

The Book Of Daniel (Part Eight)

Daniel 11:2 - 12:13

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The prophesy given in chapters 11 and 12 of Daniel, is long and complex. It is the longest prophesy in the Bible. Chapter 10 is the prelude and chapter 12 is the prophesy's completion. The first thirty-five verses of Daniel 11 were prophesied for the time period we call, B. C. (or before Christ). Important, but forgotten, historical characters with complicated relationships are covered in this chapter.

Emphasized here is the fact that God rules in the affairs of human history, and He knows the end from the beginning. These prophesies fill in the details of a previous prophesy God had given to Daniel and were the answer to his prayer for greater understanding of God's plans for Israel and His church.

Chapter 11 Chronicles the coming kings of Persia and Greece. The war is between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria, and the persecution led by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. In chapter 12, we are promised that God's people will be saved out of the tribulation and resurrected. Also we are given a time frame for the great tribulation.

Beyond the facts of what have already transpired, it is not at all certain how God plans to work out the details in the future. Most detailed interpretations of these prophesies are speculations, human guesses at best, as to what might happen or to God will actually do.

We may know the just of how the events will pan out, but until God actually reveals the details to His servants, we are left with some wonder. So what I am trying to do is to extract the main principals and apply them in our lives now. That has been my purpose throughout the whole book of Daniel, and I will continue that through these last two chapters.

Another reason I had taken this approach in analyzing the book of Daniel was because it is not intrinsically a prophesy book. Let me explain this. In the Hebrew organization of the Old Testament as a whole, we find that the book of Daniel is not listed under the prophets with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets, but rather it is listed under the writings. Why? What is the purpose and focus of the books called the writings?

In the English Bible, Daniel is placed among the minor prophets immediately after

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Ezekiel thus following the order of the Latin Vulgate. In the Hebrew Bible, however, it is placed in the third division of the canon called Kethubhim (or what is called “writings” by the Hebrews), and it is also placed in the third division under the hagiographa or “holy writings” by the Greek Septuagint.

The book of Daniel is placed in this part of the Hebrew Canon because Daniel is not called a Navi (a prophet), but rather a Hozeah (translated “a seer”) or a Hakam (translated as a wise man). So Daniel is basically referred to as a seer or a wise man, not as a prophet.

Only the works of the nebi'im were put into the prophets, the second part of the Hebrew Canon. The writings, the third part, was reserved for various works of the seers—wise men and priest—or for those who do not mention the name or work of a prophet or that are poetical in form.

In the Old Testament Hebrew Canon, the first division, the law, is comprised of the works attributed to Moses. The second division, the prophetic books, including both former and latter prophets, were written by men who were prophets of God. The third division of the Canon is composed of works written by a man, like Daniel, who were inspired by God and yet did not themselves occupy the office of prophets.

In ancient Israel, the prophet was primarily a mediator between God and the nation, warning and teaching the people on behalf of God, and he was an effective spokesman for the Lord. Daniel did not occupy such a position since his training prepared him for his service as a statesman in a secular court, a capacity in which he served throughout his long life.

While he did not occupy the technical office of a prophet of Israel, his outlook manifested many elements consistent with the highest goals and standards of prophecy and for that reason, Jesus in the New Testament, speaks of him as a prophet.

Matthew 24:15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand),

So according to Jesus Christ, Daniel was a prophet in function and in fulfilling a purpose but not technically by title or position. Therefore, the book of Daniel belongs appropriately in the third division of the Hebrew Canon; thus the book was canonized by the Jews among the writings instead of among the prophets. Now this is a minor

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technicality, but it gives you an insight into my approach to this book of Daniel throughout these eight sermons.

The prophecy of Daniel 11-12 had been introduced in chapter 10, and it is revealed in the entire 45 verses of chapter 11 as well as the first 4 verses of chapter 12. It concludes with a post script in Daniel 12:5-13. That alone sets it apart as especially significant.

Here is how the chapters may be outlined: Daniel 11:2-39 concern fulfilled prophecy; and this deals with the history of the Near East from the time of Daniel through the appearance of Antiochus Epiphanes and his offenses whose coming has already been prophesied in the earlier chapters and on down through the Roman emperors of successive revivals.

In breaking it down by verses, Daniel 11:2 is about Persia; verses 3-4 are about Greece; verses 5-20 are about Egypt and Syria; verses 21-35 is about Antiochus Epiphanes, a type of the end time beast, and verses 36-39 is about the Roman Emperors successive revivals.

