

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Great Prince

We come now to the final part of the revelation. If indeed chapter 11 does end with the destruction of the Greek empire, we can anticipate, in the light of previous chapters, that the Messiah will now come into the picture. This is what we read:

'At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.' (Daniel 12:1-3)

This abundantly confirms our expectations. The prophets indicated that the coming of the Messiah would be associated with *a time of great trouble* (Jeremiah 30:5-9). The Jews certainly believed that the Messiah would *deliver them* (Jeremiah 23:5, 6), but most were blind to the fact that only those who are *written in God's book* would be saved (Isaiah 4:2-4). *The resurrection of the dead* had been foretold (Isaiah 26:19), also the abolition of death and coming of *joy for ever* (Isaiah 25:8; 35:10).

Having confirmed that these verses probably do refer to the coming of the Messiah, let us see now how they were fulfilled.

Michael

First, we must identify Michael. His name means 'Who is like God?' He is 'first of the chief princes' (10:13, Young's Literal Translation), 'your [Daniel's] prince' (10:21), 'the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people' (12:1, R.V.), 'the archangel [chief angel]' (Jude 9). In the book of Revelation Michael is depicted as head over all the angels of God.

It is generally taken that Michael is the guardian angel of the Jews. However, Daniel 12:1 indicates that he is more than this — *he is the prince of those who are written in God's book, the Lamb's book of life*. In Revelation 12:7 we find that it is he who fights and vanquishes Satan. This is no ordinary angel — not even the highest ranking of the angels created by God. This, surely, is Jesus Christ Himself. It is Christ who bruised the serpent's head, bound the strong man, destroyed the works of the devil, brought to nought him that had the power of death and triumphed over principalities and powers. We are told that Satan and his angels warred against Michael and His angels (Revelation 12:7). We are told later that Satan's earthly puppet (the beast) and his armies war against Christ and the heavenly army (Revelation 19:19). It is likely, surely, that if Christ is needed to crush Satan's earthly puppet, Christ is needed also to crush Satan himself. Christ, we are told, will descend from heaven with a shout, *with the voice of the archangel*, and the dead shall rise. Christ said, 'All that are in the tombs shall hear his [Christ's] voice, and shall come forth' (I Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28, 29).

Michael may well be the mysterious, divine 'Angel of the Lord' — also called the angel of His presence and the messenger (angel) of the covenant. This is indicated by Jude 9 and Zechariah 3:1-4. In Jude we find Michael contending with the devil¹ and saying, 'The Lord rebuke you' and in Zechariah we find the Angel of the Lord contending with Satan and

saying, 'The Lord rebuke you'.

The 'Angel of the Lord' appears quite frequently in the Old Testament, and it is clear that on a number of occasions (including Zechariah 3) the Being is none other than God Himself.² In one particular case the Angel is shown to be not only the Lord Himself, but also the 'guardian angel' of Israel.

'Behold I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him. But if you hearken attentively to his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.' (Exodus 23:20-22)

This angel may well, like Michael, be described as 'the guardian angel of Israel'. The passage quoted suggests that the angel is actually divine, and the following verses confirm this:

'And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.' (Exodus 13:21).

'Then the angel of God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them ...' (Exodus 14:19)

Here the Person in the pillar of cloud and fire is described as 'the Lord' and also as 'the angel of God'. I suggest that the guardian angel of Israel is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

It is generally acknowledged that the 'Prince of the host' (Daniel 8:11) is God Himself and that 'the host' refers to the faithful Jews. Michael is described to Daniel as 'the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people' (12:1, R.V.). It looks as if the 'Prince of the host' and Michael are one and the same person. The natural conclusion is that Michael is God Himself. The 'Prince of the host' was also called 'Prince of princes' (8:25) — Christ is called 'King of kings, and Lord of lords' (Revelation 19:16).

There are some interesting words in Zechariah 12, a chapter which probably predicts the Jewish military victories and religious revival in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, as well as applying spiritually to the true Israel and heavenly Jerusalem.

'On that day the Lord will put a shield about the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the Lord, at their head.' (Zechariah 12:8)

The 'angel of the Lord at their head' may refer to the divine Angel that led the children of Israel in the wilderness. This chapter in Zechariah appears to deal with the times of both Antiochus Epiphanes and the Christian church, so this verse forms yet further evidence that the divine Angel of the Lord, the Prince of the host, Michael and Jesus Christ are one and the same Person.

