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SPEAKER

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Far From Home

PART

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TITLE

Not The End

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 12



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Well, Providence family, it is really good to see you. If you have a Bible on your hand, turn with me to Daniel Chapter 12, as we finish up our series today through Daniel. If you are a guest with us, we're really glad you're here. If you have a Bible in your hand, we'd love for you to join us. And if you don't or if you're here all the time and you don't have one, there's a lot of Bibles in those chairs right in front of you. And I would ask you, if possible, to turn and if you don't have one of your own, please take that one home as a gift. We would love for you to have that, but it is wonderful to see you. The 12th chapter of Daniel is much like the previous five in particular, and that is full of things that are confusing.

It's full of things that are challenging. It's full of things that can be convicting. And so I want to pray for us before we get started. Father in heaven, we bow before You, our maker, and we believe that You have written us this word and inspired it by Your spirit. And by your spirit, You make it clear to us. We thank you Father that we come to You in humility because Your Word tells us that You and Your grace, You bestow more grace upon those who have a humble heart. And so we come to You and say, "God, we want to be taught. We want to know Your will. We want to know You. We want to know what Your word here says." So would You please, God, would You help us now? Would You speak through weakness? Would You bring glory to Jesus Christ?

Pray that my words and our thoughts would be pleasing to You and to You alone. And I pray for those who are here who feel like they have no hope. I pray, God, that You would help them to see that they have hope. God, for those who simply cannot imagine because there's simply no light, no light tomorrow to be able to interpret today's challenges. And as a result they feel a sense of despair. Would You serve them this morning? Would You help them and use Daniel 12 to buoy their hope? And so we look to You in faith and we pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen. Throughout Daniel, I've tried to teach, we've tried to teach that hope is absolutely imperative to life.

We all need hope to live. You see, it is hope that actually serves as the fuel that allows us to imagine the light of day when we're still in the midst of the darkest of night. It is hope, after we have fallen, after we've tripped, after we're discouraged, after it just seems like everything is dark. It is hope that allows us to pray again and to dream again and to plan again and to rise again and to try again.

Hope is critically important to life, but hope needs something to survive. Hope needs something to thrive, and that is that hope needs to see that our lives... When I'm talking about our lives, I'm not just talking about our days, I'm also talking about the people in our lives, the successes of our lives, the strengths of our lives, the weaknesses, the pains, the interruptions, the great difficulties, the death and divorce, losing a job and finding a job and all of the ups and downs and twists and turns, hope requires that we have the ability to see how our life and all of its complexity and brokenness fit somewhere in between this meaningful story between, in the beginning, and happily ever after.

You cannot know purpose in life until you understand your origin and your destiny. Where you came from and where you're going. And so what we find here is that God Almighty tells us within the scriptures this meaningful story into which all of our lives have been written in order to reveal to us our origin, our purpose,

and our destiny. In order to give us hope that what we're seeing and experience right now is not the end. It's not the end. And that's what Daniel 12 is all about. You see, just like you and just like me, Daniel was also written into this massive story of redemption.

Torn from his own house and home and his family, Daniel was exiled in Babylon for seven decades and were told that three times a day for 70 years, Daniel would go to his knees and he would pray, "God, would You restore Your people? Would You allow your people, the Jewish people, to return home to Jerusalem where we have been removed and to go back and to rebuild and to restore for Your glory and Your honor, and for the good of Your people." And now suddenly we're 72 years into the story. Two years back in the first year of Cyrus, a new king comes, his name is Cyrus, he's a Persian king. He's been praying all this time that God almighty would move a king to authorize the Jewish people to be able to go home and restore Jerusalem.

And sure enough, in the first year of Cyrus, that's exactly what he does. And yet two years later, Daniel is devastated. He's so devastated that he's praying and fasting and mourning during a time of celebration for 21 days. He's miserable. He feels a sense of hopelessness. And the reason is because when the Jewish people were given the opportunity to go back, so many people had become so enmeshed in Babylon, in its thinking, its worldview, its school, its society, its marketplace that they didn't want to return home. They couldn't see how returning to Jerusalem was a trade up for their life or for their own children, and so they stayed in Babylon in captivity. And those who did go back, they were met with such adversity that by the time we get to the last section of Daniel, the work of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem had stopped.

