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Illustrations



DANIEL

Week 34, chapter 12 END

Today we will bring the Book of Daniel to a close. And the good news for me is that I have a chance to speak to you from my heart about the practical effects of what it is we've learned. It has been a long journey for what is but a 12 chapter book; however if the Latter Days and the End Times are important to us (and they ought to be), then it was necessary to discover that there are some significant differences between what the Daniel Scriptures actually say versus what many prophecy teachers and novelists claim about Daniel and what many denominational End Times doctrines have determined that we ought to be looking for in the coming months and years.

I think it has been equally important to uncover and bring to the light of day the disturbing truth about what the modern view of the most influential segment of Bible academics is regarding Daniel (that it is a fraud), and how these scholars arrived at that conclusion. Also how this view has become commonplace at many mainstream Seminaries and Bible Colleges, but even more importantly, what it means for most of the New Testament if that viewpoint is accepted and upheld. And what it means is that Christ, who quotes Daniel by name and identifies Himself as Daniel's Son of Man, was either deceived or used a known fraudulent document to further His own cause. Either way, the basis for Christianity is shattered and that is essentially the goal of these particular Bible Academics who on the one hand call themselves Christians, but on the other hand admit that they do not accept the supernatural, or the divine, or miracles, or predictive prophesy.

I have coined a term for folks like this: I call them Jesusites. I will not sit by and allow them to take on the mantle of "Christian" without a challenge because they diminish those of us who do depend on Yeshua's divine nature and His supernatural forgiveness. They do believe that a great Jewish prophet and humanitarian named Jesus lived and that he formulated a marvelous pacifist philosophical system of living based on universal love. But they do not believe that He is God (because there is no God), and therefore Jesus is certainly no Messiah (as there is no need for one as a Messiah is just an archaic remnant of Jewish cultural lore). So what we decide about the Book of Daniel has far reaching repercussions from testing the validity of the New Testament, to the authenticity of Christ, to whether Daniel is a window to knowing the future or is but an ancient Middle Eastern fairytale and extending even to our own relationship with God.

Let's re-read Daniel chapter 12 to begin.

RE-READ DANIEL 12 all

You wouldn't think so, but verse 1 consists of several topics, and each is interpreted a number of ways and each has significance in how one views the future and in some cases, the past. For instance, the opening words are "when that time comes". The obvious question is "what time is this"? We discussed this last week so this is just a brief review. The modern bible academia usually says that this is actually referring to the past, during the time of Antiochus Epiphanies, around 165 B.C. But another and different common interpretation is that it is an unknown time in the future and in addition it represents a hard break between verse 1 of chapter 12 and what we read previously in chapter 11. However that interpretation is almost exclusively due to the mirage created by the chapter markers that separates the final words of chapter 11 from the first words of chapter 12. Even competent Christian scholars sometimes overlook that originally Daniel (as were most of the Old Testament books) was but one long continuous scroll. There were no breaks. So it is best to understand that "when that time comes" is connected to the final events of chapter 11 (generally from verse 40 to the end of the chapter). And it reads like this:

RE-READ DANIEL 11:40 – end

Some scholars who accept this same understanding will try to get even more specific and say that "when that time comes" is directly connected to Daniel 11:40 where it says "When the time for the end comes..." And that is because the word "time" (eth in Hebrew) is used in both verses. For me that's an unneeded stretch. Others say it refers to the verse immediately preceding Dan. 12:1, which is Dan. 11:45, and there it speaks of this unnamed king (I think it means the Anti-Christ) establishing his residence between the seas and the mountain of the holy Glory where he will come to his end. Again I think this is parsing the matter further than the plain reading allows. Rather, "when that time comes" is only a generality that pertains to this overall series of events that ends chapter 11; but it is not meant to prophetically pinpoint a precise moment.

The next issue regards the Archangel Mikha'el, the great prince. For many theologically predisposed reasons Calvin says that Mikha'el is actually Jesus or later admitted that perhaps

