

❖ CHAPTER TWELVE ❖

The War in Heaven

verse 1a

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people. . . .
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Michael's crusade

“At that time” Michael will intervene to help Daniel’s people, Israel (verse 1). At what time? The previous mention of a “time” (*eth*¹), just a few verses earlier (Daniel 11:40), points to the time of the end. The time of the end must therefore be “that time” when Michael will rise on Israel’s behalf. The Scripture of Truth does not divulge exactly what he will do, yet it clearly places his exploit within the historical period represented by the feet and toes of the great image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

The sequential layout of Daniel’s last vision makes it possible to date Michael’s bold initiative more precisely. As the first event foretold in chapter 12, the initiative must follow the last event foretold in chapter 11. That is, Michael will “stand up” (Daniel 12:1) sometime after the assassination of the Antichrist.

A fuller account of Michael’s future defense of Israel appears in the Book of Revelation, which reveals that he will someday lead the forces of heaven in a war against the devil and his angels.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:7–9

God presently allows Satan access to heaven for one reason only—so that he might serve as an accuser of God’s people. In Scripture, the scene before the throne of God is often compared to a court room (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6; Zechariah 3:1–5; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1). God’s people are the defendants, the judge is God the Father, the advocate is God the Son, and the accuser is Satan. Although God now tolerates Satan’s presence in heaven, He will someday decide that his role as the accuser

no longer serves any good purpose, and He will call upon Michael to drive out Satan and his cohorts.

After Michael has rid heaven of hostile beings bent on subversion, the saints will rejoice that “the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10). At that time, most of God’s elect still on the earth will be Jews. Banishment of the accuser will benefit Jews especially. The war that Michael will wage against Satan and his evil host will therefore be an appropriate undertaking for the prince and protector of Israel.

If the Book of Daniel did not place this war during the time of the end, we might, after reading about it in the Book of Revelation, be tempted to place it long ago, perhaps shortly after Satan fell at the beginning of the world, or perhaps at the time of Christ’s death and resurrection. Partisans of the amillennial school of prophetic interpretation maintain that ever since his defeat at the cross, Satan has, at least in a figurative sense, been chained in the bottomless pit. But this school fosters blindness to the dangerous stratagems of an active enemy. As a warning that the church must contend with Satan throughout the present age, Daniel’s prophecy informs us that Michael’s defense of Israel is still future.

Satan’s defeat

In its account of the war in heaven, the Book of Revelation announces that the angels of God will utterly triumph over their foes. They will expel Satan and his angels and confine them to the earth. Then, as he broods over his defeat, Satan will contrive new mischief.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12:13–17

The first target of Satan’s wrath after he comes to the earth will be the woman—that is, the nation of Israel. When he persecutes her (verse 13) and she flies into the wilderness with the help of two eagle’s wings (verse 14), he will send a flood of water to carry her away (verse 15). But God will counter Satan’s attack upon the woman by providing her a place of

refuge. This refuge will be “prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days” (Revelation 12:6).

Who “they” are is unclear. The reference might be to angels or to raptured saints or to animals like the ravens who fed Elijah during his sojourn in the wilderness. Several other elements of the story, such as the two wings of a great eagle, are mysterious as well. No doubt God has veiled what He will do so that Satan will be taken by surprise.

In frustration at his failure to destroy the woman, Satan will go “to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (verse 17). The remnant will be a diverse group—including all gentile Christians, all believing Jews who are unable to reach the place of refuge because they reside too far away, and all Jews who turn to Christ only after the persecution begins. Satan’s war against this remnant is described elsewhere in prophecy as the Antichrist’s war against the saints (Daniel 7:21, 25; 8:10–12, 24; Revelation 13:7, 10).

The woman’s flight into the wilderness

Earlier we showed that before the woman flees into the wilderness, God will send two witnesses who will call the world to repentance. Their ministry will continue 1260 days.

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 11:3–13

In that hour when the two witnesses are taken up and a great earthquake levels a tenth part of Jerusalem, the survivors in the city will give glory to the God of heaven (verse 13). Among them will be many Jews who were formerly unbelieving, but whose obstinacy against the truth will suddenly melt. As they then begin to search the Gospels or to rehearse the instruction they had from the two witnesses, they will find Jesus' admonition,

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Matthew 24:15–21

From this admonition, they will discover that they can escape from coming persecution only by fleeing into the wilderness (verse 16). They will learn also that they must flee as soon as they see the abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place (verse 15); that is, in the outer chamber of the Temple sanctuary (Exodus 26:33–34).

The abomination of desolation

Many students of prophecy believe that the abomination of desolation will be an actual idol placed in the Temple. That idol, they say, will be a great image of the Antichrist—the same image which the false prophet will force all people everywhere to worship.

14 And [the false prophet] deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Revelation 13:14–15

Yet although the image of the Antichrist may be set up in the Temple, the preceding verses establish that he will unleash persecution of the Jews at a time well before the image is built.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

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.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Revelation 13:4–13

Notice the sequence of events. The resurrected Antichrist will control the world for forty-two months (verse 5). At the beginning of his allotted years, he will blaspheme the Temple (verse 6) and make war against the saints (verses 7–10). Later, the false prophet will appear (verse 11). Like the four beasts in the dream recorded in Daniel 7, the false prophet will arise “out of the earth” (compare verse 11 with Daniel 7:17); that is, from the world of men. His mission will be to exalt the Beast and to authenticate his claims by means of miraculous signs (verses 12–13). Only after all these things will the false prophet turn to making an image of the Beast (verses 14–15). Thus, the abomination of desolation that signals impending persecution of the Jews (Matthew 24:15) cannot be the image built at the behest of the false prophet (Revelation 13:14–15).

The term “abomination” suggests an idol, because Scripture often calls idols an abomination (Deuteronomy 7:25–26, for example). But Scripture also uses the same term for the Antichrist, referring to him as “an abominable branch” (Isaiah 14:19). The Antichrist is, in fact, the very abomination of desolation. He is an abomination because, like an idol made with hands, he is a false god.

