

Daniel 12:1-13

The Time of the End

A Short Synopsis

The angel, after finishing his prophecy about Herod the Great in the previous chapter 11 and the birth of Christ, continues here with a prophecy of a time of trouble, but also a time of deliverance and salvation; a resurrection either to everlasting life or shame and everlasting contempt. The wise will shine like stars forever.

If it follows the historical timeline, the ministry of Jesus the Messiah would be the subject.

12:6 - Then Daniel hears a question: One man clothed in linen ask another "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?"

12:7 - The man responds: "a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

The three and a half-year ministry of Jesus - which saves many, but also His rejection by the Jewish authorities which leads to the destruction of the city and the Temple within that 40-year generation..

12:8 - Daniel asks a similar question: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

The answer to that question of what would be the "end" or "result" of these things:

12:10 - 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.

Then the angel introduces another time period:

12;11-12 - And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

1,260 = 3 1/2 years - the time from the destruction of Jerusalem to the actual end of the Jewish revolt at Masada, To survive 45 days longer (1,335 days) would be a blessing.

The whole purpose of the tribulation described is to "scatter the power of the holy people" (verse 7). Then "all these things shall be finished."

That points to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Remember that Daniel's previous Messianic prophecy included a time period of 70

"weeks" of years.

Israel was required to observe a seven-year agricultural cycle mandated by the Torah, during which land in Israel "rests" or lies fallow in the seventh year, and debts are forgiven.

Seven of those cycles was followed by the 50th year of Jubilee in which land returns to its original owners, debts are forgiven, and slaves are freed (**Leviticus 25**).

The scriptures were read in Jesus' day according to a seven-year cycle consisting of two 3 1/2 years of reading through the Torah along with the Psalms and selected passages from the Prophets.

So, 3 1/2 years or 42 months was an important, spiritually charged time period that shows up throughout the Bible.

A Closer Look

Daniel 12:1 - "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Chapter 12 starts with the Hebrew phrase *uva'et*, which is translated "at that time." When used in prophetic writings, this phrase always denotes the time of the appearance of Messiah to save Israel (**Jeremiah 33:15; 50:4, 20; Joel 3:1; Zephaniah 3:20**).

"At that time" - It will occur during the dominion of Rome in time of Herod just described to Daniel 11 - Michael, the guardian angel of Israel, "stands up" ... and something amazing happens.

The Jewish translation says the opposite - Michael will "be silent" instead of "stand up." The word *āmaḍ* can be translated as "be still" or "stay." But Michael is being still because God Himself is temporarily taking over Michael's job personally.

Rashi - "He will be silent like a mute person, for he will see the Holy One, blessed be He, judging by Himself and saying, 'How will I destroy a great nation like this for the sake of Israel?'"

The beasts/kingdoms that arise from the sea, the image of the world empires that is destroyed by the "stone cut without hands," all symbolically come to an end at this time, the Days of Messiah, although from outward appearance the world system seems to keep functioning just fine.

The ministry of Jesus as He and His disciples preach the gospel of the kingdom throughout the land, forces a decision on the nation's leaders. They ultimately decide to reject him as the Messiah, to crucify him and to persecute his followers.

Two results ensue.

- "A time of trouble" - The Jewish revolt against Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem.

But could that be called tribulation "such as never was since there was a nation?" Jesus in **Matthew 24:21** goes further and calls it a time of "great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be." (See also **Joel 2:2**) Was it really that bad? Yes. Historians say judging by the percentage of world Jewish population reduced by this event, that not even the modern Nazi Holocaust surpassed it. The Jewish population was dangerously close to extinction. (The Jewish population was reduced even more about 70 years later during the Bar Kokba Revolt).

Josephus figures the number killed during the whole war and its aftermath in the region was 1,357,000 dead plus 97,000 sent to the mines as slaves: "The multitude of those that therein perished exceeded all the destruction that either men or God ever brought upon the world."

- But at the same time, "thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." - Salvation came to as many as believed on Jesus. (**Revelation 20:12**) The gospel was being preached throughout the world by the early church.

Resurrection

Daniel 12:2 - "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Jesus became the first fruits of the resurrection when He arose from the tomb:

- **1 Corinthians 15:22-23** - "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ the first fruits; then at His coming, those who belong to Him."

