

## Daniel 12:1-13 – What if this is the End?

Wasn't Daniel 11 quite a whirlwind? The empires of the Persians and Greeks, Ptolemies and Seleucids, the Romans, and then Roman Europe being attacked by the Islamic Caliphate and then the Ottoman Empire, right up into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century! But don't forget that this is one continuous vision in chapters 10-12. With Christ standing as Lord at the beginning and at the end.<sup>i</sup> The calm Refuge who surrounds the storm. Christ stands as Priest to intercede for His people in the beginning of chapter 10--when the hopes Daniel had attached to the Persian's overthrow of Babylon didn't work out; when his dreams of revival and renewed worship in a Temple in Jerusalem failed; when his heart was broken by yet more setbacks and earthly disappointments; when he was very old and out of time and knew he would not live to see the things he had prayed for... Then He saw the unveiled glory and power of the Son of God, Christ Himself 500 years before He was born as a human baby. And that encounter with the holy power of the presence of Christ left Daniel helpless and afraid. Doesn't that bring the meaning of this life into focus? The purpose of Daniel 12 is to show us what it all boils down to. Like when you pour tap water into a pot and boil it. Chapter 11 shows us a panorama of things that would happen from Daniel's lifetime until the "end times"--right up to modern events in the 20th century.<sup>ii</sup> When all those plans, and power struggles, and plots and politics are all boiled away, we are left with one simple Truth: the only thing that matters is that we belong to Jesus. Chapter 12 drives that home with four promises.

### If we belong to Christ, even if we die, we win. (vv 1-2)

Now at the end of this whirlwind vision, who takes centre stage? Christ the Lord, the only one who can say what He says in Revelation, ““Fear not, I am the first and the last,<sup>18</sup> and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.” (Rev. 1:17-18) The angel bringing God's Word to Daniel says One "Who Is Like God" (literally "Michael" in Hebrew) will arise. And more than that, He's the one, the angel says, who is responsible for Daniel's people! [read vv1-2]

When we hear about such an awful time of trouble, we might not see why this is a victory. But I think that's part of the point. Nothing can separate us from the powerful love of Christ! The “delivering” of His people, and the resurrection “to everlasting life”, they happen because our Great Prince stands up to act. But if the events predicted at the very end of chapter 11 are the final decades of the Ottoman Empire, the genocides of the Assyrian and Armenian Christian minorities, and the end of Ottoman rule in Jerusalem—and I'm pretty sure they are—then the prediction of an unprecedented “time of trouble” includes the Jewish Holocaust.<sup>iii</sup> [read v1a] Probably we should also include the sufferings of all of Christ's people in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. There has never been a bloodier time in history. And so this prophecy seems counter-intuitive because the time of trouble in verse 1 is introduced by saying that this divine Person, “Who Is Like God”—*lit. Michael*—who I've explained before is Christ the Lord, rises up to act on behalf of “Daniel's people”, the Jews. With six million Jews murdered by the Nazis, it's hard to see how Christ was acting on behalf of the Jews. The prediction here was fulfilled in unspeakable death and loss and evil. If we count the 6 million Jews, or the total 11 million Jewish and Gentile victims of the Holocaust, or the more than 60 million killed in the war, or the more-than-20 million killed by Stalin before the war,<sup>iv</sup> the death toll is so big that it leaves us numb. That's the loss. But what does this prophecy say about gain? [read v1b] Ethnic lines don't stop Jesus from loving and saving people by grace. Estimates say that perhaps 10% of Jews in Germany were followers of Jesus and died along with the rest.<sup>v</sup> Who knows how many Jews in other parts of Europe believed in Jesus? There were lots of people who believed in Jesus who died during that “time of trouble”. But the angel's promise to Daniel

here is that even if they died, they won. Maybe they didn't escape dying, but the next verse promises that death won't hold them: [read v2]. This teaches us that everyone will eventually be resurrected and judged. Jew, Gentile, follower of Christ, or unbeliever. That's why their destination after that resurrection—"everlasting life" or "shame and everlasting contempt"; Heaven or Hell—is forever. I said last week that it is not worth it in the end to ignore or reject Christ. I don't know how to say that more strongly. It will cost you everything, but if you believe in Jesus and belong to Him, you gain everything! He is our Refuge in Death.

