

At That Time

26th Sun. after Pent. – 11/17/24 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Daniel 12:1-3 Pastor Keith Besel

v. 1b – [God’s messenger proclaims this promise to Daniel,] **But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.”**

Introduction

- ✘ Even life-long Christians, who read their Bibles on a daily basis, often know very little about God’s prophet Daniel. They probably know of his time in the lion’s den when Yahweh rewarded Daniel’s faithfulness by keeping him safe all through the night after the king’s men had thrown him in among the ravenous beasts, but that’s it.
 - ➔ This whole book of Daniel though, validated by Jesus when He called it along with the entire Old Testament, God’s Holy Scripture, was written at a time when all of God’s people were in great distress.
 - ➔ They had been taken to the nation of Babylon as exile slaves, where Daniel soon stood out as a shining star because of his fearless faith; his bold witness to Yahweh as the one and only true God in a nation filled with idol and pagan worship.
- ✘ In the section of Daniel’s prophecy before us here today Daniel is actually receiving a message from God along with us. You see, beginning in chapter 10 a special messenger came from God and told Daniel about what was to come in the future – the immediate future for him and those in exile with him, but also about what was to come hundreds of years later when Yahweh would send His promised Messiah to ramp up His plan for the eternal salvation of all mankind.

I. A Time of Trouble

- ✘ This messenger from God, here in these three short verses makes numerous references to “time.” But each time that he says “at that time” he builds upon the previous “time” that he just finished talking about. The best way for us to keep this straight is for us to just take this text, one verse at a time.
- ✘ So, here we go, beginning with the first part of verse one: The messenger says to Daniel, “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people.”
 - ➔ Ok, earlier in chapter 11, the messenger tells Daniel that a time is coming when a so called “king” shall come and “do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all” (Dan. 11:35-36).
 - ➔ This is the “time” of the one that Scripture calls the “antichrist”. It’s not just one man, but a series of deceptive leaders and rulers who portray themselves as faithful “kings” or even leaders within the church. But as you just heard they are the exact opposite of faithful to the one true Triune God, because their ultimate goal is to turn people to themselves; to get you and me to think that we are following God when we buy into what they want us to believe as if it is some new, enlightened wisdom that is even “better than what that old dusty, out-of-date Bible says.”
 - ➔ For example, when Jesus refers to what we know of as the Old Testament, quoting it and calling it the holy “Scripture (that) cannot be broken” in John 10:35, the antichrist speaks through liberal theologians and others who try to tell us that “no, you’re out of touch” and “not thinking reasonably” when we believe that God created the entire universe in six 24-hour days as

Genesis one and two says; or when we trust God in Genesis 7-9 that He sent a worldwide flood and saved Noah, his family and two of every species of animal in one massive ark.

- ✘ This “time” though when the antichrist, who is empowered and guided by Satan, becomes especially active is when God’s salvation plan shifts into high gear; when He sends His only begotten Son into the world through a humble virgin woman and He is born in human flesh as baby in a manger; 100% God at the same time that He is 100% Man.

→ This is the “time” that verse one of our text today is talking about; a time that lasts until that man, Jesus, returns to earth in the flesh at the resurrection of all flesh; on what is called Judgment Day.

→ You get what that means right? We are living in “that time” right now. And as verse one continues to say, “And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.” This is the time that Revelation 7:14 calls “the great tribulation”.

→ Well, woo whoo! We get to live here in a time where trouble just continues to be ramped up upon the people of earth. But it makes sense that the antichrist is going to work harder to cause us believers in Christ more trouble now, since Jesus came; since He gave His life on the cross to pay for all sin, and rose in victory over death. The devil doesn’t want us to trust in Jesus; to believe that He did all of that for us! So the more trouble he can cause, the more people he hopes to lead away into doubt and unbelief.

- ✘ That has been going on now for 2000 years. In fact, every generation believes it is the last generation, because every generation thinks society can’t get any worse than it is right now.

→ And our generation has plenty of evidence that things are getting worse, but...so did the generations before us.

→ Just look, for example, at all of the social issues that are going off of the Biblical rails. We saw it in the political ads recently, where abortion – that willful murder of unborn babies is now advertised and defended as being a loving act of “good women’s health”. “Mercy killing” – the term itself is a contradiction. Death, witchcraft, murder mysteries and holidays of blood and gore are glorified and celebrated as entertainment.

→ Then we have all of the new natural disasters that are reported weekly in the news, as well as health scares, deadly diseases and worldwide pandemics.