he was Jesus' angelic representative. The main reason for his position was that Calvin believed that the church replaced Israel, so it was not possible for him to accept Mikha'el as Israel's national spiritual advocate since God had permanently rejected Israel. Now Mikha'el was Christ's advocate; he no longer protected Israel but rather the gentile church. Of course that completely overturns Scripture itself and every description of Mikha'el has him as the powerful Archangel who regularly comes to Israel's aid. What is even more interesting is that the verse plainly says, "Mikha'el the great prince who champions your people..." Whose people? Who is the angel addressing? Daniel. But once again Calvin as do almost all Christian denominations and the bulk of fundamental conservative scholars, says that "your people" (meaning Daniel's people) has been converted from Daniel's actual people (the Jews) to gentile Christians. I don't think I have to spend any further time proving how downright intellectually dishonest it is to turn Scripture on its head in such a way in order to uphold an institutionalized anti-Semitic Church agenda. Fortunately there are those scholars like Walter Kaiser, Jr. and Robert Culver who have had the courage to try to straighten out such long held and deeply imbedded false doctrines, and along with the efforts of the recent Hebrew Roots of Christianity and Messianic movements I sense a positive effect for change in attitude in this regard is beginning to happen within some segments of the traditional church.

Verse 1 ends by saying that when Mikha'el "stands up", there will be a period of distress beyond parallel from the time they (Israel) became a nation until that moment. "Stands up" is what is called a Judicial term. That is, standing up indicates rendering a verdict, which often includes carrying out the sentence. Thus as regards Mikha'el who operates under God's direction, Mikha'el will essentially carry out the verdict that Yehoveh has pronounced. And as the 2nd verse says, the result will be that "your people will be delivered".

Now. Although your ears may be weary of hearing it, I can't stress strongly enough that once again we face the issue of what people Mikha'el is protecting, and what people will be delivered. You'd be hard pressed to find a modern prophetic novel, or modern book on prophecy, or documented denominational doctrine that doesn't assume that in both cases the people are Christians and the gentile church and that Israel and the Jewish people play no role in this. And the reason that this is so critical to get right is that what we decide about it will form the basis for interpreting all End Times prophecy teaching. And I'm here to tell you unequivocally that the people spoken about are not referring to the church, but rather to Israel and the Jews.

I do think it is fair, however, to point out that at the earliest beginnings of this false replacement doctrine that can be traced back hundreds of years, there was no nation of Israel in existence and no real hope for one. And until 1948 of our era, a gentile Christian would indeed have to be scratching their head, and full of doubts, as to how God was going to save a nation and its citizens if it didn't exist and there was no visible evidence whatsoever that it ever would. The solution? Church authorities said we have to go back to our Bibles and scratch out the word Israel and insert the word church. Well, it turns out we needed a bit more patience and faith in God's promise of restoration for Israel.

But strangely, even with Israel back as a vibrant Jewish nation, these same church institutions

have steadfastly refused to re-examine their doctrines in this regard and continue merrily along as though Israel had not returned as prophesied. Therefore the first verse of Daniel 12 clearly says that when Israel's darkest hour comes, God's most powerful Archangel, Michael, will stand up as Israel's advocate and rescue them; not that he would rescue the church. Will the church be affected by this in a positive way, and play a role? Yes. Will we also experience some of the collateral damage that the Anti-Christ will mete out upon Israel? Yes, because it will have planet-wide consequences, which we read about in the Book of Revelation.

But we're still not done with verse 1 because we get thrown a curveball at the end of it. There it qualifies which citizens of Israel will be delivered, and it is those whose names are written in the book. There are basically two "books" (a figurative term, of course) alluded to in the Bible, and they are kept by heavenly auditors. One is The Book of Life that holds the names of the righteous in God's sight, and the other is a book that holds the names of the wicked who are condemned to eternal death. It is self-evident that in this passage the term "book" is referring to the Book of Life since it is this segment of Israel that God will deliver from this great catastrophe.

Now one last thing about this 1st verse: we are told that the distress Israel will suffer knows no parallel. If we say that this tribulation already happened under Antiochus Epiphanies (as most modern bible scholars do), and this is not referring to some future ruler in a future time, then we have a fundamental problem. Because records show that while Epiphanies was very hard on some Jews, he attempted no genocide and no exile. Rather his goal was to eradicate worship of the God of Israel so that he could try to create a more or less single national religion. He primarily punished those Jews who didn't comply. Further we would be hard pressed to make Epiphanies' persecution of the Jews equal or worse than what Israel suffered in Egypt or when Assyria decimated and scattered the 10 lost tribes. In fact we had Kings of Israel who did no worse to their own Hebrew people than what Epiphanies did; they set up false gods, looted the Temple, and decimated the Priesthood and more. So the unmatched extent of this tribulation that is predicted in verse 1 had to be something future to Daniel, and future to the time of Epiphanies.

