

The Great Tribulation

by Denis Lyle

The Great Tribulation is a time of great trouble and suffering for the nation of Israel, but God will defend and rescue them through the power of Michael the archangel.

Scripture: Psalm 31:15, Proverbs 11:30, Daniel 12:1, Zechariah 13:8, Revelation 20:4

Topics: "End Times", "Divine Protection"

Description

Denis Lyle preaches on the Great Tribulation as described in Daniel 12, highlighting the special period of trouble that Israel will face, with a focus on the hope and protection provided by God. The sermon emphasizes the role of the archangel Michael in defending the people of Israel during this time of unprecedented suffering, leading to the rescue of a remnant and the resurrection of the faithful. The message also touches on the rewards awaiting those who remain faithful and shine as lights in a dark world, pointing souls to Jesus.

Transcript

Reading: Daniel 12:1-13 THE GREAT TRIBULATION Thomas Carlyle the craggy Scots philosopher was once summoned to an audience by Queen Victoria. The Queen was worried about the way affairs were going in her realm, and very anxious to have the philosophers opinion as to how they were likely to work out. "You are regarded as a prophet, Mr. Carlyle", she said, "tell me what do you think the future will be like" The great man was silent for a moment and then made the answer, "I don't know your Majesty, but whatever it is it will be bad".

Thomas Carlyle suffered acutely physically and so perhaps there was a physical basis for his social pessimism. According to the New Testament an infinitely surer guide that Carlyle things will not be finally bad but unspeakably good. "Say unto the righteous that it shall be well with him". (Is 3:10) The long range forecast is excellent there are however, menacing black thunderclouds in the offing. A terrible tornado is about to burst upon the world. Bless God, before this tempest breaks the church will have been taken out of the way.

The Lord's coming to the air will precede the Great Tribulation. It was not escapism but a sound knowledge of Holy Scripture that prompted H. Bonar to sing: " I see the last dark bloody sunset I see the dread Avenger's form I see the Armageddon's onset But I shall be above the storm." A film entitled "I am a Jerusalemite was showing some years ago in Israel. It featured the story of a young Israeli born in Jerusalem about 1948. This young man was asked to describe his feelings toward religion, particularly

Orthodox Judaism and Christianity.

Concerning Judaism he said, "I am impressed because many of the things prophesied in the Old Testament seem to be coming to pass. And now they tell me the Mount of Olives will be divided into two". "Christianity", he said "makes me very uneasy". And he said slowly, "There is something just around the corner. I can feel it... but I don't know what it is". In this final chapter of Daniel, continuing without pause the thought of chapter 11, we are told what is around the corner for Israel... a time of deep trouble.

But there is hope also... for some. Now Daniel (Ch 12) serves as a kind of appendix to the book, paying special heed to the coming tribulation period. Can you imagine how overwhelmed Daniel must have been by the scope of the revelations he had received War and rumour of war, kingdom rising against kingdom, nation against nation, bloodshed and persecution, terror and treachery. And it seemed that it was to go on and on, and his beloved people, Israel were to receive the brunt of it.

Was there no hope Was there no help There was! For across the sweep of this foreseen history God's people could write the words, "Our times are in His hands". (Ps 31:15) Now our study this... is all about THE GREAT TRIBULATION. Notice this chapter begins with: (1) A SPECIAL PERIOD Can I remind you again that (Ch's 10: 11: 12) are a complete unit. They form an organic whole. For example (Ch 11) begins with the word "also", and (Ch 12) commences with the word "and". These chapters describe the last of Daniel's visions and the last recorded events in Daniel's life! (Ch 11) ends with the downfall of the Antichrist.

This chapter begins with the hatred of this sinister sovereign toward God's people! But there is hope! You see, hope is what makes life meaningful. Without light at the end of the tunnel a man will despair. He must be able to anticipate great things in the future or he will find himself unable to enjoy life now. Hope is especially important to those who suffer. God knows that for a man to endure present stress he must have hope in a better future. Now hope is what we find at the end of the book of Daniel.

In the preceding chapters Daniel revelation of the disastrous future history of Israel. They reveal that the Gentile world powers of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome would dominate Israel. And they were correct. My, Israel has been savagely abused and slaughtered throughout its history. But on a note of hope Daniel closes with the promise that Israel's oppression will end when their Messiah returns. But before that happens there is brought before us here a special period.

Do you see how (12:1) opens "And at that time..." "At what time Well, (11:40) gives us the answer. "At the time of the end". You see, I want you to notice in (12:1) this phrase "at that time", is mentioned. Why To assure Daniel that the point of time has not been shifted but remains the same as "the time of the end", in (11:40) So at the time of the events described in (11:40-45) that is, during the reign of the Antichrist Michael will stand up for his nation, Israel. Now this time is further described in (12:1) as "a time of trouble".