The second section, the way I have divided up here, is Daniel 11:40-12:13; it concerns unfulfilled prophecies. This part deals with the future. In breaking that down by verses, Daniel 11:40-45 is about the King of the south and the King of the North; Daniel 12:1 speaks that the saints go into a place of safety and the great tribulation begins; verses 2-4 mentions the first and third resurrections and about the glorified saints; and then verses 5-13 are the final instructions regarding the timing of the tribulation of the day of Lord in relation to Christ's return on the Feast of Trumpets.

This prophecy, in Daniel 11:2 begins by speaking of three more kings of Persia and then a fourth that was to be far richer than the others. It is not difficult in understanding what this means. The rich king is Xerxes, who reigned from 485 to 464 BBC. The kings who preceded him after the death of Cyrus were: Cambyses; Gaumata, an imposter, and finally Darius the Great, who assassinated Gaumata.

The significant thing about Xerxes reign was that he crossed the Hellespont in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Europe and was defeated by the Greeks. The Persians had tried to conquer Greece earlier under Darius the Great and had been defeated at Marathon.

This just gives you an overview of the fulfilled prophecy that is known absolutely, and all of this is fulfilled prophecy is seen throughout history.

Now in the second invasion, the great navy of the Persians was defeated by the Greeks at Salamis; the main body of the Persian army, estimated at about million men by Herodotus, was forced back to Asia. The 100,000-man land army left behind was crushed at the battle of Plataea a year later. These invasions and attempted subjugation of Greece stuck in the Greek mind and were a major factor in the campaign of Alexander the Great against Persia in the years 334 to 331 B.C., more than a century later.

Daniel 11:3 “Then a mighty king shall arise, who will rule with great dominion and do according to his will.”

Verse 4 shows how the empire of Alexander was to be divided into four parts after his death, which has already been prophesied in Daniel’s earlier visions. We have touched on this division repeatedly. The significant new item in this verse is the prophecy that not one of the parts of this divided Greek empire would go to even one of Alexander’s descendants. That is not what we might have expected, and it is not what Alexander himself expected—nevertheless, it happened.

All his descendants, including his wives, children, and even distant relatives, were murdered and the kingdom was divided into 4 kingdoms under the rule of Alexander’s four generals.

From this point on, the vision concerns two of the four kingdoms: Seleucus ruled over Syria and Ptolemy ruled over Egypt. These two had the most direct bearing on the land and people of Israel. Let me give you an illustration of how accurate and specific these revelations are.

In Daniel 11:6-9, there is a prophecy of a daughter of the king of the South who makes an alliance with the king of the North but who is unable to retain her place and is handed over or given up together with those who supported her. This woman’s name was Bernice. She was the daughter of Ptolemy II, not the first Ptolemy who assumed the rule of Egypt after Alexander’s death.

She married Antiochus Theos of Syria. It was a political marriage. Antiochus Theos had to divorce his first wife to accomplish it. But there was hatred and friction, as one can imagine. Bernice was poisoned, after which Antiochus remarried his first wife. Then Bernice was avenged by her brother, another Ptolemy, who attacked Syria and looted its temples.

Josephus, who related this history, records that Ptolemy III returned to Egypt with 4,000 talents of gold, 40,000 talents of silver, and 2,500 objects that had been in the cities and temples of the northern kingdom, and this is what verse 8 describes. Each of the details of Daniel 11:2-20 has had a similarly precise fulfillment in history and it is absolutely accurate that Daniel prophesied and recorded it through this vision before this happened.

Now we come to Daniel 11:21. The exceedingly wicked and contemptible King Antiochus IV Epiphanes has already been mentioned in Daniel, appearing first as another horn in the vision of the ram and goat of Daniel 8. In that vision he was identified as a ruler in the succession of Greek rulers going back to Alexander.

This wicked ruler appears again in Daniel 11:21-35 and many details about his conquest are prophesied. These verses teach that in the early years of Antiochus IV Epiphanes would advance his career by deceit and intrigue, which is what he did, and furthermore they speak of easy victories in these years.

The rulers of Egypt had become lax and corrupt and there were occasions when the king of Egypt did not even attempt to resist Antiochus as he marched through the land. He let him come, and he let him go without any resistance whatsoever.

Later invasions had a very different outcome, however. On one of these invasions, Antiochus was opposed by the ships and army of the expanding Roman Empire and he was forced to turn back from Egypt greatly humiliated. What happened then is described in Daniel 11:29-33.