### If we serve Christ, we succeed no matter what. (vv3-4)

Again this isn't what we might first think. [read v3] This isn't saying Jesus will be on your side. This is saying, if you are on Jesus' side you won't fail. Because Jesus wins. The final victory belongs to Him—that's what the book of Revelation is about. And these words pick up the same theme of faithful believers teaching others to hope in the Christ that we read about in 11:33 and 35 [read]. Since Christ is the Jewish Messiah, and the Saviour God sent the world, and the King of kings and Lord of lords who is coming back again to judge evil, show mercy to humble sinners who love Him, and rescue Creation itself from the chains of corruption, then what could be a wiser use of your lifetime than to help other people know Christ? Proverbs 11:30 says "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever [wins] souls is wise." Ruth Horak is a Jewish lady who was born in 1935 in Czechoslovakia. Her father was sent to Warsaw by the Nazis, and she and her mother survived the horrors of the ghetto, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen. She remembers as a child praying, "God I know I will surely survive this." After English and French troops rescued them, she and her mother eventually migrated to the US. She became a nurse, got married, and had a family. But she says, "I did not enjoy going to synagogue when we arrived in the United States, and I would never step into a church. I was always praying, though. God had been with me in some very dark hours; I had been so desperate, and He was always with me." But finally she met a Jewish Christian who told her about Jesus. And she said, "'How can you believe this as a Jew?' I had been such an independent thinker; nobody could brainwash me into believing. But I was searching for the truth, and Lev showed me different things in the New Testament. I realized that Jesus had never been anything else but a Jew, and I accepted Him into my life...Today I am very outspoken about my faith. After Auschwitz, what do I have to lose?"<sup>vi</sup> Nothing. But everything to gain.

"Those who turn many to righteousness" will shine like stars forever. If you and I shine now, if we shine our light so that anyone from any nation or background has a chance to know Jesus too, if our light is that we love Jesus, then nothing can ever make us stop shining. Not death. Not threats. Nothing in the next million years will snuff out that light. Because if we are like little pinpoints of light in the night-sky, He is like the blazing Sun. We never stop shining because we are just little mirrors pointing people to the glory of God. Daniel was going to die soon, but the work God had given Daniel to do as a prophet to write down these visions, was only just beginning. His ministry was going to bear fruit for more than 2,000 years. Because of Daniel's faithful words, I wonder how many believers have gone back and forth to share the Gospel with others so that the knowledge of who Jesus is grows and spreads? That's what verse 4 means [read]. The assurances in verse 4 are meant to encourage Daniel to go his way and leave the fruits of his ministry to God. Gospel knowledge will spread. As with 11:33, 35, and 12:3, "knowledge" is about knowing Christ as Lord and Saviour.

### If we wait for Christ, we will be blessed. (vv5-12)

Now you need to notice the scene changing in verse 5. The angel's has stopped talking and Daniel now sees two angels, one on either side of the Tigris River (c.f. 10:4), and Christ, back then called "Michael" still standing above the river, and one of the angels asks a question. And don't miss the Lord's answer: [read vv6-7]. We'll come back to the three-and-a-half-times in a moment. The more important thing to see is that in both verses Daniel notices what Christ is wearing (the clothes of a Priest) and where He is standing (above the waters of the river). It's repeated so we don't miss it. And the way Christ answers the angel's question with authority and truth.<sup>vii</sup> One commentary says, "Raising the hand in an oath was the customary practice..., but raising both hands and swearing to keep the oath in the name of the eternal God ...gives the greatest possible assurance that the words spoken are true."<sup>viii</sup> Even angels only know as much of the future as God reveals to them. Even angels are amazed and perhaps confused as they see what God is doing on Earth. And even angels who aren't bound to this world, and don't die, still care about what God's people are going through.<sup>ix</sup> I wonder if the angels could see the spiritual battles going on behind this terrible time in history? Was Satan desperately attempting to kill every last one of God's people? It seems likely. But where the angel just asks "how long?" God's people will have to suffer, Daniel needs to know what it's all for. [read v8] The angel who shared this whole prophecy with him answers that Daniel needs to go and live out his life, and so do those who will live through these troubled times of desolation, of genocide, of war, and of waiting for Christ to come. And in those times we need to be able to trust Christ with our sins and with our suffering: [read v9-10]. All God's people, and even Daniel, in order to go and live our lives, we need to believe in Christ to make us pure and change us from the inside out, and to depend on His Word for understanding. We need to know He is with us, near in times of trouble, like He was with Daniel.

