

ARE YOU READY FOR HEAVEN?

Daniel Chapter 12:1-13

Page | 1 We have only skimmed the surface of the book of Daniel – haven't really done it justice. But the stories of Daniel show us that God will look after His people. This last chapter provides comfort to us as it reveals the end times.

And I wondered how we are viewing end times, considering many of the worldwide events happening, not the least Covid19.

My neighbour the other day caught me as I was about to rush out with my bags and he said - where are you going? Of course, then I had to stop and chat while both of us got a bit wet as it was raining.

And it got me thinking – **where am I going?** I don't mean just that day, I mean tomorrow and the day after and the day after that and when I die.

Every day we are going somewhere – we all have a destination in mind. Whether it is on a walk – you often walk a set route or time available.

Jump on your bike and cycling to a destination; or in the car, on a bus or taxi or train (when they run) or perhaps, when we were allowed, on a plane. Everyone is going somewhere.

But I wonder – are you sure of your destination, do you know where you are heading?

And if so, is it in the direction you want to go or are you confused – should I go in this direction, or what about that one – what are others doing, should I follow them?.

Our passage this morning from Daniel links to Isaiah 53 about the suffering servant and the text about resurrection. Just as the suffering servant, Jesus, was resurrected and restored to a relationship with God, His people will also be resurrected and restored to a relationship with Him.

Teaching about the resurrection was not common in the Ancient Near East, although every Israelite believed that one day he or she would be included in the restoration of the new kingdom.

Daniel has a clear reference to the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, although the eternal destiny of each would be quite different.

Job 19:25-26 says: "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives and He will stand upon the earth at last and after my body has decayed yet in my body I will see God."

Isaiah 26:19 says "But those who die in the Lord will live, their bodies will rise again. Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy for Your life-giving light will fall like dew on Your people in the place of the dead."

Verse 4 refers to the opening and sealing of the book and Daniel was charged to keep it safe and preserved. This was to be done so that believers of all times could look back on God's work in history and find hope. Daniel did not understand the exact meaning of the times and events back then, but we can see events as they are unfolding now, in the end times.

Sometimes, I think we can become a bit flippant when talking about Heaven – not actually taking it seriously. We need to realise that God has given each of us free will to choose, but many continue to procrastinate or just assume heaven will be their destination.

But you see we will all face judgement and it is up to each of us to make a choice as to where we want to go. God's people seem to be shattered again and again throughout history but His recurring purpose in this is to break the pride and self-sufficiency of rebellious people and to bring them to accept Him as their Lord.

Romans tells us that when the potter makes jars out of clay he has the right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into. God has the right to judge as He sees fit. He doesn't send people to hell – people choose it. Nobody arrives in heaven by accident.

Trials and persecutions make very little sense to us when we experience them, but they can purify us if we are willing to learn from them which will help us in the future. Romans 5 tells us that God always has a purpose in our sufferings.

Are you ready for heaven?

John 5:28,29 - "The time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment."

Deuteronomy 30:19 – tell us we are given a choice – choose between life and death, between blessings and curses. We are encouraged to choose life.

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God gave us free will. We are all going somewhere and we are the ones who decide where.

But remember God loves us all and Psalms tells us that God keeps track of all of our sorrows, He has collected all of our tears in a bottle and He has recorded each one of us in His book.

So how do you get ready for Heaven? How do you get there?

John 14:6 Jesus says, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Romans 10:13 - “Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”

John 3:16 - “For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

And what if you reject God’s Word? Then you are reserving your seat to eternal punishment by rejecting Jesus.

John 3:18 - “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in Him. But anyone who does not believe in Him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son.”

John 3:36 - “Anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.”

Hopefully you have chosen to accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and following Him. What is the next step?

We pack our suitcase! Now you may be thinking I have really lost it this time. Bear with me. I have my suitcase packed and ready to go with me today.

What does one pack when heaven is their destination?

Tissues – no crying I won't need these.

Panadol – no hang on, there's no pain in heaven.

Snacks and water - but Revelation tells me those in heaven will neither hunger or thirst – so the snacks and water are out.

