

## “WALKING IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANTICHRIST”

### “The End of the World – Part 1” (Daniel 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 4:27-31)

The last chapter of Daniel is a continuation of the vision of chapter 10 and 11. It is one of the clearest OT insights into the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment of all of humanity. Much of the preceding apocalyptic prophecies in this book are filled with dread as the Gentile Empires rise and fall and it culminates with the rise and reign of Antichrist in the Great Tribulation Period. The devil is aware when this period comes that the end of the ages is near and will pour down his anger particularly against the Jews, *“for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”* (Rev. 12:12b) However, the end of this book brings a message of hope. For God’s elect people it all will end well.

*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which 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. (v1)*

The timing of this incident, *“at that time”* is the timing of the rise and destruction of Antichrist described in Daniel 11:36-45. We are told what will be going at this *“time”* that, *“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.”* In Daniel 11:36 this *“time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”* is described as *“the indignation.”* This is the unique future period that Christ described in Matthew 24:21, *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”* Jeremiah called it, *“Jacob’s trouble.”* (Jer. 30:7) Many Jewish writers hold a similar view of the linking of this verse to the end times. The Jewish writer Judah J Slotki observes that Daniel 12, *“is generally taken by Jewish authorities to refer to the remote future which will herald the advent of the Messianic era.”*

## GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD

Daniel is explicitly told that this Great Tribulation Period (GTP) has a special significance to the Jewish people, *“which standeth for the children of thy people....there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time....at that time thy people shall be delivered.”* Although God will judge the Gentile nations in the GTP, the Lord is particularly working to chastise, purify, revive, and ultimately deliver the Jewish people from the centuries of willful blindness. This is a time of unprecedented mental and physical persecution. This is a period Isaiah referred to as one when God *“washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.”* (Isaiah 4:4) This ordeal will result in a second and greater holocaust<sup>1</sup> for the Jews as two thirds of them will die, *“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will bear them: I will say, It is my*

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<sup>1</sup> Today there are around 16 million Jews in the world. That means if the GTP begins today more than 10 million will die in the latter part of the GTP! Before the Holocaust there were around 16.6 million Jews and around 5.6 million died (approx. 33%).

*people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” (Zech. 13:8-9) The Jews have suffered more than any other race of people in history. The bad news is that it’s about to become worse before it becomes better.*

The GTP will last at least 7 years. Initially the Jews will be fooled by the Antichrist into entering a peace agreement with them (Daniel 9:27). For a period of time the elusive peace will reign between the Jews and the Arabs. The Jews may even become more influential all over the planet than they are today. This will, doubtless, embolden the deceived Jews to resist the Lord Jesus Christ even more and trust the Antichrist. It will take the burning heat of the furnace of a greater holocaust to melt their proud hearts to bow to Christ. This will begin when the Antichrist breaks the covenant in the middle of the seven years and then launches the 42 month (1260 days) persecution, *“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” (Rev. 13:5)*

The Jews will discover, too late, that they have been deceived by the Antichrist. They will suffer incredible persecutions. We may well see the concentration camps and the gas chambers return. This will bring them to an end of their self-confidence as it appears they will be on the edge of total annihilation. It is at this point that they will look to the Saviour and cry for forgiveness and deliverance, *“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” (Zech. 12:10)* That is the ultimate purpose of the GTP. It will be the worst of times physically but also the best of times spiritually. Even as far back as Moses the way back to blessing in the end times was prophesied,

**And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them. (Deut. 4:27-31)**

The vision reveals that all God’s chosen ones will finally be delivered in glorification, *“and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”* This deliverance here is not talking about physical deliverance from persecution, as the Bible makes it clear that many believing Jews will be killed in the GTP, *“And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:14b)* This deliverance here is speaking of a spiritual deliverance from spiritual death and an ultimate physical deliverance from our sinful flesh in the glorified eternal state. Clearly, not every Jew will be in heaven. There is a clear qualification here. Only those that have faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ and, *“have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* They alone are the ones that, *“shall be found written in the book.”*

## ARCHANGELS

The term or prefix “arch” is a Greek word meaning “ruling” or “Chief.” There are clearly more than one archangel as Michael is referred to in Daniel 10:13 as “*one of the chief princes.*” Although Michael is the only angel specifically called an archangel in the Bible, the Jews believe that there are seven archangels. These 7 archangels are mentioned in the Apocrypha books as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Saraqael, and Remiel. Some NT scholars equate them with the seven angels of the GTP, “*And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.*” (Rev. 8:2)

We are introduced once again to the connection with the archangel Michael and the Jewish people, “*the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.*” The name Michael means “Who is like the Lord?” It seems that God had appointed Michael a special role in guarding the Jewish people. Every reference we have in the Bible to Michael he is fighting for the interests of the Jews. Michael clearly led the other angels in battle as we read, “*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.*” (Rev. 12:7) We find him fighting with the devil in Book of Jude over the body of Moses, “*Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*” (Jude 1:9) He may well be the archangel that summons the saints of God to the air in the Second Coming (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16) Certainly, Michael will have a special role in defending the Jewish people during the GTP.

