

The Time of the End

by John F. Walvoord

The sermon discusses the time of the end, a period of great tribulation and resurrection, and the deliverance of the children of Israel who are written in the book of life.

Scripture: Psalm 19:1, Jeremiah 30:7, Daniel 12:1-2, Matthew 5:18, Matthew 24:21, Revelation 5:10, Revelation 20:4, Revelation 20:12

Topics: "End Times", "Eschatology"

Description

John F. Walvoord preaches on the profound visions of Daniel, culminating in the great tribulation and resurrection, which are key events in the prophecies concerning both the Gentiles and Israel. The chapter division between chapters 11 and 12 is noted as unfortunate, as the narrative naturally extends through both chapters. The time of the end is highlighted as a period of intense trouble for Israel, leading to a special deliverance for those who worship God and the resurrection of the martyred. The revelation in Daniel 12 reveals major factors of the time of the end, including a world ruler, religion, war, great tribulation for Israel, deliverance, resurrection, judgment, and reward for the righteous.

Transcript

The material described as the fourth vision of Daniel beginning in chapter 10 has its climax in the great tribulation and the resurrection which follows, mentioned in the early verses of chapter 12. This is also the high point in the book of Daniel itself and the goal of Daniel's prophecies relating both to the Gentiles and to Israel. It is comparable to Revelation 19, the high point of the last book of the Bible.

All commentators agree that the chapter division at this point is unfortunate as the narrative of chapter 11 naturally extends through the first three verses of chapter 12. As Porteous expresses it,

The first four verses of chapter 12 are the completion of the long section which began with chapter 10. They give in remarkably brief compass and restrained language the writer's expectation of what the divinely appointed end would be like. It would be climax of which Israel would be the centre, as is shown by the fact that Michael, the patron angel of Israel, is to play the decisive part on God's behalf. The great tribulation will come to a head but Israel will escape, all those in Israel, that is to say, whose names are written in the book of life (Ps. 69:29; Ex. 32:32; cf. the later passages Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5). God already knows His own.⁶³²

Added to the previous revelation are the important disclosures (1) that the time of the end has a special relationship to "the children of thy people," that is, Israel, (2) that Israel will experience at that time a special deliverance to be realized by those in Israel who worship God, and (3) that the doctrine of resurrection which climaxes the time of the end is the special hope of those who are martyred.

The entire section from Daniel 11:36 to 12:3 constitutes a revelation of the major factors of the time of the end which may be summarized as follows: (1) a world ruler, (2) a world religion, (3) a world war, (4) a time of great tribulation for Israel, (5) deliverance for the people of God at the end of the tribulation, (6) resurrection and judgment, and (7) reward of the righteous. All of these factors are introduced in this section. Added elsewhere in the Scriptures are the additional facts that this time of the end begins with the breaking of the covenant by "the prince that shall come" (Dan 9:26-27); that the "time of the end" will last for three and one-half years (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 13:5); that the time of the end is the same as the time of Jacob's trouble and the great tribulation (Jer 30:7; Mt 24:21). Many additional details are supplied in Revelation 6-19.

The fact that the opening section of chapter 12 is obviously eschatologically future, constitutes a major embarrassment to liberals who attempt to find Antiochus Epiphanes in 11:36-45. Chapter 12, which is naturally connected to the preceding section, clearly does not refer to Antiochus Epiphanes but to the consummation of the ages and the resurrection and reward of the saints. Nowhere does the attempt to make Daniel entirely history fail more miserably than here, as the detailed exegesis of these verses demonstrates.

The Great Tribulation

12:1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

The opening phrase of chapter 12, and at that time, makes clear that this passage is talking about the same period of time as the previous context, that is, "the time of the end" (11:40). The action here in verse 1 is not subsequent to the preceding events but coincides with them chronologically. Chapter 11 had dealt primarily with the political and religious aspects of the time of the end. Chapter 12 relates this now to the people of Israel. Here is stated in clear terms that this is the time of trouble for the people of Israel, "such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." To take the expression the children of thy people in any other sense than that of Israel is to ignore the uniform meaning of thy people throughout the book of Daniel. The people involved are a nation, that is, the nation Israel.

The unprecedented time of trouble here mentioned is a major theme of both the Old and New Testament. As early as Deuteronomy 4:30, it was predicted that "in the latter days" the children of Israel would be "in tribulation." Jeremiah had referred to it as "the time of Jacob's trouble," in his lament, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it" (Jer 30:7).