Hat – ha, don't need that there is a crown waiting for me. **Torch** in I can't see – but it is never night, God Himself lights the place up.

Watch – time is meaningless where life is eternal.

Laptop Will I get WiFi up there - don't need to because heaven is the place where I can rest from my labours.

Better bring my **toiletries** though – but I am told my body will be incorruptible when I arrive – so no need – I will smell ever so sweet without these.

Money – but there will be nothing to buy in heaven, it is all free. Money was just an earthly commodity.

Heaven is all-inclusive. All our needs are met. Jesus has already prepared a place for us. Jesus has told us what to bring in Matthew 6:19,20. *“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal.”*

So hopefully you have reserved your seat. And for those who have travelled before you know you need to get there early – just in case. And you have to be well prepared.

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When it comes to where you will spend eternity, your flight leaves either when you die or when Christ returns. Only God knows the specifics – it could be next year, it could be next month, it could be today.

Romans 13:11,12 - "Time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here."

Departure is certain. Time of Departure is not. If you want to spend eternity in heaven, you have to stay ready for the announcement – boarding now, no late comers.

Is God on the throne in your heart – is He first in your life?

Or are you allowing earthly pressures, false teachings, disobedience to God's commands to dethrone God and choose your destination?

Everyone is going somewhere. Are you ready?

I remember when I was flying back home from America and landed in Sydney International Airport – our plane was late. Then we all had to go to the domestic terminal which was outside, try to find the shuttle bus or do a very quick walk dragging our luggage. Then once inside, go through security and find the right gate. Sadly a few of us missed our connecting flight to Melbourne. Apparently they had called out our names a few times – but we weren't there in time. Now that was okay because the other passengers and I rebooked for the next flight and enjoyed a meal together in the airport.

But what if this happens with my eternal flight? What if I miss it, if I have allowed delays to occur, or if I head to the wrong destination – hell and realise I need to be at the gate to heaven. I won't end up in the destination I really want.

There is only one way to heaven.

John 10:9 - "I am the Gate, whoever enters through Me will be saved."

Matthew 7:13,14 Jesus warned, "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad and its gate is wide for many people choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."

Now you may be sitting there thinking that you are heading in the right direction when in fact you may be going the wrong way, at the wrong terminal and gate. You may assume you are saved when in fact, you may not be.

You may still be sitting on the fence, neither in nor out. Still listening to false teaching; still want to have every single question answered; being lured away by the temptations of this world; waiting till you are 100% convinced that you have the answer to take that step. You may be too late – the flight may have just taken off without you.

You may find today's sermon uncomfortable and challenging – and that is a good thing, because the Holy Spirit will convict you and draw you closer to God. You are all here for a reason – God has called you to this church, this community, this faith – that has always been His plan. But it is still your choice, you are free to take what is declared and agree or disagree...it won't change whether or not you are welcome to worship

here and it won't change how I care for you as a minister. But you will never arrive at the throne of God only to find out you're on the other side of redemption as a result of me not declaring the entire Truth of

Page | 8 Scripture.

In Exodus Moses pleaded to God to forgive the people's sins but he said, if not, then erase my name – Moses – from the record you have written. James 5:20 says – you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back will save that person from death and bring about forgiveness of many sins.

So as your minister, I will stand at the throne of God one day and I will have to answer as to my ministry. And if I allowed you to get on the wrong flight and head in the wrong direction because I failed to warn you – then I will be held accountable.

Everyone Is Going Somewhere. Are you at the right gate? Are you certain you're on the right flight?

2 Peter 3:9 - "The Lord is not late with His promise to return, as some measure lateness. But rather, His "delay" simply reveals His loving patience toward you, because He does not want any to perish but all to come to repentance."

There is a time of persecution but it has an end. God is in control of it and He will be victorious over evil.

God does not reveal everything to us in this life. We must be content with the partial picture until He wants us to see more. He will tell us all we need to know.

Faithfulness to God has a rich reward, not necessarily in this life, but most certainly in the life to come.

There is still time to make sure you're on the right flight. You're not promised your next breath and Jesus could return at any moment...but TODAY is the day of salvation.

Everyone Is Going Somewhere. Where are you going?