And so when we get to Chapter 10, Chapter 10, 11 and 12 in Daniel, it's one block. It's one piece, it's one vision. And in Chapter 10, he's praying and fasting for 21 days, miserable over the plight of his people, wondering what's going to happen. And you get to Chapter 11 and God gives a vision. He sends an angel. And suddenly what we're told, something that Daniel didn't want to hear and that was the adversity of his people would not only continue but would actually pick up over a long period of time. That these world powers were going to be rising on the scene of history in the future, bringing more affliction to his people.

But not only that, it would even eventually bring a brutal, final world ruler who would be antithetical to the Christ that was promised in the Bible. That's why the Bible calls him the anti-Christ. But what we get to in Chapter 12 is this, is it even then when we think that's the end, the end days, the last days, Daniel 12 says, "It's not the end. It's not the end, it's just the beginning." So what I want to do in these 13 verses, there's a whole lot and some of the verses, there's not really strong, I'm going to say, tissue that connects one verse to the next and all of a sudden you're going to jump these enormous gaps in time. And so it's sort of hard to read all the way through and understand.

We're going to read it one verse at a time and give explanation. We're going to hang all of these verses on three big central truths. If you take notes, the first truth is this, is that God knows and delivers His people. He knows and delivers His people. We're going to see this in the first three verses. In this Chapter, the curtain opens just where the curtain closed in Chapter 11. And that is in this seven year period, the Bible calls the

tribulation, a really terrible time of trouble. And during that time of trouble, there's this ruler, as I said, the antichrist is present. And this is what we read starting in verse one. "At that time shall arise, Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people and there shall be a time of trouble such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered. Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book."

And so the first thing I want you to notice here within this verse, right in the middle, is that this is going to be a time of trouble that is incomparable in human history. He says it's a time of trouble. And then for the comparison it says, "Such as never has been since there was a nation." Now the nation of Israel is at play here. This is who he's thinking, this is who it's written. He goes in Israel's history, this will come a time that will be more devastating to the people of Israel than in any other time in the history of the world. Which is pretty remarkable if you consider the history even within the scriptures where you go all the way back and there's a pharaoh and he talks to the midwives and he says, "When these Hebrew women give birth, if it's a little girl, let them live. And if it's a little boy then kill the baby." Infanticide is where they start. It doesn't work. And so he enslaves them and the pharaoh's enslaved the people of Israel for over 400 years.

That's a really difficult time. And then we fast forward in time to this section where Babylon comes invades Jerusalem, exile its people, destroys its temple, which was a terrible time. Next were the Persians and there was the seventh ruler of Persia. His name was Artaxerxes and he invades Jerusalem and on one single day he killed 70,000 Jews. And then you fast forward in time and the Romans come onto the scene and they devastate not only the Jewish people, but they even devastate the temple in AD 70. Then you fast forward through history, just through history and what you find is the conquest of the Muslims in the six hundreds and seven hundreds. And then you even fast forward and what you find is the conquest of Christians, so called Christians, the crusaders against the Jewish people. And you fast forward through time and you see all kinds of things such as the Holocaust and concentration camps, antisemitism and all of this. What he's saying here is this, is that this time of trouble that is in our future will be worse than all of those things for the people of Israel.

When Jesus comes to the earth, He begins speaking and one of the things He said was, turn in your Bible to Daniel Chapter 12. We know that because notice what it says in Mark and what He's going to do is expand the comparison. He says, "In those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning." And notice he doesn't say of the nation of Israel but of creation. In other words, Jesus expands the time of trouble, not just the difficulties of the Hebrew people, but of all people. You think about the difficulties that have happened on the earth such as a worldwide flood. You think about all the genocide, you think about all the wars, you think about all the hostility, all the violence, all the abuse, all the pain. And what He's saying is in this period of time that is in our future, it's going to be worse.