But verse 2 gives us no rest because here we get a fascinating statement that at some point many will awaken from their graves, and that some will arise to everlasting life and others to everlasting shame. If this is not speaking of resurrection then I have no idea what else it could be referring to. The reality is that the Old Testament makes a handful of veiled implications (especially in a few Psalms) about resurrection from the dead, but nothing as plain and straightforward as Dan. 12:2. In fact what mainstream Judaism believes today about the possibility of resurrection comes from this passage.

We could spend a great deal of time only on this verse, but we won't. I do want to point out, however, that besides the matter if this is actually speaking about bodily resurrection of the dead (which it must be), the other pressing issue is: WHO, exactly, is rising from their graves? There is a tendency of Christian scholars and prophecy teachers to disregard the literal text and meaning of the first word of this passage, which is rabbim. Instead they interpret the passage as though the word kol was used. Rabbim means many, while kol means all or every. In other words, almost all bible commentators and prophecy instructors say that all (everybody)

will rise from their graves to be judged. But that is decidedly not what is written. Rather it is that many will arise.....many but not all. How are the many chosen? Who remains asleep in the dust of the ground? We're not told and I'd rather not go into endless speculation over it. However here are 4 reasonable possibilities all of which faithfully express the context of the passage. First, it could mean a general resurrection at the End of Days that will include everybody who has ever lived and died, Hebrew or gentile. Second, a resurrection strictly confined to Israel that occurs around the end of this terrible period of Tribulation; but which also leaves open the possibility of another separate resurrection of other people. Third, a resurrection only of the righteous dead just as Christ is about to return, but later on another resurrection of the wicked who will be judged and destroyed eternally. And fourth, a resurrection of the righteous dead after Christ returns, and at the End of Days a separate resurrection of the wicked dead. There are verses in NT books that pull us more in line with only a couple of these possibilities, but from the view that Daniel gives us any of these 4 are good and reasonable interpretations of the resurrection as proposed here.

Verse 3 tells us that during this period of the most intense persecution that has ever been or ever will be visited UPON ISRAEL in history, those who use their time wisely to explain to others the reality of what is happening, and why, and who work selflessly to point others towards true righteousness in the Lord, they will receive a glorious reward from God for their efforts. Once again this is still speaking directly about Israel and the Jews. However no doubt this will include those Christians who stand up for Israel and identify with Israel and the God of Israel, and refuse to be silent even if it means their excommunication from the church, or even their death.

I cannot help but quote Dr. Kiel who says it so very articulately: "these are the intelligent who by instructing their contemporaries by means of word and deed have awakened them to steadfastness and fidelity to their confession in the times of tribulation and have strengthened their faith. It also includes some who have in war sealed their testimony with their blood."

Verse 4 is a command to Daniel to seal up the vision and the prophecy. The CJB and a few other versions like the NAS say that Daniel is to conceal or make secret what has been revealed to him. That is a poor translation of the Hebrew word *satham*, which means to shut up or to close. It doesn't mean to make secret or to keep people from understanding; it means that there is no more to be added and that nothing should be altered. Actually, what we see is a Hebrew word play. Verse 4 says: "But you Daniel *satham* these words and *chatham* this book until the time of the end..." So the idea is that nothing should be added, and that its contents are verified and validated (sealed) as true. And then near the end we learn that people shall be running to and fro; this gives us the mental picture of anxiously searching. What are they searching for? Answers. Answers as to why things are they as are, and how to fix them. Things are confused, spinning out of control in the world. And yet the higher our technology and the greater our knowledge of secular things, the worse human affairs gets and deeper we sink into depravity. And that is because those who are running to and fro do not seek wisdom, which comes only from God, but rather they seek knowledge, which is from the minds of humans.

Is it not fascinating that each decade that goes by in human history, science and reason supersede Godly wisdom to a greater and greater extent? Even in our Christian institutions

we'll read book after book after book on everything from what heaven must be like, to why good things happen to bad people. But the Bible, God's Word, is becoming less relevant and more of a religious prop. What is contained within it is seen as too difficult to understand, and too ancient to be useful in our time. As those of the Hebrew Roots movement know, those who study all the parts of the Bible are today seen as cultish by the very Church who says that the Bible is at the center of their faith; but who barely opens it and usually it is to prove a point in a sermon. Daniel's prophecy is again proving to be 100% accurate.

Verses 5 and 6 shift the conversation. Suddenly, two more beings appear to Daniel; one standing on each side of the river. So now there are 3 glorious beings and they begin to speak with one another. One of the new arrivals asks the one who has been speaking, how long until the end of these wondrous things. We are given no hint as to the identities of these two new spirit beings. What are the wondrous things? It doesn't mean wondrous as in the sense of good, exciting, fun. It means awesome, terrible, inexplicable things that are far out of the realm of human imaginings.