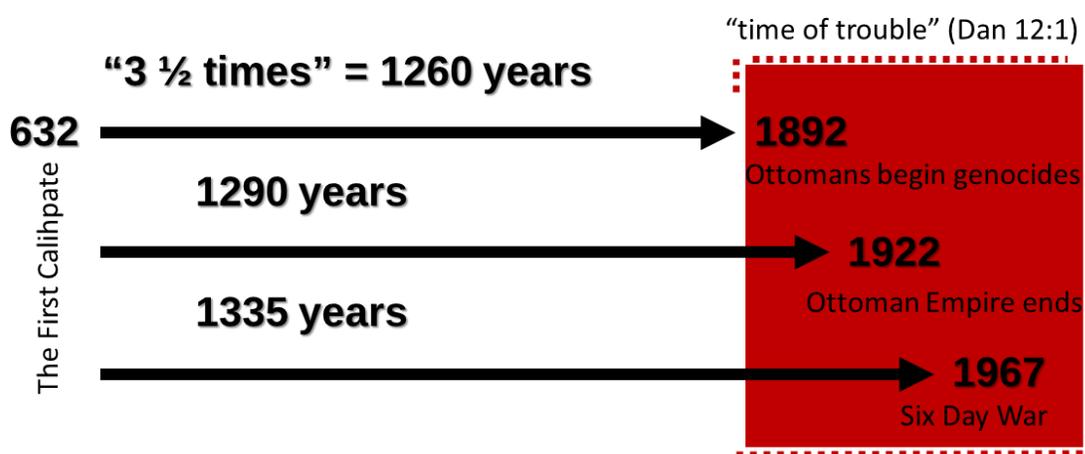
I want to take a few minutes to help us make sense of these confusing predictions in verses 11-12, but then I want to make sure you see why these predictions matter. [read vv11-12] **The three time periods in these verses** (see chart), (3 ½ times in verse 7; 1290 days in verse 11; 1335 days in verse 12) are a little bit like saying Winter will be over by March, it will rain throughout April, but May will be wonderful ("April showers bring May flowers!"). As I've explained before, history shows that these predictions are fulfilled on the scale of a year for each day.<sup>x</sup> So the winter, or the "shattering of the strength" of the Jewish people, would last 1260 years<sup>xi</sup>, rainy season for 30 years, then Spring after another 45 years.<sup>xii</sup> Summer will eventually come after that. And the measurement to the end of "winter" is described in verse 11 as *from a time when true worship is stopped*<sup>xiii</sup> and another wave of "abominations causing desolations" begins.<sup>xiv</sup> (It's not "the abomination causing desolation" as in 11:31, but "an abomination causing desolation" in Hebrew, meaning another one.)<sup>xv</sup> This event is connected with the rise of the "King of the South" in 11:40, "at the time of the end". It's called that in verse 40 because that was when the end of this winter was measured from in 12:11. I'd like to suggest that this is the period in history when the first Islamic Caliphate exploded out of Arabia into Syria and replaced Christian worship and Christian churches with Muslim worship and Muslim mosques.<sup>xvi</sup> It began with Muhammad's death in the June of the year 632AD. 1290 years later comes to the official end of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in 1922. 45 years after that, the "spring flowers", comes to June 1967 and the [Jewish liberation of Jerusalem in the Six Day War](#).<sup>xvii</sup> No wonder the angel said "blessed is he who waits and arrives" at that day—when Jerusalem is no longer trampled underfoot by Gentile rulers—as Jesus predicted in Luke 21:24. Does understanding this prophecy deepen your love and admiration of Jesus? Does it help you not just wait for Him but long for Him?

### If we trust Christ, He won't let us fall in the end. (v13)

This prophecy isn't meant to help us predict the future. They are written so that when they do happen, God's people will know it was our God who told us ahead of time. It's the same sort of proof of power and authority that God gave to the apostles when they preached the Gospel in Acts 14 where it says, God "bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3) It's the same point Jesus made in John's Gospel when He said, "From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He" (John 13:9). And again, in John 14:29, He said, "Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe." Seeing these prophecies come true is always so that we will believe in and worship the Lord who is our Great Prince, who is with us to the end, who will raise us from the dead one day to everlasting life, who died for our sins and lives forever more. Will you now believe? [read v13] Spending so much time with Daniel these last few months I have been moved by what he went through. Conquered, captured, mutilated, He did his best to stay faithful to His God. But in the end, his faithfulness wasn't strong enough. He broke. He was overwhelmed. What gave Him strength to go his way, finish his mission, write these chapters for our benefit and then to be able to die in peace and face His Great Prince again, was knowing that Christ is faithful. [read v13] For the second time (see v9) Daniel is again instructed to "go his way", that is, live out the rest of his life and whatever God has appointed for Daniel "until the end". Because he will die. So because he has seen Christ, and heard His great promises, he can "rest" as he faces death, knowing that at the right time, Jesus Christ will raise Him up so that Daniel will "stand in his allotted place at the end of days".