Near the beginning of his forty-two month reign, he will “blaspheme his [God’s] name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Revelation 13:6). Paul foresaw the setting and occasion.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

2 Thessalonians 2:3–4

The blasphemy will consist of both deeds and words. He will enter the Temple of God and make it the center of a cult devoted to worshiping his own person. Not content to be received as a god equal to other gods, he will claim to be the God of gods, the god nonpareil. The place where he will enthrone and exhibit himself will doubtless be the chamber of the sanctuary known as the Holy Place. After he first sets foot in the sanctuary—in other words, after the Jews first behold “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” (Matthew 24:15)—he will almost immediately begin his intense persecution of all Jews still faithful to the true God. Thus, his violation of the Temple will be the signal to believing Jews that they must, with all possible haste, flee to the wilderness.

Jesus advised his hearers to look in the prophecies of Daniel for explanation of the phrase “the abomination of desolation” (Matthew 24:15). Daniel replaces it with another phrase, “the abomination that maketh desolate” (Daniel 12:11). Thus, the abomination will be “of desolation” in the sense that it will produce desolation. Here, then, is a strong clue that the abomination is a person.

Daniel also says, however, that the abomination will be “set up” (Daniel 12:11), an expression that seems more appropriate for an idol. Yet the underlying Hebrew is a single word that merely signifies “given forth.”² An acceptable translation is “presented.”³ This word suggests that the Antichrist will present himself, or be presented by others, as a god. If he is presented by others, they might be men or demons. As suggested earlier, he may mock God, whose throne rests above the cherubim, by having demons in monstrous forms bear him about.

Jesus’ assumption that the presentation of the Antichrist will be seen by those in the fields and on the housetops of Judea strongly hints at modern means of communication. Whether by television or some more advanced technology, not only the people in Judea but the whole world will witness the event as it happens.

The Closing Phase of the Tribulation

verse 1b

1 . . . And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation <i>even</i> to that same time: and at that time thy
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people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Unprecedented trouble

God will offer the Jews many avenues of escape from the closing phase of the Tribulation. If they miss the rapture of the church, they can still flee to the wilderness. But many will continue in unbelief until it is too late. They will find themselves trapped in a world given over to divine judgment.

Agony and distress will fall hard upon those Jews who remain. They will, according to the Scripture of Truth, live through “a time of trouble, such as not has been from the existence of a nation [presumably, the nation of Israel] until that time” (verse 14). In other words, greater trouble will then come upon Israel than she has ever seen before. The man clothed in linen reaffirmed the same thought, declaring that the time of trouble will last until the power of the holy people has been fully scattered (verse 7).

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus said,

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Matthew 24:21

Since this oracle and the oracle under investigation (Daniel 12:1) both specify a tribulation of unparalleled intensity, it is certain that they refer to the same period. The context in each case reveals that this period will fall just before the dawn of Jesus’ Millennial reign. According to Matthew 24, Jesus will return immediately “after the tribulation of those days” (Matthew 24:29). According to Daniel 12, the time of trouble (verse 1) will lead quickly to a time of blessedness for all the saints (verses 10–12).

The catastrophic period predicted in Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21, as well as in Revelation 12–16, will last 3½ years (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5). The primary sources of end-time chronology (the Books of Daniel and Revelation and the Olivet Discourse) indicate that these 3½ years will conclude a longer historical period burdened throughout by terrible wars and disasters. In modern discussions of prophecy, the whole period is generally called the Tribulation, and the closing phase, on the basis of its description in Matthew 24:21, is generally called the Great Tribulation.

The customary nomenclature is inappropriate, however, since the Book of Revelation says that from the very outset of the whole period, the world will suffer “the tribulation the great” (Revelation 7:14⁵). The wording distinguishes this tribulation from the others mentioned earlier in the same book. In the opening chapters, we read that some of the churches in Asia Minor would suffer tribulation, including Smyrna (Revelation 2:9–10) and Thyatira (Revelation 2:22). But the difficult

times that would come upon these churches pale next to “the tribulation the great,” which will begin when Christ opens the first seal of the great heavenly scroll (Revelation 6:1–2). The definite articles before “tribulation” and “great” indicate a tribulation so severe that it will be incomparable to anything mankind has ever seen before. It will be a period of calamity on a scale previously unknown.

Yet, calamity will intensify at the very end of this period, in a brief “time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time” (Daniel 12:1). Therefore, in keeping with the usages of Scripture, the whole final period, now called the Tribulation, should be called the Great Tribulation, and the last 3½ years, now called the Great Tribulation, should be called the Time of Unprecedented Trouble. This commentary will employ the new term for the last 3½ years but, to mitigate confusion, will retain the customary term for the whole final period.

The severity of distress during the last 3½ years is a recurring theme of prophecy. The Book of Jeremiah, describing this phase of the Tribulation as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7), uses wording reminiscent of Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21 to show that the trouble will go beyond all previous experience. “Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it” (Jeremiah 30:7). Much the same wording appears again in the Book of Joel.

1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand;

2 A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years of many generations.

Joel 2:1–2

Deliverance

To soften the prediction that Israel will someday undergo devastating trouble, the Scripture of Truth assured Daniel that all his people will be delivered whose names are found written in the book (verse 1). The book is not identified but is undoubtedly the Book of Life.

The Book of Life contains the names of all human beings who have received or who will receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. After the rapture of the church, all remaining Israelites will fall into two groups: those who will never bow to Christ and those who will bow to Him either before or after He appears. The latter constitute the elect of Israel. Throughout the Time of Unprecedented Trouble, these elect will survive the ferocious onslaughts of the Beast. In his war against the saints (Revelation 13:7), the Beast will succeed in killing gentile believers only.

The promise of deliverance for the elect of Israel does not extend to the nonelect. Indeed, all the nonelect—a huge number amounting to two

thirds of the whole nation—will succumb to the Antichrist’s campaign of genocide (Zechariah 13:8–9).

The Israelite Resurrection

verse 2

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.

The dilemma

The Scripture of Truth now seems to describe a future resurrection of the dead (verse 2). The natural sense of this prophecy, when viewed in context, favors three conclusions.

1. The resurrection will involve many who sleep but not all.
2. The resurrection will involve both the just and the unjust.
3. The resurrection will occur “at that time”—presumably, at the Time of Unprecedented Trouble.

