



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Exploits for Christ in the last days

“ . . . but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits,” Daniel 11:32.

The synopsis of a message preached in Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church by Rev Ivan Foster at the evening service, January 10th, 2016, in which points he was unable to touch in the message upon are given.

Daniel is a book of prophecy. There is a lot of disputing about what it is that Daniel says. Do not be surprised at that. Disputes surround every doctrine of the Word of God - the new birth, assurance of salvation, the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. These are but a few of the Bible subjects that have been surrounded by disputings ever since God sent forth His Word.

The reason why there are such disputings is easily understood. The devil would seek to sow confusion and spread disbelief in order to rob men of God's truth and the infinite blessing that may be accrued through believing God.

Prophecy is no exception. When the devil has everyone arguing about the subject, he then whispers, “See, this is such a difficult subject, it is a waste of time to study it!”

It occurs to me that the reason the devil is so particularly interested in suppressing the study of prophecy and the right understanding of it is because within the prophecies there is revealed his inevitable defeat and damnation and the glorious victory of Christ and His cause over all His enemies.

We have seen in the news the trouble and distress of many in the United Kingdom through the extensive flooding that has taken place in various places. But much greater would have been the distress of these hapless folk, if they had taken no heed to the warnings issued by the weather forecasters, the heavy rainfall, the rising levels of the rivers? These alerts enable the taking of some actions that spared the victims from an even greater catastrophe!

We can easily see, I am sure, the parallel in these warnings and the prophecies of the Bible concerning the last days and the terrible consequences of ignoring them. God has forecast with absolute accuracy, what is going to come upon this earth in the last days. Should not men take heed? Of course they should.

Sadly, there are all too many believers who heed the devil's lies and therefore neglect the study of God's prophecies.

As there were those who knew of the coming of Christ at His first advent because they studied and heeded God's Word, so it will be in the last days. Of course, there were those like Herod, who knew nothing of the prophecies regarding Christ's first coming and who were thrown into confusion at the announcement of the wise men, and so it will be again. Christian, are you content to be in the camp of the ignorant Herods or would you be as Simeon and Anna, believers who were “waiting for the consolation of Israel,” Luke 2:25, 38.

The early verses of Daniel 11, verses 1-4, deal with the events back in the days of Daniel. The kings that would govern Medo/Persia are mentioned and so too is the overthrow of that empire by the army of Alexander the Great, the leader of the “realm of Grecia.”

His overthrow and the dividing of his empire between his four generals is also foretold.

Future

From verse 5, the prophecy moves, I believe, to events at the end of this age, things that are yet future. From verse 5 to verse 20, we have events that will take place at the end of this age which are centred upon two kingdoms, that of the king of the north, which is Assyria and the king of the south, that is, Egypt. It is not difficult to see such things taking place, given the recent animosities between Iraq and Iran and the



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

present hostilities between Syria and her Arab neighbours and the latest growing hostility between Iran and Saudi Arabia. This region is the theatre in which the final scenes of this age will be played out.

From 21 to the end of the chapter, the character that is central is the Antichrist. He is introduced as the "vile person", verse 21.

That is a variation of Paul's title for him, "that man of sin," 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Please note that we told that He comes to prominence by stealth, deceit and flattery. "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time," verses 21 and 23 - 24.

God's timetable

There is something else that I would wish to draw your attention to. Please note the repeated assertion that the timetable of God will be fulfilled. ". . . for yet the end shall be at the time appointed At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south because it is yet for a time appointed that is determined shall be done. . . . yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him," verses, 27, 29, 35-36, 45. How comforting to the child of God to read this. Here is one of the benefits of the study of prophecy! We can see that the cause of God will triumph and that even the most evil forces can only act under the constraints of God. We must never forget in the midst of the coming upheavals and wickedness that God is in control of all events.

Hear what Jeremiah said some 2600 years ago. "Every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant," Jeremiah 51:29. That this is, of course, future and not a prophecy of the fall of Babylon in BC 538, as some would teach. That it is indeed future may be seen in verses 63-64 of Jeremiah 51. "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah." These words are but a reiteration of Isaiah's prophecy of the downfall of Babylon, This is Isaiah 13:19-22. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

I would like you to compare what we read in Revelation 18:1-2 and also 20-24. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

that were slain upon the earth.”

