

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Great Tribulation, Part 1**

Scripture: Daniel 12:1-3

Code: 27-30

Tonight we come to the twelfth chapter of the prophecy of Daniel. Let me read the first three verses of Daniel chapter 12, the setting for our message tonight.

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.

Next to faith and love, the Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, the greatest reality in the world is hope. Faith, hope and love--the three most critical elements in all of human thinking. Man cannot exist without faith, or love, or hope.

As we focus on our passage tonight, the theme is hope--one of that triad of 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. One writer illustrates it like this: "The spring returns with the blossoms and flowers, its green foliage and blue sky. The voices of the singing birds are heard once more and earth adorned as a bride looks forth rejoicing. The storms of winter have passed away. Its coldness and desolation are felt no more. So the believer emerges out of all that was dark and dreary and chilling with fears and apprehensions as to an eternal state of things and a new world of light and gladness springs up to cheer and animate him. Hope in Christ is to the little world of the inner man what spring is to the external world of nature."

Hope especially is important to those who suffer. 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. A pure bright star fixed high in heaven, it reaches with its rays the uplifted eye of the weary pilgrim. But stars shine not in the day, the darkness brings them out, so grief summons hope to the aid of the sufferer."

Men cannot live with [John meant "without"] hope, especially men who suffer. They must have hope or they are miserable. They must be able to see a meaningful future or they have no resource for

living in the moment. In fact, most people who analyze the problem of suicide say that people basically do not kill themselves because of their current circumstance, they do it because they can't see any future change in that current circumstance. There's no hope that anything will ever be any different. God knows well that in order for man to endure the present stress he has to have a future hope. And so all throughout the Bible, God presents to man a great hope, an eternal hope, a hope in the future, a hope beyond all other hopes that gives to man a full rich meaning to life.

Now as you come to the close of the book of Daniel, this is precisely what Daniel does. For the last several chapters, as you well know, the prophet has been getting revelations about the disastrous history of Israel to come. In fact, all of the visions and revelation of...revelations of Daniel's prophecy chronicle a series of oppressions to come upon the nation Israel. Gentile world powers under the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, the Romans will dominate Israel. Israel will be oppressed, inundated, sacked, savagely attacked, abused, slaughtered throughout all of its history until finally the Messiah returns. And so it has been a bleak series of prophecies.

And most recently as we've been studying chapter 10, 11 and 12, we have found that in the vision that is given as the last revelation, Daniel is made to see that Israel's history is going to be one long string of oppressions. Daniel was shocked, you know, when the 70 year captivity in Babylon ended and everybody didn't go back. He thought at the end of the 70 years that all of the people of God would return to Israel and in a matter of a brief time they would rebuild that nation into its former glory. But when only a small remnant went back and the rest of the people were entrenched in paganism and it didn't look like it was going to be the way he thought it should be, and many and most, in fact, of the people never turned their hearts to God, Daniel went to his knees and he began to ask God, in effect, "Why, God? It's supposed to be over, why is it not over? Why have not they returned? Why have not they rebuilt?" And God gives him an answer in the vision or the revelation of 10, 11 and 12, God says "Because their chastening isn't over yet, because their purging isn't over yet, because their punishment isn't over yet, because their refining isn't over yet." In fact, it's going to go on until the coming of Christ. It's going to go on for millennia, for thousands of years of human history will the Jews suffer the consequence of their sin, disobedience and unbelief. So a very special angel comes to Daniel in chapters 10, 11 and 12 and gives him the message.

Now the heart of the message is in chapter 11 verse 35. The whole purpose of this chastening period for Israel is to test them and to purge and to make them white. In other words, God never gives up on His people until finally they are purified, finally they are purged. They will be subjected, says the angel to Daniel, to a series of Gentile, pagan oppressors who will bring them grave suffering. He first of all names Ahasuerus and the others who were representative of the Medo-Persians. And then he talks about Alexander and the others who were representative of the Greeks. And then, also, at the conclusion of that great Greek era, he speaks of Antiochus the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes. And then in the final form of the Roman Empire, it will be the Antichrist himself. All of this long line of oppressors who will inundate the people of God and abuse them and slaughter them to one degree or

another. But it is all designed by God to purge them, to test them and to make them white. In other words, God keeps it going until they finally respond properly.

