

# From Dust to Stars



## SABBATH—MARCH 21

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Daniel 12; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:18; Hebrews 2:14, 15; John 14:29.

**Memory Verse:** “ ‘The wise people will shine as bright as the sky. Those [Christians] who teach others [people] to live right will shine like [the same as] stars forever and ever’ ” (Daniel 12:3, ERV).



**Jesus will wake up His people from the dead and give them everlasting life.**

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL** starts with King Nebuchadnezzar entering Judah. The king takes Jewish prisoners to Babylon. The book of Daniel ends with Michael. He stands up to free God's people from end-time Babylon. The whole book of Daniel shows us that God works everything out for His people in the end.

As we saw, Daniel and his friends stay loyal to God. They show wisdom and faith in God during hard times. In the same way, God's people also will show their faith in the end times. They will stay loyal to God during “ ‘a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations have been on earth’ ” (Daniel 12:1, ERV). During this time, God's people will show the same wisdom and understanding that Daniel and his friends showed in Babylon. Then God's people will lead other people to God. They will show people how to live holy lives. Some of God's end-time people will die or be killed. Their dead bodies will be buried in the earth. Then they will turn to dust. But Jesus will wake them up from the dead and give them everlasting life (Daniel 12:2).

**MICHAEL, OUR PRINCE (Daniel 12:1)**

**Read about the end times in Daniel 12:1. Who changes history at the end of time? How do Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25 help us understand Daniel 12:1?**

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So far, every chapter in Daniel starts with a leader who worships false gods. Daniel 12 also starts with a leader. But this leader is different from the leaders we saw in the other chapters. This leader is a prince from heaven. He rises to save God's people from their enemies.

As we saw in our study of Daniel 10, Michael is the same powerful Person from heaven who shows Himself to Daniel at the Tigris River. There we see Michael as the One who helps God's people. Michael also is shown as the Son of Man (Daniel 7) and the Chosen One, or Prince (Daniel 9). Michael's name means "Who is like God?" So, we can see that Michael is Jesus Himself.

It is important to know when Michael comes to help His people. Daniel 12:1 shows us that it happens " 'at that time' " (Daniel 12:1, ERV). What time is that? It is the time we read about in Daniel 11:40–45. This time starts when the Roman Catholic Church's power ends in 1798. Then the time goes until the end of time (Daniel 12:2).

Daniel 12:1 shows us two important parts of Michael's power. The verb written as "stand" shows us what Michael does. First, "stand" shows us a king who rises up to win and to control. The verb also shows us someone who acts the same as an army leader. This leader protects His people. He leads them in a special way during the final parts of the war between good and evil.

Second, the verb "stand" also shows us the work of a lawyer in a courtroom. Michael "stands" to act as a lawyer in heaven's courtroom. He is the Son of Man. So, He comes in front of God the Father. Michael helps God's people during God's work as Judge (Daniel 7:9–14). So, when Michael stands, we see that He is both a General and a Lawyer. He has the power to beat God's enemies. Michael has the power to defend God's people in heaven's courtroom too.



**Michael helps God's people during God's work as Judge.**

## WRITTEN IN THE BOOK (Daniel 12:1)

**Daniel 12:1, ICB, says: “ ‘But your people will be saved. Everyone whose name is written in God’s book will be saved.’ ” The ERV also names this book “ ‘the book of life.’ ” What is the angel talking about in this verse?**

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Michael stands up to help His people. At that time, there is an awful time of trouble. It is the worst time of trouble that anyone has ever seen on the earth. Why is it so bad? Because at this time God’s Spirit leaves the people who have turned away from God. Then God pours the seven last troubles on end-time Babylon (Revelation 16; Revelation 18:20–24). Then the powers of darkness will take full control of the evil people on this earth. “Satan will then cause the people on the earth to enter into one big, final time of trouble. God’s angels will stop holding back the human feelings. These feelings are the same as strong and awful winds. Then all the things that cause trouble will be let loose. The whole earth will fall into awful ruin. It will be worse than what happened to Jerusalem in Bible times.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 614, adapted.

