Daniel 12

Go Your Way to the End: Rest and Rise

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The worst trouble in history is coming, but God's people are written in His book, guarded by His angel and promised resurrection. I won't understand every detail — even Daniel didn't — but I can be wise, lead many to righteousness, keep waiting, and go my way to the end, knowing I will rise to my portion.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

DANIEL 12 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

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.

2 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.

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

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.

5 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.

6 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?

7 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 ▲ sware 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.

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

9 And he said, ▮ Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till ◷ the time of the end.

10 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.

11 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.

12 ★ Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to ◷ the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

13 But ▮ go thou thy way till the end be: for ★ thou shalt rest, and ★ stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Marked in the text

- **v1** ★ Michael stand up, the great prince
- **v1** ⚠ a time of trouble, such as never was
- **v1** ★ thy people shall be delivered
- **v1** ★ written in the book
- **v2** ★ sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake
- **v2** ★ everlasting life
- **v2** ⚠ shame and everlasting contempt
- **v3** ★ they that be wise shall shine
- **v3** ▮ turn many to righteousness
- **v3** ★ as the stars for ever and ever

- **v4** seal the book
- **v4** the time of the end *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** knowledge shall be increased
- **v6** How long
- **v7** sware by him that liveth for ever
- **v7** a time, times, and an half
- **v9** Go thy way
- **v10** purified, and made white, and tried
- **v10** the wicked shall do wickedly
- **v10** the wise shall understand
- **v11** the abomination that maketh desolate
- **v11** a thousand two hundred and ninety days
- **v12** Blessed is he that waiteth
- **v12** the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days
- **v13** go thou thy way
- **v13** thou shalt rest
- **v13** stand in thy lot at the end of the days

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. KJV "a time of trouble" is the NASB95's "a time of distress"; "they that be wise" is "those who have insight"; "stand in thy lot at the end of the days" is "rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 12:1–3 (KJV)

[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. [2]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. [3]And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Setting

This is the end of the vision that began in 10:1 — and the end of the book. The messenger has just described the final willful king who "will come to his end, and no one will help him" (11:45). "Now at that time" (12:1) ties what follows to those last days. Daniel is old, still beside the Tigris (10:4), and this is the last word God gives him.

Structure

- vv1–3 — **trouble, rescue, resurrection:** "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued" (v1). "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (v2). "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever" (v3).

- v4 — **seal the book:** "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."
- vv5–7 — **how long?** Two more figures stand on either bank of the river. One asks the man dressed in linen, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" (v6). He raises both hands to heaven and swears by Him who lives forever: "it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed" (v7).
- vv8–10 — **Daniel doesn't understand:** "As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, 'My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?'" (v8). "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (v9). "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand" (v10).
- vv11–12 — **the numbered days:** "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (v11). "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" (v12).
- v13 — **Daniel's own future:** "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Repeated words

that time (v1 three times); the end / end time / end of time (vv4, 6, 9, 13); seal / sealed / conceal (vv4, 9); understand (vv8, 10); those who have insight (vv3, 10); many / the many (vv2, 3, 4, 10); forever / everlasting (vv2, 3, 7); go your way (vv9, 13); the man dressed in linen (vv6, 7); days (vv11, 12).

Contrasts

a time of distress like no other (v1) ⟷ everyone written in the book rescued. Awake to everlasting life ⟷ to disgrace and everlasting contempt (v2). Sleep in the dust (v2) ⟷ shine like the stars (v3). Many purged, purified and refined ⟷ the wicked keep acting wickedly (v10). Those with insight understand ⟷ none of the wicked understand (v10). Daniel doesn't understand (v8) ⟷ but he is promised rest and his portion (v13).

Chapter theme (my words)

The worst trouble in history is coming, but God's people are written in His book, guarded by His angel and promised resurrection. I won't understand every detail — even Daniel didn't — but I can be wise, lead many to righteousness, keep waiting, and go my way to the end, knowing I will rise to my portion.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 12:9–10 (KJV)

9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 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.

"At that time" (v1)

Guzik: this is the same time as 11:36–45 — the days of the final willful king. Michael, Israel's guardian (10:13, 21), "will arise" — to fight for them (Rev 12:7–9). "A time of distress such as never occurred" is the Great Tribulation, which Jeremiah called "the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it" (Jer 30:7). Jesus quoted this verse directly: "there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will" (Matt 24:21). Satan's fury will fall on Israel (Rev 12:13–17). Chuck Smith, in Guzik: "The Jew has always been a target of Satan." But "everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued" — not every Israelite by birth, but those whose names God has written (Rom 11:25–27; Rev 13:8).

The resurrection (v2)

This is the Old Testament's clearest statement of a bodily resurrection of both righteous and wicked. "Sleep in the dust" is death (Job 7:21; Ps 22:15); "awake" is resurrection (Isa 26:19). Two destinies, both everlasting: life, or "disgrace and everlasting contempt." Jesus taught the same: "all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28–29). The New Testament shows these happen in order — the righteous first, the rest after the thousand years (Rev 20:4–6, 11–15). Baldwin notes that "many" in Hebrew can carry the sense of "all."

Shining like the stars (v3)

"Those who have insight" (*maskilim*) are the same people as in 11:33, 35 — the wise who taught the many and suffered for it. Their reward: to shine like the sky and the stars forever. The greatest honor isn't power or fame but leading others to righteousness (Prov 11:30; Matt 13:43; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 2:19–20).

Seal the book (v4)

"Conceal" and "seal" here mean to guard and preserve, not to hide forever. Guzik: an ancient document was sealed to authenticate it and keep it safe until it was needed. The prophecy would be better understood as the end approached. "Many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase" — some apply this to modern travel and technology; Guzik, with Wood and Newell, reads it as people searching back and forth through the prophecy, and understanding growing. Newell: "many shall search it through and through" (compare Amos 8:12).

