

LESSON 38

Daniel 12:5-7

5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Daniel asked how long it would be until the end of the events in the vision. He is told that it would be “a time, times, and an half,” or better translated “a time, two times, and half a time” and that everything in the vision would be accomplished when the power of the holy people is scattered or shattered.

Notice that verse 7 gives us the termination point of the vision — “all these things shall be finished.” This is the end of the vision. If we can determine what verse 7 is talking about then once again we have an all-important time frame to help us understand the prophecy.

So what is verse 7 talking about? Nowhere is there a clearer statement than in verse 7 that the vision ends in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. That was the shattering of the power of the holy people. This vision ends with the Romans, and the Romans are the ones who shattered the power of the holy people. They shattered it to the point that it has never recovered. The priestly records were destroyed, and so the Jewish priesthood came to a permanent end. Animals sacrifices ceased and to this day have never returned. Verse 7 happened in AD 70.

Notice that if we take Daniel 12:2 to apply to the final resurrection, then we must conclude that this shattering is still future as well, but we know it is not.

The “time, two times, and half a time” is a broken seven, and we have seen this symbol before. The angel is telling Daniel that while the Jews will be oppressed, it will not be a permanent oppression. The power of Rome would end one day, and the faithful remnant of true Jews (as Paul defined that term in Romans 2:28-29) would be victorious in Christ.

Rome had control, but not perfect control; Rome had power, but not perfect power. Rome had a delegated control and a delegated power. We have already seen that Rome was acting as the servant of God in fulfilling the prophecies of this book. Rome would not last forever. It would be destroyed once it had served its purpose. A son of David would rule from the throne of David, and his kingdom would outlast and destroy Rome and all other worldly kingdoms.

Daniel 12:8-12

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

Daniel 10:1 tells us that Daniel had understanding of the vision, yet verse 8 tells us that he did **not** understand the vision. How do we explain that?

First, Daniel 10:14 tells us that the angel came to bring understanding of the vision to Daniel, and the angel is still speaking.

But second, I think by verse 8 Daniel understood the vision with his head, but perhaps was still having trouble understanding the vision with his heart. How could everything end with the people of God being shattered? How could God's plan for

the Jews end with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple? Daniel is asking the angel for an explanation.

How does the angel respond? First, the angel reminds Daniel that the end of the vision would not occur for some time. He would not be personally affected by these events. Many good things and many bad things would happen before it came to pass. Those who were wicked would not understand; that is, they would not know that they were playing a part in the plan of God. Those who were wise, however, would know that they were playing a part in the plan of God. They would know that the events that were occurring had been spoken of long before in Daniel 11 and 12.

Second, in verse 10, the angel assures Daniel that God will bless those who are good and the wicked will perish. This is just what Daniel needed to hear after seeing the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. It must have appeared to Daniel that at the end of this vision the wicked were blessed and the good perished. The angel assures Daniel that just the opposite is true. (And here we are reminded once again of a key theme in this book — things are not what they seem! We must learn to see things, including ourselves, as God sees them. We must learn to use our spiritual eyesight.)

Third, the angel then gives us what may be the most difficult two verses in the Bible to understand: “*And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a **thousand two hundred and ninety days**. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the **thousand three hundred and five and thirty days**.*” (The book of Daniel remains challenging all the way to the end!) The angel says that from the time that the burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1290 days. Further, he says that those who wait for 1335 days (45 days longer than the 1290 days) will be blessed. **Why 1290? Why 1335? Why 45 more days? What do they mean?**

First, note that the 1290 days occur after **both** the removal of the burnt offering and the abomination that makes desolate. That is, the 1290 days do **not** separate these two events, as some suggest.

