

Outline of the Final Prophecy of Daniel (11:2 –12:4)

11:2	End of Medo-Persian kingdom
11:3–4	Beginning of the kingdom of Greece
11:5–20	Egypt (Ptolemy) and Syria (Seleucus) prophecies
11:21–35	Antiochus Epiphanes
11:36–12:4	The End Times
12:5–12:9	Final Words

Daniel 12:1–4 The Close of the Final Vision of Daniel

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.

This is one of the most significant verses in the entire book of Daniel; indeed, perhaps even in the OT. Michael has already been introduced as “one of the chief princes” in 10:13. It was mentioned that he is clearly a powerful angelic being. However, later in the book of Jude, we find that Michael is a very powerful angel of the class *archangel* (Jude 9). In Jude 9 he is arguing concerning the body of Moses (a discussion for another day) with Satan himself. Satan is of the class *cherubim*. Here in Daniel 12, Michael is specifically said to “stand guard” over the nation of Israel.

The question here is “what is ‘at that time’ referring to?” Several expositors have mentioned the unfortunate use of “at that time” ... suggesting that the reference is subsequent to the previous “time” mention in 11:35 ... “the end time.” Though many have chosen “at,” a more precise rendering of the word is “during.” The sense is “during that time ... of the end” is when Michael will arise and defend the nation of Israel. Why would Michael need to defend the nation of Israel? Because ... “there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time ...” We have already mentioned that since there can be only one time so characterized, this is the same time period spoken of in Jeremiah 30:5–7, Joel 2:1–2, and Matt. 24:21. In Zechariah 13, it is mentioned that many Jews will be killed during this period of time, but a third shall be saved (Zech. 13:8–9). The final thought here in verse 1 is that despite all the tribulation and distress that will come upon the nation of Israel (and the whole world), a 1/3 remnant of the Jews will be rescued.

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.

This is another very significant passage in the OT in that it is the first mention of the term “everlasting life.” Certainly, eternal life is hinted at and understood from earlier OT passages prior to the writing of Daniel; (Job 19:25–27, Isaiah 26:19, and several in the Psalms). What does this passage say about resurrection? It is a known fact that “sleep” here is a metaphor for those who have died. The text says that many of those ... will awake. The unusual phrasing could lead someone to believe that both believers and unbelievers are being raised here after the distress of those days. But there is not a clear indication that this understanding is true, and, more importantly, that understanding violates clear teaching in other sections of scripture (we will get to that in a minute).

Notice Gabriel says “many” not “all,” indicating that he sees a specific group of people who are resurrected. Who are the “these” that he is referring to? The nearest antecedent would be in the previous verse ... “everyone who is found written in the book.” These, written in the book, will be raised from the dead. However, others, presumably those *not* written in the book, will be raised to contempt. Notice the passage says that these two groups of people are raised; it does not specifically say that they are raised at the same time, just that two groups of people will be raised. What are we to conclude about the resurrection from this; i.e., just from this passage in Daniel? Nothing more than a group of righteous and a group of the unrighteous will be raised after the tribulation. This is what we have to bring forward into the NT understanding of the order of the resurrection. Consider, for example, the first resurrection of Rev. 20:4–5.

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

We know from Daniel 12 that both believers and unbelievers will be resurrected after the tribulation period. However, here in Revelation 20, we have the added information that the resurrection of believers (those who were killed during the tribulation) will be immediately after the tribulation and Second Coming ... and the resurrection of unbelievers (from all time) will be after the Millennium at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11–15). Since Daniel is included in this resurrection (later in Daniel 12:13), it is apparent that all tribulation believers that were killed, AND all the OT saints will be raised at this first resurrection. What about those 1/3 of the Jews who are rescued out of the tribulation and repent as a nation? Since they are now believers, they will enter the Millennium as they are, in un-resurrected physical bodies like those that we possess now. All Gentile believers that survive the tribulation will also enter the Millennium as they are. However, all unbelievers will be judged and removed from the earth after the tribulation and no unbeliever will enter the Millennium at the start of it. So what will be the composition of human representatives that enter the Millennium? All saints that were killed during the tribulation period, all OT saints in resurrection bodies, all NT saints in resurrection bodies (from the rapture), and all Jew and Gentile believers in un-resurrection bodies will enter the Millennium. There is another group of believers who will enter the Millennium. All Jews who have repented at or by the Second Coming but who do not live in the land of Israel. They will be gathered to Israel for the Millennium.