There is no room in popular eschatology for such a resurrection. The common belief today is that none of the unjust will rise until after the Millennium; that is, until the Tribulation has receded more than a thousand years into the past.

Popular interpretations

Two attempts to resolve the dilemma posed by verse 2 have won the widest support.

1. The verse is speaking not of resurrection, but of national revival. Gaebelien, the leading exponent of this interpretation, said that “sleeping in the dust of the earth” is a poetic image referring to the worldwide dispersion of the Jews. He construed the verse to mean that these Jews (“many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth”) would someday rediscover their national identity and flock to the land of their fathers (“shall awake”), some out of a desire to obey and know their ancestral God (“some to everlasting life”) and some out of base motives (“and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt”).⁶

2. The verse is indeed speaking of resurrection, but the KJV offers a mistranslation. The following captures the intended meaning:

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, these [the many] to everlasting life, while the rest [a thousand years later] to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:2⁷

This slight change of wording, substituting “these . . . the rest” for “some . . . some,” shifts the resurrection of the unjust to a later time.

The expositors who stretch verse 2 to cover events a thousand years apart have differing views on the first resurrection, the resurrection of many to everlasting life. They share the belief of popular eschatology that a resurrection of all the dead in Christ will precede the Tribulation, and that a resurrection of all martyrs of the Beast will come at the very end of the Tribulation. On two more points they agree also:

a) Since the Book of Daniel focuses on the future experience of the Israel, the resurrection of many to everlasting life in Daniel 12:2 must be a resurrection of Israelite saints.

b) Since the previous verse places the event “at that time” (verse 1)—in other words, at the Time of Unprecedented Trouble—this resurrection of Israelite saints must be an event during the last 3½ years of the Tribulation.

But the same expositors disagree on exactly which Israelite saints will be raised. Some believe that all will be raised—that the resurrection of many to life is the general resurrection of Old Testament saints. They place this resurrection either at the beginning or at the end of the Time of Unprecedented Trouble. Others, supposing that the Old Testament saints will rise with the dead in Christ at the beginning of the Tribulation, view verse 2 as a prediction that many Jews (and perhaps many descendants of the lost tribes of Israel) will participate in the resurrection of late-Tribulation martyrs.

Proof that the verse is not speaking of national revival

The proof rests on four arguments.

1. The Scripture of Truth is very sparing of figurative language. The few instances—such as “a branch of her roots” (Daniel 11:7)—have plain meaning.

2. Sleeping in the dust is an appropriate and, in the world’s languages and literature, a common figure for the state of the dead.

3. It is a figure that the Bible itself often uses (Job 7:21; 17:16; 20:11; 21:26). Moreover, the Bible sees dust alone as emblematic of death (Psalm 22:15) and regards dying as returning to dust (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 22:29; 104:29; Ecclesiastes 3:20; 12:7). Once, the Bible describes the state of the dead as “dwelling in the dust” (Isaiah 26:19).

4. In no other text does the figure refer to national dispersion. The passage of Scripture with greatest affinity to Daniel 12:2 is Ezekiel’s

record of his vision in the valley of dry bones, but when the Lord Himself explained the vision, He informed the prophet that it pictured resurrection rather than national revival.

11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

12 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

Ezekiel 37:11–12

The vision assured the Jews that death could not separate them from the covenant promises of God, and that He will someday raise them up from the dead and give them the land of Israel as their eternal inheritance. The land they will occupy will not belong to the present corrupt world, but to a perfect world created after the present world has been destroyed (Hebrews 1:10–12; 2:5; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:11; 21:1).

Proof that the verse is not speaking of two resurrections a thousand years apart

The proof rests on three arguments.

1. Changing “some . . . some” to “these . . . the rest,” while most convenient from the standpoint of certain preconceived ideas, has no warrant in the Hebrew whatsoever. The Word of God does not require any improvements, even for the sake of what is deemed correct doctrine. “Some” is the plural demonstrative *eleh*, ordinarily translated “these” or “those.”⁸ The English rendering closest to the original would be “these to everlasting life, and these to reproaches and contempt everlasting.”⁹ If the first “these” refers to “many,” then the second “these” must refer to “many” also. But since each individual in the many must have one destiny or the other, the intent of the construction “these . . . these” must be to divide the many into two groups. The best translation, found in many modern versions as well as the KJV, is “some . . . some.”¹⁰

The same phraseology is commonplace in spoken language. A principal at a school assembly might say, “Now, fifth graders, I want you all to come forward: these I want to stand on my right, and these I want to stand on my left.” A hearer unable to see any gestures—a hearer backstage perhaps—would not know which children the principal wanted on each side. Nevertheless, the same hearer would never suppose that the right side was intended for all the fifth graders and the left side for the remainder of the school.

2. The arguments brought forward to justify equating the first “these” with “many” are entirely baseless.

a) Harry Bultema, otherwise a somewhat reliable commentator, alleged that Scripture elsewhere uses the figure “sleeping in the dust” only for the righteous dead.¹¹ But this impressive generalization takes in only one text, speaking of a single righteous man, Job (Job 7:21), and excludes many texts that use similar expressions for the unrighteous dead. The Book of Job, the same book that provides Bultema’s only supporting example, says twice that the unrighteous dead lie in the dust (Job 20:11; 21:26). Texts that depict the unrighteous dead as asleep are fairly common (Job 14:12; Psalm 76:5; Jeremiah 51:39, 57). The Books of Kings and Chronicles attest of every wicked king of Israel and Judah that when he died, he slept with his fathers. The difference between “sleeping in the dust” and these other expressions seems trivial.

b) According to Leon Wood, another reliable commentator for the most part, the definite article before “many” in verse 3 hints that these people are the many already mentioned, in verse 2; in other words, that the people called “many” in verse 2 (the many who will rise) appear again as “the many” in verse 3 (the many turned to righteousness). Thus, the many who will rise “at that time” include only the righteous dead.¹² Yet, proximate instances of “many” need not have the same reference. “Many” in verse 3 is situated closer to “many” in verse 4 than to “many” in verse 2, but the many turned to righteousness (verse 3) are obviously not identical to the many who will run to and fro (verse 4).

