

13. Living in a privileged time

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Before we start to go into our in-depth study of the last chapter of the Book of Daniel, let's quickly summarize our study in this Book:

The first six chapters focus largely on biographical and historical. The Book begins with the captive life of Daniel in a heathen foreign soil, Babylon. But chapters 7 through 12 of the Book of Daniel are a part of the theological and prophetic section of the Book with incredible accuracy. As the Book comes to a close, it reveals the Tribulation period in which the Jews will be persecuted by the antichrist but rescued by God.

Even though this ancient account foretells a time at which Jewish believers will be vindicated and rewarded, its description of the awful torment they will experience prompted Daniel to inquire further about the end of the age. What he was told provides not only a fitting conclusion to the book but also some practical counsel for us to apply.

Chapter 12 now concludes the vision which began back in chapter 10. This is all one vision, and everything about it must fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. The problem is that some people dip into this prophecy here and there, making applications as they see fit.

2 Peter 1:20-21 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

A. A FUTURE TIME OF TROUBLE FOR ISRAEL

Daniel 12:1 "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

The angel Michael is often associated with spiritual battle. Michael the archangel is Satan's true opposite. Satan is not the opposite of Jesus.

Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

In addition to his role as a spiritual warrior, Michael has a special job in protecting Israel. God has appointed Michael as a "spiritual guardian" over Israel.

This 'time of trouble' refers to the time of persecution for Israel and world calamity known as the Great Tribulation. This period is also called the time of Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah 30:7.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

The Jewish people have known many a time of trouble through their history. From the horrors at the fall of Samaria and Jerusalem by Babylon Empire to the terrors wrought by Antiochus Epiphanes, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, to the persecutions from the Catholic church during the Dark Ages, to the 20th Century Holocaust, it often seems that all Israel's history has been a time of trouble. But this

time of trouble will be different. This will be a worse time of trouble than Israel has ever seen before.

The Jew has always been a target of satan. He has sought to destroy them because he knew that God has ordained to accomplish His purposes through this nation. So satan has attempted in times past to destroy the nation of Israel in order to oppose the purposes of God and he is still at Israel's throat with all these Muslim fanatic terrorists' attacks.

But no matter how great the attack is against the Jewish people, God has promised to preserve them. Yet this promise of deliverance is not for every last person of Jewish heritage, but for everyone found written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

B. ETERNAL SEPARATION

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Some think this is this is the resurrection of Israel as a nation. But the plainest meaning is that it refers to the resurrection of the body.

The Bible clearly teaches two resurrections, one for the saved and one for the condemned. If we really believe every one of us will live forever either in heaven or hell, it would profoundly change our lives.

Many people have wrong concepts of hell, more accurately the lake of fire – from a major party place to a hard labor site that is operated by the demons. They all are wrong. Hell is the place of complete and utter isolation from God and from anybody and extreme endless pain from constant burning fire.

John 5:29 and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

C. A PROMISE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

This promise applies to all of those who turn to righteousness of God by faith throughout all ages. But it may have its most specific application to the 144,000 evangelists from Israel's 12 tribes during the Tribulation that mentioned in Revelation 7.

D. INSTRUCTION TO SEAL THE BOOK

Daniel 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Daniel's prophecy was to be sealed and shut up, but not forever. It was only to be sealed until "the time of the end."

In these last days, the seal is removed. The prophecies that wouldn't have made any sense back then have become perfectly clear in these last days. And it is so exciting and fascinating to live in these day where the prophecies of Daniel make sense. Most of them have already been fulfilled, and the picture is developing, and the puzzle is being completed, so we can make sense of the prophecies that are yet to be completed.

We live in a privileged time. Knowledge of prophecy is increasing for us everyday as we see God's plan of the ages unfold before our very eyes. This is an exciting time in which to live.

Many scholars take this prediction "*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase*" as being fulfilled in the travel and information explosions of our modern age. At the same time, it can be taken as running up and down the Bible in the study of prophecy.

E. TWO QUESTIONS, TWO ANSWERS

Daniel 12:5-12 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" 7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. 8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" 9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

Daniel is back to the riverbank first mentioned in Daniel 10:4. The visions of Daniel 10 through 12 have all taken place as Daniel stood at this riverbank.

"*The man clothed in linen*" has been previously identified as the preincarnate Christ. Two others join Him here – each angel stands on each bank of the Tigris River.

Two questions were asked. The first one was spoken by an angel to the preincarnate Christ. This angel wanted to know the length of the disciplinary period Israel would experience during the Great Tribulation in v6. The second question was also posed to the preincarnate Christ, but this time by Daniel. Daniel longed to know what would finally happen to his people after they had been delivered from the Tribulation in v8.

The preincarnate Christ said that Israel's period of chastisement would last "*for a time, times, and a half a time*". This is a reference to the same 3 1/2-year period that was earlier revealed to Daniel concerning the antichrist's persecution of believers during the latter half of the Tribulation. This outbreak of violent hatred toward God's people Israel will begin when the antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jewish people in the middle of the seven-year Tribulation.

This is an amazingly specific prophecy. Daniel says that from the time of the abomination of desolation, you can simply start marking off your calendar to the final consummation of all things, 1,290 days later.

But what is the relation between three and one-half years – 1,260 days, mentioned specifically in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6, the 1,290 days mentioned in v11, and the 1,335 days mentioned in v12?

Are you ready for an answer? I don't know. The speculation among Bible scholars regarding these additional days is quite varied. I am assuming that this portion of the prophecy will be revealed to us while we are in heaven.

F. GO YOUR WAY TILL THE END

Daniel 12:13 But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

In the meantime, however, the angel's counsel to Daniel was: "Carry on. Be about your business. Don't be so concerned about the future that you neglect your present responsibilities."

Throughout the history of the Church, there have been many Christians who have failed to accept this advice. One such group of believers lived in Thessalonica during the first century A.D. They had heard that Christ had already come and established His Kingdom on earth.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God

Apparently, some of them used this news to excuse themselves from work and to engage in gossip. The Apostle Paul strongly rebuked their response to this unfounded message and corrected their theology, reminding them of what he had taught them about the last days. We would be wise to heed the counsel that the angel gave to Daniel: Seek to maintain a biblical balance between looking forward to the future and living in the present.

G. APPLICATIONS

- 1) The more time we spend with God, the more teachable we become concerning Him.
- 2) The more truth we discover about God, the more profound He becomes to us.
- 3) The more we seek to maintain a biblical balance between looking forward to the future and making a holy living in the present, the more we bring glory to our God.