*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (v2)*

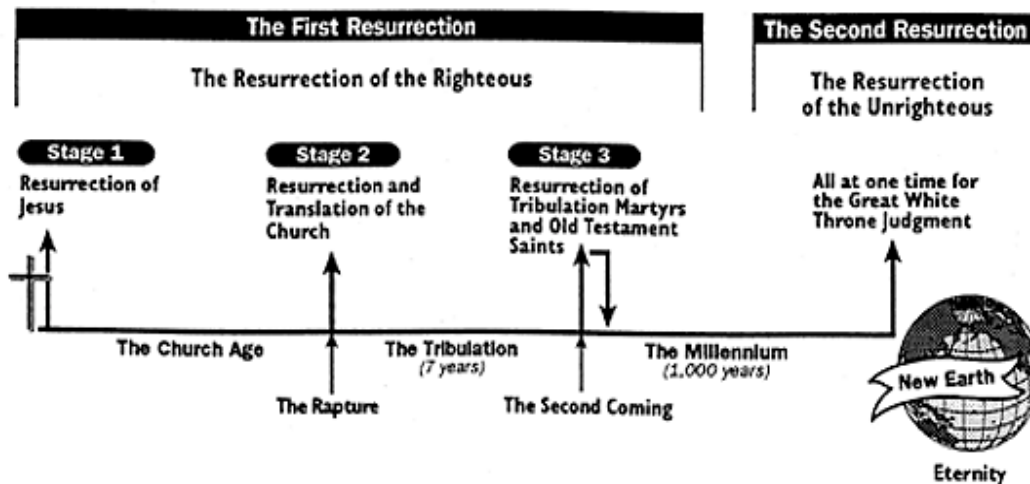
The vision then jumps to a summary of the final resurrection of the dead. This verse is describing the sharp divide at the end of the age between the righteous and the unrighteous. There are a number of schools of thoughts as to when this resurrection is in prophetic history.

**(1) TRIBULATION JEWS** - Some Pre-Tribulation Premillennial commentators believe that the context here suggests that this verse is focused primarily on the Jews of the GTP. At the end of the GTP, they believe that those who awake “*to everlasting life*” are the Tribulation Jews (and some Gentiles) who were saved and died either by martyrdom or natural death during the GTP. Those Jews who rejected Christ and died in the GTP are those who awake at the end of the Millennium, “*and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*”

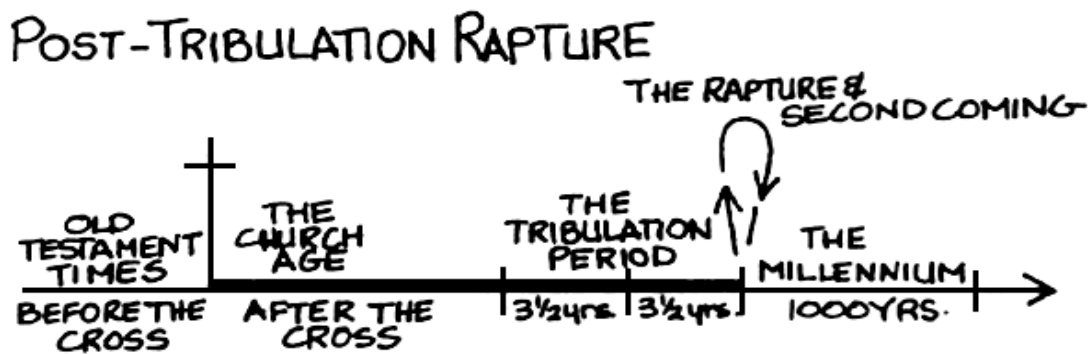
So they simply believe that this verse 2 is only summarizing the fact that there are two distinct groups within the final resurrection of those who died in the GTP – those Tribulation saints who have died in Christ are resurrected at the beginning of the Millennium and those who have died without Christ are resurrected at the end of the Millennium for judgment. Hence they believe that there are 1000 years of the Millennium between the two groups’ resurrection. Henry Morris explains this position, “At this point (as in John 5:29), however, the thousand-year time interval between the resurrection of the saved and lost is not mentioned, since it is not relevant to the context and also (in view of the following verse) inconsequential in relation to eternity (Revelation 20:4, 5, 6).” These Pre-Tribulation Premillennial advocates hence believe in a 3-part resurrection. A typical view is that of Dr John MacArthur,

“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."



(2) **POST-TRIBULATION PREMILLENNIAL** – The post-tribulation advocate doesn't believe the church is raptured before the GTP. They teach that Christ will simply return after the GTP to establish His Millennial Kingdom.



So they simply believe that this verse 2 is only summarizing the fact that there are two distinct groups within the final resurrection of all:

- (a) Those who have died in Christ are resurrected at the beginning of the Millennium; and
- (b) Those who have died without Christ are resurrected at the end of the Millennium. This is not a resurrection for salvation but for judgment.

But they believe that there are 1000 years of the Millennium between the two groups' resurrection as described in Revelation 20.

