



*The Most High  
God rules over  
the kingdoms of  
the world and  
appoints anyone  
he desires to  
rule over them.*

*(Dan 5:21b NLT)*

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# The Deliverance and Eternal Destiny of the People of God (12:1-3)

*12:1 "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. <sup>2</sup> Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup> 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. (NIV)*



<sup>12:1</sup> *“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. (ESV)*

- There is no break in thought where this chapter division has been made – the first four verses of Daniel 12 are an integral part of the prophecy and therefore should not be disconnected from Chapter 11.
- These are the ***last words*** of the long prophecy, and they bring it to an appropriate climax.
- They tell what will happen “*at that time*,” emphasizing this by repetition.
- This expression connects the passage directly with verse 40 of the preceding Chapter, where the words “*at the time of the end*” occur.
- Similar words are repeated in verse 4, where we read, “*until the time of the end*”.
- I believe these phrases indicate that the events foretold here are events that occur during the last days of Jewish history prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, which I believe is referred to here as “*a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time*”.

<sup>12:1</sup> "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. (ESV)

- Some commentaries hold that “*Michael*” is one of the names of the Lord Jesus Christ and hence that this part of the prophecy was fulfilled by His first coming, but I’m not convinced this is the case.
- This prophecy makes several references to great angelic beings, where we are told that national destinies are in some way presided over, and shaped by, mighty angels; and that Michael is specifically tasked with caring for the interests of the people of God.
- Jude speaks of “*Michael the archangel*” as contending with the devil for the body of Moses (Jude 9); and in Revelation 12:7, “*Michael*” is again seen in conflict with the devil.

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- In Daniel there are three references to "*Michael*", all in this prophecy given by the angel (Gabriel?) who appeared to Daniel on the banks of the Tigris.
- The first reference to "*Michael*" is in Daniel 10:13, where the angel (Gabriel?) says that the prince of the kingdom of Persia had "*withstood*" him, but that "*Michael, one of the chief princes*", came to his aid.
- Again, in that same chapter (Daniel 10:20–21) we find these words: "*But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come... there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.*"
- There is no revelation of the precise part played by Michael, the great prince, in the affairs of God's people during the time which this part of the prophecy references (which I believe to be the beginning of New Testament times); after all, Michael is not mentioned by name in the Gospels or Acts.

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- But the New Testament period was a time of frequent angelic activity; and it is quite possible that Michael had a leading part in the events which were connected with the coming of Christ into the World.
- For example, we read that an *"angel of the Lord"* appeared several times to Joseph.
- An *"angel of the Lord"* came to the shepherds on Bethlehem's plain, announcing the birth of the Savior
- An *"angel of the Lord"* opened the prison doors, setting the apostles free (Acts 5:9), and again released Peter from the prison, into which he had been cast by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:7);



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- And it was an *"angel of the Lord"* that struck that king down while he sat on his throne because in that great public occasion, *"he did not give God the glory"* (Acts 12:23).
- Likewise, *"an angel"* came to Paul the time he was shipwrecked with God's message of deliverance (Acts 27:23).
- *If* this *"angel of the Lord"* was Michael, then perhaps there were **many** occasions when *"Michael"* did *"arise,"* on behalf of the people of God *"at that time."*

<sup>12:1</sup> "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*. (ESV)

- But especially at the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, which is referred to here as "*a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time*", there would undoubtedly have been need of intervention by those angels who "*excel in strength*" (Ps 103:20) .
- And it's likely that Michael did "*arise*" at that time for the deliverance of God's people, referred to here as "*everyone whose name shall be found written in the book*."
- The reference to believers as those whose names were "*written in the book*" first appears in the days of Moses (Exodus 32:32).
- Believers are described by this phrase a number of times in the New Testament as well (Philippians 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27)