God’s people will be saved during this time. In heaven’s courtroom, Jesus has acted as their Lawyer. He has defended them against Satan’s charges. He has saved everyone whose name is written in the book of life.

What exactly is this book? There are two books in heaven. One shows the names of the people who belong to God. This book is named the book of life (Exodus 32:32; Luke 10:20; Psalm 69:28; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 17:8).

The Bible also talks about books of record. These show human works or actions (Psalm 56:8; Malachi 3:16; Isaiah 65:6). God uses these books in His work as Judge. These books show every person’s work for the Lord. So, the books in heaven show the names and works of every human being. Some people do not like the idea of their names and their works being written in heaven. But when we give our lives to Jesus, He writes our names in the book of life. God erases our bad works as part of His work as our Judge. This record is proof to everyone in heaven that we belong to Jesus. It shows that we are safe to take into heaven. That is why Jesus can protect us during the time of trouble.



**When we give our lives to Jesus, He writes our names in the book of life.**

## WAKING UP FROM THE DEAD (Daniel 12:2, 3)

Read Daniel 12:2, 3. What is happening in these verses? Why is it so important to us?

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One of the most powerful statements in the Old Testament about the resurrection or waking up from the dead is in the book of Daniel. We read about it in Daniel 12:2, 3. These verses can teach us some very important truths. First, the verses talk about people who “ ‘sleep in the dust’ ” (Daniel 12:2, 3, NLT). “Sleep” is a word picture for death. It shows us that our human bodies do not have spirits that never die. When a person dies, his or her spirit does not stay alive. The person stops living. He or she stays asleep until the resurrection when God wakes up His people from the dead. Second, Daniel 12:2, 3 shows that the resurrection changes what happens to the body because of sin. Daniel 12:2, NLT, says: “ ‘Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake up.’ ” Do you see the words written as “dust of the earth”? In the Hebrew language those words are written as “earth of dust.” This strange wording helps us remember Genesis 3:19. That is the only other place in the Bible where the word “earth” comes before the word “dust.” That shows us something important. We know that Adam’s sin brought death to us all. But at the Second Coming, death will no longer be able to hurt us. As Paul says: death “ ‘has lost the battle’ ” (1 Corinthians 15:54, NLT).

Read Romans 8:18 and Hebrews 2:14, 15. What reasons do these verses give us for why we do not need to fear death?

Death destroys and ends everything. But God offers us the promise that death does not get the final say in the lives of believers. Jesus broke the chains of death. He came out of the grave alive. At that time, Jesus beats death. Now we can look beyond death to the promise of everlasting life we have from God. He gives this gift to us because of everything Jesus did for us. Michael “stand[s] up” (read Daniel 12:1, KJV). So, we who belong to Him also will stand up. The dead will rise from the “earth of dust.” They will shine the same as stars forever.



Jesus broke the chains of death when He came out of the grave alive.

## THE LOCKED BOOK (Daniel 12:4)

**Read Daniel 12:4 and John 14:29. As these verses show us, why is the book of Daniel locked until the end times?**

At the end of Daniel 10:1–12:4, the angel tells Daniel to seal, or lock, the book of Daniel. Its special messages must be kept secret until the end times. At that time, the angel says, “ ‘Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge, and the true knowledge will increase [will be more and more]’ ” (Daniel 12:4, ERV). Some Bible students believe “ ‘true knowledge’ ” shows us a future time when humans will make many new discoveries in science. True, Daniel 12:4 may include these discoveries. But that is not all that the verse shows us. The words “ ‘here and there’ ” show us that people everywhere in the end times will be studying the book of Daniel itself. When we look back at history, we see that most people did not understand the book of Daniel for hundreds of years. Many of its important messages were mysteries to most people. Very few people understood the message about God’s cleaning the temple in heaven. They did not understand God’s work as Judge. They did not understand who the little horn was or what he did. They did not understand the special messages about time in Daniel 8.