Verse 7 provides the answer to "how long"; and it is a time, times, and half a time. It matches perfectly with Daniel 7:25 where it says:

CJB Daniel 7:25 He will speak words against the Most High and try to exhaust the holy ones of the Most High. He will attempt to alter the seasons and the law; and [the holy ones] will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

This is speaking of the little horn. And as we learned in our previous lesson, the little horn of chapter 7 can only be speaking of the future Anti-Christ, who appears in the era of the 2nd Latter Days in conjunction with Messiah's return.

And this information about how long is so vital that the one who is speaking raises both hands towards the heavens and swears by God that this is the truth and it will happen.

It is rather typical to say that a time, times, and half a time equals precisely 3 ½ years. I have real doubts about that. Shortly we are going to see some events measured by a precise number of days; so if term time means a year, why not just say year? Time was not (so far as we know) and never has been an alternative word for year. It is a unique expression of time in the Bible, associated ONLY with Latter Days events, and it is not clearly defined. There are hints in Revelation that causes some to equate the time, times, and half a time to a period of exactly 42 months but there are a number of doubtful assumptions needed to reach the conclusion that the time, times, and half a time is speaking of measuring the amount of time concerning the same event as the one that takes 42 months (3 ½ years). It could very well be that time, times and half a time is relative rather than precise. That is, it could very well mean "about" a year so that the approximate amount of time can be known, but that there is flexibility in it. Not too much, but a little wiggle room. So we don't have to wonder if we're talking hours or decades or centuries.

And just when the Anti-Christ is on the verge of his goal of eradicating Israel, the end comes. Instead the Anti-Christ will be destroyed, and that coincides with the completion of the period

called a time, times, and half a time. And because of all that we've been told, we know that this has been planned, orchestrated, and brought about by the Lord's will, power and perfect timing.

Then in verse 8 Daniel says: I don't understand. Let me say something here to give us all hope when we're studying Daniel. If he couldn't understand, and they were using the language and terms of his day, how are we to grasp it all? The only way to fully understand unfulfilled prophecy is to be content to wait until it has been fulfilled. Then we can look back in awesome wonder at the literalness and the precision of the prophets and the faithfulness of God to His pronouncements.

Daniel, in verse 8, asks the angel the very question I would ask: "what is the outcome of all these things"? That is: Ok, you've said what is going to happen, but when all is said and done how does this all end up? How am I affected? How are my people and my family affected? What's the world going to look like? What is life going to be like? And in verse 9 the answer is not the one Daniel had hoped for. Go! That is, the conversation is ended; you're dismissed. And the angel repeats what he told Daniel moments before: close up and seal up this prophecy until the time of the end.

I think since we now better understand the history of Antiochus Epiphanies, and what of this prophecy he accomplished and what only partially and what not at all, that it becomes all the clearer that the term "the time of the end" points towards a terminating point in each of the two Latter Days. God wished for some of these revelations to be understood well by His people, and other revelations not so much. And one can understand why the Book of Daniel would have been so popular during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanies who surely must have looked to the Jews as the exact fulfillment of the final paragraphs of the Book of Daniel. And yet, once Epiphanies was dead, and the Jews were still intact, and they had not had genocide committed upon them, the more discerning must have known that more lay ahead. How far ahead? No one knew.

Verse 10 lays waste to the idea that what Daniel was given was to be kept secret because the angel says that many shall be purified and made white and refined, while the wicked shall simply go on being wicked. And those wicked will never come to a right understanding of Daniel; but the wise will. Ask yourself this question: if you are a modern Bible scholar, or a Bible Teacher, or a Pastor who teaches that Daniel is a fraud and a fairytale, something to not be believed let alone discerned, which side of the ledger do you fall in according to verse 10? I cannot be your judge; but I can read. And I can choose to trust or to reject. And if God says the wicked will never understand but the wise in Him will, I'll let you come to your own conclusions.

This is a general description of the future, and the road leading up to the end, not a specific vision of the end. The reprobate mind will laugh and denigrate Daniel and the words of this messenger angel; those washed in the living water of Messiah and saved by His blood will, however, seek wisdom from this book and grab hold of all they can.