Christ described the great tribulation as beginning with "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Mt 24:15), a reference to the breaking of the covenant and desecration of the temple in Daniel 9:27. Christ's warning to the children of Israel at that time was that they should "flee into the mountains," not taking time to secure clothes or food. Christ graphically described the period in these words, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for

the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Mt 24:21-22).

This description of the time of the end confirms Daniel's revelation that the time of the end will be a period of trouble such as the world has never known, trouble of such character that it would result in the extermination of the human race if it were not cut short by the consummation, the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is made clear from a further study of Revelation 6-19, where the great catastrophies which overtake the world in the breaking of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets, and the emptying of the vials of divine judgment decimate the world's population. All of these Scriptures agree that there is no precedent to this end-time trouble. Even liberal expositors find it impossible to harmonize Daniel 12:1 with the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C.

As Keil has observed,

...the contents of ver. 1 do not agree with the period of persecution under Antiochus. That which is said regarding the greatness of the persecution is much too strong for it... Though the oppression which Antiochus brought upon Israel may have been most severe, yet it could not be said of it without exaggeration, that it was such a tribulation as never had been from the beginning of the world. Antiochus, it is true, sought to outroot Judaism root and branch, but Pharaoh also wished to do the same by his command to destroy all the Hebrew male children at their birth; and as Antiochus wished to make the worship of the Grecian Zeus, so also Jezebel the worship of the Phoenician Hercules, in the place of the worship of Jehovah, the national religion in Israel.⁶³³

Numerous other allusions in Scripture to this period indicate that it is indeed a time of supreme trial for Israel. Zechariah 13:8 declares of this period, "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein." Zechariah goes on to picture the refining process until the people of Israel acknowledge the Lord as their God. The very next verses describe the final struggle for Jerusalem and the second advent of Christ which delivers Israel. This time of trouble is parallel to the warfare described in Daniel 11:40-45.

In their distress, the children of Israel are especially aided by Michael, the archangel (Jude 9). As the head of the holy angels, Michael is given the special responsibility of protecting the children of Israel. Although Calvin preferred the interpretation that Michael was the person of Christ,⁶³⁴ there is no justification for confusing Michael and Christ. Earlier in Daniel itself, mention was made of Michael in Daniel 10:13-21, where Michael participated in the angelic warfare which had prevented the messenger from reaching Daniel promptly. Michael was indeed a "great prince" among the angels whose activity is especially directed to the children of Israel in their time of great trouble.

Because of the purpose of God and the ministry of Michael, it is revealed to Daniel that "at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." This obviously refers to the end of the tribulation, at which time some of the children of Israel, who by miraculous divine protection had been preserved, will be delivered from their persecutors (Dan 7:18, 27). The repeated reference to "thy people," twice in one verse, seems to limit this to the people of Israel, rather than to all the saints as Young and Leupold interpret it, after Calvin.⁶³⁵ This is in keeping with the whole tenor of Daniel which deals with Israel as Daniel's people. The deliverance will not extend to all Israel in that unbelieving or apostate Israel is excluded; and even here, it refers only to those actually living at the time of the return of Christ as many others may be martyred. The prophecy assures, however, that in spite of satanic efforts to exterminate the people of Israel, a godly remnant will be ready to greet their Messiah when He returns

(Zee 12:10; 13:8-9). The people of Israel who have endured the times of the Gentiles ever since the days of Nebuchadnezzar will be delivered "at that time," an expression repeated twice in this verse.

The reference to "every one that shall be found written in the book" conveys the thought that those delivered have their names inscribed in the book of life (Ex 32:32, 33; Ps 69:28; Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27). At the second coming of Christ, not every individual Israelite is spiritually prepared for His return, as Ezekiel 20:33-38 makes clear, describing the purging out of the rebels in Israel at the time of the second advent. Although Israel as a nation will be delivered from their persecutors (Ro 11:26), individual Israelites will still face the searching judgment of Christ as to their spiritual preparation to enter the kingdom. For Jew as well as Gentile, the issue will be whether they have eternal life.

The Resurrections

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.

