

Sabbath School Today

With the 1888 Message Dynamic

Daniel

Lesson 13: From Dust to Stars

One discerning writer says that “it is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal.” [1]

Don't forget that Daniel adds some tremendous “good news” about this time of trouble: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: ... and ... thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Dan. 12:1).

Michael is another name for Christ which means, “Who is like God?” The angel who was talking with Daniel probably used the name to emphasize the divine-human character of the mighty One who steps forward in the final crisis for the defense of His people. To “stand up” is an idiom to describe how a king takes over his throne and assumes complete control. The idea is clear: Jesus won't be asleep during the time of trouble!

For Him to “stand up” means that He will enter into a new nearness with His people, something never before realized. He will become a Bridegroom and they will become His bride. Revelation pictures the sublime excitement of this new relationship: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7). There is an intimacy in marriage that no other relationship can approach. And a bride not only loves her bridegroom; she can't help but respect and trust him implicitly. She is ready to go with him anywhere, even to perils. She will gladly share all his future experiences. She is even jealous to share his sorrows and pain.

No way will the Lord allow this coming time of trouble to take place until His people collectively “marry” Christ in that capacity as a bride. And this means for them a growing-up “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13) like a bride is grown-up to be able to stand by the side of her bridegroom at the wedding.

A wedding means that now the bridegroom and bride will begin sharing life together. This explains how the coming time of trouble will be the “honeymoon” for Christ and His bride. They will get to know each other intimately as they share the excitement of that time. And if there is to be any pain and sorrow endured by God's people in the time of trouble, you can be sure that Christ will suffer it as much as they.

He is not the one who brings on the time of trouble; He will not cause it in any way. He would love to return the second time in perfectly peaceful circumstances; the time of trouble was never His idea. It is Satan's idea of a farewell party for the saints of God. It will be brought on entirely by the machinations of the wicked who let their hatred of God erupt into a final frenzy of rebellion. Christ will meet this head on as "Michael," the Son of God to be sure; but also the Son of man "not ashamed" to call us "brethren" (Heb. 2:14-18). He is a partaker of our "flesh and blood," the new Head of the human race, 100% human as well as 100% divine. Single-handedly He takes on the combined enmity of hell and of the apostate human race in the final defense of His people.

So we conclude this series of studies on the Book of Daniel with the standing up of "Michael"—the most solemn, awe-inspiring act humans have ever had a chance to see. All the Star Wars and Superman epics of fiction will be eclipsed by the grandeur of His final campaign when He sallies forth (Rev. 19:11-15).

—Paul E. Penno

Endnote:

[1] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 622.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQtfeyWZ3Jg>

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