

THEY WILL SHINE LIKE THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER

Daniel 12:1-13
Key verse 12:3

"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."

We thank God for the blessed GLEF, on which we can study the book of Daniel. Today we look at the last chapter of this book. Chapter 12 is the conclusion of the third and final vision of the prophet Daniel. It can be seen as the conclusion of the entire book. In chapter 11, God had prophesied the work of the Antichrist to Daniel in detail. The time of the Antichrist is a time of distress for the believers. But today we see that it is also a time of God's great work. Especially in the time of distress, God uses the Bible teachers who teach God's Word and lead many to righteousness, as their main characters and leaders. When will the end be and what will be at the end? This is a big secret. What matters is how we live as we are waiting for the end. Today, through the last chapter of the book of Daniel, let us gain insight into God's work. In these turbulent times, let us live as Bible teachers, spiritual leaders, and conquerors who are wise and shine like the brightness of the heavens and like the stars for ever and ever.

I. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens (1-4)

Let us read verse 1 together: "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered." In this verse, the term "at that time" is repeated. "At that time" refers to the last part of chapter 11, which is the end of the time. "At that time" is a dark time of distress for the believers. Such "that time," the spiritually dark time, occurs again and again in history: "At that time" seemed to be Daniel's time in Babylonian captivity, when the Jews were led into exile. "At that time" was the time of persecution of Christians under the Roman emperors Diocletian and Galerius. "At that time" was the time before the Reformation, when the Church closed the Word of God from the people and traded indulgences. "At that time" was the dark time for Christians in Germany during the Third Reich, when the church was instrumentalized for the Nazi regime. "At that time" is also today. Outwardly, many things are currently happening that make us think of the end times, such as the Ukraine war, which claims lives every day. More than 100,000 Ukrainian and more than 100,000 Russian soldiers have been killed. Much worse and darker, however, is the growing spiritual depravity: The living conditions in Germany and America are excellent, but humanism, genderism and hedonism relativize and criticize the Word of God, even persecute the Bible-believing believers to eliminate them.

Let us read verses 1b-2 together: "But 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." Many theologians relate these verses to God's work in the "last days" in John 5:28,29: "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned." Jesus was saying here that at the end of the time God will speak His Word. Then everyone will be resurrected. But there will be a difference. Those who have done good will be resurrected to eternal life, those who have done evil will be resurrected to the Last Judgment. Jesus is saying here that death is not the end. In the end, either the resurrection of life or God's judgment will come. God will confess himself to His people and they will wake up to eternal life. Therefore, we can continue to dedicate our lives to God's mission and the expansion of His kingdom.

On the other hand, God says in these verses that it is precisely in the time of distress that a great work of salvation takes place. Let us read verse 3 together: "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." A proverb says that the night is darkest just before the dawn. When the night is darkest, the hopeful work of salvation and resurrection is done by those who teach God's Word, as Ezekiel 37:10 reveals: "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army."

What a wonderful promise! Here we can get to know two things. First, the great and decisive role of Bible teachers in all times. "Those who are wise" and "who lead many to righteousness" are the Bible teachers who study, obey, and teach God's words, even in the dark times. Like the stars that can only be seen at night, the Bible teachers are the bright light for a dark time, shining like the "brightness of the heavens" and leading many to the Word of God. God can do His work through one Bible teacher who makes a decision of faith to teach God's Word. God has given us the mission to live as the wise Bible teachers in this time. We can hold fast to our role as Bible-believing and obedient Bible teachers. We may proclaim God's truth by devoting ourselves to Bible study ministry. Sometimes this seems insignificant. However, our decision will be sustainable and our star in the heavens will remain and shine for ever and ever, leading many to righteousness, back to the Bible, and raising them up as determined disciples and warriors of Jesus.

Secondly, we are not alone. There are countless ancestors of faith and heroes who have preceded us and shine brightly in the heavens.

"At that time," a time of distress, was also the time of Jewish exile, when the Israelites lost their promised land because of their repeated disobedience. But God appointed a Bible teacher, Daniel, who made a life decision not to worship idols with meat and wine, but to hold fast to the water and vegetables of Bible study. Thus, he could be used as a Bible teacher for Nebuchadnezzar and helped him to recognize the living God who is above him. God used Daniel as a Bible teacher also for Belshazzar and Darius. Daniel did not say "I am not guilty", but he lived as a shepherd and Bible teacher to the end, teaching God's Word by confessing the sin of his people as his own and fighting with the angelic prince of God in fasting and prayer for his people to know God's purpose for them. Daniel became a shining star for ever and ever. The time of captivity was no longer a time of distress. Rather, God prepared the spiritual restoration of His people through Nehemiah and Ezra as the royal priesthood.