Well, that's a pretty bleak message, isn't it? For God to say as His final word to Daniel, "Daniel, it's just going to be like this for thousands of years," and then leave it at that would leave no light at the end of the tunnel. It would be so bleak. And so, in the first three verses of chapter 12 comes the light. This is hope. This is hope, that even though it's going to be dark for thousands of years, and even though the people of

Israel will not respond to God, and even 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's hope...there's hope.

Look at the beginning of chapter 12, verse 1. First few words, "And at that time..." Just that for now, just that phrase. What time? The time he's been discussing. What time has he been discussing? Oh, in verses 36 to 45 of chapter 11, he was discussing the time of the Antichrist, the consummate oppressor of Israel, the one who would bring the greatest amount of pain, the one who would slaughter the most Jews--he'll slaughter more than Hitler ever did--the one who is the worse oppressor. But even at that time, at that very time...in fact, it could be translated "during that time," at the very time when everything is the worst, 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, 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. That's the message as chapter 12 opens. It is the time of the ascendancy of the Antichrist, the time of the domination of the willful king, the time when Antichrist rises to his zenith, the time when he fights against the north and the south and the east, the time when he wins great victories, the time when he establishes his power over the earth, the time when he commits his abominable deed in the temple, the time when he establishes himself as the only God and consumes every other religion in the world, the time...the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, the time of Armageddon, it is during that time, the angel says, Daniel, that your people can have hope.

In other words, when it gets to the worst, it's nearly time for the best. The darkest comes just before the dawn.

Well, how and why? 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. Those are the reasons for hope.

First of all, there is coming a special distress. Back at verse 1 again. "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."

In other words, Daniel says there is coming a time like no other time, a special distress. Israel has suffered much. Israel suffered much from the Babylonians, incredible slaughter. They suffered much from the Medo--Persians. They suffered much from the Greeks. They suffered much from the Romans. They have suffered much in the history even since the Roman time. They have suffered much from the Crusaders. They suffered much even in a more modern Europe. They suffered from the Herods. They suffered from the Hitlers. They've suffered and suffered and suffered. And all of it has been the rod of God. All of it has been the refining process of God for their rebellion and rejection and all of it has been meant to draw them to Him. But the worst suffering is yet to come. There will be a time, a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.

Now, that is a Hebraism. That is a Hebrew idiom. It is also used several times in the ninth chapter of Exodus. It means this is the worst ever, this is the worst ever...Exodus 9:18 and 24 for those of you who want the Scriptures specifically. But it is a Hebrew idiom that means this is the worst. Frankly, people, we have to make that announcement to Israel, the worst is yet to come for them. It isn't going to get better. It's going to get worse.

Jesus said the same thing. Look at Matthew 24. Jesus said exactly this, Matthew 24 verse 15, actually, He talks about in verse 7, "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. 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, you better run. "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're going to scatter so fast, "For there shall then be great tribulation," here it comes, "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." Now you get the picture, don't you? Jesus said the same thing that Daniel said, an unprecedented time of trouble for the people of God, Israel.

As early as Deuteronomy chapter 4, the Pentateuch of Moses, the first set of books ever written, it was predicted that in the latter days, the children of Israel would be in tribulation, Deuteronomy 4:30, Jeremiah referred to it as the time of Jacob's trouble. In his lament, he said: "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.

The book of Revelation describes that final time of human history with terms that are beyond our imagination to even grasp. But let me run it by you very fast. From Revelation chapter 6 through Revelation chapter 19, you have the details of that period of time, the last three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week...the great time of tribulation. And the writer, John, sees in the vision there the following elements to 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--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, everyone in the sea and all living creatures in the sea are killed. All fresh water will be polluted. Scorching sunlight will burn people to death. Darkness will cover the earth. Pain, sores, more demons, and it just goes like that from Revelation 6 to 19.

