

Go thy way till the end be

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] The book of Daniel chapter 12 and let us read at verse 8 again. And I heard, but I understood not.

Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

And then verse 13. Verse 13, but go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the day.

Verse 13 in particular, but go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. Daniel is one of the great figures of the Old Testament.

Living as a Jew in exile in Babylon, he began life with a handicap, yet the handicap proved to be no hindrance to his advancement in that country.

[1 : 10] He rose to a position of outstanding prominence in the royal court. Indeed, his promotion to such high eminence created difficulty for him with the Caldigan courtiers, and led them to plot his downfall.

But these plots were frustrated. And we find Daniel, now an old man, still exercising a wide authority in the land of his adoption, still retaining his integrity, still loyal to the God of his fathers.

But after all, it was a small thing to be promoted to a high position in Babylon. In Babylon, the greatest honor that this man enjoyed was that he was the prophet of God, an ambassador of God to his own people, a witness to God, for God, to those who were out with the Commonwealth of Israel, a man who spoke to them, and who, because God inspired him to write this message, is speaking to us tonight.

Now, there is much that is difficult, obscure, dark, in his prophecy. much that the Church is not going to understand, as we can gather, until it pleases God to amplify the revelation and to make his own word clear.

With that notwithstanding, we are required to pay attention to what has been written, to what has been revealed, it deserves all the attention that we can possibly bring to it, and let us leave the rest with God.

[3 : 51] Now, quite evidently, Daniel himself didn't understand all that he heard from the angel, all that was said to himself, all that he saw in the vision which the Lord sent him.

He doesn't know how things are going to work out. And he confesses his anxiety, oh my Lord, what should be the end of these things?

And God answered not by filling in the blanks for him, but by telling him to be patient and leave, and leave, and leave, what he had not been pleased to disclose to the appropriate time, for thou thy way to the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Now, perhaps there's a message for us here too. That is surely because it speaks to us, first of all, of a way to be followed.

Go thou by way. You might look at these words as a refusal of the prophet's request, and yet as a direction as to where his duty lay.

[5 : 38] It was a refusal in the sense that what was obscure to the prophet was not then revealed. but it was a direction as to his present duty in that it told him what to do.

Go thou thy way till the end be. Daniel, as I have been saying, quite evidently desired to know more, to understand things more fully.

This at least was clear that there were troublous times ahead for Israel, and yet the cause of Israel was to be maintained, and God's blessing was yet to rest upon his people.

you might perhaps compare him a bit to Moses on Mount Pisgah. Israel had already come through much, and the tribulation was not yet ended.

Moses, their leader through those 40 years, was not to lead them into the land of promise, nor to go through the remaining difficulties with them.

[7 : 00] But he's given a glimpse of the future of Israel, a glimpse of that glory that awaited them. And he exclaims, happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord.

So might Daniel have done at the close of his vision. But he wants to know more. His problem, it seems to be, was how do we go from here to there?

He knew the present situation. He had seen sufficient in the vision that was given him of Israel's future glory.

But what he couldn't understand was how this was going to be transformed into that. The landscape was cloudy.

And being a man of inquiring mind, he wanted to know more. But there was to be no more revelation at that time.

[8 : 28] For the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. God does indeed share his secrets with his people.

The secret things belong unto the Lord, our God. But the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever. And the things that are concealed today will yet be revealed. with them that fear him is the secret of the Lord and the knowledge of his covenant he will to them afford. But he does it in his own time.

In his own way. God is sovereign. And we must bow in his presence. We're reminded of this fact time and again as we read scripture.

For example, Peter after the resurrection of Jesus wondering what could have happened to John the disciple who was so specially close to the master to the master.

[10 : 02] What shall this man do? What is that unto thee? We've been talking about discipleship let it rest there.

Follow thou me for thy way to the end be. we think of the disciples before the Lord was parted from them.

Lord would thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which God hath put into his own power.

But ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria to the etymal parts of the earth go ye your way you have your commission go your way till the end be.

That is the strain then in which God answers his servant Daniel on this occasion. And perhaps that is what he's saying to us tonight if we are engaging our minds in with things that are really unprofitable because it is not God's will that we should reach that fuller disclosure yet there are certain duties to which he directs us there are certain occupations for our mind as well as activities for our bodies and he closes us into these go thou thy way till the end be.

