

Erlo Stegen:

Daniel 12: 8 - 10:

And I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, O my lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go, Daniel! For the words are closed up and sealed until the end-time. 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.

In these past few days, the Tugela river has burst its banks. The same part of land where we had fetched bulding-sand for the Magqoko mission, has become a little island, cut off by the flooded river. Two donkeys had become stranded on a shrinking piece of ground in the rising waters. The donkeys had been attracted by the lovely grass on that patch. As the river rose there was an ever decreasing amount of grass, which the donkeys seemed to be happily eating away. But the river continued to rise until there was no more grass, or land, and the donkeys were ankle deep in the ever-increasing waters of the Tugela river. What was attractive to them a few days earlier was becoming their grave. Many land up in trouble because the grass seems greener "on the other side". No warnings, no rising waters, seem to penetrate them or give them understandiing. Even though they have ears as big as the donkey's on the river island, they do not hear what God is speaking to them. They are, as we've heard in the testimony, asleep and unaware of imminent danger. "The wicked shall do wickedly...and none of the wicked shall understand."

I recently read the story of the French island of Martinique. In 1902, it was noticed that Mt. Pelée was giving off smoke and had minor eruptions. Scientists gave soothing predictions but, on 8 May 1902, they were buried along with a population of about 30,000 who were wiped out in the cataclysmic eruption. (read more on it below). Many islanders had been mockers of God. Over Easter, some had "crucified" a pig. Little did they expect a literal fiery hell that was soon to swallow them.

There are some things which God wants us to know and which He gives knowledge about. Daniel was a man who made it his business to know God. In our text Daniel asks more about the last days and how things would end. The Lord did not want him to know more than the many things which had already revealed to him. All that matters, is that the last days would be marked by the Lord's people being purified and "made white" (radiant) and that the wicked would continue in their wickedness. Despite warnings about God's wrath the foolish will continue in their sinful ways.

Knowledge and accuracy about "how things will end" (Dan 12:8) is not really the issue. Some Christians argue about when the rapture will take place. There are divisions about whether Christ will come before the great tribulation, or during, or after. There are debates as to exact measurements of years and half-years. Some Christians become so heated about end-time prophesies that they attack others. There was once a "Holiness Convention" where two of the leaders were so adamant about their points-of-view that they viciously attacked each other, not just with words, but almost in a physical a punch-up. Violence at a holiness meeting!

Being cleansed and made pure means dealing with sin; separating from all sin and "those who increase to more godliness" (2Tim 2:16).

The Lord had reassured Daniel of His love towards him (Dan 10:11). Remember that God loves you too. Therefore, since He has given His life and His precious Blood for you, be cleansed and washed by Him. Let the Refiner continue to refine you (Mal 3:3) and make you radiant with His image.

All that matters is that you are forgiven, cleansed and purified by the Lord. Let His image be seen in you.

Summary of testimony by Isak du Preez: The Lord "woke me up". Having being brought up in a Christian way, knowing the truth, and yet, not awake and alive, was my condition. The strange thing about being awakened is that a person is not aware of their sleep until woken up. I was dry inside though I had made many attempts at trying to repent. Then, the Word of God came to me, as it says in Ezekiel 37; everything was dry bones until the Lord Himself "woke" them up and gave them life. The Lord made it clear to me that He expected complete obedience. In the act of obeying Christ the Lord changed me, gave me strength and a new life. I can illustrate it with the parable told by Jesus about building on the rock and the sand. Obedience is building on the rock. If one had to change the wording but keep the meaning, the illustration would go thus: he who almost builds on

All that matters

the rock and who almost digs down to the foundation ... This is the same as building on sand and the floods will destroy that building. That's how my life had been, the almost which resulted in my not being on the foundation. I thank the Lord who has saved me from a life of disobedience built on sand, to a life of obedience on the Rock.