

## OUR FINAL STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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### **GREAT DISTRESS, AND THE END OF THE AGE**

PLEASE READ DANIEL CHAPTER 12

In chapter 11 part 2 we learnt of the rise of an evil king that other passages in the Bible refer to as The Antichrist and The Beast. We also studied some of the battles that will occur when this king is in a position of power.

Now chapter 12 starts by stating, “At that time.” In as much as the previous prophecy referred to events that have not yet occurred, events that we understand will happen just prior to the return of Jesus Christ, so this reference fairly obviously is referring to that same period of time.

The Jewish people have suffered unbelievably down through the ages, yet Daniel is told that even worse is to come during these last days.

“At that time Michael, the great prince who *watches* over the sons of your people, will stand up. And there will be a time of distress such as has never happened from the beginning of the nations until then. But at that time your people - everyone whose name is found written in the book - will be delivered.” (Daniel 12:1)

Satan knows that the Saviour of the world is returning at the appointed time, and that His physical return is intrinsically woven around Israel and its people. Therefore if he, Satan, can wipe out this tiny nation and its people, he can forestall the return of Christ!

But God sends the archangel Michael to protect the remnant that will survive. This “distress” will be a terrible time for Israel, as other prophecies in the Bible tell us that two thirds of those in the land of Israel will perish during the last half of the seven year tribulation period. But “those whose names are found written in the Book – will be delivered.”

#### **Pray for the salvation of Israel and its people!**

In verse 4, Daniel is now told to “close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end ...” I am sure that Daniel could not understand all that he had been shown, but he was being told to preserve the revelations he had been given so that future generations, and in particular the last generation, would be able to read God’s warnings of events in the last days.

Verse 4 concludes with the statement that, “Many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”

Surely this implies that at that time, knowledge and understanding of the Bible, and especially events leading up to the return of Jesus would be understood – much as they are today! Who can doubt that knowledge has undergone an exponential growth in the last 100 years.

From aircraft to rockets visiting the planets, from adding machines to computers, from the finding of medicines and drugs to cure diseases to the implanting of new body organs, the list goes on and on.

For some of us the majority of this knowledge increase has occurred in the space of a single lifetime. Surely this prophecy must have almost reached its fulfillment?

I am sure that after being told to seal this information up until the appropriate time, Daniel would have had a question in his mind of just when would this time be. But God beats him to it! The angels voice the question for him – “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?” And then they answer their own question by saying, “It will be for a time, times and half a time.” (v 6-7).

At first glance it appears that the angel was asking for a date when these things would occur, but the answer shows that he was in fact asking how long the “distress” would last. The answer was that it would last for a period of 3½ years – a time (one year), times (2 years) and half a time (half a year.)

And at the end of that period of time the “power of the holy people will be finally broken.” (v 7). In the Bible the “holy people” are the Jewish race, so it would seem that this verse is a reference to the fact that it will take all of this terrible time of suffering to break the pride of the Jewish people, at least those that are left, and to bring them to a point of recognizing Jesus as the Son of God and their Saviour.

Daniel, understandably was puzzled. He could not get his mind around what he was being told. I am sure that if he had fully understood it all he would have been heart broken with grief because of what would one day happen to his people. Instead he was told to seal up all that he had been told until the world reached “the time of the end” when it would then be understood. (v. 9-10).

Many Christians believe that we now understand these prophecies. If this is true then we can conclude that the return of Jesus Christ is indeed drawing near!

Verses 11 and 12 are the subject of some debate and conjecture.

“From the time *that* the regular *sacrifice* is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there will be* 1,290 days. How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!” (Daniel 12:11-12)

We know from other verses (Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 13) that the “abolishment of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination that causes desolation” occurs at the midpoint of the seven year tribulation period.

This second half of the Tribulation consists of 1,260 days (3½ Biblical years of 360 days each). Yet Daniel 12:11-12 refers to 1,290 days and 1,335 days.

The Bible gives us no explanation as to the significance of these two sets of days, but by the very fact that they are recorded means that they are important.

These figures may indicate that there are 75 days beyond the Tribulation (that is, 1260 + 30 + 45 making 1,335), before Messiah's kingdom begins to function.

Daniel is now told to "go his way" and that he will soon find rest (die). But at the end of the days he will be raised to reap his rewards in Heaven. (v 13).

What a debt we owe this mighty man of God. Through Daniel comes a large part of our knowledge and understanding of events leading up to and surrounding that wonderful event we look forward to so much – the return of Jesus Christ.

Many of the events Daniel was shown have now occurred yet many more have yet to be fulfilled. Are we the generation which will see the final working out of God's plan culminating in the return of Jesus Christ for His Bride? Oh how I hope and pray that we are!!

As we go to sleep tonight, let us ponder the possibility that we may awake in heaven, having taken part in the Rapture. Or maybe there are still some years to go to the Rapture! Only God knows - but we are exhorted to be ready and watching for that glorious imminent event!

Friends, let us live each day as though it might be our last, looking forward to our eternal reward, and striving to take as many people with us as possible.

May God bless you, and may we meet one day in heaven.

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**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MINISTRY OF BRO BOB HINES**