

Daniel

Chapter 12

The End Times

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. ² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. ⁴ But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.” ⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. ⁶ One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?” ⁷ The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.” ⁸ I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, “My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?” ⁹ He replied, “Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. ¹¹ “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. ¹³ “As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”

Ch 12 Luther: “The twelfth chapter of Daniel ... has to do wholly with the Antichrist and with these last times in which we are living. For this reason we do not have to consult the histories any longer at this point. Rather it is the clear gospel” (AE 35:313). (TLSB)

12:1 AT THAT TIME – These words connect this passage with the preceding one, which had pictured the destruction of the Antichrist at the end of the world. (PBC)

Michael. See note on 10:13. (CSB)

An angel who had already come to their rescue in the battle with Persia in 10:13. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

“Michael, the great prince” is a reference to the archangel Michael, the warrior who helps the Lord (Dan 10:13, 21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

Michael was charged to care for Israel but this reference may include “new Israel,” the Church. (TLSB)

time of distress.† See Jer 30:7; Mt 24:21; cf. Rev 16:18. (CSB)

God’s people would suffer greatly because of the great conflict. (TLSB)

“A time of trouble, such as never has been since.” We find these words quoted by Christ in Mt 24:21–22. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

Jesus quoted from this verse in speaking about events leading up to the final judgment. Matthew 24:21-22 “For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.” (PBC)

Perhaps you have heard somebody describe this world as a madhouse. Actually the world is not a madhouse, but arena, a battleground where a war is constantly raging between the forces of God and the forces of anti-God. There is not a single area of life which has not been claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan and his henchmen. (PBC)

The struggle will continue and even intensify as the time draws closer to the end. The devil and his forces will become ever more desperate to win people over. The world during its tortured centuries of existence has seen distress of many kinds, but nothing like this last distress. These words remind us that being a Christian does not mean putting on rose-colored glasses so that everything looks pink and pretty. Daniel makes it clear that as we contemplate the future there’s no reason for overconfidence. (PBC)

But there’s no reason for despair, either. Not only is there trouble ahead; there’s triumph, too. “At that time Michael... will arise.” Daniel chapter 10 pictured Michael as the great angelic prince who was active behind the scenes of history, working against Satan’s agent in the Persian government. Michael was God’s agent to overthrow those satanic schemes and to guarantee that God’s good will for the returning exiles would be carried out. Here we learn that when the final great distress overtakes the world Michael, God’s angelic champion, will again intervene on behalf of God’s people. (PBC)

Jeremiah 30:7 “How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.”

Michael will be successful in defending God’s people, His Israel, the spiritual children of Abraham who have been gathered from the east and the west. The huffing and puffing of the enemies will stop when God sends final deliverance at Judgment day. (PBC)

book. See 10:21; see also notes on Ps 9:5; 51:1; 69:28. (CSB)

God’s Book of Life, listing those who remain faithful. (TLSB)

“Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.” This book should be identified with the Book of Life (Dan 7:10; Ps 69:28) and not “the book of truth” of Dan 10:21 (see also FC Ep XI 6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

God’s book is His family register containing the names of those who have been loved and chosen from all eternity. (Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Rev. 21:27) (PBC)

Through faith in Christ’s perfect life and His innocent death we will not only be pitied by God but delighted in, as a father delights in his own child. (PBC)

While these, too, will feel the stress and strain of life, they can have the peace that passes all human understanding knowing their place in heaven is secure.

Philippians 4:3 “Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow,^a help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”

12:2† A clear reference to a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. Cf. Isa 26:19; Jn 5:24–30. (CSB)

WHO SLEEP – The dead will be raised to live again. Ambr: “Well, then, did he speak of the rest of those that sleep, that one may understand that death lasts not for ever, which like sleep is undergone for a time, and is put off at its time” (*NPNF 2* 10:184). Jn D: “The words ... clearly show that there will be a resurrection of bodies” (*NPNF 2* 9:100b). (TLSB)