As a climax to the time of tribulation described in the preceding context, verse 2 reveals that there will be a resurrection from the dead. Both liberal and conservative expositors consider the main thrust of this passage the promise of ultimate bliss for the righteous who suffer in the preceding period of tribulation. As Montgomery expresses, "The end of the godless tyrant must have its positive foil in the bliss of the righteous; so the elder apocalypses concluded, e.g., Eze. 38:39, Joel 4 (3)."⁶³⁶

Bevan, who labors to connect this passage with Antiochus, nevertheless states,

Verse 2 introduces the resurrection of the dead. To what extent this belief existed among the Jews in pre-Maccabean times, cannot here be discussed, but this is in any case the earliest passage where the belief is unambiguously set forth. Here, however, the resurrection is far from being universal; it includes "many," not all, of the dead. That only Israelites are raised is not expressly stated, but appears probable from the context... Those who awake are divided into two classes, corresponding to the division in chap. 11:32.⁶³⁷

Montgomery quotes Bevan with approval.⁶³⁸ Although Montgomery is right that the doctrine of resurrection is the hope of saints in trial, he and Bevan are wrong that this is the earliest passage where this belief is revealed clearly. It is clear that Abraham had confidence in resurrection from the dead in offering Isaac (Gen 22:5; Heb 11:19). Job, who probably lived before Moses, stated his faith in the well known passage, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). Isaiah, who lived more than a century before Daniel, predicted that dead men would live again and that their bodies should rise (Is 26:19). Hosea, a contemporary of Isaiah, predicted, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death" (Ho 13:14). Even the resurrection of Christ is predicted in the words, "My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps 16:9-10). Here Daniel is not revealing something new but what has always been the hope of the saints. This, of course, is enlarged in the New Testament with the added truth of the rapture of living saints.

Although both liberal and conservative scholars generally agree that resurrection is in view in this passage, because of the wording of the prophecy, questions have risen concerning (1) the character of the event, (2) the time of the event, and (3) the inclusion of the event. Interpretation of the passage has

been affected by the general eschatological position of the interpreter; normally premillenarians interpret the passage somewhat differently from amillenarians.

Strange to say, some premillenarians, although conservative in their general interpretation, have questioned whether this passage actually teaches resurrection. A. C. Gaebelein, for instance, states flatly, "Physical resurrection is not taught in the second verse of this chapter... We repeat, the passage has nothing to do with physical resurrection. Physical resurrection is however used as a figure of the national revival of Israel in that day."⁶³⁹ William Kelly takes precisely the same position when he says, "The verse is constantly applied to the resurrection of the body; and it is true that the Spirit founds the figure, which is here used to foreshadow the revival of Israel, upon that resurrection. But it can be shewn that it has not the least reference to a bodily resurrection, either of us or of Israel."⁶⁴⁰ Even H. A. Ironside concurs with this teaching stating, "The second verse does not, I believe, speak of an actual physical resurrection, but rather of a moral and national one... It is the same kind of language that is used both in Isaiah 26:12-19 and Ezekiel 37..."⁶⁴¹

The motivation behind this interpretation is their zeal not only to support in general the premillennial interpretation of Scripture and the restoration of the nation Israel at the second coming of Christ, but especially to harmonize this passage with their teaching that Old Testament saints are raised at the time of the rapture of the church before the tribulation and hence would not be raised here at a later time. Most contemporary premillenarians, who are also pretribulationists, believe that this approach is unnecessary and actually misinterprets the passage.

Robert Culver, for instance, in commenting on Gaebelein states, "The thing so utterly unacceptable about this is that Gaebelein adopts the very 'spiritualizing' or 'symbolizing' principle of interpretation which our opponents adopt--and that in the midst of a passage where everything else is esteemed (by Gaebelein and all Premillennialists) to be literal, not figurative. He does with this passage precisely what the Postmillennialists and Amillennialists do with reference to a first resurrection in Revelation 20."⁶⁴²

It is significant that expositors who spiritualize the resurrection of Daniel 12:2 interpret the first part of the verse as applying to Israel's restoration, but they pass over the last part of the verse referring to those who awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Certainly the wicked are literally raised from the dead for their final judgment (Rev 20:12-13), and the same verb must mean resurrection for the righteous as well. The meaning of awake must be resurrection in both instances. It is not necessary to press this passage out of its natural meaning in order to support premillennialism, and there is nothing in this passage that contradicts pretribulationism either if understood normally. Nor does a proper understanding of this passage contradict a national restoration of Israel at the second coming of Christ. This is taught in many other prophetic passages also.

What is presented here is that those who have died will be raised from the dead to join those living in this period of restoration. Israelites who survive the tribulation and who are the objects of the divine deliverance prophesied in Romans 11:26 will be joined by the Old Testament saints who are raised from the dead. This will occur after the great tribulation, at the second coming of Christ. Actually, there is no passage in Scripture which teaches that the Old Testament saints will be raised at the time the church is raptured, that is, before the final tribulation. It is preferable, therefore, to consider their resurrection as occurring at the same time as the restoration of the living nation with the result that resurrected Israel and those still in their natural bodies who are delivered at the second coming of Christ will join hands and ministries in establishing Israel in the land in the millennial kingdom which follows the second advent.

