

Daniel 12: The Great Time of Trouble

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

Daniel 12:1

Introduction:

1. It is very important for us to remember that this prophecy has time and people parameters for our assistance.
 - a. This prophecy is limited to the nation of Israel, as declared by Gabriel (10:14 cp 9:24-27; 11:14; 12:1).
 - b. This prophecy is limited to their latter days, their second period, from Babylon to destruction (10:14).
 - c. All the events in this prophecy were fulfilled by the time of Israel's scattering by Rome in 70 AD (12:7).
 - d. These parameters are our starting point, as they are constraints we must obey to rightly understand.
 - e. We trust the Bible over any or all men; we give God the benefit of any doubt and trust His parameters.
 - f. We now come to the last stage of the latter days of the nation of Israel. What happened up to AD 70?
 - g. We accept and appreciate the date- and people-limiting statements of 10:14 and 12:7 for this prophecy, just as we accept our Lord's that all things of Matthew 24 occurred in His generation (Matt 24:32-35).
 - h. Once we believe God's plain parameters, we interpret the figurative language by Scripture and history.
2. It is impossible this prophecy of Israel's latter days has a 2000 year gap and jumps to a Gentile antichrist.
 - a. We have before shown the folly of the leap at 11:36 from the Maccabees to some yet-future superman.
 - b. A prophecy including all the chronological details of chapter 11 could not ignore the much more important years of 150 BC to AD 70, including the kingdom of God and destruction of Jerusalem.
 - c. The prophecy certainly provides details about the desolation of Jerusalem already introduced (9:26-27).
 - d. Most commentators hold this gap- or leap-theory, especially those today of the Futurist school. Once they put a gap of 2000 years in the plan prophecy of 70 weeks (9:24-27), it is easy to do it again here!
3. It is also impossible this prophecy of Israel's latter days would end with Antiochus Epiphanes in 163 BC.
 - a. Other commentators force the rest of the prophecy (11:36 – 12:13) to continue describing Antiochus IV!
 - b. A fast-moving prophecy of the sort seen in 11:2-35 would not ignore more important events following.
 - c. Antiochus Epiphanes is dealt with fully in 11:21-31, and the Hasmonean period is covered in 11:32-35.
 - d. A prophecy of the latter days of Israel had many more important events coming after Antiochus.
 - e. They arrogantly ignore the coming desolation of Jerusalem following the Saviour's sacrifice (9:24-27).
 - f. Antiochus was exceeded by Herod in atrocities and the Romans in destruction. But they ignore both!
4. The final vision of Daniel is the longest and most detailed, and it includes all the book's final three chapters.
5. The chapter break at 11:45 should not distract us at all, for the prophecy plainly continues on uninterrupted.
6. This lengthy prophecy covers every important event of Israel's history from Daniel to Jerusalem's end.

The Conclusion of the Vision (12:1-4)

- 12:1 At the time of the Herods, the Lord Jesus Christ shall send promised and horrible judgment on Israel.
1. For the time referred to, we look at the context, which is the time of Herods and Rome (11:36-45).
 2. The “time of the end” from 11:40 is the final conflict of Greece and Rome, with Rome winning all.
 3. The Bible uses time of the end, last days, and latter days with great latitude depending on context.
 4. Michael, the archangel, shall stand up in judgment against the nation, but he will save all the elect.
 5. We do not believe Michael is the Lord Jesus Christ any more than we believe that Gabriel is He.
 6. You may study this matter of Michael's identity further by reviewing the notes for Daniel 10:13.
 7. When someone stands up, we recognize that they are going to be much more active and involved.
 8. There was great angelic activity, even by the angel of the Lord, in the years surrounding our Lord.
 9. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph (Matt 1:20,24; 2:13,19), appeared to the shepherds (Luke 2:9), opened our Lord's tomb (Matt 28:2), opened a prison for Peter and John (Acts 5:19), directed Philip to the eunuch (Acts 8:26), delivered Peter out of prison (Acts 12:7), killed Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:23), took care of Paul in a storm (Acts 27:23), and fought against Satan (Rev 12:7).
 10. An angel of the Lord, Gabriel, appeared to Zacharias (Luke 1:11,19) and to Mary (Luke 1:26).
 11. Angels in general were also active (Matt 4:11; Luke 2:13; 22:43; 24:23; John 1:51; 5:4; 20:12; Acts 10:3; I Tim 3:16; 5:21; Rev 1:1), and this does not include the unprecedented activity of the devils.

