopes that gives to man a full rich meaning to life.

As we've been studying through the book of Daniel, we find that this vision which is a continuation of chapter 11 is the last revelation we read about. Daniel was made to see that Israel's history was going to be a struggle. When we look back we can see that God opened the door for his people many times – Genesis established a new beginning just like Exodus and Daniel after the 70-year captivity, even the time of Jesus when He, the Messiah opened the door of Salvation to them and yet each time, the majority rejected these opportunities. So, what's new? God opens fresh and new opportunities for His people today (which includes the church), perhaps in the area of witnessing, practical service, how about in practical sanctification? Yet like those in the past we are otherwise minded, so easily distracted, so willingly diverted down the path that serves the flesh.

God gave Daniel the reason in chapter 11 verse 35, which really is the heart of the whole purpose of Jacob's troubles. Daniel was told

“And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”

In fact, it's going to go on until the second coming of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. From Daniel's point in history it was going to go on for thousands of years of human history for the Jews... but how long will it be for us?? We don't know how much longer it will be until the second coming of Christ. There are conditions for the fulfilment for the second coming of Christ, are you aware of them? Yet there are none for the rapture! Hence the need to be ready... Have you got oil in your lamp??

The whole purpose of this chastening period for Israel is to test them, to purge them and to turn them to God's righteousness. In other words, God never gives up on His people until finally they are purified, finally they are purged. Remember the reason for all of this is for God's glorification, the fulfilment of his word. Many times, God helped his people for the His name sake – Isaiah 48:9-11

“For My name's sake I will defer My anger, And for My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.”

They will be subjected, says the angel to Daniel, to a series of Gentile pagan oppressors who will bring them severe suffering. God, who is in control, designed these circumstances to purge them, to test them and to make them white. In other words, God will keep going until they finally respond properly. We tend to look at these things from a human perspective, with fear and trembling but from God's perspective, he wants them to be glorified with Him forever in Glory.

But Praise God in the first three verses of chapter 12 comes the light. Hope! This is hope, that though it's going to be dark for thousands of years, and though the people of Israel will not respond to God, and though the time is going to come when they will actually reject their own Messiah and in His place accept Satan's counterfeit, the Antichrist, even so, in the end, there will be hope...there is hope on the horizon.

First few words of verse 1, "*And at that time...*" just that phrase. What time? The time of the Antichrist, the supreme oppressor of Israel, the one who will bring the greatest amount of

pain and slaughter, even more than Hitler ever did. Nevertheless, even at this time when everything is at its worse, in the middle of the great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble when there is this great world ruler, when there is this massive warfare that ends in the bloodbath of Armageddon which you can read about further in Ezekiel 38 and 39, and in Revelation, at that very time when the Antichrist attempts to slaughter all of Israel, when he desecrates the temple, at that very time hope will dawn.

How and why at that time can men have hope? Several reasons. I want to share them with you. First of all, there will **be a special distress**. There will **be a special defender**. There will be **a special deliverance, a special destiny and a special dividend**. This morning we are going to consider the first two points.

First of all, **A special distress**. Back to verse 1.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people," now listen to this, *"and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time."*

There is a time coming like no other time, a time of extraordinary distress like never seen before and Israel has suffered much. From their birth as a nation in Egypt right throughout their long history and not just in the recorded biblical times but even until this day. All of it has been the refining process of God on account of their rebellion and rejection. All of it has been meant to draw them to Him, but crueller suffering is yet to come.

Jesus declares this in Matthew 24 in verse 7 He stated,

"Nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, there will be famines and pestilences and earthquakes and all of this is just the birth pangs,"

just the beginning of pain and in Verse 15,

"When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, whosoever readeth, let him understand; then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains."

When you see the Antichrist desecrate the temple, when you see him establish himself as the God of the universe, when you see him call all men to worship him, when the abomination takes place, Jesus told them to run as fast as possible, get out, no going back for anything, or anyone if they want to keep their own lives. Many of Jesus' followers were saved by this

advice in Jerusalem just before the fall of it in 69/70AD but it's the same advice for those in the end times.

"And him who is on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of his house." Don't even go inside to get anything, just run. If you're out in the field, don't go back to take your clothes. "And woe unto those who are with child and those who nurse children in those days because they're going to be...it's going to be hard to run when you have little children and nursing infants... Pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath."

In other words, they need to scatter fast, "For there shall then be great tribulation,"

"such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor shall ever be. And except the days were shortened, there would be no flesh saved."

That is some prophetic statement, isn't it, sobering.

As early as Deuteronomy chapter 4 verses 27-31:

"And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."

Jeremiah referred to it as the time of Jacob's trouble in chapter 30:7:

"Alas, for that day is great so that none is like it. It is even the time of Jacob's trouble." No day was ever like that day will be.

