

## Hope Beyond The Grave

### Read the Scriptures: Daniel 12:1-13

1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”

5 Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be until the end of these wonders?” 7 And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. 8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” 9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 “Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. 11 “And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 “How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! 13 “But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.”

**Story:** A retired pastor, relating humorous incidents that occurred during his years of ministry, tells the story of a problem-plagued funeral service he once conducted. Just as he was beginning the service, a woman called out for help. A man in the congregation had collapsed from a heart attack and was lying on the floor. Managing to keep the victim alive until the medics came, the man was rushed to the hospital.

After a significant delay, the pastor resumed the funeral service. The graveside service was miserably cold and wet, with rain continuing to fall. Everyone tried to crowd under the tent where a small heater attempted to offset the bitter cold. As the pastor began to read the encouraging words of **Romans 8**, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, ...” he was interrupted by flames bursting forth from the heater, causing everyone to flee the tent. To remedy the problem, the funeral director leaped over the casket toward the heater to disconnect it, sending floral arrangements flying in all directions.

Once more, the group gathered under the shelter, and the wary pastor again began to read from **Romans 8**, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels ...” From the corner of his eye, he could see the funeral director studying the tent roof where rain water had collected producing a sizeable overhead pool. Hoping to drain the ever growing puddle of water by pushing upward on the tent roof with his umbrella, the director slipped. His umbrella pierced the canvas, ripping a gaping hole in the roof of the tent, which allowed a river of ice-cold water to cascade over the pall-bearers. Involuntarily, they yelped from the shock of the cold water, and once again rushed from the shelter.

The pastor questioned the wisdom of continuing, but he decided to once again read the precious words from the text of **Romans 8**: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, ...” Gratefully, he was able to complete the service. I have conducted numerous funerals, but have only once experienced anything resembling this one. Nevertheless, every funeral service presents me with a challenge. Funerals have to confront the ugly reality of death and the reminder that each of us must come to terms with it.

Death prompts each of us to reexamine what life is all about, and what comes after death. The final chapter of the Book of Daniel is occasioned in large measure by Daniel’s approaching death. The last words of this chapter, and of the entire book, speak of death, and of the believer’s hope beyond the grave.

**Intro:** This final twelfth chapter serves as the conclusion to Daniel’s fourth and final revelation recorded in chapters 10–12. The prophetic revelations in this lengthy section were delivered to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, who God sent in response to his prayers on behalf of his people and nation. While chapter 10 serves as the introduction to the revelation, chapter 11 provides a prophetic panorama of the conflicts that would plague the nation of Israel from Daniel’s day to the end of time. Chapter 12 concludes this revelation with a description

of the sufferings associated with the Great Tribulation period, and a prediction of the resurrection of all the righteous Old Testament saints at the second coming of Christ. The final words spoken to Daniel in verse 13 are words of comfort and hope. He would soon enter into rest through death, but is promised that he will rise again and receive his reward, at the end of the age. These words provide comfort and hope to believers of every age.

**Structure:** This final chapter is divisible into three sections. The first four verses provide additional details on Israel's future distress and deliverance. This prompts two questions, one by an angel (v. 6) and one by Daniel (v. 8), concerning the duration, and the outcome of Israel's sufferings (vv. 5-12). The book concludes in v. 13, with Gabriel's command for Daniel to take his rest, and promises him that he will be raised unto rewards at the end of the age.

## **I. Israel's Future Distress And Deliverance (vv. 1-4)**

### A. Israel's future distress (v. 1)

**1** “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

The first three verses of this twelfth chapter actually continue the lengthy revelation Gabriel delivered to Daniel in chapter 11, verses 36-45, concerning Antichrist's future reign of terror against God's people Israel. Gabriel informs Daniel that *at that time*, the time of Antichrist's future reign of terror, discussed in the previous section, Michael, the great angelic prince, who stands guard over the people of Israel, will arise to help the righteous Jews, who come to faith in Christ during this horrific time. This angelic battle between Michael and Satan is confirmed in **Revelation 12:7-9**: “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

Satan's being cast out of heaven to earth will begin the Great Tribulation; the last three and one-half years of the seven-year Tribulation period. The

angel Gabriel says, “This will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.” The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:21-22, “Then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 “And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.”

