

# Introduction to Daniel Chapter 12

## *Michael Arises, the Dead Awake, and the Old Man Is Told to Rest: The Closing Word of the Book of Truth*

Daniel chapter 12 is the conclusion — not only of the vision that began in chapter 10, not only of the Book of Truth that chapter 11 unfolded at such length, but of the entire book of Daniel. Everything the book has shown us — the four kingdoms of chapter 2, the four beasts of chapter 7, the ram and the goat of chapter 8, the seventy weeks of chapter 9, the angelic conflict of chapter 10, and the centuries of empires and the contemptible king of chapter 11 — all of it has been moving toward this chapter's handful of verses. And what these verses deliver is not, in the end, more history. It is the two things that every reader who has walked through six chapters of beasts, horns, wars, and persecution most needs to hear: a promise about what happens to the dead, and a promise about what happens to Daniel himself.

The chapter opens with Michael — the same chief prince who, chapter 10 told us, came to help the messenger when he was detained twenty-one days by the prince of Persia — now described in fuller terms as the great prince who protects your people. At that time, in the midst of the time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then, Michael will arise. And in the very next breath, the vision does something it has not done before in such explicit terms: it speaks of the dead. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake — some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. This is one of the clearest statements of bodily resurrection to two distinct destinies anywhere in the Old Testament, and it arrives at the climax of a book that has spent its final chapters describing wars, persecutions, and a contemptible king who would come to his end. The resurrection is the answer to everything that has come before it. The wise who were martyred in chapter 11 — who fell by the sword, were burned, captured, plundered — will shine like the stars forever and ever. Death was not, after all, the end of their story.

The middle of the chapter introduces two new figures — one on each bank of the river — and one of them asks, on behalf of every reader who has ever asked it, the question that hangs over every promise of future deliverance: how long? The answer comes as a solemn oath, sworn by the man clothed in linen with both hands raised toward heaven, by him who lives forever: a time, times and half a time. The duration is fixed. The oath that guarantees it is the most solemn form available. And the completion is tied, paradoxically, not to the triumph of God's people but to the moment when the power of the holy people has been finally broken — the same theme of refining through suffering that chapter 11 introduced, now sealed with a divine oath.

And then the book ends with Daniel himself — an old man, by this point, who has served four kings across two empires, who has interpreted dreams, survived a den of lions, prayed for three weeks without knowing his prayer had been heard from the first day, and just received the most detailed prophecy in Scripture. I heard, but I did not understand, he says — and this confession, near the very end of the book, is one of its

most quietly important moments. Daniel does not understand everything he has been shown. And the response he receives is not further explanation but something far more personal: go your way, Daniel... you will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance. The book that began with a young man taken into exile ends with an old man promised resurrection and inheritance. The Book of Truth, having shown Daniel the history of nations for centuries to come, closes by telling him what will happen to him.

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## Opening Prayer

*Heavenly Father,*

*We come to the final chapter of Daniel knowing that we are about to receive the answer to everything the book has shown us. We have walked through beasts and horns, through centuries of empires, through a contemptible king who desecrated Your temple and a faithful remnant who knew You and resisted him. And now we come to the chapter that tells us what becomes of all of it — what becomes of the dead, what becomes of the wise who suffered, and what becomes of the prophet himself.*

*Give us the confidence of Michael arising — the great prince who protects Your people, present and active even in the time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. Give us the hope of the resurrection — multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake — and let that hope shape how we live now, in light of the everlasting life that is promised to those whose names are written in the book.*

*And give us Daniel's honesty — I heard, but I did not understand — and Daniel's peace in receiving, not a fuller explanation, but the personal word that was enough: go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance. Let that promise be ours as well. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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### Daniel 12:1–4

## Michael Arises, the Dead Awake: The Two Destinies and the Reward of the Wise

*(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.  
(2) Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake:  
some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.  
(3) Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens,  
and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.  
(4) But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll  
until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.'*

## THE CONTEXT

The chapter opens with a continuation of the same sentence the messenger was speaking at the end of chapter 11 — at that time connects this directly to the appointed end of the self-exalting king. And at that time, Michael will arise. This is the same Michael whom chapter 10 identified as one of the chief princes, who came to help the messenger when he was detained twenty-one days by the prince of Persia, and whom chapter 10:21 called your prince — Israel's own angelic protector. Now he is described more fully: the great prince who protects your people. The same unseen conflict that chapter 10 revealed — angelic princes contending over the nations — reaches, here, its decisive moment on behalf of God's people. Michael arises.

The time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then is language of superlative severity — and it is language that Jesus himself echoes almost exactly in Matthew 24:21, describing a great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now. Whatever the precise relationship between the persecution of Daniel 11 and this time of distress — whether one continuous escalation, or the historical event serving as a pattern for a future and greater one, in the same way this series has discussed for the abomination of desolation and the man of lawlessness — the chapter's promise is unambiguous: at that time, in the midst of the worst distress in the history of nations, your people will be delivered. And the deliverance is specified with precision: everyone whose name is found written in the book. The book — elsewhere called the book of life (Revelation 20:12, 15), the book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16), or simply written among the living (Psalm 69:28) — is the recurring biblical image of a record kept by God of those who belong to Him. Deliverance is not generic or automatic. It is personal, named, and recorded.