"At that time," when the church even executed God's servants like Jan Hus in the 16th century, a Bible teacher Martin Luther stood up. He taught God's Word from Romans 1:17 that we are not righteous by the sale of indulgences, but by the grace of God. In 1517, he was summoned before the most powerful emperor in the medieval world. Luther served also him as a Bible teacher: "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, [...] my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, [...] So help me God. Amen." Luther lived also in the Wartburg as a shepherd and Bible teacher for his people, teaching them God's Word and translating the Bible into German. Then God used him as the one brightly shining star for ever and ever, through which an entire continent could renew its spiritual identity as a kingdom of priests.

"At that time", when everyone wanted to please Hitler in the Third Reich and the church was brought into line and "aryanized", a Bible teacher Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood up. He was not intimidated by Hitler. As the leading international theologian of his time, he could have lived a safe life in faraway America. But he saw that his people, the Germans, needed a Bible teacher. Therefore, he returned to serve them with the Word of God. Although his seminary was closed several times, he continued the intensive Bible study and spiritual fellowship with his Bible students in the underground. He was executed. But to this day, like the stars, he shines for ever and ever, because he led many to righteousness and made them true disciples and messengers of the Word, so that God gave Germany grace for spiritual and practical reconstruction.

William Carey lived in the 18th century and is also known as the father of modern mission. He went to India as a missionary. There he experienced not only the painful temptation of the death of his son and the madness of his wife, but also the prevailing spirits of idolatry, reincarnation and superstition in India. The people of India believed in so many different Hindu gods. But William Carey faithfully adhered to Bible study by translating the entire Bible into Bengali and raising up numerous missionaries.

Samuel J. Mills is known as the "Father of foreign mission work in Christian America". In 1806, during his studies, he formed a prayer circle with four fellow students every Wednesday and Saturday. At that time, there was not even one missionary society. In addition, one day, after their prayer circle, they were caught in a thunderstorm, so they had to find shelter under a haystack to continue praying for the sending of missionaries. He lived only until the age of 35. But from the age of 17, he offered his whole life to God with the prayer to lead the whole world to righteousness through his message of the gospel. His star shines for ever and ever that the American Bible Society was founded, and North America became a missionary sending continent.

"At that time" was also the time of fatalistic Korea, the second poorest country in the world with two million deaths and a divided country after the Korean War. "At that time," God awakened the spirit of Dr. Lee and Mother Barry. Their Bible study, especially their Genesis and English Bible study, brought the light of the gospel to the intellectual but desperate students and led countless young people to righteousness. These were spiritually awakened by the hope of God "Bible, Korea, World Mission!" They have served as God's vast army of lay missionaries of campus mission in more than 90 countries around the world as far as Russia, China and the Muslim world to this day.

"At that time" was also 2020, the time of persecution of our church. But one house church stood up and taught God's Word from 1 Peter 4:13, "But rejoice inasmuch as you participate

in the sufferings of Christ." and Ezekiel 37:3, "Son of man, can these bones live?" They are the bright, shining stars in the sky today, leading the next generation and young people on campus to righteousness. The next generation, who were spiritually asleep, were able to be mobilized by the intensive prophecy and hearing of the Word of God through GLEF. They made a decision for God's vision and mission. God will continue to produce numerous fruits through them and even establish mission base camps in the Muslim world!

"At that time" is not a time of distress. The star of an economics student at the Middle East Technical University shines brightly in the heavens! The star of a 3rd generation missionary who graduated from high school for the glory of God and is now growing as a global spiritual leader through several shepherd trainings, shines brightly in the sky! Also, the stars of a young medical student and a Korean studies student for pioneering 12 universities shine brightly in the heavens! The star of young teenagers who taught God's Word from the five books of Moses and Proverbs at this GLEF shine brightly in the sky for ever and ever!

Let us read verse 4: "But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge." When we read the book of Daniel today, we marvel at how accurate God's predictions have been in the history of the intertestamental period. Bible critics, therefore, have always said that the book of Daniel was not written by Daniel himself in the 6th century, but by pseudo-Daniel in the middle of the 2nd century BC. The word "go here and there" in the literal Greek sense means that you work through a book from beginning to end. If you work through a book from beginning to end and several times, you will find insight.

Thanks be to God for allowing the Next Generation, through GLEF, to study, explore and penetrate the Book of Daniel several times and in depth according to the IBS method. This book is one of the most challenging in the Bible. But the next generation was able to lay the good foundation through IBS. By studying the book of Daniel several times through factual study, message, and testimonies, they were able to "penetrate" the Word of God. Now they can grow as wise leaders and Bible teachers who have knowledge and insight.

