

# The Glorious Hope

The Resurrection to Eternal Life

**Daniel 12:1** "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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>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.

<sup>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."

<sup>5</sup> 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?"

<sup>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.

<sup>8</sup> I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

<sup>9</sup> He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

<sup>13</sup> But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

(Daniel 12:1-13)

---

## Fear and Death

2020 is the craziest year in my lifetime, for lots of reasons. One of the most tragic is because of what it has done to human psychology, or perhaps, rather, what it has revealed about it. People are **fearful**. No. People are **terrified**. Many who are can't talk about this rationally. Many who aren't, won't. What are people so afraid of? I believe at the heart of it, they are afraid of **dying**.

Nothing represents this fear better than **the mask**. At first, people were angry about it. It took away our personal liberty, our rights over our bodies, and besides all this, we were told by the experts that they did no good. Of course, the latter changed very quickly, but so too did the global view of the

mask. Almost overnight, “mask shaming” became a thing. Some began narking on their neighbors to the police. Some started to shake, scream, grow violent towards anyone who wouldn’t wear a mask. It is now common to find people walking on [mountain trails](#) by themselves, absolutely no one around them, wearing a mask. The latest thing I’ve seen in my bike is when they see me coming, they instantly put their mask on for protection for our .05 second close-encounter. Why? Maybe some would say they are just respecting the law. Maybe some are trying to be polite and look out for others. I think a lot of people are simply [afraid of dying](#).

I can understand this response to the drumbeat that is all that we hear and see around us—from the media, the advertising, the television programming (turn it off), the politicians, your friends, your family, your co-workers, your bosses. Drumbeats are, after all, *supposed* to terrify you, when they are war-beats. That’s their purpose. Remember [Gandalf](#) reading from the last page of the Book of Mazabul while in the Mines of Moria? “[They have taken the bridge and the Second Hall. We have barred the gates but cannot hold them for long. The ground shakes...drums, drums in the deep. We cannot get out. The shadow moves in the dark. We cannot get out. They are coming.](#)” Pípen hears the words and

stammers backwards, knocking a piece of armor down a well, making a tremendous clamor. Suddenly, *they* hear the same drums. The orcs are coming. This is a metaphor of the feelings that have consumed so many people in 2020. The disease, corona, pandemic. Death is upon us all!!!

Daniel was a man who had been **obsessing about the future too**. But for different reasons. He had been seeing these **visions** of what God was going to do with the nations and with his own people. **I do not think I would say that Daniel was fearful**. He was **anxious** and **alarmed** (**Dan 7:15**). He was **appalled** (**8:27**). His **color changed** (**7:28**). He **lay sick** for some days (**8:27**). He **mourned** (**10:2**). He **prayed** and **fasted** and begged God for mercy (**9:3; 10:2**). But the only time he grew frightened was in the presence of the holy ones of heaven (**8:17; 10:7ff.**).

Nevertheless, **Daniel is in distress** as he is thinking about the future. By the time we come to Daniel 12, the last chapter of the book, the news he receives becomes **the only news I know of that can** (and should) **ease all our alarms and fears** about death. It did his. This news ends the book. This news ends all of history as we know it. It is news that needs to be spread far and wide, especially in Christ's church,

which is full of the same kinds of fearful people we see in the world. And this should not and must not be.

Other than the Trinity itself, this news is **the most important of all the doctrines** found in the Scripture. It is news that many people do not believe. They think it to be absurd. In fact, the passage itself tells us that's what to expect. It calls them "**the wicked**" who will not understand (**Dan 12:10**). It is a wicked thing to deny this news because the news is inherently the most moral and good news in the world. These wicked people were **on full display in the days of Jesus**.

Matthew tells us of a group of them "**The Sadducees came to him ... and they asked him a question ...**" (**Mt 22:23**). The question was a trap. They were wicked. The question concerned **the resurrection of the dead**. That same verse tells us explicitly that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. That's our news! They pretended to believe in but didn't.

Jesus could have gone to many places in the OT to prove the doctrine. There are lots of them.<sup>1</sup> He went to one that is

---

<sup>1</sup> Two good short summaries which include the following passages (**Gen 22:4-13**, cf. **Heb 11:19**; **Ps 16:10**, cf. **Acts 2:24-29**; **Ps 22:22-31**; **49:10**; **71:20**; **Isa 26:19**; **53:10-11**; **Ezek 37:7-10**; **Hosea 6:1-2**; **Jonah 1:17**; and of course **Daniel 12:2-3, 13**) are, **Mitch Chase**, "Does the Old Testament Teach Resurrection Hope," **TGC** (March 31, 2018), <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/old-testament-teach-resurrection-hope/>; and

rather obscure, citing **Exodus 3:6** where the Angel of the LORD tells Moses, “**I am the God of Abraham...**” meaning that **Abraham is not dead, but alive!** On the opposite end of the obscurity-clarity spectrum has to be Daniel 12. It is perhaps the clearest declaration of resurrection found anywhere in the OT. Indeed, I believe **several NT passages come straight from it.** As we are going to see, this explanation of resurrection is given to Daniel in order to set his thinking about the future on the best possible path. It calms his anxiety; it relieves fears; it answers his questions; it allows him to go his way until the end. There is no more important message we can talk about than this.