Daniel 12:3–4

³ "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."

A few statements of blessing for "those who have insight" ... insight into what? I think it's a reference to having wisdom concerning the end time events outlined in the book of Daniel. The command to Daniel to "conceal these words" and "seal up the book" certainly can't be a prohibition for people to pursue knowledge of the end times. I like Woods¹ depiction of the sense here,

The thought is that people would run about trying to find answers to important questions, especially in reference to future events. ... the "knowledge" in view here as that which is supplied by Daniel's book, thus preserved. This explanation would give the following paraphrase of the thought: "Many shall run to and fro in their desire for knowledge of the last things, and, finding it Daniel's book, because it will have been preserved to this end, their knowledge shall be increased." As to the time in mind, reference may be especially to last days, when perhaps a marked increase in such a search for knowledge will exist, but not exclusively. Daniel is to preserve his book so that people of all time, from his day until the end, may have it for reference to last-day events.

Daniel 12:5–13 Two Final Questions

Daniel's vision concludes with him seeing and interacting with two other angelic beings (and perhaps the Lord Jesus) on the bank of the river. Recall the vision, which begins in chapter 10, starts at the bank of the Tigris river.

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 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.

¹ Wood, Leon, J., *A Commentary on Daniel*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1973.

This is the first of two final questions; one by an angelic being, the other by Daniel; each directed at the “man dressed in linen.” Recall the man dressed in linen was first introduced in Daniel 10:5–9 and was speculated that this indeed was a vision of the Lord Jesus.



The first question concerns the length of this “distress,” from which the man answers, “time, times, and half a time.” Very significant, recall that this same expression was used in Dan. 7:25 concerning the extent of the time that the saints of the Most High will be given into the little horn’s hand. Clearly, Daniel 7:25 is referencing the same “distress” that Daniel 12:1 is referencing. The man in linen specifically says this time period will consist of three and one half years, exactly the duration of the second half of the tribulation period. The expression “as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people” ... what is the antecedent for they? The nearest thing in context seems to be “these wonders.” The sense is that all these wonders will be used to break the stubborn will of the Jewish people so they would repent. It is going to take all those wonders during that last 3 ½ years of distress to finally shatter their rebellion against the Lord Jesus. After that happens ... “all these events will be completed.”

A second question then is asked, but with a disappointing answer (from Daniel’s perspective perhaps).

⁸ As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what *will be* the outcome of these *events*?” ⁹ 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.

While the answer from, I think, the Lord Jesus initially sounds like a mild rebuke ... I think He was merely stating the obvious conclusion of the information He decreed for Daniel to know. Daniel would not be alive during the events that have been described to him and the Lord was merely relaying that to him; “do not concern yourself with more details of things which you will not be a witness to.”

Now, there are two more very interesting things mentioned in the last couple verses of Daniel.

Daniel 12:11–13

¹¹ “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.”

The man in linen then tells us that from the time of the abomination of desolation (which we know is at the midpoint of the seven-year tribulation period), there will be some event that transpires 1290 days later. We know that the end of the tribulation will be at 1260 days and it concludes with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Notice that 30 days after the end of the tribulation there will be another, presumably, significant event; but the man in the linen does not tell us what this event is! Curious.

There has certainly been lots of speculation concerning this number (and the other one). Many scholars view this, not as a literal number, but just a vague reference to “lots of days ... somewhere around 3.5 years.” But this seems unlikely as three different numbers would be used to represent this “lots of days.” What could possibly be in mind here? Well, again, the text of Daniel does not tell us. All we know is that the end of the tribulation and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will occur 1260 days after the Abomination of Desolation, something else will occur 30 days later, 1290 days after the Abomination of Desolation. How are we to understand this first unusual timeframe of 30 extra days?

Well, if we now take this knowledge and bring forward into the NT, we might have a plausible speculation.

Recall two items in the gospel of Matthew (and elsewhere) ... the parable of the dragnet ...

13⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering *fish* of every kind;⁴⁸ and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away.⁴⁹ "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,⁵⁰ and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

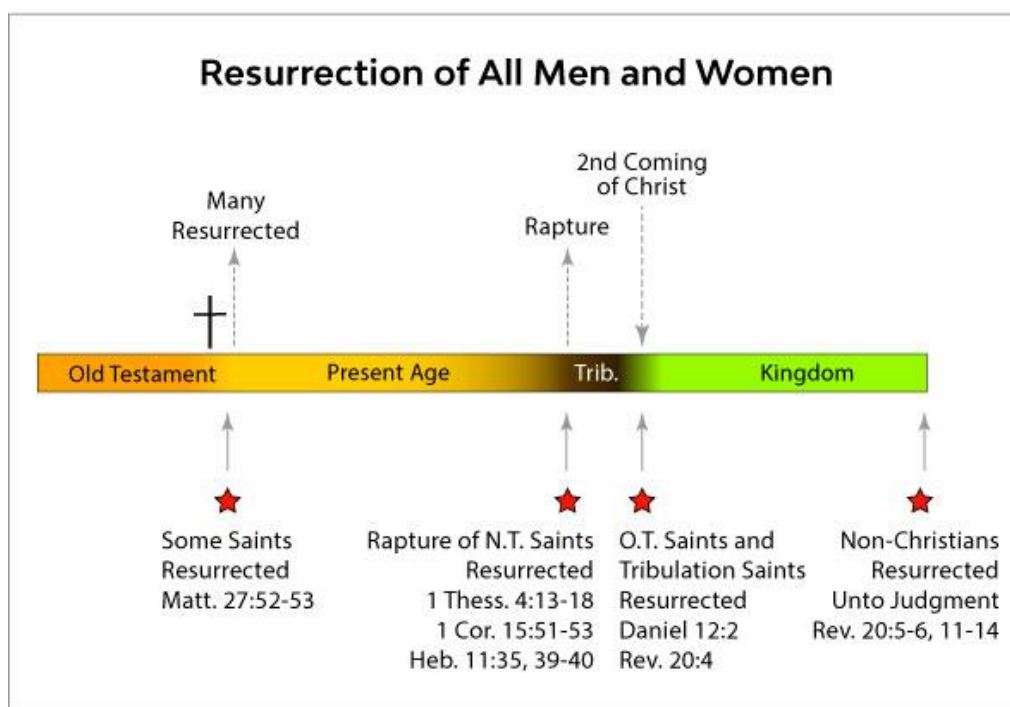
What Matt. 13 is saying here is that at the end of the age, which is the end of the tribulation period, after the Second Coming there will be a removal of unbelievers from the earth in judgment. This is a very significant passage that helps to understand the second passage, in Matt. 24:38–41

³⁷ "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.³⁸ "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,³⁹ and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.⁴⁰ "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left.⁴¹ "Two women *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.

Here we have one of the most misunderstood passages in Matthew 24. Many Christians view this passage, with one taken and one left behind, as depicting the rapture. Let me explain why this cannot be a reference to the rapture.

From our Matt. 13 passage, we are expecting unbelievers to be removed after the end of the age. Now we know precisely when that will happen (wrt to the end of the age). It will happen after the Second Coming which concludes the tribulation period and the time of distress for the nation of Israel. What Matthew 24 is telling us is that it is not BELIEVERS who will be removed from the earth in the rapture, but rather, UNBELIEVERS who will be removed from the earth and taken away in judgment. What does this have to do with the extra 30 days in Daniel 12? Perhaps that 30 days is the time duration necessary to remove all unbelievers from the earth as that job has been given to the angels.

What about the other number of days? The 1335? No clue! Nothing even remotely found in the Bible is there to help us with this one. The best explanation is from those expositors who speculate that it will take an additional 45 days from the judgment of unbelievers to set up the government of the Lord Jesus and begin the Millennial rule. I am content to say "I don't know" here. Finally, Daniel is encouraged to keep running his race to the end, presumably, of his life, and that his inheritance awaits him at the first resurrection.



Final Daniel lesson will be an entire book summary on Dec. 31.