

The Prophecy Is Sealed

Daniel 12:5-13

Introduction

We find ourselves in this final section of Daniel. Daniel began the chapter with a description of the end times and now will focus on the duration of the end times. Three different time periods are specified; a period of 1260 days (vv.5-10); of 1290 days (v.11) and a period of 1335 days (vv.12-13). In chapter 9 we looked at the prophecy of the 70 weeks or *heptads*; it was in part in answer to Daniel's prayer (9:1-1); Israel's discipline—*chastisement*—*comes to an end*. We learned that a series of sevens were to unfold; leading to the return of the Jewish people to The Land and the coming of the promised Messiah. In chapters 10-11 Daniel embarks on an extended fast and has a series of fearful visions. In chapter 11 we saw a series of christ-less conquerors with a special focus on Greek kings who play important roles in persecuting the Jews and one particular Syrian king who serves as a type and picture of a future antichrist.

In this chapter the angel promises Daniel that in spite of Israel's suffering (v.1) a prince named Michael would insure Israel's survival. All those who are written in God's book will persevere to the end and be delivered (v.1c). The angel sees a time of eternal separation where the righteous enter God's reward and the unrighteous a final punishment (v.2) in a future resurrection. The righteous will shine like stars (v.3) but the visions of Daniel must be sealed until the end times (vv.4;8-10). This end time scenario will have a definite beginning, middle and end. The final seven or the final heptad will be marked by certain key markers. The emergence of an antichrist figure, the signing of a covenant by this antichrist figure to insure the safety and security of the people of Israel; the rebuilding of a Temple complex in Jerusalem and the desecration of that Temple. The future is certain. The plan is in place.

The Witnesses To The Prophecy (vv.5-6)

Daniel 12:5–6 (NKJV) *5Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank.*

6And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"

Now Daniel identifies two additional beings standing on either side of the canal's banks. The angelic being continues to float above the waters in the middle of the gushing waters. One of these unidentified figures asks the question; "*How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?*"

The number two is important (see Rhodes; p.280). The Scripture reveals this is the minimum number necessary to confirm the oath made by the angelic being in the narrative (see v.7). Paul uses this principle in his rebuke to the Corinthians; "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established" (quoting Deuteronomy 19:15 in 2 Corinthians 13:1).

The Prophecy Is Sealed

Daniel 12:5-13

The word *wonders* is a reference to the prophetic events described in Daniel 11:36-45.

We are left with the impression that God has a divine calendar, a prophetic timetable where the prophecies and events will be fulfilled.

The Book of Daniel has repeatedly used phrases like; “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to an appointed time of the end” (Daniel 8:19). “The end is yet to be at the appointed time” (11:27). The Book’s theme; “God is Sovereign”—truly sovereign over all people and places and events (see Isaiah 46:10; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; Ephesians 1:11). And Daniel is a witness to what shall be at the latter end of the indignation (8:19). Remember a witness must have a knowledge of the facts; a reputation for honesty and a willingness to tell the truth. Daniel at the very beginning purposed in his heart to separate himself from sin and separate himself to his God. It is not enough to know the Book of Daniel. At some point we must want to be like Daniel. He resolved in his heart to know God, love the Lord, fear Him and obey Him. We must be able to recognize and receive God’s discipline and direction for our lives. We must be willing to walk by faith and not by sight. We must remain mindful of God’s sovereign control over all the events that unfold right before our eyes. We must resolve to be people of integrity and humility. **What would you rather have? A complete understanding of the book of Daniel or a heart like Daniel and the character of Daniel?**

The Duration Of The Prophecy (v.7)

7Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

The text includes several elements; the supernatural being (whether angel or pre-incarnate Christ) makes an oath or covenant concerning the duration of the time. The angel swears by Him who lives forever. This is a reference to the Eternal God (see Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; and Revelation 1:8).

It shall be for a time, times and half a time. Some scholars have argued that the expression times can mean two—but it can also mean more than two. The problem with adding more time means the oath becomes unintelligible or unknowable. It really is no answer at all. **If it means an indefinite period of time that the Lord shortens in his mercy—that provides no help to Daniel or us!**

We are given further clues; it is a time when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered. Israel is helpless.

