

# END OF THE LINES

DANIEL 12:1-13    APRIL 17, 2019

I saw an interesting article yesterday. Prominent business leaders were told to “pretend you can only ask your candidates a single interview question...to base your entire hiring decision on.” Barbara Corcoran, the Shark-Tank-famous real estate mogul said, “Tell me about your family. If their family couldn’t give them a positive attitude, there’s nothing I can do that’s going to change it.”<sup>1</sup>

Apple CEO Tim Cook doesn’t do the one question thing. A biography written about his leadership style describes how Cook would “wear people down through an endless barrage of questions.” “He’ll ask you ten questions. If you answer them right, he’ll ask you ten more. If you do this for a year, he’ll start asking you nine questions. Get one wrong, and he’ll ask you 20 and then 30.”<sup>2</sup>

In this final chapter, after receiving this overwhelming vision, Daniel will ask a single question. He won’t get the full answer he was hoping for, but we do. And that’s a pretty remarkable thing to think about. Let’s get into it.

**Daniel 12:1a - “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people...**

The time being referenced is the time of Antichrist’s reign over the world and his merciless war against the Jewish people and believers in Jesus Christ during the second half of the tribulation. During this period, we’re told, Michael the Archangel will take action in the heavenly realm.

Michael is mentioned in just 3 books of the Bible: Daniel, Jude and Revelation. But we know a little bit about him. He’s called an archangel, which is a particularly strong class of being. In Revelation 12 it seems he is on par with Satan in strength and position, in that he leads an army of angels just as Satan leads *his* angels. Here in Daniel 12 we learn that he has a special assignment to watch over the people of Israel. We’ve seen before that there are, apparently, angels and demons assigned to different geographic locations or people groups. Matthew 18, verse 10 suggests that angels may also have *personal* assignment to individuals.

In our text, we note that the strongest of angels is given to guard over Israel. The Jews *really are* God’s special, chosen people. He has not abandoned them or forgotten them. Now, before we feel jealous about Michael being assigned to Israel, we remember what Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3, where he said, “The *Lord* is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.” Our Bridegroom watches over us. By no means are we being short-changed.

**Daniel 12:1b - ...And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.**

For those who suggest that Daniel and Revelation are fulfilled either by Antiochus Epiphanes or by the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, this verse becomes a problem. Even though both of those periods were tragic for the Jews, they can’t be described as *more* terrible than anything that had happened since there ever was a nation. Add to that the fact that Jesus talked about this same

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<sup>1</sup> <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/interview-questions/2017/What-these-4-leaders-would-ask-if-they-only-had-time-for-1-interview-question>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/apple-ceo-tim-cook-management-style-2019-4>

period of time as Daniel is writing about and *He* said, "...there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, *nor ever shall be*. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved." So, it's clear that these things have not yet occurred. Charles Feinberg writes: "The best way to test whether this prophecy has been fulfilled already is to ask ourselves whether Israel has been delivered from her enemies. It was not true in the time of Nebuchadnezzar; it was not true in the time of Titus; and it is still not true in our present hour."<sup>3</sup>

We also note here that, just because the *nation* of Israel will be saved, that does not mean that every Jewish person will be. Deliverance on the *individual* level will still be determined by who is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Verse 2 brings that out.

**Daniel 12:2 - <sup>2</sup>And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.**

Some systems of theology teach that there is just one, general resurrection, all at once. Typically that position is held by those who don't believe in a literal Tribulation or Millennium. As PreMillennialist, PreTribulationists, we identify two resurrections: Revelation 20 calls them the first resurrection and the second. The *first* resurrection is of the righteous, but that resurrection does not happen at one single point in time. As we read the Bible, we see it taking place in *stages*. If someone balks at that idea, you can point out is that, *every* Christian believes that Jesus is *already risen from the dead*, right? Even those who hold to a single, general resurrection of all people from all eras will say that, of course, Jesus has already been raised. So, even to them, there are at least 2 stages to the resurrection.

As we read the Bible, we find there are in fact 3 stages to the first resurrection and 1 for the second.

When Jesus rose from the dead on Easter morning, He became the *first fruits* of the resurrection. Then, at the rapture of the Church, all the Believers who have died between Pentecost and the Rapture will be raised to life. That's stage 2 of the first resurrection. Then, after the second coming, all of the Old Testament believers and the believers who died during the Tribulation will be raised. That's what we see in Revelation 20 and here in Daniel 12. That's the *third* phase. Then, after the 1,000 year reign of Jesus on the earth we have the *second* resurrection. That is all of the unbelieving dead from all ages of human history - from Cain all the way through the Millennium. They will be raised and sent to the Great White Throne Judgement. No one comes out of that Judgement saved.