“And many of those who sleep.” This verse is quoted by Christ in Jn 5:28–29, but Christ substitutes “all” for “many.” The Hebrew could also be translated “multitude” or possibly “all” in this context. This is the clearest example of the bodily resurrection to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures (see also Is 26:19). It is also interesting to note the use of language similar to that of Genesis in reference to the dust of the ground (v 2; Gen 2:7; 3:19). This verse shows us

the reality at the Last Day when Christ returns. Those who have been faithful and survived the great tribulation will be joined with Christ, and those who have died in the faith will awake and arise bodily from the grave and join Christ. Those who died as unbelievers will also rise bodily but to everlasting shame and contempt. The Old Testament has many examples of sleep being a reference to death (e.g., Ps 13:3; Job 3:13; Jer 51:39, 57). Remember 1 Cor 15:26 and the reality that death is the last enemy to be destroyed. The Hebrew *l'echayye 'olam*, “to everlasting life,” is found only here in the Old Testament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

One of the enemies which has intruded into God’s good creation and which has caused untold misery for God’s people is death. This enemy will also be overcome in the final victory. Death is “the last enemy to be destroyed” (1 Corinthians 15:26). It will be destroyed by Him who as His resurrection broke the power of death. (PBC)

everlasting life. The phrase occurs only here in the OT. (CSB)

For those written in the book (v 1). (TLSB)

There will be those who will outlive the distress and those who won’t, but all will appear before the Lord at the end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

shame and everlasting contempt. For those who cooperated with Antichrist. (TLSB)

12:3 THOSE WHO ARE WISE – With so much coming at a person at all at once it is difficult to always make wise decisions. One way to help the decision-making process is to be in the Word constantly.

WILL SHINE LIKE BRIGHTNESS OF THE HEAVENS – They will live in the glory of heaven getting their light from Christ.

Like stars. Their glory is a blessing of God’s grace. Ambrose: “The progress of that life which shall be after death is better than that which is passed in sorrow and pain before death” (NPNF 2 10:184). (TLSB)

Christ quotes this verse in Mt 13:43. The use of *raqia’*, “expanse,” reminds us again of Genesis (1:6–8) and the creation. The use here may indicate a restoration of creation—new heavens and new earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

Matthew 13:43 “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

THOSE WHO LEAD MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS – These are those Christians who by word and example have brought others to faith in Christ Jesus.

Ambrose: “So the choirs of apostles, martyrs, and priests, shining like glorious stars, might give light throughout the world” (*NPNF 2 10:226*). (TLSB)

12:4 CLOSE UP AND SEAL – Daniel is instructed is to “close up the words and seal the scroll until the time of the end” (12:4). Both commands signify the cessation of further divine revelation to Daniel. No more words can be added to a scroll that has been sealed. In addition, these commands indicate that Daniel’s vision will not be understood “until the time of the end,” since the words on the scroll cannot be read as long as the seal remains unbroken. (CC)

Therefore, in contrast to Dan 12:4, the opposite instruction is given to the apostle John at the end of the last book of the NT canon: “*Do not* seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (Rev 22:10). The last days began already with the first advent of the Messiah, and believers always rightly regard his return as imminent (cf. 2 Pet 3:4–13). (CC)

UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END – The time of the end” is also the time of the activity of the eschatological king, the Antichrist (11:36–45). He was present but hidden in the apostolic age and was not fully revealed until several centuries later. This means that the sealed scroll began to be opened with the first advent of Christ. The victorious Lamb who was slain is the only one with authority to unseal the scroll, and he began to do that in Rev 5:1–8:1 because he had inaugurated “the time of the end” (Dan 12:4) by his suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and session in power at the right hand of the Father. Thus the end times had arrived before John received his vision. In John’s vision, the scroll is opened by Christ (Rev 5:1–8:1), who has authority over all world history and governs it for the sake of his church. (CC)

run to and fro. Seeking some word from God (Am 8:11–12). (TLSB)

The second sentence of Dan 12:4 describes the time of the end when the meaning of Daniel’s visions will be more clearly understood by those who have insight (12:10): “many will run back and forth, and knowledge will increase.” “Run back and forth” is not simply a prediction about advances in transportation.