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- The prediction of "*a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time*," is the last thing in the chain of national events revealed in this prophecy.
- It is an accurate description of what the Jewish nation went through as it came to its end with a time of tribulation, distress and sufferings beyond anything that the nation had experienced previously.
- In the introduction to his *Wars of the Jews*, Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes this period of unparalleled tribulation using similar words when he says:
  - *It had come to pass that our city Jerusalem had arrived at a higher degree of felicity than any other city under the Roman government, and yet at last fell into the sorest of calamities again. Accordingly it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were.*

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- This "*time of trouble*" is thought by most commentaries in our day (those of a "futurist" persuasion) to be a reference to a seven year of tribulation that they believe is yet future – occurring just prior to the second coming of Christ.
- But, in light of the chronological sequence of events described in Daniel 11-12, it seems likely that this "*time of trouble*" is a reference to the unparalleled suffering of the Jews that took place in the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 AD and the events leading up to that destruction.
- In fact, Jesus **cites** this verse when predicting the destruction of the temple in Matthew 24:21 where he says: "*For then there will be great tribulation [=“time of trouble”], such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now...*"

# Events Described in Daniel 11-12

Verses	Event and Approximate Time Period
11:2	<b>Xerxes I</b> (the “fourth king” from Cyrus) whose reign was <b>486-465 B.</b>
11:3	Alexander’s reign <b>336-323 B.C.</b> ; breakup of his empire immediately after his death in <b>323 B.C.</b>
11:4-6	Ptolemy I ( <b>323-285 B.C.</b> ), Seleucus I (approx. <b>311-281 B.C.</b> ), Antiochus II Theos ( <b>262-246 B.C.</b> ), Ptolemy II Philadelphus ( <b>285-246 B.C.</b> )
11:7-9	Berenice married ~ <b>252-246 B.C.</b> , then Laodice killing Berenice etc., Ptolemy III’s campaigns around <b>246-241 B.C.</b>
11:10-12	Seleucus III reign ~ <b>227-223 B.C.</b> , Antiochus III after that; Battle of Raphia in <b>217 B.C.</b>
11:13-19	Antiochus III (the Great) reign <b>223-187 B.C.</b> ; Battle of Magnesia ~ <b>190-189 B.C.</b> ; afterwards he dies in <b>187 B.C.</b>
11:20-25	Seleucus IV’s reign ( <b>187-176 B.C.</b> ), then his assassination. Antiochus IV comes to power (though not the rightful heir) in <b>175 B.C.</b>
11:32-35	Persecution of Jewish people, attempts to force worship of Greek gods; martyrs; uprising (Maccabean reaction); struggles; miraculous help; gradual weakening – roughly <b>168-165 B.C.</b> , leading to the Maccabean Revolt and the rededication of the temple in <b>164 B.C.</b>
11:36-45	The reign of Herod the Great <b>37 B.C. – 4 B.C</b>
12:1-13	The first advent of Christ 4 B.C – 30 A.D; Events leading up to the destruction of the temple in <b>70 A.D.</b>



12:2 "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. (ESV)

- Having referenced God's people as those "*whose name shall be found written in the book*" at the end of the previous verse, the angel here contrasts the destiny of that group with those whose names do **not** appear in the book.
- We are told here that "*many of those*" perhaps better translated "*multitudes*" (see the NIV) "*who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.*"
- "*Sleep*" is a figure of speech used frequently in the Bible to designate physical death (cf. John 11:11–14; Acts 7:60; 1 Thess 4:13; 1 Cor 15:51), as it does here.
- When the spirit of the believer leaves the body, there is no intermediate state; rather, the spirit goes directly into the presence of the Lord (cf. 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21–23).
- Likewise, when the spirit of an unbeliever departs, it goes immediately to a place of conscious torment (cf. Luke 16:22ff.).
- The reason for using "*sleep*" here as a metaphor for dying is that sleep is a temporary state from which we normally awake, and so the reader is prepared for the thought of resurrection.