Verse 2 is one of the most theologically significant single sentences in the entire Old Testament: multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake — some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. The image of sleep for death, and of awaking for resurrection, appears elsewhere in the Old Testament in more limited or ambiguous forms, but nowhere with this clarity and this comprehensiveness: a general resurrection, of multitudes, to two distinct and everlasting destinies. This verse stands directly behind Jesus' own teaching in John 5:28-29 — a resurrection of life, and a resurrection of judgment — and behind the great resurrection scene of Revelation 20. And it arrives, in Daniel, at precisely the moment it is most needed: immediately after six chapters that have described, with increasing specificity, the suffering and martyrdom of the faithful. The wise who fell by the sword in 11:33 are not lost. They sleep — and they will awake.

Verse 3 then specifies the destiny of one particular group among those who awake to everlasting life: those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. The word wise here is the same word used in 11:33 and 11:35 for those who instructed many, even at the cost of falling by the sword, being burned, captured, and plundered. The chapter closes the loop that chapter 11 opened: the wise who taught and suffered are the wise who will shine like the stars forever and ever. And verse 4 returns to Daniel himself, with an instruction that mirrors and yet differs from the sealing instruction of 8:26: roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. The vision is not for immediate, full publication — it is for a future time. And many will go here and there to increase knowledge — a phrase whose meaning has been read in various ways, but which at minimum describes a restless seeking for understanding that will characterize the period before the time of the end arrives.

#### PLAIN AMERICAN ENGLISH

*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will rise up. There will be a time of distress unlike anything that has happened since nations began. But at that time, your people — everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake up: some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting disgrace. Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who have led many people to righteousness will shine like the stars, forever and ever. But you, Daniel — roll up this scroll and seal it until the time of the end. Many people will rush around searching, trying to increase their knowledge.*

#### KEY OBSERVATIONS

**"Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise":** This signifies **The Unseen Guardian Introduced in Chapter 10 Now Acts Decisively — the Conflict That Was Contested for Twenty-One Days Reaches Its Climax.**

The reappearance of Michael — now given the fuller title great prince who protects your people — closes a loop that chapter 10 opened. There, Michael was the one whose help was necessary to overcome the resistance of the prince of Persia, allowing the messenger to finally reach Daniel. Here, at the climax of the entire vision, Michael himself arises — taking decisive action at the precise moment of greatest distress. The chapter does not explain the mechanics of what this arising involves. But its placement is the message: in the worst time of distress the world will have known, the angelic protector of God's people is not absent, not still detained, not still resisted. He arises. The same unseen reality that chapter 10 revealed as a costly, contested struggle is shown here, at last, tipping decisively in favor of the people it protects.

**"Your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered":** This signifies **Deliverance Is Personal and Recorded, Not Generic — the Book Is the Recurring Biblical Image of God's Particular Knowledge of Those Who Belong to Him.**

The qualification everyone whose name is found written in the book is essential to the promise. Deliverance in the time of distress is not extended automatically to an entire people group by virtue of ethnicity or nationality alone — it is extended to those whose

names are written, a phrase that recurs across Scripture (Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69:28, Malachi 3:16, Philippians 4:3, Revelation 20:12, 21:27) to describe a record kept by God himself. This is one of the most personal images of salvation available in the entire Bible: not a category one happens to belong to, but a name, individually recorded, individually known. The time of distress will be the worst in the history of nations — and within it, God knows, by name, exactly who belongs to Him.

**"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt":** This signifies **This Is One of the Clearest Old Testament Statements of Bodily Resurrection to Two Distinct and Permanent Destinies — the Direct Foundation for Jesus' Own Teaching.**

The clarity of this verse should not be passed over quickly. Sleep in the dust of the earth is a description of death — bodies returned to the ground, as Genesis 3:19 describes. Awake is resurrection — a genuine, bodily rising from that sleep. And the destinies are two, both everlasting, and both explicitly named: everlasting life, and shame and everlasting contempt. This verse stands as one of the clearest anticipations, centuries in advance, of Jesus' own teaching in John 5:28-29 that 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 — and of the great resurrection scene of Revelation 20:11-15. The hope of bodily resurrection that 1 Thessalonians 4 described as the answer to the Thessalonians' grief over those who had died is not a New Testament innovation. It is here, in Daniel, at the climax of the Old Testament's most detailed prophetic book.