Instead, the verb **וַיָּשׁוּב** often indicates going back and forth in order to investigate and gain knowledge (Jer 5:1; Zech 4:10; Job 1:7; 2:2; 2 Chr 16:9). Amos 8:12 is the closest parallel to the use of **וַיָּשׁוּב** in Dan 12:4 since it speaks of looking for God’s Word: (CC)

[People] will stagger from sea to sea and from north to east. They will go back and forth looking for a revelation from Yahweh, but they will not find any.(CC)

knowledge shall increase. Worldly learning, which is no help in knowing God's will. This concludes Daniel's report of what the messenger said to him (10:20–12:4). (TLSB)

Thus Daniel is told that many will investigate the meaning of this vision, and knowledge about it will increase. With the coming of Christ, much of the prophecy given to Daniel was fulfilled, making it easier to understand. This increased understanding is possible because of the revelation of the fullness of the Gospel in Jesus, and this increased understanding is especially given to those who have the gift of God's Holy Spirit, who dwells in all who trust in Christ. (CC)

12:5 *two others.* Two was the minimum number of witnesses to an oath (see v. 7; Dt 19:15). (CSB)

As in his previous vision (8:13), Daniel heard two angels speaking. (TLSB)

The divine man who first appeared to Daniel in 10:5–6 and has been revealing to Daniel the contents of his fourth vision (chapters 10–12) now concludes the revelation to the prophet. Now as the divine man finishes the revelation, Daniel sees two others, presumably angels (12:5). Some propose that the two angels appear to serve as witnesses to the oath that the divine man will swear (12:7). However, witnesses were required by the Law of Moses (Deut 17:6; 19:15) only in the case of criminal prosecutions. Even though the two others are angels, the three together in a theophany to Daniel hint at the Trinity, the three persons of the one Godhead, as in Genesis 18–19, where “Yahweh appeared to” Abraham (Gen 18:1), and of the three persons who appeared to him, one turned out to be Yahweh himself (e.g., Gen 18:13) and the two others were angels (Gen 19:1). (CC)

THE RIVER – “The river” (Dan 12:5) is probably the Tigris, mentioned at the start of this fourth vision (10:4), although the term here is נַחְלֵי (12:5–7), which is usually used for the Nile (e.g., Gen 41:1–3; Ex 1:22; 2:3, 5). The two angels here may be the same two angels who appeared in one of Daniel's previous visions (Daniel 8). There the two angels conversed with each other (8:13–14) so that Daniel could overhear their question and answer, and then God commanded one of them, who was Gabriel, to explain the vision further to Daniel (8:16–26). In 8:16 God spoke with “a human voice between [the banks of] the Ulai,” that is, on or above the water of that canal. That parallel is further confirmation that in 12:5–13 the divine man dressed in linen “who was above the waters of the river” (12:6–7) and who speaks to Daniel from that location is God the Son, the pre-incarnate Christ. (CC)

12:6 *How long.* Key question continued to be asked. (TLSB)

wonders? Awesome events described in chs 11–12. (TLSB)

One of the angels asks the Son of God about the time until “the wonderful things” would end (12:6). This is a reference to the “wonderful things” spoken by the eschatological king, things disguised as substitutes for God’s Word, but which in fact militate against God’s Word and deceive people away from the truth of the Gospel. Therefore, the question is about the length of the activity of the eschatological king, the Antichrist. (CC)

12:7 *raised his right ... left hand ... and swore.* Raising both hands emphasized the solemnity of his oath. (TLSB)

time, times and half a time. See NIV text note; cf. 7:25. (CSB)

Yields three and a half “times,” half of the symbolic number seven. So the reign of Antichrist stands in opposition to God’s order and is chaotic and cut short. Commentators have also noted that Antiochus IV desecrated the temple for c three years. The messenger may use Antiochus’s actions to symbolize the chaos and blasphemy of Antichrist’s reign. (TLSB)

