

SESSION SIXTEEN

DANIEL 12:1-13

Hope Beyond a Bleak Future

INTRODUCTION

- Chapter 12:1-4 is closely related to the previous section (11:36-45) as evidenced by the initial words in 12:1, "*Now at that time.*"
- There is a continuity to both units, namely, the activity and atrocities carried out by the Antichrist who is introduced in 11:36. However, the emphasis of the final section in chapter 11 varies slightly from the opening of chapter 12:

<p>Chapter 11:40-45 <i>vs 40 - "And at the end time"</i></p> <p>THE BROAD OUTLINE OF MILITARY CONFLICTS CONDUCTED BY THE ANTICHRIST IN THE TRIBULATION</p> <p>Good News: Antichrist Destroyed!</p>	<p>Chapter 12:1-4 <i>vs 1 - "Now at that time"</i></p> <p>THE HARSH REALITY OF PERSECUTIONS TO FALL ON ISRAEL DURING THE TRIBULATION</p> <p>Good News: Resurrection for Faithful Jews!</p>
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- The Main Point of Chapter 12

This chapter discloses what will happen to the Jews who must endure the Tribulation under Antichrist at the "end time" and what Daniel can personally anticipate.

A. Implications for the Jewish Remnant Living in the Days of Antichrist (12:1-4)

- Israel's "Time of Distress" Announced (1)
 - Continuity of persecution theme in Daniel
 - Example of Shadrach, Meshach & Abed-nego for refusal to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold (Dan 3)
 - Example of Daniel for refusing to cease his prayers to the God of Heaven (Dan 6)
 - The "little horn" in Dan 7 (symbolic of the Antichrist) will wage war with the saints and overpower them (7:21), and "wear down the saints of the Highest One" (7:25) for 3 1/2 years.

- (4) The "small horn" in Dan 8 (symbolic of Antiochus who serves as a type of the Antichrist) removes the regular sacrifice and tramples the "host" (Israel). See Dan 8:24 - "*he will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.*"
 - (5) Antiochus (the type of the Antichrist) is said in Dan 11:30 to "*become enraged at the holy covenant and take action.*"
- b. Old Testament Anticipations of the Tribulation for Israel
- (1) Restoration from "distress" predicted for the "latter days" (Deut 4:25-31). Note: in light of this passage and Deut 28--30, the "distress" of the *end times* is part of God's plan of discipline for His people who are disobedient to the covenant. Because of the Abrahamic Covenant, however, God will not allow them to be exterminated, but will rescue them.
 - (2) According to Jer 30:1-11, Jacob's "time of distress" (עֵת צָרָה - same expression as in Dan 12:1) will result in Gentile political dominion ("the times of the Gentiles") being lifted from Israel so that they can serve Messiah Jesus (note 7-9).
 - (3) Two-thirds of the Jewish remnant will perish in the Tribulation, although the surviving ones will call on the Lord for salvation (Zech 13:7-9).
 - (4) Jesus predicted that the Great Tribulation (the final 3 1/2 years of the 70th "week") would be initiated by the "abomination of desolation" being established in the Temple (Matt 24:15-22).
- c. Conclusion
- The *Great Tribulation* will be a time for the Antichrist to carry out the most horrible atrocities ever known to man. This period of persecution for 3 1/2 years will be aimed at Israel in particular, although ultimately this is a measure of discipline from God Himself. When the majority of the Jews have been killed, Israel will at last be brought to her knees before God and look to Jesus Christ in faith.
- d. What precipitates the Great Tribulation?
- (1) Dan 12:1 - Michael will arise
 - (2) Rev 12:7-13,17 - spiritual warfare in heaven results in the expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven. Satan then empowers the Antichrist (*Beast* of Rev 13).
- e. Two consolations for Israel: *God's R & R*
- (1) God will "rescue" His people before they are exterminated (Zech 14:2-4; cf. Rom 11:11-12; 25ff.).
 - (2) God will "resurrect" the righteous to eternal life.

2. The Anticipation of Resurrection (12:2-3)

- a. Since the previous verse focused on the Tribulation in which many of Daniel's people would be martyred, those who would not live to see the "rescue" by Messiah's return could at least have the consolation of being resurrected at a later time.
- b. Dan 12:2 only points forward to the fact of resurrection for both the righteous and the wicked, not that both occur at the same time.

(1) Resurrection for the Righteous

(a) The "Rapture" of the Church (1 Cor 15:50-58; 1 Thes 4:13-18)

i) What?

