

## Daniel 12

### Background

In the previous newsletter we concluded that the passage in Daniel 11:21-45 refers to Emperor Tiberius. If this is true, it needs to fit with the rest of the vision as well. Daniel 12 begins with words that cry out for connection: “At that time.” So what can we find in these chapters that refers to time?

Daniel 10:2 and 13 mention a period of three weeks but it seems unlikely that the text would refer to that. That was the time Daniel had to wait until he received the explanation. Another time period is mentioned in Daniel 12:7 but it is unlikely that 12:1 with “At that time” would refer to a time period that is mentioned *later* in the chapter. Let’s read what Daniel 12:1 says:

*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. (NIV)*

A third option is that Daniel 12:1 refers to the previous verse. Daniel 11:45 describes the death of Emperor Tiberius. If we use the rule of immediate context, that would make sense. But why do we then have 25 verses describing the life of Tiberius? We have already in previous newsletters concluded that this prophecy in Daniel 10-12 refers to the time of Christ’s ministry. Therefore, the best option would be that Daniel 11:21-45 specifies the *time* in history. It seems appropriate to have 25 verses describe the life of Tiberius *only* if this passage would highlight the time of Christ’s ministry.

Therefore, most likely the phrase: “At that time,” refers to the reign of Emperor Tiberius. He reigned between 14 and 37 A.D. So, this prophecy describes the time during which something extremely important would take place. As a matter of fact, this was the most important time in history! It is interesting to ponder that God gave this information to Daniel more than 500 years in advance!

### Emperor Tiberius

According to the summary in Daniel 10:1 the prophecy involved a “great war” or a “great conflict.” We studied about Michael and concluded that he is one of the greatest angels, one of the archangels. Daniel 12:1 says that Michael arises at this time. Michael was to be involved in something very unique:

*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. (NIV)*

Christ’s birth took place during the reign of Caesar Augustus but His ministry started and ended during the time of Caesar Tiberius. Christians have different opinions regarding what year Jesus’ baptism and His crucifixion took place but they all fall within the time period of Tiberius’ reign. Until proven wrong, I personally believe that Christ was baptized in the fall of 27 A.D.

If we believe that Daniel 12:1 indicates the beginning of Jesus’ ministry on earth, it would be good to find more evidence for this in the same chapter. I will come back to that as we study verse 7.

It is very interesting to notice that the Gospel of Luke gives the names of the two Roman emperors who reigned during this crucial time in history. We already saw that Luke 2:1 mentions Emperor Augustus by name in conjunction with the birth of Jesus Christ and he is also referred to in Daniel 11:20.

Luke 3:1 states that it was during the “reign of Tiberius Caesar,” that John the Baptist was active. This fits perfectly to our conclusion that Daniel 11:21-45 and 12:1 describe the time of Christ’s ministry. That means

that the two emperors connected with both Jesus' birth and His ministry, are alluded to in Daniel chapters 11-12 and mentioned by name in Luke chapters 2 and 3! Is that a mere coincidence? I believe not! Let's now read the whole verse in Daniel 12:1:

*At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. (NKJV)*

### **A Time of Trouble**

First I want to make you aware of the order in which things happen. Many believe that this verse describes the end-time and Jesus' second coming. They proclaim that there *first* will be a "time of trouble" and that Jesus will return in the sky *after* that. They also believe Daniel 12:1 is connected with the "Great Tribulation" mentioned in Revelation 7:14.

But, is that what this text is saying? Not at all! If one should draw any conclusion it would be that Michael would arise and either at the same time or right afterwards there would be a time of trouble. But to use Daniel 12:1 to prove that there will be a time of trouble *before* Jesus returns is not contextual.

What does this time of trouble refer to? It appears that it will be worse than anything one could possibly imagine! The text says that it will be "such as never was since there was a nation." That is a very dramatic statement. Many propose the fulfillment to be terrifying end-time events, like worldwide wars, calamities, persecution, etc.

### **The Flood**

Let's consider what times of "distress," "anguish," or "trouble" the world had *already* experienced when this prophecy was written. Consider the Flood, for instance. The Flood destroyed everything except 8 human beings and some animals. The Flood must have been an incredible distress.

But it seems the Flood couldn't even compare to the time of distress that Daniel 12:1 speaks of. Could anything be much worse though? Well, maybe if *all* human beings and *all* animals would be killed. But according to the promise God made after the flood that does not seem to be feasible. Therefore, the question is, if the "time of trouble" could refer to something else – maybe rather on a spiritual level.

In Daniel 10:1 we read that the message of the revelation that was given to Daniel "was true and concerns a great war." We concluded that to be the summary of the prophecy in Daniel 10-12. Thus, this needs to be taken into consideration here.