At the very outset of the conquest of the promised land, Christ appeared to Joshua and revealed Himself to be both the Prince of the host and the Angel of the Lord (Joshua 5:13-15). Joshua saw a Man standing over against him with His sword drawn in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked Him whether He was friend or foe. The reply was, 'Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come' (R.V.). 'Captain' translates the word *sar*, which is translated 'prince' in Daniel 8:11. Thus this Man was none other than the 'prince of the host' of Daniel 8. Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped Him, and said, 'What does my

lord bid his servant?’ The Prince of the Lord’s host answered, ‘Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is holy’. And Joshua did so. The Man had also revealed Himself to be the divine Angel of the Lord who had been leading Israel, because when the Angel of the Lord called to Moses out of the burning bush, He said, Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground — I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at God (Exodus 3:5, 6). The Angel went on to tell Moses that His name was I AM. Over a thousand years later, Jesus said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, *I am*’; and the Jews tried to stone Him for blasphemy (John 8:58, 59).

The belief that Michael is Christ is by no means new; but owing to the heretical ideas usually associated with it, it has been condemned by the orthodox in the past — although this attitude is changing now. In fact the belief is perfectly scriptural. Michael is described as ‘the archangel’, which means the chief angel — and note that in the Bible, Michael is the *only* archangel. An angel (messenger) is one who is ‘sent’, and Christ repeatedly claimed that He was ‘sent’ by God the Father. ‘I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.’ (John 8:42).

Having said all this, we can see that there are very strong grounds for believing that Michael is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah.

The kingdom of heaven

‘At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time ...’
(Daniel 12:1a)

This little section begins with the words, ‘At that time’. The following section (verses 1b-3) begins with the same words — ‘but *at that time* your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book ...’

It appears to me that verse 1a outlines in a nutshell the work of the Messiah and its sequel, as described already in Daniel 9. In that prophecy we were told that Christ’s redeeming work was to be followed by war, desolation and the destruction of Jerusalem. In this section likewise, it is stated that Christ was to stand up in redeeming power, but there was to be a time of great trouble. Having made this summarizing statement, the prophecy then concentrates (verses 1b-3) on the Messiah’s work of redemption, opening again with the words ‘at that time’.

I have shown already that Michael represents Christ. We must now establish the meaning of ‘at that time’, and the identity of the ‘time of trouble’. The words ‘at that time’ come at the beginning of Daniel 12. Clearly ‘that time’ must refer to the latter part of chapter 11, which was all about Antiochus and the destruction of the Greek empire. Michael is called here the ‘prince’ of Israel, and it is stated that He ‘arose’ at the time of the destruction of the Greek empire. This links up with

1. The fact that in chapter 8 we are told that Antiochus rose up against the ‘Prince’ of Israel, but was broken by no human hand.
2. The fact that the visions of the image and four beasts indicate that the Messiah began setting up His kingdom by destroying Antiochus and the Greek empire.

Now for the ‘time of trouble’. This is identified for us by Jesus Christ Himself. When He warned His disciples of the coming Jewish War and siege of Jerusalem, He said,

‘Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. For then there will be great

tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.’ (Matthew 24:20, 21)

These words suggest that the great ‘time of trouble’ is the Jewish War, which culminated in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This is the same picture as the one we find in chapter 9. The redemptive work of the Messiah will be associated with a terrible war which will culminate in the desolation of the city and temple of Jerusalem. The greatest time of trouble the world has ever seen came upon the people who crucified the Son of God. ‘His blood be on us, and on our children’, they cried. It has been, with vengeance.

Note that Daniel’s words suggest a time of *national* trouble. The Jewish War was national calamity on an unprecedented scale. The Jewish nation was wiped off the map for nearly two thousand years, and vast numbers of Jews were slaughtered or sold into slavery. Over a million perished in the siege of Jerusalem alone.

In parenthesis, we should also note that Jesus’ words differ slightly from Daniel’s. He did not mention the word ‘nation’, and He added that there would never be such great trouble again. Jesus was undoubtedly speaking of the Jewish War (cf. Luke 21:20-24), but it is possible He was also looking beyond it up to the final tribulation which is to precede His second advent.

We have dealt with the introductory section, so let us now proceed to the following section.

