

119

MINISTRIES

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The Exiled Prophet, Part 14: Awake to Everlasting Life (Daniel 12)

Welcome back to our study on the book of Daniel. In our last teaching, we covered Daniel chapter 11, which contained most of a vision that Daniel received starting in chapter 10. In this vision, Daniel saw hundreds of years of history, ultimately culminating in the desolation of the temple by the Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes. In this teaching, we’re going to cover Daniel chapter 12, the last chapter in the book. In chapter 12, Daniel receives the end of the vision that began in chapter 10. He learns that his people whose persecution was described in chapter 11, will ultimately be delivered, and that some of them who will die will be resurrected to a new life.

Before we start, there is a brief note that we want to make about this chapter. People frequently speculate about what this chapter tells us about the end of the world. In this teaching, we will not be doing that, but instead we will be focusing only on what we can prove from history and what moral lessons we can draw from this chapter. While some may find the lack of end-times commentary in this teaching disappointing, our purpose throughout this series has been to focus primarily on the moral messages contained in the book of Daniel, and we will maintain that purpose in this teaching. One other note is that we will be citing the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees frequently in this teaching. We do not believe that those books are part of the canon of Scripture, but we cite them because they provide valuable historical information that is highly relevant to Daniel’s vision. With that out of the way, let’s start in Daniel 12:1.

Daniel 12:1

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.

This chapter begins by continuing a train of thought from the end of chapter 11. It says, “at that time.” What time is it referring to? Well, chapter 11 ended with a description of the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes in the 160’s B.C., and so that is the “time” that is being referred to here at the beginning of chapter 12. To quickly recap what would happen at that time, Antiochus would invade Jerusalem, set up an idol in the temple, and kill any Jews who refused to worship Greek gods and practice Greek customs. This was indeed a “[time of trouble](#)” for Israel. However, in spite of all these horrors that Daniel was told

about in chapter 11, the first thing he is told in chapter 12 is that God will deliver his people with the assistance of the archangel Michael.

That brings us to another question: how did Michael arise at that time? This is not the first time in this vision that we are told that Michael would intervene in this situation. Back in chapter 10, Daniel was told that Michael and Gabriel would battle against the prince of Greece:

Daniel 10:20-21

Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

As we mentioned earlier, the Greek king Antiochus invaded Jerusalem, set up a desolating abomination in the temple, and killed many religious Jews. This was an unprecedented “[time of trouble](#),” but like so many other times of trouble, it was brought on by the troubled people’s sins (see Judges 10:13-14; Nehemiah 9:26-27; Jeremiah 11:9-14; Ezekiel 7:7-8; Zephaniah 1:15-17). However, a group of zealous Jews called the Maccabees stayed faithful to God, turned many to righteousness, and fought back against the Greeks. So, there was indeed a fight against the prince of Greece. But how exactly was Michael involved? Well, we know that God miraculously intervened in the situation because even though the Greek army was much larger, better trained, and better equipped than the Maccabees were, the Maccabees won victory after victory against them in battle. But that’s not all; the book of 2 Maccabees actually describes two specific instances where the Maccabees saw angelic armies fighting alongside them. Here is one of those instances:

2 Maccabees 11:6-11

When Maccabeus and his men got word that Lysias was besieging the strongholds, they and all the people, with lamentations and tears, besought the Lord to send a good angel to save Israel. Maccabeus himself was the first to take up arms, and he urged the others to risk their lives with him to aid their brethren. Then they eagerly rushed off together. And there, while they were still near Jerusalem, a horseman appeared at their head, clothed in white and brandishing weapons of gold. And they all together praised the merciful God, and were strengthened in heart, ready to assail not only men but the wildest beasts or walls of iron. They advanced in battle order, having their heavenly ally, for the Lord had mercy on them. They hurled themselves like lions against the enemy, and slew eleven thousand of them and sixteen hundred horsemen, and forced all the rest to flee.