As we near the end of the book, verses 11 and 12 can be most difficult; and in fact I think at current they are not fully answerable. Here the context is that the daily sacrificial offering, the

Tamid, at the Temple will be stopped and will remain suspended for 1290 days. And here's where the trouble really starts because depending on your theology, I have heard many a prophecy teacher say, "and 1290 days is 3 ½ years". No its not. If one decides to use a 30 day month (the standard biblical month), then we have 43 months, or 3 years and 7 months, not 3 years and 6 months. And even if we try to divide the 1290 days into a solar year of 365.25 days (which was not in use even in NT times), we wind up with 3.53 years or 3 years 6 months and a couple of days. And while that is much closer, still no cigar. The time is given to us in a precise number of days; it is about 3 ½ years, but not exactly. It is about 42 months, but not to the day.

What boggles the mind is that we have a number of fine conservative scholars who say that the number of 1290 is symbolic and doesn't mean 1290. It could mean any number of days. Well, then, what is 1290 symbolic of? They don't know. Therefore when next we're told that anyone who waits and arrives at 1335 days will be blessed, that this too is a symbolic number and there is no way to calculate it. I don't see that as reasonable on any level, but rather it is a response to trying to understand just how to put the puzzle pieces together; and since they can't find a way, it is dismissed as symbolism. My response is that the number of days is precise and true and I'm not entirely sure if this actually applied to when Epiphanies ordered a halt to the daily sacrifice before Judas the Maccabee started it up again, or if it applies to Anti-Christ and the End Times, or it applies to both. There is good historical evidence that it was indeed 1290 days that the sacrifice was suspended in Epiphanies era but not enough evidence that I could call it indisputable proof.

However there is something we can draw from this even if the timing can't be down to a single 24 hour period, a day; the time, times, and half a time (apparently about 3 ½ years) will be the most severe part of the Tribulation period, and thus some in Christianity label that final 3 ½ years as the Great Tribulation. The Book of Daniel certainly seems to verify that at least from the standpoint of the greatest intensity, that it will be about a 3 ½ year period of time, but not exactly. Some say that the 1335 days is the actual time of the entire length of the last part of the Tribulation period, but that it will be shortened by the Lord to 1290 days or no one (meaning no Jew) would survive. I must say, this makes little sense to. To say that God has always planned the final part of the Tribulation to be precisely 1335 days but at same time has always planned to only allow it to go on for precisely 1290 days is an oxymoron. This renders the 1335 days as meaningless since it was never going to happen.

Verse 12 says:

Daniel 12:12 How blessed will be anyone who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

Yeshua, in Matthew 24, seems to be tackling the same time period as Daniel, and Christ says this:

Matthew
24:7-13 CJB

7 For peoples will fight each other, nations will fight each other, and there will be famines and

earthquakes in various parts of the world;

8 all this is but the beginning of the 'birth-pains.'

9 At that time you will be arrested and handed over to be punished and put to death, and all peoples will hate you because of me.

10 At that time many will be trapped into betraying and hating each other,

11 many false prophets will appear and fool many people;

12 and many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from Torah.

13 But whoever holds out till the end will be delivered.

Verse 13 offers the perplexed and anxious Daniel some final comforting words. Go your way until the end comes, and then you will rest and rise for your reward, at the end of days.

Here once again we have two similar terms that means something slightly different. Daniel is to go his way until the ends comes when he will die, but then at the end of days he will rise for his reward. If the two terms were meant to mean the same thing, then Daniel would be dying and rising on the same day. The term "the end" means some terminating point during either of the two Latter Days eras, while the term "the end of days" means what we typically call the End Times: the end of the world, or the end of human history.

And what can be more plain than that the prophesied resurrection of the dead that we read of in verses 2 and 3, that seems to be selective rather than universal, will include Daniel. As it says, you (Daniel) will rest and rise (meaning resurrection, of course); but when will he rise? At the end of days, the end of the world as we know it.

So allow me to close our study of Daniel with this comforting thought for all of you who have been made righteous by the blood of the Lamb; when we awaken from our slumber in the dust, we too will arise and see Daniel who is awaking from his long sleep. Imagine that! We will meet King David who awakens at the same instant we do. We will have the opportunity to see Moses and Aaron who we've spent the last many years together reading about. What greater incentive could there be for us then, than to spend the remainder of our days as the wise ones who strive to turn many to righteousness, by speaking and living out God's love and salvation so that when we arise we also see our spouses, our parents, our children and our grandchildren. And of course, we will finally get to see Daniel's and our precious Son of Man, Yeshua our Messiah, face to face. Our King forever.

This ends our study of the Book of Daniel.