And in addition to that, that's what comes upon the earth in general. But in addition to that, you have God allowing the Antichrist to oppress Israel in a final act of purging. An incredible time of suffering. In addition to all the activity that God is directly involved in in this incredible time of tribulation, there is all the activity that Satan is involved in which God allows as evil finally reaches its apex. Now mark it, the whole course of the world and all of its history is outlined in Scripture to move toward a holocaust that no one in history has ever perceived before. And especially will it be difficult for the children of Israel.

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 said in a most important chapter, the thirtieth of Jeremiah and verse 4, "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." And it pictures everyone in the horrible pain of childbirth, holding themselves in agony.

In Zechariah again, as the prophet ends up his book in the thirteenth chapter and the eighth verse, "It came to pass...it shall come to pass, rather, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts in it shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left and I will bring the third part through the fire and refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They shall call on My name and I will hear them, I will say, It is My people. And they shall say, He is the Lord my God."

There will come a slaughter, two out of every three Jews will die, the other third will be redeemed. They will be purged. They will believe. If the population of the world is 15 million Jews, that means 10 million will die were it to happen now.

So, there awaits for Israel a very special distress, a distress without equal in human history. The time of Jacob's trouble, the seventieth week of Daniel, the time of the tribulation, the Great Tribulation, all of these terms are used to describe that period.

But, here comes the hope. In the midst of the special distress comes a special defender...back to verse 1...a special defender. "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, perhaps the most powerful of all the angels, has been given throughout all of Israel's history the singular responsibility of defending the people of God. As the head of the holy angels, Michael is given that generalship over Israel. It's a marvelous task. He's involved in it. We see that in the New Testament as well as the Old. In Jude chapter 9 we find him even fighting Satan for the body of Moses. He has such care and concern for the people that he will not even permit the desecration of their dead bodies. And so he looks out for Israel.

We've already seen, haven't we, back in chapter 10 that when the demons tried to stop this angel from giving his revelation, verse 13 says Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me. Michael assisted him. And over in verse 21, it says: "In all of this there's none that works with me in these things but Michael," and I love this, "your prince." God has assigned Michael the special task of caring for Israel. And so when they get in the heat of this special distress, we're not surprised to see Michael appear either in chapter 12 verse 1. When the battle gets the hottest, when the most furious persecution and oppression takes place, Michael comes to the rescue.

Now in what way does Michael stand up? How does he stand up for the people of God? Well, I believe, during the Tribulation Satan wants to release all of the forces of hell against the people of God--Israel. He wants to obliterate that nation. I'm not talking about the church now, I'm talking about Israel. He wants to obliterate Israel. He's always wanted to do that. He wanted to wipe out the people of God so there could never be a Messiah. He wanted to rub out the line. He wants to destroy them so there can never be any of them for a kingdom. He wants to capture them all so that Christ and God are frustrated in their mission for that people. And so I believe that all the demons of hell in the end time are going to go after that nation Israel.

If you want to know a little bit about what happens, turn in your Bible to Revelation chapter 12 and let's see the battle itself. Verse 1, Revelation 12--you have to compare Daniel with Revelation, they really are tied together--"There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of 12 stars." I believe that's Israel...12 tribes in the imagery of Revelation. "She being with child cried travailing in birth and pain to be delivered." I really believe that what you have here is Israel and in verse 5, "She brings forth a male child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her child was caught up unto God and to His throne." Now that's the Messiah. He was born, He lived but He ascended. He was caught up out of the world.

