

Last time we read about the end of Antiochus Epiphanes, he was a perfect picture of what is to come with the Antichrist. We looked at how we are to deal with our situation and to stand firm in our faith to Christ Jesus. Who through our deep relationship will give us the ability and courage to do so.

As we noted in the previous chapter, Daniel's vision that began in chapter 10 of this book has dual fulfillment. While the vision largely concerns events that would transpire before the end of the Old Testament era, as the vision progresses it becomes increasingly about events that are in the future, even for us today. The last section of this vision seems to be entirely prophecy about the future. This final chapter of the book of Daniel focuses on end-time prophecy—events that will occur just before and after Jesus Christ returns to earth.

Throughout the book of Daniel, we see multiple times Satan has tried to keep Daniel from understanding the visions he had received and thus prevent God's truth from being revealed!

In Daniel 10, an angel tells Daniel: "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to *many days yet to come*". We see God's work around us all the time, from the beauty of His creation, His protection in our day to day lives, but do we recognize it when He reveals His word to us? He knows we could never understand all this in its entirety without His help, but do we understand that? He sent an angel to make it perfectly clear to Daniel what is to come.

Daniel 11 provides a very long and detailed prophecy of events that would occur from the time of the Medo-Persian Empire through the end time. Verse 40 speaks of this "time of the end" when "the king of the South" will attack "the king of the North." And how the latter will enter the "Glorious Land" and overthrow many of the surrounding countries.

How many of you have problems? Financial, health, family, work, how about spiritual problems? We all have some type of problems, right? Do you know the secret to solving ALL your problems, the answer is Jesus. Our God holds the answers to all our issues. Financial concerns, focus on God, He has all the money in the world, He will take care of you. Health problems, He is the ultimate physician, He can give you peace beyond healing. Family issues, give it to Him and He can call them to Christ or call them away. Work troubles, follow Him closely and He will put you right where He wants you and you will be happy as you can be. What about spiritual problems, if you truly focus on Him more than yourself or the world around you, He will be big in your life. We will see in the scripture today that God may not take our troubles away, but He will take care of us through it.

Daniel 12:1-13

The Problem, The Promise, The Preservation

The Problem

V1. At that time does not mean that what is described in Daniel chapter 12 happened immediately after the events in Daniel 11. It means that it happened in the same era.

The angel Michael is often associated with spiritual battle, you can find examples in Daniel 10:13 and 21, Jude 1:9 where he is called the archangel, and Revelation 12:7 where it says “And there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

This makes Michael Satan’s true opposite. Many believe that Satan is the opposite of God or even Jesus. Satan is not the opposite of God or Jesus; he is the opposite of Michael, this high-ranking angel. Remember Satan is just a fallen angel, there is nothing special or great about him. He is merely the ruler of the angels who chose to follow him out of heaven.

In addition to Michael’s role as a spiritual warrior, he has a special job in protecting Israel. God appointed Michael as a spiritual guardian over Israel His chosen people. During this time, he will arise because there is a time of great trouble coming.

This “time of trouble” refers to the time of persecution for Israel and world chaos known as the Great Tribulation. It also corresponds with the one spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah: “Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of *Jacob’s trouble*, but he shall be saved out of it” Jeremiah 30:6-7.

Such has not happened from the beginning of the nations until then. In Matthew 24:21 Jesus quotes this passage “For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. The Jewish people have known many times of trouble through their history. From the horrors at the fall of Samaria and Jerusalem to the terrors brought by Antiochus Epiphanes, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, to the persecutions from the church during the Dark Ages, to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Holocaust, it often seems that all Israel’s history has been a time of trouble. Yet this time of trouble will be different. This will be the *worse* time of trouble that Israel has ever seen before.

This phrase from Jesus establishes its connection with the final or ‘great’ tribulation, for there can only be *one* ‘time of trouble, such as not happened from the beginning of the nations until then’.

Unfortunately for the Israelites and even us today, with great sadness, we must realize that the Bible teaches that the worst is yet to come.

Revelation 12:13-17 tells us what makes this time so terrible. It describes the fury of the devil directed against the Jewish people during this time. The trumpets, seals, and bowls of Revelation all described the horrific conditions of the world in general during this time. The Jewish people will be targets of the full fury of the devil and his antichrist during this period and will live in a world that is in total chaos because of the judgment of God.

The Jews have always been a target of Satan. He has sought to destroy them because he knows that God has ordained to accomplish His purposes through this nation. And so, he has attempted many times throughout history to destroy the nation of Israel in hopes of shutting down God’s plans.

### The Problem, The Promise

And at that time your people shall be delivered: Despite the terrors of that time, deliverance is guaranteed. No matter how great the attack is against the Jewish people, God promises to deliver

them. He will never break the promise He made to Abraham in Genesis 17 *“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you”*.

Do you think God is a liar? Are you a descendant of Abraham? Galatians 3:28-29 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”.