Thus, there will be a city of Babylon at the end of this age which will be destroyed AS ISAIAH AND JEREMIAH STATED!

Babylon was not destroyed in BC 538 in a manner described by these two prophets. You have only to read Daniel 6 to see that the city and its activities continued after its overthrow by the Medes and the Persians and did not become as Sodom and Gomorrah as predicted by Isaiah. However, that will take place as it is revealed to us in Revelation 18.

I repeat, that those who say that there is no future city of Babylon playing a central part in the affairs of Antichrist are wrong.

Such teaching would have us believe that “Babylon” in the book of Revelation really refers to Rome!!

Was Peter suffering from dyslexia when he wrote: “The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you,” 1 Peter 5:13? Did the Holy Ghost make a mistake?? These are the only conclusions we can draw if we accept that Peter was really referring to Rome when he wrote of Babylon!

The simple truth is - Babylon was not destroyed as Isaiah and Jeremiah said it would back in BC 538. That destruction is yet to come.

The times depicted in Daniel 11:21-45 and especially in our text are those the Saviour referred to when He said: “iniquity shall abound,” Matthew 24:12.

Let us come to our text.

I. THERE WILL BE A PEOPLE WHO ARE A COMPLETE CONTRAST TO THOSE AROUND

The first part of the verse 32 states: “And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries.” We are then introduced to a people of an entirely different spiritual mind and heart - “. . . but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”

1. God’s people have ever been a contrast to the world. They are as light in the midst of darkness. “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness,” 1 Thess 5:5.

2. This contrast has drawn the hatred of man. Cain murdered Abel because of this contrast. “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him,” Genesis 4:3-4, 8. We are commanded to maintain a distinct walk from the world around. “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,” Ephesians 4:17. That distinctiveness will bring the hatred of the world upon our heads. Joseph was hated by his brethren because he did not share their carnal ways. “And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him,” Genesis 37:4. The Saviour warns us of that hatred. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you,” John 15:18-19.

3. This contrast will be very especially marked in the days of Antichrist. There will be those who receive the mark of the Beast and there will be those who will not. “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name," Revelation 13:11-17. To be different then will mean death!

4. The fulness of this contrast will be seen in eternity. Consider these words, spoken by Christ. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal," Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46.

How glad will the sheep be that they identified themselves with Christ and distinguished themselves from the world!

II. THIS DIFFERENCE SPRINGS FROM KNOWING GOD

This people are different because they know God. I wish to speak a little on this knowledge of God. The word "know" means "to be acquainted with, to understand." The true believer is intimately acquainted with God. It is said of us that we are "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Peter 1:4.

1. It is a knowledge that saves. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," John 17:3. Life eternal belongs to those who know God. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36. "Knowing" and "Believing" refer to that same relationship with God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John 1:12.

Do you KNOW the Lord this evening? Have you the experience of the man in John 9? "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him," John 9:35-38 This wonderful knowledge becomes ours when the light of the gospel shines into our hearts. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Corinthians 4:6.

2. It is a knowledge that grows under the Holy Spirit's influence through the Word. It is not a static knowledge but one that will increase. We are thus urged "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Peter 2:2. And again, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen," 2 Peter 3:18. Such growth marks the advance in grace in the life of the true child of God. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," Colossians 1:10.

3. It is a knowledge that is accompanied by blessed assurance. As we increase in the knowledge of God's purpose in mercy and of His power to accomplish that purpose, so is our confidence and comfort deepened. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," 2 Timothy 1:12. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen," Jude 1:24, 25. This is the blessed portion of those who know God.

4. It is a knowledge marked by holiness. Those who know God, who are partakers of His nature, will be like Him. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy," 1 Peter 1:15-16. This holiness of life is what proves the reality of the believer's profession of faith. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them," Matthew 7:16-20.

5. It is a knowledge that bestows strength. That is what our text teaches. "The people that do know their God shall be strong." Thus intimacy and fellowship with God impart strength. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint," Isaiah 40:31.

Sadly, there are those believers who have not grown as they should. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. How is it with you?