Daniel 11:29-31 “At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. “So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

The fulfillment of this is an interesting story. Antiochus was on his way to invade Egypt again, no doubt expecting the easy victories he had enjoyed earlier. But he was intercepted by the Roman fleet under the command of Popilius Laenas. Popilius was a stern man who demanded that the Greek general return to Palestine. Antiochus said that he would consult his advisors.

The Roman knew what Antiochus had in mind. Antiochus wanted time to raise a larger army to repulse the Romans, but instead of granting him time, Popilius, with characteristic Roman determination, drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and ordered him to summon his counselors and deliberate on the spot.

If he stepped out of that circle without first having agreed to return to Palestine, the Roman officer said he would declare war. Opposed by such determination, Antiochus backed down and went home, but he was furious, as the text in Daniel says he would be.

So, what is the natural course of human nature when a person is humiliated, as the great King Antiochus was, or forced to back down in a situation over which he has no real control? The answer is that generally the person takes his anger out on someone else. This is what Antiochus Epiphanes did. He had been humiliated in front of his army; he could not proceed against Egypt, so he turned against the people of his own territory and poured out his fury there. He led 20,000 men against Jerusalem and abolished the temple worship.

What was worse is that by offering swine's flesh upon it, he desecrated the great altar upon which the daily offerings were made to God. This is "the abomination of desolation" of verse 31. We will take a closer look at "the abomination of desolation" when we get to Daniel 12:11.

Now As a result of these acts, Antiochus became a symbol of everything the Jewish people most despised and hated; and a widespread, successful rebellion led by Judas Maccabaeus was the result.

Daniel 11:32-35 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

These verses are a general description of the persecution and struggle of the saints down through the centuries until the time of the end, and it gives the reason why God allows such suffering among His saints—to refine them, purify them, and make them

white.

Daniel 11:36-39 generally describe the Roman emperors and successive revivals down thru time and since we know that these prophecies in Daniel 11 were fulfilled, as history shows, there are a number of important conclusions we can draw from this.

The first is that if the prophecies of this and other biblical books are made in the name of the Bible's God, then this God, and not another, is the true God because He is the only one who has revealed truth to anyone. There is nowhere else that reveals prophecies in such detail before it happened. The only way that these detailed events can be prophesied and then made to come true is if the true God, the God of the Bible, stands behind them and determines their outcome. No other god can do this, and it proves that this God, and not another, should be trusted, followed, and obeyed.

Second is that the fulfillment of prophecies, in which they are recorded, shows that the Bible is God's book. There are other evidences for the Bible being the Word of God as well. They are important and in some cases sufficient evidences by themselves, but fulfilled prophecy alone, especially detailed prophecy like that in Daniel 11, validates the Bible as not merely a human document but as God's unique revelation.

Third is that the fulfillment of prophecy shows that the God, who disclosed these events and then brought them to pass, is also able and will keep His promises to His people. When we get in difficult circumstances, our faith sometimes wavers and we wonder whether God is up to our dilemma. These fulfilled prophecies prove that He looks out for His people.

We should be encouraged by prophecy to know that nothing is too hard for God. Nothing can ever rise up to thwart His plans, and no detail is too small to merit His attention. Because of what we find Jesus saying in Matthew 28:20, we can know that He will indeed be with us and that we do not have to fear our circumstances. He is with us always.

Matthew 28:20 ...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Amen.

Now we still have the final section of this chapter and the verses in chapter 12 that go with this long prophecy. Do they relate to past history or to events yet to occur? Are they literal or symbolic? The fact that there are so many divergent interpretations of this final

section is the best evidence for concluding that the events referred to here are still future.

If this section were referring to past events, there is no reason it should not be clear in talking about them as the earlier portions of the chapter have been in talking about the history of the ancient Near East from the time of Cyrus down thru the Roman Emperors and successive revivals. But there is no clear history that the King of the South and the King of the North in this section can be applied to. Some of the passage is right but are given very weak examples.

If it were dealing with the past, commentators would agree for the most part on the historical facts of what has happened already. Instead of looking to history to see what happened and then matching those events to the prophecy, we need to study the prophecy itself and see what it says about what is yet to come.

Also, the verses must be taken as literally as similar to what has gone before. The earlier part of the chapter has spoken of kings, alliances and battles. We are able to give specific names and dates to these predictions. The same thing should be true for this section, even though we have not yet witnessed the rise or observed the careers of those prophesied. In verse 40, the angel speaks of "the time of the end," which is not the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Daniel 11:40-45 "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. [today that is the areas of Turkey, and Jordan, and perhaps even a little larger than that] He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Verses 40-45 are yet to be fulfilled since there has not been an adequate enough speculation offered on this by anyone. We must wait for more geopolitical maneuvering

to transpire first. These verses are a prelude to the Great Tribulation which is introduced in Daniel 12:1.