The Prophecy Is Sealed

Daniel 12:5-13

Here is the answer to the question in verse 6: “How long?” Three and one half years. The final seven (v.4) begins at the time of the end. The little horn—the willful king persecutes the saints (see 7:25; 11:36-39 and Revelation 12:14). This is the same span identified by John the Apostle; Revelation 11:2,3; Revelation 13:5).

“All these things shall be finished”. What things? Return to the land. The coming Prince. God’s judgments and dealings with the Jewish people.

The Sealing Of The Prophecy (vv.8-10)

8Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?”

9And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Almost every week in our study of Daniel someone has approached me and said; “I don’t understand” or “I don’t think you understand”. Welcome to the wonderful world of prophecy. I take great comfort that there were elements of this vision that left Daniel puzzled. We are left with the impression that there are elements in the vision that will not not be completely clear until the events occur.

The expression “sealed” translates the Hebrew word *chatham* (*Strongs # 2856*). The word means “to affix or attach a seal” and therefore to authenticate or insure authenticity. A Notary Public functions in a similar fashion in the modern world to insure the integrity of any given signature. In the ancient world they would use a seal or wax stamp with the impression of the seal. The implication is that the document carried the authority of the person’s seal. It would seem that Daniel’s seal is either literal or symbolic—in the sense that the content carries the authority of him who seals and is not subject to being altered. In the book of Revelation—a seal of the scroll of judgment is broken, indicating the time of its fulfillment has come (see Revelation 5:1-10).

The angel’s reply seems to contain at least three elements or three parts. First is the issue of *why* (v.9). Daniel asks no further questions. The answers (words) are closed up or sealed up. **The Lord has placed His seal (not Daniel’s seal) on the book.** Let the critics deny prophecy. Let the skeptic and the godless scholars weigh in and pile high all the reasons why Daniel’s vision of the end can’t possibly be true. **But their cause is hopeless. The eternal, mighty, self-existent God has put His seal on the vision and its contents.**

What does this mean? Daniel has no need to fear the future. And neither do you. All of it is in God’s hands. The times are set, the truth is sealed and the triumph is certain.

The Prophecy Is Sealed

Daniel 12:5-13

10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

The *why* of verse 9 leads to the *what* of verse 10. This is the second part or the second element. The angel declares what must happen. The skeptic, the critic, and the unbeliever will find no comfort in the angel's words.

The false explanations and foolish interpretations of the unbelieving theologians will simply divide the wise from the foolish; the understanding from those who lack understanding. **The stained will remain stained but some will be purified and refined. Who are the wicked? Those who embrace Satan's foolish perspective on the future. The wicked are those who persist in their unbelief.** The word wicked means "lawless" and is used three times in this verse. The verse is a prophetic strainer sifting the pure from the impure and the wise from the wicked. None of the wicked shall understand. **They will remain blind to the very end.**

The refiner's fire will have no benefit for the wicked. The wicked will remain wicked. They will reject the truth of God's Word. The ultimate challenge for the wicked is not to persuade their mind but their heart. This is not an issue of reason but an issue of moral behavior (lawless).

The wicked do not want to abandon their wickedness. **It isn't that the wicked can't believe—they won't believe. The truth is there—and by a deliberate act of the will there is a rejection of the truth.**

The wicked will scorn the book of Daniel. They did so in the past. And they will do so in the future. Even when the prophecies are fulfilled right before their eyes. **The wicked will rush to their doom.** But the wise will understand and know what to do when the Antichrist makes his sinister appearance. They will know what to do when the Beast desecrates the Temple and places his own image in that Temple to receive worship as the World's Messiah.

The Blessings Of The Prophecy (vv.11-13)

11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

There is a statement of *why* (v.9) and *what* verse 10 and now *when* (vv.11-12). There are three time designations—two here and one elsewhere. There is an initial period of 1,290 days.

The Jews in the ancient world as well as the modern use a lunar calendar. There is an initial period of 1,260 days—3 and one half years. To that is added one lunar month; 30 days making a total of 1,290 days. Another 45 days is added making a total of 1,335 days (v.12).

The Prophecy Is Sealed

Daniel 12:5-13

There is an interesting coincidence of days. From the time Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple and its subsequent restoration by Judas Maccabeus was 1,290 days. From that date to the death Antiochus Epiphanes and the end of the persecution was 1,335 days. This fact serves as an illustration of a future fact and a future fulfillment. The Preterist claims fulfillment. The partial preterists and dispensationalists of all stripes and colors claim future fulfillment. The evidence seems to side with those who believe this is a future event. The Lord Jesus spoke of this as a future event (Matthew 24:15). *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand)”*. The preterist claims this was fulfilled in the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 A.D. Paul saw a future fulfillment (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) as well as John (Revelation 13:14-15).