**"Those who are wise... and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever":** This signifies **The Wise Who Taught and Suffered in Chapter 11 Receive, in Chapter 12, the Reward That Closes the Loop Between Suffering and Glory.**

The connection between this verse and 11:33-35 is deliberate and direct. There, the wise were described as those who instruct many — and as paying for that instruction with their lives: falling by the sword, being burned, captured, plundered. Here, the same wise — and those who lead many to righteousness, the same instructing activity described from a different angle — are promised that they will shine like the brightness of the heavens... like the stars forever and ever. The suffering of chapter 11 and the glory of chapter 12 are not two separate stories. They are the same story, told across the boundary between this age and the age to come. The wise who fell by the sword did not fall into nothing. They fell into a sleep from which they will awake to shine forever — and the shining is described in terms that directly recall the description of the holy people in Daniel 7:18, who will receive the kingdom and possess it forever, forever and ever.

**"Roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge":** This signifies **The Vision Is Entrusted to Daniel But Not Fully Released — Its Full Significance Awaits a Future Time, and the Interim Will Be Marked by Restless Searching.**

The instruction to seal the scroll until the time of the end echoes 8:26, where Daniel was told to seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future — but here the sealing is paired with a description of what will characterize the time before that future arrives: many will go here and there to increase knowledge. The phrase has been read in different ways — as a description of an increase in worldly knowledge generally, as a description of people anxiously searching the prophecy itself for understanding, or as both. What the verse establishes, at minimum, is that the period between Daniel's own day and the time of the end will not be a period of settled clarity about how this vision applies. There will be searching — restless, widespread searching — and the scroll, for now, remains sealed.

#### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US TODAY

**1. Let the Hope of Bodily Resurrection — to Two Distinct Destinies — Shape How You Live and How You Grieve:** Daniel 12:2 is not an abstract theological footnote. It is the answer this entire vision has been building toward, delivered at the point of greatest need: after chapters describing martyrdom, persecution, and the apparent triumph of evil powers. The wise who fell by the sword in chapter 11 sleep in the dust of the earth — and they will awake to everlasting life. This is the same hope that 1 Thessalonians 4 offered to a grieving church centuries later: the dead in Christ will rise. Let this hope govern both how you face the prospect of your own death and how you grieve the deaths of those who have died in faith. Sleep is not the end of the story. And let the second destiny named in this verse — shame and everlasting contempt — be received with the seriousness it deserves: both destinies are described as everlasting, and the verse does not allow either to be treated as less than permanent.

**2. Be Among the Wise Who Lead Many to Righteousness — Whatever the Cost — Trusting the Reward That Chapter 12 Promises to the Suffering Described in Chapter 11:** The promise that those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever is addressed to people who will pay a real cost for that instruction — the wise of 11:33 who fell by the sword, were burned, captured, and plundered. The promise does not remove the cost. It answers it. The believer who is currently engaged in the costly work of teaching, instructing, and leading others toward righteousness — in circumstances that make this work genuinely difficult or dangerous — should receive this promise as directly addressed to them: the connection between 11:33 and 12:3 is not incidental. It is the chapter's structure telling you that your instruction, and whatever it costs you, is seen, recorded, and will be answered with a glory that the cost does not diminish.

**3. Trust That Your Name, If You Belong to God, Is Written in the Book — Even When the Time of Distress Makes Deliverance Feel Uncertain:** The promise of deliverance in verse 1 is qualified — everyone whose name is found written in the book — in a way that is meant to comfort rather than to produce anxiety about whether one's name is actually there. The consistent biblical testimony about the book of life is that it is the record of those who belong to God by grace, through faith — not a record whose contents are uncertain or constantly at risk of revision based on performance. In the worst time of distress the world will have known, this verse promises, God will know exactly who is His. Receive the promise as it is given: as an

assurance for those who belong to Him, not as a source of anxious self-examination about whether they do.

#### HOW THIS RELATES TO TODAY

Daniel 12:1-3 stands as one of the Old Testament's most important bridges to the New Testament's full revelation about death, resurrection, and final destiny. The hope that Paul offered the Thessalonians — that those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will be raised, that grief need not be grief without hope — did not arrive without precedent. It arrived as the fulfillment of a hope that the book of Daniel had already articulated, at its climactic moment, centuries earlier. The contemporary believer who reads 1 Thessalonians 4 and finds comfort there is reading the New Testament's confirmation of a promise that Daniel 12:2 had already made: the dead will awake, and for those whose names are written in the book, the awakening is to everlasting life.

The connection between the suffering wise of chapter 11 and the shining wise of chapter 12 is also a permanent pattern for understanding the relationship between present cost and future glory throughout Scripture — the same pattern this series has traced in 2 Thessalonians 1's description of suffering as the qualification for the kingdom, and in Daniel 11:35's description of refining that leads to being made spotless. The contemporary believer engaged in costly faithfulness — teaching, leading, standing firm in circumstances that make such faithfulness genuinely difficult — is living in the space between 11:33 and 12:3, between the falling and the shining. The chapter does not ask anyone to pretend the falling does not hurt. It promises that the falling is not the end of the story.