(see also 2 Maccabees 10:29-31)

So, Michael did indeed arise at that time, just as God told Daniel that he would.

Returning to Daniel 12:1, it says that God would deliver “[everyone whose name shall be found written in the book](#)”? What “book” is that exactly?

Well, this “book” seems to be the “book of life” mentioned in other scriptures. Those who fear YHWH have their names written in this book (Malachi 3:16-18), but those who sin have their names blotted out (Exodus 32:32-33; Revelation 21:27). In the future resurrection, people will be judged based upon whether their names are found written in this book (Revelation 20:12-15). This resurrection is the very next thing mentioned in Daniel’s vision:

Daniel 12:2

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.

Sometimes people interpret this verse to mean that the resurrection will happen at the same time that Michael rises and God's people are delivered, but this is clearly not the case. We do not have any record of any resurrections occurring at the time of the Maccabees, and the book of Revelation describes this resurrection as a future event. So, while people's names may have been written in the book of life during the time of the Maccabees, their resurrection would not happen right away. In fact, we are still awaiting this resurrection over 2,000 years later.

The next verse describes what the resurrection will be like:

Daniel 12:3

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.

As we mentioned when we covered chapter 11, the Maccabees were zealous for God's law, and they did turn many to righteousness. What does it mean when it says they will shine like the brightness of the sky and the stars?

Well, one of the meanings here is that they will shine the light of God's word, a concept that we see all throughout the Scriptures. God's word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). The path that the righteous walk on also shines brightly:

Proverbs 4:18

But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

So, shining light is connected to righteously keeping God's word. Returning to Daniel 12:3, the term for "brightness" in that verse is also a play on words. In Hebrew, this word is *zahar*, which has two meanings. It can mean "to shine," but it can also mean "to warn." When *zahar* means "warning," it is usually a warning that people should keep God's commandments (see Exodus 18:20; Psalm 19:11), and when people heed this warning, they become righteous. We see this in the way *zahar* is used in Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 3:17-21

Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning [*zahar*] from me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning [*zahar*], nor speak to warn [*zahar*] the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn [*zahar*] the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned [*zahar*] him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn [*zahar*] the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning [*zahar*], and you will have delivered your soul.

So, those who give a warning, a *zahar*, to be righteous, are called ‘shining ones,’ which is also the word *zahar*. The Maccabees did give the people such a warning:

1 Maccabees 2:27-30

Then Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: “Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!” And he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the city. Then many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to dwell there, they, their sons, their wives, and their cattle, because evils pressed heavily upon them.

2 Maccabees 8:1-5

Judas Maccabeus and his companions entered the villages secretly, summoned their kindred, and enlisted others who had remained faithful to Judaism. Thus they assembled about six thousand men. They implored the Lord to look kindly upon this people, who were being oppressed by all; to have pity on the sanctuary, which was profaned by renegades; to have mercy on the city, which was being destroyed and was about to be leveled to the ground; to listen to the blood that cried out to him; to remember the criminal slaughter of innocent children and the blasphemies uttered against his name; and to manifest his hatred of evil. Once Maccabeus got his men organized, the Gentiles could not withstand him, for the Lord’s wrath had now changed to mercy.

So, the Maccabees were historically the wise and shining ones, who warned the people that they should turn to righteousness. This means that there are two timeframes being referenced in verses 2 and 3. The first timeframe is the time that the Maccabees lived and turned many people back to God. The second timeframe is the time of the resurrection of the dead—the time that these righteous people will be resurrected—which is still in our future. These two timeframes in Daniel 12 are reminiscent of the two timeframes in Daniel chapter 7, in which we learn about events that would happen several hundred years after Daniel’s time (Daniel 7:6), and also events that would happen thousands of years later, when the “Son of Man” comes to establish God’s eternal kingdom on earth (Daniel 7:13-14). It turns out that the second timeframe is the same in both of these chapters. In the book of Revelation, we find that the arrival of the Son of Man and the resurrection will happen at the same time:

Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4-6

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords...

