



Daily Verse and Comment

[Daniel 12:4](#)

(4) But you, 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.

A Faithful Version

The angel's description of pell-mell activity and exploding information depict our society to a *T*, convincing proof that we are indeed living in the end time. Interestingly, the angel—Gabriel, who had interpreted earlier visions ([Daniel 8:16](#); [9:21](#))—instructs the prophet to "shut up the words and seal the book [of Daniel] until the time of the end." Present-day conditions are now paralleling what the prophecy describes, and the words have been opened up so that we can figure out the mysteries of the [book of Daniel](#).

Human knowledge now doubles every few years, as millions of people have pursued higher education, enabling exhaustive research, exploration, investigation, and experimentation in just about every field of study. What they find is then published and disseminated widely—globally, in fact—through journals and the Internet, and others take their findings and add them to their own research. In this manner, knowledge grows exponentially as people strive to innovate and be the first to invent some new thing that will garner them acclaim, fame, power, and wealth.

It is no wonder that futurist Alvin Toffler (the author of *Future Shock* and other trend-watching commentary) has dubbed this era the "Information Age." We are awash—and often thrashing about—in increasing knowledge. We cannot seem to go a day without hearing something "new" that someone has discovered, whether it is a new species, a new invention, a new therapy or drug, or a new spin on an old idea. It is impossible to keep up with it all.

This other factor—"running to and fro"—can be seen as a result of increasing knowledge. The rapid flow of information makes everyone live in a hurry; we are all dashing and jerking around like the proverbial headless chicken. To change the metaphor, many of us have had to enter the rat race just to get by. The rat race is such a demanding lifestyle that to keep from falling behind, we must pick up the pace of our lives drastically, devoting far more time and energy to "the cares of [this world](#)" ([Matthew 13:22](#)) than we would like.

To employ another analogy, the whole world is like six billion-plus ants all scurrying about the anthill, trying to set as much in store before winter sets in (see [Proverbs 6:6-8](#)). The pace of life is almost maddening—ceaseless, frenzied, pulsating, enervating. Everything seems to be "24/7/365" these days. If a product or service is not "fast," "speedy," or even "instant," it is considered to be worthless—who has time for "slow," "leisurely," or "gradual" anymore?

Will God's Kingdom be like this? Will life in God's Kingdom run at a frantic pace? It is hard to imagine [God](#) endorsing a society that is merely a "more righteous" version of this one. While it is clear that the Father and Son are constantly working (see [John 5:17](#)), they are not bouncing from pillar to post in a mad attempt to get everything done at once. Instead, He works out His plan over millennia, patiently guiding people and events to fulfill His will. From what we know of His character, He works steadily and surely, not frenetically.

Perhaps His more sedate pace comes as a result of His righteousness. Consider the fact that most of the worst components of this society would simply vanish if the majority of the people in it were righteous. If we removed just one sinful element—say, covetousness—the pace of life would instantly slow because people would not be so determined to get ahead of their neighbors. Gone would be the maddening quest to "keep up with the Joneses," as would be the vain and often cutthroat pursuit of "climbing the ladder." People would be more content with themselves and God's gifts. Their strivings would be more to better themselves and reach their full potential than to prevail over the competition. Life would slow down because they would no longer have a driving need for more.

We can conclude that this life's ramming-speed tempo is not of God. He never intended for us to live in such a fast-paced world. It produces excessive, prolonged stress, which is certainly not good for us. Although a certain amount of stress is necessary, more stress than we can physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually handle is wearying and debilitating. Eventually, it will wear us down.

Life today is also full of fear, not necessarily of something tragic happening all the time, but of slipping behind everybody else. This world produces fears and anxieties that eventually motivate us down self-destructive avenues. As mentioned earlier, the adversarial competition into which this society throws us has an edge of life-and-death reality. Just the fear of losing to "the other guy" and of not reaping the "rewards" of aggressive business practices can make a person cut corners and take chances that bring only trouble.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Beating the Rat Race \(Part One\)](#)

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