**Key Lesson:** *At the climax of the entire vision, Michael arises, the dead are promised resurrection to one of two everlasting destinies, and the wise who suffered for leading others to righteousness in chapter 11 are promised, in chapter 12, that they will shine like the stars forever and ever — the suffering and the glory are not two stories but one, and the book in which names are written is the assurance that, in the worst time of distress the world will know, God will know exactly who is His.*

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## Daniel 12:5–7

### How Long? The Question Asked, and the Oath That Answers It

(5) Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two other men, one on this bank of the river and one on the other.  
(6) 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?'  
(7) 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.'*

### THE CONTEXT

After the sweeping declarations of verses 1-4, the scene suddenly becomes visual and concrete again, in a way that recalls the setting of chapter 10: Daniel is still by the great river — and now two other men appear, one on each bank. The man clothed in linen — the same overwhelming figure from 10:5, described there in language echoed in Ezekiel and anticipated in Revelation — is positioned above the waters of the river, a position suggesting transcendence or authority over the scene. And one of the two new figures asks, on Daniel's behalf and on behalf of every reader, the question that the entire vision has been straining toward: how long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?

The answer comes in the form of the most solemn oath that Scripture describes: the man clothed in linen lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven — both hands, not the more common single raised hand of an oath — and swore by him who lives forever. The phrase him who lives forever is itself significant: the guarantor of the oath is identified by the one attribute that makes the oath utterly reliable — His eternal existence. An oath sworn by someone who lives forever cannot be voided by the death of the one who swore it, cannot expire, cannot be outlived by the circumstances it concerns. And the content of the oath is: a time, times and half a time — a period of three and a half years (using the reckoning of 'time' as one year, 'times' as two years, and 'half a time' as half a year), the same duration that Daniel 7:25 attributed to the period during which the little horn would oppress the saints, and the same duration that Revelation 12:14 attributes to the period the woman is protected in the wilderness.

The final clause of the oath is its most theologically striking: when the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed. The completion of these astonishing things is tied not to the triumph of the holy people but to the breaking of their power — a phrase that recalls and intensifies the refining of the wise in 11:35 and the falling of the wise in 11:33. The timeline does not run toward a moment when God's people overcome through their own strength. It runs toward a moment when their power, by every visible measure, has been finally broken — and it is precisely at that moment, the oath declares, that all these things will be completed. The pattern is the pattern of the cross before the cross has happened: completion arriving not despite the breaking but through it.

### PLAIN AMERICAN ENGLISH

*Then I, Daniel, looked, and there in front of me stood two other figures — one on this side of the river, and one on the other side. One of them said to the man dressed in linen, who was standing above the waters of the river, 'How long will it be until these astounding things are fulfilled?' The man dressed in linen, standing above the waters of the river, raised both his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by the One who lives forever: 'It will be for a time, times, and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been completely broken, all these things will be finished.'*

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

**"How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?":** This signifies **The Question Every Sufferer Asks Is Voiced Here by a Heavenly Being on Daniel's Behalf — How Long Is Not a Question of Weak Faith but a Question Built Into the Fabric of the Vision Itself.**

The question how long is one of the most frequently repeated cries in all of Scripture — from the Psalms (How long, O Lord? Psalm 13:1) to Revelation's martyrs under the altar (How long, Sovereign Lord? Revelation 6:10). Its appearance here, in Daniel 12, is significant for who asks it: not Daniel himself, but one of the heavenly figures, on his behalf — or perhaps simply as part of the heavenly conversation that Daniel is permitted to overhear. The question is not framed as a failure of trust. It is framed as the natural and appropriate response to astonishing things — events of the magnitude this vision has described — and it receives, in response, not a rebuke but an oath. The how long is built into the structure of the vision itself, as if to say: of course this is the question. Here is the answer.

**"He lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever":** This signifies **The Double-Handed Oath Sworn by the Eternal God Is the Most Solemn Possible Guarantee — the Answer Is as Certain as the Existence of the One Who Swears It.**

The raising of both hands — rather than the single raised hand more commonly associated with oath-taking — intensifies the solemnity of what is being sworn. And the one by whom the oath is sworn — him who lives forever — is the guarantor whose own nature makes the oath unbreakable. An oath's reliability ultimately depends on the one who swears it: a mortal's oath can be voided by death, by changed circumstances, by the passage of time eroding the conditions under which it was made. An oath sworn by him who lives forever has none of these vulnerabilities. The answer to how long is therefore not merely an estimate or a best guess. It is a guarantee whose certainty is identical to the eternal existence of the God in whose name it is sworn.

**"It will be for a time, times and half a time":** This signifies **The Three-and-a-Half-Year Period Echoes Daniel 7:25 and Anticipates Revelation 12:14 — a Recurring Measure Associated with the Duration of the Saints' Affliction.**

The phrase a time, times and half a time is not unique to this verse. It appears in Daniel 7:25, describing the duration during which the little horn would oppress the saints of the Most High, and it reappears in Revelation 12:14, describing the period during which the woman — representing God's people — is protected in the wilderness from the dragon. The recurrence of this specific duration across these passages, separated by centuries, is part of the larger pattern this series has traced repeatedly in Daniel: the same shape of affliction and deliverance, appearing at different points in the unfolding of the Book of Truth, consistent with itself across every appearance. The duration is fixed. It is not open-ended. And its fixed nature — three and a half years, however that period is ultimately to be understood or applied — is itself part of the comfort the oath provides: the affliction has a measured end.