So this is a special period of trouble or suffering which in some way affects the nation of Israel. " At that time... there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time". Now think of: (a) THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL'S SUFFERING: For in the past Israel suffered under the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, and Romans History records that Titus Vespasian led 4 Roman legions to besiege and destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD. Josephus tells us that the misery of the city was incredible.

A mother killed roasted and ate her own child, because of her hunger. Often 500 Jews were nailed to crosses on any given day. The death toll came to over a million. In 1096 Pope Urban the Second proclaimed the First Crusade to rid the Holy Land of the Muslims. Suffering spread and Jews by the thousands were massacred. In 1290 all the Jews were ordered out of England by Edward the First. In 1306 all Jews were ordered out of France by Philip the Fourth. In 1475 all Jews in the Italian city of Trent were killed.

When Theodore Hertzl was in Paris he heard the words, "death to the Jews", echoing through the streets, and he decided that Europe was no place for the Jewish people. History proved him right as the Holocaust showed. My, no matter where one looks in the world this... the Jews have few friends. Anti-Semitism in Russia: Germany, in the Arab bloc. One Arab leader said, "There are 50 million Arabs, what does it matter if we lose 10 million to kill all the Jews". Why do the Jewish people continue to suffer Because God is not finished with refining Israel. (11:35) Their sufferings are designed to purge their rebellion and rejection, leading them to turn back to God in faith.

But My, the worst suffering is yet to come. For think of: (b) THE HEIGHT OF ISRAEL'S SUFFERING: Do you see that phrase in (12:1) "A time of trouble, such as never was", this is a Hebrew expression that means the time of trouble referred to will be the worst ever. (Exod 9:18 24,) Things aren't going to get better for Israel... they'll get worse. A time of unparalleled suffering lies ahead for Israel! Now the Bible uses different terms for this blood chilling period. It is called: (1) The Day of the Lord: (2) The Indignation: (Is 26:20 34:2) (3) The Time of Jacob's trouble: (Jer 30:7) (4) The Seventieth Week: (9:27) (5) The Tribulation: (Matt 24:21, 29) Now numerous Scriptures speak of this coming time of terror.

You see: 1. The Tribulation is Predicted in the Old Testament: Moses spoke of the Tribulation: He says in (Deut 4:30) " When thou art in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days." Jeremiah spoke of the Tribulation: (Jer 30:5-6) When Jeremiah looked into the distant future he did not see peace. He saw trembling and fear. The most excruciating human pain, that of giving birth to a child without an anaesthetic (as woman did in that time) symbolises the pain of society in the future.

Jeremiah saw the world and Israel in particular in great pain. Look at (Jer 30:7-9) He describes a time like no other time, a time of great judgement and distress, the time of Jacob's trouble, but out of it is going to come to salvation and the raising up of Messiah and His kingdom. Joel spoke of the Tribulation: He described it as "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness". (Joel 2:1-2) 1. But: 2. The Tribulation is Predicted in the New Testament: Christ spoke of the Tribulation: (Matt 24:15-21) The coming calamity will be the most severe holocaust of all human history.

It will far exceed the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70! Paul spoke of the Tribulation: In (1 Thes 5:1) he says, " For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and safety then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child and they shall not escape." John spoke of the Tribulation: Indeed this seven year period of Daniel's prophecy comprises the fascinating and sometimes frightening series of events that are recorded in (Rev Ch 6...

Ch 18) My, the Tribulation will be an incredible time of suffering when God's judgements occur simultaneously with Satan's persecutions in a historical apex of misery. It will be especially difficult for the people of Israel! Yet during that time Israel will receive unique assistance. For note: (2) A SPECIAL PRINCE Look at (12:1) You see, Israel will not be completely destroyed (Zech 13:8-9) because the

archangel Michael will undertake their defence. Now this statement tells us something about Michael!

Notice for example: (a) THE PERSON THIS PRINCE REPRESENTS: The name "Michael", means "Who is like God" A name that immediately identifies him as a representative of the Supreme Being! The previous references to Michael in the book of Daniel substantiate the fact that he is a heavenly being. (10:13 10:21) Daniel refers to him here as "the great prince", Jude refers to him as "Michael the archangel", (Jude 9) indicating that Michael holds a high office in the heavenly hosts of the Lord.