**(3) AMILLENNIAL/POST-MILLENNIAL** – Those who advocate this view believe that there are not two separate resurrections of righteous and unrighteous separated by 1000 years. They argue that this verse 2 should be read along with John 5:29 as teaching this position. So they interpret verse 2 as simply speaking of a one-time event of a General Resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. Most of the Reformed writers in church history were proponents of this view so it should not be dismissed lightly. J. Dennison has designed a typical chart of the Amillennial position:



The problem with not having the 1000-year gap is that it means there is no adequate explanation for the explicit gap mentioned in Revelation 20,

**And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4-6)**

The Amillennial/Post-Millennial position has many other exegetical problems. They cannot adequately explain multiple passages of Christ reigning on the earth from Jerusalem and the throne of David, the persecution and restoration of the Jews, and the partial lifting of the curse on the earth in literal fulfillment of the O'T covenant promises to Israel. These include:

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:31-33)

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness. (Jer. 23:5-6)

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. (Isa. 11:10-11)

And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.....And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: 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 into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. (Ezek. 20:34-38)

And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. (Ezek. 43:7)

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. (Zech 13:1-2)

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. (Zech 14:9)

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:9-10)

These verses cannot be easily dismissed by allegorization or misapplied to the church. God has elected the Jews to be His people, “*For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*” (Isa. 45:4) He has not cast them off and He will not cast them off, “*I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. . . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.*” (Rom. 11:1-2) Paul went on to promise of a future generation of the Jews,

**And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. (Rom. 11:26-28)**

Indeed, the reason we still have the Jewish people scattered all over the planet for centuries and now re-gathered in Israel is because God has keep His covenantal promise with them. All the historic nations around them have disappeared and are footnotes in the pages of history. The Jews are the indestructible people, as they are heirs to the covenantal promises of the sovereign God who cannot fail. Their continual existence as a distinct people is one of the great evidences of the truth of God's Word. Bishop JC Ryle rightly observed,

“All these [prophetic] texts are to my mind plain prophecies of Christ's second coming and kingdom. All are yet without their accomplishment, and all shall yet be literally and exactly fulfilled. . . . From the first day that I began to read the Bible with my heart, I have never been able to see these texts, and hundreds like them, in any other light. It always seemed to me that as we take literally the texts foretelling that the walls of Babylon shall be cast down, so we ought to take literally the texts foretelling that the walls of Zion shall be built up—that as according to prophecy the Jews were literally scattered, so according to prophecy the Jews will be literally gathered—and that as the least and minutest predictions were made good on the subject of our Lord's coming to suffer, so the minutest predictions shall be made good which describe our Lord's coming to reign.”

(4) **SUMMARY VERSE** – Some just see this verse as a summary of the great principle that at the end of this world the righteous and the unrighteous will separated i.e. the wheat from the chaff. The righteous are then blessed eternally and the unrighteous are cursed eternally. This verse is describing the event rather than explaining the timing. Therefore, it should not be used by any of the systems of interpretation to bolster their eschatological framework. Often the OT prophecies juxtapose beside aspects of prophecy separated by thousands of years. For instance, Christ First Coming and Second Coming are placed beside one another in many places e.g. Malachi 3:1-2.

*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (v3)*

During the darkness, confusion, and compromise of the GTP there will be a great revival of the Jews. God will use the terrible persecution of the Antichrist to finally open the eyes of the Jews. This is what Paul spoke of to the Corinthian church,

**But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. (2 Cor. 3:14-16)**

This GTP period will be a time of great evangelism. Indeed, this will be the greatest revival in history when a whole race of people are brought to Christ, “*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*” (Zech. 12:10 cf. Rom. 11:26-28) Jonah was used to bring a whole city to repentance. But the revival in the GTP will bring a nation to repentance in less than 4 years. God will preserve them as a living remnant, redeemed people. These people will enter the Millennium.

Many commentators believe that from the Jewish people will become the greatest missionary force that the world has ever seen. They are the “*wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.*” These “*wise*” evangelists are reflected in the 144,000 identified as an elect group in Revelation 7 and the 2 divinely empowered witnesses of Revelation 11, “*But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*” (Rev. 11:2-3) Many of them will give their lives for the faith. But their faithfulness unto martyrdom will be greatly rewarded.

The world has their stars – movie stars, pop stars, sports stars, business stars etc. But God has a very different perspective on stardom. He honours those who point people to Jesus Christ. The people God honours have eternal rewards, “*for ever and ever.*” Although the context of this verse is likely speaking of the soul winners of the GTP it has equal application to saints in every age. Every person who brings people to Christ has an eternal reward. Our faithfulness on earth will be proportionate to how we reflect the glory of God in eternity. The hymn writer, Eliza E. Hewitt summed up wonderfully in her hymn *Will there be any stars?*

**I am thinking today of that beautiful land  
I shall reach when the sun goeth down;  
When through wonderful grace by my Saviour I stand,  
Will there be any stars in my crown?**

*Will there be any stars, any stars in my crown  
When at evening the sun goeth down?  
When I wake with the blest in the mansions of rest  
Will there be any stars in my crown?*