12:2 “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.* (ESV)

- Two groups of resurrected persons with drastically different futures are represented in this verse.
- Jesus probably had this verse in mind in John 5:28-29 when he said: “*Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.*”
- Here we see that believers will rise to enjoy “*everlasting life*” in their new bodies.
- On the other hand, unbelievers will face “*shame*” and “*everlasting contempt.*”
- Note the fate of both groups is “*everlasting*”.
- This verse contains the most explicit reference in the OT to the resurrection of the individual, but other Old Testament passages teach this idea as well (cf. Job 19:26; Ps 17:15; Isa 26:19).

<sup>12:3</sup> *“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. (ESV)*

- In the New Testament age believers (*“those who are [spiritually] wise”* and *“those who turn many to righteousness”* will *“shine like the brightness of the sky above”* and *“like the stars forever and ever.”*
- The two parts of this verse contain parallel ideas.
- The reference here is to believers who are spiritually wise themselves and make others wise through their life and witness.
- Through words and deeds God’s children lead others to understand the call of the sovereign Lord upon their lives, a call that involves a life of holiness since God is holy.
- This verse is not talking about a special class of saints, but is describing something that characterizes the life of every true believer: those who live out their **own** faith and who, in turn, encourage and lead **others** to faith and righteousness.



12:3 *“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. (ESV)*

- Jesus cites this passage in Matt 13:43 where he declared that *“the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father”*.
- Just as stars display their beauty and glory in the sky, a bright (glorious) future and a great reward (which includes God’s blessings and great honor) awaits those who were wise enough to comprehend and obey spiritual truth and who led others to repent of their sins and live a righteous life.
- This blessed and glorious state will continue *“forever and ever”*
- In this present world, believers often are persecuted, misunderstood, misrepresented, and suffer economically because of their spiritual priorities, and are overlooked by the world.
- Yet someday things will be different.
- Those who follow Christ and put his kingdom first will be rewarded.

# The Final Command to Seal Up the Book (12:4)

*<sup>4</sup> 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.” (NIV)*

*12:4 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." (ESV)*

- Here Daniel is told to “*shut up the words and seal the book*”
- As we saw in 8:26 this admonition concerned the preservation of the document, not its being kept “secret” (NRSV).
- In the ancient Near East the custom was to “*seal*” an important document by impressing upon it the identifying marks of the parties involved and the recording scribe.
- A sealed text was not to be tampered with or changed.
- Then the original document was duplicated and placed (“*shut up*”) in a safe place where it could be preserved.
- An excellent illustration of this process is recorded in Jeremiah 32:9-12:
  - “*And I bought the field at Anathoth from Hanamel my cousin... I signed the deed, **sealed** it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. Then I took the **sealed** deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions and the open copy. And I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah... in the presence of all....*”



*12:4 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." (ESV)*

- The sealing of Jeremiah's property deed was not done to "hide" the contents or to keep them "secret" but to **preserve** the document.
- As a matter of fact, Jeremiah performed this transaction in the presence of his cousin and *"in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard"* (Jer 32:12).
- There also was an "unsealed copy" of the deed that presumably was open for inspection.
- Gabriel therefore was instructing Daniel to preserve *"the book"* for those who will live at *"the time of the end"* when the message will be needed.
- This future generation will undergo the horrors leading up to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD (*"time of trouble"*) and will need the precious promises contained in the Book of Daniel—that God will be victorious over the kingdoms of this world and that the suffering will last for only a brief time—to sustain them.

<sup>12:4</sup> 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.*" (ESV)

- Here we're told that at the end of the Jewish age "*many shall run to and fro.*"
- In a number of Old Testament passages (e.g., 2 Chr 16:9; Jer 5:1; Amos 8:12; Zech 4:10), this phrase is translated "to go here and there" in search of a person or thing, and that is the meaning here.
- The purpose of this search will be so that "*knowledge shall increase.*"
- The article appears with "*knowledge*" (lit., "the knowledge"), showing that a **particular kind** of "*knowledge*" was intended – the knowledge of when and how Daniel's message is to be fulfilled.
- As the time of fulfillment draws nearer, the "*wise*" will seek to comprehend these prophecies more precisely, and God will grant understanding ("*knowledge*") to them.

