

That Day will come! - Daniel 12:1-3

The text for meditation for this morning is from the first lesson of today: Daniel 12:1-3, which was read before.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

Dear fellow redeemed;

Very often we are in shock when people do despicable things to others, and it is worse when a mother or a father do outrageous things to their children. For example, this year in Detroit a mother of four beat and killed two of her children to death and stuffed them in a freezer. Investigators believe her son who was 9 years old died in August 2012 and her daughter who was 13 years old died the following year. Her two surviving children — ages 8 and 17 — have been placed into a relative's care. This woman has been charged of felony murder, premeditated murder and torture.

Friends, these tragedies happen very often, and we wonder: How can anyone do this so terrible especially to their children? Even children are arrested for killing other children, for example this year in Jefferson County, Tennessee an argument between two children over puppies turned tragic when an 11-year-old boy killed his 8-year-old neighbor with a shotgun. I could mention more tragedies to you: the war in Syria and Iraq where almost 300,000 people have died. Among those death, 10,000 people have been executed by ISIL. On Friday November 13 in Paris six nearly simultaneous attacks, attributed to the ISIL terror group, left at least 128 people dead and around 300 wounded. We wonder, when is it going to stop? When is the madness of this world going to come to an end?

Our text today gives us an answer to that question, although it may not be the answer we actually want. Here our God tells us that a day is coming when the madness of this world will come to an end, and He will deliver His people forever. A day is coming when He will bring judgment to all, including to those who have died. He does not tell us when or how it will happen, but He promises that it will be something wonderful: that when it comes, that will be the day that truly marks the first day of the rest of our lives in the glories of God's kingdom.

In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in the "End Times", and all that is involved in the final days of this earthly existence. You remember the Mayan calendar. The supporters of this calendar predicted that the end of the world would happen on December 21st, 2012. It did not happen. Others predicted the coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the world would happens any day between April 2014 and September 2015. They spoke about a Blood Moon on that period of time. An eclipse of Blood Full Moon happened on September 27 and 28, but that's all. Chris McCann and the Bible Fellowship group predicted the destruction of the universe on October 7th, 2015. Nothing happened. The last day did not come. Friends, we need to be on our guard in order that no one led us astray.

God, in His holy Word does teach us to be aware of that day, and its importance. Jesus often spoke of the coming of the end, and even gave His people signs of the coming of that day, like those in our gospel lesson today: ***nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.*** And again and again we are warned and encouraged to be prepared and on our guard, as we await the day of His coming. When it comes, that will be the day when the madness of this world will come to an end. Thankfully, it will also be the day of our salvation.

In these last weeks of the church year, we remember what we confess in the creed: that Jesus Christ will come again in glory to judge both the living and the dead. That is as sure and certain as the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Of course, there are those who doubt that this world will ever end.

Many people want to believe that this world will keep going forever, evolving into something new along the way. But when we see the madness of our world, we realize that things cannot keep going as they are now. Man would be doomed to destroy himself, regardless of anything else. But whether people want to believe it or not, God does tell us very plainly that He has planned a time when this world will come to an end. We just wonder when this day will be.

I have said it before, and I still believe it to be true, that we are truly drawing near to that great and glorious day of the Lord. The signs are all around us. We see the earthquakes and famines; we see the loveless attitudes that permeate our world. We see parents turning against their children, and brother against brother because of the selfishness that fills their hearts. There are days that I read the news online or listen to the news and wonder if things can get any worse.

And yet, our text suggests that yes, things will get worse, especially for those who trust in God. We are told: ***There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.*** Scripture does not tell us this to frighten us, but to make us aware of the devil's evil attacks on our faith.

I think it is getting harder to be a Christian today. Our world does persecute us because of the truth we profess. In the next few weeks, as we get ready for Christmas, we will be again reminded of how hard it is to speak out for the truth of Christmas as the birth of Christ, when all people want to hear is about Santa and peace and good times.

There is no room in the schools for anything Christian, but the false religions of this world are allowed to spread their evil messages to our children. Christians today are not viewed as people of conviction and faith, but as fanatics, as hypocrites, or as ignorant, unknowing people. And only God truly knows what still lies before us in the days ahead.

But while we may not know what is coming, we can be sure of this: when the day of the Lord comes, that will be the day of our salvation. Listen again to what our text says: ***at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.***

When that day comes, everything will change forever. All the evil that fills our newspaper; internet, radio, all the uncertainty that is a part of our earthly existence; all the doubt and fear of what might be will come to an end. That is when the madness of this existence will come to an end. And it is important to note that two things happen that day.

On the one hand, there are those who will rise to everlasting life; but there are also those who rise to shame and everlasting contempt. God is going to judge all mankind, both the living and the dead. He will punish people for their sin and evil and wickedness. Actually, shame and everlasting contempt is all that any of us has any right to expect, and is what we truly deserve, because we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory God expects of His children.

Day after day we live as if there were no day of judgment, because we continue to do those things that are wrong in the sight of God, those things that show we seek only to serve ourselves and not the God of our salvation. But God has done something to turn that day into a day of deliverance and life. We deserve punishment, but God has done something to set us free from punishment. That is exactly what John 3:16 tells us: ***For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***

In Christ, we have been set free from the judgment that would condemn us on that day. Jesus Christ died for sinners like you and me, and He rose so that we might share in His life—the eternal life of joy with Him in the glories of heaven. And through faith in Christ, by trusting in all He has done for us, we can look forward to that day, facing it in confidence, because our faith assures us that God has already written our name in His book of life. He has forgiven us our sins and given us new life as His people.

And when that day comes, and God calls us home to His eternal rest, we are going to know life like we have never known it before. Our gracious, loving God will give us life in all its fullness. In heaven, the best, and only the best, is what we will know forever. We will never again have to fear tomorrow, or fear pain and illness, death and trouble. We will have the peace that only God can give. We will have the blessing of knowing Him as He knows us. We will experience joy and bliss that we can only dream of in this world. And nothing will be able to take that away from us.

Friends, when we look around us and see the madness of this world, we truly long for something better. For us, that something better is coming. God has a plan that is well under way. His plan, which has been at work since the creation of the world assures us that He can deliver all those who trust in Him from the fate that we deserve because of our sin.

His plan was at work when He defeated Satan and the powers of sins and death through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and through the glorious resurrection of the Saviour. In accordance with His plan, the day is coming when this life will end, and a better life - at least for believers - will begin. Trust in the promises that God has given you in Christ - and get ready for that day, when God delivers us from this life that leads to death, and brings us into the blessings of life everlasting. The day is coming soon, and what a wonderful day it will be! Amen.

That the Father, the Son + and Holy Spirit pour out His richest blessings to all of us and fill us with peace. Amen