

Third Sunday of End Time – Saints Triumphant
November 15, 2015
Daniel 12:1-3
Out of Great Distress will Come Deliverance
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Dearly loved by God, saints triumphant in Christ,

Last week we examined the Final Judgment. Jesus is coming to bring the end of things as we know them. He will judge all people; the living and the dead he has released from the brief sleep of temporal death. For the unbelievers, this will be the worst possible judgment as God sends them eternally out of his loving presence. For believers, this will be the best possible judgment. It is our triumphant holy day.

First, let's step back. Along with the rest of God's people, in the Babylonian Captivity Daniel was suffering great distress even as they awaited deliverance. In this context, God revealed to Daniel the ultimate deliverance from distress. Daniel saw our condition when time ends and eternity begins, when **Out of Great Distress will Come Deliverance**. God's time of reckoning surely will come. God will vindicate the faithful.

There is no avoiding Judgment Day. None of us who live in daily contrition and faith as God's people want to avoid it. God's time of reckoning surely will come. We look forward to that day. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. It is the day of our triumph, our great deliverance. That triumph and deliverance already have taken place by the gospel of Christ. The Holy Spirit has called us to faith. What is coming is the final triumph over our enemies against whom we daily wage the fight of faith.

That fight is going to get fiercer as the day approaches. Twice we read the phrase "at that time," and a description of that time: "There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until now."

Every day as the curtain of time draws to a close is a time of distress for God's people. False prophets distress us. Wars distress us. Natural disasters distress us. Temptations to sin, and our falls into sin distress us. Rather than getting better each day, the affairs of this world get worse and worse. More people turn away from God than come to Christ. The love of many grows cold. It will continue this way until the end. Right before the end, this distress will reach a crescendo.

"At that time," God will send his avenging servant, the archangel, Michael, who protects us, to end this distress. God's time of reckoning surely will come. Jesus Christ stands at the door ready to reenter this world not to save it but to judge it. The Bridegroom is approaching to claim his Bride. Out of this great distress will come deliverance. At that time, God will vindicate the faithful.

The Holy Spirit describes to Daniel who are the faithful. "Your people - Everyone who name is found written in the book - will be delivered." Daniel's people were God's people faithful to God and God's Word. This is the church, all believers. You believers, you saints, are triumphant because God has written your names in "the Lamb's book of life." He has written your names with Jesus' blood in eternity as he graciously chose you in Christ. This is your election to salvation, the guarantee of your forgiveness and eternal life.

God has given you certainty of this triumph, a security deposit. The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are

God's possession-to the praise of his glory."

What does this mean? When you arise with all from "sleep in the dust of the earth," or, are changed in an instant, it will be to everlasting life. You are triumphant in the wisdom that comes down from above. Jesus Christ suffered shame and contempt from his Father on the cross for us as the wisdom of God for our salvation. Only those who have rejected Jesus must endure their own shame and contempt.

The wise fear the Lord. The wise daily acknowledge sin, and humbly bow before the throne of grace in full expectation of absolution. Whether you are wise in Christ by believing the gospel, or impart wisdom in Christ and lead many to righteousness through teaching God's Word, you "will shine like the brightness of the heavens...like the stars forever and ever."

In Revelation, the risen and victorious Christ calls pastors stars that shine because we have the privilege of imparting the wisdom of Christ. That picture applies to all of you who share God's Word and teach God's Word, especially you parents who teach your children.

Saints triumphant also reminds us of our loved ones who are asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep, from which none ever wakes to weep. It reminds us that Jesus has destroyed the final enemy death. Saints Triumphant points us to the sky to watch for Christ the King when he comes to translate his entire kingdom from the battlefield on earth to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the city of everlasting peace.

Thank God Daniel wrote his vision on a scroll so that we would see that out of great distress will come deliverance. We see that no matter how hard we must fight in the Church Militant soon we will join all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven in Christ's glory. Amen. <SDG>