

Lesson 34

Chapter 12

Daniel 12:1-4

1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 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. 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. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

The most important words in understanding this section of the vision are the first four words in verse 1: **"And at that time."** This key phrase is repeated twice in verse 1, and it provides the timeframe for this part of the vision, which of course is crucial to understanding the vision.

What is the timeframe?

The items mentioned here in Daniel 12 will occur at the time when the events of Daniel 11 come to an end. What was happening when Daniel 11 came to an end? Rome had just established its authority in Palestine. The angel is telling Daniel (very plainly) that this part of the vision applies to the time when Rome would be in charge of the Holy Land.

But we do not have to rely on this clue alone to determine the time when this prophecy would occur. We can also look at what the angel said would happen, and then look elsewhere in the Bible to see when that happened. Let's consider these other clues.

First Clue: At this time, we are told that the angel Michael would arise.

Here Michael is called "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." In Daniel 10:21, he is called "your prince." Just as Persia had a prince in Daniel 10, the Jews also had a prince - Michael. The fact that Michael is involved here confirms that this part of the vision is focused on the

Jews.

This focus fits in well with what we were told at the beginning of this vision. Daniel 10:14 told us that this vision would tell us about the Jews in the latter days. ("Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.") This entire vision has been focused on the Jews, and the opening verses of Daniel 12 are no exception.

Second Clue: At this time there would be "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" This language was a common way of describing a very terrible calamity. Did such a calamity befall the Jews in the first century? Yes. Read the description of Jerusalem's destruction found in Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:21 - For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

We can also compare Josephus' description of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

It is impossible to give every instance of the iniquity of these men (the Romans). I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly: that never did any other city suffer such miseries.

Third Clue: Verse 1 tells us that:

At that time thy people (the Jews) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Did that happen in the first century? Absolutely.

Jeremiah 33:14-16 - Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. **In those days, and at that time**, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. **In those days** shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.

Luke 1:68-70 - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.

But, you say, how can we be in the first century when verse 2 talks about the final resurrection at the end of the world? Let's take a closer look at that verse.

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.

For starters, if this is the final resurrection, then we must conclude that the vision includes the end of the world, and so we must conclude that the Jews have a special role to play in the end of the world. Such a conclusion would be in clear conflict with other scriptures that tell us there is no distinction between Jew and Greek in the church.

But, you say, verse 2 sure sounds like the final resurrection. Does it really? Let's take a closer look. How many people will be raised from the dead at the end of the world?

2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one** may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Notice the word "all" and the phrase "every one" in that verse. If we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, doesn't that tell us that all who have died will be raised from the dead?

If every knee shall bow to God and every tongue confess to God (Romans 14:11), then doesn't that tell us that every person who has died will be raised?

Acts 24:15 - There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Is anyone not included among the just and the unjust?

But what does Daniel 12:2 say? Does verse 2 say: "And all who sleep in the dust of the earth shall be raised"? No. Daniel 12:2 says that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Many of them? Doesn't that language suggest that some will continue sleeping in the dust? Maybe this verse doesn't sound as much like the final resurrection as we first thought! I think even the text itself suggests that the final resurrection is not in view here. (I do think we will see the final resurrection in this chapter, but I don't think we are seeing it here.)

But we have more than just the text of this verse - we also have the context and timeframe of this verse. And the context and the timeframe confirm that this resurrection in verse 2 is not the final resurrection at the end of the world. The context is the fate of Daniel's people, the Jews, and the timeframe at the end of the vision is the first century after the death of Herod the Great.

Then to which resurrection does it apply if not the final resurrection? It is the figurative resurrection of many from the Jewish nation that occurred when their promised Messiah came to bring blessings to the entire world.

What happened to the Jews at this time? Those Jews who followed Christ were saved. Here they are pictured as awakening to everlasting life. Verse 3 shows them being turned to righteousness by those who were wise and shining as the brightness of the firmament. This awakening is the spiritual resurrection of the faithful Jewish remnant who entered into the kingdom of God under the rule of their Messiah.

They had long been under foreign domination - they were under the Persians when this vision was received. They would be under the Greeks, and they were under the Romans when the vision ended. But the day was coming when they would once again be ruled by a son of David, and that rule would last forever.

Listen as an angel of God tells Mary all about it 500 years after Daniel received this vision.

Luke 1:32-33 - He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Those Jews who rejected Christ were lost. Here in verse 2 they are pictured as awakening to shame and everlasting contempt.