Daniel 12 is of great value to us; because it gives a description of the characteristics of the last days and tells how the righteous are to live in them. In a general sense, every age has characteristics of the last days and the saints are always to live as Daniel was to live, that was to be true all the way down through the centuries until the end comes. Daniel 12:1

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 [spiritual Israelites, the church] shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

“Delivered,” here, means to escape, as if by slipperiness; it means to slip away. The most common use of this word is to express escaping from any kind of danger, such as an enemy or a trap. The word appears twice in Genesis 19:17

Genesis 19:17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.”

Daniel 12:1 begins with, “At that time,” which means at the time just described. Chapter 12:1-3 introduces a great persecution, the church fleeing as it is about to hit, the 1st resurrection to eternal life; the 3rd resurrection, to judgment, and the eternal holiness of the saints. Jesus Christ Himself took these verses as applying to the last days in His discourse recorded in Matthew 24. He says in Matthew 24:21

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Daniel is referring to the time of persecution and trouble unlike any other, the Great Tribulation, immediately preceding Christ’s return on the Feast of Trumpets. Next, Daniel mentions the first and third resurrections and the future brightness of the glorified saints here in Daniel 12:2-3

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Daniel 12:2-3 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt[there we see the first and third resurrections]. 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.

Now we get into a description of the end time, the hustle and bustle of a frantic, chaotic society. Followed by final instructions to Daniel.

Daniel 12:4-7 “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.” Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 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?” 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.

Looking at the end-time events in general, "the holy people" refers to God's Church. The apostle Peter calls us, “a holy nation, His own special people, the people of God,” in I Peter 2:9-10.

Both the descendants of ancient Israel and the Church seem to be in the process of having their power completely shattered as we read in Daniel 12:7. The phrase "completely shattered" is translated from a Hebrew expression that means "broken in pieces" and is associated with a blast. When an object explodes, it moves in all directions losing all unity; at that point it is impossible for it to function as it had previously and therefore becomes useless or ineffective.

Despite what may be happening in the nation and the church, we have an individual responsibility, as members of God's church, to make our call and election is sure thereby preparing ourselves with the help of God's Spirit for His soon coming Kingdom.

Amos 8:11-12 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, And

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from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord,
But shall not find it.

So how much do we value God's Word and how well do we know the Word of God? This is especially important to us because, those who are wise will be able to determine specifically when the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation start. They shall understand, probably from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away.

Daniel 12:8-10 Although I heard, I did not understand. [Daniel is speaking here] Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 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.

The term "purified" here comes from the Hebrew word *barar*, which refers to the mind being cleansed of sinful thoughts. Is that not what we think about prior to Passover and what the days of Unleavened bread are about? Since sin separates man from God, the result is a lack of spiritual understanding, but the wise shall understand! Who are the wise? God gives the saints wisdom because they fear Him and keep His commandments. That fear of God is partly of fear, but it is actually more of an act of reverence to the point of never wanting to do anything against what God says. We still should have the righteous fear of God. Now in Daniel 12:11.

Daniel 12:11 "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.

Now what is the "abomination of desolation?" Daniel's original prophecy about the abomination of desolation found in Daniel 9:27; 11:3 and also 12:11, have more than one fulfillment, as is typical.

The first fulfillment took place in 168 BBC, on the 25th day of the month Kislev, that is November-December in the Roman calendar. With the help of his army, Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes erected an altar to the Greek god Zeus on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

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Here is one summary of the horrible details from Miller's book, "Ancient History in Bible Light:" "The observance of the Sabbath, circumcision and abstinence from unclean food were forbidden under penalty of death. Mothers who had their infant sons circumcised were crucified with their babes hanged upon their necks. The daily sacrifice was made to cease. An altar to the Olympian Zeus was built upon the altar of burnt offering and sacrifice offered upon it. A herd of swine was driven into the temple and swine's flesh offered upon the altar. The Holy of Holies and its furniture were sprinkled with broth made from swine's flesh. The courts of the Temple were polluted with indecent orgies".

This is how Antiochus Epiphanes carried out his anger after he was humiliated by the Romans. What would a king today do if the same thing happened to him and he had full power? Probably something similar. This time has rarely, if ever, been equaled in the history of Israel or Judah. Not only were the people butchered and even fried in huge pans, but Antiochus personally entered into the Holy of Holies in God's Temple and took away the gold vessels in the Temple. He erected a Greek altar on the site of the old one on December 25, 167 BBC. That date sure is important to the pagans.