This promise of deliverance is not for every last person, but for these who are found written in the book. This book could be any book, this book, this book, maybe this book. But these books are all already finished, edited, and printed. Your name will not be found in any of these, but the book of life is the book that holds the names of everyone who puts there trust in Jesus.

Revelation 21:27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This promise of deliverance reminds me of a story I read. A story from a Pastor about a funeral he conducted. Just as he was beginning the service, a woman called out for help. Someone 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, or so he thought. 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 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 the floral arrangements flying in all directions.

Once more, the group gathered under the shelter, and the pastor again began to read from Romans, “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 rainwater had collected producing a sizeable overhead pool. Now the tent visibly began to bulge and hoping to drain the water by pushing upward on the tent with his umbrella, the director slipped. His umbrella pierced the canvas, ripping a gaping hole in the roof of the tent as a river of ice-cold water cascaded over the pallbearers. 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 start again: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels,...” Gratefully, he completed the service.

I have conducted a few funerals, but never have I had an experience anything like this one. Nevertheless, every funeral service presents a great challenge. Funerals must deal with the ugly reality of death and the reminder that each of us must come to terms with it.

Those without hope of eternal life try to avoid the reality of death. They are, in fact, enslaved by the fear of death. Hebrews 2:14-15 says “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their

humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Great amounts of money and effort are spent to conceal the ugly face of death. The gospel of Jesus Christ faces death head-on, with the proclamation that while death is the consequence of sin, Christ is the cure for sin and death.

V2 Multitudes other translations say many, the Hebrew word used here can be used for many or all. All makes more sense here, as everyone who has ever perished will be raised at their appointed time.

Some think this refers to the resurrection of Israel as a *nation*. But the plainest meaning is that it refers to the resurrection of the body in general. The Bible clearly teaches two resurrections, one for the saved and one for the damned.

Daniel writes about the resurrection at the end of time, when Christ returns, and all mankind faces judgment. In order for justice to be carried out completely at the coming of the Messiah and of His kingdom, the dead must be raised so that all men receive their just reward. This resurrection of the righteous and the wicked is very plainly prophesied. The righteous will be raised and rewarded with everlasting life, while the wicked will be raised and given their reward of everlasting contempt.

Jesus spoke of this resurrection in Matthew 25:31–46. Christ taught, “All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats”. John refers to this event as the great white throne judgment in Rev. 20:11–15. John taught, “The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works”. This is the first time we hear of the phrase “everlasting life” in the Bible. If we really believed *every one of us would live forever in one place or the other*, it would profoundly change our lives.

V3 Those who live in God’s wisdom will shine, no matter how things are going around them. This is the joy we get from our deep relationship with Jesus, it is the source of our joy. Happiness is situational, I am happy until my boss tells me I have to work Saturday but come Saturday morning when Jesus gives me new day, I am joyful even on my way to work. So, others should see the light of Jesus in me throughout my day no matter if it’s a miserable Monday or a sorrowful Saturday.

The reward of this righteous in eternity is directly linked to their faithfulness to the task they were given. Those who “let their light shine” in the dark days of persecution and opposition, and thus led many to righteousness, will shine brightly forever in eternity.

God’s people are like the moon in the sense that they reflect light of Jesus and help others to see and find their way. But certainly, those who turn many to righteousness shine even more brightly, helping even more people to see the light and find their way. Do you all know someone who seems to shine a little brighter, I can think of 3 people who I think shine a little brighter. They are all pastor’s wives, and I don’t know if that has anything to do with it or not because I know one of the pastors pretty well. These 3 people always seem to be able to have the right thing to say right when you need it, they are always pleasant to deal with, and they all have a heart for people in need.

How many of you like a nice clean car? I enjoy washing my car, it is rewarding to see the filth of this world being washed away. I spend over an hour washing it, cleaning the wheels, drying it, and wiping down the interior. But does it last, no, it ends up right back in that same condition. With the weather here and my driveway it usually short lived. This brightness that those who shine to turn other to God will not only be worn throughout their life here on earth but will last forever. It isn't fading. It endures, when so many other things that we put our effort into, even if they succeed, give only a temporary "shine." How much do we invest in the things that really mean something? It is worth it to invest our lives in the things that last forever and ever.

V4 The "words" refers to the vision of Daniel chapter 10:2-12:3 and the "book" likely refers to the entire book of Daniel. Observe that the command to shut up the words and book is not a directive to hide or to conceal this book. Rather, this instruction to Daniel seems to be a command to protect and to archive the book, it should be kept safe, so it is available for future generations. Daniel's prophecy certainly was of some value in his own day. But there would come a day, the time of the end, when his prophecy would be of even more importance. The idea here is that in times of persecution—both that of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BC and in the present time—God's people will look for an explanation of their suffering. The book of Daniel can help in this regard, as it shows God's sovereignty.

