

It is fitting that we conclude the book of Daniel on Easter Sunday,
because the resurrection is at the heart of the conclusion to the book of Daniel.

What are you doing here?
Why are you alive?
What is the *point* of your existence?

The resurrection is the *point* of your existence.

You *know* how much I emphasize the way of the cross
and the importance of suffering in the Christian life!

The Christian ethic is characterized by the cross –
Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.
Have this same mind in yourselves that is yours in Christ Jesus. (Phil 2)
For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God,
one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly (1 Peter 1:19)
Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds... (James 1)

But the cross-shaped ethic of the gospel is *only* cross-shaped – it is only cruciform –
because the cross leads to *resurrection*.

We can count it joy when we endure trials precisely *because*
these light momentary afflictions are preparing for us
an eternal weight of glory. (1 Cor 4:17)

Chapters 10-12 consist of a single vision.

10:1 is the summary statement about the word.
10:2-11:1 is the lengthy introduction to the word.
11:2-12:4 is the “word” that was revealed.
12:5-13 is the final instruction to Daniel regarding the word.

1. “A Word Was Revealed” (10:1)
2. “Understand the Words That I Speak”: The Vision of a Man (10:2-11:1)
3. “I Will Show You the Truth”: The Word of the Days Yet to Come (11:2-12:4)
4. “How Long?” Final Instructions (12:5-13)

1. **Michael and the Time of Trouble: The Resurrection and the Time of the End (12:1-4)**

“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.

Michael means “Who is like God?”

In the book of Jude, he is called an “archangel” –

Revelation 12 describes this.
(Read Revelation 12:1-17)

What Daniel 12 describes as future,
Revelation 12 describes as past.

“Now war arose in heaven” –
Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.
The dragon had been accusing the brethren before God.
Think back to the book of Job –
where Satan – the accuser – had gathered in the heavenly council.

I’m sure that Michael was there as well.
As the archangel in charge of the Jews,
undoubtedly Michael was fuming over Satan’s accusations.

But there was nothing he could do!
Ever since Adam and Eve had handed the dominion of the earth over the Serpent
the Dragon had a legal right to accuse humanity before God!

And if Michael was going to uphold the majesty and holiness of God,
then he must obey the laws of his God!
You do not break the law in order to uphold it!

And so for millennia after millennia, Michael waited for the promised time!
And when Jesus – the male child who would rule the nations with a rod of iron –
was caught up to God and to his throne –
Michael knew that the time had come!
When Jesus – the second Adam – conquered death through his own resurrection,
Michael saw that there was no longer any reason
why Satan should be allowed access to the heavens –
and so “war arose in heaven.”

Because Jesus won the great victory in his resurrection from the dead –
now the hosts of heaven could go into action against the Dragon!

This is part of the reason why the faithful have always understood Daniel
as referring to *more* than just Antiochus Epiphanes.
The deliverance in the time of Antiochus (the Maccabean revolt)
was a *good thing* –
but it was not the great deliverance.
It merely pointed forward to what Jesus would do.

But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

How should we understand the “book”?

And how does your name get written in the book?

Dale Ralph Davis says that this is the “citizen list” of the kingdom of God – and that’s a good way of putting it.

In Revelation 13:8, we hear that judgment is coming against
“everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world
in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” (cf. 17:8)

So pretty clearly, the names were written in the book “before the foundation of the world.”

But then there is another passage that raises another question:

Revelation 3:5 – “The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments,
and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.”

So are there people whose names are written in the book of life – and then blotted out?

Well, if you want to understand how this ‘book’ works,
look back at the first reference to it in Exodus 32:32.

Moses has been asking God to forgive Israel for their sin (with the golden calf).

And so Moses says,

“But now, if you will forgive their sin –
but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”

In reply, the LORD said:

“Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book...” (32:33)

Likewise, in Psalm 69:28, David says of the treacherous (in a passage applied to Judas),

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;
let them not be enrolled among the righteous.”

