

WHEN MICHAEL STANDS UP

Daniel 12:1: And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which 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 that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.

“Michael” is Christ Himself.¹ For Him to “stand up” means to begin to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This we learn from considering the use of the words “stand up” in verse 2 of chapter 11, where we saw that three kings in Persia were yet to “stand up,” that is, reign.

When the “king of the north” comes to his end, Christ will begin His long awaited reign. Until now, He has continued His work as Mediator and High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. “At that time” which we are considering in this verse He will cease His work as Savior from sin, and become the mighty Judge of their enemies and Protector of His people. To wait until the “king of the north” comes to his end before we listen to the Savior is to wait until too late. *The door of mercy which has remained open so long, will then swing shut forever.*

When Christ ceases to intercede for guilty man, the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn. There is waiting now in the world such an explosive spirit of rebellion and pent-up wrath that people will be astounded beyond measure when the restraining influence of God’s Spirit is finally withdrawn. Then indeed will come a “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” Once in a while, even today, we catch little glimpses of the horror that can come when people reject the Spirit of God. This is but a foretaste of what the entire world will be given up to, when once the door is closed. Unbelieving people will be left to their own ways with no restraint.

“Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel’s people are *God’s* people, not of any one particular tribe, race, or nation, as the literal Jews, but those of “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6). Their names have been *retained* “in the book,” because they have responded to the seeking love of Christ (Galatians 3:29).

¹ The name means “Who is like God?” Only Christ is that.

This important “book” in which the names of God’s people have been written is the Lamb’s “book of life” (see Revelation 13:8). It is called the “book of life” because only those whose names are retained in it will receive the gift of eternal life. John tells us how he saw in vision that “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

And we must know, further, that our name will not be *blotted out* of that book. Jesus has warned us that to *begin* the Christian life is not enough. To “follow on,” to “keep the faith,” is what our Savior is concerned about. It is possible for one’s name to be “blotted out” of the book once it has been written there: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I *will not blot out his name* out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels” (Revelation 3:5; see 22:19). We will be the happiest people in the universe when we hear Him “confess” our name.

Some have had their names blotted out of that book of life, although at one time they had their names written in it. There is Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, whom everyone knows about. Instead of overcoming his love of money, he permitted it to overcome him, until he sold the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver. There is king Saul, who at times in his life felt the power of the Holy Spirit working upon his heart (see 1 Samuel 10:6; 19:23, 24). But later he gave in to jealousy and hatred, and rebelled against the Lord. He was eaten by jealousy of David until his heart was filled with an evil spirit. He died in his sin, without hope. There were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, leaders in Israel, who rebelled against God and His chosen servant Moses (see Numbers 16), and others whose experiences are “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Before Jesus ceases His work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, it must be determined whose name is to be retained in the book of life, and whose is to be blotted out. This has to be, because Jesus says, “I come quickly: and *My reward is* with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be*” (Revelation 22:12).

How will these “rewards” be determined? There must be first an inquiry of all who have professed to serve God so their names have been at some time enrolled in the book of life. This is an investigative judgment. Some call it a “pre-Advent judgment,” because it must take place *before* Jesus returns to earth. When it has been completed,

“Michael” (another name for Christ), will “stand up” and begin to reign as King, no longer to serve as High Priest to grant forgiveness to the repentant sinner. The door of mercy which has stood open to the sinner so long, will then swing shut. Then will go forth the solemn decree, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11). What we are, we will be, forever! (Scary? Then let’s be thankful verse 1 hasn’t been fulfilled, quite, yet).

Some among the dead will be judged righteous in this pre-Advent judgment. Jesus refers to them as being “*accounted worthy* to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead” (Luke 20:35). Some among the living will likewise be *accounted righteous*; Jesus refers to them whose names are retained in the book of life as those who will be “accounted worthy to . . . *stand* before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). That means translation at His coming.

This is the judgment which Daniel saw in vision in chapter 7:9, 10, when the “Ancient of days did sit, . . . [and] thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: . . . and the books were opened.” This investigative judgment takes place while people are still living on the earth, for Jesus urges us to “watch and pray” while it’s going on, that we “may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). This is carried on as part of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which (we learned in chapter 8) began in 1844 at the close of the 2300-year prophecy.

Not only is the book of life considered in this judgment, but there are other books that record all our words, acts, and even secret thoughts (see Malachi 3:16-18; 1 Corinthians 3:5; Ecclesiastes 12:14). All these “secret things” will be revealed in the judgment, spread open to the gaze of “thousand thousands” of angels (and people), unless by repentance and confession we ask for forgiveness and “blotting out.”