"And then the woman," verse 6, "began to be persecuted and fled to the wilderness." Now back to verse 3. The reason she flees, "There appeared another wonder in heaven, behold a great red dragon, seven heads and ten horns." That shows how he embodies all the imperial governments, the final form of the Roman Empire, all the crowns on his head. "His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven." You know what that means? That means when Satan fell, one third of the angels went with him, so his force is not as large as God's, He has two thirds left. It's not a question of numbers either, it's a question of power and righteous power can always overcome evil power. "But he drew a third part of the stars of heaven and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered to devour her child as soon as it was born."

And what...do you remember what Satan tried to do to stop the birth of Messiah? Everything he possible could. And then when the Messiah was finally born, he got Herod to try to slaughter the child, right? To devour that child. "But she brought it forth and the child was caught up to God." And all through his life, I believe, Satan tried to kill Him, but always unsuccessful. And finally, Christ went to His throne and Satan has continued his attack on Christ obviously. But in the Tribulation time, the future that Revelation speaks of, the woman is left, Israel. And I believe that Satan and the beast and the demons of hell come after Israel again. And she flees into the wilderness and she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and threescore days. That's three and a half years.

Now God protects the nation for this period. That's the earthly thing. But how does He do that? Verse 7, "There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels." Here, folks, you're getting a glimpse of an incredible scene. The demons want to overrun the earth and dominate Israel, but Michael and the holy angels start a war against them in heaven. And the dragon...and the dragon and his angels, it says, fought and verse 8, "Prevailed not, neither was their place found anymore in heaven. The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, the devil, and Satan who deceived the whole world was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him." I believe there's a sense in which they lose some of their supernatural power at this point. "I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation. And strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down who

accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them, woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

What happens is his plan is thwarted in relation to Israel and in the short time that he has left, apparently he just overruns the earth with evil. He tries hard to persecute the woman. Verse 13, but he's unsuccessful. The battle is already over. The battle has been won. "And the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecutes the woman who brought forth a male child--that is Israel--and to the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to her place."

"And she is nourished for a time, times and half a time." That's one, two and a half, that's three and a half. Again, the same idea, she's protected for three and a half years. "The serpent, he casts out water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman to cause her to be carried away. But the earth helped the woman, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." It could be another thing like Korah, Dathan and Abihu in the Old Testament, the beast and all of his army go out there and the earth just opens up and swallows them up.

"The dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Now, the key to winning this battle seems to be Michael. Michael.

Now with that in mind, go back to Daniel and build on that a little bit. In the end time, and I don't have time to go into the whole thing in Revelation 12, if you want the details we have a tape on that you can get and listen to the whole thing. But what happens is Michael stands up to defend the people of God. He has a war in heaven and he wins the victory. Satan is no longer the prince of the power of the air, he is no longer in heavenly places, he is cast to the earth. The major battle is over. While he's only got a short time here, he overruns the earth. He does everything he can to destroy the people of Israel. But they are protected for a time, times and half a time, for 1200 days, both indicating three and a half years. They're protected for that time. And when his army goes out to try to destroy them, the ground opens up and they're all swallowed. Now Michael seems to be in charge of this whole operation...a special defender. Michael is going to stand up.

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 worse trouble? A special distress and a special defender.

Thirdly, a special deliverance...a special deliverance. Back to verse 1 again. This is great. It says at the end of the verse, "And at that time," there's that word again, that phrase, "thy people shall be



delivered."

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

Israel will be delivered. Now I've already hinted at that, haven't I?, in telling you that God will protect them in the wilderness for three and a half years. Israel will be delivered. All Israel, says Romans 11, all Israel will be...what?...saved. Jeremiah 30 says that. After it says there will come a time of trouble such as has never been in the history of the world, it says, "But we shall be saved out of it," Jeremiah 30 verse 7. Verse 11 says, "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee." Verse 17, "I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thee of thy wounds."

There's coming a time when Israel's going to be delivered. And it's going to be in that same time. Marvelous thing...when the persecution is the worst, that's when their redemption is going to take place.