But notice what He says in verse one at that time. At that time He says, "Michael, the great prince, that's an archangel who has charged of your people at that time, your people are going to be delivered. They're going to be delivered." So we need to back up because some of you're like, "Michael? Angels? What is going on here?"

Where's he going? Never heard a sermon like this." I promise you it's going to get more interesting, okay? But if you back up in scripture, which you need to to understand what's happening, you back up to Genesis 1:1 where it says, "And in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He created us in His image for a relationship with Him." And then it says that He also created angels, at least three of which were called archangels. One was Gabriel, one was Michael and one was Lucifer.

And were told that Lucifer looked at the throne of God and he says, "I wish I had that chair." And so he makes a play in order to usurp the throne of heaven, which is immediately snuffed out by God Almighty who has all power. He's thrown down to the earth and he comes to the garden where the man and woman are living. And the Bible tells us that Satan came with intentions to destroy and to tempt people, to doubt God's characters goodness, His justice, His integrity. And he comes in, he says to them, "Did God really say...?" And he begins eroding and trying to create holes within their own confidence of God's word. And the Bible says that the man and woman sinned against God, broke fellowship with God, and suddenly there's this avalanche of brokenness that swept over humanity.

And in that moment, God makes a promise, an amazing promise and He says, "I want you to know what's going to happen. One day I'm going to send a rescuer. It's going to be the seed or the son. A special son is going to be born of the woman. And one day..." This is what He says. He says that Satan, the serpent is going to strike it as heel, but he is going to crush the serpent's head. And so the problem of sin for all humanity will be solved by a war between this serpent, which is Satan and between this special son who is the promise Christ and the son is going to be victorious. You fast forward just a couple chapters from here and what happens is God comes to a man named Abraham. He's worshiping rocks. And so it's very clear that God doesn't look down and go, "Wow, there's a righteous person."

And in fact He says, "It's not because he righteousness, not because that you're meritorious in any way. It's not because you're big or significant or anything like that. It's because I'm setting My grace on you to show the world My power in grace. I will use and choose anyone." And what the Bible says, He says, "I'm making a promise that my special son that I promised before, He's going to come to you, your line." And ever since that time, Satan has set his targets upon the Jewish people. And ever since that time, the Archangel Michael has been deployed and charged with the task of protecting them. You find any anti-Semitism, and what this means is that it has evil origins. They will survive. And to be very clear, because I recognize there's a lot of people in the room, it's not because of the righteousness of the people of Israel. It's not because of their size or their strength or their integrity, it has nothing to do with them. It's because God Almighty made a promise to save the world through them and Satan wants to thwart the purposes of God.

And so there is a war that will not stop until this time of trouble is complete. We find at the end of the book, in the book of Revelation Chapter 12, we find a woman who's symbolic of Israel. She has a son who's symbolic of Christ and there's this dragon in the book of Revelation who's symbolic of Satan and then Michael rises, come down and they war against Satan. He delivers God's people. He tosses Satan down to the ground and he rages for three and a half years. Now the question is, who is delivered? He says, "At that time, your people

will be delivered.” Who is that people who is going to be delivered? Then He tells us, “Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.” This book is sometimes called the Book of Life or the Lamb’s Book of Life. And this book is where God writes the names of every single person who has put their faith and trust in His special Son.

What will this special Son, the Christ, deliver us from? And that’s verse two. “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” And so what’s happened here is this, in a blink of an eye from verse one to verse two, he’s moved from a deliverance in a three and a half year gap, a window of this tribulation in time, all the way to the deliverance of people from everlasting shame and contempt, rescuing them and to give them everlasting life. He’s moved away from a time of trouble and he’s moved to eternal time, everlasting time. Sometimes it’s hard for us to imagine the idea of everlasting because it means, last forever. You will last forever, not on this earth, but you will live forever. When you were created in the image of an eternal God, you will your soul, you will live forever.

And if you can imagine forever, which I know it’s really hard to do so, but you can imagine a really, really long rope that it never, ever ends. And I realize this rope ends, okay, so it’s not a great illustration. It’s going to end. It ends right there. I can see it, okay? But if you can imagine billions of years from now, this is where you’re at and you start backing up in time, backing up thousands of years, thousands of years, thousands of years, thousands of years. And sometimes it’s not and you just keep backing up thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of years, and all of a sudden where you get to is you’re sitting in this room today.