## Daniel 12: Structure and Context

For the last time, **let’s get our bearings** with the passage. We’ll do this on several levels. First, ch. 12 itself can be **outlined simply** in something like **two parts**:

1. The Hope of Glory (12:1–4)
2. Living with Unanswered Questions (12:5–13)<sup>2</sup>

---

**Herald Gandi**, “The Resurrection: ‘According to the Scriptures,’” *The Master’s Seminary* (July 31, 2018), <https://blog.tms.edu/resurrection-according-to-scriptures>.

<sup>2</sup> **Sinclair B. Ferguson** and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Daniel*, vol. 21, The Preacher’s Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1988), 223.

This is helpful for two things. It gets us to understand that the chapter will tell us about a future eternal hope, something Daniel and everyone else needs in a dark world of certain warfare and uncertain outcomes of the future. And, it keeps us humble, understanding again that when dealing with future questions, some things just have to be accepted even if they are not fully understood. Nevertheless, we will try to understand as best we can what the chapter is saying.

But again, as we have seen throughout the entire book, this chapter can also be outlined as a chiasm.

- A. Resurrection (“stand” = *'amad*) and “time (*eth*) of trouble” (12:1-2)
- B. The wise (*sakal*) understand (12:3a)
- C. Righteous shine like the stars forever (12:3b)
- D. “Shut up” (*satham*) the words (*dabar*) to the “time of the end” (*et qes*) (4)
- E. The angel’s question about the end of the wonders (5-6)
- F. Angel above the waters: A time, times, and half a time (7)**
- E<sup>1</sup>. Daniel’s question about the outcome of these things (8)
- D<sup>1</sup>. The words (*dabar*) “shut up” (*satham*) to the “time of the end” (*et qes*) (9)
- C<sup>1</sup>. Many are purified and white and refined (10a)
- B<sup>1</sup>. The wicked and the wise (*sakal*) (10b)
- A<sup>1</sup>. “Time” (*eth*) of trouble and resurrection (“stand” = *'amad*) (11-13)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Two independent but similar chiasms (they differ only slightly because they start in different places) are *Biblical chiasm Exchange* (Nov 4, 2015), <https://www.chiasmusxchange.com/2015/11/04/daniel-121-13/>; Christine Miller, “Daniel 11

This gives you a **center**, which is something we've seen on my than one occasion in this book, with a **vision of Christ** speaking above the waters. It is bookended by the idea of **trouble and resurrection**. As a single unit of thought, it also shows that every chapter in our book is a coherent whole.

But there is one more structure we need to remember, and this one will help us understand why Daniel ends the way it does. Recall that the book begins in **Hebrew**, but then in chs. 2-7 is written in **Aramaic**. Chs. 8-12 **return to Hebrew**. This has created all kinds of interesting parallel chapters, but what it does here is connect ch. 12 back to ch. 1.



and 12,” *A Little Perspective* (Oct 29, 2015), <https://www.alittleperspective.com/daniel-11-and-12/>.

There are two ways I want you to think about this connection. They are 1. **type** and 2. **antitype**. On the level of the **type**, there is **Daniel**. This man was carried away out of Israel into Babylon as the temple was **sieged** and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The book ends with the **temple** being sieged again, but with Daniel being told by God, “**Go your own way, Daniel**” (**Dan 12:9**). Going his own way is put in typological language. “**You shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place**” (**13**), in the last verse of the book.

How is that typological? He does this “**at the end of the days**” (**13**). Those are literally the last words of the book. This parallels what he was told in **vs. 9**, “**Go your way ... for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.**” The time of the end takes us past Daniel’s own life and death into the distant future. Hence, Daniel’s being allowed to go home as a very old man becomes **a type of the great resurrection of the dead** with which book ends, the resurrection that we must all learn to believe in and hope for, because it is the Great Hope of all hopes.

**James Hamilton** puts it slightly different. As he outlines the chiasm, he has ch. 1 beginning with “**Exile to the unclean realm of the dead**” (that is, to Babylon). Ch. 12 ends with the return from exile and the *resurrection* from the dead.

Again, that's **type and antitype**. He concludes, "This chiastic structure enables us to put the message of Daniel into one sentence: *'Daniel encourages the faithful by showing them that though Israel was exiled from the land of promise, they [the faithful] will be restored to the realm of life at the resurrection of the dead, when the four kingdoms are followed by the kingdom of God, so the people of God can trust him and persevere through persecution until God humbles proud human kings, gives everlasting dominion to the son of man, and the saints reign with him'*" [italics mine].<sup>4</sup> This is what we want to look at now.

## Center: The Man Above the Waters (12:7)

The way I want to unfold this is by going to the chiasm of the chapter and **beginning in the middle**. Then, we will **work our way outwards** to the first and last verses of Daniel 12. In doing this, we **begin with the most important thing**—the vision of "**the man clothed in linen**" (**Dan 12:7**). This does not refer to Gabriel (or whatever angel has just been speaking). For this is the man "**above the waters of the stream**." We've seen him before (**8:16**). He's the one who has terrified Daniel!

