

## Bible Tuesday for Pentecost 26, 2018

### Daniel 12:1-3

“At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. <sup>2</sup> Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth<sup>[a]</sup> shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup> Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky,<sup>[b]</sup> and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The book of Daniel is apocalyptic literature, of the same type as the New Testament’s Revelation. Daniel is an amalgamation of legends from Greek, Babylonian, and Persian cultures, as well as Jewish folklore and tradition. The concept of the Book of Life comes from Mesopotamia tradition and is found in later Jewish writing in the Hebrew Scriptures. Michael “the great prince” is one of four archangels in Hebrew Scriptures. Coincidentally, Michael reappears in the book of Revelation as God’s military general in the final battle between good and evil. Just as Revelation takes a carrot and stick approach to faithful life, so does Daniel. This passage mentions that only some will be awakened at the end of days, only those whose names are written in the book of life.

### Psalm 16

#### **A Miktam of David.**

<sup>1</sup> Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

<sup>2</sup> I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord;  
I have no good apart from you.”<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble,  
in whom is all my delight.

<sup>4</sup> Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;<sup>[b]</sup>  
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out  
or take their names upon my lips.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;  
you hold my lot.

<sup>6</sup> The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
I have a goodly heritage.

<sup>7</sup> I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;  
in the night also my heart instructs me.

<sup>8</sup> I keep the Lord always before me;  
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
my body also rests secure.

<sup>10</sup> For you do not give me up to Sheol,  
or let your faithful one see the Pit.

<sup>11</sup> You show me the path of life.

In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

The psalm is inscribed “a michtam of David”. The term “michtam” is not understood by biblical scholars. In other literature, “michtam” means “an inscription on a stele or a pillar.” There is no evidence that this psalm has been found in that context.

The psalm is unique in that there is only one line of petition, followed by a full body of praise to God.

“I have no good apart from you.” Jesus says, “Why do you call me good?! No one is good but God alone.” Jesus appears to be supporting the statement of this psalmist.

“The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.” This calls to mind the surveying of property boundaries which may or may not fall in your favor.

The second half of this psalm is united by its theme of body parts. Verse 7 in NRSV states “in the night my heart instructs me.” The word here translated “Heart” is actually “kidneys” in Hebrew, as kidneys were believed to be the seat of conscience. Verse 8 speaks of the “right hand” which symbolizes one’s authority and power. “Soul” or in Hebrew “nefesh” which means whole being. These are all in contrast to verse 11 which speaks of God’s whole presence and right hand of might and power.

Hebrews 10:11-18

<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ<sup>[a]</sup> had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, “he sat down at the right hand of God,” <sup>13</sup> and since then has been waiting “until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.” <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. <sup>15</sup> And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying,

<sup>16</sup> “This is the covenant that I will make with them  
after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts,  
and I will write them on their minds,”

<sup>17</sup> he also adds,

“I will remember<sup>[b]</sup> their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

<sup>18</sup> Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

The author of Hebrews finalizes his systematic of Jesus as high priest with this statement. Jesus is the final and fulfilling sacrifice for all sin. The sacrifice of Jesus earns forgiveness of all sin to humanity by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of this sacrifice, Jesus is seated at God’s right hand (note this does not agree with Trinitarian Theology that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-equal) and serves as God’s second in command and heir.

Mark 13:1-8

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!"<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

<sup>3</sup>When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately,<sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?"<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray.<sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!'<sup>[a]</sup> and they will lead many astray.<sup>7</sup> When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come.<sup>8</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

This is part of the Palm Sunday story from the gospel of Mark. Jesus rode into Jerusalem celebrated by his disciples and the crowds. The parade ends at the Temple, where Jesus dismounts and leads the crowds into the Temple courts. This appears to be the first time at least one of the disciples has been to Jerusalem, as he marvels aloud to Jesus about the huge, hewn rocks that make the Temple Court walls. Jesus declares that all these glorious walls and buildings that make the Temple complex will be destroyed. Indeed, in 70 AD, Rome sacked Jerusalem and the Temple was obliterated, save the "Wailing Wall", which still stands to this day.

What is most fascinating to me about this text is not that Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem, but rather Jesus' response to Peter, James, John, and Andrew when they ask him when the Temple will be destroyed. Note, Jesus doesn't actually answer the disciples' question. Jesus warns that lots of folks will come down through history claiming to be THE HERO, THE SAVIOR, and mislead people. In addition, there will be talk about wars and actual wars, but that is just the beginning. Of what? Certainly of Rome's squashing of the Jews. There were indeed multiple insurrections of the Jews against the Romans before Rome finally sent legions to destroy Jerusalem. But Jesus is also prophesying about the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. Since the Kingdom of God is the fruits of the Holy Spirit manifest in people (love, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, compassion, self-control, wisdom, understanding, council, might, knowledge and fear of the Lord, joy in God's presence), it is bound to come in conflict with world powers, governments and wealth. Over the course of human history, that has caused wars and rumors of wars. Nations have risen against nations, such as the crusading Europeans and the Muslims, Northern Ireland and England. Jesus does not call his followers to arms to join in these wars for His cause. No, Jesus merely warns that these wars are to be expected.