This red represents your life on the earth and mine as well. This is when we are born on this earth. This is when we die on this earth and then we will continue to live forever and ever and ever and ever. And what the Bible says is, the condition, the destination of your eternal existence is dependent solely upon how you live in this amount of time and specifically how you respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. To hear about Christ and to respond in favor of or against Him becomes the pivot point for the rest of your existence forever. And those who reject Him receive the due penalty of our sin, which is everlasting shame and contempt. And everyone who puts their faith in Christ receives everlasting life. He’s talking about the resurrection of the dead.

And in the book of Revelation, we get a picture of this day when all of this will actually happen. John says, “I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. I saw the dead, great and small standing before the throne. So let me just pause right here by saying this, when we die, our body goes into the ground and our spirit immediately goes, for those of us who have faith in Christ, immediately into His presence to be absent from the body, to be present with the Lord. And yet your body doesn’t go there yet, but there’s coming a day at the end of the sequence when Jesus Christ comes to the earth and there is a bodily resurrection of every single person who has ever lived on the earth. A reconnection of body and soul. And then it says this, another book was opened, which is the Book of life.

This is the book that contains all the names of people who have put their faith in Christ. And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. A modern sensibilities tend to ask one dominant question, "Would a loving God ever actually send people to hell?" Yes. And we know it's yes, not because of my authority, but because He says yes. And it's not because of a lack of love. I know that this shakes the modern sensibilities of a generation today who suppress the truth of God's holiness and who define truth as whatever we agree with. But truth is not what we agree with. Truth is what God says whether we with it or like it or not. He is the everlasting judge of all the earth and modern sensibilities have suppressed the truth of His perfect blazing, brilliant holiness.

And so we imagine that God on this ladder with rungs of morality is just a rung or two above us. He's perfect in every way. So much so that when we're told that we all stand before God Almighty in Romans chapter two, when humanity, this includes you and me. When we see God Almighty, when we see His holiness, it's going to reflect upon our sinfulness. And in that moment there will not be a single voice that opens in defense of themselves to justify their behavior or their place in heaven and hell. We will all be silent before Him who is holy. When people ask the question, "Could a loving God actually send people to hell?" Let me ask you a question. Could a just God ever send sinners to heaven?

You would all hate an unjust judge like that. We would all determine that He was unjust. If there was an actual judge and he heard a trial, one of your loved ones, their life was snuffed out by another human being and this judge acquits someone that He knows is guilty, sets them free, you would say it's a terrible judge. How in the world is God Almighty in His perfection ever going to allow any sinner into heaven if He's just and stay just? And the answer the Bible gives us is this, is that God in His vast and generous love for humanity provided a way, not just for salvation but for sinful people to become righteous. And this is what the gospel is all about. This is what the entire New Testament is about. It can be summarized in three verses in Romans Chapter three, and this is what He says.

He says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace, as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood to be received by faith." I know it's a lot of words, so let me break them down. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Each one of us in our sin have created a debt before a holy God that we do not have the moral capital to be able to pay. And so God in His grace to us, He put forward Christ Jesus, His Son as a propitiation. That means substitutionary sacrifice.

It means someone else dying in your place, taking your penalty for you. And the Bible says this, is that when we receive Christ by faith, when we say, "I am not going to try to save myself because I can't, but I'm putting all of my faith and trust in Jesus Christ who live without sin, who died for my sin and who rose again." What happens is, His death on the cross becomes the redemption payment to remove that debt from us. And not only that, but to justify us. Now what does justification mean? It's different than forgiveness. Jesus came to the earth and He says, "You therefore, in order to get to heaven, you must be perfect, as My heavenly Father

is perfect.” That’s the requirements to go to heaven. You have to be perfect, not forgiven. Forgiven takes a dirty bucket of water and just empties it. Moral neutrality is not sufficient to enter heaven. You have to have perfect righteousness in the bucket. Now how are you going to get that?

