**DANIEL CHAPTER 12**

[Cover slide] Well this morning we are going to finish the book of Daniel. Chapter 12 is much shorter and is a lot less intense on history than we saw in Chapter 11.

[Spiritual warfare] One thing I wanted you to notice and I think I emphasized in in Chapters 10 and 11 is that behind every scenes of human history God’s angelic forces are battling the forces of darkness. We don’t see it with our human eyes, but there is this constant warfare taking place all around us.

[Show Daniel 12:1 slide]

Chapter 12 opens with the phrase, “At that time.” This is a reference to where we left off at the end of Chapter 11, the end of the Tribulation period. The heavenly messenger gave Daniel an overview concerning the rise to power and the eventual fall of the antichrist. This is all covered in detail in Revelation Chapters 13-18. What Daniel is told is that his people, the Jews, will undergo severe persecution before the antichrist is defeated. So let’s look at those final days – events still future for us.

READ Daniel 12:1. The archangel Michael is spoken about here as “the great prince who has charge of your people.” He is Israel’s guardian angel and he will be working overtime during the Tribulation period. It will be a terrible time. Just read the book of Revelation! Jesus Himself talked about it in Matthew Chapter 24. To give you some context, Jesus is responding to a question raised by His disciples about the last days. READ Matthew 24:21-22. The “elect” that Jesus mentions in Matthew 24 are the same people of Daniel 12:1 “whose names shall be found written in the book.”

During the Tribulation period many Jews will come to faith in Jesus Christ. But this will be a terrible period of suffering. It will be among the worst of their painful history. The O.T. prophet Jeremiah wrote about this period also. This is how he describes it… READ Jeremiah 30:7-9. No longer will God’s people be oppressed by foreign Gentile powers such as the Babylonians in Jeremiah’s day; or the Greeks and Romans later; or the evil antichrist in Revelation. Instead they will be ruled by their Messiah King, the Lord Jesus Christ!

God will allow intense persecution against the Jews for a short time during the Tribulation period. And why does God do this? In order to finally break the Jews’ long-time rejection of Jesus as their promised Messiah. A remnant of God’s people WILL be saved in the last days. They will be ready to accept the returning Jesus as Messiah, Savior and Lord.

[Q1] The message the angel gives Daniel in verse 1 is “Your people will be delivered! Many will be saved – those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” This is great news!

READ Daniel 12:2. Some have interpreted this verse to be symbolic of the nation of Israel’s spiritual resurrection. Well, perhaps. But I think this verse refers to the literal resurrection of the dead that both Jesus and Paul talked about. READ John 5:28-29. Paul in his defense before Felix in Acts 24 says… READ Acts 24:15. In Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians he tells them what will happen at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). There will be a bodily resurrection of the righteous, the “dead in Christ.” Later on in Revelation 20:13 after the Millennial Kingdom it describes the resurrection of the wicked, those without Christ. They will be raised from the dead, judged and then thrown into the lake of fire.

[Q2]

READ Daniel 12:3. During the Tribulation Period the antichrist will deceive most of the world, but some people, “those who are wise” will see right through his deceitful words and be saved. Revelation Chapter 7 speaks about 144,000 Jewish evangelists who reap an enormous harvest of souls from many nations during the Tribulation period. This verse compares these bold witnesses to stars that shine brightly and stand out against a backdrop of darkness and troubled times.

READ Daniel 12:4. Daniel is told to seal up his book. Why? Because the time has not come yet for the fulfillment of its words. The idea is not to conceal the book forever, but rather to preserve the contents of the book until the time comes for the fulfillment of its prophecies. When the end times approach many will run to and fro seeking answers. They will seek to discover what the future holds and they will find this book of Daniel both informative and useful. By contrast in Revelation, the Apostle John is instructed just the opposite of what Daniel was – NOT to seal up his visions. The reason is that the time for their fulfillment was close at hand – certainly closer at hand than in Daniel’s day.

READ Daniel 12:5-6. If you recall back in Daniel Ch 10 when this vision began, Daniel was standing by the Tigris River. So now the scene shifts back to that same location. Two angels have joined Daniel at the river. One angel stands on Daniel’s side of the river while the other angel is on the other side. They are carrying on a conversation with each other across the river. One of the angels asks the question, “How long? How long will it be until all of these things take place? How long will it be until the Messiah comes and defeats the antichrist?”