**"When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed":** This signifies **Completion Arrives Through the Breaking**

## **of the Holy People's Power, Not Through Their Triumph — the Same Pattern of Strength Through Weakness That the Cross Will Later Embody.**

This final clause of the oath is the most theologically dense in the chapter. The natural expectation — that all these things will be completed when the holy people finally win, finally overcome, finally demonstrate sufficient power to prevail — is reversed. Completion comes when their power has been finally broken. This is the same logic this series has encountered in 2 Thessalonians 1's description of suffering as the evidence of God's righteous judgment qualifying the suffering ones for the kingdom, and in Daniel 11:35's description of the wise being refined and purified through falling. The pattern that Daniel 12:7 describes — completion arriving through brokenness rather than around it or despite it — is the same pattern that the cross will make definitive: the decisive victory accomplished not through the triumph of strength but through the apparent and total defeat of it.

### **WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US TODAY**

**1. Bring the Question How Long Honestly Before God — It Is Not a Question That Disqualifies Faith but One That the Vision Itself Voices:** The presence of how long within the vision — asked by a heavenly figure, answered by a solemn divine oath — is permission for every believer to bring this question honestly into their own prayers, without treating its presence as evidence of insufficient faith. The Psalms are full of this question. Revelation's martyrs ask it. And here, in the climactic chapter of Daniel, it is asked and answered with the most solemn guarantee Scripture describes. Ask it. The asking is part of the conversation the vision itself records.

**2. Receive the Oath Sworn by Him Who Lives Forever as the Foundation for Confidence That Outlasts Every Circumstance That Might Seem to Contradict It:** The double-handed oath sworn by the eternal God is offered as the answer to an affliction whose end was not yet visible to Daniel and is often not visible to those currently enduring it. The reliability of the promise does not depend on visible evidence that things are moving toward its fulfillment. It depends entirely on the nature of the One who swore it — him who lives forever. When circumstances seem to contradict the promise, the appropriate response is not to doubt the promise but to remember whose oath it is, and to recall that an oath sworn by the eternal God cannot be outlasted by any circumstance, however long that circumstance persists.

**3. Expect That the Path to Completion May Run Through the Breaking of Strength Rather Than Around It — and Do Not Mistake This for Defeat:** Verse 7's closing clause is a permanent corrective to any theology that expects the completion of God's purposes to be marked, at every stage, by visible strength, victory, and increasing power on the part of God's people. The oath specifies the opposite pattern: when the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed. The believer or the community that experiences a season of being broken — stripped of strength, resources, or influence — should not necessarily read this as evidence that God's purposes have failed or stalled. It may be the pattern the oath describes: the breaking that precedes, and in some sense produces, the completion.

### **HOW THIS RELATES TO TODAY**

The fixed duration of a time, times and half a time, sworn by the most solemn oath available, is one of the most important resources in Scripture for communities and individuals enduring affliction whose end is not visible. The promise is not vague or open-ended — it is measured, bounded, and guaranteed by the eternal God Himself. The contemporary believer facing a season of suffering whose duration feels indeterminate can take genuine comfort from the fact that the affliction this verse describes was never indeterminate to God, even when it was indeterminate to the one experiencing it. The same God who swore this oath governs the duration of every affliction His people experience.

The recurrence of this duration across Daniel 7, Daniel 12, and Revelation 12 — separated by centuries of human history and yet describing the same shape of affliction and protection — is also a testimony to the consistency of the Book of Truth across the whole of Scripture. The pattern does not change because it does not need to. The God who swore this oath to Daniel is the same God whose pattern of allowing affliction for a measured time, before bringing completion through the breaking of human strength, is visible across the entire canon — from the cross itself, where the power of the One who came to save was, by every visible measure, finally broken, and it was at that moment, and through that breaking, that all these things were completed.

**Key Lesson:** *How long is the question every sufferer asks, and it is answered here with the most solemn oath Scripture describes — sworn by Him who lives forever, guaranteeing a fixed and measured duration — and the oath's final clause reveals the pattern that runs through the whole of Scripture: completion arrives not around the breaking of the holy people's power but through it, the same pattern that the cross will make definitive.*

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## Daniel 12:8–13

### Go Your Way, Daniel: The Honest Confession, the Sealed Scroll, and the Promise of Rest and Inheritance

(8) I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, 'My lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?'

(9) He replied, 'Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end.'

(10) Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

(11) From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

(12) Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

(13) As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.'

## THE CONTEXT

The final section of the chapter — and of the entire book of Daniel — opens with one of the most quietly significant confessions in all of prophetic literature: I heard, but I did not understand. After everything Daniel has received — the vision of the man clothed in linen, the explanation of the angelic conflict, the centuries of empires traced in chapter 11, the resurrection promise, the oath sworn by Him who lives forever — Daniel still does not fully understand. And his response to this incomprehension is not despair or further demand for clarity, but a question: my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things? He is asking, in effect, for the ending — for the resolution that will make sense of everything that has come before.