**The angel tells Daniel to seal or lock the book of Daniel until the end times.**

In Martin Luther’s time, more and more people started to study the book of Daniel. But it was only in the end times that people understood the book more fully. As Ellen G. White writes, “Since 1798, the book of Daniel is no longer locked. From that time, our knowledge about the special messages in Daniel has grown. That is why many people have announced that the time for God’s work as Judge is near.” —*The Great Controversy*, page 356, adapted. “People started to take new interest in the book of Daniel. That happened at the end of the 18th century and the start of the 19th century. . . . Their study led to a worldwide belief that the Second Coming was near. Some of the people who announced this message were Bible students in England, Joseph Wolff in the Middle East, Manuel Lacunza in South America, and William Miller in the United States. These men and many other students of end-time Bible messages studied the book of Daniel. They said that Jesus’ coming was near. Today, this belief is the reason for the work that the Seventh-day Adventist Church does.” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 4, page 879, adapted.

**THE WAITING TIME (Daniel 12:5–13)**

**Read the ending of the book in Daniel 12:5–13. How does the book end?**

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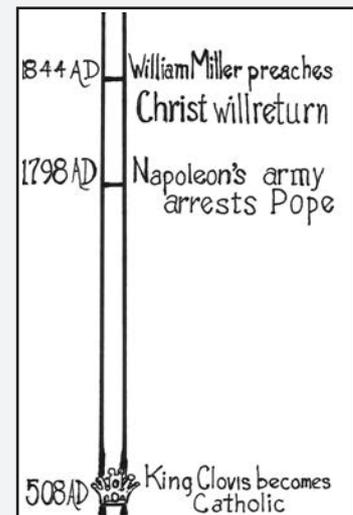


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The ending of the book of Daniel happens at the “ ‘river’ ” (Daniel 12:6, ERV). The river is the Tigris River. Daniel’s last dream happened there (Daniel 10:4). In Daniel 12:6, Daniel does not write the Hebrew word for “river.” No, he writes the word “**ye’or**.” “**Ye’or**” means “the Nile River.” It helps us remember the Exodus and how God saved Israel from Egypt. In the same way, “**ye’or**” shows us that God will save His end-time people too.

At the end of Daniel, we read about three special messages about time. (1) The first one is “a time, times, and half a time” (Daniel 12:7, NKJV). It answers the question: “ ‘How long will it be before these amazing [surprising] things come true?’ ” (Daniel 12:6, ERV). The “amazing things” are the things we read about in Daniel 7; Daniel 8; and Daniel 11. We also read about the “time, times, and half a time” in Daniel 7:25; Revelation 11:3; Revelation 12:6, 14; and Revelation 13:5. The “time, times, and half a time” also is the same as the 1,260 years that the Roman Catholic Church was very powerful on the earth. That was from A.D. 538 to 1798. Daniel 11:32–35 shows us this same time in history. But the chapter does not tell us how long this time is.

The other two time messages are 1,290 days and 1,335 days. They are the angel’s answer to Daniel’s question in Daniel 12:8: “ ‘What will happen after all these things come true?’ ” (ERV). Both the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days start with the little horn’s work. The little horn removes the daily work that Jesus does for sinners in heaven’s temple (read Daniel 8:13). Both the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days start in A.D. 508. At this time, King Clovis becomes a Catholic. The 1,290 days end in 1798 when Napoleon’s army arrests the pope. The 1,335 days end in 1843. At this time, the students of William Miller start to study the special messages in the book of Daniel. They wait and hope for Jesus to come back.