Those who are part of the body of Christ will be supernaturally taken to be with the Lord. First those who have died will be resurrected and those who are living will be translated.

ii) When?

Apparently before the beginning of Daniel's 70th "week"

a) The NT epistles promise that the "body of Christ" will be delivered from the "wrath to come" (1 Thes 1:10; 5:9). Note 1 Thes 5:2 - the context is the "day of the Lord," clearly an eschatological wrath, not simply a general wrath.

b) The promise of Christ to the church at Philadelphia (and to others by implication) was that they would be kept from (not *through*) the "hour of testing" which was coming upon the whole world (Rev 3:10). In the context of Revelation, this has to refer to the Tribulation before Christ's return in glory.

c) If the *rapture* occurs at the same time as the 2nd Coming, it becomes difficult to explain the need for a separation of the sheep and goats following the 2nd Coming (Matt 25:31ff.).

(b) The Resurrection after the Tribulation (Rev 20:4-6)*i)* Martyrs of the Tribulation (so Rev 20:4-6)*ii)* OT saints (Dan 12:2)

(2) Resurrection for the Unrighteous

All unbelievers will be resurrected to be judged before the "Great White Throne" and to be consigned to spend eternity in hell away from the presence of God (Rev 20:11-15).

- c. Elaboration on the Doctrine of Resurrection - Believer's judgment
- (1) When one trusts in Christ alone for his salvation, he is spared from ever being judged for sin and disobedience.
 - (a) Jesus promises - John 5:24
 - (b) The Epistles promise total forgiveness - Col 2:13-14
 - (c) We enter into *peace with God* - Romans 5:1-2,8-10
 - (d) Total and eternal forgiveness is possible because Christ's sacrifice for us was perfect - Heb 10:11-12,14,17-18

Note: True believers will not be judged at the "Great White Throne" judgment to determine their eternal destiny!

- (2) There is, however, a judgment for believers: The Judgment Seat of Christ
 - (a) The Fact: 2 Cor 5:6-10 *Only for believers!*
 - (b) The Purpose:
 - i) That each of us may give an account of our life to the Lord - Rom 14:10-12
 - ii) That rewards may be determined (1 Cor 3:10-17) and that each of us may be praised by Christ for our service and faithfulness to Him (1 Cor 4:1-5)

- d. Commendation for Winning Souls to Christ (12:3b)

"those who lead the many to righteousness"

- (1) During the Tribulation there will be 144,000 Jewish believers zealous for their Lord and evangelism (Rev 7:4; 14:1ff.).
- (2) In every age, leading lost people to faith in Jesus Christ is one of the greatest things we can ever do!

3. The Preservation of Daniel's Prophecy (12:4)

- a. The thought that "*knowledge will increase*" probably does not refer to general knowledge, which obviously increases with each new generation. The word "knowledge" is more literally "*the knowledge*" (Heb. תְּעִיף, with the definite article prefixed), and points back to the initial part of the verse where "these words" and "the book" are mentioned. The phrase looks forward to the increase in prophetic knowledge, and the unique role that Daniel's book would play.
- b. Two key factors contribute to the increase in prophetic knowledge
 - (1) The completion of God's written revelation to man through the Scriptures.

- (2) An increase of interest in prophetic revelation as the "end time" approaches. There have been more books written on prophecy in the last 50 years than the preceding 200 years combined. This *prophetic interest* will certainly accelerate during the Tribulation!

B. Daniel's Perplexion in Response to the Revelation (12:5-13)

1. The Concern for the Duration of the "Distress" (5-7)

a. Insight on Verse Six

The question raised in v 6 has to do with the time involved: how long? Unfortunately, the *NASB* weakens the question.

- (1) *NASB* = "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"
- (2) The word translated "wonders" is the Hebrew word *happēlā'ōt* (חִשְׁלֵי), which means "things which are incredible, hard to imagine or believe." The *NIV* has rendered this better: "*these astonishing things*." They are so terrible as to be astonishing to all who hear?
- (3) In this context, this refers to the astonishing things that were announced for Israel in the future Tribulation when the Antichrist would have authority to afflict God's people.

b. The answer to the question (7)

- (1) The time: "*time, times, and half a time*" i.e., 3 1/2 years.

This is the same expression as appeared in Dan 7:25, and corresponds to the half "week" in Dan 9:27 where the "prince to come" (the Antichrist) will bring "desolations."

