

Keep Watch

Quite a few years ago, 'two little boys were sitting in the front row for an Easter pageant at their church. As [Lord] Jesus was entering Jerusalem, one of the characters announced His entrance by shouting, "The King is coming!" One of the boys in the front row jumped up in his seat, looked toward the back of the room, and shouted, "So that's Elvis!"'

If Elvis really is king, then, folks, we're in big, big trouble! But we know who the King really is. He's the One and Only Living God Who condescended to descend to earth and be born as a human, as one of us, Who became the One and Only Great High Priest by taking upon Himself all our sins, indeed all the sins of all the earth, of all time and space, then accepting the just penalty for all those sins by giving up His life, dying a felon's death by execution on a cross, but then, after three days, rising from the dead, to live and reign over all creation, never to die again! This is the real King, and He will directly govern this earth for a thousand years, after which point, all creation will be rejuvenated, the greatest renovation project of all time, and be reunited with the very presence of the Triune God, literal heaven on earth, as God first walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, never to be separated again.

In the concluding chapters of Daniel we read today, he is shown the distant future, so far distant that the Jewish scribes and teachers of the Law didn't include the book of Daniel with the other books of the prophets; instead putting it in the third and final category of scrolls called "The Writings—Historical", and in the Hebrew book order of the Old Testament, almost at the end. For they interpreted the majority of the other prophets as having predicted times and events that would occur and did occur in the "near" future, that is, within decades or a few centuries hence. Daniel, as we see, was given visions of the end of time, of ages in the future, thousands of years future, that is, in our own time right now. Indeed, modern-day rabbis consider Daniel to be the record of all of Israel's future, from this time on. The man Daniel, as we saw, asked the angel what all these things meant, saying in verse eight: 'I heard what he said, but I did not understand what he meant. So I asked, "How will all this finally end, my lord?"'. The angel angelically deflected, saying in verse nine through the end of the book: "Go now, Daniel, for what I have said is kept secret and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined by these trials. But the wicked will continue in their wickedness, and none of them will understand. Only those who are wise will know what it means. From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the sacrilegious object that causes desecration is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days. And blessed are those who wait and remain until the end of the

1,335 days! As for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days, you will rise again to receive the inheritance set aside for you”.’

First the angel tells Daniel that what he’s been told is not for Daniel’s own time. In other words, these words are secret, and can only be released, that is, understood, at a future time, namely the very end of time. There are and have been a number of Bible interpreters that claim that all these prophecies in Daniel have already been fulfilled, particularly in light of the 135 prophecies earlier in chapter eleven that have been fulfilled to the letter, most notably by the Greek tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes. But beginning in verse 36, the details shift and we realize that the teachings are no longer referring to the “near” future of the Greek Seleucid rulers. We see that that the references no longer fit what we, living in 2021, know from the historical records. It’s clear that from verse 36 onward, these are prophecies for the end of time, the end times, of which it has become obvious we are living in. For not just in Daniel, but in our Lord’s Own teachings to His disciples, even as we read in Mark 13, we see that many things have yet to be fulfilled. Not least of which what our Lord Jesus said in Mark 13:24-25: “At that time, after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken”. These are actual quotes from other Old Testament prophets, namely Isaiah and Joel, and they are not metaphors. The sun is still shining,

as is the moon, and the stars are still in the sky. But not for too much longer. Since the Bible contains no errors, then these references in Daniel must refer to a future yet to pass.

In the angel's last sentence to Daniel, he tells Daniel that he will die, that is, "rest", but "then at the end of the days, you will rise again to receive the inheritance set aside for you", meaning that Daniel will be resurrected and receive his inheritance from God. This refers to the same resurrection that we will all experience, assuming we, us, will have physically died before our Lord Jesus returns. But the times are getting so short, that it may well be that many of us may still be physically living when that great and glorious day arrives when the Lord of Lords and Kings of Kings returns to take over once and for all, for all time, this earth and all of this creation, away from that satan devil who tried to usurp God's rule and reign over all things.

While Daniel is "resting", a whole lot will take place. And as bad as Antiochus Epiphanes was, he was just a foreshadowing of a far worse "baddie" who would enter the world stage at the very end of time. He's specifically titled in the Book of Revelation as the antichrist. And, as the angels dictated to Daniel, this antichrist will do everything listed in Daniel 11:36 and following, as well as in earlier prophetic visions Daniel was given and recorded in prior chapters of his book, and also in the further visions given to Apostle John, as he recorded in Revelation. As we've seen a few years ago, when we focussed for a time on Revelation, the an-

tichrist will be quite busy when he makes his appearance. Commanding center stage for a brief period, thank God it will be brief!, he will unleash havoc and chaos such as this world has never known and, again thankfully, will never know again. For as Daniel records in 11:38-39, this antichrist will ally himself with, and worship a “foreign” god, “the god of fortresses”, which is one of the ancient fallen angels that God originally sent to help mankind administer the earth, but who joined satan’s rebellion and were exiled to this planet. These entities want to regain what they lost, and once again, in league with their leader, satan, who will indwell the antichrist, as it were, they’ll attempt to take over the earth, if even for a short while, if for nothing else than to spite God and Christ Jesus the King of All. For they will lose, and this time, they won’t be placed under house arrest, that is, earth arrest. This next time they’ll be thrown into the prison under the earth, the lake of fire, commonly known as hell, never to released ever again.

So while the revelations given to Daniel spoke of the evil antics of the antichrist, and the many conflicts, convulsions and confrontational wars that will ensue just before the very end, the presence of the One like unto a Son of Man, is always there. Daniel had no idea Who this One like a Son of Man was, though we do. And Daniel will know, if even while he “sleeps” in Abraham’s bosom, he isn’t aware, then he will know at the first resurrection of the dead who are raised to life everlasting. Likewise, in the visions given to Apostle John, Christ appears before John,

who is then ostensibly paralyzed by Lord Jesus' glory shining and energizing everything around him in Revelation 1:17, John can never and will never forget this awesome beyond awesome encounter with the Great, Eternal High Priest Who sits forever next to and within the Majesty in Heaven. And while our forever High Priest was still "learning the ropes" of what it means to live as a human being, so He could come to experience and thus sympathize with each and every thing that besets us people, before He became our permanent High Priest always praying for us to Father God, He answered His closest disciples of how things will be before He comes the second time. His final commands and instructions as recorded in Mark 13:34-37 say: "The coming of the Son of Man can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. When he left home, he gave each of his slaves instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return. You, too, must keep watch! For you don't know when the master of the household will return—in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. Don't let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!"

So pay attention. Keep watch over what's happening around us these days. The "pandemic", the tragedies, politics, lawsuits, persecutions, brewing conflicts, lunar eclipses, everything happening all around us, are telling us the end is, as Lord Jesus said, "His return is very near, right at the door". So keep watch!

