

Names in the Fire: The Judgment of Love (Daniel 12:2)

I. Saved Through Fire: Burning Away the False Identity

While the majority of our journey through Daniel focused on the finished work of Christ as the pinnacle of human history and the fulfillment of prophecy—including Daniel 12:1-3—this is not to deny the clear New Testament reality of a *future* resurrection and judgment.

Building on Daniel 12:2, Jesus said this:

28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good [deeds] to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil [deeds] to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)

The word “deeds” is in brackets because the translators acknowledge it isn’t the original text. This is important to catch lest we throw out the reality that we are **not** saved by our works. There is a clear apostolic revelation of two paths in life: faith vs. unbelief.

The “good” is the way of faith—or *trust*. James tells us that true faith produces good works, therefore the Scripture still stands as is; however, the clarification is vitally important because without it we will build our life on the foundation of our own efforts.

Those who embrace this way of faith will experience a resurrection of life—which starts now. The true life we were designed for is a life of “good works.”

On the other hand, “the evil” is the way of unbelief. It is about those who reject the grace given to them. Such people will experience a resurrection of *judgment*.

This word for “judgment” is *krisis*. While there are other terms Jesus could have used to articulate a sense of condemnation or punishment, this word does not always carry that meaning. It was often used in a corrective sense—it could have to do with a painful yet restorative “judgment.”

This is not the main view in much of modern church, yet it has been embraced by many people throughout church history, including some of the earliest church fathers. Such a view lines up with the consistent connection in Scripture between fire and purification.

In light of this, let’s look again at Daniel 12:2:

2 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.

The Hebrew word translated “everlasting” is *’ôlām*. It is a rich and somewhat flexible term that doesn’t always mean “eternal” in the modern sense of “unending duration.” Rather, *’ôlām* can mean something like “a long, indefinite period of time,” or “an age-lasting” period. Its meaning depends heavily on context.

For example:

- In **Exodus 40:15**, the Levitical priesthood is said to be an “everlasting priesthood” (*kehunnat ’ôlām*)—yet it ended with the coming of Christ.
- In **Jonah 2:6**, Jonah says he was in the deep “forever” (*le’ôlām*)—but that “forever” lasted only three days.
- In **Psalms 24:7**, “ancient doors” (*pithei ’ôlām*) doesn’t mean eternal doors, but “doors of old.”

This opens up possibilities that the *krisis* people experience at the resurrection will only be a period of time. For many, this seems like the Roman Catholic view of purgatory, but it is simply referring to what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians:

15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

(1 Corinthians 3:15)

This fire is a *krisis* that burns away that which was false. To bring this back to what we learned in our previous session—the fire would destroy everything that is not in line with our *true name*.

This brings fresh insight into Jesus’s harsh words: *I never knew you*. In this sense, he would be speaking of the false identity people create through their own efforts and performance:

22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'

(Matthew 7:22-23)

Those people would then enter into a *krisis*.

We don’t know the fullness of what this entails, but taking the whole of Scripture together, we have hope for a restorative experience. An experience that would burn away our false, self-driven works, which is probably what behind the “prophesying” and other activities mentioned here.

The Scriptures make it clear that our own performance is like “filthy rags.” Our self-works expose a lack of trust and an intimate knowing of Jesus. This is what gets thrown into the fire—and Paul’s words could suggest a hope for that person beyond the flame.

II. Love's Burning: The Fire That Heals the World

This brings a different perspective on the famous passage about the Lake of Fire—which also connects back to our discussion on the book of Adam/death vs. the book of Christ/life.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

(Revelation 20:12-15)

Everything written in “the books” speaks of all that humanity has done. It is the written record of “Adam.” These books are opened, but then another book is opened. It is a *greater* book—the book of Christ and his salvation.

Those embrace this “book” enter the Kingdom joyfully. Those who cling to their identity in Adam will “suffer loss”—if we tie it to Paul’s words from 1 Corinthians 3. This is because everything they built their life upon will burn away, including their sense of self. (Notice that death itself is thrown into this lake of fire. The fire destroys that everything that is outside of God’s design.)

This fire seems to be clearly connected to that which is revealed in Daniel—a fire that proceeds from the throne right as “the books” are opened.

**10 "A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;
The court sat,
And the books were opened.**

11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

(Daniel 7:10-11)

The fire is coming from God. *It is the fire of his presence.* His presence is destroying the “beastly” identity we have examined all throughout our study in Daniel. The beast ultimately represents man’s fallen ways (including the self-made systems of government and religion).

Many believe the fire of “hell” is total separation from God, but there is no verse affirming this. Psalm 139 states there is nowhere to go where God is not. The one verse people use is from 2 Thessalonians:

**9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power
(2 Thessalonians 1:9 NKJV)**

This verse is clearly saying the “destruction” (and remember the destruction is against all that is false and out of design) is coming “from” the presence of the Lord. Some translators (such as the NASB) interpret this word as “away from”—but that is not the best way to translate the text.