- (2) The main point of this time period: "*shattering the power of the holy people*" (7b)

This needs to be interpreted in light of Dan 12:1 where attention was called to "the sons of your people." Hence, "the holy people" is the nation of Israel, the Jews. Though the Tribulation will bring God's judgment on the whole world (even believers in Christ), it is aimed at Israel in particular.

- (3) The Bad News:

Correlation with Rev 11:1-2: the nations of the world will trample underfoot Jerusalem for 3 1/2 years.

- (4) The Good News:

The shattering of Daniel's people will eventually make the Jewish people willing to welcome Jesus Christ as their Messiah (see Matt 23:37-39).

2. Daniel's Concern for the Outcome (12:8-12)

- a. God's purging and refining of Israel will not be understood by the unbelieving among the Jews ("the wicked"), but the "completed Jews" with insight (who believe Jesus is the Messiah) will understand.
- b. Further Goals Subsequent to the Tribulation (11-12)

(1) The 1290 Days

This is a period of time measured from the setting up of the "abomination of desolation" and halting of the Temple sacrifices at the middle of the final seven year period.¹ The latter half of the final "week" will be 3 1/2 years or 1260 days, at which time Christ will return in glory. So the 1290 days apparently extend 30 days beyond the 2nd Coming of Christ. Even though Christ returns at the end of 1260 days (and the atrocities of the Antichrist are terminated), the work of purging and refining the people of God is still in progress.²

- (a) The anticipation for the end of the present age is explained in the "parable of the tares" (Matt 13:24-30; 36-43).
- (b) Judgment upon the nations (Matt 25:31-46)
- (c) Judgment upon Israel (Ezek 20:34-38)

Point: Only believers go into Messiah's kingdom!

(2) The 1335 Days

Another 45 days beyond the previous 30 will result in a very special blessing! No hint is given as to the nature of the blessing, but the extra days could be allotted for making certain necessary preparations for the millennial kingdom.

They are about to become citizens of the most wonderful society governed by the most wonderful ruler in all human history!

3. A Special Promise to Daniel (12:13)

- a. The promise of being resurrected -- "*rise again*"
- b. The promise of an "allotted portion/inheritance"

¹Regarding the "abomination of desolation," see notes on Dan 9:27.

²J. Dwight Pentecost mentions another possible interpretation: "Another possibility is that the 1,290 days will begin 30 days before the middle of the 70th "seven" of years when the world ruler will set up "the abomination that causes desolation" (Matt. 24:15). The 1,290 days could begin with an announcement (about the abomination) made 30 days before the abomination is introduced" ("Daniel," *Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT*, 1374).

Daniel will one day be a part of the kingdom of the "Son of Man" and will be well rewarded for a life of faithful service (cf. 2 Tim 2:12).

A Lesson for Our Life

1. Reflections on the Life of Daniel

Throughout the book of Daniel, we've seen more than prophetic knowledge revealed to us . . . we've seen a man who lived closely with the Lord who revealed these things to him. As the youthful Daniel marched out of Jerusalem in 605 BC in line with the other exiles, there was no way he could fathom what would become of his life. But he placed his life in the hands of the God of the Bible, and God made a stalwart of the faith!

Under God's sovereignty, he became an influential commissioner in the courts of Babylon, one to whom God revealed mysteries and dreams, and to whom were given some of the most marvelous prophetic details ever recorded. Yet, as for all men, he had only one life to live, and it eventually came to an end. He escaped the lion's den, but his body would nevertheless see the grave; his graying hair and his wrinkled skin would have to undergo decay. But Daniel's life was not over. In fact, Daniel is alive right now and he will participate in the resurrection of OT saints when Jesus returns, so that he too can be a part of the Millennial Kingdom.

2. Our Personal Response to Daniel's Life and Ministry

Just as God has a personal plan for Daniel, He has one for you and me as well. Our earthly ambitions and goals may be interrupted by the hand of God to set our sights on an even greater calling. Pity the man or woman who only has the dust of temporal aspirations to show for their life when all is said and done! Now is the day of choice when we must consider before God what He would have us do to carry out His march toward the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has not given us the Book of Daniel to simply tickle our prophetic imagination, but to encourage and challenge each one of us to be a "Daniel" in this generation. Is your life on course with the will of God and the fulfillment of the Great Commission, or do you need to correct your course right now while the breath of life is still within you? May God give you grace to do what is pleasing in His sight.