Is that Christ Jesus, when he rose from the dead, He said, you have not lived as you ought, but I have. And if you’ll place your faith and trust in me, then all you deserve and your sin will fall upon me on the cross and all that I deserve in my righteousness will be added to your account and will be given to you forever and ever.” This is how sinners are made righteous. This is how a just judge sends people to heaven in His love. He first makes us righteous. This is the gospel. This is what we are delivered from and to. So what we find here is tremendous clarity, not all about our origin and our destiny, eternal heaven or hell. The verse three says, “What is the life purpose? What becomes of the life purpose for those who actually put their faith in Christ?”

And He says, “And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” Our calling and purpose in life and all the complexities and twists and turns is this, I created you and I’m going to take you to heaven. I’m making you righteous and in all of the mess in the middle, here’s your life calling. No matter what you’re doing, no matter what occupation, no matter what relationship you’re in, it’s this, it’s the shine like a star and it’s to open your mouth to share the gospel so that people who are bound for eternal contempt can hear the good news, turn away from their sin, turn to righteousness and receive everlasting life. He knows and He delivers His people.

The second big truth we find here is that God knows and appoints the times. God reveals the times. He knows the times. He appoints the times. He destines the ends of the times and he reveals all these things to us in order to give us hope. So look at what it says in verse four, “But you Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase.” In other words, what He says is this, “Daniel, this is all you’re getting. Put down your pen.” When he says seal it up, that doesn’t mean keep it hidden. Literally means preserve it so that it can last till the very end. There’s a lot of people, I’d say a lot of people, there’s some people who look at the second half of this verse and they say, “Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase.”

And they view this as two signs of the end of time, is that in the end, when the end is near, is that we’ll be able to travel to and fro, we’ll be able to get to India in a day and a half. And not only that, there’ll be an explosion of information that people have access to, unlike any other time in the world. And although those things are true and it sounds fun to talk about, the fact is I don’t think that’s what he’s saying. I think what He’s saying is this is that many people during this time of trouble are going to be looking for answers running around, looking for some rationale. How long is this going to last? There’s so much chaos because Daniel, the book of Daniel has been preserved. It’s going to provide a light for people to be able to understand.

It’s going to be around even then. Well then all of a sudden we get to verse five and six and he says, “And then I, Daniel looked and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the

stream. Someone said to the man clothed then linen who is above the waters of the stream, 'How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?'” And so what we find here, I believe, is two different angels. We’ve seen angels throughout these last six chapters coming to explain these things.

And here in his vision he looks and he sees one angel on one side, one angel on the other. And they’re asking a question that is, “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders? How long is this time of trouble? Is it going to last?” But they’re asking somebody and this somebody is clothed in linen, a man clothed in linen. He just kind of appears. The last time this man clothed in linen appears was in Daniel chapter 10 and there what I sought to teach and show is that this is actually the pre-existent or the pre incarnate Christ, meaning Christ is eternal. He’s been around forever. We celebrate Christmas when He took on flesh, but even before he took on flesh, He would make appearances in the Old Testament. I believe that’s who this is. I’m not certain about that, but I believe that’s who it is.

And notice what he says in verse seven. He says in response, “And I heard the man clothed in linen who is above the waters of the stream and he raised his right hand...” When you go to court, you raise your right hand in order to do what? To promise to tell the truth. And here this person en clothed in linen, he raises his right hand and then he raises his left hand and he swears by Him who lives forever. That’s God almighty, that it will be for a time, times and half a time. We’ve looked at this, that’s three and a half years. A time is one year, times is two years and half a time is six months. And then notice what he says at the end of verse seven. He says, “And that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end, all these things would be finished.” Three and a half years.

We’ve seen this in a number of forms in seven different places in the Bible. Sometimes it’s called 42 months, sometimes it’s 1,260 days, which in the Jewish calendar, 30 days per month is exactly 42 months or three and a half years. And what we’ve seen over the last many months as we looked at these last six chapters of Daniel that’s forecasting the times of the end, we’ve seen that there will come at the very end, a seven year block of time called the tribulation, and there a ruler who is antithetical to Christ will arise. In the first three and a half years he’s going to start small and he’s going to grow in power and influence. He’s going to solve problems and therefore the world is going to give him its problems.

