

Go Thou Thy Way

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[0 : 00] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn back to the prophecy of Daniel and chapter 12, and consider words focusing particularly on the very last verse of the chapter.

What the Lord says to Daniel, But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

The book of Daniel is partly historical and partly prophetic.

The first six chapters of the book are mainly historical, almost a continuation of what we have in the end of the second book of Kings in the Old Testament, where Judah and Jerusalem are taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and the people are taken to Babylon.

And of course, one of those who was taken as captive to Babylon was Daniel. As a young man, he was taken to Babylon. And we see that he was very influential in the Babylonian situation.

[1 : 52] He was obviously a highly gifted person, and those in authority recognised his gifts and gave him status in the government in Babylon.

But besides being gifted, he was also a very godly man. And the Lord used him to witness to the pagan people and in the pagan atmosphere of Babylon.

And we see that the second half of the book of Daniel, as I said, is prophetic. And the prophecies, so far as we are concerned, are very difficult to understand and are very obscure.

Certainly we see from chapter 7 onwards, and particularly chapters 10 and 11, that the Lord is highlighting that various kings are going to rise.

And they are intent upon defeating the Lord's people and the Lord's cause. And of course, the prophecy isn't really to do always with the situation immediately following the days of Daniel.

[3 : 24] But the prophecies actually extend right to the end of the world. And what we have here in chapter 12 really talks about the end days or the latter days.

And he's talking there particularly about a time when there will be great trial and tribulation experienced by the church.

And in chapter 12, we see that there is a question.

In verse 6.

And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And verse 8. Daniel says, I heard, but I understood not.

[4 : 44] Then I said, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? Daniel is keen to know exactly what's going to happen.

And the Lord said to him, Go thy way, Daniel. For the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified and made white and thied, but the wicked shall do wickedly.

None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. And then he goes on talking about times and set times and days and so on.

And Daniel still can't understand it. But then the Lord says, It's not for you to understand these things. What you have to do is go on with your godly life until the end.

And the promise is, You shall stand in your lot at the end of the days. Verse 13. Go thou thy way till the end be.

[5 : 52] For thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. You know, there are some people, and I try and focus on the words that we have here.

The number of days, what do they mean? The number of weeks, what do they mean in prophecy? Well, we mustn't be taken up with these things. The Lord here is saying to Daniel, You, he says, have something more important that you have to take care of.

And that is to go your way until the end be. And then you shall rest and stand in your lot at the end of the days. And I'd like just to highlight under four headings what the Lord at least is saying here to Daniel and hopefully get some lessons from it ourselves.

First of all, go thou thy way. What way is the Lord commending to Daniel? It's not any old way.

But go thy way. Secondly, he talks about the end. What does the end mean? Thirdly, he talks about a promised rest.

[7 : 17] Thou shalt rest. We heard about the saints everlasting rest. And that's what he's talking about in these words.

Thou shalt rest. And finally, thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days. He's talking about an eternal inheritance.

Into which Daniel is going to pass at the end of life's journey. Firstly then, the Lord says to Daniel, It's not for you to be delving into these days and the prophecies that are too deep for you to understand.

Rather, you go thy way. Go thou thy way. Now what way would the Lord commend to Daniel?

What kind of way had he been walking up until now? What kind of lifestyle has he had? Well, you see what the Lord says about Daniel in chapter 9 and at verse 23.

[8 : 32] At the beginning of thy supplication, when Daniel began to pray, the commandment came forth, Thou art greatly beloved.

The Lord has said of Daniel, he is a man who is greatly beloved. And that's not the only time he says it.

In chapter 10 at verse 11, the same thing. He said to me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved. Fear not.

This man was the object of God's love. And he is living in a particular way and walking a particular path as someone beloved of the Lord.

What way has he been walking? Well, I'm going to highlight four or five things from the beginning of the prophecy that mark out the kind of lifestyle Daniel has been living.

[9 : 52] The kind of way he's been walking. And the way at this point in verse 13 that the Lord commends that he continue to walk in.

Look first of all in chapter 1 at verse 8. When Daniel and his fellow people from Judah have come into the land of Babylon.

And you remember that particular kinds of food were offered to them from the king's table. Food and wine.

And they were given these things to eat. And in chapter 1 at verse 8, Daniel says, He purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.

Therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now that might at first sight seem to you to be a kind of a dietary preference that Daniel was making.

[11 : 12] That he didn't want any of the food that these people were living because of another diet he preferred himself. But what we have here is someone who knows the laws of the Lord.