[12 : 12] a spurious optimism seems to take possession of men at the beginning of a new year think back to the beginning of this year recall the various things that you heard at the beginning of the year oh you hear them always you'll be hearing them this week again happy new year yes that's our wish for each other quite that it should be but you'd almost get the impression that with the tearing off of the page of the calendar which relates to the old year the last page of the calendar which relates to the old year there's going to be a complete change the passing of 1982 into 1983 was somehow or other going to automatically bring about a change for the better that was then what are you hearing in these days what are you thinking in these days has that early optimism been realized hasn't there come instead a spirit of pessimism what's the good what's the good of hoping what's the good of trying the economic situation we are told is worsening unemployment still on the increase the nations have stopped piling arms in distrust of each other more than ever they did millions of people in the less privileged parts of the world hardly know when their next meal is going to come from the church in the lands with which we are familiar is on the decline some seem to be totally ineffective and perhaps anxious hearts are crying to God tonight and I'm sure there are many oh my

Lord what shall be the end of these things and indeed if we are to build our focus on the prospects for the future as they present themselves to us and on a common sense and realistic evaluation of them we shall find that we don't have a great deal to build on I read somewhere of an eminent German politician in the days of the first world war or rather after the first world war who referred to the allied victory and particularly to the part of Great Britain and it said there are strange people the

British they're never prepared when the crisis comes but somehow they always muddle through as a tribute that doesn't rank high

God surely requires more of us than this spirit of muddling through it's not the spirit that Christ commended it's not the spirit that he exemplified it's not the spirit that is commended in this word of his from beginning to end wandering and wondering why we are where we are and how we are tonight O my Lord what shall the end of these things be?

And God is saying to us as in effect he said to Daniel and as he said to the psalmist be still and know that I am God what I do thou knowest not now but thou shalt know hereafter Let us take from our text that life is intended to follow a definite course that a definite way has been laid down for us by God Go thou thy way and it was not a way willfully chosen by Daniel but a way that God had chosen for him and with which he accepted even at the cost of all the trial and difficulty and suffering of which we read in this book which bears his name

Go thou thy way Go thou thy way Blessed is the man who knows that he's got a way and to whom the Lord has revealed it and to whom the Lord has revealed it That's the difficulty today It's been the difficulty of course of all ages We have turned everyone to his own way We have lost the sense of objective There is no clear and imperial overruling ambition dominating our lives an ambition that has regard to God's glory there is no clear there is no clear There is no clear There is no clear There is a little other spirit which expressed itself in the words of Paul this one thing I do all the other things were incidental they were necessary but they were incidental this was the main thing seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all other things shall be added unto you the Westminster divines chose their words well when they said man's chief end chief purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever that's the way that God sets before us are we following it?

[19:42] following any other way that may occur to us will undoubtedly lead to disappointment just as it did to Henry Martin whose great ambition as he tells us in his university days was to attain a certain academic distinction upon which his heart was set he attained it but there was no sense of elation I found he says that I have grasped a shadow none but Christ can really satisfy what shall it profit a man said Jesus if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul go thou thy way he might have said to Daniel go thou my way because that's what he was doing he had been in God's way for years doing God's will carrying out his purposes as these were revealed to him continuing it says God turn not to the right hand nor to the left turn not to the right hand nor to the left so thou thy way till the end be let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid neither let it be afraid

I say again there's a word to us there tonight isn't there because it's so easy to become completely ineffective through sheer frustration and bewilderment we need to be in such close touch with God that his direction shall be clear it's not necessary in the building of a great cathedral let us say that the humblest labourer engaged in the work should know every detail of the architect's plan he's got his own part to play he's been told what it is he's been shown his duty and if every man does the part that has been assigned to him the building that was in the mind of the architect would appear at the appointed time in all the glory it is not for you to know the times nor the seasons which God hath put in his own power not for you to pry into those things which God still keeps him leave thee out walking to him go thou thy way till the end be then again in these words there is a message to us because they speak of a rest that is to be sought go thou thy way till the end be for thou shalt rest is that what

Christianity is about resting yes indeed not resting in indolence not resting in indifference to the cause but resting in the confidence but faith in Christ alone can produce conclusions now there are many who take this passage to be a reference to the death of the believer very probably is but don't forget that there is a restfulness in the Christian life from its very inception he's not speaking just of the rest that comes to the believer when his labors here are finished he's speaking of the rest that comes into his experience from the very moment of his acceptance of God's way go thou thy way there shall restfulness in doing it come unto me said Jesus all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest and again let me say it's not the rest of indolence it's rest not from toil but in toil take my yoke upon you and learn of me and in his service there is rest in me you shall find rest unto your souls throw thou thy way till the end be yes there is an end to everything that pertains to this life here we have no continuing city our fathers where are they our prophets do they live forever to take only one year what reminders of our mortality are given us from the beginning to the end

death death has broken in upon us in various ways some in their homes loved ones have been taken from them some in their in the congregation we miss them as we come to the end of the year they were with us last year they are not with us anymore that life with every day there is a dawn and a sunset with every year there is a round of the season and all these changes remind us that this is not our rest we are still in the way we are pilgrims to that born from which no traveler returns it is not a time for us to relax vigilance