3. Replacing “some . . . some” with “these . . . the rest” does not change the meaning enough to allow two resurrections at widely separate times. So modified, the passage still presents a single event or series of events within a narrow temporal frame. A reader without bias would take it for granted that the force of “at that time” (verse 1) carries all the way through the end of verse 2. The passage teaches that the raising of some to everlasting shame will be one of the events “at that time”; that is, at the Time of Unprecedented Trouble. It affirms that within “that time,” there will be a resurrection of many including the unjust as well as the just.

Proof that the resurrection “at that time” will exclude Jewish martyrs of the Beast

As stated before, some expositors believe that the many who will rise “at that time” are Jewish martyrs of the Beast. It is true that any believer killed by the Beast during the Time of Unprecedented Trouble will not remain long in an unresurrected state. John reports that immediately after the return of Christ,

4 . . . I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his

image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:4–6

The term “first resurrection” (verse 5) does not imply that, in the order of resurrection, all the blessed and holy will precede all the wicked, for, in fact, the martyrs who will rise at the time of Revelation 20:4–6 will not precede the Antichrist and the false prophet. These two leaders of the last rebellion against God will rise at the time of Revelation 19:20. Rather, the term “first resurrection” echoes the words of Christ.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

John 5:28–29

Paul enunciated the same teaching.

And [I, Paul] have hope toward God, which they [the Jews] themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Acts 24:15

The resurrection of the just is the first in two respects.

1. Christ defined it first.

2. It will be completed first. After the resurrection of late-Tribulation martyrs, none of the just will remain among the unresurrected dead. Yet most of the unjust will not be raised until a thousand years later (Revelation 20:5).

Though the resurrection of late-Tribulation martyrs falls within the same short span of years as the resurrection of saints “at that time” (Daniel 12:2), the two events must be distinct. Independent lines of reasoning demand this conclusion.

1. The preceding context of Revelation 20:4–6 reveals that the resurrection of late-Tribulation martyrs will not occur until after Christ has returned to the earth, defeated His foes, relegated the Beast and the false prophet to the lake of fire, and enchained Satan in the bottomless pit. Hence, the martyrs of the Beast will gain immortal bodies only after the glorious age of universal justice and tranquillity has already dawned. In other words, their resurrection will come not at the Time of Unprecedented Trouble, but at the time when Christ is ruling over a world rid of trouble; not “at that time,” but after that time.

2. The Scripture of Truth states explicitly that no saints of Israel will perish during the Time of Unprecedented Trouble (Daniel 12:1). Hence, none who rise in fulfillment of Daniel 12:2 will be Jewish martyrs of the Beast.

Time and compass of the resurrection “at that time”

Daniel 12 contains several statements characterizing the whole Time of Unprecedented Trouble. The Jewish people will be crushed (verse 7). The pressure on them will last 3½ times (verse 7). The righteous will be made perfect, and the wicked will be made worse (verse 10). Since the verse speaking of a future resurrection precedes all these statements, this resurrection is likely an event at the beginning of “that time” rather than at the end. At the beginning of “that time,” many Israelites—indeed, all the just and the unjust who lived and died under the Mosaic covenant—will be raised from the dead. The just will awake to eternal life. The unjust will awake to eternal damnation.

It is always God’s policy to give people what they really want. The man who desires fellowship with God will live forever in God’s presence, and the man who shuns God will live forever in hell. The unjust in Israel took pride in their racial identity and wished to be counted as part of the nation. Thus, they will be raised and judged alongside their fellows. But, in the sight of all, their unrighteousness will be exposed. As a result, they will earn, literally, “reproaches and contempt everlasting.”¹³ (“Everlasting” modifies both nouns.¹⁴) Whose reproaches and contempt? Evidently, of the just. In this prophecy, we catch a dim reflection of a future day when the just will watch the unjust on trial. The just will learn how the unjust have dealt perfidiously with God and have scorned His goodness. Every deed done in darkness will be seen, every word spoken in the ear will be heard, and every secret thought will be discovered (Luke 12:2–3). And the spectacle of treachery will be so odious to the just that they will form in their hearts an everlasting hatred for the unjust.

The Glorification of the Saints

verse 3

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.
--

Paul discloses four characteristics of the body that each believer will possess in eternity.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

The body of the risen believer will be incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, and glorified. What “incorruptible” and “powerful” signify is self-evident. “Spiritual,” however, is a much more elusive concept, permitting only speculation as to its meaning. A spiritual body is perhaps a body capable of living and moving not only in the realm of the visible universe, but also in the spiritual realm, the realm presently inhabited by such beings as angels and demons.

A correct understanding of the term “glorified” requires a search of the Scriptures for information about the glory of God. God permitted Moses only a glimpse of His glory, because the full sight would have been fatal (Exodus 33:18-23). After Moses returned from communing with God on Mount Sinai, the glory of God lingered upon his face, and his face shone (Exodus 34:30). When the angel announced Jesus’ birth to the shepherds, the glory of God “shone round about them” (Luke 2:9). Taken together, these texts imply that the glory of God is the fiery light that attends His presence. According to Paul, God dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto” (1 Timothy 6:16). That light was seen in the cloud which accompanied Israel (Exodus 13:21); also, on the top of Mount Sinai, where it was like a devouring fire (Exodus 24:17); again, in the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35); and again, in Solomon’s Temple (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). A cloud of light abode permanently above the Mercy Seat of the ark within the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:2). Jews in post-Biblical times referred to this cloud as the *shekinah*.¹⁵

Since the glory of God evidently consists of light, a glorified body must be a body clothed with light, a body invested with bright radiance. Luke’s account of the Transfiguration confirms this surmise (Luke 9:28-36). He says that what the disciples saw when they looked upon the radiant countenance and raiment of Jesus (verse 29) was His glory (verse 32).

The body in which Jesus was seen after His resurrection appeared to be a normal body in all respects. Thus, although it was incorruptible, powerful, and spiritual (since He was able to appear and disappear, to move instantly from place to place, even to enter a closed room), it was not glorified. The glorified body He assumed after He ascended into heaven was dazzling in its magnificence (Revelation 1:13-16).

The privilege of owning a glorified body is not reserved for Christ alone. The text quoted above (1 Corinthians 15:43) promises that every humble believer will be raised in glory. The text under investigation (Daniel 12:3) compares the saint’s glory to the brightness of sky and

stars. Jesus informed His disciples that the righteous will rival a yet stronger light. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43).