[20:4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus [Yeshua] and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of

Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

So, here in chapter 12, Daniel is being told amazing things about what is to come. Those who are faithful to God are going to live again after they die, and when they do, they will get to experience the eternal and righteous kingdom that Christ, the son of man, will establish when he comes to judge the world. What wonderful news that is, and what incredible motivation to be faithful to God so they can experience this life after death! We would think that God would want Daniel to shout this message from the rooftops, but instead, God tells him something very curious:

Daniel 12:4

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.

Instead of being told to share this book with as many people as possible, Daniel is told to “shut up the words and seal the book.” Why is that?

Well, this is similar to what Daniel was told in chapter 8. In that chapter, Daniel was told to seal up the vision that God had given him, and he was also given a reason: because “it refers to many days from now” (Daniel 8:26). The idea seems to be that the vision was only useful for people in a later generation; God had something else for Daniel’s generation to focus on and prioritize. This makes some sense when we consider the important work that Daniel’s generation had to do. After King Cyrus released the Jews from captivity, they had two major projects to accomplish. One was to resettle and rebuild the promised land as a place for God’s people to dwell. The other was to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem as a place for God to dwell. We see these important projects described in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, and Haggai, and God’s people faced many difficult obstacles as they tried to accomplish these important goals. It took all of their time, energy, and dedication to do these things, and so perhaps God did not want them to be distracted with visions of events that would not come to pass for another three hundred years. Now, we might ask why God gave these visions to Daniel at all if he didn’t want his generation to be distracted by them, but that is explained in chapter 10: God gave Daniel these visions because Daniel was worried about what would happen to his people in the future (Daniel 10:2). Since God “greatly loved” Daniel (Daniel 10:11), he graciously gave him prophetic knowledge and comfort.

So, in chapter 12, Daniel was instructed to conceal the words of this vision from his generation, but a later generation at the “time of the end” would be able to make use of it. In our teaching on Daniel 8, we covered the phrase, “time of the end,” and explained that it refers not to the end of the world, but rather, to the “end of the indignation” (Daniel 8:19). To quickly recap here, the “indignation” is a term that refers to God’s wrath. When the people of Israel sinned, they incurred God’s wrath, and one of the ways that wrath manifested was in the form of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. The “time of the end” was the time when that period of wrath ended. That generation would need to have Daniel’s words, so that was the time when Daniel’s prophecy would no longer be shut up, and his book would no longer be sealed.

The next thing we are told is that at that time, “many will run to and fro, and knowledge will increase.” What exactly does that mean? Why are people “running to and fro,” and how will “knowledge increase”?

We find the answer in several prophecies. One is from the book of Jeremiah, where those who “run to and fro” are seeking people who will behave righteously:

Jeremiah 5:1

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note! Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her.

So, one reason that people “run to and fro” is to seek out those who will “do justice and seek truth.” Another similar answer comes from a prophecy from the book of Amos. Amos mentions a time that people will “run to and fro,” and he explains why they are doing this:

Amos 8:11-12

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD [YHWH], “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD [YHWH]. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD [YHWH], but they shall not find it.

So, in Amos, those who “run to and fro” are seeking the word of YHWH. Since YHWH’s word teaches justice and truth (Psalm 119:29-30), the runners in Jeremiah and Amos are seeking similar things. In Amos’s prophecy, those who are running are not finding the word of YHWH, but in Daniel’s prophecy, in Daniel 12:4, after they “run to and fro,” it says that “knowledge will increase.” How did knowledge of the word of YHWH increase during the time Daniel is describing? Well, when the Maccabees revolted, the first thing they did was gather together those who sought to follow God’s word:

1 Maccabees 2:27-30

Then Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" And he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the city. Then many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to dwell there, they, their sons, their wives, and their cattle, because evils pressed heavily upon them.

