

Your Tragic End? or Your New Beginning?

Daniel 11:45-12:3

In just four verses, the Book of Daniel portrays a grand panorama of future events: a coming battle of cosmic proportions, a time of trouble the like of which the world has never seen, the demise of the Antichrist, the description of the everlasting destinies of human beings and the urgent need to shine the Gospel light in this present darkness. Throughout this series, we have emphasized one simple question: *“Since Biblical prophecy is true, what should we do?”*

With this question in mind, let’s read the last verse in chapter 11 and the first three verses in chapter 12: **And he [the Antichrist] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands 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. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.** (Daniel 11:45-12:3) These verses paint a picture of a tragic end and a new beginning. Which of these will be your destiny?

The Worst Time of Trouble, 11:45-12:1

The words of Daniel 12:1 prophesy, **“And at that time...”** Let’s take a few minutes to think about the events of that time, **“a time of trouble [distress], such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time...”** In other words, this will be the worst time in the past, present or future of the world. What will happen during this time? This is **“the time of the end ... a time appointed”** (Daniel 11:35). As we learned in the last few messages, this time period is dominated by the reign of terror of the arrogant Antichristⁱ, the wicked warriorⁱⁱ and ultimate human aggressorⁱⁱⁱ. About this coming time, Jesus said, **“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be [again]”** (Matthew 24:21).

Heaven’s angelic warrior will defend God’s chosen people, Israel. 12:1

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of thy people ...” God will send His archangel, Michael, to wage spiritual warfare to defend the nation of Israel. Michael, who is described as “the archangel” in Jude 9, was introduced in Daniel 10:13-21. In direct answer to Daniel’s prayer, the archangel was sent to him to reveal what would happen in the last days. In Daniel 12:1, we find that Michael will rise to defend the nation of Israel from the dark forces arrayed against it.

Earth’s arrogant warrior will come to a tragic end, 11:45

“And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Daniel 11:45). The Antichrist will exalt himself in Israel and be utterly destroyed. The phrase, “between the seas” is a reference to the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Dead Sea (or “Salt Sea” Joshua 18:19) to the east. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:4, the Antichrist will exalt himself as a god in the temple at Jerusalem. (It is likely that Jesus referred to this in Matthew 24:15.) How will the Antichrist be defeated and destroyed?

The Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 16:12-16, **“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty... And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”**
(Revelation 16:12-14, 16)

This final battle at Armageddon will come as all nations gather against Israel. The unholy trinity (the Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet) will send demons to gather the nations against Israel. Now it's important to remember that the Most High God rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:17). This is especially clear in passages such as Zechariah 14:2 where the Lord prophesied, **“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ...”** And again in Joel 3:2 where the Lord predicted, **“I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”**

And what will be the result of the Battle of Armageddon? **“...he [the Antichrist] shall come to his end, and none shall help him”** (Daniel 11:45). Revelation 19:20 explains, **“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”** Will the Antichrist be burned up or annihilated in the Lake of Fire? Listen to the words of Revelation 20:10 which describe an event 1000 years later: **“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever”** (Revelation 20:10). The unholy trinity (the Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet) will be tormented in the Lake of Fire for all eternity.

A Time of Deliverance, 12:1

“...and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Stephen Miller commented that “Michael will be needed to help deliver Israel during this trying period. Israel will also require the assistance of such a mighty angel because Antichrist will be energized by a powerful evil angel, Satan himself (cf. 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2).”^{iv}

One of the purposes of these years of great distress will be to cause Israel to see its true Messiah – the Lord Jesus Christ. Zechariah 12:10 predicts this coming revival in Israel: **“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only *son*.”**

Zechariah 13:1 predicts, **“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”** What a revival this will be!

When the Lord pours out His Spirit, precious promise of His grace, then His people shall behold Him and His welcoming embrace. Then the blessed house of David shall cry out and humbly pray and a fountain for their cleansing shall be opened in that day.^v

What is meant by the phrase, **“...every one that shall be found written in the book”**? This is a reference to “The Book of Life” described in Philippians 4:3, **“...help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.”** From this

verse, we understand that the names of believers are written in God's Book of Life. Revelation 21:27 explains that only those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be granted access to heaven (the new heaven or heavenly Jerusalem).

By contrast, we learn from Revelation 13:8-9 that, by worshiping the Antichrist, people will reveal that their names are not written in the Book of Life: **"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear."** (Revelation 13:8-9).

Jesus placed great emphasis on being sure that your name is written in the Book of Life. On one occasion, when seventy of His disciples returned from their various mission trips, they made a startling announcement: "Lord even the demons are subject to us through thy name!" (Luke 10:17). Think about that. Christ's disciples exercised power over the demons! But Jesus said that there is something far more important: **"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"** (Luke 10:20). In other words, it is extremely important that every one of us is certain that his or her name is written in the Book of Life.

