

Daniel

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Chapter Twelve

Dan 12:1

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

“That time” is the same time as was referenced at the end of chapter 11. He is referring to the End Times and the effects on “your people” or the Jews as he is referring to the people of Daniel. Daniel is told that there will be a time of horrible tribulations for his people and that such a time has never existed since the time that there was a nation. This time interval seems to then stretch back all the way to the beginnings of ordered human society. Many interpreters refer to this as the Great Tribulation or the last part of Daniel’s seventy “years”. The Lord Jesus picks up on this prophecy in:

Matt 24:21-22 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. (22) "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."

The archangel Michael has been assigned by God to protect the covenant community of Israel and when Daniel is told that he will arise that means that Michael will spring to action at this appointed time. Gabriel modifies the accounting of the people that will be saved to not only include Daniel’s people but everyone whose name is written in the book. We read of this Book of Life in several places:

- Exo 32:33 *The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book."*
- Mal 3:16-18 *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. (17) "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." (18) So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.*
- Rev 20:12 *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.*
- Luke 10:20 *"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."*

These people will then be rescued from this horrible time on earth. This probably does not mean that they will not be persecuted or even killed during this terrible time for many of God’s

children have been killed during horrible tribulations such as recorded in Heb 11. However all these people will be rescued from the second death:

- Rev 20:14-15 *Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*
- Rev 21:8 *"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

Dan 12:2

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

This verse relates to a bodily resurrection of everyone who has lived on earth. Many of them will awaken to everlasting life but the others will awaken to disgrace and everlasting contempt. These people have all experienced the first death and we know that their souls have either been in heaven with Jesus or in Hades awaiting the second death. Jesus spoke of this time:

John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, (29) and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."

John also was given a vision of this time:

Rev 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. (12) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. (14) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. (15) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Daniel 12:3

"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

This verse is an elaboration of the eternal destiny of the children of God. These true believers are described as having insight and having led many to righteousness. Some translations refer to this first characteristic as "acting wisely". This means that these true believers have actions that reflect their proper understanding of God's holy will and so are wise before God. The second attribute of such saved people is that they have been active in bringing forth the fruit of believers who have been brought to a true belief in God through the actions of their gifts. This glory that belongs to them because of the work of the Holy Spirit will shine forever, as do the stars. Thus this Old Testament book proclaims resurrection and life beyond the grave. This is not the only OT reference to an expectation of eternal glory for we read also in the following:

- Job 19:26-27 *"Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; (27) Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!"*
- Psa 17:15 *As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.*
- Psa 73:23-24 *Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. (24) With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.*
- Isa 26:19 *Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.*

Thus this concept goes back as far as the time of Job, David, and Isaiah and is not a new concept in the NT time.

Daniel 12:4

"But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

In the ancient Near East, important documents were prepared in duplicate. The original was kept in a secure location (closed up or concealed) so that they could be brought out later if there was a challenge to them. The practice of sealing was also a concept used at this time. The original writer and any witnesses would put their seal on the scroll so that it could not be opened without breaking these seals. This sealing was done for the original and a copy to make sure that the contents were not changed. "Going back and forth" refers to the actions of many people who will try to understand the writings as they currently apply and will be fulfilled. The increase in knowledge refers to the understanding that is developed by people over time as they see the predictions concerning the Persian and Greek kings carried out during the fourth through the second centuries B.C. and the conquering of the Roman Empire in the first century and continuing. We can now see the great increase in the understanding of Bible students from the time of Daniel in the sixth century B.C. to the tremendous writings of Jerome around 400 A.D. Then we have seen great increases in understanding base upon great archeological evidences and the return of Jewish people to their ancestral land since 1948.

Daniel 12:5-7

Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. (6) And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" (7) I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

Daniel was then given a striking vision of two other angels standing on each side of the Tigris River (see 10:4 for the location). All angels are interested in when prophecies will be fulfilled: *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look.* (1Peter 1:12). So these two angels asked

for a clarification on the time when the tribulation time under the Antichrist would end. Most interpreters consider the man in linen to be the Lord Jesus who in his human form did not know the timing of the End but after His resurrection and ascension would know all things. He made a solemn oath by raising His hands toward heaven and swearing by God who lives forever. He said that it would be completed after 3.5 years during which time the power of the Jewish people would be shattered by the power of the Antichrist. But after this seeming destruction the events would be completed as referred to at the end of chapter 11. This time is exactly one-half the full seven years of the seventh week referred to in 9:27. Presumably this will be the Battle of Armageddon that ends the time of Satan and his demons.

Daniel 12:8-10

As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" (9) He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. (10) "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

Daniel was still confused and did not understand so he asked for an explanation of the outcome, probably especially relating to the seeming destruction of the Jewish people as stated in verse 9. After their power was broken would they then just cease to exist? The answer given Daniel reminds me of the statement of Jesus to the question of the disciples regarding their wanting to know the time of the end:

Acts 1:6-8 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; (8) but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

The words are to be sealed until the end time meaning that the total meaning will not be understood by anyone until the end comes. Just as the disciples of Jesus, Daniel and his people had works to be done and they do not need to understand all the details. I am reminded again of: *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."* (Deut 29:29). God's people have always had enough revealed things of God belonging to them and their relatives forever so that they can act properly as His children. From the time of Daniel until the very end, God's people will be purged, purified, and refined as they endure their testing. In the NT age, believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit so that they can better understand the things of God that belong to us and we should all be content with such wonderful insights. But the prophecy is clear that the world will not get better as a result of the behavior and teaching of believers. People who are pre-dispensationalists are incorrect in their understanding that the world will be so influenced by the church that it will get holier until they are ripe for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule for 1000 years. The wicked will continue to not understand as Paul stated:

- *1Cor 2:14-15 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (15) But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.*

- 2Tim 3:13 *But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

The parables of Jesus clearly state that even the church will become worldlier as it grows throughout the world (Matt 13). The leaven of the world will invade the church, tares will grow and invade it, and evil “birds” will nest in its “branches”. But the angel ends this discourse with good news for Daniel.

Daniel 12:11-13

"From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. (12) "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! (13) "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

It seems that the angel gave Daniel two time periods that cannot be totally understood. In verse 7 he gave a time of 3.5 years or 1278 days and this first time is 12 more days. Between this time and the second time is a period of 45 more days. Many people have speculated on these times with most people thinking this is the second half of the seven weeks of tribulation after the covenant with Israel was abrogated and the abominable image was set up in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. I understand these time periods to be unknown but do relate to the time after the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem when the Romans set up their standards in the Temple. It seems there will be a first time period between the ending of regular sacrifice (the destruction of the Temple) and the setting up of the abomination of desolation (the Roman desecration of the Temple Holy Place). Then there will be an additional time period before the church is established by the people who left Jerusalem before its total destruction. This understanding is more fully discussed in my M.A. thesis that is available on my web site: <http://livingtheology.com/articles.htm>.

The last verse would have been especially uplifting for Daniel as he is told to go his own way until his death when he will enter his rest. He will then rise again to receive his allotted portion at the end of the age. Many people think this will be the 1000-year rule of Christ on earth but my understanding is that this millennial rule of Christ began at His ascension when he sat on the right hand of the Father to rule. Then Daniel, all the OT saints, and NT saints all rule with Jesus during the 2000 years He has already been ruling. At the End Times there will then be a final battle when Satan is defeated and the New Jerusalem will come to earth to begin the forever rule of Jesus and His saints. Then the earth will be filled with His righteousness: *“They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”* (Isa 11:9)