Accordingly, the exegesis of this passage which interprets it as revealing an actual resurrection at the time of the second coming of Christ is preferable. At the same time, those who have died in the great tribulation just preceding will also be raised as taught in Revelation 20:4-6.

If this is a genuine resurrection, what is the timing of the event? Here the distinction in interpretation arises from the differing point of view of the amillennial and postmillennial interpretations. Amillenarians like Leupold and Edward Young, with some qualification, consider this a general resurrection preceding the eternal state which follows.⁶⁴³ However, some scholars not committed to premillennialism admit that this is not a general resurrection. J. M. Fuller considers this "not the last and general resurrection, but a partial one which precedes that, and is confined to Daniel's nation."⁶⁴⁴ Young, while holding that the ultimate meaning is a general resurrection by implication, says, "...the Scripture at this point is not speaking of a general resurrection..."⁶⁴⁵

Premillenarians, however, believe that the hope of a thousand-year kingdom on earth after the second coming of Christ is clearly taught in many Old Testament and New Testament passages and the resurrection of the wicked is placed at the close of the millennium. How can the pre-millennial point of view be harmonized with this verse?

Some help is afforded in understanding Daniel 12:2 by appealing to more accurate translations. Actually the Hebrew seems to separate sharply the two classes of resurrection. Tregelles following earlier Jewish commentators translated verse 2, "And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time, shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt."⁶⁴⁶ Robert Culver defends this translation by finding support in commentaries by Seiss, and Nathaniel West.⁶⁴⁷

There is obviously no problem in the resurrection of the righteous at the second coming of Jesus Christ as premillenarians and amillenarians generally agree on this point. By the beginning of the millennial kingdom, all the righteous dead already have been raised. Pretribulationists believe that the church, the saints of the present age, are raised before the tribulation; and if Old Testament saints are not raised before the tribulation, they will be raised after the tribulation, prior to the millennial kingdom. Hence, there is no conflict with the statement of the righteous being raised at this time.

The problem arises, however, in that the passage states that the resurrection will extend to "some to shame and everlasting contempt." Here, premillenarians appeal to the clear distinction provided in Revelation 20 which states, after revealing the resurrection of the righteous, "But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (v. 5). The resurrection of the wicked, the second resurrection, is revealed in Revelation 20:12-13. If the resurrection of Revelation 20:5 and that of 20:12-13 are actual resurrections, fulfilling the prophecy of the resurrection of Daniel 12, it makes very clear that there will be more than one resurrection. The confident assertion of amillenarians such as Leupold that, "A dual resurrection is taught nowhere in the Scriptures"⁶⁴⁸ is a judgment which ignores obvious distinctions in the Bible.

First of all, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, as even amillenarians agree. His resurrection is unquestionably separated in time from the final resurrection. At the time of the resurrection of Christ, a token resurrection of saints occurred as stated in Matthew 27:52-53, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This also appears to be a genuine resurrection. If the

pretribulational position is correct, there is also a resurrection of the church prior to the great tribulation. In any event, a natural and normal interpretation of Revelation 20 would indicate that the resurrection of the righteous occurred at the beginning of the thousand years and the resurrection of the wicked at the end of the thousand years (Rev 20:12-14). Only by spiritualizing this passage and making the first resurrection the new birth of the believer--rather ridiculous in the context of Revelation 20:4 which speaks of martyred dead--can a genuine separation of the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked be denied.

Accordingly, premillenarians consider the revelation to Daniel as a statement of fact that after the great tribulation and the second coming of Christ many, of both the righteous and of the wicked, will be raised. It is not at all unusual for the Old Testament in prophecy to include events separated by a considerable span of time as if they concurred in immediate relation to each other. The passing over of the entire present age--the period between the first and second advents of Christ--in such passages as Isaiah 61:1-2 is familiar to all expositors of the Old Testament. Here is another illustration. The righteous will be raised according to this interpretation as a reward for their faith and faithfulness, but the wicked who die are warned concerning their final judgment. The setting off of the many who awake, into two classes by inference assumes that there will be two resurrections with different destinies. Although this passage does not teach premillennialism expressly, it is not out of harmony with the premillennial interpretation.