Some to "everlasting contempt" - *d^orā'ôn* - abhorrence, contempt, repulsive, aversion

The word is also used here:

- **Isaiah 66:24** - "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring (*d^orā'ôn*) unto all flesh."

This is the first full description of the hope of the Resurrection in scripture. It is hinted at previously:

- **1 Samuel 2:6** - "The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up."

- **Psalm 16:9-10** - "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

- **Psalm 49:15** - "But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me."

- **Job 19:25-27** - "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

- **Isaiah 26:19-20** - "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead. and the earth will give birth to the dead."

Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones

- **Ezekiel 37:4-6** - "Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD."

- **Jonah 1:17-2:2, 6-7, 10** - "And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. . . . Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. . . . I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple." . . . And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land."

The Raising of Lazarus:

- **John 11:25** - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.'"

As a taste of the future resurrection, after Jesus rose from the dead:

- **Matthew 27:52-53** - "The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many."

'Now, But Not Yet'

The Medieval rabbinical scholar Rashi linked this verse to the verses in Daniel 7 that describe the time when "the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (**Daniel 7:18**). That time was

also when the fourth beast (Rome) was making war on the saints and prevailed, "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (**Daniel 7:22**).

The gist of this comparison is that during the rule of Rome the time would come when believers would inherit the kingdom.

This is one of many prophecies in which there is the tension of a "now, but not yet" fulfillment. Jesus proclaimed the kingdom as having arrived, but also talked about a future fulfillment.

This is reflected in Jesus' resurrection, the dead that He brought back to life during His ministry, and the dead who came out of tombs after Jesus' own resurrection. His was a "first fruits" of the full harvest that would happen at the general resurrection of Judgement Day.

- **Hebrews 2:8-9** - "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

i.e. what we "see" presently does not yet conform to what we know to be true- but it will in God's time.

Daniel 12:3 - "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

The imagery of the righteous shining like stars is echoed in Jewish pseudepigrapha like **1 Enoch 108:12**. Also see **1 Enoch 104:2**; **4 Ezra 7:78, 125**; **2 Baruch 51:10**; **Pseudo-Philo, Biblical Antiquities 33:5**; **4 Maccabees 17:4-6**).

This verse was applied to the Days of Messiah by the Jews (Shemot Rabba sect. 15. fol. 102. 4.).

- **Philippians 2:15** - "that ye may be blameless and unoffending, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Seal Up the Book

Daniel 12:4 - "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."

"run to and fro" - Possibly referring to the "famine of hearing the word of God":

- **Amos 8:11-12** - "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it."

Possibly there will be a similar search for understanding that will be rewarded when the book is unsealed.

"Seal the book" - in contrast to John in Revelation, when the angel tells him:

- **Revelation 22:10** - "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near."

When Shall These Things Be?

Daniel 12:5-7 - "Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said 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? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

"a time, times, and an half" = three and a half years, forty-two months or 1,290 days. This would be half of a 7-year prophetic "week" of years. Sometimes this 3 1/2 year period is stated as 1,260 days using what commentators call a "prophetic year" of 360 days. Other times it is 1,290 days using a 365-day solar year.

[The Jewish lunar year is 354 days, and needs an extra intercalary month every few years to realign it with the seasons.]

The Book of Revelation uses 1,260 days:

- **Revelation 11:2** - "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

- **Revelation 11:3** - "And I will empower my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

- **Revelation 12:6** [and **12:14**] - "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

- **Revelation 13:5** - "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

But the Jewish rabbinical interpretation has a different total:

Rashi on Daniel 7:25 - "until a time, two times, and half a time" - they are the 1,335 years stated at the end of the Book (Daniel 12:12): 480 [years], which is the time from the Exodus from Egypt until the Temple was built, and 410 [years], [which are] the days of the First Temple, totaling 890, and another half of this time, 445, totaling 1,335.
- Deuteronomy 31:18: "And I will hide My face" [the words] add up in gematria to 1,335.

But Daniel says he didn't understand, and I think we can sympathize:

Daniel 12:8 - "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

Like the disciples asking Jesus in Matthew 24:

- **Matthew 24:3** - "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Daniel 12:9-10 - "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 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."

Daniel was troubled by this prediction of tribulation. But the result would be the purging, testing and purifying of God's people. The chaff would be burned up. The refiner's fire would eliminate the sludge. The pure gold would be revealed by the Assayer.