He may be the most powerful of all angelic creatures! (a) (b) THE PEOPLE THIS PRINCE DEFENDS: Look at (12:1) Or as AT puts it "The great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people." " Your people", of course stands for the people of Israel. The Hebrew verb translated "standeth for", is difficult to determine. Perhaps we could render it " represents". This would mean that Michael is charged by God with the responsibility of caring for the nation of Israel. Now do you recall what we learned when we looked at (Ch 10:13) You see, this angel was hindered by a powerful force (demonic) but look this angel was also helped by a wonderful prince (angelic) Michael helped the angel.

In (10:21) he is referred to as "Michael your prince". You see, God has assigned Michael the task of caring for Israel, its not surprising therefore for him to appear in their greatest distress. My, at the time of the most furious persecution and oppression, Michael will come to the rescue. But there is something else we need to note about Michael. (a)(b) (c) THE POWER THIS PRINCE WIELDS: Did you notice (12:1) "At that time shall Michael stand up... "Now notice this very carefully. 1.

Michael arises: WHEN " At that time... " A phrase we believe equivalent "to the time of the end". Its the time when the final world ruler is on the scene. The last part of the Tribulation period, that is the final three and a half years. 2. Michael arises: WHERE Look at (Rev 12:1-9) Now I think we've got to make a distinction between (12:4) and (12:7) The former verse seems to refer to the Fall of Satan when he and his hosts revolted against God (Is 14:12-15) However, the casting out described in (12:7-10) is yet future.

You see, this passage describes the casting down of Satan and his hosts from the "heavenly realms". Already he has been cast out of heaven into the air (Eph 2:2) here he will be cast from the air to the earth, then from the earth to the bottomless pit (Rev 20:1) and finally from the bottomless pit to the lake of fire. (Rev 20:10) Aren't you glad this... that Satan is on his way down Now I want you to see that this war in heaven precipitates the Great Tribulation for the woman here represents Israel.

Look at (Rev 12:13) Now come back to Daniel. "At that time shall Michael stand up", When "At that time shall Michael stand up", Where 3. Michael arises: WHY Because Satan will wage war against Israel. Hurling out of heaven Satans wrath will know no bounds. The Antichrist will be a ready tool in his hands. His benevolent mask will be torn away and he will stand revealed for what he is... the vicious enemy of both God and man and especially of the nation of Israel. My, has Satans goal not always been the destruction of the nation Has he not always found a ready tool for that end Think of Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, Hitler, Saddam Hussein, to mention but a few, but the great tribulation will be worse than them all.

Satan, the demons, the Antichrist will attack Israel again, but God will protect Israel by the power of Michael. For at the time of the most furious persecution Michael will come to the rescue and a remnant will find refuge in the wilderness and there will be sustained and protected for the latter part of the great tribulation. (Zech 13:8-9 Rev 12:12-14) My, would this not have given old Daniel comfort He knew Michael would be present at the time of Israels greatest need So there is (1) (2) (3) A SPECIAL PEOPLE We know now, that the period of time is the Tribulation, and that the Prince of Israel is Michael, who will do all to

uphold the cause of the children of Israel, who are referred to in (12:1) "As thy people".

There are actually three categories of people here, who are the children of Israel. Firstly notice: (a) THOSE WHO ARE RESCUED: Look at (12:1) again. My, during this awful period, hundreds of thousands of Jews will be killed (Zech 13:8-9) but some will be saved.

David Baron once wrote these lovely words: " Just as that Shepherd of Israel slew both lion and bear and saved from their jaws the lamb which was taken possession of by them as their prey, so will the Shepherd of Israel save the remnant of His people from the hands and jaws of those who are stronger than they, and slay them who devoured broke in pieces and stamped with their feet His chosen, with a fierceness exceeding that of the bear and the lion." My, Israel's time of trouble is designed to prepare her for the Coming of the Messiah.

In the closing days of the Tribulation the surviving Jews will apparently search the Scriptures seeking the reason for the bitter trials that have come upon them. Then, they will discover it is because of their rejection of Jesus Christ and they will then, many scholars believe pour out their national confession in the moving words of (Isaiah Ch 53) Following this they will plead for Messiah's return perhaps in these words "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down". (Is 64:1) A Jew in a New York synagogue was once heard praying, "Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and that Thou wouldst come down...

Lord send Messiah and should Jesus of the Gentiles be the one grant us a sign that we may be sure that it is really so, and forgive our guilt toward Him." My, in response to Israel's desperate prayer Jesus Christ will come bringing deliverance, a deliverance that will be both physical and spiritual. (Zech 14:1 & Zech 12:10-31:1) The ones delivered are described as those "found written in the book", that is those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Messiah and Saviour! J.C. Hoover at one time a missionary to the Jews in Denver was travelling in a car one day with a Jewish Rabbi.