In the understanding of this passage, a further difficulty arises in the use of the term many. Here, expositors are divided as to whether the word means precisely what it indicates, that is, "many, but not all," or whether the word is here used in the sense that all will be raised.

Leupold argues at some length that many means as a matter of fact in this passage "all." He states, "There are also other instances where 'many*' and 'all' are used interchangeably, the one emphasizing the fact that there are numerically many, the other the fact that all are involved."⁶⁴⁹ Leupold goes on to cite Matthew 20:28; 26:28; and Romans 5:15, 16 as cases in point.⁶⁵⁰

The fact is, however, that while in some cases all may also be "many," it is also true that in some cases many is not "all." Here, the precise expositor would prefer to let the text stand for itself, and the text does not say "all." Although interpreting many as "all" would be natural exegesis for amillenarians, it is of interest that Edward Young, also an amillenarian, does not take this position. He says,

We should expect the text to say all. In order to escape the difficulty, some expositors have taken the word many in the sense of all. However, this is forced and unnatural. The correct solution appears to be found in the fact that the Scripture at this point is not speaking of a general resurrection, but rather is setting forth a thought that the salvation which is to occur at this time will not be limited to those who are alive, but will extend also to those who lost their lives... The words, of course, do not exclude the general resurrection, but rather imply it. Their emphasis, however, is upon the resurrection of those who died during the period of great distress.⁶⁵¹

Even Bevan states, as previously quoted, "Here, however, the resurrection is far from being universal; it includes 'many,' not all, of the dead. That only Israelites are raised is not expressly stated, but appears probable from the context."⁶⁵²

From the standpoint of the pretribulational interpretation of prophecy, which holds to a resurrection of the church before the tribulation and therefore as preceding this resurrection, this passage can be taken quite literally. As a matter of fact, if the pretribulationists are correct, there will be an extensive resurrection of the righteous at this point when Christ returns to reign. Although it would be too much to say that this

confirms pretribulationism," it harmonizes with this interpretation precisely. At the same time, Young is probably correct that the hope of resurrection is especially extended to the martyred dead of the tribulation who are given special mention in Revelation 20:4.

The Reward of the Righteous

12:3 And they that be wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Following the resurrection of the righteous, their faithfulness in witness will be rewarded. It is significant that no mention is made of the punishment of the wicked. Their resurrection will not occur until a thousand years later, according to Revelation 20; and the final judgment at the great white throne will include the judgment of those who wickedly opposed Christ at His second advent and who will be destroyed according to Revelation 19:17-21. The main point of Revelation 20 is that the saints, whether living or dead, may look forward to a glorious reward at the conclusion of the great tribulation when Christ returns.

From verse 2, it is learned that they will receive everlasting life. As Young states, "This is the first occurrence of this expression in the OT."⁶⁵³ In addition to receiving eternal life itself, those who are among the resurrection to everlasting life will be rewarded by glorification. They are described as "wise" in that they were able to see through the unbelief and wickedness of their generation and put their confidence in the unseen eternal values of their faith. They behaved themselves wisely; that is, they were obedient to God. Because of this, their reward is that they will shine with the same glory as the heavens and fulfill the same function to "declare the glory of God" (Ps 19:1). In a natural Hebrew parallelism, they are also described as having turned "many to righteousness." The lot of those who have influenced others to faith will also be to shine as the stars forever. In the background are the particular references to the fact that "they that understand among the people shall instruct many" (Dan 11:33), fulfilled in the second century B.C., and reference to "them of understanding" mentioned in Daniel 11:35, living in the same period. To limit this, however, to those in the reign of Antiochus is unjustified, as they are illustrations of faithful saints in all ages.

Keil has summarized the teaching of this passage in these words: "The salvation of the people, which the end shall bring in, consists accordingly in the consummation of the people of God by the resurrection of the dead and the judgment dividing the pious from the godless, according to which the pious shall be raised to eternal life, and the godless shall be given up to everlasting shame and contempt. But the leaders of the people who, amid the wars and conflicts of this life, have turned many to righteousness, shall shine in the imperishable glory of heaven."⁶⁵⁴

The Conclusion of the Revelation

12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

After experiencing the broad expanse of the revelation--beginning as it did with the kings of Persia, extending through the Maccabean period, then leaping to the end of the age and the great tribulation, and including the resurrections and reward of the righteous--Daniel is now instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book." In this statement, it is made plain that the revelation, although enlightening and reassuring even to Daniel, was not intended primarily to interpret these events to him alone. The prophecies thus revealed were to have primary application to those living in "the time of the end." In fact,

the entire revelation, even the portions already fulfilled through Daniel 11:35, are designed to help those seeking to trust in the Lord in their affliction at the climax of the age. It is significant that in the twentieth century, even though twenty-five hundred years have elapsed, the prophecies of Daniel have never been more relevant to an attempt to understand the course of history and impending future events.

