

Daniel 12: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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[0 : 00] Daniel chapter 12. At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.

But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars for ever and ever. 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 behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?

And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream. He raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and swore by him who lives forever, that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end, all these things would be finished.

[1 : 17] I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, O my Lord, what shall be the outcome of these things? He said, Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, But the wicked shall act wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, But those who are wise shall understand.

And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away, And the abomination that makes desolate is set up, There shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

But go your way till the end, And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days. Daniel chapter 12 is the conclusion of the fourth vision, Received in the third year of Cyrus and the final chapter of the book.

Daniel receives this final vision in response to his distress and lengthy mourning at that time, Presumably provoked by discouraging news from the returned exiles in Jerusalem, And the stalling of the rebuilding efforts.

[2 : 23] In the vision he sees Michael, the angelic guardian and glorious high priest of Israel, A figure who should be likely identified as the pre-incarnate Christ, Daniel is given an outline of the history that will follow.

In chapter 11 he was given a preview of the events from the middle of the 6th century, Through the rise of the Empire of the Greeks, The six Syrian wars, The persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, The Maccabean revolt in the Hasmonean dynasty, And through to the rise of the Herodian dynasty. The concern that drives Daniel is not some general uncertainty or anxiety About what sort of things are going to happen in the future. The vision is aimed at addressing something more specific.

We arrive at the climax of all of this, in this chapter. The arrival of Michael, the angelic guardian, the glorious high priest, and the messianic prince. The nations were ruled over by angels at this time. Israel, however, was the Lord's special possession. Michael, or the angel of the Lord, or the angel of the covenant, Is the divine guardian of Israel. Daniel saw him back in chapter 10, Falling down as dead as a result of the glory of the vision.

[3 : 30] In the last days, the time when the whole order of the empires will come to its end, The time anticipated in Daniel chapter 2, With the stone crushing the statue, Or in chapter 7, with the

granting of authority to the people of God, Michael himself will come on the scene.

The advent of Michael, however, Will be accompanied with unprecedented tribulation. Those whose names are found in the book will be delivered. We should think here of the various references to names written in the Lamb's book of life, In the book of Revelation, Which is framed as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel.

Verse 2 is one that many have seen as a rare Old Testament testimony to the resurrection. The resurrection here, however, seems to be more complicated. First, it is of many, not necessarily all. Second, if this is the final resurrection, It is happening far, far too early. Third, it is a resurrection that includes many of the wicked, Which makes it difficult to identify as a spiritual resurrection.

Elsewhere in scripture, we see a number of different ways in which resurrection is referred to. For instance, there is a sort of resurrection in the advent of new spiritual life, In a person or a nation.

[4 : 37] In Revelation chapter 20, verses 5 to 6, We read of the first resurrection. In the first century, following the resurrection of Jesus, Old covenant saints who had rested in Sheol, Were raised up by Christ to sit with him in the glory of heaven.

Whereas they had been formerly in the exile of the grave, Now they enjoyed God's very presence and participation in the divine council itself. What death means for the people of God radically changed at that point.

This being raised up from the grave to God's presence is the first stage of the resurrection. The later, greater stage still awaited is the raising of our bodies and the fullness of the new heavens and the new earth.

In Ezekiel chapter 37, and the vision of the valley of dry bones within it, We have not individual bodily resurrection, But the spiritual resurrection of Israel as a nation, Its re-establishment as a people.

In John chapter 5, verses 25 to 29, Jesus talks both of a form of resurrection that is already occurring through his ministry, And of a resurrection yet awaited.

[5 : 40] Truly, truly, I say to you, An hour is coming, and is now here, When the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, And those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, So he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, And he has given him authority to execute judgment, Because he is the Son of Man.

Do not marvel at this, For an hour is coming, When all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, And those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Jordan argues that the resurrection in view in verse 2 of Daniel chapter 12 Is principally the raising of the nation through the ministry of Christ and his apostles. Some hear, respond, and are raised up to new life, And others, hearing and rejecting, are marked out for destruction.

