

SERMON FOUR -- BY ELDER JAMES WHITE.

p. 1, Para. 1, [TIME].

THE TIME OF THE END.

p. 1, Para. 2, [TIME].

TEXT: But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Dan. 12:4 p. 1, Para. 3, [TIME].

The time of the end noted in the text is not the end itself. It is evidently a period of time just prior to the end. In the time of the end many were to run to and fro, and knowledge upon the grand subject before the prophet's mind was to be increased. p. 1, Para. 4, [TIME].

The words of the book, named in the text, are undoubtedly the prophecy of Daniel, the several chains of which reach down to the close of all earthly kingdoms at the second coming of Christ. p. 1, Para. 5, [TIME].

*Shut up the words, and seal the book.* Prophecy is history in advance. To the prophets themselves, their own prophecies could afford but little light, the prophetic scenery spread out before them being the history of the future. The apostle, speaking of the prophecies relative to the plan of salvation, embracing the sufferings of Christ at his first advent, and also the glory that should follow at his second advent, says: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. 1 Pet. 1:10-12. p. 1, Para. 6, [TIME].

The prophecies relative to the first advent of Christ were not an especial light to the prophets in their day. But they were given for the benefit of the believing about the time of their fulfillment. From the very nature of the

case, they were, in a degree at least, shut up until about that time. So with those prophecies which relate to the second advent, They were not designed for the especial benefit of the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, or the reformers; but they are an especial light to those who live in the time of the end. The book was to be shut up and sealed until that period of time should arrive, called the time of the end. What then? p. 1, Para. 7, [TIME].

*Many shall run to and fro.* Whether this be fulfilled in turning and searching to and fro in the Scriptures for light upon the subject of the fulfillment of prophecy, or by men called of God to the work, traveling to and fro with the message from God to the people upon this subject, the fulfillment is evident. Both have been done within the last half century as never before. p. 2, Para. 1, [TIME].

Duffield on Prophecy, p. 373, says: "The word translated, *run to and fro*, is metaphorically used to denote investigation, close, diligent, accurate observation -- just as the eyes of the Lord are said to run to and fro. The reference is not to missionary exertions in particular, but to the study of the Scriptures, especially the sealed book of prophecy." p. 2, Para. 2, [TIME].

Clarke says: "*Many shall run to and fro.* Many shall endeavor to search out the sense; and knowledge shall be increased by these means. p. 2, Para. 3, [TIME].

This seems to be the meaning of this verse, though another has been put upon it; viz., 'Many shall run to and fro preaching the gospel of Christ, and therefore religious knowledge and true wisdom shall be increased.' This is true in itself; but it is not the meaning of the prophet's words." p. 2, Para. 4, [TIME].

Matthew Henry says: "They shall read it over and over, shall meditate upon it; they shall discourse of it, talk it over, sift out the meaning of it, and thus knowledge shall be increased." p. 3, Para. 1, [TIME].

Gill says: "*Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;* that is, toward the end of the time appointed, many shall be stirred up to inquire into these things delivered in this book, and will spare no pains nor cost to get a knowledge of them; will read and study the Scriptures, and meditate on them; compare one passage with

another, spiritual things with spiritual, in order to obtain the mind of Christ; will carefully peruse the writings of such, who have lived before them, who have attempted anything of this kind; and will go far and near to converse with persons that have any understanding of such things; and by such means, with the blessing of God upon them, the knowledge of this book of prophecy will be increased, and things will appear plainer and clearer, the nearer the accomplishment of them is; and especially when prophecy and facts can be compared." p. 3, Para. 2, [TIME].

*And knowledge shall be increased.* This does not mean general knowledge; but the words must be limited to the subject presented to Daniel. The book of Daniel contains chains of prophecy which reach down to the end of earthly kingdoms, and the judgment. Chapters 11 and 12 are one chain, reaching down to the time when Michael shall stand up, the time of trouble such as never was, and the resurrection of many. Chap. 12:1,2. In verse 6, one says to "the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The end of the wonders is the close of those scenes connected with the judgment. In the next verse the answer is given by the man clothed in linen, with a most solemn oath, with both hands raised to heaven. p. 3, Para. 3, [TIME].

But says Daniel: "I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" Verse 8. The prophet here makes earnest inquiries relative to the scenes connected with the second advent. Read the angel's reply: "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Verse 9. The prophecy of Daniel, which points distinctly to the period of the second advent, was closed up, and sealed, till the time of the end. What then? In verse 4, Daniel was told that in the time of the end many should run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased. This relates to the theoretical part of the work. But, in verse 10, the angel's answer to the earnest inquiry of the prophet, relates to the work of preparation, and the results of the great Second Advent movement. He says: "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." p. 3, Para. 4, [TIME].

Here are two classes, the wicked and the wise. The wise are those who are being purified and made white. They are wise in reference to the things of God, and the kingdom of Heaven. They understand by the opening prophecies the events which terminate the wonders shown to the prophet. p. 4, Para. 1, [TIME].

They see these things clearly, believe, prepare, and rejoice in the blessed hope. Here we should be impressed with the practical bearing of the Second Advent faith and hope. The truly wise, those who are being purified, and made white, and tried, understand. They will listen to the voice of warning, and will be instructed, and will understand that the day of the Lord is coming, and hasteth greatly. They will be waiting and watching, and will be ready when the Lord shall come. Of these Paul speaks: "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. 9:28. Or, as Peter exhorts: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:14. Again, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Verse 11. p. 4, Para. 2, [TIME].

But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand. They do not seek for the Spirit of truth. They are led by the spirit of error. They doubt, scoff, and mark their course of rebellion against the truth of God by doing wickedly. May God pity the blind sinner. p. 5, Para. 1, [TIME].

That there is a period of time in which the church is especially to look for the second coming of Christ, is evident. Many, however, take the ground that it was right for the early Christians to look for Christ's second coming in their day, that it has been scriptural for the followers of Christ in each generation since to expect his coming in their day, and that nothing more, in this respect is required of the church at this time. p. 5, Para. 2, [TIME].

It is true that some of the early church received the idea that Christ would come in their day. And it is evident that the Thessalonian church thus believed from the fact that the apostle in his second epistle to them, corrects this error. He says: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God." 2 Thess. 2:1-4. p. 5, Para. 3, [TIME].

From this testimony we conclude that there were those who had taught the Thessalonians to expect the second advent in their day. But the apostle exhorts them not to be troubled with this idea, and warns them against being deceived by it. He then states that the day of Christ would not come, except there came a falling away first, and that Man of Sin (the Papacy) be revealed. He points the church of Christ down over the period of the apostasy, and the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal supremacy, to near our time, and guards all the way with a warning against being deceived with the idea that Christ might come during that period. And why did his warning cease there? Answer: At that point the time of the end commenced, when the prophecy of Daniel was to be unsealed, knowledge on the subject of Christ's coming was to be increased, and many run to and fro. p. 6, Para. 1, [TIME].

What a beautiful harmony in the testimonies of the angel and of Paul. The angel says to Daniel, "The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." p. 6, Para. 2, [TIME].

Paul says to his brethren, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed." The apostle's warning reaches down to the time of the end, where the words were to be unsealed. This plainly shows that the last half century has been the period for the subject of the second advent to be brought out, and this the only time that the church of Christ could scripturally look for the coming of the Lord. p. 6, Para. 3, [TIME].