**Both the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days start with the little horn’s work in A.D. 508. At that time King Clovis of France becomes a Catholic.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “The Bible’s special messages show many things that will happen. These happenings lead to the start of God’s work as Judge in heaven. We see this Bible truth in the book of Daniel. The angel tells Daniel to close and lock that part of his message about the end times. The angel tells Daniel to keep this part a secret ‘ “until the time of the end.” ’ [Daniel 12:4, ERV]. No one can announce the message about God’s work as Judge until after this time. At that time, people will see that many things in the book of Daniel happened just as God promised. In the end times, ‘ “Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge, and the true knowledge will increase.” ’ Daniel 12:4 [ERV].

“Paul warned the church not to look for Jesus to come back in his time. ‘Do not let anyone fool you. For the Lord will not come again until many people turn away from God. Then the leader of those who break the law will come. He is the man of sin.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:3 [NLV]. Paul’s words tell us about the things that must happen before Jesus can come back. First, the ‘man of sin’ must stay in power for a long time. The ‘man of sin’ is a word picture for the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. Next, the Bible shows us that the Roman Catholic Church will have power over kings and governments for 1,260 years. But then the church’s power ends in 1798. Jesus cannot come back before that time. That is why the message about Jesus’ coming cannot be announced until after 1798.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 356, adapted.

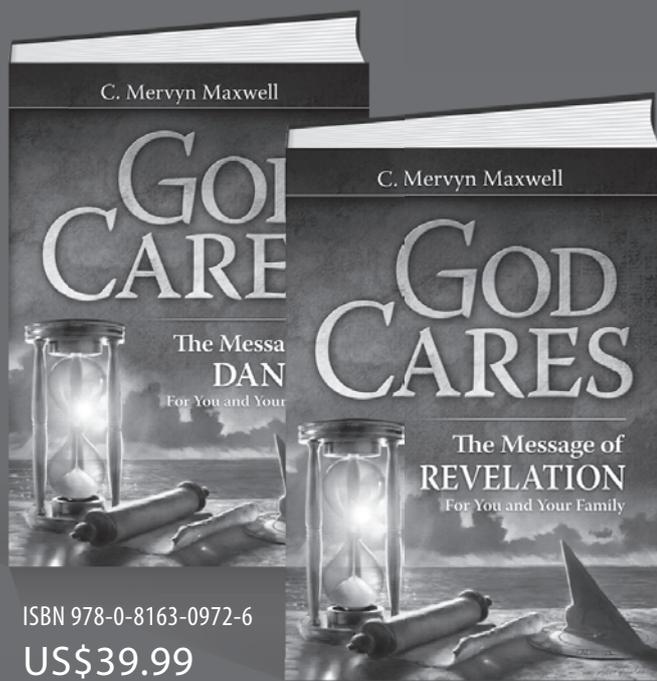


“ ‘Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge, and true knowledge will increase.’ ”  
(Daniel 12:4, ERV).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What risks do we take by setting dates for future end-time happenings? What happens to the faith of many people when these things do not happen? What does Jesus say in John 14:29 that should help us understand prophecies, or special messages, about the future? How can Jesus’ words also help us not fall into the trap of making and believing false prophecies?
- ② Why is the Good News about Jesus our only hope of having our names written in the book of life in heaven? Without this promise, what hope do we have?

# C. MERVYN MAXWELL



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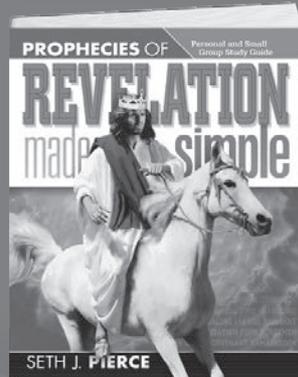
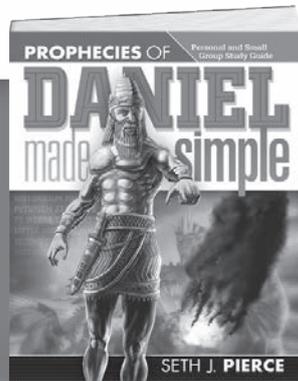
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