Second, are this removal of the daily sacrifice and this abomination of desolation the same ones that we read about in Daniel 11:31? **They cannot be.** Jesus pointed to a prophecy of Daniel in Matthew 24:15 regarding the abomination of desolation and said that it had not happened yet, but that it would occur in the first century (Matthew 24:34). The abomination of desolation in Daniel 11:31 occurred nearly 200 years before the birth of Christ. There are two such abominations in the book of Daniel — one perpetrated by Antiochus Epiphanes and another perpetrated over two centuries later by the Romans. The earlier one is spoken about in Daniel 8:13 and Daniel 11:31. The latter one is spoken about in Daniel 9:27 and here in Daniel 12:11.

We may have another clue that this is the fact. Recall Matthew 24:15.

Matthew 24:15 — *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.)*

Do you see the phrase “whoso readeth, let him understand”? Almost the same phrase is found in Daniel 12:10 where we read “but the wise shall understand.” (Yes, a similar phrase also appears in 11:33, but there it is referring to the Macabees.)

Which abomination is this then? We have already answered that question. It is the desecration of the temple by the Romans in AD 70. The vision ends with the Romans. Jesus was talking about the Romans in Matthew 24. In Matthew 24:15 and 24:34, Jesus said that the abomination he spoke of would occur in the first century. It did, and this verse in Daniel is telling us about it.

Back to our earlier question: What about the 1290 days and the 1335 days? What do they denote? Let's turn that question around: What would we **expect** them to denote?

Daniel doesn't understand how God's plan for the Jews could end with the destruction of the Jews. But after he hears this final message from the angel, he understands God's plan (as we were told in Daniel 10:1). **What must God have told him?** God must have told Daniel that God's plan for the Jews did **not** end with the destruction of their city and their temple, but for those Jews who were faithful to God, they would enter an eternal kingdom ruled by a son of David. God must also have told Daniel that those who destroyed the city and the temple would themselves be destroyed, and thus would **not** ultimately be victorious.

How do these two symbols depict that? Revelation 13:5 uses 1260 days to describe the temporary power of Rome. Because 1260 days is 42 months (thirty days each), we have three and a half years. Thus, 1260 days points to a broken seven. But here we have **1290** days. Why the extra month? I think that God is telling Daniel that while the Roman persecution will be temporary, it will be longer and worse than other persecutions. It will be a broken seven plus a little bit more.

Another possible explanation is that thirty days would be added to the lunar calendar every three years to bring it in line with the solar calendar, which may explain why we have 1290 instead of 1260 (but again, we have 1260 in Revelation 13, so I prefer to assign a figurative meaning to this extra thirty days rather than just explain it away as an intercalary month).

What about the extra 45 days between the 1290 days and the 1335 days? Again, what would we *expect* it to denote? The context suggests that it denotes the time after Rome during which God's followers must continue to persevere. Those who wait and come to the end of the 1335 days will be blessed.

For those that have been wanting to find the end of the world in Daniel, I think we have finally found it! I think these 45 days denote the time between the judgment of

Rome and the final judgment. Those who wait and are faithful during this period will be blessed at the end of it. I think we are living in that figurative 45 day period.

But why 45? The short answer is that I don't know for sure, and no commentary I have looked at seems to know for sure either. If, as seems likely, the number 45 had some special figurative meaning to the Jews of Daniel's day, then that understanding may have been lost. But we can speculate.

The number five is said by some to symbolize the grace of God. (The number five and multiples of five occur all throughout the descriptions of the tabernacle.) The number nine is said by some to denote finality and judgment. (The nine judgments of Haggai 1:11, for example, and the number nine being the final digit.)

Thus, 45 being five times nine may denote the grace of God leading to the final judgment of the world. In my opinion, that is the most likely explanation for the extra 45 days.

It is possible that the number 45 denotes a **countdown** to the end of the world. Why, you ask, would 45 be used to denote a countdown? Because 45 is equal to $9 + 8 + 7 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1$.

One other possibility is that the 45 days (a month and a half) is simply God's way of telling Daniel that after Rome, God's people will need to persevere a little longer. This understanding would fit in well with our explanation of the extra thirty days in the 1290 days.

Daniel 12:13

13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Finally, Daniel is assured that although he will not live to see these events (“for thou shalt rest”), he will be present at “the end of the days.”