And who knows that the law of the Lord directs the people who love the Lord, the Israelites who love the Lord God, that they live a particular lifestyle and they refrain from eating certain kinds of food.

Do you remember that in Israel the Lord specified that there were some particular animals and fish and birds that they were not allowed to eat?

Because they were termed unclean under the ceremonial law. And Daniel loved the law. And he loved the God of the law.

And he didn't want to offend the Lord. Whether he was in Babylon or in Jerusalem, he lived by this particular life.

[12 : 17] That he wanted to do what pleased the Lord. And this is what we see here in chapter 1. He says, I'm not going to have any of this food lest I defile myself. Of course, the Apostle James says the very same thing.

And in other parts of the scripture also in Isaiah 52. Ye who bear the vessels of the Lord, come ye out from among them and touch no unclean thing.

This is a pointer to us also. But there are things that will defile us if we involve ourselves with them in life.

I don't mean particularly aspects of diet. I mean particular practices and involvements with various sins and unclean habits.

If you involve yourself with them, you will be defiled. This man alerts the eunuch who was in charge of these people.

[13 : 27] Young people who came from Jerusalem as captives. And he says, I'm not going to defile myself with anything. I'm going to stay true to the Lord Jehovah.

Well, that's a particular path he's walking. And the Lord says to him in chapter 12 at verse 13.

You continue doing that. You go your way till the end. Keep yourself clean till the end. The second thing under this first heading is in chapter 2 and verses 13 and 17.

Particularly chapter 2 verse 17. There was a particular time when the king Nebuchadnezzar had had a dream.

And he wasn't disclosing the details of the dream to anyone. And he asked the astrologers and the Chaldeans and all the people who had, who were reckoned to be wise, to come and tell him his dream.

[14 : 41] And he asked Daniel. Daniel came and said, no, I can't tell you the dream. But what did Daniel do? He went to his friends. Chapter 2, 17.

That Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions. That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret.

That Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. The lesson is in the difficulties of life.

He was a man who was maintaining close Christian spiritual contact with his friends.

In the difficulties of life, he and they prayed together. They were as one together.

[15 : 39] They were as one together in the presence of the Lord. Have you ever thought, something I came across recently, that the New Testament doesn't use the word sent in the singular.

It uses sense in the plural. In other words, the people of God together as one, unitedly doing business with the Lord and living as one to the glory of the Lord.

And that's the way it was with Daniel. He wasn't, as it were, a Christian, a way out on his own there. No, he was confiding in his fellows and praying about the problems that were common to them all.

And the Lord says, you continue in that way till the end. And the third thing is this, that he was manly in his witness despite difficulties and opposition.

Chapter 5 at verse 22, when the king Belshazzar had his great feast and he was using the vessels of the temple that had been taken from the temple in Jerusalem, using these cups and vessels in his orgy and in his drunkenness.

[17 : 11] And Daniel was brought in before the king after the Lord had written the message, many, many, take ill you, fasten, over against the candlestick on the wall.

And the king wanted to know, what does this message mean? When Daniel comes in, he accuses the king of not living the way he ought to have lived.

He was clear in his words to the king. The king had heard of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride.

And he said, you didn't take note of any of these things. You have continued living in your own way. And he stood up in that great banqueting hall with all the important people in Babylon.

And Daniel, I said, was on his own in the middle of all that. And he stood for the Lord. Well, that took some courage. And that's what the Lord said to him.

[18 : 16] You go on in that way. Be courageous as my witness. Don't shrink your wave as a shrinking violet. But be strong in the strength of the Lord to continue witnessing for me.

And the next one is that he is faithful despite personal danger. Chapter 6 at verse 10. When the king Darius, a new king, wanted nobody to ask a petition of any god but of him for 30 days.

And anybody who was going to break that command of the king was going to be cast into the den of lions. When Daniel heard the threat made against anybody who would pray to any other god, what did he do?

He went home. He opened his windows toward Jerusalem. And as customary, he prayed three times to the Lord in heaven.

Disregarding what the king and his commandment had said. Well, of course, he was thrown to the lions.

[19 : 33] But what was the answer he gave King Darius when he came early in the morning? Daniel is your god to whom you pray and whom you worship, able to save you from the lions.

My god has sent his angel. And shut the lions' mouths. A person who is faithful to God despite personal danger.

Go on in that way, Daniel, until the end. And finally, before I go on, we find in chapter 9, verses 3 and 5, that this was a man who wasn't just focusing on himself, but he was focusing particularly on the Lord on behalf of himself and the people of God.