So, taking all of Daniel 12:4 in context, Daniel was supposed to seal up the words of his vision until the proper time. At that time, there would be many who “run to and fro”—that is, who are seeking the word of YHWH, justice, and truth—and there would also be wise ones, mentioned in verse 3, who helped provide that knowledge. These wise ones—those who obeyed God and spread knowledge of his word—would be delivered with the help of Michael, as it says in verse 1, and one day they will be resurrected, which is mentioned in verse 2.

As this vision continues, Daniel sees two more angels arrive:

Daniel 12:5-6

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?”

What is the significance of these two angels standing on each side of the river bank? Well, these two verses use language that is reminiscent of the time that God parted the Red Sea after he freed the Israelites from Egypt. We have one angel above the waters, and one angel on each side of the waters. When God parted the Red Sea, first Moses lifted his hand over the waters, and then the waters were parted to each side:

Exodus 14:21-22

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD [YHWH] drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

This event was also called one of God's "wonders," the same word used in Daniel 12:6:

Exodus 15:10-11

You blew with your wind; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. Who is like you, O LORD [YHWH], among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

To cap off this parallel, we see in 1 Maccabees that God's deliverance of his people at that time was being compared to the Red Sea crossing. They knew, even as they were in the middle of fighting against the Greeks, that God was performing wonders and fighting for them:

1 Maccabees 4:6-11

At daybreak Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men, but they did not have armor and swords such as they desired. And they saw the camp of the Gentiles, strong and fortified, with cavalry round about it; and these men were trained in war. But Judas said to the men who were with him, "Do not fear their numbers or be afraid when they charge. Remember how our fathers were saved at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh with his forces pursued them. And now let us cry to Heaven, to see whether he will favor us and remember his covenant with our fathers and crush this army before us today. Then all the Gentiles will know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel."

So, it may be that these angels in Daniel's vision were indicating that God would deliver the Maccabees from the Greek army just like he delivered the Israelites from the Egyptian army after the Exodus. In any case, God's deliverance here was certainly a wonder, and someone asks the angel who is hovering above the water when these wonders will end. The angel answers in the next verse:

Daniel 12:7

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.

Many people interpret "time, times, and half a time" to be a period of three and a half years, and as we will see when we cover the next verse, this interpretation lines up with history quite closely. However, it seems that Daniel does not quite understand what that phrase means, because he asks the angel a question about it:

Daniel 12:8

I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

The Hebrew word translated "outcome" here is *acharit*, a word that we spoke about when we covered chapter 10. This word *acharit* is usually translated "to come" or "ending." So, Daniel seems to be asking for clarification on when exactly all of the things this angel is describing are going to end. He has

already been told “[time, times, and half a time](#),” so his question seems to indicate that Daniel doesn’t understand what that phrase means. Consequently, the angel gives him a much more specific time frame. However, before he does that, the angel says this:

Daniel 12:9

[He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. 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, the angel reiterates that the vision Daniel is receiving is “sealed,” and should not be revealed until the proper time. He says that “[many will purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined.](#)” This is another reference to the resurrection. We saw this same phrase back in chapter 11, when Daniel was told that some of the wise would “stumble,” meaning that they would die (Daniel 11:32-35). The words for “purify,” “make white” and “refine” are all quite interesting in this verse. To “purify” (Hebrew *barar*) means to specially select someone or something (see 1 Chronicles 7:40; 9:22); to “make white” (Hebrew *lavan*) is typically attached to righteousness or removal of sin (see Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18); and, to “refine” (Hebrew *tsaraf*) means to smelt a metal, as when one refines silver in a furnace to remove any contaminants (see Isaiah 1:25; 48:10; Malachi 3:2-3).