The answer comes in verse 7. READ Daniel 12:7

[Q3] Most commentaries agree that “For a time, times and half a time” means three and a half years. This coincides with the last half of the seven-year Tribulation period. This is when the antichrist will break the covenant he made with the Jews at the beginning of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27). Then he will begin his ruthless persecution of the Jews. This is what Daniel calls “the abominations that make desolate” (11:31). It will come up again later in this chapter.

Poor Daniel is having a difficult time putting together all the events of this revelation.

READ Daniel 12:8. Daniel doesn’t fully understand. So, Daniel does what any good student would do. He asks questions. He seeks further clarification.

READ Daniel 12:9. Basically the angel tells Daniel that it is not for him to know. These matters are not for Daniel’s day. Daniel has no need to know. The fulfillment of the events of which Daniel has been foretold lies far off into the future. Here in our day we have a distinct advantage over Daniel. We can look back and see that most of the events of Chapter 11 have already been fulfilled. We have the teachings of the N.T. including Revelation. This sheds even more light on what occurs in Chapters 11 and 12, events that are still future for us. So we have been given much more light than Daniel was given. For now all Daniel needs to know is…

READ Daniel 12:10. Many in the last days are going to be able to sit down and read the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, the teachings of Jesus, and the letters of Paul. By studying these, they will be able to understand all that is about to happen. They will see the destruction of the antichrist and his followers. They will understand that the coming of the Messiah, of Jesus is imminent. Many will be convicted of their sin and their need for a Savior. “Many shall purify themselves.” Thousands of Jews will see that Jesus IS in fact their promised Messiah and they will call upon Him as Lord.

But clearly this is not the case for all people. The wicked, no matter how much information they are given, no matter the evidence they are presented with, will not understand and will not believe. They will not search for truth. Instead, they will reject it outright. They will refuse to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. This type of individual has always been around. They abound in our world today. Paul describes them in Romans Ch 1. READ Romans 1:18-21. Basically, the ungodly rationalize themselves straight to hell. They are what we called “bottom line.” They do things their way and don’t care what God wants.

It is plain and simple. Daniel says, “None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.”

[Q4]

READ Daniel 12:11. The period of 1,290 days, roughly three and a half years, will begin when the antichrist seizes the Jewish temple and puts an end to the Jewish worship. What the antichrist does during the last part of the tribulation, “the abomination that makes desolate,” parallels almost exactly what Antiochus Epiphanes did in the 2nd Century B.C. But this time it will end with the return of Christ and the destruction of the antichrist.

READ Daniel 12:12.

[Q5] There is no explanation given in the book of Daniel. The heavenly messenger tells Daniel, “Blessed is he who waits” Why are they blessed?

Revelation 20 describes what happens after Jesus returns and destroys the antichrist. READ Revelation 20:4-6. Thanks to the insight offered to us in the book of Revelation we have a good idea what will be going on during those mysterious 1,335 days mentioned in Daniel 12:12.

[Show 1335 days slide] It is widely held by many Bible scholars that this is period of time – an additional 45 days beyond the 3 ½ years – is when certain events will occur:

The Battle of Armageddon where the antichrist defeated;

The antichrist and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire;

Jesus sets up his throne and judges the nations in accordance with Matthew 25, where we see this separation of the sheep (believers) from the goats (unbelievers)

Jesus begins to rule in His earthly kingdom from Jerusalem.

Well, the concluding words in the book of Daniel are words for Daniel himself… READ Daniel 12:13. Daniel, like everyone else, will experience physical death (he shall rest). But then he will stand in his allotted place. In other words…

[Q6] And just like that --- the book ends.

[Resurrection and Jerusalem slide] Daniel, the man of uncompromising faith receives a promise. His faithfulness to God will bring a rich reward, though it will not be in this life. Daniel remains in Babylon until his death. He never returns home back to Judea like many of his fellow Jews did. Oh, but Daniel WILL eventually return home, won’t he? In the end, we see Daniel reigning with His Lord in the millennial kingdom. He’s back in his homeland. He’s in Israel. What a thought!

[Last slide] And that, my friends, is the great hope that the book of Daniel leaves US with. Physical death, though it will more than likely be a reality for all of us one day, unless our Lord returns – it’s not the end.

For Christians, death is merely being dispatched home to be in the presence of the Lord. Like the ambassador who, after years of faithful service to his government on foreign soil, says “Goodbye” to his friends, then boards a plane and heads home, so it will be for us. Oh, to be like Daniel and hear those wonderful words from our Lord upon our arrival home…

“Well done, My good and faithful servant! Enter now into your rest.”