As they drove up to the front of the synagogue the Rabbi said, "Mr. Hoover, you Gentile Christians are looking for the second advent of your Saviour Jesus Christ, we Jews are looking for the first advent of our Messiah. Who knows but what He might be the same person". Then he paused before asking, "Mr. Hoover how do you think we recognise our Messiah" Quietly and prayerfully J.C. Hoover read the words of the prophet Zechariah, "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced".

The Rabbi was silent as he got out of the car and walked slowly into the synagogue. My, what a day this will be when "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer... all Israel shall be saved." (Rom 11:26 Jer 30:7) Yes, Daniel speaks of (a) (b) THOSE WHO ARE RESURRECTED: Look at (12:2) Now resurrection was the hope of the Jewish people. Do you recall: Abraham: He willingly offered his son Isaac because he was confident of the resurrection of the dead. (Heb 11:19) Job: He cherished the hope of resurrection.

He said, " 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 this body yet in my flesh I shall see God". (Job 19:25-17) David: He was predicting the resurrection of Christ when he said, "My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol, neither wilt Thou permit Thy Holy One to see corruption. (Ps 16:9-10) My, the resurrection has been the hope of God's people from the beginning.

The angels message to Daniel was good reason for hope. Israel will be saved and the resurrection will indeed occur. Now (Dan Ch 12 & Rev Ch 20) speak of 2 aspects of the resurrection. One is to "everlasting

life", the other to " everlasting contempt". (Rev Ch 20) talks about: 1. THE FIRST RESURRECTION: Now "the first resurrection", has three parts to it: (A) CHRIST: Paul tells us that Christ was "the first fruits of them that slept". (1 Cor 15:20) The second phase has reference to: (B) THE CHURCH: That will take place at the Rapture according to (1 Thes 4:16) "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are live and remain shall be caught together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever will be with the Lord".

But the 3rd part of "the first resurrection has reference to: (C) THE OLD TESTAMENT AND TRIBULATION SAINTS: Now the Tribulation will occur after the church is removed from the earth, then 7 years later after this time of purging for Israel, the third and final part of the first resurrection will take place: the raising of the Old Testament and Tribulation saints. (12:13 Rev 6:9-11) It seems proper to believe that righteous Gentiles martyred in the Tribulation are raised at this time as well. (Rev 7:9-10) There's an old Negro spiritual that talks about "That great getting up morning", which is meant to describe everybody getting up out of their graves.

This is a great song, but it is not Biblical for the Bible does not teach one general resurrection. Revelation talks about the 1. Then it speaks of: 2. THE SECOND RESURRECTION: Look at (Rev 20:4-5) Here is a millennial kingdom where the saints of all ages are alive and reigning with Christ. But look at (20:5) You see, the second resurrection has just one part to it. It will happen at the end of the millennium when God raises the bodies of the unjust from the dead. (20:7) provides the time frame.

" And the thousand years are expired... "(20:11-15) provides some of the solemn details. So Daniel did not see the thousand year gap between the two resurrections, but (Rev Ch 20) clarifies it for us and tells us that the resurrection to life and the resurrection to shame will occur a thousand years apart. (Jn 5:28-29) Now lets pause and for a moment and realise that death is not the end. My, its just the beginning for the child of God. Paul speaks of being "absent from the body and at home with the Lord". (2 Cor 5:6) But My, dying and going to be with the Lord is not all.

There is coming a resurrection. Indeed our holy, happy dead shall rise again. So Daniel speaks of those (a) (b) (c) THOSE WHO ARE REWARDED: Look at (12:3) We learn from (Rev Ch 7) that many will be saved after the rapture of the church, when the 144,000 Jewish evangelists will reap an enormous harvest among people of all nations. These fervent Hebrew preachers saved and sealed by God, and kept from the vengeful hands of the Antichrist, will be the later day wise men (11:33-35) turning many to righteousness in spite of the wickedness of the age and the wrath of the beast.

My, their reward will be great. They will shine with the same glory as the heavens and the stars! There have been many earthly stars in the past, such as Caesar, Napoleon, and Hitler that have led great armies that have wreaked havoc. There are also many contemporary stars. But do you know what Ten years from now noone will think about them. Gods estimate is different from mans. W.A. Criswell wrote these words, "Who are God's great Who are these who shine forever and ever. The answer is not they whom the world magnifies, exalts and applauds.

Rather, it is God's humblest person who points a soul to Jesus." The Bible says, "He that winneth souls is wise." (Prov 11:30) It has been well said that if you want to plant something that will last a year... plant a flower. If you want to plant something that will last a lifetime ... plant a tree. If you want to plant something that will last forever... plant the good news of the gospel in the heart of a sinner! My, will you shine brightly in glory Are you committed to "turning many to righteousness" Are you shining as a light in the world

holding forth the Word of Life (Phil 2:15)?

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