All of the Jews were asleep in the dust of the earth as they awaited the Messiah. Jesus came to bring them life. Those who awakened are those who heard the gospel. Those who awoke to everlasting life are those who heard and obeyed the gospel. Those who awoke to shame and contempt are those who heard the gospel but rejected it. Many of the Jews fell into those two categories. But some never woke up at all because they did not hear the gospel call.

And so, just as verse 2 describes, many of them that slept in the dust of the earth awoke, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

But is this figurative resurrection of the Jews spoken of elsewhere in the Bible? Yes.

Ezekiel 37:12-14 - 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. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.

John 5:24-25 - Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Ephesians 5:14 - Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Luke 2:34 - And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.

Isaiah wrote about nations that would not experience such a figurative resurrection.

Isaiah 26:14 - They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

This language may also help explain a very puzzling event that occurred at the death of Christ. Recall:

Matthew 27:52-53 - And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

I think that this actual physical resurrection of faithful Jews in Jerusalem was a sign of the spiritual resurrection that was occurring for the faithful Jews at that time.

Many use Daniel 12:2 to apply to the end of the world. I think they are taking it out of context. If we want to apply Daniel 12:2 to the end of the world, then we should be aware of the logical

consequence from Daniel 11 that the Jews must then have some special future role to play in God's plan.

So is this figurative resurrection in the first century the only resurrection? Of course not, but some have also made that mistake, such as Max King, who has followed the way of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

2 Timothy 2:17-18 - And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

And if you don't know about Max King ... be thankful!

As there was a spiritual resurrection at Christ's first appearance, so will there be a physical resurrection at Christ's second appearance.

1 Corinthians 15:52-53 - In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

And, again, I think we will see that final physical resurrection before we leave Chapter 12.

Finally, in verse 4 Daniel is again told to seal up the vision, which means that it pertains to a future time and a future people. (Recall that John was told just the opposite in the book of Revelation 22:10!) In Daniel's case, the time of the end likely refers to the end of the vision in Chapter 11, which was the first century, about 500 years after the book of Daniel was penned.

What is meant by that last phrase: "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

That final phrase in verse 4 confirms our first century timeframe for these opening verses of Chapter 12. Where in the first century do we see many running to and fro so that knowledge shall be increased?

Matthew 28:19-20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Mark 16:20 - And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

Verses 1-4 are still focused on the Jews, and those verses are describing what happened to the Jews when Jesus, their long awaited Messiah, arrived. Many of the Jews awoke and heard the gospel, with some obeying it and others not. The terrible judgment on Jerusalem occurred because of those who rejected Christ, and the gospel was proclaimed all throughout the world.

Daniel 12:5-7

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? 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.

Daniel asked how long it would be until the end of the events in the vision. He is told that it would be "a time, times, and an half," or better translated "a time, two times, and half a time" and that everything in the vision would be accomplished when the power of the holy people is scattered or shattered.

Notice that verse 7 gives us the termination point of the vision - "all these things shall be finished." This is the end of the vision.

If we can determine what verse 7 is talking about then once again we have an all-important time frame to help us understand the prophecy.

So what is verse 7 talking about?

Nowhere is there a clearer statement than in verse 7 that the vision ends in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. That was the shattering of the power of the holy people.

This vision ends with the Roman Empire, and the Romans are the ones who shattered the power of the holy people. They shattered it to the point that it has never recovered. The priestly records were

destroyed, and so the Jewish priesthood came to a permanent end. Animals sacrifices ceased and to this day have never returned. Verse 7 happened in AD 70.

The "time, two times, and half a time" is a broken seven, and we have seen this symbol before. The angel is telling Daniel that AD 70 is not the end for the people of God. The power of Rome would end one day, and the faithful remnant (both Jew and Gentile) would be victorious in Christ.

As for the Jews, the door did not close on them in AD 70. God's plan for the Jews had always been to save them through Christ. That was God's message to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. That was God's message to Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15. That was God's message to David in Psalm 2. That was God's message to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 33:14-16.

And it is also God's message to Isaiah.

Isaiah 59:20 - "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD.

Paul quoted those same prophecies from Jeremiah 33 and Isaiah 59 when he likewise explained how the pathway to salvation remained open for the Jews.

Romans 11:26 - And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob."