It would appear that from the moment this future event occurs the prophetic clock that has been set aside for the judgments against Israel and the world will begin to tick. One thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Some have suggested the Abomination of desolation will be set up in the Temple in Jerusalem thirty days before the Great Tribulation begins (see William MacDonald *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.1092). This would explain 1,290 days. The final half of the tribulation is 1,260 days. Some have suggested that the additional 30 days might allow for the Christ’s judgment of the nations prior to the beginning of the millennial kingdom (see Matthew 25:31-46 see Ron Rhodes who suggests this p.282).

The Scriptures hint that the Lord will set up His throne in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, near Gethsemane and will judge the nations (see Matthew 25 on what basis Jesus judges).

12Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

Why is this person blessed? The judgment has passed. The 1,335 days includes the 30 days to judge the nations but also an additional 45 days for Christ to establish His millennial government during this month and one half.

The sheep and the goats are separated. Those who have the mark of the beast are destroyed. The remnant Jews and the remnant Gentiles will form the nucleus of a brand new kingdom. The word ‘blessed’ is plural—like Psalm 1:1—“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. . .”. The blessings of the Millennial Kingdom will be worth the wait (see Revelation 20:2-7; Psalm 2:6-9; Psalm 72:1-20 Isaiah 65:18-23).

In the Book of Revelation 20:2,3,4; The dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan is bound for a thousand years and cast into the bottomless pit. This is the first of six references to the length of the millennial kingdom (see vv.3,4,5,6,7). The Millennial comes with the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. He removes all that stumbles (see Matthew 13:41). The remnant Jews are united to Christ (see Zechariah 12:10) and the Nation is fully restored (see

The Prophecy Is Sealed

Daniel 12:5-13

Ezekiel 36-37). In the Millennium Jerusalem will be the Center of God's Administration and the earth will have been dramatically changed by the events of the Tribulation. The Bible sees a world that is fruitful and fertile and reminiscent of the first Garden in Eden. Men and animals will no longer fear one another; war will disappear; death becomes the exception; Satan is shut up in the Abyss (Revelation 20:1-2); and the character of the Kingdom will be righteousness. The Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28-29). In the Millennium Jerusalem is rebuilt and a new temple and the Lord will be "King over all the earth" and all nations will worship him (see Zechariah 14:9; Isaiah 2:2).

13 "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.

The vision that began in chapter 10 is finished. Ron Rhodes writes; "We might paraphrase the angel's words this way: "Go your way and live in faith for the rest of your earthly life. Following death, your soul will enter heavenly rest. At the appointed time, you will be physically resurrected, with your soul rejoining an eternal resurrection body. You will stand, and you will receive your eternal inheritance" (p.283). Daniel will rest (in death) and arise in resurrection and enjoy the inheritance—millennial blessings with the Jewish Messiah—His Messiah—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kingdoms will come and kingdoms will go. The Christ will come—only to be cut off. The ages will unfold. The Antichrist will come. And the Messiah will come again. Daniel will die. But he will rise. He will enter into his reward and the book ends.

Conclusion

Daniel's ministry in Babylon will last some 70 years. This nobleman—is remembered for his faith and courage. He was strong in purpose, wise, tactful, brave, modest, humble and persistent in his faith and prayers. No wonder three times in this book the angels call him highly esteemed (see 9:23; 10:11, 19). In sweeping terms Daniel is given revelations that cover the exile and return of the Jews; the Coming of Messiah; the Coming of the Antichrist and the End of all things. He was given a prophetic gift and called Prophet by Jesus. He served in the Court of Kings and it is his book that provides the key to understanding all other Biblical prophecies concerning the last days. In this book Jesus is the stone that comes from Heaven and crushes the kingdoms of this world. In this book Jesus prepares and then possesses all things for Himself.

Most of Daniel's life will be spent in exile and in Babylon. But his heart remained in Jerusalem. Our study has shown us Daniel's friends and Daniel's future. But it was Daniel's decision to separate from sin that allowed God to bring him the stunning revelations. Daniel is promised rest and a resurrection. Daniel is promised that one day he will return to his beloved Jerusalem and serve the one true king.