---

<sup>4</sup> **James M. Hamilton Jr.**, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 32, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL; England: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 83.

He does something important. “He raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever...” You may be thinking, if this is Christ, why would he swear by God? This is why it is so important to understand the **Two Powers** in heaven, the Two Yahweh’s in Scripture. This is Trinitarian language. One is in heaven; one is on earth. As it says, “*Yahweh* rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire *from Yahweh* out of heaven” (**Gen 19:24**).

Our verse here is very similar to something Moses sings about. The God of gods says, “I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever...” (**Dt 32:40**). Likewise, **Revelation 10:5-6**, which is also a vision of Christ, is almost identical to Daniel. “The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever.” This is Christ swearing to his Father. But the Two are One! Thus Hebrews says, “For when God [that is Christ] made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself...” (**Heb 6:13**). This is the center of Daniel 12, then, because God himself is swearing and speaking to Daniel about future things.

## E. / E<sup>1</sup>. Two Questions about the End (12:5-6, 8)

“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 12:7). You may be saying, “What does that mean?” If so, you are like Daniel. “I heard, but I did not understand” (8). Daniel is confused. The next thing he says, a question, isn’t much more helpful. “Then I said, ‘O my Lord, what shall be the outcome [or the end] of these things?’” As someone has put the problem, why would he ask this when “he has already been told it repeatedly.”<sup>5</sup> Jerome gives us a good explanation. Daniel is simply asking for further information. The “end” in Daniel is never the utter cessation of history, so something will happen even after the resurrection. As we will see, the angel’s response makes clear that no further information is forthcoming.<sup>6</sup> And that really needs to keep us humble when thinking about future things.

Now, if you go back to vv. 5-6 you see the context for Christ’s appearance. “Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold,

---

<sup>5</sup> Walter F. Adeney and R. H. Charles, eds., *The Book of Daniel: Notes*, The New-Century Bible (New York; Edinburgh: Henry Frowde; T. C. & E. C. Jack; Oxford University Press, n.d.), 143.

<sup>6</sup> Jerome in John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 400.

two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream” (5). These “two others” refer to two angels. Why does Christ appear? Because a parallel question to Daniel’s is asked by an angel. “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’” (6). So, it was a question of “how long” before all of the long vision from 11:2-12:3 comes to its fulfillment that prompts the answer, “A time, times, and half a time.”

## **D. / D<sup>1</sup>. The End of these Wonders, the Time of the End (12:4, 9)**

What does a time, times, and half a time mean? Though we’ve seen it before (7:25), Daniel does not understand, but rather than explain it, the Lord says, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end” (12:9). This parallels vs. 4, “But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.” And this is curiously described as a time when, “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” This whole verse is rather cryptic, which is ironic, because the reality it is, if you know and believe God’s word, it isn’t cryptic at all.

To seal up a book does not mean that it is a mystery until you get closer to the end when it can be figured out. That's how many people take it and then they go to newspapers and say, "Aha! God is unsealing the meaning because of what happened this week." Rather, sealing up a document was a way of keeping people from tampering with it so that it would be preserved (see Jer 32:9-12).<sup>7</sup> Sealing it up therefore means it shall not change. It is fixed.

As for running to and fro with knowledge increasing, there are two parts to this statement, both of which seem to be echoed in other parts of the Bible. You can view these negatively or positively. Negatively, it reminds us of Amos 8:12, "They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it." That is, people will scurry about desperately trying to find knowledge, hope, clarity about the future, but in their own power. They will utterly fail in their attempt.

Positively, people can find "the word of the LORD" which is as near as Christ (Rom 10:8), even as we have seen

---

<sup>7</sup> "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. The original document was duplicated and placed ("closed up") in a safe place where it could be preserved" (Miller, Daniel, 320).

here. The prediction in Isaiah is “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11:9). Jesus talks about how “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14).<sup>8</sup> They are talking about the same thing: the gospel. You hear that gospel which comes from God’s word. Then, you believe what is said or you don’t. You trust God or you don’t. You find your only hope in him or you don’t.

## **C/B. & C<sup>1</sup>/B<sup>1</sup>. The Wicked and the Wise (12:3, 10)**

This negative and positive running to and fro and knowledge increasing corresponds to the wicked and wise in vv. 3 and 10. These are the people who follow and trust in Christ or who do not, who either believe in the resurrection or do not, who either believe in God’s sovereignty over history or do not. Vs. 3 discusses the wise. “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

---

<sup>8</sup> The end he has in mind is 70 AD at the moment he says this. But surely the same idea continues until the end of the resurrection, as he seems to be getting this language from Daniel 12!

and ever.” “Star” language is the language of the sons of God that Paul uses when he speaks of Christians.