Chapter 9, verse 3, I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

I made my confession and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and so on. Verse 5, Verse 9, He was a man whose heart was wide to embrace the cause of God and the people of God and bring their faults before the Lord, asking for the Lord's forgiveness and cleansing and mercy.

[21 : 28] And we need to be like that also, to bring the cause of Christ with all its problems to the Lord himself.

And the Lord says, Now go thou thy way. You're a person who is dedicated to me, a person who is faithful in the fellowship of the church, a person who is strong as a witness, a person who is a prayerful one, go on in that way until the end.

This is the way that the Lord commends. And we would seek grace to follow in Daniel's example. But then he comes and he says, Go thou thy way till the end.

The end. Well this can only mean the end of life. Till the day that you end your experience and your life ends in this world.

The end of the wilderness journey. And it's not a prospect that is a happy one for many people because they live for this world alone.

[23 : 13] But for the people of God it's a wonderful prospect. although the Jordan of death is a reality. And the river Jordan overflows its banks all the time of harvest using the words applicable to the Jordan when the children of Israel passed over going into the promised land.

Death is the last enemy. But what does it say? What does the end mean for the people of God?

What did it mean for the Apostle Paul when he's writing to the Corinthians 2 Corinthians chapter 5? And he says that he looks on himself just like a tabernacle that's about to be dismantled.

A tabernacle that's about to be taken apart and moved to another place. And the Apostle Paul elsewhere he looks as it were forward to the moment of his death in 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 6 and 8 and he says the time of my departure is at hand.

And the word departure there means basically the same word as we use for opening something loosing something up and they use to illustrate the meaning of the word those of you who have known service as seamen when you unhook or open the last ropes of the ship as you're just about to leave port.

[25 : 15] The ship has been tied up stem and stern and the ropes are eventually all loosed off and the ship is free to move to another country another continent.

Well that's what the Apostle Paul is saying the time of my departure is at hand. And this is what he's talking about here go go thou thy way till the end be that is the moment at which the last tie that ties you to this world is loosed till the end be.

And in prospect of that Paul is saying I have fought the good fight I have run my ways I have kept the faith henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the righteous judge will give me at that day and not to me only but also unto all them who love his appearing.

The apostle Paul looked beyond the prison walls the time he wrote these words he was in the prison in Rome awaiting execution.

The prison bars couldn't constrain his lively hope that at the moment death came his soul would fly away in the arms of the angels into heaven and this is what the Lord is saying really to Daniel you continue on that godly way sustained by my grace serving me in faith and in love until the end.

[27 : 23] I read once of John Calvin who was feeling the weight of duty as a minister of the gospel and it's as if he asked the Lord how long Lord do I have to bear these weights and these responsibilities and these burdens things and he made out that the Lord said to the very end to the very end you have to bear the witness of Christ to the end you have to bear your responsibilities in his name to the end you mustn't give up you don't see the long distance runner quitting halfway no you have to continue to the end and you say well how can I manage it I'm finding the hill so steep finding the wind against me so strong how can

I continue there are things in life that I didn't expect trials that I didn't realize I had to experience opposition that I didn't know anything about when I started off following the Lord Jesus Christ it's getting tougher and tougher well you have to fall back on the Lord who began the good work in you and what does he say where I have begun the good work in you I will continue it until the day of Jesus Christ he gives more grace grace for the situation just as you feel you're ready to give up he comes with extra grace some of you might remember the late reverend John McSween who was in point for a number of years and he was asked once what is it like being a minister and this is what he said well he said

I'll tell you it's being at breaking point but not breaking and very often that's the way it is being a Christian especially in our present day when there's so much anti-Christian rhetoric and anti-Christian legislation anti-Christian attitudes anti-Christian atmosphere around us what's it like to be a Christian if you're going to be a Christian like Daniel was a believer and a witness well it's going to try you but you have to commit yourself to the Lord who is able to do for you far above what you're able to ask or even think go thou thy way till the end be till the end be thirdly he promises him rest thou shalt rest well this isn't putting up your feet with slippers in retirement from