The oracle here in Daniel seems to present two kinds of glory in an ascending series. They who are wise will receive glory, but they who turn many to righteousness will receive even greater glory. A greater measure of eternal glory is therefore one of the rewards for conscientious soulwinning.

The oracle is correct in treating the light direct from a star as brighter than the firmament (that is, the sky), which shines only with sunlight that has been scattered in all directions by the atmosphere. But how did a writer in antiquity know that a star is brighter than the sky? As far as the ancients were concerned, a star was just a pinprick of light in the night, much less glorious than the whole sky during the day. Here we have subtle proof that the oracle has a perspective transcending man’s. Indeed, it comes from God.

The Sealing of the Book

verse 4

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, <i>even</i> to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.
--

Knowledge denied

The manuscript penned by Daniel was not a sheaf of pages, of course, but a scroll. The angel speaking to Daniel gave him the curious instruction to “shut up the words, and seal the book” (verse 4). The translation “shut up” is correct.¹⁶ The meaning is not “preserve,” as some commentators allege. The angel was telling Daniel to treat the scroll in an accustomed manner. The owner of a scroll protected it from prying eyes by rolling it shut and fastening down the end with one or more seals of wax.

The long duration of the sealing—“*even* to the time of the end” (verse 4)—disallows every easy literal interpretation. Since the contents of the book have never been withheld from public knowledge, the angel could not have meant that the book should be literally closed up and, in some fashion, secreted away for rediscovery during the time of the end. The Book of Daniel is not among the Qumran writings and many other ancient books lost until just recently. What the angel apparently meant was that its intended readers should not be allowed to understand the book.

Why, then, was John instructed not to seal his book, the Book of Revelation?

And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Revelation 22:10

The correct interpretation of these contrary instructions to Daniel and John must explain in what sense the Book of Daniel has been sealed while the Book of Revelation has been unsealed.

The key lies in recognition that the Book of Daniel is addressed primarily to the Jews, whereas the Book of Revelation is addressed to the church. The Jews have never advanced beyond a very rudimentary understanding of Daniel. They have never even perceived that its central figure is Christ. For them, Daniel has been a sealed book, and will remain so until God sends them spiritual revival. But for the church, Revelation has never been a sealed book. Although much of its symbolism has baffled commentators, most Christian readers down through the centuries have apprehended its main teachings: that the present age will close after a time of great tribulation, that a personal Antichrist will lead a final rebellion against God, and that Christ will return bodily and overthrow the Antichrist.

Knowledge granted

The angel's next words verify that the future unsealing of the book represents a dawn of understanding. He said that in the time of the end, many would run to and fro, and knowledge would be increased (verse 4). In the view of this commentary, the time of the end arrived at the reestablishment of Israel in 1948. The angel was therefore predicting great activity and growing knowledge within our own time. Yet he was not, as some commentators have maintained, applauding the achievements of modern civilization. Rather, he was promising energetic inquiry leading to new insights concerning the Book of Daniel.

The unsealing of the book would benefit not only Jews. The impression given by verse 4 is that during the time of the end, whoever inquired diligently into the meaning of Daniel would reach a greater understanding than was ever before possible. The book would then become more transparent, presumably because the cloud of mystery that had always hung over many of its prophecies would be lifted. It is no mere coincidence that Daniel's prophecy of the sixty-nine weeks, for example, did not become susceptible to a full solution until shortly after 1948. The tables of Parker and Dubberstein were published in three editions, dated 1942, 1946, and 1956.¹⁷ Only the last edition shows the date of Artaxerxes' accession.¹⁸

The prediction that many would run to and fro (verse 4) vividly portrays a frenetic search for knowledge. Here is a small but unclouded ancient window onto a remote future when archaeologists would be hopping jets to the latest dig; when scholars would be constantly en route to distant museums and libraries; when professors would be rushing to far cities to give or hear lectures; and when pastors and evangelists would be touring the churches to speak on prophecy.

Two More Beings

verse 5-6

5 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.

6 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?

Number of beings in the vision

Earlier, the first person Daniel had seen was the man clothed in linen (Daniel 10:5). Then an angel had come and stood before Daniel (Daniel 10:10-16) to tell him what was contained in the Scripture of Truth (Daniel 10:23). Throughout the recitation, the same angel had no doubt remained standing before him. Now, two other beings appeared, the first on the near side of the river, the second on the far side (Daniel 12:5). When one of them spoke, Daniel's attention shifted to the man clothed in linen, who was standing upon the river (Daniel 12:7). Whether He had been visible all along is uncertain, but it seems likely that He had not disappeared or moved since He first manifested Himself. Altogether, four beings besides Daniel occupied the scene.

At the beginning of the vision, Daniel had been aware only of the man clothed in linen (the Lord) and of His angelic spokesman (probably Gabriel), but the other two beings may have been present then also. Perhaps they had been present but invisible, for Daniel's recollection that he "looked, and, behold, there stood other two" (Daniel 12:5) suggests that they suddenly materialized before his eyes.

Identity of the last two

The account does not indicate whether the last two beings who joined the scene were men or angels. It is probable that neither was Michael, for the angel speaking to Daniel had hinted in earlier conversation that Michael was away carrying on a struggle against the prince of Persia (Daniel 10:13-14, 20). The best remaining possibility is that these two

beings were the two witnesses who will appear during the Tribulation (Revelation 11:3). The Lord brought them to hear the Scripture of Truth because much of it directly concerned their own future ministry. One portion showed them the world situation they will find when they return to the earth (Daniel 11:36–45), and another showed them the world situation they will leave behind when they complete their ministry (Daniel 12:1–3).

One of the two asked how long it will be “to the end of these wonders” (verse 6); in other words, how long it will be until the seed they have planted comes to harvest. The answer is that God will be able to restore His people to Himself after they have gone through a fiery tribulation of 3½ years (verse 7).

Identity of the two witnesses

The two witnesses who will minister to a world on the verge of devastating final plagues must be two individuals, for after the Beast slays them, their enemies will gaze upon their dead bodies lying on the street of Jerusalem (Revelation 11:8). But who are they?