We’ve seen one like a *son of the gods* in the fiery furnace (**Dan 3:25**). These sons of the gods are called *watchers* in the next chapter (**4:13, 23**). The sons of God are heavenly beings. In **Job 38:7** they are called “stars.” That’s the language used here. Paul takes this idea and applies it to those who have been united to Christ by his Spirit through faith. “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (**Rom 8:14**). He takes it a step further and says that the whole creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed (**19**). This refers to all the elect being saved by Jesus Christ and then them reclaiming their inheritance back after the original son of God, Adam (**Luke 3:38**) forsook it.

This is that mirror between heaven and earth that we spoke about in chs. 10-11. Believers mirror the heavenly sons of God in that they rule up there while we rule will the earth in the full dominion we were given in the Garden of Eden. Ruling and dominion, turning many to the Son, to righteousness is the meaning of shining like the brightness of the sky, like the stars forever and ever. That “forever”

language takes us to the resurrection, which we will look at more closely in a moment.

Vs. 10 parallels vs. 3. Now the “wise” are, “Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined” (10a). Sinclair Ferguson summarizes the most obvious truth.

The important thing for Daniel to know is that the Lord’s people will be purified and refined through these events; whereas those committed to the destruction of God’s influence will harden their hearts even more and remain in their wickedness (v. 10). Despite their worldly wisdom, they will not understand God’s ways. In contrast, for all the apparent confusions and contradictions of history, the wise—those who know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—will understand (Prov. 9:10). They know that if God is for them, nothing can ultimately be against them. He works everything together for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). The assurance that God has a purpose, that He uses the sufferings of His people to fulfill it, is all we need to know in order to trust Him fully.”<sup>9</sup>

The wicked are added at the end of the verse. “But the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall

---

<sup>9</sup> Ferguson, 229.

understand, but those who are wise shall understand.” Ah, this takes us back to many running to and for and knowledge increasing. The wicked increasing in knowledge but do not understand because it is knowledge rooted not in truth but their imagination. This all takes us to our last pairing and the last thing to think about in the book of Daniel.

## **A. & A<sup>1</sup>. The Times of Trouble and Resurrection (12:1-2, 11-13)**

### *The Times of Trouble*

Vv. 1-2 and 11-13 deal with two parallel subjects. These are “a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time” (12:1) which is also called “everlasting contempt in vs. 2 and “everlasting life” or the hope of resurrection. We will look at the trouble first. While the language makes it seem as if it must refer to the end of all things, the prophets often use hyperbolic and cosmic language to describe things like the exile, the destruction of Jerusalem, the comic consequences of Christ’s First Coming, and 70 AD. I suggested last time that this time of trouble is typological, having fulfillments in our past but also in our

future to come. Believing that some of it is in our future comes partly because of the resurrection language that is associated with it.

What is this time of trouble? We need to look at the specific time frame associated with it in vs. 11 and, probably, also verse 12. “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” (11-12). The first thing to notice is the “abomination that makes desolate.” This parallels our “time of trouble,” but that specific language was also used back in 11:31.

When we looked at that, I advocated that it also had multiple fulfillments, but that this differed as a prophecy from the earlier “desolation” of Daniel 9:26-27, which predicted the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, where sin would be atoned.

Dan 9:27	Dan 11:31	Dan 12:10
“on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate”	“the abomination that makes desolate”	“the abomination that makes desolate”
Künap šiqqûcîm müšömëm	haššiqqûc müšômëm	šiqqûc šömëm

Chapter 11 had an initial typological fulfillment in Antiochus Epiphanes who placed an altar of Zeus in God's holy temple and sacrificed a pig on it. But Jesus predicted the destruction of the Herod's Temple in 70 AD using the same language. "When you see the abomination of desolation spoken by the prophet Daniel..." (Matt 24:15). Whether or not there is some kind of future fulfillment of this, I am not certain.

The bigger question for now is does ch. 12's abomination that makes desolate refer to the same thing as chapter 11, chapter 9, or something else entirely? As with Daniel 11:36-12:3, we have many different interpretations. Liberals see it referring to ch. 11 and Antiochus' desecration of the temple, which is quite imprecise, and therefore they use this to say that Daniel was wrong in his prophecy. Preterists see it as referring to the 3 ½ years prior to the desecration of the temple by the Romans. They give some impressive dates. Futurists of various stripes see it in our own future. I want to take you on a journey through what I think these numbers represent.

The key to how we should interpret it is found in taking a detour into the specific time frames. In ch. 12, we have three of them: a time, times, and half a time (7), 1,290 days

(11), and 1,335 days (12). To what do these refer? A first thing to notice is that the length of the two numbers bears a **striking resemblance** to something we saw earlier in the visions. That is, half a week.

**Daniel 9:27**, which uses the same word “desolate” (*shamem*), is related to these numbers. “**And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator**” (**Dan 9:27**). The prophecy is the last of Daniel’s famous “70 weeks” (24). We saw that these “weeks” were 70 periods of seven years each (490 years). The “strong covenant” and hence beginning of the last week began **during Jesus’ earthly ministry**. For **three and a half years (or half of the week)** he walked among us, ministering that covenant. Then, at the end of that, he died on the cross where he “**put an end to sacrifice and offering.**” Curiously, **Dan 12:11** refers to **offerings** as well. “**And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up...**” The ideas of offering being removed and some kind of abominable desolation suggest that **Daniel 12:11 is**

parallel to Daniel 9:27, not 11:31. The time frame is also similar, as 1,290 days is roughly 3 ½ years.