‘... but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.’ (Daniel 12:1b-3)

These verses describe what Michael or Christ achieved when He ‘arose’ in conquering and redeeming power. In Revelation 12 Christ’s work of deliverance is symbolized by the battle between Michael and the dragon. The dragon is finally cast out of Heaven and a voice is heard saying, ‘Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come’. This shows that the defeat of the dragon symbolizes Christ’s work of redemption and the setting up of the Messianic kingdom. Jesus said, ‘Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out’ (John 12:31).

The section we are considering begins, ‘But at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book’. The deliverance referred to is the deliverance from sin, Satan and death made possible by Christ’s victorious death and resurrection.

‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old ...’ (Luke 1:68-70)

‘Your people’ would at first sight appear to mean Daniel’s fellow-Jews. However, the qualification ‘every one whose name shall be found written in the book’ clearly limits ‘your people’ to those who are true children of God, those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 21:27). It also brings in all the Gentiles who are children of Abraham by faith (Romans 4:16, 17; Galatians 3:7, 14, 28, 29). Thus we can see that Michael’s work of deliverance is to be identified with Christ’s work of atonement and victory over death and hell.

The section we are considering continues,

'And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.' (Daniel 12:2, 3)

Here Daniel goes on to describe further the consequences of Christ's victory over death and hell when He died and rose again some two thousand years ago. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is the glorious certainty of resurrection and eternal life stated so clearly. Christ was probably thinking of Daniel's prophecy when He forecast His return in the following words:

'... the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.' (John 5:28, 29)

'The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father ...' (Matthew 13:41-43)

On the face of it, Daniel seems to be predicting the general resurrection at the time of the second advent — and in a secondary sense he *is* doing this. But as with the rest of Daniel's prophecies, the *primary* reference is to something which took place at the time of the first advent. Note that whereas Daniel only said 'many' shall 'awake', Jesus said 'all' shall 'come forth' when He returns at the end of the world. Daniel is primarily speaking of a limited 'awaking' that occurred when Michael 'arose' some two thousand years ago. When we turn to the New Testament we find that in fact there *was* an 'awaking' of the dead at the time of the first advent.

'Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.' (John 5:25)

'And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."' (Luke 23:43)

'... and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.' (Matthew 27:51-53)

'Christ ... being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison ...' (I Peter 3:18, 19)

'... but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God.' (I Peter 4:5, 6)

After His death, Christ apparently proclaimed the news of His completed work of salvation to those who had 'fallen asleep'. John 5:25 refers partly, at least, to the spiritually dead; and the meanings of I Peter 3:18, 19 and 4:5, 6 are much disputed. However, the verses quoted above do seem collectively to indicate that Jesus proclaimed the gospel to the dead after He was crucified. In the Old Testament, Sheol, the abode of the dead, is represented as a place of complete darkness, forgetfulness and oblivion.³ Dying, therefore, was aptly pictured as a 'falling asleep'. The 'awaking' of those who slept is therefore a good picture of what happened when Christ went into Sheol and proclaimed the gospel. Those who were righteous awoke to be taken with Him to Paradise, and those who were unrighteous awoke only to find they were under shame and contempt. The word 'many' is used rather than 'all', perhaps, because it speaks only of those who died before Christ, rather than the total number of all

those who will have died before the end of the world.

In John 5:28, 29 (quoted a few paragraphs back) Jesus took Daniel's words and, having altered them slightly, applied them directly to the second advent. But in so doing, He was perhaps developing the idea in Daniel and giving the words a degree of meaning they did not possess originally — He dealt in a rather similar way with the 'stone' and perhaps with the 'time of trouble' and the 'Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven'. Christ's defeat of death two thousand years ago was the bud of which the resurrection at the last day will be the full flower. The awaking described by Daniel was the general resurrection in embryo. In fact Jesus was probably referring to the awaking which took place at the time of the first advent *as well as* the general resurrection at the time of the second advent. He was thinking of the awaking described by Daniel, but He was also looking beyond it to the general resurrection at the last day.

Daniel's words about the resurrection are so strongly reminiscent of those describing the saints who were persecuted by Antiochus (8:10; 11:33) that they were probably meant to be a special encouragement to those who suffered for their faith, including those who actually were persecuted by Antiochus.

'Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life.'
(Hebrews 11:35b)

The book of Revelation also gives special encouragement to those who suffer for the cause of Christ. They are assured that if they 'overcome' and are faithful to the end, they will sit with Christ on His throne and will live and reign with Him a thousand years. This is called the 'first resurrection'. The events which Revelation depicts as taking place after the 'thousand years' are, according to the rest of the New Testament, to take place at the end of the age in which we are living *now*. I believe that this means we are living in the 'thousand years' of Revelation *now*, and that the 'first resurrection' occurs as soon as Christ's redeemed depart this life — we go to reign with Him. But it is a spiritual resurrection, not a physical one. 'The second resurrection' will be the resurrection of both the just and the unjust, when Christ returns after the 'thousand years' at the end of the world. For the just it will be a bodily resurrection in preparation for the new heaven and the new earth and for the unjust it will be a resurrection to judgment and the 'second death'. This whole question of the 'thousand years' will be dealt with at slightly greater length in the final chapter.

Could it be that Daniel's 'awaking' of the sleepers has something to do with the 'first resurrection'? When the righteous sleepers awoke and were taken with Christ to Paradise, were they taking part in the first resurrection? It seems that there is an earlier 'resurrection' of the righteous which first occurred at the time of Christ's first advent; but there will be another resurrection of the *whole* world (the 'second resurrection') at the time of His second advent. Every time a believer dies, and goes to be with Christ, he or she takes part in the first resurrection — and this has been happening ever since Christ died and rose again.

The angel concludes the prophecy with the following words:

'... But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.' (Daniel 12:4)

This probably means that towards the time of the end many people will 'run to and fro' through Daniel's prophecies. They will eagerly examine the prophecies and begin to understand them in the light of the events taking place around them.

How long till the end of these wonders?

One could quite easily take the next section (12:5-7) as referring to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes — because in a superficial way it does appear to do this. But as with 9:24-27, there is far more to this passage than meets the eye at first glance. We noted that 9:24-27 appears *superficially* to refer to Antiochus; but when we examine the passage closely, we find that the real reference is to the coming of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. We shall see that almost exactly the same thing can be said about 12:1-7. We have dealt already with the first four verses, so we proceed now to 12:5-7.

'Then I Daniel looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And I said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished.' (Daniel 12:5-7)

To the critical scholar it is obvious, as we have noted, that this passage, together with 11:40-12:4, refers to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. The 'time, two times, and half a time' refers to the three and a half years of Antiochus' persecution. And the 'shattering of the power of the holy people' refers to the persecution itself. The second century author believed that after a period of three and a half years, 'all these things would be accomplished'. That is, the death of Antiochus, the deliverance of faithful Jews and also, presumably, the resurrection of the dead (11:40-12:3).

Needless to say, I reject this interpretation. There can be no doubt, as far as I am concerned, that these prophecies look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. As far as we know, the resurrection of the dead (12:2, 3) certainly did not take place around the time of Antiochus Epiphanes! And as we have seen, 11:40-45 does not describe the last days of Antiochus. It describes the final destruction of the Greek empire. It should be noted also that Antiochus' persecution lasted three and a *division* (*pelag*) times in 7:25 — not three and a *half* (*chatsi*) times, as in 12:7. And last, but not least, Antiochus did *not* shatter the power of the Jews.

Assuming that these prophecies look forward to the time of Christ, therefore, how are we to interpret this passage? Daniel is told that all the things he has been shown in this vision will be accomplished 'when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end'. We learn from 8:24 that 'the holy people' means Israel. 'Shatter' translates the word *naphats*, which means to beat or dash in pieces and spread out. Chapter 9 indicates that the Messiah's work of establishing the New Covenant was to be sealed by the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of the Jewish people. And we have seen that the same event is referred to in 12:1. We are told that Michael shall arise and 'there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time'. We have seen that Jesus indicated that this 'time of trouble' was the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of the Jewish people in 70 A.D. We are now told (12:7), '... when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things will be accomplished'. In my opinion, there can be little doubt that the angel is speaking here about the events of 70 A.D., when the power of the Jews was truly shattered. (Note, however, that as with Daniel 9:26b, 27b, there is a secondary link-up with the 'tribulations' which precede the first and second comings of Christ.)

This last prophecy, like that of chapter 9, deals with the nation of Israel, to a large extent, because at the beginning Daniel's informant said, 'I came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days' (10:14). The nation's history as God's covenant people came to an end in 33 A.D. God set His outward and visible seal on this event by destroying

the nation and scattering the people in 70 A.D. This is where the prophecy comes to an end. The kingdom of Christ had been born; but as Jesus predicted (Matthew 21:41, 43), the Jews had to be severely punished for rejecting their Messiah, and the kingdom was taken away from them and given to 'a nation producing the fruits of it' (that is, to the true, spiritual Israel).