This intensified the Jewish resistance, leading to the Maccabean revolt. Once the Jews retook Jerusalem, they cleansed and rededicated the Temple in 165 BBC, an act that is commemorated in the Jewish Hanukkah celebration.

Roughly a hundred years later, in 63 BBC, the Roman general Pompey desecrated the Temple by brazenly entering the Holy of Holies, finding it empty, but he did not plunder the Temple furnishings or treasury. The abomination of desolation Jesus predicts is the desecration of the Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in AAD 70 after the Jews rebelled. In Matthew 24:15, he says:

Matthew 24:15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

The Temple was completely destroyed by the Roman legions and not one stone was left upon another, as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:2. However, another fulfillment awaits. A short time before Christ returns, armies will once again surround Jerusalem and an "abomination" will be done in the city. This act announces the time of the Great Tribulation is starting.

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

At that time the saints in Jerusalem are told to flee to the mountains for safety. What form this end-time abomination will take is not specifically mentioned, but it will probably be similar to what Antiochus sanctioned. It may be that it will involve some action by the invading army Jesus mentions. Possibly a blasphemous rite performed or an idol erected in the Temple precincts, as in the former desolations.

From the biblical perspective an abomination callously disregards and actively disdains the values God has established. It shows disrespect and contempt of God's holiness, sovereignty as Creator and purposes expressed in the Law.

In the Old Testament, the term abomination is often synonymous with the word idol. Idolatry and its related immorality and witchcraft and sorcery characterize dismissal of God's sovereignty. Failures of God's people to separate from pagan practices that are in conflict with the Law are abominable, such as lies, arrogance, evil plans, murder and sexual perversions.

This abomination of desolation is typical and prophetic of an evil, pagan individual or force, arrayed against God and His people and usurps God's rightful worship by desecrating the temple. It could also be something as simple as the army's brutal destruction of the Temple Mount and its buildings; nevertheless, the abomination of desolation is one of the primary signs of the end time that Christians are commanded to watch for.

Luke 21:34-36 “But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

We have a great deal of work to do, Bible study, prayer and fasting and dedication to God's work. Are you watching with discernment the signs of the times and praying always that you and your family and the brethren may be counted worthy to escape the global deception that is already begun gripping the world? If you are just praying for yourself to escape, you are probably not in the right attitude. We should even pray for the world that God will have mercy on them, because when His wrath comes, nothing good can be said about that individual time period, except for the end result; that will be good.

Now let us look at what the 1,290 and 1,335 days represent. Both Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 12:14 show that the Great Tribulation will last three-and-one-half years, or a “time, times, and half a time.” This is also 1,260 days or forty-two months.

Now the church had speculative beliefs that the tribulation is in the first two and a half years and then in the last year of the Great Tribulation, is the day of the Lord when God brings His wrath upon man and the heavenly signs and such are seen. So the whole time period, the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, which entail the great Tribulation are three-and-one-half years.

Now the 1,290-day and 1,335-day time periods, then, refer to events that will happen to God’s people. Each begins with a significant prophetic event and both end at the return of Christ on the Feast of Trumpets.

Daniel 12:11-12 “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.

This verse indicates that the Jews in the modern-day nation of Israel may restore the twice daily sacrifice for a short time. It is probably a literal meaning there, but it could also be a spiritual meaning. However, it does not necessarily suggest that a literal temple will be built in our time in Jerusalem. These sacrifices can only be legitimately offered with an altar.

In a similar way, as the Syrian anti-type Antiochus desecrated the Temple during his assault on Jerusalem, so also might the armies of the beast of Revelation 17 take away the sacrifices and ban them upon entering Jerusalem. If this is the correct scenario, there would be 1,290 days until the appearance of the Messiah.

Daniel 12:12-13 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.” [speaking to Daniel here]

A blessing is pronounced upon the saints who endure until the 1,335 days, to the time beginning 1,335 days before Jesus Christ’s return. Since nobody knows the day of Christ’s return, we may not know exactly when the 1,335 days begin. The additional

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figure of 1,335 days, 45 days longer than the 1,290 day period, heightens the sense of mystery that surrounds God's timing and emphasizes the need for the saints to persevere faithfully even when, to human wisdom, Christ's arrival seems overdue.