We've also seen the “time, times, and half a time” (Dan 12:7) before. “He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time” (Dan 7:25). Indeed, this is also a period of 3 ½ as a time is one, times is two, and half a time is half, making  $(1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} =) 3 \frac{1}{2}$ .

We find 3 ½ being used prophetically in only one other book of the Bible. This is Revelation. “But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for *a time, and times, and half a time*” (Rev 12:14). This has a parallel earlier in the chapter when it says that “the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days” (Rev 12:6). This number is very close to the two at the end of Daniel 12, but it is not identical.

There is one more 3 ½ which is spoken about not in terms of years, but days. It speaks of God's two witnesses. It introduces us to them with this same 1,260 day number. “And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they

will prophesy for *1,260 days*, clothed in sackcloth” (Rev 11:3). Importantly, I’ll point out that the next verse calls them “*two olive trees and two lampstands*” (4). In the next verse, “*fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes*” (5). After they have finished their testimony, “*the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them.*” Again, importantly, the next verse says that their dead bodies will “*lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified*” (8). Why are those verses important to consider? Because they very clearly use symbolic language. In fact, one uses the word “symbolically.” This helps us interpret our numbers, as you’ll see in a moment.

Next, our  $3\frac{1}{2}$  appears. “*For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb ... after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them*” (Rev 11:9, 11).

There is one more parallel number in Revelation that is not found in Daniel. This is the number “*42 months.*” It appears in two verses. One relates to God’s “*temple*” and

“holy city.” “But do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for *forty-two months*” (Rev 11:2)., The other is about the same beast was “was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for *forty-two months*” (Rev 13:5).

Let’s try to make sense of all this. When we look at the context of these passages, we find a couple of common denominators. First, there is persecution and the persecuted. Whereas Daniel says the persecuted are “the saints” or “the holy people,” Revelation clearly tells us that they are the church. This is made clear in Revelation 12 for example where the woman who gives birth is, at first, clearly Mary who has “a male child” who “is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron” (Rev 12:5). But later in the chapter, she morphs into those “who have conquered [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb” (11) even as she flees into the wilderness to be nourished. Curiously, Michael, who makes his last appearance in Daniel 12:1 shows up for one of only two named appearances in the NT in Revelation 12:7. This is no coincidence.

Second, the **time frames are all similar**. They all roughly have 3 ½, either through years, months, or days. That’s what they have in common.

Dan 7:25	“time, times, and half a time”	Little horn <b>blasphemes</b> the Most High and <b>wears out the saints for...</b>
Dan 12:7	“time, times, and half a time”	Christ swears the vision is for the ending of the <b>shattering of the holy people</b>
Rev 12:14	“time, times, and half a time”	The <b>woman</b> given two wings to <b>flee</b> from the serpent into the <b>wilderness</b> to be <b>nourished</b> for...
Rev 12:6	1,260 days	The <b>women flees</b> into the <b>wilderness</b> prepared by God to be <b>nourished</b> for...
Rev 11:3	1,260 days	Two witnesses prophecy in sackcloth, perform great miracles for...
Dan 9:27	“half of the week”	Christ makes a “strong covenant” with man, half way through he <b>puts an end</b> to sacrifice and <b>offering</b> on the wing of <b>abominations</b> by one who makes <b>desolate</b>
Dan 12:11	1,290 days	The regular burnt <b>offering</b> is <b>taken away</b> and the <b>abomination</b> that makes <b>desolate</b> is set up
Dan 12:12	1,335 days	A blessing for waiting and arriving at...
Rev 11:9, 11	three and a half days	Resurrection of the witnesses (“they stood up on their feet”) after the <b>beast kills them</b>
Rev 13:5	42 months	<b>Beast</b> utterly <b>blasphemous</b> words and given authority for...
Rev 11:2	42 months	God’s “temple” and “holy city” given over to the <b>nations who trample them</b> for ... (during this time, see above, the two witnesses are working)
Rev 20:2	1000 years	Satan bound from deceiving the nations <sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Meredith Kline makes a compelling case that the millennial 1000 years is to be equated with all of these numbers as well. See **Meredith G. Kline**, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 171-73.

However, there is a **difference in the numbers** that are given as specific “days.”

Many have sought the interpretation of this in looking for exact periods of 1,260, 1,290, or 1,335 days somewhere in history. This kind of interpretation goes back a long way in church history. For example, **Jerome** (347-420) cites Porphyry of Tyre (234-305) who he says, “asserts that these 1,290 days were fulfilled in the desolation of the temple in the time of Antiochus, and yet both Josephus and the book of Maccabees ... record that it lasted for only three years. From this circumstance it is apparent that the three and a half years are spoken of in connection with the time of the antichrist, for he is going to persecute the saints for three and a half years, or 1,290 days, and then he shall meet his fall on the famous, holy mountain.”<sup>11</sup> Over the centuries, people have tried to force the time frames or insert gaps to make it work.<sup>12</sup>

There is a **deeper problem** we have to deal with is we are going to try to fix dates like this. At least two of these three numbers are directly associated through parallelism with 3½ years or 42 *months*. What’s the problem? There is no known

---

<sup>11</sup> **Kenneth Stevenson** and Michael Gluerup, eds., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 311–312.