The answer he receives begins with the same instruction given in verse 4: go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Full understanding is not on offer — not to Daniel, not in this moment. But the response does not stop there. Verse 10 offers a different kind of clarity — not about the timeline, but about the people who will live through it: many will be purified, made spotless and refined — the same language as 11:35 — but the wicked will continue to be wicked. And then the crucial observation: none of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. Understanding itself, the verse says, is tied to wisdom and to the refining process — not merely to access to information. The wicked, possessing the same information, will not understand it. This is the same principle this series encountered in 2 Thessalonians 2's description of those who refused to love the truth and were given over to a powerful delusion: understanding is not purely intellectual. It is moral and spiritual.

Verses 11 and 12 then introduce two specific durations — 1,290 days from the abolition of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination of desolation, and 1,335 days, with the promise blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. These numbers do not match exactly either the three and a half years (1,260 days on a 360-day calendar) of verse 7, or each other — and the differences have been the subject of considerable discussion across the centuries, with various proposals for what additional periods these numbers might represent, beyond the basic duration already sworn by oath. What is not in doubt, regardless of how the precise arithmetic is resolved, is the message of verse 12: blessing is promised to the one who waits and reaches the end. The specific numbers, whatever their full significance, function pastorally as a further assurance that the timeline — down to the day — is known, fixed, and worth waiting for.

And then, in the chapter's and the book's final verse, the messenger turns from the centuries of history, the multitudes, the wise, and the wicked, to address Daniel himself, personally, one final time: as for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance. This is the personal application of the resurrection promise of verse 2, spoken directly to the man who has just spent this entire vision being strengthened, touch by touch, to receive it. Daniel will die — you will rest, the same image of sleep used for the multitudes in verse 2. And Daniel will rise — at the end of the days — to receive your allotted inheritance, an inheritance specifically his, recorded, and waiting. The book that opened with a young

exile taken from his homeland closes with an old man promised an inheritance that no empire, however contemptible or however powerful, can take from him.

#### PLAIN AMERICAN ENGLISH

*I heard all this, but I didn't understand it. So I asked, 'My lord, what will be the outcome of all this?' He replied, 'Go on your way, Daniel, because these words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless, and refined — but the wicked will keep on being wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits and makes it to the end of the 1,335 days. As for you, go on your way until the end. You will rest, and then, at the end of the days, you will rise to receive the inheritance that has been set aside for you.'*

#### KEY OBSERVATIONS

**"I heard, but I did not understand":** This signifies **Daniel's Honest Confession of Incomprehension, Near the Very End of the Book, Models a Faithful Response to Revelation That Exceeds Full Understanding.**

This brief confession is one of the most important moments in the entire book — not because it resolves anything, but because of what it permits. Daniel, who has received more direct revelation than almost any other figure in the Old Testament, who has just been shown the Book of Truth opened in unprecedented detail, says simply: I heard, but I did not understand. The book does not treat this as a failure on Daniel's part, and it does not treat it as a problem that must be solved before the book can end. Daniel's incomprehension is simply recorded, honestly, as part of his experience of receiving this vision — and the book ends without fully resolving it. This is itself instructive: receiving revelation faithfully does not require comprehending it fully. Daniel heard. That was enough for the moment to be genuine, even though understanding was not complete.

**"None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand":** This signifies **Understanding Is Tied to Moral and Spiritual Condition, Not Merely to Access to Information — the Same People Reading the Same Words Will Not Arrive at the Same Understanding.**

This verse is one of the most important in the chapter for how it reframes the entire question of understanding prophecy. The wicked and the wise, in this verse, are not distinguished by access — both, presumably, could have access to the same sealed words once unsealed at the time of the end. They are distinguished by understanding — and the verse states flatly that the wicked will not understand, while the wise will. This is the same principle this series has traced in 2 Thessalonians 2's description of those who refused to love the truth and were given over to a powerful delusion so that they would believe the lie: the capacity to understand truth is not a purely intellectual matter. It is connected to the moral and spiritual orientation of the one doing the understanding. The wise of Daniel 12 — the same wise who instructed many in 11:33 and who will shine like the stars in 12:3 — understand because of who they are, not merely because of what they have read.

**"Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days":** This signifies **Whatever the Precise Significance of the Specific Numbers, the Pastoral Message Is Clear: Blessing Belongs to the One Who Waits and Reaches the End.**

The two specific numbers in verses 11-12 — 1,290 days and 1,335 days — have generated extensive discussion across the centuries of interpretation, including proposals about additional periods of purification, dedication, or transition beyond the core 1,260-day (three-and-a-half-year) period sworn by oath in verse 7. This study does not attempt to adjudicate every proposal. What can be received with confidence, regardless of how the arithmetic is ultimately understood, is the pastoral weight of verse 12's blessing: blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end. The specificity of the numbers — down to the day — is itself part of the message. This is not a vague or symbolic gesture toward an indefinite future. It is a timeline known to the day by the God who set it, and blessing belongs to those who wait for it and reach it.