Now, sometimes people take issue with this position that the first resurrection happens over 3 stages. However, it's interesting to learn that, in Jewish society, the *harvest* had 3 stages. You had firstfruits. Then later a *larger* harvest of the main crop and then a *third* phase called the gleanings. The stuff gathered up at the end.<sup>4</sup> It's a wonderful picture of God's plan for the first resurrection.

**Daniel 12:3 - <sup>3</sup>Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.**

God values, rewards and *commands* that we share His good news of salvation. Proverbs 11:30 says, "he who wins souls *is* wise." We are sent to go out and labor in the harvest and bring back spiritual returns on the Lord's investment. That's an exciting thought, but it can also be a sobering thought. What can I do to be like the industrious servants who made good on the talents the Master gave

<sup>3</sup> Charles Feinberg Daniel: The Kingdom Of The Lord

<sup>4</sup> <https://bible.org/seriespage/4-two-resurrections>

them, rather than being like the one who simply buried those coins in the ground, deservedly bringing the Master's anger upon himself?

**Daniel 12:4 - 4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."**

There are lots of ideas tucked away in the two halves of this verse. Let's take the first and talk about Daniel *sealing* up the book. Some scholars feel the word means that the book of Daniel will be sealed in the sense that it is *secured* and kept *intact*. That's certainly been the case. All the words of his prophecies, we've seen, have been true and reliable.

Other scholars feel that the book was *sealed* in such a way that its full meaning was kept *concealed* until the time of the end. That seems to fit well with what we're going to read in verse 8 and following. From where Daniel stood, there were many, many things on God's to-do list before you could even start *thinking* about the Tribulation and the second coming. The Messiah hadn't even come the *first* time yet! But now we're in a much different position. The only item left on God's prophetic calendar before the Tribulation is the rapture of the Church. Peter and Paul both talked about how we are *in* the last days. Hebrews 1 verse 2 says that in *these last days* God has spoken to us by His Son. And so now, as we look at Daniel, we may understand everything perfectly, but we can look back through history, we can harmonize it with the rest of Bible prophecy and get a pretty clear handle on what is being said, in a way that was sealed shut in previous centuries.

The second half of the verse also has that phrase: "many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase." Scholars debate the exact meaning and context of this as well. Some point to Amos, chapter 8 where it uses similar language to describe people seeking the word of the Lord. In this way of thinking, the interpretation is that in the end times people will be scouring prophecy, specifically Daniel's prophecy, trying to find understanding and answers. And, as many people run to and fro over God's word, their knowledge of spiritual things will increase. There's nothing wrong with that interpretation. And, clearly, we see much greater attention and emphasis being given to Bible prophecy now than has ever been before. Not just in the Church, but by the wider world as well.

But others suggest that this half of the verse is also giving us a *marker* to look out for - signs of the times. The Bible is big into us watching the prophetic weather, as it were. In that case, it's easy to see that people move about the earth more quickly and easily than ever. As of 2014 there were over 100,000 flights *per day*.<sup>5</sup> These days, we regularly hear talk of manned voyages to Mars. Sub-orbital flights from London to Sydney in less than an hour.<sup>6</sup> All sorts of fantastic developments in travel.

As for knowledge increasing, *I* may not get much smarter, but the collection of accumulated data is growing at an exponential rate. This is something that has been studied for a while now. It's centered mostly on what's called the "Knowledge Doubling Curve." The idea is: How long does it take for all accumulated and transmitted human knowledge to double? In the year 1,750 it took about 250 years for human knowledge to double. By 1900, it was 100-150 years.<sup>7</sup> By the end of 1945, it was every 25 years. As of today, researchers suggest that the amount of accumulated and transmitted knowledge is doubling *every 12 hours*.<sup>8</sup> If we're looking for markers along God's prophetic road, these are pretty prominent.

<sup>5</sup> <https://garfors.com/100000-flights-day-html/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/sub-orbital-flight-virgin-galactic-blue-origin>

<sup>7</sup> <https://gowithfloat.com/2018/01/rapid-doubling-knowledge-drives-change-learn/>

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

**Daniel 12:5-7 - <sup>5</sup> Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. <sup>6</sup> And *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?*” <sup>7</sup> Then 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.**

I appreciate that the angels asked on our behalf. It’s a gentle reminder that God’s word speaks to those questions you have in your heart. It’s an ancient book, but it’s alive and speaks to our real lives today. Those questions that you have nagging in your heart have answers already delivered in the Bible. And we don’t need to be afraid to *ask* God questions about the things going on in our lives. We can trust Him to answer and to direct us.