Now people have always asked the question, "Who is this that's going to be saved? It says, All Israel shall be saved. Who is this wall Israel'?" Let's find out. Ezekiel chapter 20, stay with me cause I'm going to move quickly now so we can cover this, Ezekiel 20 verse 33, "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with fury poured out will I rule over you and I will bring you out from the people and will gather you out from the countries in which you are scattered with a might hand and with an outstretched arm and with fury poured out." In other words, God's going to bring Israel back. "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples and there will I enter into judgment with you face to face as I entered the judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I enter into judgment with you, saith the Lord God."

Now listen, "And I will cause you to pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." Passing under the rod seems to be a shepherd's term. Each sheep would pass under the rod, he would drop the rod, stop the next sheep and examine it. God says, "I'm going to examine you."

"And I will purge out from among you the rebels and them that transgress against Me. I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn and they shall not enter the land of Israel and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Now listen, who is the all Israel that will be saved? Well, in the end time, first during the testing period, the apostates and the rebels will be purged out. Only the remaining ones will be protected. Zechariah 13:8 says two thirds will die. That leaves one third purged as the remnant. That one third purged then becomes the duly constituted nation, they are the all Israel, they are the Israel that's promised redemption, the godly remnant.

As Revelation chapter 12 and verse 17 tells us, they are the ones protected by God who affirm their relationship to Him. "And the dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed." What remnant? "Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It is against them that the attack is made.

So, I really believe that when it says thy people shall be delivered, it does not make a blanket statement that every Jew alive on the earth is going to be saved at that time. What it is saying is that God is going to purge, He's going to put them under the rod, He's going to test them, two thirds of them will die, one third will be protected for they are the ones who obey the commandments of God and keep the testimony of Jesus Christ. They are the ones who are purged, they are the ones who are tested as in Daniel 11:40...or 11:35, they are the ones made white.

And that's verified. God back to verse 1 now of Daniel 12. "He will be delivered," who will be delivered? "Every one that shall be found written...where?...in the book." The promise of deliverance and the promise of salvation is for those who believe. The delivered one third, then, seem best to be understood as the remnant of believing redeemed Jews.

Remember in Malachi, that last book of the Old Testament, it says: "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and thought on His name and they shall be Mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him. For behold, the day comes and it shall burn like an oven and all the proud and wicked shall be stubble, the day comes it shall burn them up. But unto you that fear My name, shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in His beams."

In other words, even in the end time, there will be a distinction between those Jews who believe and those who did not, those who will be condemned and those whose names are written in His book of remembrance. Yes, there will be a special deliverance, there will be a purging out of the rebels, two out of every three Jews will die, but that one third remaining,

redeemed remnant will constitute the remaining nation of Israel and I believe they are the "all Israel" that is redeemed.

Now some people would ask the question, "How does this remnant come to believe? How do they come to faith?" And we can't be very specific and get all these little things in sequential chronological slots, or we really do injustice to the general tone of Scripture. But I think one of the very key things to remember is that God sets apart, according to Revelation chapter 11, two witnesses. Remember them? Two olive branches, two witnesses who can do miracles. In fact, they're killed. And they're going to lie in the street and they're going to be murdered because of their testimony and because

they're preaching the gospel and they're going to lie dead in the streets and, of course, everyone's going to watch and look and the whole world is going to take notice and all of the commentators will be saying: "There they are, aren't we glad they're dead these two who are preaching this foolishness?"

And then, you remember, after a given period of time, they rise from the dead. That will be interesting on instant replay. They rise from the dead. I imagine their message becomes somewhat more convincing.

In addition to them, in Revelation 7 and Revelation 14, you have 144 thousand Jews who are sealed and protected by God as evangelists during this period of time, twelve thousand from every tribe. And I believe it is the ministry of the two witnesses and it is the ministry of the 144 thousand that reaches the Jewish people. But that isn't all of it. Then the Jewish people that they reach begin to reach others. And even in the midst of all of the holocaust, Jews will become true believers and they will win other Jews to Christ so that many will come to know Him and they will be preserved as a living remnant, redeemed nation. Jeremiah 46:28 says, "For I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whether...with I have driven thee but I will not make a full end of thee."