**"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance":** This signifies **The Book's Final Word Is the Most Personal — Daniel Himself Is Promised Death as Rest and Resurrection to an Inheritance Specifically His.**

After all the multitudes, all the wise, all the wicked, all the centuries of kings — the very last word of the book turns to Daniel, by name, one final time. Go your way till the end. The phrase recalls the go your way of verse 9, but now applied not to the sealed scroll but to Daniel's own life: he will go his way until his own end arrives. You will rest — the same sleep-language as verse 2's multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth, now spoken to Daniel about his own death, with the gentleness of the word rest rather than any harsher term. And then at the end of the days you will rise — the same awake-language as verse 2, now personal — to receive your allotted inheritance. The inheritance is allotted: assigned, portioned, specifically his. The book that began with Daniel as a young man taken from his inheritance in Judah, given a new name in a foreign court, ends with Daniel as an old man promised an inheritance that is his — permanently, by resurrection, regardless of what any empire took from him along the way.

#### **WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US TODAY**

**1. Receive Revelation Faithfully Even When Full Understanding Does Not Follow — Daniel's Confession Is Permission, Not Failure:** I heard, but I did not understand is one of the most liberating confessions available to any believer who has engaged seriously with Scripture and come away with genuine questions still unresolved. Daniel — recipient of more direct revelation than almost anyone in the Old Testament — ends the book with this confession, and the book does not treat it as a deficiency to be corrected before the book can properly conclude. The contemporary believer who has read, studied, and prayed over passages of Scripture — including, perhaps, the very chapters of Daniel this series has covered — and still finds genuine questions remaining is in good company. Hearing faithfully does not require understanding completely.

## **2. Examine Whether Your Engagement with Truth Is Forming the Kind of Understanding That Verse 10 Describes — Understanding That Flows from Being Refined, Not Merely from Being Informed:**

The stark contrast of verse 10 — many will be purified, made spotless and refined... none of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand — is a standing challenge to any approach to Scripture, including prophecy, that treats understanding as a purely intellectual achievement, separable from the moral and spiritual formation of the one doing the understanding. The question worth asking is not only what do I understand about this text but what kind of person is my engagement with this text forming me into. The wise understand because the refining process described throughout chapters 11 and 12 has been at work in them. Pursue that refining, and trust that the understanding verse 10 promises will follow it.

## **3. Hold Daniel's Final Promise as Your Own — Death as Rest, and Resurrection to an Inheritance That Is Specifically Yours:**

The book's closing words to Daniel — you will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance — are addressed to Daniel by name, but the pattern they describe is the pattern this entire series has traced from 1 Thessalonians 4 through Daniel 12:2 and now to this final, personal application. Every believer who belongs to the God of Daniel can receive this same promise as their own: an allotted inheritance, specifically theirs, waiting beyond the rest that death will be. Let this be the lens through which every other promise in Daniel — and in every chapter this series has covered — is finally read: history moves toward an end, the end has been written, and your name, if it is written in the book, has an inheritance allotted to it that no contemptible king, however long permitted to exalt himself, can touch.

### **HOW THIS RELATES TO TODAY**

The book of Daniel, across the chapters this series has covered — the four beasts, the ram and the goat, the seventy weeks, the angelic conflict, the centuries of empires, and now this final chapter — has consistently demonstrated the same underlying message in different forms: the kingdoms of this world rise, exalt themselves, persecute the people of God, and fall, exactly as the Book of Truth recorded in advance — and the people of God, sustained through that history by knowing their God, are promised an outcome that the kingdoms of this world cannot touch. Daniel 12 is where that promise becomes most explicit and most personal. It is not only that the kingdom of God will outlast every other kingdom, as chapter 2 promised at the very beginning. It is that Daniel himself — and everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be there to receive it.

The final image of the book — an old man told to go his way, rest, and then rise to receive an inheritance allotted to him — is one of the most fitting conclusions in all of Scripture to a book that began with a young man's deportation into a foreign empire. Everything that empire and the empires that followed it could do to Daniel — take him from his homeland, give him a foreign name, place him under threat of death by lions, surround him with kings whose power seemed, in their moment, absolute — none of it touched the inheritance that was allotted to him. The Book of Truth, having shown Daniel the history of nations for centuries beyond his own life, closes by assuring him that his own story does not end where his life ends. He will rest. And he will rise.