While Michael will come to Israel’s aide in this future cosmic battle with Satan, it will be Christ who delivers the righteous and judges the wicked. Look at the final line of verse 1, “And at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.” The “book” refers to the Book of Life. According to Revelation 20:12 this is a record that contains the names of every human being who has trusted in Christ as Savior. Gabriel assures Daniel that every Jew who places their faith in Christ during the Tribulation will be rescued.

#### B. Israel’s future deliverance and judgment (vv. 2-3)

2 “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt

Gabriel next informs Daniel that *those who sleep in the dust of the ground*, both believers and unbelievers will be raised to everlasting life. This is the first reference to *everlasting life* in the Old Testament. To *sleep in the dust of the ground* does not mean unconscious existence. It simply means that a dead person’s body appears to be asleep. The physical body is “asleep,” while the person’s soul lives on. A believers’ soul lives on with God, while the unbeliever’s soul resides in the place of conscious torment (see the story Christ told about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31).

We know from the New Testament that there is a specific order to four resurrections. **The first resurrection** will be of believers who have trusted in Christ during the Church Age (1 Thess. 4:13-18). This resurrection will take place at the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15: 51-58). **The second group of believers to be resurrected** will include all the Old Testament saints, all those who died prior to the Church Age, as well as those who will loose their lives during the Tribulation. They will be raised to life at the close of the Tribulation when Christ returns to earth in power and great glory to defeat Antichrist and all the Gentile powers (Rev. 19:11-21), and to establish His Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 26:19-21; 1 Cor.

15:20-24, 51-58; Rev. 20:4-6). **The rest of humanity**, comprised of all those who have rejected God's gracious offer of eternal life through faith in His Son, will be raised and judged at the conclusion of Christ's thousand year reign (Rev. 20:5, 11-13). This vast company of unbelievers will be consigned to everlasting punishment in hell (Matt. 25:41-46; Rev. 20:14-15). *Refer to the chart on the order of Resurrections on back of handout.*

**3** “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

Those *who have insight*, probably refers to those individuals who will see through Antichrist's deception, and bravely teach God's Word during the Tribulation. Their service to God and His people will be rewarded, for they will shine brightly like the brightness of the luminous expanse of heaven.

In the same way, those who lead the many to righteousness, those who evangelize—lead people to faith in Christ during the tribulation—will radiate God's glory. They will shine like the stars forever and ever.

C. Daniel is instructed to seal up the words in his book (v. 4)

v. 4 “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”

Daniel is instructed to conceal or better preserve the prophetic revelations given to him by God's angelic messenger, Gabriel, until the end of time. The words recorded in the Book of Daniel would not be appreciated or understood until the time of the end. Believers today, looking back over history, and equipped with the Book of Revelation, can see the significance of much of what Daniel predicted. Those living in the future time of Great Tribulation, who possess godly insight and discernment, will be able to gain spiritual knowledge from Daniel's predictions.

## **II. Two Questions Concerning Israel's Future Sufferings (vv. 5-12)**

Gabriel's explanation of Israel's future sufferings during the Tribulation lead to two questions, one by an angel (v. 6) and one by Daniel (v. 8).

## A. The length of Israel's distress (vv. 5-7)

### 1. The angel's question (vv. 5-6)

**5** Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on the opposite bank of the river. **6** And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"

Daniel, and the angel Gabriel, who had been explaining the vision to him, were suddenly joined by two other angels. One angel appeared on one bank of the Tigris River, and the other on the opposite bank of the river. One of the angels asked the man dressed in linen, apparently Gabriel, who was positioned above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"

In other words, how long would the events recorded in the vision in 11:36–12:3, describing Israel's final occupation by the coming Antichrist, be allowed to go on?

### 2. Gabriel's reply (v. 7)

**7** And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

Gabriel responded by raising his hands to heaven, and swearing an oath by Him who lives forever, that Israel's future time of tribulation and travail would last for a time, times, and half a time. This is a reference to the last three and a-half years of the seven year Tribulation period.