They have their names in the Book of Life. The Book of Life is a key feature in the Old Testament and particularly in the book of Revelation, chapter 13 verse 8, chapter 17 verse 8, chapter 20 verse 15, chapter 21 verse 27. All of those verses talk about the Book of Life, a book in which God places the names of the redeemed. They are the elect for whose sake the Tribulation is shortened lest even they would perish.

So, the deliverance is two-fold. It is a deliverance of personal salvation but it happens on a wide enough scale and God protects those that are redeemed so that it becomes a national deliverance, as a duly constituted remnant of believing Jews become the all Israel that is saved. This, beloved, is Israel's hope. The purging will someday be over. The nation will be saved and ushered into the long-awaited and long-promised Kingdom.

Now that special deliverance leads to, fourthly, a special destiny. And by the way, what I've tried to cover in the last point is to sum up a whole scheme of prophetic truth. So if you have a few loose ends, it's understandable. But I wanted you to get the overall thrust. Fourthly, a special destiny...a special distress demands a special defender, a special defender provides the opportunity for a special deliverance, and a special deliverance leads to a special destiny--verse 2. "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 angel says to Daniel, "Daniel, the climax to the Tribulation is resurrection." Now this has long been the hope of the Jews. Some Bible scholars and commentators feel that they never had this

hope, that Jews never really had a clear understanding of life after death. But that's not true. It is very clear that Abraham had confidence in the resurrection of the dead and that's why he offered Isaac. If you doubt that, you should read Hebrews 11:19. It is very clear that Job, which may be the oldest book in all the Bible, probably lived before Moses, said this, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and though after my skin worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God whom I shall see for myself and not another, though my reigns be consumed within me." He knew he'd be resurrected.

Isaiah, who lived more than a century before Daniel, predicted that dead men would live again. And their bodies would rise, Isaiah 26:19. Hosea, a contemporary of Isaiah, said in chapter 13, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death." Even the resurrection of Christ is predicated on the words of David who said, "My flesh shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption."

No, this has been their hope all along. And so says the angel, there is hope. There will be deliverance. And beyond the deliverance there will be an incredible destiny, a resurrection.

Revelation chapter 20 talks about it, we won't take the time to go into it tonight. But it talks about that very special resurrection. What's going to happen in that resurrection? Well, it says, back to verse 2, "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." There are two parts to the resurrection: positive and negative. It's going to be for life and it's going to be for contempt.

Now let me just give you a short understanding of this in the time that we have, very brief. What does the resurrection involve? Always...mark this...always has reference to the body, to the body.

Now, let's talk about the resurrection number one--to everlasting life. The resurrection to everlasting life. This simply is a large broad categorical term, now think with me. And it really has several specific elements. In Acts 24:15 it is called the resurrection of the just. In John 5:29 it's called the resurrection of life. Hebrews 11:35 calls it the better resurrection. But it is the resurrection of all glorified saints, all glorified saints, all believers, all redeemed, Old Testament, New Testament, Tribulation, everybody will get in on everlasting life. But specifically here, he's referring to Israel. And that's very important.

The first resurrection, as it's called in Revelation 20 verse 4 has three parts. First Christ, the firstfruits, that's part number one. And by the way, when He was raised from the dead there were several others with Him, right? The graves were open and they came forth, too. And that was a genuine resurrection apparently. So Christ was the firstfruits. And that was a picture of what was going to come in the Kingdom. Christ was the firstfruits.

The second part of the first resurrection is the church. And when does our resurrection take place? At the Rapture, 1 Thessalonians 4, "The dead in Christ shall rise first and then they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with the Lord to meet the Lord in the air and so shall ever be with the Lord." I believe that Christ is the firstfruits, the church comes second.