The three and a half times in Daniel’s visions (7:25; 12:7) is a symbolic period representing the time from the first advent of the Messiah to the final judgment of the Antichrist, who is represented by the beast with its little horn (7:7–8, 11, 21–26) and by the eschatological king (11:36–45). It is the same as “the latter days” (2:28; 10:14) and the end times: the NT era or the church age, from Jesus’ earthly ministry to his parousia. It is during this period of time that the eschatological king, the Antichrist, is present on earth and continues to attack God and his people, and his persecution will escalate as the return of Christ draws nearer (Rev 20:7–9). St. Paul confirmed that the Antichrist was already present in the apostolic era when he wrote that “the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” (2 Thess 2:7). This mystery of lawlessness operates through “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:3), who was restrained while the Roman Empire lasted, but emerged clearly after it fell in the fifth century AD (see 2 Thess 2:6–8). “The man of lawlessness” in 2 Thessalonians 2, the little horn in Daniel 7, and the eschatological king in Dan 11:36–45 all refer to the Antichrist. He will continue to utter his “wonderful things” against God (Dan 11:36; also 12:6) until Jesus slays him at this second coming (2 Thess 2:8). (CC)

It is during this time that there will be “rejection by a holy people.” The Jewish people, elected in the OT to be God’s treasured possession, will as a nation reject Jesus as the Messiah. However, the Jewish apostles and disciples in the Gospels and the Jewish apostle Paul remind us that there will always be a remnant of Jewish people who believe in the Messiah God promised and sent for them and for all (Rom 11:1–6). The hardness of heart among the Jewish people as a whole (Rom 11:7, 25) signals a time of grace when the Gospel is preached to all peoples and God offers salvation in Christ to all, Jew and Gentile alike (Rom 1:16–17; 11:7–10, 25–27; Gal 3:26–29). When the “time, times, and half [a time]” (Dan 12:7) end, all members of the true Israel—all believers in Christ from

among Jews and Gentiles alike—will be saved (Rom 11:26) and will inherit God’s eternal kingdom at the resurrection (Dan 7:18, 22, 27; Mt 8:11; 25:34; 1 Cor 15:50–52). (CC)

power of the holy people. In the OT and the Time between the Testaments, believers often held civil as well as spiritual authority. Here, the messenger likely describes the influence of God’s people upon larger society.

12:8–13 Daniel is told to go on with his life, even if he does not understand what he has seen and heard. We, too, should take special note of this counsel: God does not want His people caught up in endless speculation about His timing (cf Ac 1:7). He calls us to serve Him and gives clear ways to do so. Focus here on the general point of the angel’s message rather than the difficult symbolism describing matters that are sealed up until God fulfills them. (TLSB)

12:10 MADE SPOTLESS AND REFINED – Daniel is not given any specific dates about the time of the first or second advent of Christ. (He will receive symbolic chronological information in 12:11–12.) The divine man reminds him that “the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end,” that is, until the first advent of Christ, which marks the beginning of the end times and latter days (12:9; cf. 12:4). But Daniel is told what will happen during the church era: “many will be purified, be made white, and be refined” (12:10) through the work of the coming Messiah, through faith in him, and through suffering and persecution (see the first textual note on 12:10). This purification of Christians throughout the church age, starting about 560 years after Daniel’s lifetime, will be parallel to the refining of believers that would come first, about 360 years after Daniel’s lifetime, through their persecution at the time of Antiochus IV. That first persecution was described in 11:35 with different forms of the same three verbs used in 12:10, “purify,” “make white,” and “refine.” Therefore, the divine man is implying that the church era, lasting three and a half times (12:7), is a time of persecution for God’s faithful people. (CC)

WICKED WILL BEHAVE WICKEDLY – Also during this era, “the wicked will behave wickedly” (Dan 12:10). The ultimate display of wickedness will be the rejection and crucifixion of the promised Messiah, followed by the persecution and martyrdom of the saints. The contrast between the wicked who do not understand and the understanding possessed by those who have insight reveals that even after the words of this vision are unsealed with the first coming of Christ, only those who are given insight by God through faith in the Messiah will truly understand and grasp with faith the meaning of the divine man’s words (cf. Lk 24:45; 2 Cor 3:7–16). (CC)

Those who side with Antichrist (v 2). (TLSB)

understand. Though Daniel did not understand, wise people would understand when the events later took place. Despite the trials they would experience, the Lord

would preserve them. The general message is that God's wisdom and kingdom will prevail. (TLSB)