Here in verse 7 we’re given that formula again: All of these great trials for Daniel’s people would be for a time, times and half a time. We learned before that this refers to a period of 3 and a half years, the last 3 and half years of human history before the establishment of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. We’re told in this passage that those years will be characterized by the crushing and shattering of God’s people. We learn a lot about that in the Revelation. Luckily, Jesus gives us more insight in the Olivet Discourse, promising that this time will be capped off by the Second Coming, where God rescues and makes right all that’s gone wrong in this world.

Now, the *answer* given in these verses poses a real problem for the Post-Millennial view. In that view, the world will become more and more Christian, culminating in the return of Christ to *receive* His Kingdom from us. That’s the *opposite* of what we read here.

**Daniel 12:8 - <sup>8</sup> Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things?*”**

We’ve seen from previous passages in Daniel that he knew God would establish a never-ending dominion *and* that His people would receive that kingdom and rule with the Lord. But from his vantage point he simply couldn’t understand the whole picture of God’s plan. What a privilege it is for us to have the whole, completed revelation of Scripture at our fingertips.

**Daniel 12:9-10 - <sup>9</sup> And he said, “Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. <sup>10</sup> 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.**

Daniel wasn’t going to get more of an explanation. Once again he’s told the book would be sealed to him and others *until the time of the end*. We sit up with anticipation when we read what John wrote almost 700 years later. An angel said to him: “Do *not* seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”

Commentaries will often talk about how Revelation is a companion book to Daniel. It is, but it’s more than that. It’s also like a decoder ring. The *cypher* to these previously sealed prophecies found in the Old Testament. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes: “The value of the Book of Revelation is not that it provides a lot of new information, but rather that it takes the scattered Old Testament prophecies and puts them in chronological order so that the sequence of events may be determined. This book provides a framework for the understanding of the order and the sequence of events found in the

Old Testament prophecies.”<sup>9</sup> Of course, Revelation *does* provide new material as well. But it is the key that unlocks the seals of passages like Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah and others. To discount Revelation, to dismiss it as unintelligible or strange or unimportant is to walk past a vast treasure trove of knowledge, wisdom and teaching from the Lord. It’s unacceptable to do so.

Daniel was desperate to understand prophecy. We should be too, especially since we have so much more to work with, such *greater* understanding and clarity.

**Daniel 12:11-12 - <sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.**

One last little prophetic tease here at the very end of the book. What does this mean? The Bible is very specific about the timing of the Great Tribulation. We’ve talked at length about the time, times and half a time. 3 and a half years. 42 months. In Revelation 11 and 12 it’s described as 1,260 days. God is belaboring the literalness of this time period. But then here have 2 *other* lengths. First, there’s 1,290 days, then ultimately 1,335 days.

While we can’t be absolutely certain about how this will all work out, there are some things we *do* know. We know that after the second coming the Kingdom will be established. And, this text indicates that there will be a transition period between the second coming and the opening of the Kingdom. It seems that there will be a total of 75 days in between. What’s going to be going on during that time? Well, we know from Ezekiel 20, verses 33-44 that the people of Israel will be examined by the Lord. They will pass under His rod like a flock of sheep. The rebels who did not believe will be purged and those who did believe will be brought into the bond of the covenant. We also know from the Olivet Discourse that angels will be sent out to gather the elect from one end of heaven to the other. And Jesus will preside over the sheep and goats judgment to determine which Gentiles will enter the kingdom and which will not.

It would seem all of this is going to take 75 days. I’m not sure what we’ll be doing during this time. Probably participating in some way. But, finally, 1,335 days after the Antichrist sets up his abomination which makes desolate, the kingdom will be established.

**Daniel 12:13 - <sup>13</sup> “But you, go *your way* till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.**

Daniel is told again to go and rest, despite his questions. And then the book is suddenly over. No epilogue. No “and so Daniel lived long and happy years.” No, verse 13 sends Daniel off and he immediately sets down his pen. But, notice the close: Daniel is sent to live out his life in the hope of the resurrection. That’s how his story ends. That’s how his great book of prophecy concludes. He looks forward to his own resurrection and inheritance.

How does our great *New Testament* prophecy Book end? The Revelation closes, for us, with a somewhat different hope: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.” We live out the rest of our lives in the hope of the *rapture*, the coming of the Lord. And, as we go, we can go in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may have questions, we may face temptations, struggles, disappointments, lions and fires, but we know the end. We know what’s

<sup>9</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8e7f/382029dd1f7b76ab573cd612e5e10595252a.pdf>

coming. The Lord is coming quickly. In the mean time, we can rest in His victory and busy ourselves with seeking His wisdom, seeking His kingdom, seeking His righteousness and turning *others* to righteousness. Not toward acts and works, but to *Jesus Christ*, our righteousness.