These prophecies are all telling us the same thing - the door was not closed on the Jews even after AD 70. The promise of worldwide blessing through Christ was a promise for the Jews just as much as it was for the Gentiles.

The Jews have a pathway to salvation, but they do not have a pathway different from the pathway for the Gentiles. Jesus is the one and only pathway to life for both Jew and Gentile.

That is why we see the broken seven symbol used here. Whatever happens to the faithful people of God in this world, it can only be a broken seven as long as they remain faithful to the end. And that was true even with mighty Rome.

Yes, Rome had control, but not perfect control; yes, Rome had power, but not perfect power. Rome had a delegated control and a delegated power. We have already seen that Rome was acting as the servant of God in fulfilling the prophecies of this book. Rome would not last forever. It would be

destroyed once it had served its purpose. A son of David would rule from the throne of David, and his kingdom would outlast and destroy Rome and all other worldly kingdoms.

The very best description of the "broken seven" symbol is found in Romans 8.

Romans 8:31-39 - What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That is what it means when we see a broken seven.

Daniel 12:8-12

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. 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.

Daniel 10:1 tells us that Daniel had understanding of the vision, yet verse 8 tells us that he did not understand the vision. How do we explain that?

First, Daniel 10:14 tells us that the angel came to bring understanding of the vision to Daniel, and the angel is still speaking.

But second, I think by verse 8 Daniel understood the vision with his head, but perhaps he was still

having trouble understanding the vision with his heart.

How could everything end with the people of God being shattered? How could God's plan for the Jews end with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple? Daniel is asking the angel for an explanation.

How does the angel respond?

First, the angel reminds Daniel that the end of the vision would not occur for some time. He would not be personally affected by these events. Many good things and many bad things would happen before it came to pass.

Those who were wicked would not understand; that is, they would not know that they were playing a part in the plan of God. Those who were wise, however, would know that they were playing a part in the plan of God. They would know that the events that were occurring had been spoken of long before in Daniel 11 and 12.

Second, in verse 10, the angel assures Daniel that God will bless those who are good and that the wicked will perish. This is just what Daniel needed to hear after seeing the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

It must have appeared to Daniel that at the end of this vision the wicked were blessed and the good perished. The angel assures Daniel that just the opposite is true. (And here we are reminded once again of a key theme in this book - things are not what they seem! We must learn to see things, including ourselves, as God sees them. We must learn to use our spiritual eyesight.)

Third, the angel then gives us what may be the most difficult two verses in the entire book of Daniel to understand:

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

The book of Daniel remains challenging all the way to the end!

The angel says that from the time that the burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1290 days. Further, he says that those who wait for 1335 days

(45 days longer than the 1290 days) will be blessed. Why 1290? Why 1335? Why 45 more days? What do they mean?

First, note that the 1290 days occur after both the removal of the burnt offering and the abomination that makes desolate. That is, the 1290 days do not separate these two events, as some suggest.

Second, are this removal of the daily sacrifice and this abomination of desolation the same ones that we read about in Daniel 11:31? They cannot be.

Jesus pointed to a prophecy of Daniel in Matthew 24:15 regarding the abomination of desolation and said that it had not happened yet, but that it would occur in the first century (Matthew 24:34). The abomination of desolation in Daniel 11:31 occurred nearly 200 years before the birth of Christ.

There are two such abominations in the book of Daniel - one perpetrated by Antiochus Epiphanes and another perpetrated over two centuries later by the Romans. The earlier one is spoken about in Daniel 8:13 and Daniel 11:31. The latter one is spoken about in Daniel 9:27 and here in Daniel 12:11.

Which abomination is this then? We have already answered that question. It is the desecration of the temple by the Romans in AD 70. The vision ends with the Romans. Jesus was talking about the Romans in Matthew 24. In Matthew 24:15 and 24:34, Jesus said that the abomination he spoke of would occur in the first century. It did, and this verse in Daniel is telling us about it.

Back to our earlier question: What about the 1290 days and the 1335 days? What do they denote? Let's turn that question around: What would we expect them to denote?

Daniel doesn't understand how God's plan for the Jews could end with the destruction of the Jews. But after he hears this final message from the angel, he understands God's plan (as we were told in Daniel 10:1). What must God have told him?

God must have told Daniel that God's plan for the Jews did not end with the destruction of their city and their temple, but for those Jews who were faithful to God, they would enter an eternal kingdom ruled by a son of David. God must also have told Daniel that those who destroyed the city and the temple would themselves be destroyed, and thus would not ultimately be victorious.