Then comes the Tribulation period, the church is removed, we weren't in the first 69 weeks, we aren't going to be in the seventieth. God goes back to dealing with Israel. At the end of that seven-year period, at the end of that time of testing, purging, purification comes the third and final part of the first resurrection--the raising of the Old Testament saints' bodies and the Tribulation saints. Now it will include some Gentiles because there will be Gentiles saved during the Tribulation who will be martyred just as there have been Gentile proselytes to Judaism through its ancient history. So these will be raised at the end of the Tribulation.

The second resurrection just has one part. It happens a thousand years later at the end of the thousand years, when God raises from the dead the bodies of the unjust. Look with me for a moment at Revelation 20 and I think you'll see the clarity. I just wanted to give you the picture, now show you the Scripture. Verse 4, "I saw thrones, they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them. I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God who had not worshiped the beast neither his image, neither received his mark on their foreheads or in their hands. They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Now that implies a resurrection. John in his vision sees the Kingdom. He sees a thousand-year millennium. And there living alive and reigning with Christ are all the saints, those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, for the Word of God, those who wouldn't worship the beast, those who wouldn't take his mark, they're alive.

But the rest of the dead, verse 5, didn't live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection, that is prior to the thousand years. "And blessed and holy are the ones that have part in the first resurrection." They're the blessed and the holy. Then, verse 7, "When the thousand years are ended," that's the time frame, now verse 11, "I saw a great white throne and Him that sat upon it," then verse 12, "and I saw the dead small and great stand before God and the books were opened and another book was opened which is the Book of Life and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books according to their works and the sea gave up the dead that were in it and death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them and they were judged every man according to his works and death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death and whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

That, my friends, is the resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. Now Daniel does not see a thousand years in between. But that's just because the whole concept was a mystery to him. The whole flow of redemptive history had some big gaps for the Old Testament prophets. That's why Peter says they looked into what they wrote to see what it really meant because they didn't have the full range of revelation. Daniel says there's a resurrection to life and a resurrection to shame and

contempt and in Revelation we see they're a thousand years apart. And that first resurrection is for the holy and the blessed, it starts with Christ and then the church and seven years later the Old Testament saints. They don't get raised until the end of their era, do you see? The church, born on Pentecost, consummated at the Rapture, the resurrection happens, that's an entity in itself. Then God has seven more years to deal with His people Israel. Then comes their resurrection.

Now what a glorious hope this is. They didn't understand everything I've told you. They didn't get the whole picture. Jesus tried to help them a little bit. Early in His ministry He said, "Marvel not at this," John 5:28, "for the hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Jesus said everybody's going to come out of the grave, all bodies will be resurrected...some to life and some to death. That's the choice...life or death. And that's exactly what the angel says is the hope of Israel. In the midst of a time of terrible distress, in the darkness of suffering under the Antichrist, in the horror of Armageddon, the overruling power of demons shall stand a special defender, Michael. And through the instrumentality of Michael, God shall bring a special deliverance that promises to all who believe a special destiny.

Finally, for those there is promised a special dividend, verse 3. "And they that be wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Oh, this is so rich. Marvelous verse, marvelous. It doesn't mention anything about the punishment of the wicked, it just drops that subject almost as if it was a thousand years later. The message here is hope. And so he focuses on the hope and says after the resurrection, that isn't the end, comes the reward, comes the time of dividends. You not only will receive everlasting life but in that life they that be wise, and who are the wise? The wise are the ones who believe, the wise are the ones who are purged, the wise are the faithful, the redeemed. And what are they going to receive but the brightness of the firmament. They're going to shine like stars.

The wisest people in the world are the saved and the biggest fools are the unsaved. The wisest of all men are those who come Christ and everybody else is a fool...a fool. There will be many that will come in the Tribulation, not only of the Jews but Revelation 7 says there will be so many Gentiles saved you couldn't count them, innumerable. And the ones that are saved are going to shine like stars.