And the “end of the days”? What does that refer to? As I said, I think that we have at last come to the end of the world! The vision is over. The Romans are gone. God’s grace has been extended to the final judgment. Daniel is again present and standing in his allotted place. I think that this is the final judgment of the world.

Recall that the vision dealing with the end of the Jewish age ended in verse 4 of this chapter. Thus, it does not violate the time frame of that vision to say that Daniel is now hearing about the end of the world at the end of Daniel 12.

What we are studying now is the answer to Daniel’s question in verse 8: “O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?” This question parallels the question in Matthew 24:3— “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” In response to that question, Jesus first told them in verses 4-34 about the destruction of the city, which was coming in their generation, and then Jesus told them in verses 35-51 about the end of the world, which would not come with any signs. Here, I think we also see an answer that jumps from the destruction of Jerusalem to the final judgment of the world.

Thus, while Daniel 12:2 does **not** refer to the final resurrection, I think that Daniel 12:13 does. Daniel goes to his rest in verse 13, but then we see him standing again. How could that occur absent a resurrection?

So, for those who ask you to show evidence of the final resurrection in the Old Testament, you should **not** point them to Daniel 12:2 (as many mistakenly do), but you should instead point them to Daniel 12:13.

The book ends with a complete confirmation of one of the book’s main themes: the absolute and total sovereignty of God. God is in control of this world and this universe, and he has a plan to bless the entire world through his son Jesus Christ. This book has given us a glimpse of just what was involved in bringing that plan about.

We are looking back over 2500 years of history, and during that time we have seen virtually everything in this book come to pass. But there is one thing that we have not yet seen. We, as Daniel, are waiting for that day when we will stand up and take our allotted place among the people of God.

What a beautiful book! What a beautiful promise! The faithful people of God, as did Daniel, will go to their rest, but they will one day take their place with Daniel when the King comes to claim his own.

The Seven Main Themes in Daniel

Theme Number 1: The absolute sovereignty of God.

This theme may be the central theme of the book. We saw it in every event and in every chapter in this book.

Psalm 47:2 — *For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.*

Psalm 103:19 — *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

Psalm 145:13 — *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

Psalm 29:10 — *The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.*

God is king over the universe and everyone in it. Many are in rebellion against God, but that does mean that they are in anyway not subject to God as their king. In 1 Timothy 6:15, Paul tells us that Jesus is “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” That means that Jesus is everyone’s King and everyone’s Lord.

You mean that God was king over the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar? Absolutely, as Nebuchadnezzar himself found out when God sent him out into the field to munch grass like an ox.

God is king over all, and that includes all of the nations and earthly rulers of this world, no matter how high and mighty they are or how high and mighty they may think they are.

Isaiah 46:11 — *Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*

That is the king speaking!

Theme Number 2: God loves and cares for his people.

Yes, John 3:16 tells us that God loves the entire world, but God has a special love for his people.

Exodus 19:5-6 — *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Ephesians 5:25 — *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*

The faithful remnant, despised by the world, has always been and is today a peculiar treasure to God.

In Daniel's day, that faithful remnant had been carried off into foreign captivity, but the message that shines through in Daniel is that God still loved and cared for his people even in their exile, and God was still working to carry out his plans for his covenant people. Yes, there were dark days ahead, but the book of Daniel was a book of hope and comfort for the Jews. Their Messiah was coming, and he would

establish an eternal kingdom that would last forever and sweep away all of the kingdoms of this world.

The coming of Christ and the coming of the kingdom of Christ would require meticulous planning, and this book lifts the curtain to show us that planning. Visions received under Chaldean and Persian kings showed us Greek and Roman kings not yet born and showed us how the Greeks and Romans would together create the perfect cradle for Jesus and his church. That did not happen by chance. Daniel was told all about it centuries before God made it happen.

Theme Number 3: Things are not what they seem.