How do these two symbols depict that?

Revelation 13:5 uses **1260** days to describe the temporary power of Rome. Because 1260 days is 42

months (thirty days each), we have three and a half years. Thus, 1260 days points to a broken seven.

But here we have 1290 days, which is 30 days more than a broken seven. Why the extra month?

I think that God is telling Daniel that while the Roman persecution will be temporary, it will be longer and worse than other persecutions. It will be a broken seven plus a little bit more.

A more elaborate explanation is that thirty days were added to the lunar calendar every three years to bring it in line with the solar calendar, which could explain why we have 1290 instead of 1260. But I prefer the simpler explanation - 1290 days is three and half years plus just a little bit more.

What about the extra 45 days between the 1290 days and the 1335 days? What does that mean?

The context suggests that it denotes the time after Rome during which God's followers must continue to persevere. Those who wait and come to the end of the 1335 days will be blessed.

For those that have been wanting to find the end of the world in Daniel, I think we have finally found it!

I think these 45 days denote the time between the judgment of Rome and the final judgment. Those who wait and are faithful during this period will be blessed at the end of it. I think we are living today in that figurative 45 day period.

But why 45? The short answer is that I don't know for sure, and no commentary I have looked at seems to know for sure either. If, as seems likely, the number 45 had some special figurative meaning to the Jews of Daniel's day, then that understanding may have been lost. But we can speculate a bit.

The number 5 is said by some to symbolize the grace of God. (The number 5 and multiples of 5 occur all throughout the descriptions of the tabernacle.) The number 9 is said by some to denote finality and judgment. (The 9 judgments of Haggai 1:11, for example, and the number 9 being the final digit.)

And so, 45 being 5 times 9 may denote the grace of God leading to the final judgment of the world. In my opinion, that is the most likely explanation for the extra 45 days.

It is also possible that the number 45 denotes a countdown to the end of the world. Why, you ask, would 45 be used to denote a countdown? Because 45 is equal to $9 + 8 + 7 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1$.

One other possibility is that the 45 days (a month and a half) is simply God's way of telling Daniel that after Rome, God's people will need to persevere a little longer. This understanding would fit in well with our explanation of the extra thirty days in the 1290 days.

Daniel 12:13

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

Finally, Daniel is assured that although he will not live to see these events ("for thou shalt rest"), he will be present at "the end of the days."

And the "end of the days"? What does that refer to?

As I said, I think that we have at last come to the end of the world! The vision is over. The Romans are gone. God's grace has been extended to all. Daniel is again present and standing in his allotted place. I think that this is the final judgment of the world.

Recall that the vision dealing with the end of the Jewish age ended in verse 4 of this chapter. And so it does not violate the time frame of that vision to say that Daniel is now hearing about the end of the world at the end of this chapter.

What we are studying now is the answer to Daniel's question in verse 8: "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

This question parallels the question in Matthew 24:3 - "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

In response to that question, Jesus first told the apostles in verses 4-34 about the destruction of the city, which was coming in their generation, and then Jesus told them in verses 35-51 about the end of the world, which would not come with any signs.

Here, I think we also see an answer that jumps from the destruction of Jerusalem to the final judgment of the world, just as Jesus did in Matthew 24 (after quoting Daniel).

And so, while I do not think Daniel 12:2 refers to the final resurrection, I think that Daniel 12:13 does.

Daniel goes to his rest in verse 13, but then we see him standing again. How could that occur absent a resurrection?

So, for those who ask us to show evidence of the final resurrection in the Old Testament, we should not point them to Daniel 12:2 (as many mistakenly do), but we should instead point them to Daniel 12:13.

The book ends with a complete confirmation of one of the book's main themes: the absolute and total sovereignty of God.

God is in control of this world and this universe, and he has a plan to bless the entire world through his son Jesus Christ. This book has given us a glimpse of just what was involved in bringing that plan about.

We are looking back over 2500 years of history, and during that time we have seen virtually everything in this book come to pass. But there is one thing that we have not yet seen. We, as Daniel, are waiting for that day when we will stand up and take our allotted place among the people of God.

What a beautiful book! What a beautiful promise! The faithful people of God, as did Daniel, will go to their rest, but they will one day take their place with Daniel when the King comes to claim his own.

I don't know about you, but I want to be standing right next to Daniel on that great day!

#daniel