One, as most expositors agree, must be Elijah, for the Scriptures predict that Elijah will return to the earth during the time of the end and revive Mosaic religion among the Jewish people. God’s last words to Israel during the era of Old Testament revelation were these spoken through Malachi the prophet:

4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Malachi 4:4–6

That Elijah will yet come in the future was reaffirmed by Jesus.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

Matthew 17:11

To alleviate any doubt that one of the witnesses is Elijah, the Book of Revelation reveals that they will send fire upon their enemies and stop the rain (Revelation 11:5–6). So far as we know, the only man in the past who performed these particular miracles was Elijah (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1–46; 2 Kings 1:1–16).

Who, then, is the second witness? A popular candidate has always been Enoch, since he and Elijah are the only men who have passed into heaven without dying. Those who name Enoch and Elijah as the two witnesses argue that the Lord took them alive from this world because He

foresaw that they will return and die during the end time. But the assumption that the Lord does not permit anyone to die more than once fails the test of history. At least nine others, including Lazarus and Jairus's daughter, have died twice.

The Book of Revelation gives a salient clue to the identity of the second witness.

These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

Revelation 11:4

The symbolism alludes to one of the more elaborate and difficult visions of Zechariah.

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all *of* gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof:

3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof.

4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord?

5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it.

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof?

12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be* these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves?

13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord.

14 Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Zechariah 4:1-14

When Zechariah asked what “these” (all the elements of the vision) represented (verse 4), the angel answered, in essence, that they represented the working of the Spirit of God (verse 6). Many expositors associate the

Holy Spirit with only the oil, but in fact He is the agency responsible for, as it were, building and operating the whole apparatus.

Perhaps the best way to explain the vision is to consider the lamps first and the trees last. The symbolic meaning of the lamps recognizes that they are essentially a source of light. The oil burning within them represents the Word of God, the fire represents proclamation of His Word, and the shining light represents revealed truth penetrating the darkness of ignorance and unbelief. Accordingly, the seven lamps are called “the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth” (verse 10). They are like His eyes because, when spread abroad by witness, revealed truth searches through a lost world for receptive hearers.

To be credible, an identification of the candlestick must show why, in Zechariah’s vision, there is only one candlestick, but in Revelation 11, there are two. What means of holding lamps of witness aloft existed in John’s day but not in Zechariah’s? The means existing in Zechariah’s day was the nation of Israel. The means coming into existence later, before John wrote the Book of Revelation, was the church. We conclude that Israel and the church are the two candlesticks.

Now it is possible to offer an identification of the trees that is not merely guesswork. These must be two individuals either human or in human form, for they stand by the Lord (Zechariah 4:14). Since they are the source of God’s Word flowing into the lamps, they must be authors of Scripture. Yet since they are only two, they must be in some way representative of all the authors besides themselves. The Jews customarily thought of the Scriptures as divided into the law and the prophets (Matthew 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; Romans 3:21). The giver of the law was Moses, and chief among the prophets was Elijah. Hence, the two olive trees standing by the Lord of the whole earth must be Moses and Elijah. Likewise, these must be the two witnesses who will preach repentance to a world on the brink of judgment.

Scripture offers triple corroboration of this conclusion. The Lord of the whole earth is, of course, Jesus. During His earthly ministry, He was seen in His heavenly glory only once, upon the mount of Transfiguration, and the two standing by Him on that occasion were Moses and Elijah. Moreover, just as two of the miracles performed by the future witnesses are reminiscent of Elijah’s ministry, two others—turning water to blood and smiting the earth with plagues—recall feats that Moses performed in Egypt (Revelation 11:5–6). Finally, Moses is paired with Elijah in the very passage that proclaims Elijah’s role as a witness to the world in the end time (Malachi 4:4–6).

Our reasoning has led us to differentiate the candlesticks and the olive trees, although Revelation 11:4 seems to equate them. But the verse is merely giving two ways of interpreting the two witnesses mentioned in the previous verse. During the 1260 days preceding the seventh trumpet, the world will hear prophesying not only from two men,

but also from two bodies of believers. The urgent warnings of Moses and Elijah will be echoed by Israel and the church.

The End of These Things

verses 7–10

7 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.

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

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

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.

Duration of the great ordeal

The closing phase of the Tribulation will last a time, times, and half a time (verse 7). The man clothed in linen specified the interval in this curious way for two reasons.

1. He wanted us to recognize that the Time of Unprecedented Trouble (verse 1) is identical to the second half of Daniel's seventieth week. The Book of Daniel implies that the length of the former period will fall a little shy of 1290 days (Daniel 12:11). The Book of Revelation states that it will extend exactly 1260 days (Revelation 12:6), or forty-two months (Revelation 11:2; 13:5). Yet, although 1260 days approximates 3½ years, we might easily overlook the connection between this period and the scheme of seventy weeks. So, to make it more evident that the final half week of the seventy will coincide with the horrific closing phase of the Tribulation, both Daniel and Revelation measure the Time of Unprecedented Trouble as a time, times, and half a time (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:14). This formulation sounds less strange if expressed simply as 3½ times. Now, 3½ times is the same as a half week, since, as we showed earlier, the Hebrew word for week means a period of seven times. Therefore, the Time of Unprecedented Trouble has the same duration as the closing half of the seventieth week. Since the former period will last until "many shall be purified, and made white, and tried" (Daniel 12:10), and since the latter will "bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24), we conclude that the two periods are one and the same.

2. He wanted to avoid any reference to years, which, in the absence of information to the contrary, would necessarily mean solar years.

Yet, as shown earlier, each unit of the final half week is an attenuated year of 360 days. Therefore, because He did not wish to mislead us, He quantified the final half week as 3½ times, a time being an indefinite period. He was content to let other prophecies define the exact length of a time.

Purpose of the great ordeal

The purpose of the closing phase of the Tribulation will be to scatter the power of the holy people (verse 7). So stated, the purpose appears malevolent. Yet the crushing of the Jewish nation will serve the benevolent purpose of bringing as many Jews as possible into a right relationship with God (verse 10). God is merely seeking to maximize the harvest when He finally puts in the sickle and begins reaping.

