

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER 2009: EVENING SERVICE

Adoration ...

Sing before: Psalm 40:4

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 147:1

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation for the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises.**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 146:3+4

Scripture reading: Daniel 12.

Scripture text: Daniel 12:2

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake; some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

In the book of Daniel most terrible events are prophesied.

- Wars and movings of people that all end in the display of power of the anti-christ – who tries to destroy the church.
- Surely that cannot be our end? That the enemy of God's church gains the final victory?

In these final chapters Daniel acquires insight into the last days and the great salvation of the people of God out of this eternal struggle between realm of satan and the kingdom of God.

- The book of Daniel reveals to us the conflict between these two realms and how the fails each time.
- Daniel and his friends could not be turned into worldly people – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to deny God and to bow before a statue – despite a blazing furnace.
- Likewise Daniel did not permit Satan break off his contact with his God, although he was threatened with a den of lions.

Why is the work of the anti-christ frustrated so?

- God answers Daniel that is the result of the fact that the LORD answers his prayer.
- That also applies to our prayers!

In chapter 10 the angel speaks to Daniel:

Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.” (Daniel 10:12)

Opposed to all Satan's attempts we see God's salvation. We read:

Now God had caused the official to show favour and sympathy to Daniel,.. (Daniel 1:9)

God showed Daniel favour and compassion...

In exotic words on a wall God records the end of the anti-christian rule of Belshazzar. Another victory for the kingdom of God.

Thereafter God widens Daniel's vision so that he can see the end of the struggle between God and the anti-christ.

- It all ends there where for the true believers salvation comes and
- the unbelievers are punished.

When shall this happen? That is a question mankind has been asking for centuries.

The disciples asked it of the Lord Jesus Christ:

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3)

Tell us **when** ...

There is a growing longing in believers for Christ to come – they want to know whether it will be long.

- It is difficult to live as a true believer
- It is hard to always have to fight for your faith
- It is bitter to be despised by others because of it.

When shall it end?

Daniel speaks for us all when he asks the LORD:

One of them (=Daniel) said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?” (Daniel 12:6)

The triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ is already revealed in Daniel.

- The Gospel of live is already recorded for us in the Old Testament.
- The angel tells Daniel:

...But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered. (Daniel 12:1)

But a shadow hangs over the lives of us who live, before that time arrives.

Ominously sound the words in Daniel's ears:

“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. ..” (Daniel 12:1)

Listen to these words again:

...as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then...

The Lord Jesus Christ also predicts a time when there will be an oppression such as there has never been from the beginning of time and that nobody would be saved unless the days were shortened for the sake of the believers.

- Once again the pyres of martyrs for the Lord Jesus Christ will blaze
- Church and public worship will no longer be
- Only they who bear the mark of the anti-christ shall live.

But God makes a promise to Daniel:

But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered.

- At the time when it will appear as if the child of God will perish under the pressure from the world – at the time when it will appear as if Satan will finally take over – at that time the people of God will be delivered.
- The situation will become so terrible that God will give Michael, His angel, a special instruction to keep and to protect the church.
- As the angels strengthened Jesus in Gethsemane, so they shall strengthen us
- The Lord Jesus refused their services precisely so that they might be available to us when our faith is tested.

But the day of resurrection is a day of justice.

- All will be resurrected – but only they who arise for life will be surrounded by angels
- The others will arise for death.

This why the Lord Jesus Christ arose from death:

- In the first place so that He could open the everlasting life for those whose names are written in the book of life.
- But also to send to the horror of death those who rejected Him.

If we believe that the Lord Jesus arose from the dead, then we believe that the last battle against the anti-christ is already won.

- The prophecy of Daniel is then fulfilled.
- Only then can we believe in the resurrection of our own body (flesh) of which Daniel prophesies.

Daniel describes the battle between the Lord Jesus Christ and Satan.

- With the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ the decisive battle was won.
- With it the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed to the world that He has power over life and death.

Hence the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not only a comfort – to the unbelievers it should be a terror.

- It is a comfort for those whose names are in the Book
- But it is a terror to those who fight and fought with Satan against the Lord Jesus Christ.
- For them death awaits inexorably – the terror of hell.

Nobody whose name is recorded in the Book has any grounds for boasting, he can only be amazed and thank God that his name is written in the book of life.

Has it ever struck you how dismal our life on earth is?

...In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:52)

...Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel doubtlessly listened with great joy to this message of great salvation – for he too was one of the redeemed.

- But immediately the question – when?
- When will these things happen?

The LORD then answers: **a time, times and half a time.**

- We do not comprehend God's time and Daniel also did not understand it.
- Hence he asks again: **“My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?”**
In Matthew 24:36 Christ answers the same question when He says:
“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father,...”

The book of Daniel ends with an exhortation and a promise.

“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.” (Daniel 12:13)

It is an exhortation to continue the daily struggle of life until the last day – to persevere to the end.

- The promise is an incentive that at the end we shall share in the inheritance of the saints
- That is why our life must be of the same nature.
- May God give us the strength to hold on, in the name of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, to the promises of God as He gives them to us in His Word.

Then the question in our lives will not be **when**, but

Blessed are they
who keep His statutes
and seek Him with all their heart. (Psalm 119:2)

Amen.

Be merciful to us, Lord, bless us abundantly. Cherish us with the love shining from Your face. For Christ's sake. **Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 68:1+9.

Public confession of faith.

Psalm 134:4

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
The Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.

Amen

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Scripture: New International Version