And in Philippians 4:3, Paul speaks of Clement and the rest of my fellow workers

“whose names are in the book of life.”

Is Paul claiming to know *for certain* that Clement
and the rest of his fellow workers are elect?

How do you make sense of the idea that there are names written in the book of life

“from before the foundation of the world” –

and yet God speaks of blotting people *out* of the book of life!

And only those who persevere to the end – “the one who conquers” –
will *not* be blotted out?

I would suggest that the best way to picture this
is to say that “before the foundation of the world”
God wrote the names of the elect in his book with invisible ink.
Then, in history, as people are added to the visible church,
their names are added to God’s book.

Also, in history, when people rebel against God and apostatize,
he blots their names *out* of his book.

At the end of history, the invisible ink is made visible,
and it turns out that the names of those who persevered to the end
are exactly the same as the names of the elect before the foundation of the world.

“It helps immensely to know...that no church-crushing, saint-smashing regime
can remove the names written in the indelible ink of God’s book” (Davis, 164)

² 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.

Many have been puzzled by the reference to “many” here.

When he says that “many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,”
what does he mean?

Does he not mean *all*?

Possibly.

If verse 2 is referring to the final resurrection of the dead
then certainly “many” means “all.”

(And OT scholars have pointed out that in Hebrew ‘many’ *can* refer to all).

But more likely, it is referring to what happened at the death of Jesus –
when Matthew tells us that “The tombs also were opened.
And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,
and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection
they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” (Matt 27:52-53)

Why do I say this?

Because of the way that verse 3 is worded:

³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;^[a] and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Verse 3 talks about “those who turn many to righteousness.”

It would be tempting to argue that this is referring to our future resurrection –
when we will be like him, for we will see him as he is...

but in Philippians 2,

Paul says that what Daniel had foretold has already come to pass *in you*.

Listen to how Paul says it in Philippians 2:14-16:

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

That phrase “shine as lights in the world” draws on the language of Genesis 1 –
when God created the sun, moon, and stars.

The image is very much the same as Daniel –

“shine like the brightness of the firmament” –

the raqia – that bright blue dome that shines above you!

If you think about it,

the image of the stars shining in the darkness

is not especially appropriate for the image of eternal life.

For there *will be* no darkness!

So Paul rightly understands the imagery in Daniel

and says that *this is now* who you are in Christ!

You *now* shine like stars in the firmament.

So verse 2 is not referring to the general resurrection at the final day.

Rather, it is speaking of the resurrection of Christ –

and the relatively small number of people who were raised at that time.

But of course, that is itself a pointer forward to the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting.

Because there is a point for *Daniel's own future* as well:

⁴ 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 is told to seal the book until the time of the end.

Some have taken verse 4 in a negative sense –

with the idea that people are running to and fro in futility –

and the knowledge that increases is an empty and futile knowledge.

But the language of running “to and fro” is a word that means “to rove about” –

and Jerome commented in the 4th century that it was a phrase often used

to say “I have gone through a book” –

so it is quite possible that the idea is that people will study the book of Daniel
“and knowledge shall increase.”

After all, the point of verses 1-4 is that the wise will shine –
and those who turn many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever –
so it would make sense that the “knowledge” referred to here
is actually a good thing.

2. How Long? A Time, Times, and Half a Time (12:5-7)

⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. ⁶ And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream,^[b] “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” ⁷ 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.

Verses 5-7 then turn to the question of *how long*.

Daniel sees two others – one on each side of the stream.

The man clothed in linen was “above the waters of the stream.”

And “someone” said to the man clothed in linen
“How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?”

In reply, the man clothed in linen “raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven
and swore by him who lives forever...”

The fact that the man swears an oath is significant.

In Deuteronomy 32:40, the LORD says,

“For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear,
As I live forever, if I sharpen my flashing sword
and my hand takes hold on judgment,
I will take vengeance on my adversaries
and will repay those who hate me.”