<sup>12</sup> On a history of the gaps see the long table presented in **Douglas E. Cox**, *Understanding Daniel’s 70 Weeks* (2012), 49-55. <https://creationconcept.info/dload/D70.pdf>.

calendar that has 1,260, 1,290, or 1,335 days in that span of time. This tips us off that the numbers are **not being used literally but symbolically**. This is precisely why I mentioned all the other symbols being used in a passage like Revelation 11.

So **what might the symbolism mean?** There is a long tradition in the church that understands all of these lengths of time to be referring to **the entire church age**. As early as **Methodius** (d. 311) to the early middle-ages with **Bede** to the late middle ages with **Thomas Aquinas**, and into the modern era, this has been a consistent pattern of interpretation. Bede (672-735), the first man to translate any of the Scriptures into English (albeit old English), is short and to the point. **“In this number of days, which makes three years and a half, he comprehends all the times of Christianity, because Christ, Whose body the Church is, preached the same length of time in the flesh.”**<sup>13</sup>

Bede is on to something very important here. In noticing the 3½ years of Christ ministry and comparing it to 3½ years of the church’s struggle after the resurrection, he is completing Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week through **a mystery** rather than through history. That mystery is, to put it one way, the

---

<sup>13</sup> **Bede** (the venerable.) *The explanation of the Apocalypse*. Translated by Edward Marshall, 1878. p. 83. For many more quotations (including Kline, Hendriksen, and Beale), see Cox, 56-75.

mystical union between Christ and his Body—the church. We are one and so it is fitting that each should have half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

We could put this another way. Some of these numbers are associated with the temple or city of the last days. But the NT makes it very clear that this temple and city is Christ’s church, exactly what I just said about our mystical union with Christ. Because our Head is in heaven, the church is a heavenly thing. In this way, we can look at the first 69 ½ weeks of years in “earth” years because they dealt with the typological temple and city on earth. But we look at the last half week with these different “non-natural” or “heavenly” numbers because heavenly time is not earthly time. As Douglas Cox puts it, “earth time does not apply to the heavenly city, or to spiritual things.”<sup>14</sup>

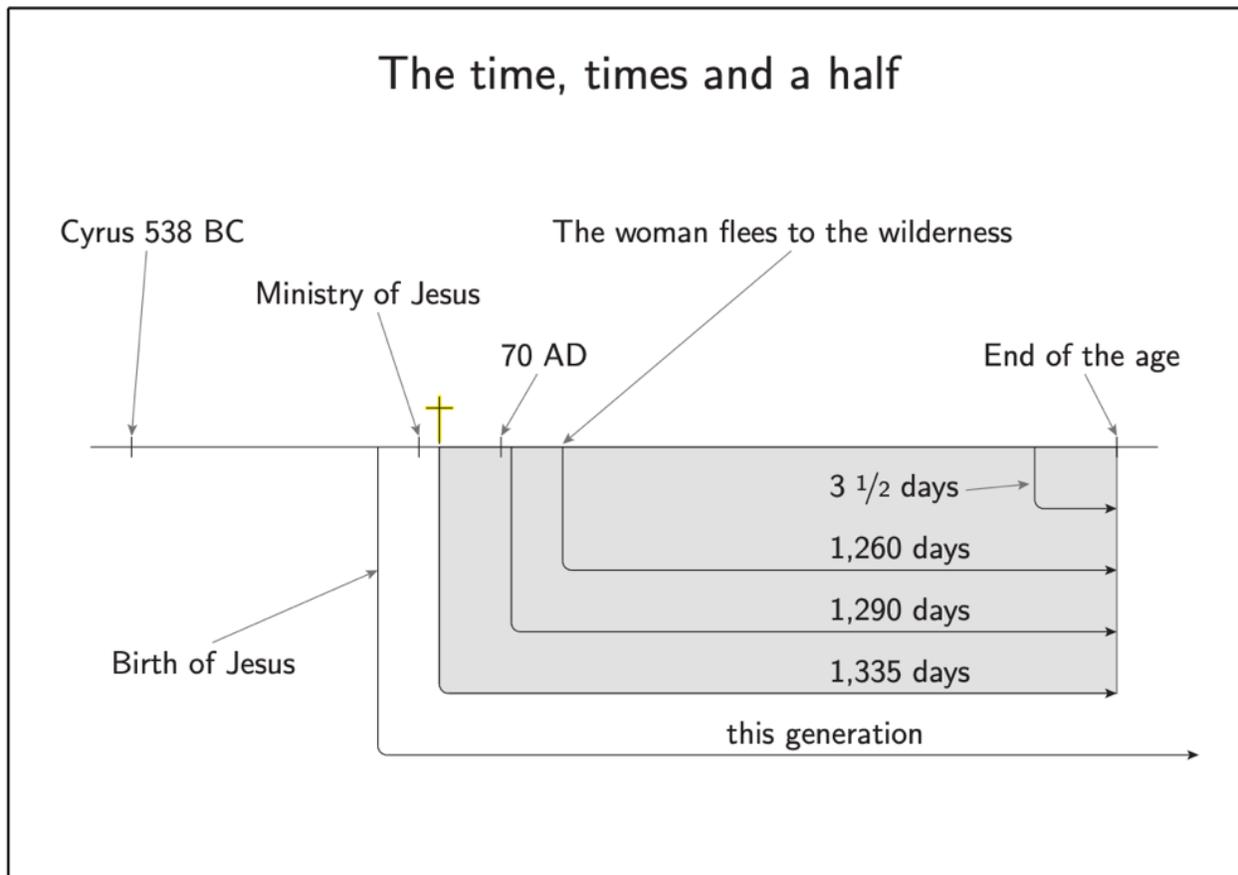
Building upon many who have interpreted these numbers this way, Cox has taken this a step further. He puts the lengths of time into a descending order,<sup>15</sup> according to