Jesus is the one who brings about the fall and the rising again of many in Israel. This time of national resurrection to judgment and new life Comes in the period from Christ's ministry to the end of the age in AD 70, With the removal of the old covenant order, With the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

It would be accompanied by extreme tribulation, As Christ declares in the Olivet Discourse, In Matthew chapter 24, verses 21 to 22. For then there will be great tribulation, Such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, No, and never will be.

[7 : 01] And if those days had not been cut short, No human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, Those days will be cut short. It would be a time when the judgment of the entire old creation would occur.

All of the blood from Abel to Zechariah Would come upon that first century generation, As Jesus said in Matthew chapter 23. The arising of Michael at that point in history Was the advent of Jesus, His atoning work, And his rising again in the resurrection.

He is exalted as the representative and great high priest of his people To the Father's right hand. He raises up the Old Testament saints with him from the grave, And vindicates them against the unfaithful of their people In the events of AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Michael would wage successful war in heaven, And the old covenant demonic authorities would be subdued, As we see in Revelation chapter 12 verses 7 to 11. Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.

And the dragon and his angels fought back, But he was defeated, And there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, That ancient serpent, Who is called the devil and Satan, The deceiver of the whole world.

[8 : 13] He was thrown down to the earth, And his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God And the authority of his Christ have come.

For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, Who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb And by the word of their testimony.

For they love not their lives even unto death. Coming through the tribulation of that time, The faithful martyrs would be raised up to God's presence. They would be vindicated. And their enemies would be judged In the downfall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Those who are wise and righteous Would shine like stars, Reigning with Christ and sharing in his victory, Testifying to him in the darkness of the world. In Philippians chapter 2 verse 15, Paul describes Christians as shining as lights in the world.

Daniel must seal the book until the time of the end. His prophecies concern a time long distant. While the book of Revelation is constantly stressing That the fulfilment is near at hand And is about unsealing a sealed book, Daniel's prophecy awaits a far-off future.

[9 : 22] In Revelation we see the fulfilment of the events Foretold by the book of Daniel. The advent of Michael, The coming of the Son of Man and the saints Into possession of the kingdom, The destruction of the beast, empires, And victory over the angelic powers, The elevation of the saints, The great work of atonement, And the consummation of the destiny of the people.

Because the events foretold by the book of Revelation Will occur within a matter of a few years after its writing, In Revelation chapter 22 verse 10, John is instructed not to seal the book, Because the time is near.

During the period of awaiting the fulfilment of the vision, There would be a great deal of drama, Wars and rumours of wars. All of the events of chapter 12, for instance, Are important, yet they are just milestones on the road to the awaited future.

The conflicts and persecutions foretold during that period are not the final end. Nevertheless, as the time drew nearer, Clarity of understanding the prophetic horizon of that future would greatly increase.

The faithful people of God would meditate upon the meaning of the prophecies of Daniel over the centuries that followed, wondering what exactly their fulfilment would entail. The man clothed in linen, Michael, is asked by an angel about the time of the fulfilment of the vision, and the end of the times foretold.

[10 : 38] The answer is given that it will be for a time, times, and half a time. This length of time has already been mentioned earlier in other connections in the book. It seems to be a symbolic means of referring to both longer and to shorter periods.

The time, times, and half a time was mentioned in connection with the little horn in chapter 7 verse 25. In Revelation chapter 12 verses 6 and 14 and chapter 13 verse 5, it's related to the period of the woman's time in the wilderness in 1260 days, and the period of the blasphemous authority of the sea beast as 42 months.

We should also recall the half week in the final of the 70 weeks of years in Daniel chapter 9. The referent of the time, times, and half a time is made a little clearer in verses 11 to 12, with the 1290 and 1335 days.

The first number, as Jordan points out, is 3 times 430. The significance of that number is seen in Exodus chapter 12 verses 40 to 41. The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. The prophetic symbolism of that number is also seen in Ezekiel's prophetic sign act of Ezekiel chapter 4 verses 4 to 6.

[12 : 02] Then lie on your left side and place the punishment of the house of Israel upon it. For the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their punishment. For I assign to you a number of days, 390 days, equal to the number of the years of their punishment.

So long shall you bear the punishment of the house of Israel. And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of