## “Shattering the Holy People” in Daniel 12

On the scale of prophecy, 1 day = 1 year



<sup>i</sup> The view that the divine being called "Michael" is the preincarnate Christ, has been held by many of the Reformers and subsequent Protestant, Evangelical writers. The argument from Scripture seems conclusive to me: The name "Michael" in Hebrew means, "Who is like God". In Daniel 10, the Hebrew words describing Him can be translated "first of the chief princes". Also in Daniel 10, he is described almost identically to the risen Lord Jesus in Revelation 1. In Jude 9 He is called "the archangel" (not "an archangel") which in Greek means "the ruler of

angels". In Revelation 12:7 the angels are described as "his angels". Moreover, in Jude 9 He is quoted by Jude saying to Satan, "the LORD rebuke you", itself a reference to the passage in Zechariah 3:2 where the speaker is named as Yahweh Himself. So either Jude is completely mistaken and is taking Yahweh's words and putting in the mouth of someone else, or rather Jude understands that the Old Testament person revealed as Michael is none other than the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, Christ Himself. See also my sermon on Daniel 10:1-21, "Afraid of the Future Loved by God", on verses 10-14. Also see Stephen Miller, *New American Commentary*, "Daniel 10:6" for a good, modern analysis by a respected evangelical writer.

<sup>ii</sup> From the beginning of the events of the King of the South vs. the King of the North, in 11:5, that amounts to 2300 years of history, c.f. Dan 8:14.

<sup>iii</sup> It seems likely that the focus is possibly on the Holocaust as part of the wider history of the two World Wars in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The details that the "wise" are any people who "turn people to righteousness" and have their names written in the book, and are resurrected to everlasting life, strongly imply this is not just about Jews, but about any Gentile believers also "grafted in" (Rom 11) to the true, spiritual Israel of which Christ is King.

<sup>iv</sup> <http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm#Stalin>

<sup>v</sup> <https://jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/issues-v21-n05/what-happened-to-jewish-believers-in-jesus-in-nazi-germany/>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://jewsforjesus.org/publications/havurah/havurah-v03-n01/losing-all-gaining-all/>

<sup>vii</sup> See Dr. Oral Collins, *The Final Prophecy of Jesus* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2007), pp. 233-234.

<sup>viii</sup> Stephen Miller, *New American Commentary: Daniel*, "Daniel 12:7".

<sup>ix</sup> These points from Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, "Daniel 12:5".

<sup>x</sup> See my sermons on Daniel 8:15-27 "The Vision of the Evenings and Mornings" (Part 2), on the "2300 days"; and Daniel 9:20-27, "Seventy Weeks and the Love of God", about the "seven sevens and sixty-nine sevens" in verse 25.

<sup>xi</sup> 3 ½ "times" is an ambiguous period that suggest 3 ½ years. The more precise periods, 1290 days and 1335 days confirm that 3 ½ times is 1260 days where each "time" stands for a standard Hebrew year of 360 days—a soli-lunar harmonization well attested in Scripture (see Fausset's Bible Dictionary, "Year" #3730).

<sup>xii</sup> For this illustration I'm assuming a northern-hemisphere typical four-season cycle.

<sup>xiii</sup> See my discussion of this word translated "regular burnt offering" in the ESV, in my sermon on Daniel 8:15-27, "The Vision of the Evenings and Mornings – Part 2".

<sup>xiv</sup> In the previous sermon I explained more fully that the abominations were the transgressions of the Jewish people that were the reason for all the desolations God poured out on the Jews. See Daniel 8:12, 9:27, 11:31. That these are separate "waves" of desolation, all because of the national guilt of the Jews, is confirmed by each passage. Daniel 8 describes that desolation caused by transgression happening at the hands of a kingdom somehow from the Greek Empire; Daniel 9 describes the ruin of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70 AD; Jesus also refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the lifetimes of his hearers in Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, and Luke 21:20-22. This wave of desolation caused by the national guilt of the Jews happens long after Jesus' original hearers had died, in a punishment upon future generations of Jews living in Jerusalem.