Israel, you will recall from our study of Daniel 9:24-27, will enjoy a time of peace, protection, and prosperity as a result of a seven year peace covenant she will make with Antichrist. However, in the midst of the seven-year agreement, Antichrist will break that covenant (Dan. 9:27), and will reign in Jerusalem as king and god. He will become the greatest

persecutor Israel has ever known (Rev. 13:5-7). Israel's power, *arrogant self-dependence*, will be broken by Antichrist's ruthless power. He in turn will be broken by the victorious return of Jesus Christ, who comes from heaven in power and great glory (Rev. 19:11-21).

Gabriel's reply to the angel caused Daniel to ask another question in verse 8, concerning the outcome of Israel's distress.

## B. The outcome of Israel's distress (vv. 8-12)

### 1. Daniel's question (v. 8)

**8** As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?"

Daniel heard Gabriel's reply to the angel, but could not understand. He longed to know what would happen to his Jewish brethren once God had delivered them from the future Tribulation.

### 2. Gabriel's reply (vv. 9-12)

**9** And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.

Daniel is once again told not to concern himself with the particulars surrounding these end time events. He is commanded to go his way, and seal up, so as to preserve, these revelations until the end time. As believers approach the end time events described in these verses, we have been granted spiritual understanding to discern from the signs of our times, that the rapture of the church, which will permit Antichrist to come to power (2 Thess. 2), will be accomplished at any moment.

**v. 10**—During the coming Tribulation many Jews will be purged, purified, and refined and come to embrace Christ as Savior; but the wicked, those who follow Antichrist, will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight, spiritual discernment derived from God's Word & Daniel's prophecies, will understand.

Gabriel informs Daniel in verse 11 that “from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. This refers to the last half of the Tribulation, the 70th “seven” of Daniel’s 490 years (7:25; Rev. 12:14), which is three and one-half years. It is also designated as 42 months (Rev. 11:2) or 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3). Many commentators suggest that the additional 30 days mentioned here in the 1290 day figure, may refer to the judgments that will take place at the second coming of Christ (cf., Matt. 25:31-46).

Gabriel concludes in verse 12 that those who keep waiting and attain to 1,335 days, will be blessed by God. This is an additional 45 days beyond the 1,290 days (v. 11). Forty-five days after the end of the Tribulation Israel’s long-awaited blessings will be realized. Dr. Ryrie believes this marks the beginning of the actual functioning of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom on earth.

### **III. The Final Command To Daniel (v. 13)**

“But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.”

Even though Daniel did not live to see most of his prophecies fulfilled, the angel Gabriel counsels him to carry on. Be about the business to which God has appointed you Daniel, and don’t be so concerned about the future that you neglect your present responsibilities. The angel closes with a word of promise that Daniel would soon enter into his rest, and rise again for his allotted portion at the end of the age.” Daniel’s faith in God resulted in his living a life of faithful service for Him, and for that faith and obedience he will receive a glorious reward. All who like Daniel trust the Lord will share in the blessings of His millennial kingdom.

**Conclusion:** Daniel 12 is the crowning chapter of this extended prophecy (Dan. 10-12), as well as its conclusion. It takes the believer to the high-water mark of Christian hope—the assurance of resurrection from the dead.

**Closing Story:** A man and his five-year old son were driving past a cemetery and noticed a large pile of dirt next to a freshly dug grave. The little boy said, “Look, Dad, one got out!”



Next time you drive past a cemetery, think of God's promise of Resurrection!

**Applications:**

1. Seek to maintain a biblical balance: Don't become so obsessed with the future that you fail to serve God in the present.
2. The more time you spend with God, the greater insights He will grant you into His divine Word.
3. Pray for opportunities to share God's love and forgiveness with lost people. Gabriel promised Daniel that those who teach and share God's Word will shine like the stars forever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

Closing prayer:

**Closing Song: *Ain't No Grave Goanna Hold Me Down***