We are constantly being called upon in Daniel to see events through God's eyes. The world saw Daniel and his friends one way; God saw them another way. The world saw Nebuchadnezzar one way; God saw him another way. The world saw Babylon one way; God saw it another way. The world saw Jerusalem and the Jews one way; God saw them another way. The world saw Persia, and then Greece, and then Rome one way; God saw them another way. Over 2500 years after it was written, this book is still calling us to see things differently than the world does.

Yes, the situation looked bleak. Yes, Jerusalem had been destroyed. Yes, the Jews had been carried off into foreign captivity by a nation that sought to absorb them and assimilate them into its own pagan culture.

The Jews appeared powerless in the face of the great nations that surrounded them. But was that the reality of the situation? No. Things were not what they seemed.

Daniel lifts the curtain and shows us the great spiritual events that were occurring behind the scenes as powerful angels acted on behalf of God's people to thwart the plans of Satan.

Psalm 123:1 — *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*

Likewise today we must constantly strive to lift up our eyes and see with spiritual eyes. If we are ever tempted to think that the church is insignificant in the rush of current events, that it is because we have failed to see the church as God sees it — as it really is. In Revelation 21, John sees “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” What follows in that chapter is a beautiful description of the church, the bride of Christ. If you are ever tempted to see the church as just a footnote of history, read Revelation 21 to see how God views his church.

Theme Number 4: God’s eternal kingdom was established in the first century.

No one can study Daniel honestly and come away with any other understanding than that the eternal kingdom of God was established during the days of the fourth kingdom — the Roman empire.

Daniel 2:44 — *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

Hebrews 12:28-29 — *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.*

The church that Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16:18 and that was established in Acts 2 is the eternal kingdom that was promised in Daniel 2. Few books in the Bible, and certainly few books in the Old Testament, tell us more about the church of Christ than does the book of Daniel.

That beautiful church of Revelation 21 is the same church that was established in Acts 2, it is the same church that Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16, it is the

same eternal kingdom that Daniel told us about nearly 600 years before it was established, and it is the same church to which God has added us. There is one church, and you can draw a straight line from the church of Christ today all the way back to the church of Christ in Daniel 2:44.

Theme Number 5: God is faithful to his covenants.

The people who receive those covenants are not always faithful, but that is not true of God. God is faithful to his covenants.

2 Timothy 2:13 — *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*

Why was it so important that the Jewish people survive and not just be absorbed by and become a part of the pagan nations that surrounded them? Because God had made a covenant with Abraham and with David.

God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham to bless the entire world through his seed. And God made an unconditional covenant with David that a son of David would rule eternally from the throne of David. For those covenants to be fulfilled, the Jewish people had to survive, which was why Satan was so intent on destroying them.

Theme Number 6: The danger of compromise.

Daniel is one of the most wonderful examples in the Bible of how a child of God should live in an evil and pagan society. And the key danger that such a person faces is the danger of compromise.

We first saw Daniel's refusal to compromise when he was just a teenager, and we continued to see that throughout his life. Daniel was faithful and loyal to God no matter what was happening around him or to him, and for that reason Daniel is three times said to be greatly beloved by God. In fact, the Bible has not a single bad

thing to say about Daniel, which is not true for very many of the major characters in Scripture.

We, too, constantly face the temptation to compromise with this world, and we should remember the example of Daniel when those temptations come.

Theme Number 7: The power of prayer.

Daniel was a man of prayer. How powerful is prayer? Prayer can do anything that God can do, and Daniel knew that.

How did Daniel remain faithful in such a godless society? That is no secret. He devoted himself to a study of God's word and to prayer (Daniel 9:2-3). Do we think the answer is any different for us? Do we think we are more spiritual than Daniel? Do we really think that Daniel needed to study and pray, but we do not? If so, then perhaps we need to review how God responded to the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar, who saw himself as a god and boasted about all of the wonderful things he had done all by himself.

Daniel prayed. Daniel studied God's word. Daniel remained faithful and steadfast. Those things are not unrelated. It took great strength for Daniel to stand alone, as he so often did. Where did he get that strength? Through prayer and Bible study. Let's follow his example!

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