The other instance of this is in Revelation 10:5,
when the angel who was standing on the sea and the land
“raised his right hand to heaven
and swore by him who lives forever and ever...
that there would be no more delay.”

So the raising of the hands to heaven and swearing by the one who lives forever
signals that this is *really important* and *really certain*!

But in this case, the thing that is really important and really certain is *also* very unclear!!
“it would be for a time, times, and half a time,

and that that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end
all these things would be finished.”

In chapter 7, verse 25, we had heard that the saints of the Most High
would be given into the hand of the fourth beast
for time, times, and half a time.

The Hebrew for “times” is a rare form called the ‘dual’ –
there is singular, plural, and *dual* (meaning that there are two of them!).
So we probably should translate it time, 2 times, and half a time –
which would communicate more clearly that the text is specifically saying
three and a half times!

The Man in linen is saying that the power of the Fourth Beast –
the kingdom that is not like any other kingdom –
will be great – but limited, and temporary.

Given the importance of numbers in the book of Daniel,
it is worth pointing out that 3 ½ is half of 7 –
and 7 is the number of completeness.

Also, the numbers in verses 11-12 give us some sense of how to understand this:

“from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away
and abomination that makes desolate is set up,
there shall be 1,290 days”

(1,290 days is approximately 3 ½ years)

But then he adds:

“Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.”

Where do these extra 45 days come from?!

What do we do with these two different numbers?

All sorts of solutions have been proposed,
but the basic point is that there is an appointed time –
even if the precise date may not be known.

The wise will recognize the signs of the times –
and will persevere –
even if it seems like it is taking a little longer than it should!

There have been hundreds of schemas designed to explain the numbers –
from those who think that it refers to Antiochus Epiphanes
to those who think that it refers to Nero, Frederick II,
Napoleon, the Pope, Gorbachev, or some other antichrist!

But the *point* has never been to figure out the *puzzle*!

(There is no puzzle!)

The point is that we need to *see the picture*!

There will come a time when the power of the holy people comes to an end.
There will come a time “where it appears that darkness has really won the day.
It will seem as if the Antichrist is going to continue for ever.
It will seem as if the church has been entirely obliterated,
for there will no longer be any sign of it.” (quoted in Davis, 165)

How long will it last?
A time, times, and half a time.

No, not a full 7 – half of a 7.

Every time this pattern is repeated we need to stand firm and be patient.
Because *one of these days* it will be the final time!

And the reason for the obscurity of the numbers is to make the pattern *work*
every time!

3. You Shall Rest (12:8-13)

⁸ *I heard, but I did not understand.*

You can feel for Daniel!
We very much would like to agree!

But finally we hear Daniel’s voice – asking the question that *we also* want to ask!

Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” ⁹ *He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.*

Why are you so worried about your life?
You already know the end of the story!

Don’t be anxious, Daniel!
Go your way.
The words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

The image here is that the word is certain –
this *is* going to happen!

In Revelation 4-5, John sees a scroll sealed with seven seals.
What is contained in this scroll?
We find out, when Jesus opens the seals in chapters 6-8:
The scroll contains God’s purposes for history,
in between the first and second comings of Christ.

In a very real way, this is Daniel's scroll!
The scroll that Daniel sealed could not be opened
until the One like a Son of Man came –
until the coming of the Lion of the tribe of Judah –
the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!

Only he was worthy to open the scroll and read it.

Why are you anxious about what you will eat or what you wear?
Why are you anxious about the much less important questions –
who will I marry or what will I do with my life?

I have been asked, "Why do you have so many kids?
The world is getting so awful –
how is it responsible to bring more children into such a world?"

My answer is simple:
Jesus has promised that *he wins* – and he is faithful!

Honestly, life is a lot simpler than we think it is!
(And remember, when I say *simple* – I don't mean *easy*!)
Simplicity has to do with the fact that it's *not complicated*.

Go your way, Daniel.