We need to take the whole counsel of God’s Word. Daniel 7 affirms the right way of seeing this passage. In Daniel, the destroying fire comes *from God*. It is his very presence coming against all that is broken and defiled.

None of this is in contradiction to the reality that God is love, and that perfect love casts out fear of punishment (1 John 4:18).

It is the passionate love of God that burns away evil—and yet still infinitely loves his creation and keeps no record of wrongs and is filled with unending mercy (1 Corinthians 13).

Again, we must take the whole counsel of the Word. Understanding this view of the *everlasting fire* helps bridge these *seeming contradictions* in Scripture.

III. True Judgment: Coals on the Head

In Exodus, God tells Moses:

**... “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.”
(Exodus 32:33)**

We know from the book of Hebrews that the law of Moses is filled with “shadows” (Hebrews 10:1). Even through the shadows of this passage, light breaks forth from the verse right before it.

**32 "But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!"
(Exodus 32:32)**

In this verse, Moses says that he would have his own name blotted out if the others are blotted out as well.

This is a picture of Christ breaking through the shadows of the law. Moses is the intercessor standing for others, foreshadowing the True Intercessor who will come from the heart of God.

There is even more light hiding behind in shadows of the law when we look at the other main text that mentions “the book of life” in the Old Testament. It is found in Psalm 69, where David is writing about his anger toward evildoers. Here is a sampling of his poetry:

**21 They also gave me gall for my food
And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. ...
24 Pour out Your indignation on them,
And may Your burning anger overtake them. ...
28 May they be blotted out of the book of life
And may they not be recorded with the righteous.
(Psalm 69:21, 24, 29)**

David is writing of those who have persecuted and attacked him. They have fed him the “gall” and “vinegar” of disdain and rejection. As a result, David wants their evil to return on their own heads. This is truly the shadow of the law that demands an eye for an eye. Thus, he desires their name “be blotted out of the book of life.”

Of course, Jesus came and flipped the law of Moses on its head, particularly this “eye for an eye” mentality. (*“You have heard it said...but I tell you...”*—Matthew 5:43-45)

What’s amazing is that Jesus experienced the darkness of this Psalm for himself. He was given literal gall and vinegar to drink as his persecutors sent him to a violent death, revealing that this was a Messianic Psalm (Matthew 27:34 & John 19:29).

But instead of asking for “burning anger” to overtake his enemies, Jesus cried out, ***“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do”*** (Luke 23:34)!

In this, Jesus is redeeming the Old Covenant understanding of wrath and anger. He is revealing what gets unveiled in Romans 12:20, where Paul says that responding to evil with kindness and love is like pouring “burning coals” on our enemy’s head.

➤ Note: The Greek word for “burning” is the same word for lake of *fire*.)

Like everything else in the Old Testament, Psalm 69 is *foreshadowing* a greater revelation... It turns out God’s anger is the passion of a Father pouring restorative kindness and healing even over the heads of his worst enemies.

It says in Isaiah 55, *God’s ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts*. The context of that verse is about God’s mercy (see Isaiah 55:7). It signifies that God is not like the punitive and retributive systems of mankind—the same mankind who developed and idolized bloodthirsty, violent cosmic deities.

- And that is the world God entered through the seed of Abraham in order to turn it all upside-down with the coming of the Messiah. The “law of Moses” was part of this entering of our broken system in order to redeem it.

IV. The Heart of God: No Name Blotted Out

Going back to Moses in Exodus 32—the point here is that God’s desire is that no name would be blotted out of the book. Paul states this very clearly when he says God *wills* all to be saved:

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires (*same word for “wills”*) all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.
(1 Timothy 2:3-6)

If Jesus has assumed the whole human race upon himself, it means every name has come under his name. He is the High Priest of humanity—not just Israel or the church. This is the message of Romans 5, which declares that just as Adam affected all people, so did Christ:

18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.
(Romans 5:18)

Later in 1 Timothy, Paul writes:

10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.
(1 Timothy 4:10)

Jesus is the Savior of all mankind—period. This shows that all humanity is covered in his blood and written in his book. However, those who truly receive—believe—in this grace who go on to experience it—therefore this salvation is especially for *believers*.

So how then are names missing from the book of life in Revelation 20?

Everything that is false is consumed in the fire—perhaps leaving the gold of the person’s true name written from before the foundation of the world.

None of this is meant to deny the urgent warnings and pleadings of Scripture that speak of a very real fiery experience for those who choose the path of evil. This simply gives us hope in the glorious and overcoming love of God.

It also gives us hope in taking the following two Scriptures to heart:

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Philippians 2:9-11)

**27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations will worship before You.**

**28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S
And He rules over the nations.**

(Psalm 22:27-28)

Follow-up Encounter:

1 John says the fear of punishment is a sign we have not come into the fullness of love. Ask the Lord to deal with any fear in the area of judgment/punishment. Ask for peace and wisdom in this whole discussion on "krisis."

As you do this, celebrate communion.