III. IN THE LATTER DAYS THE STRONG WILL ACT

They shall "do"!

1. The genuine believer has always been a 'doer'! "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed," James 1:21-25.

2. In the days of spiritual advance in the past, it was those who knew God that accomplished much. The record of that may be seen in the old hymns from the days of revival. We have numerous hymns from the days of the Whitefield and Wesley revivals of the 18th century. We sing them still for they were written in days of Holy Ghost unction and that blessing lies still upon them, distinguishing them from the sentimental, shallow trash of modern so-called 'hymns.'

Consider these words of Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788).

Let earth and Heaven combine,
Angels and men agree,
To praise in songs divine
The incarnate Deity,
Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made Man.

He laid His glory by,
He wrapped Him in our clay;
Unmarked by human eye,
The latent Godhead lay;
Infant of days He here became,
And bore the mild Immanuel's Name.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

See in that Infant's face
The depths of deity,
And labour while ye gaze
To sound the mystery
In vain; ye angels gaze no more,
But fall, and silently adore.

Unsearchable the love
That hath the Saviour brought;
The grace is far above
Of men or angels' thought:
Suffice for us that God, we know,
Our God, is manifest below.

He deigns in flesh t'appear,
Widest extremes to join;
To bring our vileness near,
And make us all divine:
And we the life of God shall know,
For God is manifest below.

Made perfect first in love,
And sanctified by grace,
We shall from earth remove,
And see His glorious face:
His love shall then be fully showed,
And man shall all be lost in God.

While not endorsing all the theology which Mr Wesley espoused, I do believe that he who wrote such hymns as that above indicates he had a great heart-knowledge of God. Calvinists of his day testify to that grace. Here is what the great John Newton (1725-1807) said of John Wesley. "I know of no one to whom I owe more as an instrument of divine grace." George Whitefield was asked: "Will we see John Wesley in heaven?" Whitefield's answer was: "I fear not. He will be so near the throne, and we shall be at such a distance, that we shall hardly get a sight of him."

The blessing of God upon the men of that era lives on in their hymns and such splendid words indicate that power that rested upon them, the power that was the source of their deeds.

3. In the final days of this age God's grace will make those believers the chief of believers! It will be as stated in John 2:10. ". . . thou hast kept the good wine until now." I believe that it is indicated in the Word of God that the last generation of believers will be the greatest in grace and holiness. God will indeed have kept the best wine until the end!

The two witnesses illustrate this. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will," Revelation 11:5-6. This is in the very depths of the great tribulation, just before the return of Christ. While the other believers of that era may not share in the special powers given to the two witnesses, I do believe they will show the same ability to serve Christ courageously and victoriously. What courage will be shown in the last days by God's people! Here is God's testimony of their wonderful grace and fearlessness. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled," Revelation 6:9-11. Their high standing is further indicated in Revelation 20:4 "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." A special mention is given to their living and reigning with Christ in His Millennial reign. That of course will be the privilege of all the redeemed but special honour seems to be given to that generation that owned and served the Lord Jesus during the days of the 'beast'.

Being strong in their knowledge of God, they rejected the deceitfulness of the Antichrist, irrespective of the price they had to pay.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

courage lacking today

Sadly, it must be said that the words of John 7:13 depict the "courage" of many professing Christians today! "Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews." What a contrast is today's cowardly silence in the face of the lies and deceptions of the devil that many professing faith in Christ are guilty of!

Here in Ulster, day and daily in the political and religious world there are events taking place which in former years would have brought a united cry of despair and outrage from the Free Presbyterian Church but today, we can hardly mount a whimper! Oh that the days of power and courage of former years may be visited upon us again!

Loyalty to Christ in a day of Him being dishonoured will bring its blessed reward. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. 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. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Revelation 7:13-17.

These scenes are just prior to the opening of the last, the seventh seal, so it is close to the end of this age. The "great tribulation" mentioned in verse 14, is the "great tribulation" that Christ said would take place just before His return in power and glory. These slain believers are those who will "know their God . . . strong, and do exploits" as prophesied by Daniel.

Is this not a verse for us today, Christian?

Please note: You can listen to a recording of this message [here](#).