He’s going to issue world peace national covenants. He’s going to help, I believe, rebuild the temple. That might happen just before then. And he’s also going to do signs and wonders that we’re told, are empowered by Satan himself. And then in the middle of that seven years, right in the middle, three and a half years this happens. What we’re told is that he makes war on the saints. We’re told that he’s going to desecrate the temple by setting up his own image in the holy of hollies of that temple that was rebuilt. He’s going to demand worldwide worship and he’s going to demand that everybody take a mark upon their own physical body in order to function in his economy.

But I want you to see in this last point is that instead of thwarting God’s purposes, many people, because they

have nowhere else to look, are going to put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ in this time. And then Christ is going to come again. He's going to divinely defeat evil and then he's going to reign forever and ever and ever and it will be finished. The last point I want you to see is this, is that God makes known our calling until the end. Many of you like me, take great comfort when you read all this and you're like, "Now what am I going to do with that tomorrow?" Like, "Okay, that's all great, but I'm just trying to stay afloat in this relationship, this marriage, this job. How am I supposed to take hope? What am I supposed to do with all of this?" And you're in really good company because Daniel asked the same thing.

He's like, "What now? I'm just retired. Do I go collect something? What am I supposed to do with the rest of my life now that I know all of these amazing things?" And so notice what he says in verses eight and nine. "And I heard, but I did not understand and then I said, 'Oh my Lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?' And He said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.'" In other words, "Daniel, I have given you all the vision I've given you enough to be faithful with. I've told you about the end. I've told you about the final ruler. I've told you about the final war. I've told you about everlasting life. I've told you about everlasting contempt. I've told you about Christ who's coming again. I've told you all these things. You have enough, even in the confusion of it, to be faithful today to what you know is true from God's word. Be faithful, go your way, live faithfully and it will be made clearer at the end."

Verse 10, what's going to happen? Even during this time, He jumps back into the very end and He says, "Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand. But those who are wise shall understand. Not only today but even during this time of trouble." It says here that people are going to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and respond. And you notice what it says here is that some people are going to respond by purifying themselves, which means they're going to put their faith in Christ and receive forgiveness and His righteousness and other people are going to become more emblazoned in their wickedness. In other words, the closer we get to the time, not only in our life, and culture, but all cultures, there will be a more distinguishable line between those who are seeking to trust in Christ and walk in godliness and those who are choosing wickedness. The line will be clearer.

But not only that, He says people are going to respond even during that time. Zachariah chapter 13 tells us during this time of trouble, a third of all of the inhabitants of the people of the Israelites are going to put their faith in Christ. In other words, Christ Almighty... This is the power of God. He's going to take Satan's worst and He's going to create a revival out of it. This is what He does. How is this going to happen? Well, the whys are going to shine and turn many to righteousness. That's how it's going to happen. The Book of Revelation talks about 144,000 evangelists and two specific evangelists who are actually martyred after they have preached the gospel and were told that they will be resurrected, which becomes a pretty amazing dramatic proof of the reliability of their message.

Verse 11 and 12, from that time that the regular burn offering is taken away in the abomination that makes

desolate set up, that's halfway in that seven years, the beginning of the last three and a half years, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. Now this is so interesting because I have no idea what it means. And so if you don't know, you'll be like, "Well, at least he doesn't know either." We don't know. Every other place it's 1,260 days. That's when Christ comes back. And so Daniel doesn't tell us why the extra 30 days and the rest of the Bible doesn't either. And it's not a typo, it's intentional.

Something's going to happen during that time. And as a result of that, a lot of people have tried to speculate and I think the best speculation that I've heard... I don't know if it's true or not, but the best that I've heard is this is that Christ comes back, 1,260 days and there is 30 days that is required in order to thresh and to separate those who will receive everlasting life and those who will receive everlasting contempt. And then Daniel, without any warning, he gives us another number. Blessed is he awaits and arrives at the 1,335 days. Let me just... I have no idea. He adds another 45 days. But this is clearly a different kind of result. And the reason we know that is because whoever gets to this days, waits that long, they're going to be called blessed. And as a result of that, we know that these 45 days are an establishment of something that is good for the people who have inherited eternal life.