12. The holy angels were involved in Christ's kingdom coming with power (Matt 16:27-28), which was His coming in judgment on that generation, as indicated by some of the hearers still being alive.
 13. This time of trouble without precedent is identical to the great tribulation of Jesus (Matthew 24:21).
 14. This time of trouble without precedent is the consummation and destruction of the nation (9:26-27).
 15. Josephus recorded calamities and suffering exceeding any before (Wars, Introduction; V, 10:5).
 16. Josephus recorded over 1,100,000 were killed by Romans and each other and 97,000 taken captive.
 17. Upper class women ate their children, as Josephus describes, due to the horrible famine in the city.
 18. As Jesus prophesied, the elect would be saved from the deception and destruction (Matt 24:22,24).
 19. Jesus and Peter told them how to escape the coming judgment altogether (Matt 24:16; Acts 2:40).
- 12:2 The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom would confront the sleeping nation and cause great division.
1. Did an awakening occur before Jerusalem's destruction that divided Israel into elect and reprobates?
 2. The events told in 12:1-4 must occur before 70 AD, for Jerusalem's destruction is the climax (12:7).
 3. We are to rightly divide the word of truth here, just as we must do in so many places to avoid error.
 4. We are at the climactic end of a great prophecy, so we should not be surprised with some figurative language, which was characteristic of the prophets (Hosea 12:10; I Peter 1:11; Revelation 1:1). For review of this point, read Isaiah 13 about the Medes in 459 BC and Acts 2:17-21 about Pentecost!
 5. The final resurrection is not here, for that event is at least 2000 years past the scattering limit (12:7).
 6. The final resurrection is not here, for all shall be raised but only some are awakened (John 5:28-29).
 7. The final resurrection is not here, for most saints have nothing to do with Daniel's people (10:14).
 8. The resurrection of saints at Christ's rising is not here, for some were for shame (Matt 27:52-53).
 9. We are constrained to place the fulfillment before AD 70, and we see a perfect such fulfillment.
 10. Because of this verse's language, the literalists and futurists cannot see anything but resurrection.
 11. As we have seen many times, God will give unbelievers enough rope for them to hang themselves.
 12. There is nothing said here at all about death, resurrection, bodies, angels, clouds, saints, etc., etc.
 13. Put your faith to the test; believe God rather than men; see if Scripture does not fulfill the figures.
 14. After 400 years of silence from God, John the Baptist and Jesus burst on the scene with the gospel.
 15. They found a nation asleep in ignorance and worldliness, which they jarred into consciousness.
 16. John and Jesus preached the "time is at hand," for it was time to get up and receive the Messiah.
 17. Due to the time of expectation, all men mused whether John was the Messiah or not (Luke 3:15).
 18. Some believed unto eternal life; some rejected the message unto everlasting shame and contempt.
 19. Jesus preaching the gospel brought great light to those in the shadow of death (Is 9:2; Matt 4:12-17).
 20. The light of the gospel of Jesus Christ arising on people was the dawning of a new day (Is 61:1-3).
 21. Remember figurative language of Christ's ministry (Is 40:1-11; 42:1-7; 60:1-3; 61:1-6; Mal 3:1-6).
 22. God judged the nation with a stupor and sleep upon hearer and teacher (Is 29:9-10 cp I Cor 1:19).
 23. Jesus caused great division and consequences (Luk 2:34-35; John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; II Cor 2:16).
 24. Paul used figures of sleep and death often (Romans 13:11-12; I Cor 15:34; Eph 5:14; I Thess 5:6).
 25. The gospel message created a division by eternal life and eternal condemnation (John 3:18-21,36).
 26. Peter and Paul warned the Jews of judgment for rejecting Jesus (Acts 2:40; 13:40-41; 28:25-29).
 27. There was horrible shame within the generation of those who did not confess Him (Luke 9:26-27).
 28. The Gentiles believed the word of the Lord; but the Jews condemned themselves (Acts 13:44-52).
- 12:3 There was a special class of persons coming, known for their wisdom and conversion of many to God.
1. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers of our Lord Jesus Christ fulfill this verse.
 2. The twelve apostles are added to the twelve fathers of Israel as the twenty-four elders in heaven.
 3. These men were gifted with wisdom to teach the people knowledge (Luke 2:40; 21:15; Acts 6:10; I Corinthians 2:6-7; 3:10; 12:8; Ephesians 1:8,17; 3:10; Colossians 1:28; II Peter 3:15).
 4. They turned men to God (Acts 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 17:6; 19:26; 26:18,20; I Thess 1:9-10).
 5. Jesus said John was a bright and shining light; he turned many to God (John 5:35; Luke 1:16-17).
 6. The pastors of the seven churches of Asia were represented as seven stars in His hand (Rev 1:20).
 7. Many were turned to righteousness; their enemies admitted they turned the world upside down!