Basically, these “many” people are going to go through a difficult and uncomfortable process of refinement, while also being made righteous and specially selected. These are the same as the “wise” from verse 3 who are going to be resurrected. The angel says that the wise ones will understand, but the wicked will not. What will the wise understand? Well, the Scriptures tell us repeatedly that those who are wise understand the works and commandments of God:

Deuteronomy 4:5-6

[See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD \[YHWH\] my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’](#)

There are many other ways that the Scriptures repeat this same idea: they say that the wise know that YHWH provides miraculous victory (Deuteronomy 32:29-30), that the wise make righteous judgments in accordance with God’s law (1 Kings 3:10-14), that they understand the steadfast love of YHWH (Psalm 107:43), and the path they are walking on (Proverbs 14:8). The wise understand that YHWH is the only God and savior (Isaiah 43:10-13), and that he will punish those who do not obey him (Jeremiah 9:12-14). The wicked, on the other hand, do not understand the works of YHWH (Psalm 28:3-5). They do not understand what path to stay on (Psalm 32:8-10), nor that their evil deeds will lead to eternal doom (Psalm 92:5-8). The wicked do not understand that they belong to YHWH (Isaiah 1:3), or how to do good (Jeremiah 4:22). The wise turn to God for eternal life, but the wicked look for life elsewhere, and only find eternal destruction.

After this exhortation, the angel clarifies exactly how long “[time, times, and half a time](#)” will be, as well as when that timeframe will begin:

Daniel 12:11

[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.](#)

So, Daniel is told that, starting at the setting up of the abomination of desolation, something significant will happen after 1,290 days. This is a more precise measurement of time than three and a half years, which seems to be what “time, times, and half a time” is referring to. So, do we know if anything significant happened after 1,290 days? Well, we can actually find out. We know exactly when the abomination of desolation was set up, and so we know when this 1,290 days began:

1 Maccabees 1:54

Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering.

So, the day that we start counting the 1,290 days is the fifteenth of Chislev, which is the ninth month of the year, in the year 145. This “year 145” is not the year 145 B.C., but it is year 145 in a dating system that was used by the Seleucids. From this date, we then count forward 1,290 days, which, again, is about three and a half years. If we count these days, then where do we end up? Well, if we take leap years into account, in which there was an extra month in the calendar, then there were two leap years during that time span: one in the year 145, and one in the year 148 (Richard A. Parker & Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology: 626 B.C. – A.D. 45* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1942] pp. 39-40). Taking this into account, the 1,290-day count ends on the sixth day of the month of Sivan in the year 149. Was there any significant event that happened on that date?

There was, but to understand its significance, we need to backtrack a little bit and understand the significant events that led up to that date. In 1 Maccabees, we are told of several significant events that happened after the abomination of desolation was set up in the Seleucid year 145. One was the death of Mattathias, the leader of the Maccabean revolt. He died in 146, and when he did, his son Judah took command over the rebel army (1 Maccabees 2:69-70). The next year, Judah defeated the Seleucid commander Seron in a full-fledged battle (1 Maccabees 3:13-26). Later in 147, the Idumean commander Gorgias attacked the Maccabees, and he was also defeated. In 148, the Seleucid commander Lysias attacked the Jews, and the Seleucids were defeated for a third time (1 Maccabees 4:1-25). Lysias retreated back to Syria to try to muster more soldiers, and while he was gone, the Maccabees cleansed and rededicated the temple, culminating in the celebration of Hanukkah starting on 25 of Chislev in the year 148 (1 Maccabees 4:52-54).

This first ever Hanukkah celebration occurred a little over three years—1,102 days, to be exact—since the abomination of desolation had been set up and the burnt offerings had ceased. So, what happened next? Well, immediately after this Hanukkah celebration, the Maccabees were back at war again, but this time, they went on the offensive. They captured land in Idumea and Ammon to the south, and Gilead and Galilee to the north (1 Maccabees 5:6-23). They formed a peaceable arrangement with the Nabateans, sacked the city of Bozrah, and then sacked the city of Ephron (1 Maccabees 5:24-51). After all this, they returned to Jerusalem just in time to celebrate their victories during the festival of Shavuot, or Pentecost.