Daniel's question

To relieve his lack of understanding, Daniel asked for further light on “the end of these *things*” (verse 8). As noted earlier, the word translated “end” is *acharith*, a technical term designating the final 3½ years of the Tribulation. The Lord answered accordingly, by giving Daniel a summary of what will happen during this period (verse 10) as well as a clearer idea of how long this period will last (verses 11–12).

Yet Daniel probably did not understand the true meaning of his own question. The question in his own mind may have been, “What will happen after the holy people are reduced to impotence?” In several previous visions as well as in this one, he had heard that the little horn who waxes great will inflict terrible persecution upon the Jews, and that God will introduce an everlasting kingdom of righteousness as soon as the persecution runs its course. As we would, he no doubt wondered how history will make the transition from its darkest hour to its brightest hour. Exactly in what fashion will God defeat the evil usurper, and by what measures will God introduce the Kingdom?

A modern reader must remember that Daniel was not privy to New Testament revelation. He did not know that when Christ returns, He will immediately join battle with a great host assembled at Armageddon under the leadership of the Beast. Nor did he know that after Christ summarily puts down His enemies, He will reign on the earth for a thousand years. So, Daniel naturally had some unsatisfied curiosity about what exactly will happen.

The Lord's reply

The Lord knew full well the real meaning of Daniel's question, and His answer was a terse but gentle rebuke, informing him that the knowledge he sought will not be made available to the Jews until the time of

the end (verse 9). A similar exchange took place on the day of the Ascension. The disciples asked the Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). He replied,

7 . . . It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:7-8

On both occasions the Lord set aside a query about hidden things of the future with essentially the same reply. "I am sorry, but the information you are seeking is not for you to know. You must put the question out of your mind and occupy yourself with the work I have given you."

When speaking to Daniel, the Lord reiterated the earlier disclosure that Daniel's book would remain sealed until the time of the end. He was implying that the answer to Daniel's question lies hidden in the revelation already entrusted to Daniel. Although this revelation lacks a full survey of the events that will transfer rule from the Antichrist to Christ, it does furnish a clouded glimpse of the three most important events on the threshold of the Millennium: the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the Most Holy Place (Daniel 9:24). The nature of these events will be made clear later in this discussion.

The warning to us

When the Book of Daniel was finally unsealed, some would approach it reverently, with a desire for truth, and God would give them understanding, but many would be so blinded by wickedness that they would see nothing of value in the book (verse 10). They would continue in the pleasure of sin rather than accept instruction from a holy God.

The warning to us who live in the time of the end is, "None of the wicked shall understand" (verse 10). What sobering words! God means what He says, and He says that no one loyal to the evil world system of the Last Days would comprehend the prophetic significance of the time in which he lives. As he rushed with the crowd along the thoroughfare of convenience, self-indulgence, and success, he would be oblivious to the destruction lying just around the corner. As Jesus predicted,

37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:37–39

The Holy Spirit can use the preaching of prophetic truth to awaken in the sinner a fear of divine judgment. But no one can advance very far in his understanding of prophecy until he has repented and come into a right relationship with God. The secrets of the future are reserved for those who have demonstrated their loyalty to the cause of holiness. “The wise shall understand” (Daniel 12:10). As the Lord said to Abraham,

17 . . . Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? . . .

19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Genesis 18:17, 19

Three Terminal Events

verses 11–12

11 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.

12 Blessed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

Each interval—the 1290 days (verse 11) and the 1335 days (verse 12)—begins at the abomination of desolation and reaches to an event unspecified. Earlier, the Book of Daniel mentions another span of days from the same starting point.

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Daniel 8:14

Thus, after the abomination of desolation will fall intervals of 1290 days, 1335 days, and 2300 days. Here in Daniel 12, Scripture says nothing to connect the ends of these intervals with events. Perhaps it is reticent because it expects us to find the explanation in another passage—in the one that names three objectives of the seventy weeks that will be fulfilled at Christ’s Second Coming (see commentary on Daniel 9:24). Since the abomination of desolation marks the beginning of the final half week, the whole seventy will conclude after an interval of 1260 days. Then, Christ will return. In consequence, according to Daniel 9:24, everlasting righteousness will be brought in, vision and prophecy will be sealed up, and the Most Holy Place will be anointed. To nudge us toward associating

these three events with the intervals of 1290, 1335, and 2300 days, Scripture says that the third interval will finish at the cleansing of the sanctuary, an event that could be concurrent with the anointing of the Most Holy Place. Both an anointing and a cleansing might be performed during a larger ceremony of consecration.

By assuming that the intervals of 1290, 1335, and 2300 days terminate in events foreseen in Daniel 9:24, we can date three main developments directly following Christ's return.

1. After the interval of 1290 days (that is, thirty days beyond Christ's return), everlasting righteousness will be brought in. The meaning is that Christ will begin to reign as king over the earth. With one voice, the prophetic books laud His kingdom as one of everlasting justice and righteousness (Isaiah 9:7; 11:1–5; Jeremiah 33:15–17; Zechariah 8:3–8; Malachi 4:2). Although the ceremonies that will mark the formal inauguration of Messianic rule are scarcely imaginable, the psalmist provides an inkling of their solemnity and majesty.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

Psalm 24:7–10

The doors that the psalmist apostrophizes are doubtless those belonging to the Golden Gate, the city gate on the eastern side of the Temple platform in Jerusalem.¹⁹ Although presently walled shut,²⁰ this gate will be reopened for the grand entrance of Christ into the capital city of His kingdom. The leaders of the city rebuffed Him at His triumphal entry two thousand years ago, but when He returns, brandishing unconcealed splendor and unrestrained might, He will come in without opposition. His intent will be to rule with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15). With irresistible power He will put down all agitation against righteousness and all promotion of sin.

In the next forty-five days after He assumes power, Christ will bring gentile survivors of the Tribulation to the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1–3). There, near Jerusalem,²¹ He will determine who supported the Beast's attempts to annihilate Israel and who resisted these attempts (Matthew 25:31–46). He will separate the corrupt from the innocent—the goats from the sheep—and cast the goats into everlasting punishment. But the sheep will hear His benediction,

. . . Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25:34

At the end of this judgment, known as the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats, all the wicked will be purged from the world. All who remain will enter the Kingdom. Thus, the man clothed in linen stated that those who attain the 1335 days will be blessed (Daniel 12:12).