We read that the breaking in pieces of the power of the holy people will be completed after 'a time, two times, and half a time', that is, 1260 days (360 x 3½). 'Half' on this occasion does mean 'half', because it translates *chatsi*, meaning 'half' or 'middle'. Vespasian set out from Antioch in the spring of 67 A.D. and began the bloodbath which was completed by his son Titus, approximately *three and a half years* later in September, 70 A.D., when he destroyed the temple and city of Jerusalem. We shall see later that Revelation 12 indicates the Jewish War lasted three and a half 'times' and it is specifically stated that this period was one of 1260 days.

Final hints

Daniel is still mystified, however, and asks, 'What shall be the issue of these things?' Daniel's informant does not answer this question, but says,

'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand. And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But go your way till the end; and you shall rest, and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.' (Daniel 12:9-13)

The man clothed in linen tells Daniel that many shall purify themselves, but the wicked shall do wickedly. Comparison with Daniel 11:32-35 makes it apparent that the messenger is referring again to the time of Antiochus' persecution. This is confirmed by the words which follow regarding the taking away of the continual burnt offering and the setting up of the abomination that makes desolate (cf. 11:31). We are told that the wise shall understand (Daniel's prophecies), but the wicked shall not. It is in fact generally agreed that the Jews who were persecuted by Antiochus did read Daniel's prophecies, and were greatly strengthened and encouraged thereby.

We are told that from the time that the continual burnt offering shall be taken away (this being followed by the setting up of the abomination that makes desolate) there shall be 1290 days. This is very strong evidence that the little horn of the fourth beast is Antiochus, because 1290 days is a period of three 'times' plus a fraction of a time (7:25). If we count back 1290 days from December, 164 B.C. (the time at which the temple sacrifices were restored) we come to June, 167 B.C. As we have seen already, it was at about this very time that Antiochus caused the 'continual burnt offering' to be 'taken away'. Note that in 7:25 the 1290 days are described as being three times and a *division* of a time (*pelag*). In 12:7, however, the Jewish War is said to last exactly three times and *half* a time (*chatsi*). Revelation 12 indicates that this was a period of 1260 days, confirming the importance and amazing accuracy of Daniel's use of *pelag* and *chatsi*.

The question of whether Antiochus' persecution and the Jewish War really did last for exactly 1290 days and 1260 days, respectively, is probably both unanswerable and unimportant. The important point is that both events did last for approximately *three and a half years* — a period of great symbolical significance (as we shall see in our final chapter). As for

the thirty-day difference between 1290 and 1260, this may well symbolize something which Jesus said about the Jewish War — ‘And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened’ (Matthew 24:22).

The messenger goes on to say, ‘Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days’. This is 45 days more than the 1290 days, and it appears to bring us on to February, 163 B.C. We ask ourselves what event of significance took place at about this time — and there is an answer. *The death of Antiochus Epiphanes*. The exact date of his death is not known, but it is reckoned that it was in the spring of 163 B.C. When the news of the Jews’ successes reached Antiochus, he was on campaign in Media. His fury knew no bounds and he vowed a terrible revenge on the Jews; but he died soon afterwards at Tabae, in Persia. He was struck down by a mysterious and horrible illness in which the Jews saw the hand of God.

It will now be asked, why was Antiochus’ death of such great significance? Again, there is an answer. Antiochus’ death was a very special sign of the imminent arrival of the Messiah. It heralded ‘the time of the end’ (8:19; 11:35, 40). It is the event with which the vision of Daniel 8 closes — we are told that Antiochus ‘shall even rise up against the Prince of princes; but by no human hand, he shall be broken’. It was the triumphant work of Christ — it was the sign that He had begun the process of setting up the kingdom of Heaven. It signaled the beginning of the chain of events which culminated in the arrival of the Messiah. It was the slaying of the little horn — and was the sign that the fourth beast had also been slain. It was the sign that the ‘Stone’ had begun to pulverize the great image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

We ask now, why is Daniel told, ‘*Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days*’? The answer, surely, is that those who waited upon God were told to look for more than the restoration of the temple sacrifices — they were told to look for the coming of the kingdom of Heaven. There was general rejoicing when the temple sacrifices were restored, but the people of God looked beyond this event; they watched and waited for the sign that the Messiah had laid bare His arm, the sign that He had indeed begun finally to destroy the fourth beast, the sign that the kingdom of Heaven was near. Some Jews may have thought privately that the Maccabees, rather than God, were responsible for the restoration of temple worship; but God made it quite plain that He was responsible for the event of prime importance — Antiochus’ death.

