

The Time of the End

Scripture Reading: Daniel 12:1-13

Key Verse 4

“But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the Time of the End.”

INTRODUCTION

It is not my design this morning to be sensational in my introduction of this sermon, but I want to share with you how I came to this sermon this morning.

For several months on Wednesday nights, we have a group of people who have been studying what we refer to as Signs of the Times and now we are in a study on the Book of Revelation, by Dr. David Jeremiah.

This group has grown to the place of almost outgrowing our room.

We have become intense about the times in which we live. It has done several to us.

- 1) It has made us more aware of our spiritually relationship with God.
- 2) It has made us more aware of events that are taking place in our world today that we would not normally have known.
- 3) It has caused us to carry a burden for those who are unsaved, unchurched and lost without

God.

- 4) And the fourth thing this study has done has caused us to begin praying for those people who need Jesus, because we don't want to see them miss heaven.

Several days ago, I was driving early in the morning towards Pataskala from my home and I was sharing with the Lord my feelings about how intense I was becoming about His Rapture of the Church and wanting to make sure that everything was right in my life spiritually.

As I prayed that prayer, I said to God, “God, there are a number of us in the church who are very intense and acutely aware of how close Your coming could be and my concern is – What about the rest of the Church family? How do I share this urgent feeling with them?”

And immediately without any hesitation I heard a voice in my mind that said, “TELL THEM! TELL THEM!”

For several days I have heard these two words coming into my mind, “TELL THEM! TELL THEM!”

Again, the sake of those who are here – I don't want to sound sensational when I tell you this, but it's very unusual for me to wake up every morning at 4:30 and the Lord keeps telling me to get this message to you.

It was Thursday morning 4:30 when I was awakened again and I couldn't shut my mind down. So I got out of bed and I prayed and asked God to show me what He wanted and immediately I was led to this sermon that I want to preach to you.

Daniel chapter 12 is the conclusion of the long prophecy Daniel began receiving in Chapter 10.

In Daniel Chapter 10, Daniel received an awesome vision of the glorified Jesus.

The purpose of prophecy is to reveal Jesus Christ and the End of Times, which we refer to as Eschatology.

If you were to read the Book of Daniel, you would find this book is the supernatural Word of God, I challenge you to honestly compare the amazing prophecies to how they have been fulfilled in history.

Beginning in Daniel 11:36, you will see the career of the final world leader—the Antichrist.

In the last verse of that chapter, the Antichrist is terminated at what the Book of Revelation calls the Battle of Armageddon.

But that's not the end of the story.

God's plan continues into eternity.

Just as the book of Revelation concludes with a wonderful doxology of praise, so does the book

of Daniel.

In Daniel 12:8-9. ***“I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, ‘My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?’ He replied, ‘Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.’”***

This really means the answer to Daniel's question won't be fully understood until the end of time.

In our fast-paced society that we live in today, people just want to get to “the bottom line.”

We have coined a lot of phrases to describe this.

- We say, “Get rid of the fluff;
- cut-to-the-chase;
- don't beat around the bush;
- just give it to me straight!”

This morning I don't have time to look at all the facts; we would be here way too long; so we are just going to look at truth.

I want us to look at five truths from the Word of God.

Then I want each of us to ask ourselves a personal question relating to each truth.

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There is a difference between facts and truth.

They aren't the same.

- For instance, $2 + 2 = 4$ is a fact, but it doesn't change your life.
- When Jesus said, ***"I am the way, the truth, the life..."***

That is truth that can transform your life.

- George Washington was the first U.S. President—that's a fact.
- But it won't transform your life.
- The Bible says, ***"If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."***
Now that's truth that can revolutionize your life.

Let's begin our study in verse one:

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people will arise (remember, Michael is the archangel.

The Bible says when Jesus comes to rapture the church it will be announced by the shout of the archangel

I Thessalonians 4:16 Michael is the archangel that comes to announce Christ's coming.

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Read with me: ***"For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, KJV says He will come with "A loud shout", with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."***

How will believers dead and alive know that Jesus will come?

- 1) The Lord, himself will come down from heaven
- 2) He will come with a loud shout
- 3) He will come with the voice of the archangel
- 4) He will come at the sound of a trumpet call of God.

After this Great Event there will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. This happens during the 7 year Tribulation.

1. GOD'S TRUTH: THERE IS A BOOK OF LIFE (12:1b) ***"...But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered."***

We refer to this book as the Lamb's Book of Life.

MY RESPONSE: IS MY NAME WRITTEN IN IT?

Several times in the Bible we are told there is a book in heaven containing names of certain people.

God deals with us as individuals.

Your name, your individual life, is important to God.

Maybe you've had your name on certain lists here on earth.

