

DANIEL (Pt.5)

The Only WHEN We Need to Know

'*THY KINGDOM COME*' – BUT *WHEN?* (9:21-12:12)

[9:21-25] The TIME THAT IS IMPORTANT to know is here revealed – the coming of the Messiah. What 6 things will that coming accomplish? [a side point (or is it?) - If Gabriel gave Daniel insight into times and seasons because he was 'highly esteemed', v.23, what might we assume about C.T. Russell and J.F. Rutherford, authors of *The Time is at Hand* (1889), and *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (1920)?]

[v.24] The six verbs divide into two sets of three; the first three are concerned with the problem which exercised Daniel in his prayer, namely the grounds on which God could forgive human sin, and the second three with the positive fulfilment of God's righteous purposes. [Baldwin 168]

Daniel in his prayer, in addressing God, had constantly spoken of Israel as "thy people", "thy holy city", etc.; but the angel Gabriel in the reply takes them up simply as Daniel's people – "thy people, thy holy city", etc. – as though God would intimate that until the everlasting righteousness should be brought in, He could not in the full sense own them as His. [Tregelles 98]

ASK THE WITNESS: *If God took the trouble to give this time prophecy over 500 years in advance so that He might vindicate Daniel as a prophet, and that we might identify the Messiah (= Anointed), why didn't God fulfill the prophecies of The Watchtower so as to identify His modern 'anointed'?* (Isaiah 44:24-28)

[9:26,27] How can it be that the Messiah will have NOTHING? (Matt.23:36-39) What will be the future of Jerusalem and the temple, with what hope attached?

Commentators who argue that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled this prophecy are at a loss to account for the fact that he destroyed neither the Temple nor the city of

DANIEL NO 'ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN'

Sometimes when I hear people railing against this denomination and that company of Christians, while glorying in their own position and utterly ignoring their true state, I think how little such persons enter into the thoughts and feelings that filled the heart and wrung confession from the lips of this man, Daniel. Notice that he does not begin by accusing the Jews ... When we look around and see the failure in the Church, the fleshliness and the worldliness that prevail on every hand, let us not be content to pass our judgment upon them, and lift up our hearts in spiritual pride and say: "Thank God, we are not as others;" but oh, let us remember that we too are part of that Church which has failed. [Ironsides 159]

Jerusalem, though undoubtedly much damage was done (1 Macc.1:31,38). [Baldwin 171]

[10:1-12] 3 facts we must note in order to *begin* to understand the following chapters, which are a unit of revelation in the original Hebrew. 1. Daniel would UNDERSTAND the revelation (vv.1,11,12); 2. The message is TRUE, therefore we too are obligated to believe it; 3. The message involves a 'great conflict' (v.1), which interpreters tend to see being a natural segue from the final verses of ch.9

God has nothing to say to the frivolous man. It was to Moses, a trembling man, that God spoke on the mount ... Daniel's long season of fasting and prayer brought Gabriel from heaven to tell him the secret of the centuries. [A.W. Tozer The Best of ... 61]

[10:13,14] What would Daniel understand about the conflict here described?

The fact is, the people are not referred to as God's people (which could, indeed, taken absolutely, refer to the church) but as "the children of thy people" and "thy people" (12:1), that is Daniel's people. [Culver 171]

The dealings of God in the latter day with the Jews and Jerusalem possess an exceeding interest to all those who see the importance which God attaches to that place and people. A degree of prominence, which might at first seem strange, is given in the prophetic word to those scenes; but it is our place to sit as learners, having our ears open to receive the instruction of God, even when we are most at a loss to perceive the bearing of that instruction. Whatever is important in God's eyes ought to be so in ours, as being made the children of God; He has said of Jerusalem, "My eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually." He has said of Israel that if His covenant with the day and night cannot be broken, then He will not cast off His ancient people. Jesus died for that nation; they are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes". No marvel then that our eyes are directed again and again to the closing scenes of the period of God's indignation, and the dawn of that day in which God has said, "In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." What soul is there that has tasted the mercy of God and rejoices in the grace which has been shown in the precious blood of Christ, that does not feel joy in the contemplation of this great and surpassing display of the same grace? [Tregelles 80]

[10:15-21] Who is Michael, and what conflict is HE engaged in? (cf. Jude 9; Rev.12:7)

ASK WITNESS: *What does Scripture tell us FOR SURE about Michael?* (cf. 12:1)

[11:1-45] The Holy Spirit gives more space to the activities of Persia, Greece, Egypt, Kittim, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Libya, Ethiopia and the 'beautiful land' than He gives to Paul's Hymn to Love (1 Cor.13) or to the 'governing body' of the early church (Acts 15). What possible bearing can these nations have on the KINGDOM? (Micah 4:1-8)

In the events which the messenger goes on to foretell, the glorious land, the Temple

and the wise among the people are at the centre of the writer's concern. Two hundred years of Persian rule are passed over in a verse (2) because they are not relevant to his theme; the Greek empire, and the struggles between two eastern areas, have more attention (3-20), because armies were to march through Judea and put increasing pressure on God's people. All this, however, is merely leading into the main theme, the time of oppression which is to overthrow all that the loyal believer holds dear. Whereas the exile had been explained by the prophets and accepted in the end by the people as a judgment well deserved, this coming terror is not presented in those terms. It is rather the brutal attack of a megalomaniac against 'the holy covenant' (28). He will have such massive international support that opposition is ineffective and his armies will cause the death of many before he comes 'to his end' (45). That is the signal for unprecedented trouble, deliverance of the faithful and resurrection for judgment (12:1-4). [Baldwin 182-183]

[12:1,2] To which great events that JW's think much upon does Michael's 'standing up' relate? (Matt.24:15-22)

[12:2-12] The book is sealed (v.4; remind JW's that much 'running to and fro' by Witnesses publicizing past predictions based on this very passage only proves that 'the organization' CAN'T open this seal). The only 'how long ...?' we are allowed insight into are short periods of 1260, 1290 and 1335 days (which *The Watchtower* formerly interpreted as YEARS, ending in 1799, 1829 and 1874 respectively). But note that these periods all have to do with 'your people' (twice in v.1), 'the holy people' (v.7), 'the regular burnt offering' and 'the abomination of desolation' (v.11). Here we are in the same situation as Matt.24 and Luke 21 (the latter passage is the ONLY mention of the 'Gentile times', crucial to *Watchtower* last days calculations).

[12:1] Here is stated in clear terms that this is the time of trouble for the people of Israel, "such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." To take the expression the children of thy people in any other sense than that of Israel is to ignore the uniform meaning of thy people throughout the book of Daniel. The people involved are a nation, that is, the nation Israel. [Walvoord 282]

ASK WITNESS: *We are told expressly that these prophecies are 'to remain secret and sealed until the time of the end' (v.9), and 'those who are wise shall understand'. Then what may we conclude from the fact that Russell's, Rutherford's, and other Watchtower publications purporting to explain Daniel's prophecies are long out of print?*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baldwin, Joyce *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary: Daniel* (1978)
 Culver, Robert D. *Daniel and the Latter Days* (2nd ed. 1964)
 Ferguson, Sinclair B. *Communicator's Commentary: Daniel* (1988)
 Ironside, Harry *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet* (2 ed. 1920)
 Montgomery, J.A. *The Book of Daniel (International Critical Commentary)* (1926)
 Tregelles, S.P. *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel* (5th ed. 1863)
 Walvoord, John F. *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (1971)
 Wilson, Robert Dick *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (2 vols. 1927,1924)
 Wood, Leon *A Commentary on Daniel* (1972)
 Young, Edward J. *The Prophecy of Daniel* (1949)