12:11–12† Assurance that though afflictions and trials may seem to last a very long time, they never reach the point where they will make a full end of those who remain steadfast “till the end” (v. 13; cf. Jer 4:27; 5:18). (CSB)

Matters described here could be any of three events, all of which were future to Daniel: (1) the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BC; (2) the destruction of the temple by the Romans in AD 70; or (3) an abomination to be committed by the Antichrist in the last days. Hipp: “Daniel has spoken, therefore, of two abominations; the one of destruction, and the other of desolation. What is that of destruction, but that which Antiochus established there at the time? And what is that of desolation, but that which shall be universal when Antichrist comes?” (*ANF* 5:184). *1,290 days ... 1,335 days*. Difference of 45 days. How these two figures relate to history or the future is not entirely clear. They likely apply to one of the events described above. Commentators offer numerous proposals. However, bear in mind the angel's advice to Daniel in v 9: focus on your calling, not speculation. A helpful observation is that God promises to bless those who endure hardship. This promise is made throughout Scripture and applies to believers of all eras. *he who waits*. Person of faith who hopes in the Lord's deliverance (cf Ps 130:5–6). (TLSB)

12:13 *your allotted place*. Daniel was assured that after death he would stand with the wise and receive his eternal reward. (TLSB)

Ch 12 The long discourse of the man clothed in linen (chs 10–12) concludes with encouragement for Daniel. He is assured that Michael is in charge of Israel; the people will be delivered; and those whose names are written in God's book will rise to everlasting life in the end. Believers have always been curious about when the end of the world is coming. Some have tried to precisely determine that date based on the various numbers found in Dn and other biblical books. Jesus made clear that no one knows that day and hour (Mk 13:32; trying to guess the year has led to numerous false prophecies [see p 307]). The angel's advice to Daniel, to “go your way,” is good for us all. Know that you are in God's hand, and take comfort that He has allotted a place in heaven for you. • Almighty Father, I wait for You to guide my life as I go on my way to my heavenly home. Amen.

Subsequent history confirms that this predictive prophecy was accurate and that this is the correct interpretation of the numbers of days. Elderly Daniel received this final vision in 536 BC. If he lived to 530 BC, then it would be another 363 years until Antiochus desecrated the temple in 167 BC. A shorter period of time, another 165 years, would transpire from the time of Antiochus until the birth of Christ in about 2 BC. Moreover, both of those periods of years are much shorter than the time between the birth of Christ and his return, which at the time of this writing has been about 2,010 years. How much longer it will be until the end of

the 1,260 symbolic days or three and a half times, only God knows (Mk 13:32).
(CC)

12:13 *rest.†* Die (see Job 3:17; Rev 2:10). (CSB)

The command given to Daniel at the beginning of the divine man’s clarification of the time of the end (גֵּזֶר in 12:9) is repeated here (גֵּזֶר in 12:13): “go!” Moreover, Daniel is told that he will “rest,” a synonym for the sleep of death (12:2). Daniel will not live to see most of the events he prophesied. However, Daniel is also given a promise that he will be among those who will participate in the resurrection to eternal life on the Last Day (12:2). Since God has granted him wisdom and insight (e.g., 1:17, 20; 9:22), he will be among “those who have insight,” who “will shine like the brightness of the sky,” and since God has worked through him and the book God inspired him to write to “bring many to righteousness,” he will shine “like the stars forever and ever” (12:3). This will be his “allotted portion” (12:13), his eternal reward by grace. This is the same glorious award described by Paul as “the portion of the inheritance of the saints in light” (τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί, Col 1:12). Finally, Daniel is told that he will receive this “at the end of the days” (Dan 12:13). The resurrection of all believers to eternal life (and of all unbelievers to eternal damnation [12:2]) will occur at end of the time periods described by symbolic days in 12:11–12, which is also the end of the time period in 12:7 and covered by this entire fourth vision (chapters 10–12): “the blessed hope and epiphany of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” at his parousia (Titus 2:13).
(CC)