2 Maccabees 12:29-32

Setting out from there, they hastened to Scythopolis, which is seventy-five miles from Jerusalem. But when the Jews who dwelt there bore witness to the good will which the people of Scythopolis had shown them and their kind treatment of them in times of misfortune, they thanked them and exhorted them to be well disposed to their race in the future also. Then they went up to Jerusalem, as the feast of weeks was close at hand. After the feast called Pentecost, they hastened against Gorgias, the governor of Idumaea.

What was so significant about this Pentecost celebration? Well, it was the first time that all of Israel had gotten together to celebrate one of YHWH's appointed times since the abomination of desolation had been set up. It was an especially joyous and miraculous occasion, because Judah had not lost any of his soldiers during his most recent expedition to conquer the lands around Judea (1 Maccabees 5:52-54). In many ways, this festival marked the beginning of a new era, with an independent Jewish state and a functioning temple. So, this was a highly significant event. In the year 149, this festival was celebrated on the sixth day of the month of Sivan. Again, if we recognize that the years 145 and 148 were leap years in which there was an extra month, we can determine that this Pentecost fell exactly on the 1,290th day since Antiochus had set up the abomination of desolation. Daniel's vision gave this timeline down to the exact day.

That brings us to the next verse in Daniel, which describes another number of days:

Daniel 12:12

[Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.](#)

1,335 days would be 45 days after the Pentecost celebration we just described. So, what significant event happened on that date? Why are the people who arrive at that time especially blessed?

Unfortunately, the historical sources do not give us an exact count of days for the events that followed the Pentecost celebration, so it's hard to say with certainty which event the 1,335 days is referring to. However, there are several reasonable candidates for what event may have happened at the 1,335 days, and why those who made it to that time would have been considered blessed. To understand this, let's go back in time just a bit. After the first Hanukkah was celebrated in the Seleucid year 148, Judah Maccabee led an army into Gilead and Galilee and conquered some of that territory. While he was doing that, he left part of his army in Judea under the command of a man named Joseph. Even though Joseph's orders were to stay put and protect Jerusalem, he decided to attack the Idumeans in the south, and he was defeated and lost 2,000 soldiers (1 Maccabees 5:14-19, 55-61).

Moving forward in time to Pentecost of year 149—that is, to the end of the 1,290 days—that was when Judah celebrated his victorious campaign, and after that he took his army and attacked the Idumeans himself (2 Maccabees 12:32). He was much more successful than Joseph had been, and after conquering some of the Idumean territory, he returned triumphantly to Jerusalem. We are not told how long this military campaign lasted, but it is conceivable that it could have taken 45 days. If that's the case, then that would have marked the time when the vengeance upon all of the enemies who had attacked Israel during the persecution of Antiochus was complete. This was not the last time that Israel would fight against the Greeks or the other surrounding nations, but it was a significant milestone in the formation of the new independent Jewish nation. If this occurred on the 1,335th day, that would certainly be a noteworthy event.

Another possibility is that the 1,335 days ends at a tragic discovery that Judah made as he was attacking the Idumeans. Remember the 2,000 men who died when Joseph led his failed attack? Well, Judah's army came upon the bodies of those men, and discovered that they had been carrying small idols around with them (2 Maccabees 12:40). So, even though at Hanukkah God had given Israel miraculous victory over the idolatrous Greeks, these Israelites had not given up their idol worship, and they paid the ultimate price for their sin. After Judah found them, he sent silver back to Jerusalem to pay for sin offerings to be given on behalf of the fallen men (2 Maccabees 12:43). It is possible that those men who survived until the 1,335 days were considered "blessed" because they were the righteous ones who did not turn to idols and die in that failed attack.

In either case, Judah's military actions extended beyond both Hanukkah, and the 1,290-day Pentecost celebration, so it is likely that something in that extended military operation was the blessed event at the 1,335 days. It likely either marks the time that Judah's army returned triumphantly after vanquishing their enemies, or the time that they realized that the 2,000 Jewish soldiers who died under Joseph's command had been idolaters.