2. After the interval of 1335 days (that is, seventy-five days beyond Christ's return), vision and prophecy will be sealed up. In the opinion of most commentators, the cryptic words that prophecy employs to summarize this event imply that all the promises contained in vision and prophecy will at last be fulfilled. But twice in the context (verses 4, 9), the sealing of a prophetic book represents its removal into the realm of uncomprehended mystery. When the Millennium is underway, God will again draw a curtain over His prophetic Word so that its predictions will not handcuff His dealings with the people who will be born into the Millennial Kingdom. To protect His purpose in allowing a final rebellion under Satan, He may deem it necessary to suppress foreknowledge of that rebellion.

The sealing up of vision and prophecy likely has another meaning as well. It suggests that Christ's way of revealing His will to men will change after He establishes His earthly kingdom. Then, because He dwells among them, He will communicate with them directly. He will no longer have any need to speak through vision and prophecy. Thus, vision and prophecy will cease.

3. In the days after Christ installs His administration over the earth, one of the first tasks of the government in Jerusalem will be to rebuild Zion. The first and most important project will be to reconstruct the Temple. After the interval of 2300 days (that is, 1040 days beyond Christ's return), the Most Holy Place will be anointed. The name designates the inner chamber of the Temple sanctuary (Exodus 26:33-34). The anointing will apparently come right after a cleansing (Daniel 8:14).

Consecration of the Most Holy Place will likely be the last step in preparing the new Temple for regular public worship. Thus, completion of the Temple will require 1010 days (2300 days minus 1290 days), a little less than three years. The need for so lengthy a time, running into years, indicates that the work will be done by ordinary human labor, without supernatural assistance. Yet the need for so short a time, only three years for completion of a project monumental in scope, shows how efficient divine government will be.

Daniel's Future

verse 13

13 But go thou thy way till the end <i>be</i> : for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Heavenly honor

After three years of training, young Daniel and his companions were found so excellent in learning and wisdom that they were appointed to stand before the king (Daniel 1:19). But the privilege of serving Nebuchadnezzar was inconsequential next to the much greater privilege Daniel earned by a lifetime of faithful service to God. In the last verse of Daniel's book, giving a momentary glimpse of his future, the Lord promises him, "For thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13). Whereas he once stood before a temporal sovereign, he will someday stand in his glorified body before the Sovereign of eternity. Here is a good illustration of the principle that in God's economy, a man who perseveres in good work can expect to move into larger spheres of responsibility.

Present state of the righteous dead

Daniel 12, the chapter offering the clearest Old Testament teaching on the resurrection of the saints, also reveals something about the present state of the righteous dead. It says that they are in a state of rest (verse 13). But though resting, they are not unconscious. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus revealed something about the experience of the righteous dead in Hades, saying that Lazarus felt comfort and that Abraham was capable of hearing and speaking (Luke 16:23, 25).

The rest that the righteous dead enjoy is not an actual sleep punctuated only by dreams, but a suspension of work. They will not resume work in the service of God until they have received the full equipment of a glorified body.

Christ and the Antichrist

The last vision in Daniel shows the crucial difference between the word of Christ and the word of the Antichrist. Christ speaks the truth. The Antichrist is a liar.

The truthfulness of Christ's Word is a prominent theme of the vision. The source of the prophetic message is the "scripture of truth"

(Daniel 10:12), and the message itself, as recited by the angel, is “the truth” (Daniel 11:2). At the end of the vision, while speaking on His own behalf, Christ guarantees His truthfulness with a solemn oath (Daniel 12:7).

In contrast, the Antichrist is incapable of telling the truth. The last vision reveals for the first time exactly what he will say, and what he will say is preposterous. He will “speak marvellous things against the God of gods” (Daniel 11:36). The word “marvellous” strikes a note of amazement—as if to say, “It is utterly stupefying just to think that someone would speak such things.” Yet he will heap lie upon lie. In a spasm of wishful thinking, he will embrace and promote the ultimate lie that he is greater than God.

The visions of Daniel compare Christ and His archrival, the Antichrist, with respect to five attributes: origin, nature, position, work, and word. The following overview of these visions reveals each one’s essential character:

VISION	ATTRIBUTE	CHRIST	THE ANTICHRIST
first (chapter 2)	origin	from heaven	from the earth
		lofty (from a mountain)	base (like toes)
		divine (made without hands)	human (a human artifact)
second (chapter 7)	nature	God incarnate	beast
third (chapter 8)	position	King (Prince of princes, one who directs angels)	would-be usurper (horn of a goat; starts as nothing and magnifies himself to heaven)
fourth (chapter 9)	work	Savior (suffers for the sake of others)	desolator (makes others suffer)
fifth (chapters 10–12)	word	Author of truth	liar

In the one, the Antichrist, we see nothing to admire. In the other, in Christ, we see “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, . . . full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Notes

Chapter Twelve

¹R. Young, 989; Green, 3:2072–2073.

²Strong, *Hebrew*, 81.

³Stevenson, 31.

⁴Green, 3:2073.

⁵Berry, 873; Vincent, 2:503.

⁶Gaebelein, *Daniel*, 198–201.

⁷For translations similar to the one stated, see Robert Duncan Culver, *The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1980), 187; Bultema, 345; Wood, 317; Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 162; NASB.

⁸Wood, 318.

⁹The proposed wording closely follows Green's interlinear translation. See Green, 3:2073.

¹⁰ASV; RSV; NIV; NKJV; Green, 3:2073.

¹¹Bultema, 345.

¹²Wood, 319.

¹³For verification that the adjective follows the nouns, see Green, 3:2073.

¹⁴Wood, 318.

¹⁵William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, revised ed., revised and edited by F. N. and M. A. Peloubet (Philadelphia, Pa.: Universal Book and Bible House, 1948), 614.

¹⁶Brown et al., 711.

¹⁷Parker and Dubberstein, iv–v.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁹W. Harold Mare, *The Archaeology of the Jerusalem Area* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987), 157–158.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹C. Von Orelli, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, trans. J. S. Banks (n.p.: T. & T. Clark, 1897; repr., Minneapolis, Minn.: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1977), 94.