<sup>xv</sup> This lack of the article, "the", indicates a further event in addition to the one in 11:31. It would seem that after the initial desolation of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, God showed mercy by restoring the Jews to Jerusalem near the end of Daniel's lifetime. But then because the people resumed their idolatrous ways, a much worse and much longer season of desolations began with the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes in 167BC, continued with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, and climaxed with the rise of Islam beginning in 632 AD. Notice that the angel only says that the *end* of the "shattering of the power" of the Jews would begin then; not that the process of the "shattering" would begin at that time. Therefore, the whole process of "shattering the power" of the Jews—what I'm calling the waves of desolations caused by their abominations—is parallel to the "times of the Gentiles" which Jesus said would end when Jerusalem is no longer being trampled by non-Jewish nations (Luke 21:24). So that whole period of the "times of the Gentiles" began about 604BC with Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Jerusalem, and ends stages, during the "time of trouble" in Daniel 12:1. One important stage in the end is 1917 AD with the liberation of Jerusalem from the Ottoman Empire, exactly 2,520 years (or "seven times") in total. The final stage ends in 1967 when Jewish autonomy was once again asserted over all of Jerusalem (c.f. Luke 21:24).

<sup>xvi</sup> So the "time of trouble" in the last days brings an end to the much larger period that began with the abolishing of Christian worship and rise of Islamic rule in the Middle East—especially in Jerusalem and more widely in Syria. E.B. Elliott observed that, "in the ten years of Omar's Caliphate, from 634 to 644, the Saracens had reduced to his

---

obedience 36,000 cities or castles, destroyed 4000 churches, and built 1400 mosques for the exercise of the religion of Mahomet." [*Horae Apocalypticæ*. Vol.1, p.449.] According to one ancient historian, when Omar conquered Jerusalem his tour of the city included the Church of the Resurrection. And when the pastor of that church saw Omar there, he said, "This is of a truth the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, standing in the holy place!" [citing Theophanes in Modern Part of An Universal History, vol. 1, p. 296 (London: C. Bathurst et al., 1780)]

<sup>xvii</sup> The "time of trouble" (v1), then, possibly means the period from the end of the first 1260 years (Dan 12:7), until the final end of the 1335 years (12:12), the additional period of time. But the extension of time specified in Daniel 12:12 is a total of 75 years (1335-1260=75). That's interesting because the year of Muhammad's death (and the establishment of the Caliphate after him) was 632; adding 75 years to that comes to the symbolically significant year in which under Caliph al-Walid's orders, the cathedral of John the Baptist was torn down and replaced by the great Umayyad Mosque--the site where Muslims believe Jesus will return to at His second coming. That was the year 707. [see [Umayyad Mosque](#)]. The mid point, 30 years after Muhammad's death, is notable because it was the year in which the first Muslim Civil war took place, and established the Umayyad Caliphate (second caliphate after the Rashidun Caliphate). The war ended with the assassination of Ali on January 26, 661AD. 6 months later, in June or July 661, the first Umayyad Caliph, Muawiya, signed the Hasan-Muawiya treaty, and power passed to the Sunnis. Also, Muawiya was crowned Caliph at a ceremony in Jerusalem in 661. [see [First Fitna](#)]. [Also see [Muawiyah I](#)]. From that time the Umayyad Caliphate made Damascus their capitol. June 632 until June or July 661 is 30 years. 45 years later comes to 707 and the building of the Umayyad Mosque. Therefore the 3 1/2 times in verse 7 not only points to the end of the process of shattering the Jews, but also measures each of the stages in the rise of this "abomination causing desolation" and snuffing out of Christian worship, until each of the stages in the decline of Islamic rule over Jerusalem: 632AD + 1260 = 1260 1892\* (see below); 632 + 1290 = 1922; 632 + 1335 = 1967. So also, the first year of Muawiya's Umayyad dynasty is 662 AD + 1260 = 1922, and 707 AD + 1260 = 1967.

\* After the Congress of Berlin (1878) Armenians began to demand more freedoms, leading to the establishment by the Sultan of the Hamidian Regiments in 1891, and the ensuing massacres of Assyrians (e.g. The Diyarbakir Massacres) and Armenians (e.g. The Hamidian Massacres). The [Hamidian massacres](#) drew fierce international reaction, committed much of the international public to bringing an end to Ottoman rule, helped propel Theodor Herzl's campaign for Zionism, and is thought by many to be the first wave of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23.