

Daniel 12 – The End of the World as We Know it

Before the end there will be a great tribulation

“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” -Daniel 12:1-4

1. Daniel is reminded again that God’s people will continue to face fiery trials ahead. What word of hope and encouragement is given?
2. As we have seen throughout the book of Daniel, God doesn’t spare the people He loves from trials and pain. He promises that they will not be alone *through* it, that He is doing something *with* it, and He provides an ultimate solution *for* it. What has God been teaching you in this area about Himself and about your life?
3. How does the promise of bodily resurrection at the end encourage you to remain faithful in the midst of present trouble?

At the end there will be a final separation

1. In your day-to-day living, are you consistently aware of the reality that every human being you see and interact with is eternal, and your interactions with them can potentially affect their eternity?
2. Every individual will awake to either everlasting life or everlasting shame and contempt (v2). How is our awareness of this meant to inform our perspective and priorities?
3. Who are “those who are wise” and “those who turn many to righteousness” in v3? What is the exhortation to us?

“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations... it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours.” (C.S. Lewis)

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’” -Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46

Before the end there will be lots of speculation

Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. - Daniel 12:5-9

1. When Daniel is confused about what is happening and what is to come, he asks the angel for answers. What response does he get? (v7-9)
2. The angel gives Daniel all that he needs to know at the time in order to labour on in faithfulness and holiness. Do you struggle to accept that you might not get answers or closure in this life on the difficult things you encounter? What comfort is there in knowing that what we see dimly now will be revealed in fullness, and in the promise of peace and an inheritance waiting for us at "the time of the end" (v9)... "the end of days" (v13)?

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. -1 Corinthians 13:9-12

Until the end we've been given an important occupation

Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days." -Daniel 12:10-13

1. The angel is less concerned with when the end is coming than with what the people are doing to prepare their hearts. Instead of asking "how long?", how can we get ready-preparing our hearts to meet God and living purposefully as we wait for Christ to come again (notice the contrast between the wise and the wicked in v10)?
2. Knowing that we will stand in our allotted place and take our rest in the end (v13), how can the church press on toward that rest with perseverance, passion and zeal for the mission of God?

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. -1 Thessalonians 5:14-24

Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. -Romans 13:11-12

3. What have been your greatest take-aways from our study of Daniel? How has God most challenged, informed, rebuked, encouraged you through His word in this book?

Spend some time thanking and praising God for these things, asking Him for what you need, and lifting one another up in prayer.

*“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
to whom belong wisdom and might.
He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have understanding;
he reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what is in the darkness,
and the light dwells with him.
To you, O God of my fathers,
I give thanks and praise...”*

-Daniel 2:20-23

We pray that through our study of the book of Daniel together, we as a Church have grown and will continue to grow in a deeper knowledge and trust of our great God who is forever King of an everlasting Kingdom. And we pray that we are better equipped and encouraged to live faithfully and fruitfully as exiles in the midst of kingdoms in conflict.