- 12:4 Gabriel tells Daniel to close up the vision until the end time, when many would be bringing knowledge.
1. The prophecy was not understood well until the time of the end, when John and Jesus appeared.
 2. Both John and Jesus foretold these same events, with emphasis on that generation being destroyed.
 3. Jesus declared at the time of the end – the last generation – Daniel could be understood (Mat 24:15)!
 4. He declared to Israel that all written vengeance against them was about to be fulfilled (Luke 21:22).
 5. The apostles ran to and fro with their commission to take the gospel to all nations (Mark 16:20)!
 6. Men run with their feet, and gospel ministers are described as having beautiful feet (Rom 10:15).
 7. Philip ran so fast, by the Spirit's power, that he moved from the eunuch to Azotus (Acts 8:39-40)!
 8. Paul went all over the place from Syria to Illyricum, from Asia to Rome, from Cyprus to Crete.
 9. Paul labored more abundantly than all in running to and fro for Christ (I Cor 15:10; Rom 15:18-24).
 10. Paul ridiculed the ignorance of the Athenians! Consider the knowledge he brought (Acts 17:16-31).
 11. Paul had great knowledge of matters that had been kept secret since the creation (Eph 3:1-19).
 12. The New Testament and the gospel of it bring great knowledge (Luke 1:77; Rom 15:14; I Cor 1:5; 12:8; 14:6; 15:34; II Cor 4:6; 6:6; 10:5; 11:6; Eph 4:13-14; Col 1:9-10; I Tim 2:4).
 13. Shall we hallucinate about planes, trains, cars, and men ever learning (II Tim 3:7)? God forbid!
 14. We are now at the end of the prophecy, which began in 11:2. No important event was left out from Daniel's day to the final calamities of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Give God the glory!
- 12:5 Daniel observed two other angels, one standing on each side of the river Hiddekel, or the Tigris (10:4).
- 12:6 One of the angels beside the river asked Gabriel how long until the end of the wonders of this prophecy.
1. We leave the italicized words just as they are, for there was and are surely good reasons for them.
 2. We know from the answer that the question was understood of the time of trouble just emphasized.
 3. Since any other use of the time frame given does not fit the nation of Israel or any other nation, it must be "how long shall it be to the end" of the unprecedented trouble.
 4. The time of trouble was unparalleled suffering for Israel, but there would be a special deliverance.
 5. The timing of this matter is of great importance, as N.T. believers would be carefully watching it.
- 12:7 Gabriel clarifies a couple matters of timing, but shows their great significance by swearing by God.
1. Why in the world is this question and answer of such importance that Gabriel swears dramatically?
 2. Because the great importance of the event and the precise details of timing justified confirmation.
 3. Our Lord used a comparable oath in confirming His own prophecy of this event (Matt 21:34-36).
 4. This prophecy and fulfillment witnessed the arrival of Christ's kingdom (Matt 24:14; Luke 21:31), for the prophecy was preached in all the world for a witness that Jesus was truly Lord and Christ.
 5. The answer has two parts – duration of the time of trouble and the endpoint of the whole prophecy.
 6. The wonders leading to the scattering of the holy people would take time, times, and half a time.
 7. Time, times, and half a time is an expression for 3 and a half years, or 3 years and part of a year.
 8. The time, times, and half of Antichrist is exactly 3 ½ years by virtue of 1260 days and 42 months, which clarification is plainly given in Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12:6,14; 13:5.
 9. If we run the day-year principle from any date in the prophecy (455 BC – AD 70), it does not fit, for that would require 1260 years and there is no Jewish event after 70 AD, with the nation scattered.
 10. How can we use the year-day principle in some places (7:25; Rev 12:6,14; 13:5) and not in others (8:14)? By rightly dividing the word of truth, just as we are commanded (II Tim 2:15), by the limiting context and plain historical fulfillment.
 11. The number of days explained to Daniel, 1290 and 1335, both qualify as 3 ½ years. We would not say 3 7/12 years, and we would seldom say 3 2/3 years. We would say 3 ½ years for both.
 12. The holy people, God's people, the nation of Israel, would be scattered to conclude this prophecy.
 13. The entire prophecy would be completely fulfilled when Israel was scattered, which was 70 AD.
 14. We are told in the New Testament such a scattering occurred in our Lord's generation (Luke 21:24).
 15. Moses had prophesied of this horrible desolation long before when warning Israel (Deut 28:49-68).
- 12:8 Daniel does not comprehend the exchange so far, so he asks for clarification about the end of the things.
1. There is some particular event that is being implied by the angels, which Daniel wants clarified.
 2. The particular event is the unprecedented time of trouble with only the righteous delivered (12:1).
 3. But Daniel does not have the starting or ending point, so he asks for clarification of "what."
 4. Daniel wants more details, but he is denied further knowledge or explanation (I Peter 1:10-12).