Christianity Christians don't retire but there is a rest promise to them in this not in this world but in the next the same word is used here for rest as we find in 2nd Samuel chapter 7 at the beginning when the Lord says that he had given David rest from all his enemies round about him there was no conflict no aggression and this in the higher and the more spiritual sense is what the Lord is saying to Daniel you shall rest the time when Satan comes with his trials and with his afflictions and with his wiles that time will stop no more trials no more temptations no more difficulties in connection with the labour you have in the gospel no more bodily toil no more spiritual darkness disappointment heartache trial none of these things the rest is so complete that all things that bother you here will have gone will have gone sorrow and sighing will flee away they used to illustrate this rest by likening it to a horse that had been ploughing all day ploughing furrow after furrow and then when the evening came the horse would be led into his stable and all the harness was taken off a harness of labour that meant labour for him was all taken off and he would have rest in his stall at night the same with the person who's been travelling if you're travelling over moorland you're all dressed for that kind of walk but when you reach the house you take off these things wouldn't do for you to be walking around in the house with heavy wellingtons and so on no you part with these things you've had on the journey and you leave them because they mean anguish and pain and discomfort but when the

Lord brings his people home anguish has gone pain has gone the trials have gone nothing enters into heaven that worketh abomination or maketh a lie but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life you shall rest what an amazing thing this rest is you know it's not something that the people of God are totally ignorant of because when grace comes into your heart and soul in this world you taste this rest you taste this peace you have moments of it as you journey on and that draws your heart and affections to the rest in all its fullness that awaits you in heaven you shall rest this isn't the place for rest this is the place for work this is the place for serving this is the place for witnessing this is the place for praying this is the place for being active for the

[35 : 15] Lord by faith and in love but at the end of it there is the rest that remain a rest for the people of God and finally what he says to him is you shall stand or thou shall stand in thy lot at the end of the days well maybe the first reference here is to the resurrection you shall stand the very beginning of the chapter many of them verse two many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake some to everlasting life some to shame and everlasting contempt they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever first point that I think in this word at the end you shall stand is that after death there is the resurrection and what a day that will be in our communities

I don't suppose it's wrong to say that there are more lying in the dust of the earth in our cemeteries than there are living in our homes around us but the day will come and the trumpet shall sound and the graves must open because the command of Christ cannot be refused on that day they who have done righteously and lived for him they will wake to everlasting life to enjoy it body and soul sanctified souls and now sanctified bodies coming together at the resurrection and the complete personality entering into the joy of the Lord forever and ever you shall stand in your lot the reference

I think to the we have here in relation to the word lot goes back to the book of numbers when the Israelites were commanded by the Lord to appoint to every tribe their lot or their inheritance in the land of Canaan numbers 33 54 it says you shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families and so on dividing it by lot casting the lot depending on the Lord's direction and administration of the casting of the lot and the Lord appointed to every tribe land according to his mind and purpose for them and what lot does Daniel have what lot do you have you

Christian what lot do you have who has appointed your lot in which you're going to stand in heaven at last what does Peter say well it's a lot that is incorruptible and that's undefiled and that fadeth not away that's reserved in heaven for you who has reserved God himself who has spoken about it the Lord Jesus has spoken about it in John 14 when he says I am going to prepare a place for you and in my father's house are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you I'm going to prepare a place for you I'm going to prepare a lot for you

I'm going to secure an inheritance for you and how did he do that well he said that when he was facing the cross and that's the way he secured it it's the price that he paid to secure a lot in heaven what's the price the price of his obedience unto death even the cursed death of the cross and that inheritance cannot be corrupted cannot be defiled cannot be taken away it cannot be devalued it cannot ever ever not be given to those who believe in Jesus preserved in heaven for you how does that make you feel this morning that at the end of such a trying life a demanding life that Daniel had in

[40 : 54] Babylon a testing life a life full of challenges every day the Lord says you go your way till the end then you will rest then you will stand in your lot at the end of the days I think it's a wonderful way to finish this book isn't it it's a kind of a climax to the whole of his life we see him at the beginning there taken captive into Babylon refusing to have the food that they were eating but living in fellowship with his other believer friends prayerfully doing what the Lord asked of him and the Lord says now at the end of such a dedicated life of faith you will stand in your lot at the end of the days isn't this something you would want for yourself well the only way to have it is to receive the

Jesus of the gospel who has paid for this inheritance and reserved it for those who believe in him and trust in him what's the alternative the alternative to this inheritance is outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth my friends that has all come to the feet of Jesus today and ask him make me an heir of this wonderful inheritance by working grace in my soul and giving me to live in your fear all my days let us pray help us oh lord we pray to hear the voice of the lord and to heed what you say to us in the scriptures give us not to go our own way in life our own way is the way of selfishness the way of carnality and worldliness rather give us to turn away from these things and by grace to set our feet upon the path of obedience and the life of faith whereby we will live for you and glorify your great name in this world bless us we pray go before us and if we are permitted to come to worship you here in the evening we ask that you would fill your house and our hearts with your spirit and his saving influence forgive our sins in

Jesus name Amen