This chapter concludes with a command and a promise to Daniel:

Daniel 12:13

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

Here we have two more references to the "end." The first reference, "*Go your way till the end*," is referring to the end of Daniel's life. "Go your way" is telling Daniel to continue doing what he is doing. This encouragement is no doubt valuable for Daniel; what Daniel has been doing has gotten him a lot of favor and success, but also a lot of trouble and persecution. Daniel was even thrown into a den of lions at one point! But he is told that later he will "rest" at the "*end of the days*." This last phrase, "*end of the days*," is referring to the same time as verses 2 and 3, which is the time of the resurrection of the just. As we mentioned earlier, this resurrection is described in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 20:4-6

Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus [Yeshua] and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Those who are in this resurrection will be "*priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him for a thousand years*." This reign is the kingdom that was described in Daniel 2 and 7, the kingdom that the "*Son of Man*" will establish in righteousness after overthrowing all of the earthly kingdoms. As it says in Daniel 7:

Daniel 7:27

And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

At the beginning of Daniel chapter 1, we are told that Daniel was made to "stand" before the king Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:4). Here at the end of Daniel 12, we find that at the end of the days, Daniel will "*stand in his allotted place*" before King Messiah. What a fitting end to Daniel's amazing story.

A Note on Eschatology

While our purpose in this teaching is not to focus on eschatology, we would be remiss if we did not mention one important verse in the gospels that directly references this chapter of Daniel. That verse is

Matthew 24:15.

Matthew 24:15-16

So 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.

This is part of a much more extensive prophecy, in which Yeshua speaks of the destruction of the temple (24:1-2) and the signs that foretell the end of the age (24:3). Yeshua's prophecy is about much more than the things spoken of in Daniel 12, and it would require its own teaching series to address it properly. What is relevant for our purposes is that this verse speaks of the abomination of desolation from Daniel 12 in the future tense. Since Antiochus Epiphanes set up his abomination in 167 B.C., and Yeshua gave his prophecy in the first century A.D., many argue that the idol set up by Antiochus could not have been Daniel's abomination of desolation. Yeshua said that this abomination was yet to come. So, how do we explain that?

We should start by reiterating that the history of the Maccabean period lines up with Daniel's vision from chapters 11 and 12 in every single detail. One of those details was the abomination of desolation. The book of 1 Maccabees explicitly calls Antiochus's idol an abomination of desolation—in Greek, *bdelugma eromoseos*. This is the same Greek term used by Yeshua in Matthew 24:15. Not only that, but after Yeshua uses this term, he again cites 1 Maccabees when he says, “let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” This is a reference to what the Jewish rebels did after Antiochus set up his abomination.

1 Maccabees 2:27-30

Then Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: “Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!” And he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the city. Then many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to dwell there, they, their sons, their wives, and their cattle, because evils pressed heavily upon them.

(see also: 2 Maccabees 2:27)

It is quite clear that the abomination of desolation mentioned in Maccabees is the same as the one mentioned in Daniel 12, and Yeshua's use of terms and phrases that are contained in 1 Maccabees only strengthens that connection. So, the question is, if the abomination of desolation had already arrived in 167 B.C., then why did Yeshua refer to this abomination in the future tense in Matthew 24:15? Why is he saying that a prophecy would be fulfilled in the future when it had already been fulfilled in the past?

Without getting into the details of what Yeshua's entire prophecy means—again, that topic deserves its very own teaching series—we should simply understand that prophecies can establish patterns that are repeated in history. So, just because a prophecy was fulfilled once, that doesn't mean that we will never see any elements from that prophecy again. For example, consider this prophecy from the book of Genesis:

Genesis 6:5-7

The LORD [YHWH] saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD [YHWH] regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD [YHWH] said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

God said that he was going to destroy the earth because of man's wickedness. This prophecy was fulfilled when God flooded the earth in Genesis 7, thousands of years before Yeshua's ministry. However, just because the flood prophecy was fulfilled, that doesn't mean it was no longer relevant. The flood fits into a prophetic pattern—it shows how future judgments upon the earth will look. In fact, Yeshua refers to the flood in exactly this way later in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:37-39