---

<sup>14</sup> Cox, 18. Later he says, “An interpretation that invokes a gap is flawed, as the 1260 days, and the time, times and a half, and related periods signify, not a certain number of earth-years or earth-days, but the whole age of the church, which is the heavenly city, a city not made with hands, and so is spiritual in nature. It remains forever. How could earthly units of days, and months, and years apply to it?” (p. 48).

<sup>15</sup> “These numbers also seem to represent a diminishing period of time, as they progress from the larger to smaller periods. This is the nature of time; it tends to run out. The remaining time in the church age is constantly running out, and decreasing. At the very end of the age, it is represented by three and a half days.” Cox, 19.

their relative fixed beginning points attached in the prophecies (the crucifixion, 70 AD, or whatever), and then demonstrates how **the numbers symbolically teach us that the church will not have to wait forever** for this time of trouble to end! It might feel like it is forever, and even the martyrs are crying out “**How long, Lord**” (**Rev 6:10**). Heaven has a clock and it is counting down! 1335 days .... 1,290 days ... 1,260 days ... 3 ½ days ... We do not have to despair.



Cox, 17 (I disagree with Cox that "this generation" refers to the end of days)

## *The Resurrection*

Why? Because something happens at the end that all the wise can see because Christ clearly tells Daniel and us through him about it. In **Dan 12:1**, the time of trouble is brought to an end through **Michael**, “the great prince,” Christ himself, whom we have seen makes one of his rare appearances (at least by that name) in Revelation 12, a passage that uses one the 3 ½ numbers.

We need to **read Daniel 12 and Revelation 12 together** to understand this work of Michael. As I see it, he is working throughout the whole period of the church age. First, he throws down the dragon and 1/3 of the stars fall with him. The context of this chapter is clearly the birth/death/resurrection/ascension of Christ which brings in the church age. Therefore, I see his work here as the work of Christ himself in human flesh who battled the cosmic forces of evil in his life and at his death descended to hell, proclaimed his victory, lead a train of captives out of Shoel-Hades, and in a sense, brought them to new life with him in heaven. Michael delivers his people. Christ delivers his people. This takes us squarely into Daniel 12.

In Daniel 12, Michael comes and delivers “everyone whose name shall be found written in *the book*.” As he does in many other places in Revelation, only some of which we have seen, John takes *this very image* and applies it, again, to all believers, past, present, and future. He calls it “*the book of life of the Lamb who was slain*” (Rev 13:8; cf. 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

What does this deliverance entail? In the clearest possible terms, unsurpassed anywhere in the OT—*resurrection*. “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 those who are wise...” (Dan 12:2). Something only a few people have explored<sup>16</sup> is the parallel structure of vs. 1-2 with vs. 13. “But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of days.” The word “stand” here is the same word used of Michael in vs. 1 (*'amad*). It is also a figurative way of speaking about the resurrection.

For this reason, it is possible to see *two resurrections* in Daniel 12. In fact, John’s use of this passage in Revelation 20 demands it. That passage mentions the “*book of life*”

---

<sup>16</sup> One who has is Artur A. Stele, Resurrection in Daniel 12 and its Contribution to the Theology of the Book of Daniel, Andrews University Dissertation 148 (1996). <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1147&context=dissertations>.

twice and the language comes straight out of Daniel 12. “Books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the *book of life*. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done ... If anyone’s name was not found written in the *book of life*, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:12, 15). John’s “lake of fire” is Daniel’s “everlasting shame and contempt.”

Prior to this, however, John says, “Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection!” (20:6). A first resurrection implies a second. This verse sounds a lot like Daniel 12:12. “Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.” Therefore, Daniel does seem to have in mind two resurrections. So what are they?

In John, the first resurrection is clearly a spiritual resurrection, “something this side of bodily resurrection, some experience that does not bring the subject of it into his consummated condition and final state.”<sup>17</sup> John says, “I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God ... they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (20:4). Meredith Kline says, “The death of the Christian is paradoxically

---

<sup>17</sup> Meredith G. Kline, “The First Resurrection” *WTJ* 37 (Spring 1975): 370.

identified as ‘the first resurrection.’”<sup>18</sup> The dead are living and reigning with Christ ... in heaven. But he doesn’t connect this back to Daniel’s day.