You may be on the list of "who's who" or you may be on the list of "who's not?"

Your name might be on the membership list of clubs or organizations.

You might even have your name on the list of members at the Pataskala Church of the Nazarene or some other church list.

But the only list of names that matters for eternity is in the Book of Life God keeps.

The Bible says God has written the names of His children, chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) ***"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight."***

Let me ask you:

Can a person know his or her name is in that book?
Absolutely! Certainly!

Jesus said: ***"Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."***
(Luke 10:20)

There is also a tragic penalty if your name is NOT found written there.

These words appear in the Book of Revelation in the description of the final judgment, called the Great White Throne Judgment.

"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:15

Your concern this morning ought to be: **Is my name written in it?**

First, let me tell you this list in heaven doesn't coincide with any church membership list.

I'm afraid churches offer a false sense of security if they communicate church membership as synonymous with salvation.

I read about a pastor this week who had a file with the letters FBPO.

And when asked what they stood for he answered, "Oh, that stands for '**For Burial Purposes Only**'. Those are

people whose names are on our roll, but they seldom attend church services or give and hardly ever serve the Lord. I figure the only reason they are a member of this church is so when they die, their obituary can read they were a member of this church.” Ouch.

I never heard of such a thing like that and would never have anything like that in our church office.

Actually, it’s not our job to decide who is truly saved, or not—that’s God’s job.

But based upon what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, where Jesus said, *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.”*

But there are multitudes of religious people whose names are written in any number of man’s books whose names aren’t written in God’s book.

You ask, **“How then can I be sure my name is written in the book of life?”**

It’s Simple. Answer this question: Do you know Jesus as your Personal Savior and Lord?

In Matthew 7:23, Jesus rejects some religious talking people because He says, *“I never knew you.”*

Do you know Jesus? I mean really know Him?

I’m not asking if you know about Jesus.

To use my earlier analogy, all of us know **about** George Washington but none of us know him.

In this room today everyone knows **about** Jesus but do you know Him?

I do. I met Him years ago, and my life has never been the same. I talk to Him almost constantly every day. He speaks to me through His Word.

That’s how you can be certain that your name is in God’s book.

Now look down at verse 2 to see the second bottom line truth: *“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”*

2. GOD’S TRUTH: THERE ARE TWO FUTURE RESURRECTIONS (12:2)

MY RESPONSE: WHICH ONE WILL BE MINE?

Let’s see what else the Bible says about this:

In John 5:28-29 *“A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”*

In Revelation 20:6 it reads, *“Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them.”*

During Easter, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. While it is a historical fact, the truth of Jesus’ resurrection must be understood.

None of us are going to live in this body forever.

These bodies are temporary, they get old and sick, and they finally stop. We die.

You can exercise all you want,
You can eat properly,
You can tuck it, lift it, move it, but the most you can hope for will be a few more years.

But listen to me, **Death is not the end. Our souls live on.**

And one day, every one of us will face this event - there will be a resurrection of our bodies.

Actually there will be **two resurrections**. Revelation 20

- 1) Those who know Jesus, whose names are written in the book of Life, will be **resurrected to eternal life**. We will live with Jesus forever.

Daniel says some will be resurrected to eternal life and some to eternal shame and contempt.

2) **Hell is called the second death.**

Physical death is the “first death” and eternal separation from God is called the “second death.”

There are two births and two deaths in the Bible.

There is a physical birth and Jesus said in John 3 that, *“you must be born again.”*

He is talking about a spiritual birth.

Even so, there are two deaths.

Now maybe you’ve never considered this, but let me make it simple: **“If you are born once, you’ll die twice. But if you are born twice, you’ll only die once.”**

If you are born once (physically) and then you are never born again (spiritually), that is you spend your entire life without ever knowing Jesus, **you will die twice.**

The first time will be physical death and then in the future your body will be resurrected to go through eternal death (that’s the second one).

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But God loves you and has taken extraordinary measures to let you know that He doesn't desire for that to happen to you.

If you are born twice (physically and spiritually)—**you will only die once** (physically) and the *“second death”* will never touch you.

I want us to look at the third truth found in verse 3: *“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”*

3. GOD'S TRUTH: REAL “STARS” ARE THOSE WHO SHINE FOR JESUS (12:3)

MY RESPONSE: AM I LEADING OTHERS TO CHRIST?

This amazing truth should thrill us.

Who are the “stars” of our modern culture?

- Go out on the street and ask that question and you'll hear names of people who are movie stars, or rock stars, or sports stars, the people who are pictured in People Magazine.
- Just a few weeks ago, the stars gathered for the annual Academy Awards. Every year, people line the streets to catch a glimpse of these stars. They

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want to see what they are wearing, who they are with and how they fixed their hair.

