

At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Text: Daniel 12:1-3 SS 11/18/12, E. Bay 11/22/15 He. 10:11-18

Jn. 5:25-29 Ps. 111

Hymns: 444, 463 (1-4), 463 (5-8), 779

THE JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Jesus told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus: *“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets’ (i.e., they have the Word of*

God); *'let them listen to them.'* *'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'* *He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets,'* (if they will not listen to the Word of God), *"they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."* (Lk. 16:19-31)

Our text for this morning is from the book of Daniel, the same Daniel whom God rescued from the lions' den. God gave Daniel many visions of the future, one of which is our text. In it the Lord speaks of the very last times – the times just before the Judgment Day, and the Judgment Day itself.

We read, *"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise."* Jude 9 refers to the angel Michael as *"the archangel"* – one of God's chief angels. God has His holy angels watching over us and protecting us. The psalmist tells us, *"[God] will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone"* (91:11-12). Our Lord assures us that He and His holy angels will certainly be with His believing people also in those terribly difficult days just before the Judgment Day.

"There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then." The days just before the Judgment Day will be very bad. Revelation 21:3 says that in the days just before Judgment Day *"[Satan] must be set free for a short time."* At that time God is going to allow Satan and his evil angels more freedom to do what they do among the people of the earth. In the thirteenth chapter of Mark Jesus describes that time: *"Those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now – and never to be equaled again. If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has shortened them. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there He is!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect"* (the believers) – *"if*

that were possible. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. But in those days, following that distress, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken' (vv. 19-27).

God warns us that there is trouble ahead so that we can be laying up heavenly treasures in preparation for it.

We're told, *"But at that time your people ... will be delivered."* *"Will be delivered"* in the original is "allowed to escape, saved." Don't be afraid of the last times. Jesus will be with His believing people, and bring us all safely into heaven.

God wants you and me to have a healthy fear of Satan and the unbelieving world and the destruction of Judgment Day. But God does not want us to live in fear of any of them. John says in his first epistle, chapter four, *"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because [Christ] who is in you is greater than [Satan] who is in the world. ... If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. ... In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment ... There is no fear in (God's) love. But (God's) perfect love drives out fear"* (vv. 4, 16a, 18a). As we said before, in the last days God and His holy angels will be with everyone who believes in Jesus, keeping us as His people. Jesus says, *"At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption is drawing near"* (Lk. 21:27-28). By God's grace, we believe in Jesus! Jesus doesn't want us to live in dread of the last days and the Judgment Day because that is when He is coming to take us to heaven!

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt." Everyone who will ever live will face God on the Judgment Day. Anyone who thinks death is the end, and he's going to escape God's judgment, is wrong. We read in Hebrews 9:27, *"Man is destined to die once, and*

after that to face judgment;” and in Acts 24:15, *“There will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked;”* and in 2 Corinthians 5:10, *“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body”* (i.e., during our life on earth), *“whether good”* (by faith in Jesus) *“or bad”* (through unbelief). Everyone is going to live forever. The question is, where?

There are those in Christian churches who claim that God is too loving to make anyone, even Satan and his evil angels, stay in hell forever. They say that even Satan and his evil angels will eventually end up in heaven. When God says that everyone faces either *“everlasting life”* or *“everlasting contempt,”* the word *“everlasting”* is the same in the original: *“everlasting life”* or *“everlasting contempt.”* Jesus says the same thing: *“[The unrighteous] will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life”* (Mt. 25:46). Everyone who believes in Jesus will go to heaven **forever**, and everyone who does not believe in Jesus will go to hell **forever**.

Our text describes hell as a place of *“shame and everlasting contempt.”* All who reject Jesus as their Savior during this life will be rejected by Jesus for all eternity. Hell is eternal separation from God, without ever having another chance to come to Him and receive His forgiveness and mercy and love.

There are those in Christian churches who say that God is too loving to make hell. They say that there is no hell. In Jesus’ parable of the rich man and Lazarus the rich man who Jesus said *“was in torment”* in hell cried out, *“I am in agony in this fire.”* Jesus will say to all the unbelievers on Judgment Day, *“Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Mt. 25:41). Jesus says that in hell, *“Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched”* (Mk. 9:48). Hell is a real place of eternal suffering and dying, without ever finally being dead and having the suffering come to an end. Some people make fun of the idea of hell. Some people live a life of defiance of God. Some people who once knew

Jesus as their Savior fall in love with life on earth and end up losing eternal life in heaven. All of them are playing with the fire of hell, and they will suffer in hell's flames for all eternity. The God who rained down fire and brimstone and consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, the God who, except for Noah and the seven members of his immediate family, destroyed every person on the face of the earth in the Flood, is the God who will condemn all who reject Him to the *"shame and everlasting contempt"* of hell! The Bible says, *"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (He. 10:31).

But, we're told, *"Everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered"* from hell! What book? Revelation 3:5 says, *"Those whose names are written in the Lamb's **book of life**"* will go to heaven. Jesus says, *"He who overcomes ... I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels"* (Rev. 3:5). All of us who believe in Jesus have our names written in His book of life. And everyone whose name is written in the book of life *"will be delivered"* from hell, and taken to heaven! *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"* (Jn. 3:16-17).

"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life...." Jesus says, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die"* (Jn. 11:25-26). When our bodies die some day, we will pass from this life into eternal life with God! As Jesus told the dying thief on the cross, *"Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise"* (Lk. 23:43).

"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." We know we get to heaven by faith in Jesus Christ. So when our text speaks of *"those who are wise"* shining in glory in heaven,

it's speaking of the wisdom God gives us when He brings us to know Jesus as our Savior, and of going to heaven by faith in Him. 2

Timothy 3:15 says, "*The holy Scriptures ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*" When our text speaks of "*those who lead many to righteousness*" shining in glory in heaven, it's referring to believers who through their witness and their lives lead others to Christ. In heaven, we will be cleansed from sin forever, and we will all shine in perfect holiness and glorious brightness. The seventh chapter of Revelation says that those in heaven will all be clothed "*in white robes ... (having) washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*" (vv. 13-14).

THE JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING, when "*multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*" Thank God, we believe in Jesus. We look forward to the Judgment Day with joy and confidence because that is when Jesus will take us to heaven! Amen.