The close of verse 4 with its statement, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," is difficult to translate; and commentators have not been agreed as to its precise meaning. The familiar interpretation that this phrase refers to increased travel in modern days certainly makes sense, as never in the history of the world has there been more travel. However, in the context the search for knowledge seems to be the main idea. Montgomery interprets it in the light of Amos 8:12, "And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."⁶⁵⁵ John Calvin translated it, "Many shall investigate, and knowledge shall increase."⁶⁵⁶ Leupold interprets the verse to mean, "Many shall diligently peruse it, and knowledge shall be increased."⁶⁵⁷ In the Hebrew the word for "knowledge" is *hadda'at*, literally, "the knowledge," that is, understanding of this long prophecy. Some consider the sentence as referring to the eyes of a reader running "to and fro" in reading the Word of God (cf. 2 Chr 16:9). Whether or not physical wandering and travel is involved, the implication is that attempts to understand the truth will require considerable effort.

Young agrees with Montgomery in finding the key in Amos 8:12 and states, "The verb appears to describe a vain travelling about in order to discover knowledge."⁶⁵⁸ As Young goes on to explain, what the angel is saying to Daniel is that for the immediate future, attempts to understand these prophecies will be in vain, but in the time of the end, when these prophecies will become especially pertinent, additional understanding will be given. Accordingly, it is not too much to say that a twentieth-century interpreter of Daniel may understand these prophecies with greater clarity and be able to relate them to history in a way that was impossible in the sixth century B.C. There is also the intimation that the ceaseless search for knowledge by men will often go unrewarded either because they do not look in the right place for it, or because their time and circumstance does not justify their understanding of prophecy that does not immediately concern them. No doubt, those living in the time of the end will have far greater understanding of these things than is possible today.

How Long Until the Time of the End

12:5-8 Then I, Daniel, looked and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

At the conclusion of the vision Daniel, still observing the scene by the side of the river as in chapter 10, observes two individuals, one on one side of the river and the other on the other. It may be assumed that the river is the Hiddekel (10:4), that is, the Tigris, its more modern name. The individuals whom Daniel observes are probably angelic creatures, in keeping with his experiences in chapter 10. One of these asks the obvious question in the light of the great prophecies which have just preceded, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" In verse 7, reference is made to "the man clothed in linen," apparently the same one described in verses 5 and 6 of chapter 10.

As Daniel observes, the man clothed in linen holds up his right hand and his left to heaven and swears "by him that liveth for ever," no doubt a reference to God, that the time factor involved in the time of the end is "for a time, times, and an half." Although the second angel does not participate in this revelation, it may be in keeping with the concept of two witnesses as establishing a point (Deu 19:15; 31:28; 2 Co 13:1). The fact that the one making the statement raises both hands indicates the solemnity of the oath. Ordinarily, only one hand was raised (Gen 14:22; Deu 32:40). The message is obviously delivered on behalf of God and, to some extent, parallels the thought of Deuteronomy 32:40.⁶⁵⁹

The revelation is further solemnized by the fact that the angel stands by the bank of the river, and the particular word for river is the word ordinarily used for the Nile River. As Young states, "There must be a reason for the choice of the word translated stream. As already indicated, it is the common designation for the Nile river. Possibly, it is deliberately employed here to remind Dan. that just as the Lord had once stood over Egypt, the world-nation which was hostile to God's people, so now does He stand over the world kingdom, represented symbolically by the Nile stream, actually the Tigris, ready again to deliver His people."⁶⁶⁰

What is the meaning of the phrase a time, times, and an half. This expression, also occurring in Daniel 7:25, apparently refers to the last period preceding the second coming of Christ which brings conclusion to the time of the end. Montgomery, although a liberal scholar, correctly stated the meaning when he wrote, "Here, 5:7, it is in the terms of 7:25, with the Heb. equivalent of the Aram, there; i.e., three and a half years."⁶⁶¹ In other words, it is the last half of the seven-year period of Daniel 9:27 which culminates in the second advent. The expression time, is considered a single unit; times, as equivalent to two units; and an half, a half unit. Adding these units amounts to three and one-half. Obviously, this expression would be obscure if it were not for added light given in other passages and the further revelation given in this chapter. When the three and a half years are fulfilled in them, as the prophecy states, "He shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people," that is, it will be the period of terrible persecution of the people of Israel. The verb translated "scatter" means "to shatter," allowing the translation, "when (they) finish shattering the hand (fig. for power) of the holy people."⁶⁶² When the persecution has run its course in God's time, and "all these things shall be finished," the time of the end will be concluded.