→ In the political and geo-political realm there are always fights and conflicts, wars, assassination attempts, and hateful elections every other year now.

→ On top of it all, and worst of all, Christian churches of every denomination are shrinking and going way. Those raised in the faith no longer see a need for Jesus because they’ve been misled into thinking that they can trust in themselves or others for life and salvation instead of Jesus Christ.

- ✘ This is a very, very bad time, isn’t it?

II. A Time of Deliverance

- ✘ “But at that time,” the last part of verse one says, “your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.” This is God’s promise of deliverance out of this “great tribulation” as John shows it happening in real time in Revelation 7:10.

→ And the book of life is what Revelation 21:27 calls “the Lamb’s book of life” because it is the book in which Jesus, the Lamb of God writes with His very own blood – the same blood that He shed on the cross to pay for our guilt. And with His blood He has written what ... the name of every true believer in Christ.

- And when did He write your name in that book? At time of your baptism, when He attached His perfect Word of salvation to that water there and washed you clean of all sin; when He wrapped you in His perfect robe of righteousness and undeservedly, but lovingly adopted you into God's family of believers forevermore.
- ✘ What a promise, proclaimed some 600 years before Jesus perfectly fulfilled it in His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension to now sit at the Father's right hand in glory.
 - But He hasn't left us alone. For now, as we endure this time of trial and tribulation, along with the Holy Spirit, God has sent His archangel Michael – God's general over the rest of His angels to defend and protect those who remain strong in the faith until, what time?
 - ✘ That's what verse two tells us about – the "time" when God's promised deliverance is finally and permanently realized. Verse two: "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." The Hebrew word that is translated as "many" technically means "a great number" where there is no upper limit, meaning this is the resurrection of all who have ever lived.
 - This then is the clearest teaching about the resurrection of all flesh in the entire Old Testament. But first we can't just brush over the fact that those being raised are/will be those who are in the dust. This body that only God could create "from the dust of the earth" as Genesis 2:7 tells us, by creating and organizing and teaching every single atom and particle to perform just right for our enjoyment in God's service – this is the body that disintegrates back into dust after we die.
 - Here's a fun fact: because atoms are made up of mostly empty space, if you crammed all the atoms in all human beings together, without any wasted space, they wouldn't be any bigger than a normal sized sugar cube. But that cube would weigh Five Billion Tons! And yet to God, that is as light as a feather is to you and me.
 - ✘ Well, Jesus said about the day of His promised return at the end of time in John 5:28-29 that "an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear [My] voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."
 - This is the resurrection folks, that verse two is referring to here in our text today. The same all-powerful God that created our flesh and gave us life, is the one who, "at that time" will do it again with the very same atoms that have been resting in the dust after our death (unless of course Jesus returns before we die).
 - ✘ And there are only two options for our bodies and souls from that day forward. We'll talk about the second option first. It says, "some" will rise "to shame and everlasting contempt." These are the ones Jesus said are "those who have done evil." In Mark 3:29, Jesus tells us who these are. He says, "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."
 - The Holy Spirit is the One who gives us saving faith in Jesus alone, so to blaspheme against Him is to say, "I don't need to believe and trust only in Jesus." This is the antichrist's goal and desire for all of us, that our names will not be written in the book. And Revelation 20:15 says, "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
 - ✘ But the first – and preferred option is to be those who are raised "to everlasting life." Verse three describes it in more detail: "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."
 - This wisdom is not something that any of us can take credit for gaining on our own. It is the wisdom that Christ gifts us with through the Holy Spirit at our baptism – the wisdom of faith. You

could say it is spiritual wisdom that enables us to trust and follow God's ways even when the world's evidence and those around us in the world want us to think that God's ways and God's truth in Scripture can't possibly be right.

→ Yet Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." He always is "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6).

Conclusion

✘ But God's not done showering us with His promises. He says that we believers will "shine like the brightness of the sky above." Think of a bright sunny morning without a cloud in the sky. This isn't our glory that is shining but Christ's glory shining in and through us.

→ In fact, this is not talking about just a sudden one-time flash of bright light, like a sudden starburst. No, because a starburst only shines for a moment and then is gone. This is us shining day-in and day-out with Christ's righteousness reflected in our words and actions; in the way that we treat others with His love and the times that we tell them of His saving love for them too.

→ When that happens, God then uses us to "turn many (more) to His righteousness." So we are not, nor can we ever be our own stars, folks, we are God's shining stars today and into eternity. To Him be the glory! Amen.