We know that these verses are talking about a time still to come as we see in the book of Revelation as it a final time of human history with terms beyond our imagination to grasp. From Revelation chapter 6 through to Revelation chapter 19, the 70th week which includes the 3 and a half years of great tribulation that Daniel seen in this revelation is spoken about.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ given to John, forth tells us the following elements of that time: war, famine, 25 percent of the world killed, the collapse of the heavenly bodies, one third of the earth destroyed, one third of the sea destroyed, the creatures in it and the ships on it,

one third of the fresh water and many multitudes of people who drink it, one third of the sky lights—as in the stars--the release of hell's demons to overrun the earth, the slaughtering of the beast and the false prophet consummates their evil, vile ministry that goes on during that time, body sores all over men, all living creatures in the sea are killed. All fresh water will be polluted. Scorching sunlight will burn people to death, talk about global warming! Darkness will cover the earth as well as pain, sores, with more demons.

In fact, in Zechariah 12, listen to what it says in verses 2 and 3,

"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about and in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people."

Listen to what Jeremiah chapter 30 verse 4 says,

"And these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah, for thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace. Ask now and see whether a man doth travail with child. Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in travail and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas, for that day is great so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble."

That picture once again as discussed last week - the horrible pain of childbirth, holding themselves in agony.

In Zechariah again, chapter 13:8-9,

"And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

As discussed last week, during world war 2, 1 in every 3 Jew died, but here during Jacob's trouble we see, that it will 2 out 3 that will die and only 1 third will remain, this is surely a time of very special distress.

But, here comes the hope. In the midst of the special distress comes **a special defender** which we see in verse 1.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up."

The nation will not be utterly destroyed, for Michael will stand up. And who is he? "The great prince who stands, or who guards the children of thy people." Michael is an archangel

which means that he is a high-ranking, chief of other angels. He has been given, throughout all of Israel's history, the singular responsibility of defending the people of God. It's a marvellous task. We see this in the Old Testament as well as the New. For example, in Jude verse 9 we find him fighting Satan for the body of Moses but in Revelation 12 verse 7 forth-tells of his part in the war against Satan.

Now in Who is Michael standing up against?

Based on the book of Revelation, in particular chapter 12, a view that I believe in as well as most biblical commentators hold to, is that during the Great Tribulation, Satan will want to release all of the forces of hell against Israel, God's chosen nation; so as to obliterate it. I'm not talking about the church now because according to the Scriptures, the church as we know it under the New Testament ways will be gone from this scene of time. In fact, there will be Gentiles, that we come to know Jesus during the Tribulation but at a huge cost. That is another study and this morning I'm talking about Israel only.

Satan always wanted to wipe out the people of God so there could never be a Messiah. He wanted to rub out that line, there are many examples of this throughout the bible, remember Pharaoh wanting to get rid of all the males of a certain age and under, Herod tried the same thing when Jesus was born. Satan always sought to destroy them so there can never be any of them for a kingdom.

How does he stand up for the people of God?

We see in Daniel 10 as well as in Revelation 12, Michael is a warrior and stands up against them in battle array. In Revelation 12, there a battle scene is laid out before you. So, let's look at Revelation 12 to see how Michael does it. Starting at Verse 1 – 6

“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labour and in pain to give birth. ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. ⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

The woman in verse 1 is representing the church at that time, the sun representing Christ and the moon representing Satan. Here the 12 stars represents the 12 tribes of Israel. Like already referred to the labour pains, in verse 5 she bares a son, which is referring to the Messiah. But back in verse 3, the dragon who represents Satan, is thrown out of heaven with a third of the angels go with him. Satan is out to get the church and hence she goes into the wilderness, the place appointed by God. So here we see what Satan is up to but here in verse 7 we see the special deliverer

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them^[a] in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Here we see Michael, with his angels going into battle and that God provides victory, oh what a Hope! Here, folks, you're getting a glimpse of an incredible scene.

Now with that in mind, go back to Daniel and build on that a little bit.

Now isn't it important that in chapter 10 the very special angel let Daniel in on the power of Michael to deal with Satan and the ministry of Michael through all the centuries so that he would have the confidence to know and the hope to know that Michael would be there in the time of trouble? God uses Michael to be Israel special defender, God uses angels also charge over us which we see in Hebrews 1 verse 7 –

“And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits. And His ministers a flame of fire.”

In Verse 14 of the same chapter –

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”

Even in the Psalms 91:11 –

“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;”

Psalm 34:7

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”

You see, God does use his angel to help all those who love and fear but this does not allow us to worship them, or pray to them asking for help or guidance. In fact,

Colossians 2:18

“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,”

Romans 1:25

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Revelation 22:8-9

“I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, “Do not do that I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”

It all goes back to the first command – Exodus 20:1-5

“And God spoke all these words, saying:

² “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ “You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴ “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

While Michael is Israel special defender – God is their ultimate defender and praise God, he is our defender also.

Amen.