Although Daniel heard the prophecy plainly, he states in verse 8 that he did not understand it. Daniel rephrases the original question asked by the angel in verse 6, and addresses the angel with the words, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" Daniel is stating his bewilderment in his effort to understand the revelations given concerning the consummation of the time of the end.

The Concluding Explanation of the Angel

12:9-13 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

In verse 9, Daniel is once again informed that the revelation given to him will not be completely understood until the time of the end. Daniel is not rebuked for his curiosity, as it is only natural to ask the questions which he raised. The primary purpose of the revelation, however, was to inform those who would live in

the time of the end. The confirming interpretation of history and prophecy fulfilled would be necessary before the final prophecies could be understood.

However, in partial answer to Daniel's question, which concerned the purpose of the events revealed, the prophet is informed in verse 10 that the time of the end will have a twofold result: first, it will result in the purification of the saints; second, it will manifest the true character of the wickedness of the human heart. Likewise, understanding the events of the time of the end will be possible for "the wise" who "shall understand," but "none of the wicked shall understand." The understanding of prophecy peculiarly requires spiritual insight and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Even though the Scriptures describe in great detail the time of the end, it is obvious that the wicked will not avail themselves of this divine revelation; but it will be a source of comfort and direction to those who are true believers in God. Divine revelation is often given in such a way that it is hid to the wicked even though it is understandable by those spiritually minded.

In verses 11 and 12, two important revelations are given by way of clarification of the duration of the time of the end. According to verse 11, a period of 1,290 days will elapse from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away until the time of the end is consummated. The time that the daily sacrifice is taken away is equated with "the abomination that maketh desolate." This expression originating in the revelation of Daniel 9:27 has reference to the stopping of sacrifices in the middle of the seven-year period. The predicted event had its corresponding anticipation in the desolation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century b.c. (Dan 8:11-14). That this event is future and not a reference to the historic desecration by Antiochus is apparent from the prophecy of Christ in Matthew 24:15 where "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," is given as a sign of the great tribulation. From these passages, it is obvious that the last three and a half years of the time of the end is in view.

Seiss summarizes this interpretation as follows,

Nor shall this state of things be only for a few days, weeks or months, but for full three and a half years. In not less than six different places, and in almost as many different ways, is this declared in the prophecies, including both Testaments. It is for "a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25)--"It shall be for a time, times, and a half" (12:7) -- "the holy city shall be tread underfoot forty and two months" (Rev. 11:2) -- "the woman fled into the wilderness, a thousand two hundred and threescore days"--for "a time, and times, and half a time" (12:6, 14)--"and power was given him to continue forty and two months" (13:5). All these passages refer to one and the same period of oppression and trouble under the Antichrist, and in each instance the measure is three and a half years, dating from the breaking of the league and the suspension of the daily offering to the destruction of the monster by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Our Lord ministered on earth three and a half years, and the Antichrist shall enact his Satanic ministry for the same length of time.⁶⁶³

The three and a half years of Daniel 9:27, however, are normally taken to be three and a half years or forty-two months of thirty days each, following the custom of the Jews. This would be only 1,260 days. The duration of the great tribulation as forty-two months is confirmed by Revelation 11:2; 13:5, which is considered equivalent to the "time, times, and an half" of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. Why then are thirty days added to the 1,260 days? This question is further complicated by verse 12 which states that there is a special blessing for the one who attains to the 1,335 days. This is still another forty-five days beyond the limit of verse 11.

Although Daniel does not explain these varying durations, it is obvious that the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His millennial kingdom requires time. The 1,260 day period or precisely forty-two months of thirty days each, can be regarded as culminating with the second advent itself. This is followed by several divine judgments such as the judgment of the nations (Mt 25:31-46), and the regathering and judgment of Israel (Eze 20:34-38). These great judgments beginning with the living on earth and purging out of unbelievers who have worshiped the beast, although handled quickly, will require time. By the 1,335 days, or seventy-five days after the second advent, these great judgments will have been accomplished and the millennial kingdom formally launched. Those who attain to this period are obviously those who have been judged worthy to enter the kingdom. Hence, they are called "blessed."