- 12:9 Daniel is told again that the words of this prophecy were reserved until the time of the end (Matt 24:15).
1. Jesus said that Daniel could be understood in light of His prophecy (Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20).
 2. Jesus explained sufficient details to show when this 3 ½ years began counting to serve His people.
 3. Jesus said that all things that were written of vengeance on Israel were coming shortly (Luke 21:22).
 4. Every believer in the New Testament era – the wise of the 12:10 – understood the prophecy (12:4).
- 12:10 A great contrast would exist between the wise and wicked – the wise suffering from ignorant wicked.
1. The conflict between the wise and wicked was horrible, as we read (I Thess 2:13-16; Heb 10:34).
 2. There were many purified and made white by the blood of Christ (I Cor 6:9-11 cp Acts 21:20).
 3. These were tried with fiery trials of persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ, as in I Peter 1:7; 4:12.
 4. The Jews raised enormous persecutions against the saints starting in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1; 9:1-2,23; 13:45,50; 14:2,4-5,19; 17:5,13; 18:12; 19:13,33; 20:3,19; 21:11,27; 23:12; 25:7,24; Rev 2:9; 3:9).
 5. Many became early martyrs for the cause of Christ at the hands of the Jews (Acts 12:1-3; 22:20).
 6. When the wicked do wickedly, there must be special wickedness being considered (Acts 2:22-24).
 7. Crucifying Jesus Christ was doing very wickedly (Mat 12:45; Act 3:12-15; 4:10; 5:28-30; 7:51-53).
 8. The difference between the two classes was understanding (Matt 13:13; 24:15; Luke 1:3; 8:10; 24:45; John 8:43-45; 12:37-43; 15:21; Acts 3:17; 13:27-28; 28:23-29; Rom 11:28; 15:21; I Cor 2:8; II Cor 3:14; 4:3-4; Eph 1:18; 3:4; I Tim 1:13; I John 5:20).
 9. Though the warnings of Jerusalem's destruction were preached plainly, repeatedly, and publicly for forty years, only the "wise" disciples of Christ understood. The wicked Jews were destroyed!
 10. The Jews foolishly rejoiced in their defeat of Cestius Gallus and the Twelfth Legion in 66 AD, rejecting the warning of John, Jesus, and the apostles in their superstitious trust in God to save them.
 11. God hid gospel things from the wise and prudent, and He revealed them to babes (Matt 11:25-27).
- 12:11 There would be 1290 days from the abomination of desolation set up to the end of the daily sacrifice.
1. The time considered is between the two events described in this verse, as there are only two events.
 2. The abomination of desolation is clearly the Roman armies (Matthew 24:15-16 cp Luke 21:20-21).
 3. The verbs do not require the events in any particular order, though we are used to progressing in time from one event to a later event, by their order; here it is the time between them that is given.
 4. This part of the prophecy was not understood til the time of the end, when Jesus opened it (12:5-13).
 5. Jesus told us plainly the abomination of desolation came first (Matt 24:15-21 cp Luke 21:20-24).
 6. Once Jesus set the beginning of the time period, His disciples could easily gauge the war's progress.
 7. The Roman armies under Cestius entered the suburbs of Jerusalem, according to the warning of Jesus, on the 30th of Hyperbereteus (Tisri), 66 AD, according to Josephus (Wars, II, 19:4).
 8. The converted date is November 17, when he burned some of the suburbs, camped at the royal palace, and began work on the upper city walls for five days. He could have taken the city easily.
 9. On Nov 22, he withdrew "without any reason in the world," when he could easily have taken the city without a struggle, or in only one day, according to Josephus (Wars, II, 19:7).
 10. Of course, we know he withdrew by God's providence to allow the saints to flee (Luke 21:20-24), or else how could the Christians flee a city surrounded! Give God the glory!
 11. And of course, the Romans returned with much greater strength and great fury against these rebels.
 12. The daily sacrifice ceased to be offered, due to the lack of men to offer it, according to our prophecy, on the 17th day of Panemus (Tamuz), 70 AD, according to Josephus (Wars, VI, 2:1).
 13. The converted date is July 8, 70 AD, when the daily sacrifice was no longer offered in Jerusalem.
 14. There are exactly 43 whole months of 30 days (a total of 1290) between these two events, if we discard the partial months in which the events occurred, in wonderful agreement with the prophecy.
- 12:12 There would be relief and blessing for those who could wait another 45 days for a total of 1335 days.
1. The daily sacrifice ceased to be offered, due to the lack of men to offer it, according to our prophecy, on the 17th day of Panemus (Tamuz), 70 AD, according to Josephus (Wars, VI, 2:1).
 2. The city was completely taken and hostilities ended, when the wicked Jews deserted their impregnable towers out of fear and gave the Romans the city, on the 7th day of Gorpieus (Elul), 70 AD, according to Josephus (Wars, VI, 8:4-5).
 3. Titus and troops were very surprised when the Jews gave up their positions (Wars, VI, 8:4-5; 9:1).
 4. Jesus had prophesied Himself the days would be cut short to preserve the elect (Matthew 24:22).