- These people are called stargazers. Even the best sports celebrities are called All-Stars.

Did you know God tells us here the kind of people who are His stars?

He says when you lead someone to righteousness—that's Jesus—God considers you a star that will shine forever and ever!

- Are you a star?
- You may never have your face on People Magazine but if you are actively leading others to righteousness, God says you are a star and you are special to Him.
- You may do it by teaching children in Sunday School; you may do it by sharing your faith with your co-workers.
- Many of our teenagers are stars because they bring their friends to church to find Jesus.

The Apostle Paul says we are to do the same thing in the New Testament.

He writes: *“Children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.”*

Philippians 2: 15-16

It is the job of every Christian to point people to Jesus.

When you stop and think about it, we are to share Jesus with others in the same way that the stars shine.

So we are to be God's stars in this sinful and perverse generation.

There is one big difference between you and the stars shining in the sky.

Daniel 12:3 says we will "*shine forever!*" It doesn't just say "*forever,*" it says "*forever and forever.*"

Now understand this - All the stars in the sky, including our own sun will one day burn out.

They will be snuffed out like a candle.

But when you are one of God's stars shining forever, you will outshine the sun and the moon and the stars!

So this is another reason why it's so vitally important that you let your light shine for Jesus, leading others to Christ?

4. GOD'S TRUTH: AN EXPLOSION OF INFORMATION WILL CHARACTERIZE THE LAST DAYS (12:4)

MY RESPONSE: AM I RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS?

Daniel is given an amazing statement in verse 4: "***But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there (that speaks of transportation) to increase knowledge (that speaks of information, we've never had more information than we do now.)***"

What will characterize the "*time of the end?*"

Daniel is told we can expect an improvement in transportation and an explosion of information.

Isaac Newton is often called the father of modern physics. He was a committed Christian, and perhaps the first scientist to see God's hand in the orderly design of the universe. Harold Wilmington writes that in 1680, Sir Isaac Newton read these words in Daniel and said, "Personally, I cannot help but believe that these words refer to the end of the times. Men will travel from country to country in an unprecedented manner. There may be some inventions which will enable people to travel much more quickly than they do now." Sir Isaac Newton went on to suggest that this speed might exceed 50 miles per hour! Some years later, the French atheist, Voltaire, read these words of Isaac Newton and scoffed, "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man! Here a scientist like Newton actually writes that men may travel at the rate of forty to fifty

miles per hour. Has he forgotten that if a man would travel at this rate he would be suffocated? His heart would stand still!” (Harold Willmington, Basic Stages in the Book of Ages, p. 375)

How interesting.

As you and I know, today Space Shuttle astronauts travel at speeds in excess of 18,000 miles per hour.

Daniel was right and Isaac Newton was on the right track in understanding what Daniel was saying.

From Daniel’s time up until just over 100 years ago, think about this, the fastest a man could travel was on horseback, a peak speed of 30 mph (for short bursts only). During the past 150 years, we’ve witnessed the advent of the train, the automobile, the jet, and spacecraft. Today you can fly from New York to Paris in just three hours.

But what about the information explosion?

Just as the Industrial Age revolutionized the world, the current Information Age is creating changes faster than we can imagine.

When I was in college, I bought a set of encyclopedias that weighs about 70 pounds and takes up an entire bookcase.

Today, an encyclopedia fits on a CD-ROM that weighs a few grams. The last time I counted the books in my personal library I have had close to 1,000 volumes.

They are scattered from my study at home, to my office, and some I given to the church library.

I don’t have a room big enough for them.

Several times as I’ve moved I’ve boxed them and unboxed them. It’s pretty amazing to think that my entire library can now be stored on a couple of discs in my Zip drive.

Never before has so much information been made available to so many people. As I was researching a topic for this message on the Internet, I typed the topic into the search engine and I got a response that there were 877 links to sites on that topic. While there is plenty of junk out there, there is plenty of good information, too.

Every week people access our web site to learn about our church, or to read my sermons. I was at Mt. Carmel East Hospital this week visiting Dutch and Lois’s little granddaughter.

The Receptionist behind the desk informed me that she had been on the webpage to look at our church and said she would be out to visit us.

Today, people don't even need a desktop or a laptop to access cyber-information. Now they get it on Palm Pilot much smaller than your Bible and soon it will be as small as a wristwatch. Computers run everything today.

The four most dreaded words in business today are **“our servers are down.”**

When that happens, most offices have to shut down.