That is why the next generation and all of us may keep the Word of God as it is. Let us teach God's Word as it is through inductive Bible study "at that time" as Bible teachers and thus seal it in the Bible students for ever and ever. God's Word is a living and powerful Word and a sharp and double-edged sword. God uses the work of 1:1 Bible study teams powerfully, that through 10,000 1:1 Bible study teams and the spiritual common life of students and the next generation, young people will understand God's Word, gain great knowledge and are raised up as royal priests, global leaders, conquerors and world changers.

II. The final victory of God and of the holy people (5-13)

Let us look at verses 5 through 8. We now return to the starting point of Daniel's vision, when Daniel was on the bank of the great river Tigris (10:4,5). On the bank of the river there were now two others, one on one side, the other on the other side of the river. One of them asked when the astonishing things that had been foretold would happen. The man in the linen robes replied that it would take a time, times and half a time before the dispersion of the holy people would come to an end. Jesus himself commented that no one, even the angels, nor the Son, does not know the hour of the Father (Matthew 24:36). Let us look at verse 8: "I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

Daniel did not understand the answer of the man with the linen clothes either. But Daniel was interested in what the end of these events would be.

Look at verse 10: "Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand." The mystery of the end will be hidden until the last time. In the end, there are two types of people: the wicked and those who are wise. The wicked are those who do not want to understand the Word of God and the work of God. Their way leads to destruction. But those who are wise are those who meditate on the law of the Lord day and night. They will understand the way and will of God and have salvation from the power of sin and death.

Daniel was interested in what God meant by the "end." But the book of Daniel shows us that it is not about the end. Rather, it is about how we may live as the wise people in the time of the end: by patiently "waiting" - "Blessed is the one who waits..." God bless you to live as wise Bible teachers in the time of the end through Bible study. But how can we wait patiently? Let us read verse 13: "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." We see here that waiting patiently means active waiting: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19,20) To "wait" is not just to be used as Bible teachers who teach God's Word "at that time". To be a Bible teacher also means to educate the determined disciples of Jesus and holy stumps "at that time" through Bible study and discipleship ministry, and to raise them up as spiritual leaders who in turn proclaim God's Word as Bible teachers! God wants us to be filled with His hope and vision to first preach the gospel in the universities and to raise up disciples to the ends of the earth.

Many 1st generation missionaries are now in their seventies. A missionary came to Germany 50 years ago at the age of 22 to serve the mission among the campus students. It is encouraging that she does not just retire. Instead, she still goes to serve as a Bible teacher on campus "at that time" for 1:1 Bible study ministry. Let us follow Daniel's example, "go" and be used as influential Bible teachers in "that time" according to the Great Commission. Through Bible study on campus, we, as Bible teachers, may raise up determined leaders among the students so that Europe, America, and the Middle East may be spiritually reconquered and restored as His kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

As I lived in the spiritual distress of my shameful desires of youth, God helped me through a Bible teacher with Deuteronomy 6:5. Thanks be to God, who filled my heart with his absolute love, that because of my sin He had his only son crucified in such agony to give me eternal salvation. Now God intends to raise me up as a Bible teacher and a shining star in this spiritually dark generation. Praise be to God, who challenged me in the time of trials with 2 Timothy 2:15, to present myself to God like Daniel as a campus shepherd and Bible teacher who teaches God's Word. God has entrusted me with his flock of sheep in the students in Germany and Europe. With Luke 5:10b and 2 Timothy 2:15, God has called me as a Bible teacher to lead the lost souls on campus to the Word of God. As a Bible teacher, I have the privilege of co-working with God's people to mobilize the next generation and young students as global spiritual leaders and Bible teachers like Daniel. Moreover, I may proclaim God's Word according to Ezekiel 37:10 at the Bonn university and to the ends of the earth. Praise be to God who wants to use you as Bible teachers in the dark times, who are the

influential shining stars for ever and ever, through which the students in Germany and Europe are raised up as a vast army of disciples and warriors of Christ who carry on God's salvation history.

Through the book of Daniel, we have learned that "at that time" the Bible teachers who teach God's Word and lead many, even kings, to righteousness are the main characters and spiritual leaders in God's salvation history. God fulfills His plan of world salvation to the ends of the earth through one faithful Bible teacher who teaches God's Word and thereby makes disciples of Jesus. But the Antichrist passes away. In this time of spiritual distress, we can live victorious and influential lives as Bible teachers and spiritual conquerors like Daniel. You will shine like the brightness of the heavens and like the stars for ever and ever: for the pioneering ministry at the 1700 universities, for raising 7000 spiritual leaders, for the mobilization of the next generation, to the ends of the earth, and until our Lord Jesus returns.