We do know that 45 days later, which is the 1,290 days, before the return of Christ, the Beast's armies will surround Jerusalem. The saints who are worthy will have been warned and will have 30 days to flee to a place of refuge, a place of final training while still human. God has provided and prepared for those worthy to escape. It does not mean that every last person in God's church will go to the place of safety, only those worthy will go.

The specification of 1,290 days emphasizes the precision with which the period is measured, predetermined by God to the very day, just over three and a half years. In this time many will purify themselves and be refined. It may be that the organized physical work of the Church's preaching of the Gospel is thwarted, banned, or stopped at the 1,290 days. This could be a warning that the power of the holy people being completely shattered is almost finalized.

When God's church is in its place of protection, the 1260 days or three and a half years of the Tribulation will begin. At the end of the 1,335 days, the 1290 days and the 1260 days of overlapping periods, Jesus Christ will return to this earth and set up the Government and Kingdom of God here on the earth.

So we have that 1335 days, then you have 45 days after that, which is 1290 and then you have 30 days after that which is 1260 days. The 1260 days is when we believe the tribulation will begin and the place of safety will be shut up and kept safe. We believe that in the 1290 days we will know that it is time to flee and we will have thirty days to do that.

The response to the outcome of these things is the assurance of continuing persecution to purify and refine the wise and the of continuing wickedness on the part of this immoral society. This matches God's consistent pattern of working in this world, moving through suffering to glory, and refining His people through trials and persecution, even to the point of martyrdom.

It would be better to go through these trials now than have to go through them during the tribulation, because we have not made ourselves ready with God's Holy Spirit empowering us. In the meantime, God's people are to go on living faithfully in this corrupt world, confident of the inheritance that is stored up for us at the end of the days. Remember Daniel lived and worked in a very heathen and pagan society, at the very

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top of it as a statesman, and he was able to be greatly loved by God.

In this last chapter of Daniel, there is emphasis on understanding, a lack of understanding by the wicked and a desire for understanding by the righteous. But to see what is involved it is necessary to go back to the closing phrase of Daniel 12:4, which says:

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.”

Run “to and fro” is a Hebrew idiom suggesting a frantic but futile pursuit of something elusive.

So the idea is that in the last days people will embark on a pursuit of knowledge, thinking that it will lead to understanding, but they will not find it. There are few things more characteristic of our age than this.

At no time in the history of the world have more things been known by more people. Education is a major industry, yet at no time have people seemed more to lack understanding. Millions do not even know who they are, let alone why they are or what they are doing. They live and let live and if it feels good, they do it.

We have a crisis in the area of learning today in this society, which is the result of a failure of the secular approaches to knowledge. The reality of knowledge is neither an equation nor an emotional experience as secular education teaches. Wise King Solomon states this succinctly in Proverbs 9:10

Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

The world thinks the impersonal rationalistic approach to knowledge is right and good when in reality the knowledge that God gives, through His inspired written Word, is personal knowledge given by a personal Supreme God. He loves and cares for us, reveals Himself by name, and He gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins and washed us with His blood. How much more personal can you get than that?

The world’s rationalistic approach to knowledge is inadequate and misleading because it fails to give an adequate foundation for morals and ethics.

Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.

Man does not even know his own heart, but God is the righteous and ethical God. What is right flows from His character. When people choose the emotional experience approach to knowledge, they have chosen a path that is passing and does not last and fails to satisfy the human mind. But God is eternal and unchangeable, the same yesterday and today and forever, and He reveals Himself and His way of life which brings joy and satisfaction. That is a key in God's knowledge, it brings satisfaction. God sets down the Law for success.

Deuteronomy 12:28 Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

The world does not have this approach to knowledge; therefore, its experience is what the angel predicted in his words to Daniel: a frantic pursuit of knowledge without true understanding.

Another characteristic of the last days, suggested by reference to a final judgment in Daniel 12:2 but explicitly spelled out in verse 10, is an increase in wickedness. Verse 10 says of the saints:

Daniel 12:10 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.

Certainly, the wicked will break the power of God's people in some great final catastrophe, the most wicked among them having ushered in the period of intense suffering and persecution in which the abomination that causes desolation is set up. Although we live in wicked times today, it has not reached the level of the Great Tribulation yet.

Take note of what the apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy about the last days in II Timothy 3:1-5:

II Timothy 3:1-5 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

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For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

We are rapidly coming to the epitome of when the majority of people are entirely wicked. Here is Solomon's description of the wicked man:

Proverbs 6:12-19 A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, He sows discord [Is that what our leaders are doing today and many of the populace as well?]. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy. These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

Notice that there are two different types of lying there, a lying tongue, which includes white lies and a false witness that speaks lies meant specifically to do harm to someone; hands that shed innocent blood.