This is where **vs. 13** comes into view. “Go your way till the end.” The end of what? It tells us, “You shall rest.” This refers to Daniel’s death. “And you shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.” This refers to the first resurrection, the one ushered in by Christ’s own death, descent into hell, and resurrection. As someone notices, “Daniel awoke to life when Christ entered Hades and that he is now reigning in glory with Him.”<sup>19</sup> This happens to all Christians who die now before the final resurrection.

It is this **final resurrection** that is in view back in **vv. 2-3**. At that time, God’s people will be finally delivered. “And those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting life*, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” It should again be noticed that here this is **the work of Michael**. And yet, it is our Lord Jesus who uses the language of **everlasting life**.

Jesus tells us this is life that is available right now. “This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>19</sup> **Robert M. Gurney**, *God in Control: An Exposition of the Prophecies of Daniel* (Worthing, England: He. E. Walter, 1980), 172. In *Stele, Dissertation*.

and believes in him should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:40). This life is the first resurrection.

But there is still that **second resurrection**. Jesus also says, “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” (Jn 5:28-29). This comes straight out of Daniel 12. Our Lord loved God’s word. So too, did his disciple John.

Friends, we must not be like pagans who run through this life with no eternal hope. You must not be like those right now terrified and tortured so badly with the threat of death that they will turn on their fellow citizens and even their own country to preserve their short, fleeting lives.

Everyone dies.

You will not escape this. “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb 9:27).

But **the good news** is not shut up so that you can’t understand it. It is shut up so that you won’t be able to change it. That good news is that **Jesus has conquered death**, and anyone who looks to him will, like Daniel, stand on that great day, alive, in Christ, resurrected to eternal life.

This doctrine, presented so clearly in Daniel 12, is so important that the Apostle Paul says, “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1Co 15:13-14). Do not call God a liar (15) and so play the part of the wicked who will not share in this life, but will partake only in shame, everlasting contempt, wicked acts, and blind vision.

You have a great hope set before you now. Eternal life is set before your eyes, which you may partake in if you trust in Christ, is constantly called the great hope in the New Testament. “It is with respect to *the hope* and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial” (Acts 23:6), Paul says. “If in Christ we have *hope in this life only*, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1Co 15:19-20). It is “*a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Pe 1:3-5).

There is no need to be as one who has no hope. Death is not the end, for anyone. But eternal life, fullness of glory,

joy everlasting, treasure upon treasure are available if you bow your knee to the Father, trust that Jesus alone will guide you safely out of exile in this unclean realm of the dead and into the glorious freedom of the sons of God. Pray to him. Confess your sins, your unworthiness, as Daniel has done. Tell him you need saving and sanctifying on that last day. Then look with the eyes of faith. For “Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (Heb 9:28).

## Bibliography

Bede (the venerable). *The explanation of the Apocalypse*.

Charles, R. H. and Adeney, Walter F. (Eds.). *The Book of Daniel: Notes*. The New-Century Bible. New York; Edinburgh: Henry Frowde; T. C. & E. C. Jack; Oxford University Press, post 1929.

Chase, Mitch. “Does the Old Testament Teach Resurrection Hope.” *The Gospel Coalition* (March 31, 2018). <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/old-testament-teach-resurrection-hope/>

Collins, John Joseph and Collins, Adela Yarbro. *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Ed. Frank Moore Cross. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.

Cox, Douglas E. *Understanding Daniel's 70 Weeks* (2012). <https://creationconcept.info/dload/D70.pdf>.

Ferguson, Sinclair B. and Ogilvie, Lloyd J. *Daniel*, vol. 21. The Preacher's Commentary Series. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1988.

- Gandi, Herald. "The Resurrection: 'According to the Scriptures.'" *The Master's Seminary* (July 31, 2018). <https://blog.tms.edu/resurrection-according-to-scriptures>.
- Gurney, Robert M. *God in Control: An Exposition of the Prophecies of Daniel*. Worthing, England: He. E. Walter, 1980.
- Hamilton, James M. Jr. *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*. New Studies in Biblical Theology Vol. 32. Ed. D. A. Carson. Downers Grove, IL; England: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015.
- Jerome. *Commentary on Daniel*.
- Kline, Meredith G. *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The First Resurrection" *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (Spring 1975): 366-375.
- Longman, Tremper III. *Daniel*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.
- Miller, Christine. "Daniel 11 and 12." *A Little Perspective* (Oct 29, 2015). <https://www.alittleperspective.com/daniel-11-and-12/>.
- Miller, Stephen R. *Daniel*. New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman, 1994.
- Stele, Artur A. "Resurrection in Daniel 12 and its Contribution to the Theology of the Book of Daniel." Andrews University Dissertation 148 (1996). <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1147&context=dissertations>.
- Stevenson, Kenneth and Gluerup, Michael (eds.). *Ezekiel, Daniel*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.