In any case, there is no justification for the attempts to link this with Antiochus Epiphanes as Montgomery does.⁶⁶⁴ Even Zockler admits, "The troubled events of the Maccabean period, which might deserve notice as the points of the beginning and the end of the historical equivalent of the three and a half years, do not present a satisfactory reason for such vacillating predictions; for the exact period required cannot be found in that epoch, however its limits may be fixed."⁶⁶⁵ Here, as throughout the book of Daniel, the expression the time of the end is the end of Gentile power, which obviously extends beyond the present age to the second advent as anticipated in the prophecy of Christ in Matthew 24:15-31. The whole approach of the liberal scholar attempting to treat Daniel as history and not prophecy, breaks down when the comprehensive nature of Daniel's prophetic foreview is understood. The explanation of the additional time required to complete the transfer from the time of the end to the time of the fifth kingdom no doubt did not help Daniel much. But in the light of New Testament revelation, it provides the background for the transition from the great tribulation to the kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth.

Anticipating that Daniel would not completely understand these additional revelations, the angel informs him, "But go thou thy way till the end be." The angel predicts that Daniel will "rest," that is, die, and "stand in thy lot at the end of the days," that is, be resurrected in the resurrection of Daniel 12:2 and participate in the glorious triumph of Christ as the millennial kingdom is inaugurated. Inasmuch as resurrected saints are declared to reign with Christ (e.g., Rev 5:10), it is conceivable that Daniel, who reigned under Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede, will be allocated a future executive responsibility in the kingdom of Christ on earth for which his earthly experience could constitute a preparation.

This concluding revelation of Daniel's prophecy, acting as a capstone on all the preceding tremendous revelations, establishes the book of Daniel as the greatest and most comprehensive prophetic revelation of the Old Testament. Its counterpart in the New Testament in the book of Revelation provides the final word of God concerning the prophetic program of the ages. In the light of world conditions today, which would seem to anticipate the fulfillment of Daniel's time of the end, it is possible to understand Daniel today as never before in history. The hour may not be far distant when faithful saints in the midst of trial in the great tribulation will turn to these pages of Scripture and find in them the strength and courage to remain true even though it mean a martyr's death.

For Christians living in the age of grace and searching for understanding of these difficult days which may be bringing to a close God's purpose in His church, the book of Daniel, as never before, casts a broad light upon contemporary events foreshadowing the consummation which may not be far distant. If God is reviving His people Israel politically, allowing the church to drift into indifference and apostasy, and permitting the nations to move toward centralization of political power, it may not be long before the time of the end will overtake the world. Many who look for the coming of the Lord anticipate their removal from the earth's scene before the final days of the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

When the plan of God has run its full course, it will be evident then with even more clarity than at present that God has not allowed a word to fall to the ground. As Christ said while on earth, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Mt 5:18).

632 N. W. Porteous, Daniel, A Commentary, p. 170.

633 C. F. Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, pp. 477-78.

634 J. Calvin, Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, 2:369.

635 E. J. Young, The Prophecy of Daniel, p. 255; H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Daniel, pp. 528-29; Calvin, 2:371-72.

636 J. A. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Daniel, p. 471.

637 A. A. Bevan, A Short Commentary on The Book of Daniel, p. 201.

638 Montgomery, *ibid.*

639 A. C. Gaebelein, The Prophet Daniel, p. 200.

640 W. Kelly, Lectures on the Book of Daniel, pp. 225-26.

641 H. A. Ironside, Lectures on Daniel the Prophet, pp. 231-32.

642 R. D. Culver, Daniel and the Latter Days, p. 172.

643 Leupold, pp. 529-532; Young, p. 256.

644 John M. Fuller, An Essay on the Authenticity of the Book of Daniel, p. 339.

645 Young, p. 256.

646 S. P. Tregelles, Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel, p. 162.

647 Culver, p. 175.

648 Leupold, p. 530.

649 *Ibid.*

650 *Ibid.*

651 Young, p. 256.

652 Bevan, p. 201.

653 Young, p. 256.

654 Keil, p. 484.

655 Montgomery, pp. 473-74.

656 Calvin, 2:379. *Orig. in italics.*

657 Leupold, p. 534.

658 Young, p. 258.

659 Cf. Young, p. 259.

660 Ibid.

661 Montgomery, p. 475.

662 Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 658.

663 J. A. Seiss, Voices from Babylon, pp. 310-11.

664 Montgomery, p. 477.

665 O. Zockler, "The Book of the Prophet Daniel," in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, 13:267.

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