- **Malachi 3:3** - "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

More Numbers

Daniel 12:11-12 - "And from the time that the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

The first problem this verse poses is whether this is a time period *between* the sacrifice being taken away and the setting up of the abomination, or whether both of these were a starting point to count until the "end," which was Daniel's question.

The Septuagint Greek translation interpreted this passage as explaining how many days were left until the end of the judgment. The Septuagint translators drew on older manuscripts than the Masoretic text and might be more accurate. In their

understanding, the two events were the same starting point followed by 3 1/2 years leading to the "end."

"And from the time of the removal of the perpetual sacrifice, when the abomination of desolation shall be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." (**Daniel 12:11**, Septuagint version)

If the verse actually does refer to the daily sacrifices, they stopped when there were no more animals available to sacrifice, about three weeks before the Romans entered the Temple, ie. on the Fast of Tammuz. In that case both would be seen as happening almost simultaneously,

Tamid - The 'Continual'

But there is also confusion about the meaning of "daily sacrifices." It is the translation of a single word - *tamid*

"daily sacrifice" = *tamid* - that which is continuous, perpetual, or regular; could refer to the morning and evening burnt offering sacrifice, but also could mean the Golden Lampstand flame in the holy place, which was to burn continually (**Exodus 27:20**). Or really to any of the "continual" ritual activities described below.

(In **Daniel 9:27**, different words are used for "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease")

See also these examples of *tamid*

- (1) The shewbread (Ex 25:30; Lev 24:8; Num 4:7, 16).
- (2) The light of the Golden Lampstand (Ex 27:20; Lev 24:2,3,4).
- (3) The incense on the golden altar (Ex 30:8).
- (4) And the attributes on the coat of the High Priest: the breast plate and the engraved plate on his forehead (Ex 28:29,30,38).
- (5) The cloud above the tabernacle (Num 9:16).
- (6) In Deut 11:12 we find a *tamid* not in reference to the sanctuary, where God promises that He would consider the land 'continually'.

"The Ner HaMa'aravi (Western Light) testified that the Divine Presence rested upon Israel, for it burned longer than the others despite receiving the same amount of oil." - Talmud (Menachot 86b)

The Tosefta further notes that about 40 years before the destruction of the Second Temple (approx. 30 A.D.), the lamps began to be found extinguished in the evening rather than burning continuously. The rabbis interpret this as a symbolic omen of the coming destruction of the Temple. (At the same time the ribbon of the Yom Kippur scapegoat ceremony failed to turn white denoting God's acceptance of the sacrifice. And the Temple doors opened by themselves).

If the Golden Lampstand's flame is meant by *tamid*, then the Romans seized it at the

same time as they came into the Temple precincts with their banners, which was the "abomination." The Lampstand was carted away back to Rome as plunder by Titus. The *tamid* was literally "taken away."

If that is the meaning, then it also could mean the same in describing Antiochus' acts in **Daniel 8:11-13** and **11:31**, which is plausible.

So, from the Roman entry into the Temple precincts Aug. 28, (ninth of Ab) 70 A.D. where both the Lampstand was seized and the Roman banners were set up (the abomination) there would be another 3 1/2 years until the Masada fortress fell, finally ending the revolt. To survive 45 more days (a total of 1,335 days) until the judgment was past would be a blessing.

Recall that Rashi interpreted 1,335 as a sign of judgment, broken down by numerology:
- Deuteronomy 31:18: "And I will hide My face" [the words] add up in gematria to 1,335.

Josephus says that after Jerusalem's defeat, when Titus inspected the strength and workmanship of the city's walls and buildings, he said, "...We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of man or any machine do towards overthrowing these towers?' (Wars, VI,9:1)

The last of the Judean zealots killed themselves at Masada in 73 A.D. ending a total of 7 years of revolt/tribulation.

Although Daniel is told to seal up the words of this prophecy, Jesus quotes him and points to the destruction of Jerusalem as the tribulation that was predicted.

Summary: This chapter gives us hope in the resurrection, and comfort to any who are suffering persecution.

God is in control, so we can receive the word of Gabriel to "fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong."

For an alternative explanation, see - <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/78396/daniel-1211-12-do-the-1-290-and-1-335-periods-start-at-the-same-time>

Also see "The Zealot Temple Siege" <https://prophecycourse.org/session/more/zealot-temple-siege/>