We need to find out what this "great war" or "great conflict" was all about. Is this "war" mentioned anywhere else? In Daniel 9:26 we can read about a "war" and it says that: "War will continue until the end." Thus, sometime after the "revelation" in Daniel 10:1 was given, there would be a "war." We will pay specific attention as to when this "war" began and when it ended. But there is a Bible passage of great importance that speaks of both "Michael" and a "war"...

### **Michael and the War**

We started out when reading Daniel 10:1 by saying that the prophecy in Daniel 10-12 is about the truth, Jesus Christ, and that it concerns a great war. Revelation 12:7-11 speaks about a "war." And where did this war take place? In *heaven*! And who was involved in this "heavenly" war? No one less than Michael and his angels! In this text Michael is the commander of God's angels. This fits very well to the picture we saw in Daniel 10:21.

Revelation 12 describes Michael and his angels warring against Satan and his angels. It says that Satan and his angels were defeated and hurled down to earth, Rev. 12:9. Prior to the war in heaven, Satan had access to God's throne in heaven. Revelation 12:10 calls the devil the "accuser of our brothers." In Job 1:6-12 we read about Satan approaching God's throne in heaven to accuse God's people.

This means that during the time of the Old Testament the devil had access to heaven! He had obviously not been cast out at that time. So prior to this "war" the accuser had access to heaven – but after the "war" he did not! So what happened to change this and when did this change take place? Let's read the whole narrative in Revelation 12:7-11:

*And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." (NIV)*

How did Michael and his angels win this war in heaven? It was won "by the blood of the Lamb." Of course that points to the cross! Thus the "war" was won when Jesus, the Lamb of God, was slain! The defeated devil and his angels were cast out of heaven. Consequently the "war" ended at the cross! Maybe this is new to you – but even Jesus spoke of this prior to His crucifixion, John 12:31-33:

*Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die. (NKJV)*

In this passage Jesus told His listeners just what we read in Revelation 12. When He was "lifted up", i.e. when He was crucified, there was a judgment of this world. Part of that judgment was that the "ruler of this world" was cast out. We all know that Jesus refers to the devil in this passage. We also agree that the devil is still around on this earth. So, the only place the devil was cast out from was the rest of the universe, including heaven. Jesus said very similar things in John 16:11 and Luke 10:18.

### **The Authority of Christ**

Something that Revelation 12:10 also mentions is the "authority of his Christ." What authority does this verse refer to and when was this authority given to Christ? According to the Gospels, authority was given to Christ because of His death on the cross. After His death and resurrection Jesus gives His disciples the command to go out into all the world to proclaim the Gospel. The reason this command could be given is in the verse before, Matthew 28:18-19:

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Go therefore... (NKJV)*

And Peter says the same thing in 1 Peter 3:21-22:

*...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. (NKJV)*

Thus, Revelation 12:10, Matthew 28:18 and 1 Peter 3:21-22 all say the same thing. In all these passages authority was given to Christ because of His faithful life, ministry and death. Thus, the war in heaven ended at the cross!

### **Ellen White**

This is a Bible study but I found a very interesting statement from Ellen White that I would like to share with you. It is rarely quoted and the reason for that is quite obvious. We have not had a clear view of when this war started and ended so therefore we have ignored this quotation. It begins with a more general statement showing that the whole universe truly was interested in and followed Christ's life on earth to see what the outcome would be:

*“The **heavenly universe** had watched with intense interest the **entire life of Christ**,--every step from the manger to the present awful scene.” {ST, December 9, 1897 par. 1}*

It becomes more interesting as we read the next quotation:

*“The **Prince of Peace** had come to engage in **the most severe conflict that was ever waged upon the earth**, in order that he might **bring light, and truth, and peace to the sons of men**. He was to overcome the apostate who had usurped authority over this world and its inhabitants; and **the heavenly universe was to engage with Christ in this conflict**. {YI, August 5, 1897 par. 4}*

Do you realize what she says? Christ came to this earth to engage in “the most severe conflict that was ever waged upon the earth.” That certainly fits to what we read in Daniel 12:1! According to this quotation not only earth but the *whole universe* was involved in this “war.”

It is also clear that the time she refers to is the time of Jesus' ministry on earth. This was the time when He brought “light, and truth, and peace to the sons of men.” Thus, this was the “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” from Daniel 12:1!

Now we can see why Christ's 3 ½ year-ministry was history's most important “war.” It encompassed heaven, earth, the whole universe, all the angels, and God's trustworthiness. This was the greatest conflict ever! This was the time of trouble! We will learn more about this “war” later on in Daniel 12.

If Jesus would have failed in any way, sin, evil, and the devil himself would never have been conquered or eradicated. Death, disease, anguish and pain would have been here to stay. But because of His victory all evil forces are in submission to Jesus. They are put under His authority. They were cast out of heaven. The purpose of this “war” was to purify the whole universe from sin. Praise God for Christ's victory on the cross! Very likely the earth is the only place in the whole universe that the devil and his angels have access to today.