The amount of information and knowledge is increasing exponentially, that means it is like a number squared rather than a number multiplied. Someone observed from the time Jesus died until the year 1700 knowledge doubled. It took 1700 years! But then by 1900, after only 200 years, knowledge doubled again. By 1950 technological information had doubled again, in only fifty years. Then by 1970, there was another doubling—20 years—until now. It is doubling every two years and if some of the predictions of quantum physics come true, it could double in one day sometime in the near future.

Don't let that scare you. To me, it just shows the Bible is true and we really are moving into the last days.

While man has advanced into the Information Age, our culture is still morally bankrupt.

In 1948, after we had dropped the atom bombs in WW II, General Omar Bradley spoke to an audience of

scientists in Boston. Although he spoke these words over 50 years ago, I think they are still true:

“We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount...With the monstrous weapons man already has, humanity is in danger of being trapped in this world by moral adolescents. Our knowledge of science has already outstripped our capacity to control it. We have too many men of science, too few men of God.”

(NY Public Library of 20th Century American Quotations, p. 367)

What should we do?

Look at the words of Jesus: *“Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door...So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”* (Matthew 24:33, 44).

We aren't here to set dates or try to figure out the timetable of His coming.

Jesus has commanded us to be faithful to Him, to worship Him, to serve Him by lovingly sharing His message with those around us.

And we are to be more faithful to do this as we see ***The Day approaching.***

The angel says the true application of this final portion of the prophecy is sealed up until the end of time.

Look at the text beginning in verse 10. This is pretty amazing: *“Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.”*

That means toward the end of time, the wicked will get even more wicked (we are certainly seeing that in America) but at the same time there will be many who are purified and made spotless.

That means we are going to see a dual revival in the last days. This is the revival I’ve been talking to you about:

- God’s people are going to get more and more fired up for Jesus.
- We are going to see a remarkable spiritual awakening in the church but there is going to be a parallel increase in wickedness and sin.
- To me that means that as we approach the return of Christ, the so-called “middle ground” is going to shrink to nothing.

Some of you think you can live with one foot in the world and with one foot in the kingdom of Jesus.

You have two lifestyles, one for church and one for the rest of the time.

As we get closer to the end, this option will disappear, like a boat drifting away, and you have one foot on the dock and one foot in the boat, you are going to have to decide: **Jesus or this world?** What will it be for you?

Then in verse 11 and 12 Daniel is given some kind of **“final answer.”**

“From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up there will be 1,290 days.”

Remember, after Jesus comes to Rapture the church, the last 3-1/2 years of the reign of the Antichrist will be a time when he does something so horrible (an abomination) that the Jewish temple (which is going to be rebuilt) will once again be deserted (desolate) by the faithful Jews.

Actually 1,290 days is exactly 3-1/2 years plus 30 days.

What does it mean? You may not be ready for my answer. What does it mean? I don’t know. I believe this will not make any sense until this happens during the Great Tribulation and only then will God’s faithful followers read this verse and understand what it means.

The same is true for verse 12: ***“Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”***

This is an additional 45 days. Again, I believe in the future, when God's people are under terrible persecution, they will read those two verses and gain great strength. They will be able to match those words with what Antichrist has done and they will be able to encourage each other by saying, "Just 30 more days...just 45 more days.. hang in there, be faithful!"

That's what the angel means when he says that the words of this prophecy are "*sealed up*" until the end of time. Isn't that amazing?

God gives a personal word to old Daniel. Picture this faithful saint of God, probably in his 90s at this time, still on fire for God, praying and serving His Lord.

Here is God's final truth to Daniel in verse 12: "*As for you, go your way till the end* (that means just keep on doing what you've been doing until you die). *You will rest, and then at the end of the days* (end of the world) *you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.*"

Here's God's final truth:

5. GOD'S TRUTH: THERE IS A REST AND A REWARD FOR GOD'S CHILDREN (12:13)

MY RESPONSE: DO I HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

How much longer do you have to live? You don't know the answer to that question but you should know the answer to this next one:

Will you live the rest of your life with the assurance that when you die you will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus?

Daniel enjoyed a personal relationship with God. He wasn't just the participant in some religion. He knew God. He spoke to God every day and God spoke to him.

Today, I'm not asking you if you are a religious person,

- I'm asking you—do you know God?
- Do you have a personal relationship with Him?
- I'm not asking you if you believe in God.
- I'm asking you if God is real to you?
- If you know God, this is the future promise you can claim: "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.*" "*Yes,*" says the Spirit, "*they will rest from their labor, for deeds will follow them.*" Revelation 13:14

The old song says, "There's a land that is fairer than day; and by faith I shall see it some day. For the Father waits over the way, to prepare me a dwelling place there. In the sweet by-and-by we shall meet on that beautiful shore; in the sweet-by-and-by we shall meet on that beautiful shore."

God said, "Dan, Tell Them! Tell Them!"