**Key Lesson:** *The book of Daniel ends not with full understanding — I heard, but I did not understand — but with something better: the personal promise that the old prophet's own death will be rest, not ending, and that at the end of the days he will rise to receive an inheritance allotted specifically to him; and this same promise, given to Daniel by name, is the inheritance of everyone whose name is found written in the book — the final word of the Book of Truth, and the final word of this study, is that the story does not end in the dust.*

EXPLORING  
**DANIEL CHAPTER 12:**  
THE END TIMES & THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION

<p><b>1 A TIME OF GREAT TROUBLE</b> (vs. 1-3)</p> <p>"A TIME OF TROUBLE SUCH AS NEVER WAS SINCE THERE WAS A NATION." (v. 2)</p> <p>"AT THAT TIME YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE DELIVERED." (v. 1)</p> <p>"EVERYONE FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK SHALL BE DELIVERED." (v. 1)</p> <p>"MANY OF THOSE WHO SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE." (v. 2)</p> <p>• Some to everlasting life. • Some to shame &amp; everlasting contempt.</p>	<p><b>2 THE WISE WILL SHINE</b> (v. 3)</p> <p>"THOSE WHO ARE WISE SHALL SHINE LIKE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT, AND THOSE WHO TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE THE STARS FOREVER AND EVER."</p> <p>Daniel is told to "shut up the words, and seal the book... and the time of the end." (v. 4)</p>	<p><b>3 DANIEL'S PRAYER &amp; THE ANSWER</b> (vs. 5-13)</p> <p>Daniel seeks understanding about the end times.</p> <p>An angel is sent to give him understanding and strength.</p> <p>Daniel is instructed to "understand the matter..." (v. 30)</p> <p>Michael, the great prince who stands for your people, will arise. (v. 1)</p> <p>Blessed is the one who waits and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. (v. 12)</p>	<p><b>4 THE TIME FRAMES REVEALED</b> (vs. 7, 11)</p> <p><b>70 WEEKS (490 YEARS)</b> DECREED FOR YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR HOLY CITY</p> <p><b>7 WEEKS (49 years)</b> To restore &amp; build Jerusalem</p> <p><b>62 WEEKS (434 years)</b> Until the Prince Messiah the Prince</p> <p><b>1 WEEK (7 years)</b> Covenant confirmed in the middle of the week... Sacrifice &amp; offering cease.</p>	<p><b>5 THE END TIME RESURRECTION</b> (vs. 2-3)</p> <p>A great resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.</p> <p>SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT</p> <p>This will happen at the end of the age when God's Kingdom is fully established.</p>	<p><b>6 DANIEL'S FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT</b> (v. 13)</p> <p>"But you, go your way till the end is accomplished; for you shall rest, and stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."</p> <p>Keep going; God's plan will be completed.</p> <p>You will rest in the grave.</p> <p>You will rise to receive your inheritance.</p>	<p><b>7 KEY THEMES OF CHAPTER 12</b></p> <p>GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE DELIVERED</p> <p>THE WISE WILL SHINE FOREVER</p> <p>GOD REVEALS AND SEALS HIS PLAN</p> <p>GOD'S TIMING IS PERFECT</p> <p>RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED</p> <p>ETERNAL REWARDS OR JUDGMENT</p> <p>HOPE IN THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE</p>	<p><b>8 THE ULTIMATE HOPE</b> (Daniel 12 &amp; Beyond)</p> <p>God's kingdom will stand forever.</p> <p>"THE WISE SHALL SHINE LIKE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT FOREVER AND EVER." (v. 3)</p> <p>LET US HOLD FAST TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST!</p>
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**DANIEL 12 GIVES US CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES.**  
GOD KNOWS THE END FROM THE BEGINNING, AND HE WILL BRING HIS PEOPLE INTO EVERLASTING GLORY.

## Closing Prayer

*Heavenly Father,*

*We close the book of Daniel having walked through visions of beasts and empires, through a prophet's confession and a king's pride, through seventy weeks and a great war and a contemptible king who desecrated Your temple — and we close it here, at the only place it could have ended: with the dead promised to awake, with the wise promised to shine like the stars, and with an old man told to go his way, rest, and rise to receive an inheritance that no empire ever touched.*

*Lord, give us Michael's arising in our own time of distress — the confidence that the unseen guardian who was contested for twenty-one days in chapter 10 is the same guardian who arises decisively when the time comes. Give us the hope of the resurrection — multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake — and let it govern how we grieve and*

*how we live. And make us among the wise: those who lead many to righteousness, whatever it costs, trusting the promise that the cost is not the end of the story.*

*Give us Daniel's honesty when we do not understand — I heard, but I did not understand — and Daniel's peace in receiving, not every answer, but the answer that matters most: the personal word that says go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance. Let that be true for us, as it was true for him. Whatever this life takes from us — whatever empire, whatever loss, whatever contemptible power is permitted, for a time, to exalt itself — let us hold what cannot be taken: the inheritance allotted to everyone whose name is found written in the book.*

*We have read the Book of Truth, as much of it as has been given to us, and we believe it — not because we understand all of it, but because the One who wrote it lives forever, and swore by His own life that it is true. Soli Deo Gloria. To God alone be the glory — for the beasts that fell, for the kingdom that will never be destroyed, for the prophet who rests and will rise, and for every name written in the book. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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***Soli Deo Gloria***  
*Glory to God Alone*