This helps to explain a rather puzzling sentence in 11:34 — ‘they shall receive a little help’. ‘They’ refers to the saints and the ‘little help’ apparently refers to the exploits of Judas Maccabeus and his followers. The puzzling feature is the playing down of the part played by the latter. The explanation is the fact that although these freedom fighters were of immense importance in the eyes of the Jews, they were of relatively small importance in God’s wider plan. God did not have to depend on them to achieve His purposes. The Maccabees destroyed neither Antiochus nor the Greek empire. The former died at God’s hand through an illness, and the latter was destroyed through God’s instrument, the Roman empire — as described so accurately in Daniel 11:40-45. And although the Maccabees managed to end the Greek tyranny in Israel, in fact they replaced it with one of their own. In the long run, therefore, they were quite literally no more than a ‘little help’.

The book of Daniel closes with the following words:

‘But go your way till the end; and you shall rest, and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.’ (Daniel 12:13)

We can trust that Daniel awoke to life when Christ entered Hades and that he is now reigning in glory with Him.

The last days

In the final chapter I shall show that the three and a half years of persecution by Antiochus *symbolizes the age in which we are living now*. The age in which the church of Christ is persecuted by the forces of evil, but out of which it will emerge triumphant. In a sense, therefore, the angel *did* answer Daniel's question, 'What shall be the issue of these things?' He replied,

'... And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.'
(Daniel 12:11, 12)

There can be no doubt that this 'abomination that makes desolate' was set up by Antiochus Epiphanes. But Jesus Christ also applied it to the events of 70 A.D., and Daniel 9:27 speaks of Christ causing the 'sacrifice and offering to cease' (when He died on the cross). Moreover, the angel has just been speaking about the Jewish War of 67-70 A.D. (12:7).

The 1290 days of Antiochus' persecution *symbolizes* the present age, which began with the first advent of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The end of the 1335 days, when Antiochus was destroyed, *symbolizes* the time when the forces of evil (the Antichrist?) will be destroyed at the end of this age, at the time of Christ's second advent.

'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.' Blessed is he who remains faithful to Christ, even to the end. Blessed is he who is found ready and watching for Him when He returns.

But this is not all. The number 1335 has appeared in recent history in a very remarkable way. To the Christian church and to the Jewish people, 1917 is a year of enormous significance. This was the year in which the Ottoman empire was defeated and Jerusalem was liberated. It was also the year of the 'Balfour Declaration', in which Britain, the liberating power, declared that she viewed with favour the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Jesus prophesied that following the siege of 70 A.D., Jerusalem would be trodden down by the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled* (Luke 21:20-24). The liberation of Jerusalem and the return of the Jews was therefore a very special fulfilment of prophecy.

Now the interesting thing from the point of view of Daniel's prophecies is that in the Muslim calendar, 1917 A.D. was the year 1335. The appearance of this highly unusual number in connection with a highly unusual and significant event may be no more than a very remarkable coincidence. On the other hand, it may be that God is trying to tell us something here.

We have said that the number 1335 was connected with the death of Antiochus, and that this event (which resulted in Jerusalem being liberated from the hand of a tyrant) was the sign that Christ had begun the process of setting up the kingdom of Heaven — the sign that the coming of the Messiah was near. Could it be that the defeat of the Ottoman empire and the liberation of Jerusalem was a sign that the present age is coming to a close and that the second coming of Christ is near? Does the parable of the fig tree coming out in leaf refer in part to the formation of the state of Israel?

'And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees; as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.'" (Luke

21:29-31).

This strange number 1335 carries a very real message. Apart from possibly telling us that Christ's return is near, God is assuring us that *He is still in control*. He is still working out His purposes in history. The defeat of His enemies and the vindication of His saints are certain. Christ really is coming again.

May we be found ready and watching for Christ when He returns, so that when we stand in our allotted places 'at the end of the days', it will be a day of rejoicing and not a day of remorse.

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1. In the light of II Peter 2:10, 11, the fact that Michael 'did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him' suggests that He is 'greater in might and power' than Satan.
 2. E.g., Genesis 48:16; Exodus 3:2-6; cf. Joshua 5:13-15; Isaiah 63:8, 9; Malachi 3:1, 2.
 3. Job 10:21, 22; Psalms 6:5; 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Isaiah 38:18.

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