### **Salvation in Christ**

Let's now finish reading Daniel 12:1. Just after speaking of this “time of trouble such as never was” comes a promise from God. The phrase “at that time” is repeated which again connects it to the time of Christ's ministry. It also alludes to the “Book of Truth,” which we read about in Daniel 10:21. So who did God give this promise to? Let's read again Daniel 12:1:

*At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And **at that time your people shall be delivered**, every one who is found **written in the book**. (NKJV)*

It was given to Daniel's people here referred to as "your people." In Daniel 10:14 the Man Dressed in Linen came to Daniel to tell him what would happen to his people in the future. And this was the promise to them. Of course it refers to those who were faithful, to the ones who have their names written in the "Book of Truth" or the "Book of Life" as we read earlier. To be "delivered" means to be saved. Praise God for His promise and faithfulness!

### **Christ's Victory**

Revelation 12:10 describes Christ's victory on the cross and its consequences: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ." And, of course, Daniel 12:1 goes hand in hand with that saying that everyone whose name is found written in the book" – "will be delivered." Daniel speaks of the victory as coming in the future but in Revelation 12:10 and in 1 Peter 3:21-22 the victory is an accomplished fact!

Daniel was very worried about the status of his people during the time of the Babylonian captivity. He was not sure whether or not his people were divorced from God. Were they still God's covenant people, Jeremiah 3:8? That was one of the reasons Daniel interceded so intensively for his people in Daniel 9. How comforting it must have been for him to hear this message from God in Daniel 10-12. Everyone who has his or her name written in the Book of Life "will" be saved. God's promise of mercy certainly pertained to Daniel's people.

If we now go back to Daniel 12:1 we easily realize that the "time of trouble" refers to the "war" or "conflict" that Daniel 10:1 and Revelation 12:7 both speak about. In these texts the Truth, Jesus Christ, is the focus and the solution. Do you now see how this "war" was bigger and much more important than any other war, distress, or catastrophe in the past? Nothing can compare with the tremendous importance of Jesus' victorious ministry on this earth.

### **Multitudes who Sleep in the Dust**

Daniel 12:2 speaks about multitudes that sleep in the dust that will awake. Many believe that this refers to the resurrection at the *second* coming. If that would be so, it needs to be in harmony with the rest of the passage. Let's see if it is. If we read carefully the text seems to point to *two* different events that "will" take place, Daniel 12:2:

*Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (NIV)*

This passage actually deals with two resurrections. One group will awake "to everlasting life" and the other group "to everlasting contempt." The text obviously refers to two separate events! The first group must refer to the saints, who will be resurrected at the second coming, and the other group must be the wicked. The fact is that the saints are resurrected *at the second coming* and the wicked *1,000 years later*, according to Revelation 20:4-6:

*They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. (NIV)*

This implies that the two resurrections mentioned in Daniel 12:2 do *not* fit the second coming. Instead, this text describes two different destinies as a result of Jesus' victory on the cross! Because of what happened at the cross, the world is split in two. Jesus "purchased" souls for His kingdom by His death on the cross, according to Revelation 5:9. These believers will "awake" to eternal life at His coming. This is what Daniel 12:2-3 describes. Of course we find the same message in other parts of the Bible as well.

The authority given to Jesus because of His victory on the cross will also condemn those who reject Him to “everlasting contempt.” This will be the experience of the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years. The wonderful promise to those of Daniel’s people who remained faithful continues in Daniel 12:3:

*Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. (NIV)*

Daniel 12:2-3 truly sounds like the gospel. Yes, the promise given by the Man Dressed in Linen is extended to anyone who chooses to be faithful to God, regardless of time in history, Old or New Testament time. The promise in this verse, however, was primarily given to God’s Old Covenant people. The promise is that they “will shine...like stars for ever and ever.” This will be fulfilled on that wonderful day when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### **Summary**

- “At that time” in Daniel 12:1 refers to the time of Emperor Tiberius described in Daniel 11:21-45.
- The “time of trouble such as never was” refers to the time of Jesus’ 3 ½ year-ministry.
- The time of Christ’s ministry truly was the “most severe conflict” or “war” that has ever been waged on this earth. It involved heaven as well as the whole universe.
- When Jesus died on the cross the devil and his angels were hurled down to earth. The devil was defeated and thereafter he and his angels have no more access to heaven.
- All of Daniel’s people, God’s Old Covenant people, whose names were written in the Book of truth, will be delivered at the second coming. Then they will shine like stars forever and ever.
- The unfaithful of Daniel’s people will rise to shame and everlasting contempt after the 1000 years are ended. Thus God gave the exact same promise to the Old Covenant people as He has given to the Gentiles.

This newsletter covered Daniel 12:1-3. The ones that follow will give even more support for the understanding that Daniel 10-12 deals with Christ’s *first* coming. A prophecy about Daniel’s Messiah!

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