"Time, times, and half a time" (vv5–7)

The man in linen raises *both* hands — an unusually solemn oath (compare Deut 32:40; Rev 10:5–6). The period is three and a half years — the same span as Daniel 7:25 and the last half of the seventieth week (9:27), also given as 1,260 days and 42 months in Revelation (11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). It ends when "the power of the holy people" has been completely shattered — when Israel has nowhere left to turn but to its Messiah (Zech 12:10; 13:8–9; Rom 11:26).

"I heard but could not understand" (vv8–10)

This is encouraging: Daniel, the great interpreter, didn't understand everything either. God's answer is not more detail but "go your way" — trust and keep living faithfully. The end-time years will divide people: many will be purified and refined (Mal 3:2–3; 1 Pet 1:6–7), while the wicked keep on in wickedness and never understand (Rev 22:11). Spiritual understanding is given to the wise — those who fear God (Ps 25:14; Prov 9:10).

1,290 and 1,335 days (vv11–12)

Both counts start from the abomination of desolation, which Jesus pointed to as still future in His day (Matt 24:15). The period of 1,260 days ends with Christ's return; 1,290 adds 30 days, and 1,335 adds 45 more. Guzik suggests the extra time covers the setting up of Christ's kingdom — including the judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31–46) — and Chuck Smith, in Guzik, speaks of a 45-day period of judgment before the kingdom fully begins. Other careful interpreters hold different views, and Scripture doesn't spell it out. What is clear: "How blessed is he who keeps waiting" — the reward belongs to those who endure to the end (Matt 24:13).

"Go your way to the end" (v13)

The last verse of the book is personal. Daniel won't see these things in his lifetime. He is to keep living faithfully until he dies — "you will enter into rest" — and then "rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age." Clarke, in Guzik, draws out four truths: each of us has a way, and an end; and for God's people there is rest, and an inheritance. Like Jesus told Peter, "what is that to you? You follow Me!" (John 21:22).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **arise — *ʿamad* (H5975):** to stand, stand up — Michael takes his stand.
- **stands guard — *ʿamad ʿal* (H5975):** stands over, protects.
- **distress — *tsarah* (H6869):** trouble, anguish, a narrow place.
- **rescued — *malat* (H4422):** to escape, be delivered.
- **book — *sepher* (H5612):** a scroll, written record.
- **sleep — *yashen* (H3463):** sleeping — a picture of death.
- **awake — *qits* (H6974):** to awake, arise.
- **everlasting — *ʿolam* (H5769):** long duration, forever.
- **contempt — *deraʾon* (H1860):** abhorrence — used only here and Isa 66:24.
- **those who have insight — *maskilim* (H7919):** the wise, those who understand.
- **shine — *zahar* (H2094):** to shine, give light.
- **lead to righteousness — *tsadaq* (H6663):** to make righteous, turn to righteousness.

- **seal — *chatham* (H2856):** to seal up, preserve.
- **purged, purified, refined — *barar*, *laben*, *tsaraph* (H1305, H3835, H6884):** to purify, to make white, to smelt.
- **keeps waiting — *chakah* (H2442):** to wait for, long for.
- **rest — *nuach* (H5117):** to rest, settle down.
- **allotted portion — *goral* (H1486):** a lot, inheritance.

Cross-references

Job 19:25–27; Ps 16:10–11; Ps 25:14; Prov 11:30; Isa 26:19; Isa 66:24; Jer 30:7; Dan 7:25; Dan 9:27; Dan 11:33–35; Zech 12:10; Zech 13:8–9; Mal 3:2–3; Matt 13:43; Matt 24:13, 15, 21; Matt 25:31–46; John 5:28–29; John 21:22; Rom 11:25–27; 1 Cor 15:51–55; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 4:13–17; Rev 10:5–7; Rev 12:6–17; Rev 13:5–8; Rev 20:4–6, 11–15; Rev 22:10–11.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 12:13 (KJV)

13 But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Command to obey — "go your way to the end."

God didn't answer all of Daniel's questions; He told him to keep living faithfully. I don't need to solve every timeline to obey today. I'll lay down my need to understand everything and go my way faithfully this week — one step, one day, one man at a time.

Sin to confess — curiosity without obedience

I can spend more energy on charts and dates than on being purified and refined (v10). Prophecy is meant to make me wise, not just informed. I'll confess where I've loved knowing about the end more than preparing for it.

Warning to heed — two resurrections, two destinies

Every person who ever lived will wake up — "these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (v2). That includes the men I meet in recovery and in prison. This is why I can't stay quiet about Jesus.

Promise to trust — written in the book

"Everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued" (v1). My name is written by grace (Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3). The worst trouble in history can't erase it. And for my own death: "you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion." I have a portion waiting.

Example to follow — shine by leading many to righteousness

The brightest stars in eternity won't be the famous, but those who helped others turn to God (v3). Every book I publish, every study I build and every man I disciple is aimed here. I want to be one of "those who lead the many to righteousness."

Worship

From a teenage captive in chapter 1 to an old man at the river in chapter 12, God kept Daniel and kept every promise. The Ancient of Days rules; the Son of Man will receive the kingdom; the dead will rise. "How blessed is he who keeps waiting."

Prayer

Lord, You hold the end of history and the end of my life. Thank You that my name is written in Your book. When I don't understand, help me go my way faithfully. Purify me, make me wise, and use me to lead many to righteousness. Keep me waiting and watching until I rise to my portion at the end of the age. Amen.