

Daniel 12 - How to Shine Like the Stars

The last study focused on the prophecies concerning a coming world leader and a time in history that you probably don't want to be around in. In brief, that's because the coming world leader is the Antichrist and, as we shall see in the first verse of chapter 12, the time is one of *'distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations.'*

It was the worst of times, it was the best of times...

Daniel 12:1,4 "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... 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."

Daniel 12 starts with a statement that is pretty full on. Daniel is told that the coming tribulation and rise of the Antichrist will lead to time of unequalled distress since the foundation of the world. This is especially true for the nation of Israel. And yet, we find something else rather remarkable – Israel has a protector of the highest order! Michael, the only archangel specified in scripture, is assigned to protect the nation of Israel! And though the time of distress and tribulation will be unequalled, yet all of Daniel's people, the Jews, whose name are written in the book will be delivered.

Daniel is then instructed to seal the words of the scroll. I believe this means that the words of this prophecy were to be protected until the time of the end when their words will become invaluable to those who are seeing the fulfilment of its words. Two other interesting prophecies are given in this passage:

1. Many will go here and there (or to and fro)
2. Knowledge will increase.

In its context the fulfilment of these words are likely to be related to the study of prophecy and the words of Daniel. A vast increase in knowledge of Bible prophecy has, and is, occurring. Many others take these as general prophecies of the travel and knowledge explosion that is occurring.

The shattering of the holy people's power

Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

(Dan 12:5-7 ESV)

In this part of the vision, Daniel again sees the 'man clothed in linen' (from Daniel chapter 10:5). This 'man' is likely to have been Christ. Another asks the man in linen how long it will be until the end of this time of unrivalled distress – A good question don't you think? The answer gives us the exact time frame for this period of tribulation but also a key requirement that must occur before the end can come. The length of this period is said to be 'a time, times, and half a time.' Now, if you have got a good memory you will remember that we have come across this before (see Dan 7:25, 9:27). It is a reference to the last 3 ½ years of Daniel's 70th 'seven'. But look also at the key requirement for this time period to end – 'when power of the holy people is shattered...' That mighty proud, resilient nation of Israel must be brought to its knees. They must be brought to the place where they will acknowledge their offense in rejecting Jesus as their Messiah and cry out for Him to return!

A couple more time periods just to complicate matters!

I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. 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. And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

(Dan 12:8-12 ESV)

Now Daniel doesn't fully understand what he is being told... But it doesn't matter. These prophecies are for the time of the end and those that are wise and live at that time will understand. Now two more time frames are thrown into the pot in these verses. You'll see above that from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and

the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. But then even slightly more cryptic is the next sentence that tells us that blessed is he who makes the 1,335 days! Let's try unraveling this!

The first period mentioned is in relation to desecration and judgment. It is telling us from the point of time when the Antichrist puts himself into the rebuilt temple and declares himself to be God until the time that judgment is complete will be 1,290 days. We know that Jesus returns after 1,260 days so there is a further 45 day period where the nations will be judged for their part in the persecution of God's people. The second time frame involves a blessing. Blessed is he that makes it to the 1335 days! This time period will have the same starting point but the extra 45 day period (from the 1290 days) will be the time until the Messianic Kingdom officially begins. Anyone who makes it to this time truly is blessed!

So how are we to live?

Daniel 12:13 "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."

Daniel 12:2-3 "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."

I have left these three verses for last because I feel they help us focus on eternal matters the best. Verse 13 contains things that are true of all mankind and other things that are only true of some.

Things true of all	
We all go our own way	Everyone in this world chooses the way in which they will go. For some, that way is God's way. Daniel was one of these. He could be told to go his own way because his way was God's way! Others do not walk in God's way but choose a broader wider road.
We all come to an end	Again, all of mankind reaches its end. All die (even if we sometimes think that we are bullet proof) and come to the end in this life and it normally occurs quicker than we expect!
We will all rise	Everyone will rise from the dead. For some it is a resurrection unto life. For others it is a resurrection unto judgment.
Things only true of some	
We enter rest	Daniel was promised that at the end of his life he would enter into rest. That is also true of all those who are 'in Christ' and have found salvation through Jesus. But to those who did not walk in God's way 'there is no rest for the wicked' as the scripture says. They will only experience the consequences of judgment for a life lived in rebellion to the provision of salvation God made available in Christ. Scary proposition.
We receive an allotted inheritance	God's rewards and inheritance are for all those 'in Christ' but their fullness and measure is in accordance to our faithful work and dedication to God's calling in this life.

The importance of this life is shown in verse 2: *"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."* Firstly, note that there is a resurrection. Death is not the end. Though this body grows old and dies, our soul does not. The resurrection is a resurrection of the body. Now, at the resurrection some will be raised to everlasting life... yet others to everlasting contempt and shame. Their shame and punishment will last forever. That is the simple cold hard truth of the matter though it is hard to think about.

But note also the beauty of the next verse: *"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."* Those that walk in the ways of God and those who help others to find and walk that path shall shine!^[9] Forever! What a great promise and a great motivation to walk in those ways! What you do now impacts eternity. It impacts your rewards. It impacts your inheritance. The Bible says 'He who wins souls is wise'. They will be eternally grateful and you will be rewarded accordingly.