These verses are very descriptive and characteristic of our day; although we have given other names to these vices, it still does not nullify them. Lovers of themselves we call narcissism; lovers of money we call materialism; boastful, proud, or abusive we call doing your own thing. We call being disobedient to parents the generation gap, and so on, with all the other failures of our age.

The first chapter of Romans explains why and how this happens. It shows that the only way in which a civilization moves upward from barbarism is by a genuine growing in the knowledge of God. That is the way a people, a nation, or a culture advance.

But what happens if knowledge of God is neglected or spurned? In that case, people are cut off from what is good and enter a downhill spiral that results in their increasing spiritual, moral, and physical debasement. There is only one direction to go without the

knowledge of God.

In the first chapter of his letter to the Roman brethren Paul uses the phrase, "God gave them over," and shows the result of rejecting knowledge of the true God. First, they are given over to sexual immorality, found in Romans 1:24. Second, they are given over to shameful lusts found in Romans 1:26. Third, they are given over to a depraved mind in which they justify their evil deeds by calling good evil and evil good found in Romans 1:28-32.

That is precisely the point to which our culture has come today. People have been given over to sexual immorality, shameful lusts and to a depraved mind. Certainly, there are few things as characteristic of our time as the use of words to justify evil and disparage the good.

Sins that in an earlier time would have been considered abhorrent are now justified as: self-expression; personal growth; an alternative lifestyle; freedom of choice; honesty or similar nice words for sin that they call good.

This society has reached the point when it is decadent enough to lead rapidly into the final period of intense trouble described by the angel: "a time, times and half a time," the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

I remind you that the basic theme of the Book of Daniel is the overruling sovereignty of the one true God, who condemns and destroys the rebellious world power and its sinning masses and faithfully delivers His covenant people according to their steadfast faith in Him.

So, what can the righteous do? The bearing of these things on our lives is that we are to live for God the Father and Jesus Christ and honor them regardless of the circumstances. Look at Daniel; he was surrounded by horrible circumstances at times and horrible people. Psalm 11:3 asks the probing question:

Psalm 11:3 "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The psalmist asked the question and then answered, "Go on being righteous, of course."

Psalm 11:4-7 The Lord is in His holy temple, The Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The Lord tests the

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righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Upon the wicked He will rain coals; Fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup. For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.

Hopefully that upright involves you and I, members of God's church. That is what Daniel is saying in Daniel 11:32

Daniel 11:32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits.

That has been going on since the time of Christ and even before that by the sins of the Old Testament. Daniel is saying that there is always going to be wickedness in this world. There will always be wars and rumors of wars, famine, trouble, persecutions, and distress. He had them in his day and we have them in ours and they will be present even at the end of this age. Nevertheless, those who know God are to stand firm, live righteous lives, resist evil, and do exploits, as God prospers them.

The point of Daniel 12 is not to describe the wickedness of the final days. That has already been adequately described in the preceding visions. Nor is it even to describe the wickedness of Daniel's own day or ours. The evil of his age was vividly known to Daniel already. The point of chapter 12 is to encourage God's people to triumph in the midst of evil. How are we to do that?

This last section of Daniel suggests two things: first, the people of God are to live by faith in God and by the knowledge of God given in His written revelation. This is the point of the angel's words to Daniel regarding the scroll on which this book was written.

Daniel 12:9 The angel said, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end."

Sometimes this verse is understood as if it were teaching that the book was to be withdrawn from circulation until the time of the end when it would have its seal broken and would again be read and understood, but that is not entirely correct, since the book has been known and read, though not always fully understood, from Daniel's time until our own. Actually, the words imply an official validation of the book as a true revelation from God.

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The words of prophecy are closed up as an official, validated document. The words are also to be sealed by Daniel himself, as a faithful transcript of God's revealed truth. In other words, this was the trustworthy, validated revelation according to which Daniel was to live in those days.

But even if this refers to the sealing up of prophecies not yet understood until a later time when they will be understood, we can hardly fail to compare this last chapter of Daniel with the last chapter of Revelation. Revelation 22 is the closest parallel in the New Testament to Daniel 12.

In the book of Daniel, the prophet is told to close up and seal the prophecy, but in Revelation 22:10-11, the angel tells the apostle John:

Revelation 22:10-11 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

We live after the days of the apostle John, so even if the words of Daniel's prophecy were sealed up because the people of that time could not understand them, we are no longer living in such times and the entire Word of God is open for us to read and understand.