V5-7

Although I'm sure Daniel was full of questions, he did not ask this question. Instead, one of the angels standing on the shore of the Tigris River asked for him. One angel asked the other, not for the benefit of the angel, but for Daniel's benefit and our benefit.

The answer was given by the One whom Daniel saw in the vision of chapter 10:5-6—our Lord Himself. He raised both hands and swore by the eternal Father who "lives forever" that the end of these wonders would come after a time, times, and half a time. This is generally understood to mean a period of three and a half years.

While Daniel would surely be concerned with the length of time his people would suffer in the Great Tribulation, the emphasis of this does not seem to fall on the length of Israel's suffering but on its purpose. The suffering will end when its purpose has been fulfilled "as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed".

Israel's deliverance does not come about because God will make them strong, but rather because God will use wicked men to shatter the power of His holy people. Here again we come to a biblical principle which defies human logic but falls in consistently with the way God deals with men.

The principle is this, God's power and our deliverance do not come through our strength, but through our weakness. We see this principle at work all through the Bible. God provided the means for Abram's blessing through a son, in this Abram and his wife were powerless to produce. God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, not by their power but in their weakness, through His power. They were powerless to resist the Egyptian army or to cross the Red Sea. God opened the Red Sea, making a path for Israel's escape and the means for the destruction of the Egyptians. God provides man's salvation when we were too weak to save ourselves.

The Problem, The Promise, The Preservation

V8-10 In chapter 10, we were told that Daniel “understood the message and had an understanding of the vision”. I think Daniel did have a general grasp of God’s plan and of its meaning and message for him. I do not think this meant he understood everything concerning the future.

From Daniel’s question in verse 8, it is clear he did not yet understand where the prophetic program of God was going, and so he asked, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” This comforts us. Daniel didn’t understand it all either, even though he heard it first-hand.

The answer Daniel is given seems to be a gentle refusal to supply the information he requested. It is as though he were told, “That’s really none of your concern, Daniel, for these things will take place in the distant future, long after your death. What you have asked needs only to be revealed to those who live in those last days.” We shouldn’t think there was no instruction, no blessing, or no benefit in these words for any generation. But the meaning of these prophecies would be *less* mysterious at the time of the end.

What Daniel needs to know is that the time of Israel’s suffering will have a two-fold effect. Those who are righteous will be purged and purified by their suffering, prepared for the coming of the King and His kingdom. And those who are wicked will not understand what God is doing, and they will persist in their sin, awaiting the day of their judgment. While the wicked will blindly pursue the same course of sin, those who have insight will understand and see the hand of God divinely guiding the course of human history in such a way as to fulfill His purposes and promises. Daniel and us must be content with what God has revealed so far.

The massive interest in prophecy, and the incredible development in understanding of Biblical prophecy in the last 150 years should make us see that we truly are at the time of the end.

When we look at Church history, we see that God has successively had the church focus on specific areas of doctrine at different periods. Our present understanding of many areas of Biblical teaching were only most carefully and precisely defined *after* God appointed the church to focus on that doctrinal area.

For example, in the second through fourth centuries, the church focused on the doctrine of Scripture. In the fourth century, the focus was on the doctrine of God. In the fifth century, the focus was on the doctrine of Christ. In the sixth through seventh centuries, the focus was on the doctrine of man. In the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the focus was on the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of the church. So, it should not surprise us that it was not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the focus would turn upon the doctrine of the time of the end and the return of Jesus.

V11-12 This reveals one more detail, the period between the time the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up will be 1,290 days. Those will be truly blessed who persevere throughout these 1,290 difficult days, for an additional 45 days totaling 1335 days. This marks the time when the evil “horn” is destroyed.

V13 These words spoken to Daniel should set the standard for every Christian. While the specifics of God’s plan for the future will remain a mystery to Daniel and to us, God does not leave Daniel in doubt as to the implications of prophecy. The final verse of the chapter and of the Book of Daniel spell out the hope of Daniel and every Old and New Testament believer.

Daniel's death was surely not very far away in time. The day of his departure was near, yet he was encouraged to "go his way;" he was to keep on just as he had been. I wonder how many of us could be told the same thing. As the day of our death or the day of our Lord's return draws near, is there anything we would wish to change? I know many changes are needed in my life. But from the first chapter of Daniel through all those many years of his bondage and service in captivity, Daniel remained faithful. He did not need to change, for *he had lived all of his life in the light of eternity and of his glorious hope in the God of Israel.*

His death would be the "entrance into his rest." His hope was that he would rise from the grave to receive the blessings which God had promised.

As death or the return of our savior approaches, it prompts each of us to get to the "bottom line" of what life is all about and what comes after death. As a believer in Jesus Christ, we have to decide do you actually believe that we will last forever somewhere, that should affect the way we live right now! Is our light shining to lead others to salvation? Do you need to make changes to your life as our time draws near, or would God tell you to keep on going as you are?