The Time of Resurrection and Revelation of Eternal Destinies, 12:2-3

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." (Rev. 12:2-3)

After the horrific, great tribulation, multitudes will be raised from the dead. Using the illustration of sleep to represent death is common in the Scriptures (1 Thessalonians 4:14). To "sleep in the dust" is to say that one has died and was buried. This is not a description of "soul sleep" (as some false teachers teach); the Scriptures never represent the soul as sleeping; sleep is an activity of the body. Referring to the dead as "asleep" emphasizes the ease with which God will awaken them, bringing them back from the dead in the resurrection.

Thomas Constable answered an important question about this passage: "Why did the angel say "many" will awake and not "all?" Apparently he did so to stress the fact that those Jews who die because of Antichrist's persecutions will experience resurrection at the end of this period (i.e, the Tribulation; cf. Revelation 20:4-6). [Note: Young, p256.] He referred to the hope of those Jews in particular. Furthermore, this wording clarifies that not all will arise then. Some will experience resurrection at other times in history (e.g, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 20:4-6)."^{vi} Rolland McCune agreed, "Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected just prior to the establishment of the millennial reign for their allotment in the golden age (Rev 20:3-6)."^{vii} By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we realize that there will be a gap of 1000 years (the millennium) between the resurrections described in verse 2; Revelation 20:4-15 explains this consecutively as "the first resurrection," "the thousand years" and the resurrection "when death and hell delivered up the dead" before the "Great White Throne" judgment. Those who will be sent to the Lake of Fire experience "the second death."

It is very important to think carefully about the words, "everlasting life" and "everlasting contempt." These words pose a question for each one of us. Do these verses describe your tragic end or your new beginning? Some insist that heaven's bliss is everlasting but that sinners' punishment will not be everlasting. Those who say this need to take another look at this verse; both are everlasting. One of our missionaries was contacted recently by a man in the Tenek region of the mountains of Mexico. When the

missionary visited the man, he asked if he had any questions. The man immediately responded, “How can I have eternal life?” With great joy, our missionary was able to lead the man to the Lord. To have eternal life, you must mix your personal faith with the promises of God. Last week in our Sunday school classes we studied one of these promises: **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”** (John 10:27-28) Have you listened to the Shepherd’s voice (the Word of God) and followed Him? By dying on the cross for your sins, being buried and rising again from the dead, Jesus grants eternal life to those who will place their faith in Him. These have everlasting life and they shall never perish. But Daniel 12:2-3 also describes “everlasting contempt.” Revelation 20:15 explains, “... **whoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire.**” So my friend, this raises the question for you: Are these verses describing your tragic end or your new beginning? The Antichrist will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire. In Matthew 25:41, Jesus described the words that no man will ever want to hear. He said, **“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”** Don’t miss that. The everlasting fire was prepared for the Devil and his angels. But human beings – such as the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all who receive the mark of the beast will be placed there for all eternity. Don’t speak of “spending eternity” for eternity cannot be spent. It will never end. Revelation 21:8 records the tragedy this way: **“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”** Unrepentant murderers and liars are destined for the Lake of Fire. Will this be your tragic end – to be in this awful place forever?

Many of you today are rejoicing that you have eternal life and need not fear the fires of hell. To you, verse 3 is especially significant: **“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”** Picture these shining saints in the coming Messianic age. These are the wise – made wise by the wisdom of God’s Word. These are witnesses – they turn many to righteousness through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Like the stars in the sky, these saints of God will shine brightly for all eternity. This is “the new beginning” for those who have eternal life. Their destiny is to shine forth in a brilliant manner. May God grant you the grace to be wise and to turn many others to the Savior and to enjoy the rewards He will give you.

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ⁱ The Arrogant Antichrist, a message based on Daniel 11:36-37, accessed at <https://www.cbfindlay.org/the-arrogant-antichrist/>

ⁱⁱ Antichrist: A Wicked Warrior, a message based on Daniel 11:38-39, accessed at <https://www.cbfindlay.org/antichrist-a-wicked-warrior/>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Aggressive Antichrist, a message based on Daniel 11:40-44, accessed at <https://www.cbfindlay.org/the-aggressive-antichrist/>

^{iv} Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 315.

^v Unpublished poem, “Those Who Pierced Me Shall Behold Me”

^{vi} Expository Notes of Thomas Constable accessed at <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/daniel-12.html>

^{vii} Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity: The Doctrines of Salvation, the Church, and Last Things*, vol. 3 (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 391.