This does not mean that God has revealed all His secrets to us. There is much we have not been told. Deuteronomy 29:29 speaks of these things, saying:

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

That is what we are to be doing and how we are to understand. We are to be doing what it says and living by it and not worrying about speculative things. It is not wrong to speculate, but sadly in the World Wide Church of God, much of the speculation turned to doctrine, which was wrong. We can all speculate; we all have our own ideas, and that is fine, but not to set it as doctrine.

To live by faith in God and by the knowledge given by His written revelation is the first secret to living for God in the last days. Second, in Daniel 12:10 the angel spoke to

Daniel about the righteous being purified, made white and refined or, to go back to the concluding words of the vision, Daniel 12:3 says:

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 combination of ideas, purification; refinement; spotless living and shining with the brightness of the heavens, speaks of the actual personal righteousness of God's elect people, which by the blessing of God inevitably leads others to believe in God and become like God themselves. It is what we are called upon to be and do as the end approaches. We are to be witnesses of God's way of life.

Whenever the Bible speaks of the people of God shining like the celestial bodies, it is speaking of their showing forth and reflecting the character of God. By their own acts of righteousness, they glorify Him. This is as a result of spending quality time with Him through daily prayer, fasting and Sabbath worship. Spiritually speaking, do you shine like the stars or are you like the dark-side of the moon? A good question to ask yourself.

After Moses had spent time with God on the mountain, his face shone with a transferred brilliance, so much so that the people asked that he cover his face with a veil until the glory of God, visible in His face, subsided. The brightness of his face was blinding and unnerving to those people who did not have God's Holy Spirit.

Moses revealed God's glory as a result of having spent time with Him, and this is what Paul picks up in II Corinthians to admonish us that we also are to reflect God's glory to others.

II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We do not always do it well, we are like the moon when the sun goes down and the moon comes up, and it shines. It does not shine by its own light, it shines only by reflecting light from the sun. Sometimes it is a full moon and the sky is filled with light. At other times it is a new moon, barely visible. That is the what we are; it is our duty is to reflect the light of God's glory so that people living in our own dark age might see the light and be witnessed to about its true source. Those who shine with God's glory will

lead many to righteousness, as the angel told Daniel they would.

In the very last verse of the book Daniel is told to “go his way till the end,” knowing that he would eventually rest and await his resurrection and receive his inheritance at the end of days. It was a way of telling him that, though the days ahead would be tough, his task was to persevere and not waver in his dedication and loyalty to God, and so it is with us. This is what God has given us to do. It is our commission and task and opportunity.

Some questions that we may ask when the times are difficult and the future in doubt are, “How long?” “How long until the end?” Daniel did what all of us must do; he humbly asked God for the wisdom that he needed. But, what if God does not tell us yet? God knows how much we need to know and how much we can take, and we can be satisfied with that if we have complete confidence in Him as a result of having spent time with Him.

He did promise that all these things would be clearer for those living in the end times, which is an encouragement for us to prayerfully study the Scriptures. The servant of the Lord never has to fret over what to do next, because God always has a word of encouragement and instruction for him at the right time. Daniel prayed faithfully, studied the Scriptures, and sought to serve God and he was always guided, protected, and used for His glory.

The Book of Daniel is a book for our time, and it is worthy of pre-Passover preparation. Do you remember the words from Daniel’s supplication and prayer for forgiveness?

Daniel 9:19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Daniel knows why the exile came upon the Jewish people, and he confesses his own and his people’s sins and prays for forgiveness and mercy. Hear, forgive, listen and act—these are four things Daniel requests, and all four are accomplished spiritually through Christ’s ministry for the spiritual Israelites, the Church.

Thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we have been declared justified in the eyes of God and now we have access to God through Christ our Savior. God hears when we ask forgiveness, He forgives our sins when we genuinely repent, He listens when we ask for help in overcoming, and He acts accordingly to help us glorify Him.

We need to be about our Father's business, doing the Work He has asked us to do, cleaning up our personal lives so that we, together with others who have already qualified, may become a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

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."

It is clear that the language of this verse is appropriately used by one who believes in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and who meant to direct attention forward to the far-distant and glorious scene when the dead in Christ will all arise.

Daniel was a righteous man, greatly beloved by God. This final comment to Daniel is unique and appears to promise him a place in the first resurrection. Wow! Would we not all like to have that promise? We do! All that we have to do is live God's way of life and we have the power to do that if we have God's Holy Spirit. Could there be anything more encouraging with which to end the book? May we all arise to our eternal inheritance!