I believe, I have no idea exactly, but I think this is something to do with 45 days that Christ takes to reestablish His perfect kingdom that we get to live in forever and ever and ever. He ends in verse 13 and He says, "But go your way till the end and you shall rest and stand and you're allotted peace at the end of the days." In other words, go your way and don't waste your life. Don't waste your life in panic or fear or speculation. Shine like a star and turn many people to righteousness. And as you do, you can take hope that one day when you die that you too will arise and you will stand before Me and you're allotted rest. The good news is Jesus affirms for everyone who has put their faith in Him the same promise He says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have what? Eternal life."

Let me close with two things. First, as a church family, must be ready for the return of Christ. One of the ways you can be ready is you can know the signs of the time. Study Daniel, study Revelation, study Matthew 24. Know the signs of the times. Peter tells us one way to be ready is to pursue holiness, to go about activities that you hope Jesus finds you in if He arrived without telling you when He's coming. But the most important way for you to prepare yourself for the coming is to put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ by confessing your sin to Him, by believing in Him, confessing him as Lord of your life. I urge you, if you don't have a relationship with Him, would you trust Him now? And finally, the last application is this, is let's shine like a star and turn many to righteousness. I've noticed in life that many people get very confused as the kind of star we want to be. Everyone wants to be a star.

When you go and you see a firework show, have you ever noticed you always forget the stars? The reason is because these big shimmering burst of light, they're so bright and so much more seemingly powerful than the star. And then the problem happens. They go away and they turn to ash. And then you know what happens? You see the stars again. They didn't disappear. They just disappeared from your sight. And I think what

he's saying here when he talks about being a star is this, let me urge you to choose your stardom carefully. Only a fool would choose to be a firework that ends in ash. Shine like a star that's going to last forever. That people can look at and begin to navigate their life because of the consistency of your life.

Choose faithfulness, choose credibility. Choose a mission that's going to outlive your life. Jesus said to us, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you, go and make disciples, turn many to righteousness." Get on an airplane, go across the street, tell people the gospel. They don't know, but they need to know. Be a part of the mission that's going to outlive your life. And in the coming weeks and months, you're going to hear a lot of opportunities. For some it will be to actually plug in here at a deeper level where you can actually engage, where you can serve, where you can lead. But there's some that we're going to actually ask that you would ask the Lord, is it time for you to leave Providence? I don't know, that might sound weird.

The fact is, it's a little weird, because I love you and I have a hard time imagining saying that. But let me tell you something, God has not called us to be a holy huddle. He's called us to reach the world with a gospel. And that means some of us have to go and the rest of us have to pray and support and give. And so I'm going to present to you over the next several months, several opportunities. And one of them I want to present now. And that is, you know we've begun a partnership with New Hope Baptist Church here in Raleigh that it's been suffering, it's been struggling. We want to foster them. And part of the fostering is that we would actually invite some of us to take at least a year and to go to that church and to serve with your gifts and plug in, in the hope that church would once again, not just be revitalized as a church, but as a missionary people reaching people within our city.

And so in two weeks, the first Sunday in August, there's going to be an informational meeting. And all I'm asking you to do is, would you just pray? This will not be the only opportunity, I promise you, to engage, but this is one, and it just happens to be first. And so I urge you, no matter what God [inaudible 00:42:44] your life, shine like a star. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we bow before You and thank You God for the book of Daniel. Thank you for Your grace and our life to give this to us, to preserve it for us, that we can grow in wisdom. And I pray for those who are considering putting their faith and trust in You, would You please incline their heart to believe?

And I pray, Father, that You would give us grace now as we sing, we want to sing to Jesus because we know it's Jesus who's the only one that makes this possible. Who's the one who can truly deliver us from eternal contempt, give us eternal life. So help us to sing to You in faith. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Would you stand and sing.

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