What does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. This is beautiful. I really believe what you have here is this, the concept that in eternity we will be rewarded by the capacity to manifest the blazing glory of God. There are little stars and big stars as we look in the sky, right? They're all stars and they're all beauty...beautiful, but all of them have a different beauty. And I believe in eternity we will shine as stars. And I believe that the capacity to glorify God will be dependent upon our faithfulness. We'll all shine like the brightness of the firmament. In other words, we will all have the capacity to eternally radiate the glory of God. We'll all be blazing suns in eternity. But there's a special glow for they that

turn many to righteousness. They shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

I really believe in the New Testament, we've talked about this, but I think that rewards or crowns that we get when we go to glory are simply ways to express the capacity which we'll have to radiate the glory of God. If we're saved, we'll shine like stars...especially if we've turned many to righteousness. The brightest glories of eternal capacity are reserved for those who have influenced others to faith. And I really believe he's saying what's going to happen in the Tribulation is Israel is going to be saved and they're going to lead others to Christ. Where do all those Gentiles come from? So many Gentiles they can't even be counted, from every people, tongue, tribe and nation are going to be redeemed and sing the song to the Lamb, where do they come from? I think they come from the Jewish evangelists and their stars will shine all the brighter for they have caused many to be righteous.

Beloved, we can draw that to our own selves. The faithfulness of our own witness will determine our eternal capacity to manifest the glory of God. Have you always wanted to be a star? Who are the stars of our world? The great? Oh, I suppose historically they are the great war makers, the greatest most known names of history: Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler. The ones we remember had armies that raped the land and wreaked havoc.

Contemporarily where we live, who are the stars? Walk down Hollywood Boulevard, they're right there under your feet. Or you could walk at Forest Lawn and they're right there under your feet. We have stars in the sidewalk: singers, dancers, actors, TV people. Their graves and their stars are all under our feet. In fact, they're walked on by common men. They don't shine very bright.

Who are God's great? Who are the greatest in God's sky? The shining stars, they are those that turn many to righteousness. Would you like to meet one? His name was John. "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink and be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb." Why should he be so great? "For many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." You know what Jesus said about him? He said he was the greatest human being that ever lived up until his time. The star will shine forever when his body is resurrected and he has the full capacity to radiate eternal glory because he caused many to be made righteous.

When you think back and look at your life, what have you done to contribute to such a future? This morning we learned that Jesus came to save sinners. What I didn't say but I would say tonight is that He came also to use you to do it. Now he's speaking specifically of Israel here, but I think we can extend this to us as well. I believe that the Lord wants us to be faithful to preach the Word and give out the gospel. In Philippians 2:15 he says, "We are to be blameless, harmless children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life." I think God wants us to do the same.

Well, Daniel is given great hope here. There is coming a special distress, but in the midst of it a special defender will arise and that special defender will allow God to bring about a special deliverance and out of that deliverance will come a special destiny, a resurrected glorious life. And in the midst of that glorious life there will be a special dividend, the capacity to radiate the glory of God forever. What a hope. That's Israel's hope.

You know something? That's our hope, too. For we're blessed in the tents of Shem. We become the seed of Abraham by faith. We too shall reign in the Kingdom and have the same privilege to give Him glory. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we thank You tonight for our time and we ask that somehow You'd pull together all of these thoughts, themes from all over Scripture, tie them into our hearts that we may understand. Oh, the mysteries of the prophetic Word, we'll never totally understand. May we not be so foolish as to think we've reduced everything to its absolute category. But may we treat Your Word, realizing our own infirmity and yet sensing that we've grasped a hold of the truth that is far larger than we are, far more infinite than we are and yet able to transform our lives. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem knowing full well that ultimately there will come a devastation that they have never dreamed of, but out of it You will purge Your people and bring Your Kingdom. And we with John say, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," do it. We thank You for that special event which we await, the Rapture of the church which shall take us to Your side. And while all of these things are going on in the earth, we shall be enjoying a time of reward and the marriage supper of the Lamb. We await these with great anticipation.

Father, we who have received so much, may we be faithful to give in return to others who so desperately need what we have. May we shine for eternity as those who have turned many to righteousness. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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