5. The blessedness told to Daniel of waiting another month and one-half occurred immediately, for Titus gave clemency to any Jews not in arms, according to Josephus (Wars, VI, 9:1-2).
 6. The Jewish Encyclopedia says there were 50 days between the sacrifice ending and the siege's end, as they reckon the siege of Titus lasted 134 days and the daily sacrifice ended after 84 days.
 7. If we continue using whole months and half months, we can easily understand the rounding to 1335.
 8. Since we are dealing in multiples of 30, we should not have a problem with 44 ½ months in total.
 9. The Spirit has already tipped us to this rounding by calling 1290 days, "time, times, and an half"!
- 12:13 Daniel would not be directly affected by the coming events, for he would be safely standing in heaven.
1. Daniel was a very old man, somewhere between 80 and 95 years of age, having served many kings.
 2. His life clearly shows he fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept his faith (II Tim 4:7).
 3. Gabriel tells Daniel to go his way in life and death until the end, which occurred in about 525 years.
 4. It is good for us to think of going our way, for the Lord will take us from here and we will be gone.
 5. Gabriel tells Daniel he would be resting, which is the saints' death (Job 3:17; Is 57:1-2; Rev 14:13).
 6. It is our happy lot to be able to leave this place of vanity and vexation of spirit for a place of rest.
 7. Daniel would stand in his lot, his inherited place in heaven, when the end of Israel finally came.
 8. It is our highest goal to live in our bodies now with an eye to that happy lot we will want in that day.

Conclusion:

1. We have studied Daniel by its given parameters, its prophetic wording, its Scriptural connections, and its incredible historical fulfillment; and we find a wonderful prophecy right up to the end of the Jewish nation.
2. The gaps and leaps necessary for the Futuristic system of prophetic interpretation are unjustified and patently erroneous. They are simply trying to sell sensationalism and speculation. We are not buying!
3. Sticking to the limitations of 10:14 and 12:7, the consecutive nature of the political and spiritual events described, the Scriptural use of language, and the well known and verifiable events of history, we find perfect fulfillments of every verse.
4. The culminating conclusions to studying this book are several: The Bible is true by virtue of Daniel's fulfilled prophecies; Jesus Christ is LORD by fulfilling these prophecies as King of the Final Kingdom; the Jews are no longer the people of God; and God is absolutely sovereign over all the affairs of men.

For further reading:

1. Works of Josephus <http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/JOSEPHUS.HTM>
2. Works of Josephus: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/>
3. Josephus Assistance: <http://members.aol.com/FLJOSEPHUS/home.htm>
4. Philip Mauro's "Seventy Weeks": <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/9170/MAURO4.HTM>