Alexander McLaren the famous preacher in Manchester of a bygone generation now speaks in one of his sermons about the foundering of a ship known as the Royal Charter it had come across the Atlantic through terrible storms and when they were now just in calm waters again and within easy reach of port the grateful passengers gathered together to present a testimonial to the captain to whom they believed they owed so much and there was great rejoicing and hilarity the perils were over tomorrow they will be ashore but many of them weren't the ship foundered just outside the port due very largely it was believed to the carelessness induced by a false sense of security on the part of one of the officers go thou thy way until the end be there is no time for a relaxation of vigil go thou thy way till the end be what a comforting word this is to the believer thou shalt rest he knows the restfulness of faith in his own personal experience but as he looks forward to the end of the way he knows that the grave awaits him there but he knows that the grave is as

Murray McChain once put it a dressing room where the believer puts off the garments of his mortality and puts on the garments of his immortality and glory what a glorious thought that was a rest it was a thought that inspired Samuel Rutherford to write those lines which Mrs. Cousin put into verse I shall sleep sound in Jesus filled with his likeness rise to see him and adore him to see him with these eyes tweak me and resurrection but paradise that stand then then for glory dwelling in Emmanuel's land restfulness even now restfulness from the crushing burden of sin from the sharp accusations of an awakened conscience from the terrible burden of guilt a restfulness in the harmony of the new creation a restfulness in the knowledge that life's supreme purpose has been attained a restfulness in the thought that all things work together for good unto them that love [31 : 21] God who are called according to his purpose salvation the souls of believers are at their death so again said the Westminster divines made perfect in holiness and to immediately pass it to glory and their bodies being still united to Christ to rest in their graves till the resurrection and at the resurrection believers being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity storms on the way yes dangers hazards perils yes but faced in partnership with him who said when thou passest through the waters

I will be with thee through the rivers they shall not overflow thee when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame kindle upon thee blessed blessed are the dead that die in the Lord yea saith the spirit for they shall rest from their labors and their works do follow them let me remind you of the words that we sang a little while ago which expressed the hope of the psalmist thou would guide me by thy counsel and afterward receive me into thy glory now lastly these words speak of a lot to be inherited for thou shall rest and shall stand in thy lot at the end of the days know that word lot has different meanings as you know a man can say to you well this is my lot when he's trying to be resigned to something unpleasant in life he doesn't see the hand of God in it at all but well it's his lot blind fate has arranged this for him he's just got to endure it or on the other hand the word may be used as signifying a definite and deliberate allocation reference reference reference reference here to to what happened to the children of Israel at the end of their pilgrimage ATM they left Egypt they they left they passed among

Steve Laut to be strangers yet God had promised them the land and God chose out the lot of their inheritance for them every tribe had its lot every family had its lot it was all planned God had arranged for their arrival and for their settlement and those new surroundings I remember meeting in Canada many years ago now a worthy Christian lady who told me how she had gone out there in her youth and she was a very old lady when I knew her and that's a long time ago and she could remember that somebody had asked her father because the family went out together asked her father as they were about to board the ship is there any preparation for you on the other side and he said no a bleak prospect they would have to fight for their own hands from the moment of their arrival and that they did but I want my friend to turn that question to you tonight is there any preparation for you on the other side there is for the believer thou shalt stand in thy lot he's got the word of his Lord

I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself but where I am there he will be also is there any preparation for you on the other side go thou thy way what is thy way is it God's way Jesus spoke of two ways and only two enter thou in at the straight gate for straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it but wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in there out drive to enter in at the straight gate go thou thy way to the envy for thou shalt rest and stand in thy loft at the end of the day

[38 : 32] I say again it's his way your way my dear friend if not get rid of that folly before the year end yes before the night end cry for his mercy even now pray that he will guide you your feet into his way and keep your face toward the sunrise until the end be let us pray we give thee thanks O Lord our God that thou didst have regard to us in our lost and undone condition and that notwithstanding our demerit thou wast moved by our need and it sent thine only begotten son into the world for our rescue to seek and to save the lost to open a new way to God to say to the wandered

I am the way the truth and the life no one cometh unto the father but by me hear us O Lord in our supplication and forgive our unworthiness to be heard for Christ's sake Amen