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Yeshua referred to Noah's flood as a prophetic pattern. It was already fulfilled in history, but it still had relevance to the future. When Yeshua said that the pattern of the flood was going to be seen again, he wasn't saying that the flood never happened, because obviously the flood did happen. But the historical flood revealed a pattern of how events would play out in the future. Yeshua's remarks about Daniel and the abomination of desolation are also referencing a prophetic pattern. The abomination of desolation from Daniel's vision had already come by way of Antiochus Epiphanes, but when Yeshua gave his prophecy, it still had relevance for the future. Just like there can still be worldwide judgments after Noah's flood, there can also be desolating abominations after Antiochus Epiphanes' idol. So, Yeshua's words in Matthew 24:15 do not mean that Daniel's abomination of desolation had never come before. They simply mean that the pattern that Daniel's vision established still held true.

We have abundant testimony of history that proves that Daniel's vision came to pass exactly like God had told him it would. Matthew 24:15 is not contradicting that history; it is not telling us that Daniel's vision was never fulfilled in the past. It is telling us that the pattern of Daniel's vision would repeat in the future.

As we said before, Yeshua's prophecy in Matthew 24 is a subject all unto itself, and we will not be thoroughly exploring that now. We simply want to make it clear that Yeshua was not saying that Daniel's vision was never fulfilled. Also, we are not saying that Daniel's vision has no relevance to the future. Just like Noah's flood, the fact that it was fulfilled in the past establishes it as a pattern that can repeat in future events. We are simply pointing out the facts of history that show that this prophecy was true, because the events of history do line up with this vision in every detail.

Lessons For Us

We have now gone through all of the book of Daniel. Looking back over Daniel's life as it was described in this book, we can see how it gives us hope for our own lives. The book started with Daniel being taken into captivity to serve in the king's court. Throughout the book, Daniel is given revelation about things to come. He is told that the kingdoms of this world are going to become the kingdoms of God and his Messiah. He is told that the powers on earth are insignificant next to the power of God. He is told that those who exalt themselves against God will be humbled, and those who humble themselves before God will be exalted. Daniel endures persecution, but he continues to hold fast to God, to give credit to God, and to trust in God's provision and protection.

When Daniel expresses concern about whether God's prophecies would be fulfilled, God comforts him

with even more revelation about the future. Finally, in chapter 12, Daniel is given the ultimate words of comfort. Just as during his life Daniel has faithfully served in the courts of human kings, after he dies, he is going to faithfully serve in the court of the King of kings. During his life, Daniel was exiled from his home, persecuted for his faith, and threatened with death numerous times. But after he is resurrected, he will have everlasting life, he will be rewarded for his faith, and he will dwell in God's home forever. This final chapter shows Daniel's personal story coming full circle. His suffering and steadfast faith have not been in vain. Just as God will bring justice to all of the kingdoms of the world, he will also bring justice to Daniel himself.

As Christians, our story should look similar to Daniel's. If we are following God, then we will face troubles in this life. The kingdoms of this world will cause us to suffer, and our faith will often be a major reason for that suffering. But, like Daniel, we can look ahead and realize that these kingdoms are nothing compared to our God. They are all going to fall and be forgotten, but God's kingdom will be established eternally. Messiah is coming to bring justice to the world, and when he does, we will awake to everlasting life. As Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 15:50-53

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

So, like Daniel, we can have hope for the future even in the midst of the chaos and corruption of the world. We can be faithful and righteous servants who declare God's word to those around us. Though we will face trials, and eventually death itself, we do not need to fear. God is with us, and he will raise up his faithful people to stand before him forever.

Conclusion

Thank you for joining us in this journey through the book of Daniel. We hope it has given you encouragement to keep following God, and correction in the areas where you may fall short. When we face the trials in this life, remember: if God is for us, who can be against us? If God rewarded Daniel for his faith, he will also reward us. Let's keep humbly walking before God, so we can all stand before him at the end of the days.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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