Just go about your daily life doing the things that God puts in front of you to do!
Love the LORD your God with *all your heart* –
with every last little part of you –
and love your neighbor as yourself!

That's *simple*.

Listen to me, please!
Having a great career – doing what you love –
doesn't matter!!
What *matters* is following Jesus.
Because if you are following Jesus,
then whatever you do will honor him!

Quite frankly, *your calling* is to be part of Jesus Great Commission –
making disciples of the nations.

You will only be here on earth for a few more years –
maybe a few decades.
And *all* that you do in that time
needs to be oriented around loving and serving Christ Jesus!

One of the best ways to make disciples is to bear and rear children in the fear of the Lord.
But as the family of Jesus,
we bear and rear children *both* through having babies
and through adoption (whether legal or spiritual).
Because by “adoption” I don’t just mean legal adoption –
I mean the active work of discipleship
as you walk together as the body of Christ.

We are called to “turn many to righteousness.”
Or to use the language of verse 10:

¹⁰ 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.

So don’t worry about the wicked!
You know that there are some people who *just won’t get it!*
And that’s not something you can worry about.
Those who are wise shall understand.

And they will purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined.

¹¹ 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. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

Verse 11 speaks of the “abomination that makes desolate.”
It would be easy to identify this with the abomination of desolation
when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple 167 BC.
But our Lord Jesus understood this in a different way –
and I am not inclined to disagree with him!!

In Matthew 24:15, Jesus says,
“When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel,
standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),
then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

In one sense Jesus may clearly be referring to the destruction of the temple by the Romans
in AD 70.

But as many have noted,
by the time that the Romans had taken the city in AD 70,
it was *far too late* to flee to the mountains!

And as Jesus continues to talk in Matthew 24-25
it becomes clear that (like Daniel)

Jesus is also referring to multiple events.
Yes, he is talking about the destruction of the temple in AD 70 –
but he is also talking about the end of the age
and his second coming.

Because (as Hebrews 9 tells us) the first part of the temple (the holy place)
was symbolic of this present age.
The temple was designed as a picture of *this age* (the holy place)
and the *age to come* (the most holy place).
The destruction of the earthly temple, therefore,
is symbolic of the destruction of the present age.

I like the way that one commentator put it.

“The coming of the kingdom and the resurrection of the dead are anticipated in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. The coming events, his return, and the general resurrection are in one sense subsequent events, but they are also completions and revelations of that accomplished event.” Sumner, 219)

History *turned a corner* at the resurrection of Jesus –
which means that all of history is now running *parallel* to the final resurrection!
In other words, all of history from the apostles to the present
is equally close to the second coming and the final judgment!
The resurrection of the body and the life everlasting
is the *next thing*.

Notice how Daniel concludes:

¹³ *But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”*

You shall rest.

As one commentator says:

“All creation, all history, even in its most pessimistic and turbulent periods,
is still oriented toward the eternal Sabbath that is God’s purpose throughout.
The theme of rest or a resting place also evokes,
first, Israel’s arrival in the promised land,
and second, the arrival of the ark into the temple in Jerusalem.” (Sumner, 219)

Now it speaks of the *rest* – the Sabbath rest – of the people of God
as they await the end of days.

It is because of verses like this that our Shorter Catechism says,
“The souls of believers are at their death
made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory;

and their bodies, being still united to Christ,
do *rest* in their graves till the resurrection.”

You shall rest – and you shall stand in your allotted place at the end of days.

Daniel had lived through the first destruction of the temple.

He would not live to see the desecration of the second temple by Antiochus –
or its destruction by the Romans.

In the same way, *you* have lived through *some* suffering – some troubles.

You may – or may not – live through the final afflictions.

But you are called to *go your way* till the end.

“Your duty is clear and your future is settled.

Is that not enough?

If your Lord says to you,

‘And you will rest and will stand in your allotted place at the end of the days,’
isn’t that about all you really need?” (Davis, 169)