## Two More Angels Appear (12:5-7)

*12:5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. <sup>6</sup> One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" <sup>7</sup> The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."*



12:5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, *two others* stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. <sup>6</sup> *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?” (ESV)

- Next we’re told that “*two others*” (probably angels), standing on opposite banks of the Tigris River (cf. 10:4), suddenly appeared to Daniel.
- The speaker, who is introduced only by the phrase, “*and someone said*” could be one of the two angels standing by the river or perhaps the interpreting angel (Gabriel), since he has been the spokesman throughout the vision.
- At this point in the narrative “*the man clothed in linen*” (i.e., Christ - see 10:5) is reintroduced.
- He is described as standing in midair “*above the waters of the stream.*”
- Daniel was witness to a striking scene:
- Two angels were on either bank of the river, the interpreting angel evidently was still standing before him, and the Lord was exalted above them all.

12:5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. <sup>6</sup> 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*?” (ESV)

- “*someone*” now addresses a question to “*the man clothed in linen*.” <sup>1</sup>
- The question is not, How long will it be ***before these things take place***? but How long will they ***continue once they begin to occur***? <sup>1</sup>
- Such an understanding is confirmed by the reply given in the next verse. <sup>1</sup>
- “*wonders*” (“*astonishing things*”) will occur during this period. <sup>1</sup>
- These include the Roman-Jewish War and the Siege of Jerusalem from spring of AD 67 to the destruction of the Temple in September of 70, and the “*time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time*” <sup>2</sup>
- The angel’s question indicates that he was curious about these future events. <sup>1</sup>
- It is interesting to observe there are things that ***even angels*** do not know but desire to learn (cf. 1 Pet 1:12). <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Miller, Stephen R., Daniel, vol. 18, The New American Commentary (pp. 322–323)

<sup>2</sup> Rogers, Jay. *In The Days of These Kings: The Book of Daniel in Preterist Perspective* (p. 118).

<sup>12:7</sup> 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. (ESV)

- Next Daniel hears “*the man clothed in linen*” (Christ) as he responds to the angel’s question.
- We’re told that as “*the man clothed in linen*” began his response, “*he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever*”
- Raising the hand in an oath was the customary practice (cf. Gen 14:22; Deut 32:40; Rev 10:5–6), but raising **both** hands and swearing to keep the oath in the name of the eternal God (cf. Rev 10:5–6) gives the greatest possible assurance that the words spoken are true.



<sup>12:7</sup> 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. (ESV)

- In his oath he swears that “*the shattering of the power of the holy people*” would be for “*a time, times, and half a time*”.
- The phrase “*a time, times, and half a time*” reveals the duration of the period.
- As discussed earlier in 7:25, if we understand a “*time*” to mean a year, then “*a time, times, and half a time*” would be three-and-a-half years or 1,260 days (if each month has 30 days).
- During these three and one-half years, “*the power of the holy people*” will be “shattered”.
- The “*holy people*” in this context is a specific reference to Israel; therefore their “*shattering*” signifies that the nation will be utterly defeated by their enemies – in this case, the Roman army in 70 AD.

# Class Discussion Time

- In Daniel 12:1B-3 we have a description of true believers and their eternal destiny.
- We are told their names are found “*written in the book*”.
- We are told that one day after they die (“*sleep*”) they “*shall awake... to everlasting life*” in contrast to unbelievers who shall also be raised, but to “*shame and everlasting contempt*”.
- Believers are then described as those who “*are wise*” and those who “*shall shine like the brightness of the sky above*” and we are told believers are characterized as “*those who turn many to righteousness*”.
- What does this tell you about the central role that evangelism and ministering to others should play in the life of a true believer?

# Class Discussion Time

- What do you think of my identification of “*time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time*” mentioned in verse 12:1 as the events that occur during the last days of Jewish history prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD?
- What do you think of the opposing view taken by the majority of modern commentators, that this is instead a reference to a seven-year period of tribulation that they believe will occur just prior to Christ’s second coming?
- What do you see as the pros and cons of these two views?