Something must be “blotted out.” Either our names, as Jesus said they would be if we refuse to overcome; or our sins themselves must be blotted out.

Peter speaks of this time: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, *when the time of refreshing shall come* from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). The wise man says: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth

and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). At the cross of Christ, mercy and truth were met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other (Psalm 85:10). It is the blood of the crucified Jesus that washes away and “blots out” sins, which means two truths: first, the broken law has met in Him its legal substitution; and second, His love revealed in His sacrifice of Himself motivates us to a change of heart (Psalm 51:1, 2). “The Lamb of God . . . taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). More than a whitewash, it’s “taken away” from the heart.

This “taking away of sin,” “finishing the transgression,” “making an end of sins” (Daniel 9:24), is what is finally completely accomplished in the cleansing of the sanctuary. It is a work possible only because of the sacrifice of Jesus made on His cross. It has an effect on the hearts of God’s people on earth, because the books of heaven can never be cleansed of the *record* of our sins until first of all *our hearts here on earth* have been truly cleansed. Nothing else can make sense.

Those among the living who shall be “accounted worthy” when He comes will be those who “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,” in whose mouth is found no “guile,” who are “without fault before the throne” (Revelation 14:4, 5). To bring this about is what Christ died for on His cross.

Daniel 12:2: And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Two general resurrections will come: the first, that of those who died in faith, who will come forth at the second coming of Jesus (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17); and the second, that of the unbelieving, who will come forth at the close of the one thousand years of Revelation 20 (verses 5, 7, and 8).

But this resurrection which the angel speaks of here is a special one. It comes *before* the second coming of Christ; it’s a mixed resurrection of good and evil people. We read about such a special resurrection in Revelation 1:7, where we learn that some of the people who actually crucified Christ will be among those on the earth who behold Him coming in the clouds of heaven in glory. Among them will be Caiaphas, whom Christ promised that he should see Him come in glory (Matthew 26:64). That promise must be kept! These eminently rebellious people will be given a special opportunity to see the glory of the One whom they hated and murdered. The Father

won't torture them physically; just looking will be torture enough. And it is fitting that some among the righteous dead should also be granted a special privilege of seeing the coming of their Lord and Savior.

Daniel 12:3, 4: And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Those who are "wise" have often suffered in this world of evil. It costs something to live a life of faith. We forsake friends, wealth, property, ease, and comfort; sometimes relatives forsake us. We "bear the cross" *with* Jesus, suffer *with* Him, endure reproach and ridicule and loneliness, and privation, all *with* Him.

But who can say that it costs too much? Those who "turn many to righteousness," who pour out their lives in self-sacrifice for the saving of others, will have an abundant reward beyond all counting.

It is Satan who would bewilder and confuse us. He says, "You cannot afford to make the sacrifice involved in keeping the Sabbath! You dare not stand alone in your family for the cross of Christ!" But the truth is that we gain infinitely more by standing for Jesus. We may lose a job, lose money, lose friends, possibly even (God forbid!) lose even a husband or wife or children or parents or property; but there comes an inheritance as everlasting as stars you see shine at night.

Let us not hesitate to pour out our lives in toil to help to finish God's work on earth. "He that winneth souls is wise," and it is the "wise" who shine forever and ever (Proverbs 11:30).

The book of Daniel was to be opened and understood in the time of the end. Now there are no secrets "sealed" within it. To "run to and fro" may refer to a unique searching of the book of Daniel in the time of the end, bringing "increased knowledge" of its message. Since the beginning of that "time of the end" in 1798, worldwide interest in Daniel has become intense.

This expression may also refer to the great increase of transport and scientific knowledge which has come at the same time as this increased knowledge of the Bible. Through unprecedented scientific inventions, the Lord has prepared the way for the proclamation of His last-day message. Practically no one is untouched by this, which *U.S. News & World Report* calls the "info explosion." The commonest yet most astounding example is our instantaneous communication with

nearly every person on planet earth through cell phones. Ordinary people of a generation or two ago could never have dreamed of them.

If one compares the 6000 years of human history to a single day between sunrise and sunset, mankind has slept the quiet sleep of bygone ages from sunrise to within twenty minutes of sunset, when suddenly, in that space of a few moments all these modern inventions have sprung into being.