

Introduction

We've been walking with Daniel through his entire adult life. Daniel was perhaps a teenager when we met him in chapter 1, and now he is at the end of his life, easily into his 80s.

- Ch. 1 – resolved not to defile himself
- Ch. 2 – interpreted vision of the kingdom of God
- Ch. 3 – standing to idolatry & deliverance through the fiery furnace
- Ch. 4 – Nebuchadnezzar's beastly pride and restoration
- Ch. 5 – Belshazzar's fatalistic pride and the writing on the wall
- Ch. 6 – Praying through the lion's den
- Ch. 7 – Vision of 4 beasts
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He is longing for the redemption and deliverance of his people, and after all he has been through, you would think if anyone has the right to ask, "Are we there yet?" it would be Daniel. But twice he is told, "Go your way..." He finds out that was the wrong question.

Yet we are all asking the same question for the same reasons. According to Daniel's prayer (from ch. 9), sin against God was the primary reason for their exile and despair. Likewise, in a general sense, sin is the primary reason for all the futility and despair of all of life.

Romans 8:20-22, *For the creation was subjected to frustration...a bondage to decay...and all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

While we wait...while we sit in the back seat of the car on our way...*how should we live?* Life as a Christian should not be like an annoying car ride where everyone is repeatedly asking "Are we there yet?". Rather, it should be a trip that is so certain to reach its destination, we aren't anxious about it and (therefore) able to enjoy the view along the way.

We have a clearer picture than what even Daniel received here since Christ has come, whereby we know to look specifically to Jesus for this deliverance (as we shall see).

Instead of answering, "Are we there yet?" our passage answers three better questions we should be asking: (1) What is the hope of our deliverance? (2) How does this hope become ours? (3) How should we wait for this hope to come?

(1) What is the hope of our deliverance?

In verse 1, Daniel waits to hear when his ultimate deliverance would come for him and his people, but the angels begins by saying "it will only get worse." It will get so bad, like it's never been ever before...(and we know he is talking about the Day of the Lord, the final day, because Jesus says the same exact thing in Mark 13). YET...your deliverance is sure to come. *What will this ultimate deliverance look like?* He answers in v2. ² *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.* 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.*

Answer: deliverance by resurrection. Now this teaching about the resurrection was completely unique in contrast to other ideas from other worldviews and religions of Daniel's day. There was a belief that you could call up spirits of the dead, but it was not a permanent condition more a bodily presence.¹

What about contemporary views of the resurrection? Here's just two: (1) Universalism: Everyone will be raised to everlasting life, everyone will be happy, everyone will be restored and ultimately redeemed. (essentially) there is no judgment. (2) Karma & reincarnation: The futility of life is eternally recycled. There is no end goal. There is no splendor and glory.

What Daniel receives here is unique. What Daniel receives here is the only view of resurrection that actually satisfies the longings of our heart...in two ways specifically:

The resurrection the angel is referring to involves every single person who ever lived. There is not a single soul that will be left out of this resurrection. That doesn't mean every soul will rise to everlasting life and find the redemption we all long for.

(In contrast to universalism) *Some* will rise to everlasting life, but others (the angel says) will rise to shame and everlasting contempt. This is one way the biblical doctrine of resurrection is unique: there is indeed going to be judgement of the wicked...

¹ cf *The NIV Cultural Background Study Bible*

(when you look at what Jesus himself says in the Gospel accounts, he is very clear about this as well).

Some will rise to life, others to shame and contempt. Why not say death? (Perhaps) to show that the wicked too will be alive, but their life will be one of shame and everlasting contempt – for that is the judgement they are due. (Their “allotted inheritance”, 12:13). And *this* means...the resurrection is going to bring perfect justice.

I watched a great film on the Israeli secret service agents who went to South America after WWII to search for Nazi leaders (and even Hitler, if they could find him). Because they (along with every other person on planet) could not bear the thought of wicked people living long, prosperous lives, dying in peace, and escaping justice.

Are we not disturbed seeing the wicked slip through the grasp of justice? Ideas like universalism are not able to solve these problems. It does not bring justice to the wicked and vindication for the abused...and we know that's not right.

We should pursue justice on earth as far as it depends on us, but even when perfect justice is unachievable, the wicked will not escape justice through death, for God will raise them from the dead for judgement.

The resurrection will bring perfect justice. Second, (in contrast to Karma & reincarnation) the resurrection will bring radiant glory. **v3**, *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.*

Imagine...if you weren't troubled by all the ways you fall short, how amazing would you be? How attractive would you be? How funny would you be? How helpful would you be? ...What is the best version of yourself? What about your job...what is the best version of your job? What is the best version of your relationships? If everything were right in the world, how amazing would your life be? We would be freed from the mentality of working for the weekend and ever longing for something new.

This is what the resurrection will bring...like the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly. The resurrection will bring the butterfly version of your caterpillar life.

Ideas like karma and reincarnation are not able to solve these problems. They do not bring final, ultimate rest...let alone peace. There is no end goal. The futility of life is eternally recycled, and it is never satisfied. But what the angel describes to Daniel is

something completely different (and making much more sense of the longings of our hearts): all the toil and labor to maintain life in a fallen condition will be completed and brought to an eternal end, for the resurrection will bring an eternal state of radiant glory.

And this is the end and the answer of the angel's message. "The longings you have, Daniel, for the vindication of God's people and judgment of God's enemies will be satisfied in the resurrection." Chapter 12 (and thus, the whole book of *Daniel*, I suppose) could have ended here, in 4. That's all there is to it, therefore (v4) *"as for you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."* The end.

But...if an angel appeared to you and told you things like this, wouldn't you try to ask some bonus questions before they left? Of course. One fascinating thing about this chapter is that it is another angel who asks, "How long will it be until we get there?" (v6).

You see – this isn't just something Daniel was longing to know. This is something every creature in all creation longs to know. For *all creation* has been subjected to the futility of the curse of the Fall of Adam and Eve (Rom 8:20-22), and even angels long to look into these things (1 Pet 1:12).

Daniel is able to listen in on the answer, and he finds the answer...uneventful. It's not what *he* wanted to hear either. It's not what any kid in the back seat on the way to the amusement park wants to hear: "We'll get there when we get there. Why don't you just forget about when we'll get there and try to enjoy the ride? Blessed are those who wait."

Twice Daniel is told, "Go your way..." i.e. Move along, this is none of your business. The answer to that question doesn't concern you. So...what do we get out of what we have been given here? Although we don't get any particular insight into when Jesus will return to bring this great resurrection and final judgement, the angel does redirect our attention in some important ways.

So second, How can we get in on this resurrection to life? and third, How should we live while we wait?

(2) How does this hope become ours?

Surprisingly, Daniel does get something out of pestering the angel of God, it is in the two events the angel said will happen at the end. These two events point us to Jesus and how we can be raised to everlasting life.

Daniel has already been told all of God's people will be delivered despite great persecution. So one would think that this deliverance would come through an unexpected display of power...a mighty comeback of some sorts...but Daniel is told the end will come when what strength God's people have left is finally exhausted (according to v7). And this time is depicted (according to v11) as a time when *the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up*.

Fast forward – In Jesus' life, miracles, and principally his resurrection, he reveals himself to be the Son of Man as prophesied about in Daniel 7. And 70 weeks prophecy from Daniel chapter 9 (when the abomination of desolation is set up) brought us right to his death on the cross. When we see his life, death, and resurrection....we have the benefit of looking back to Daniel 12 to know the significance of these phrases.

Jesus' death on the cross illustrates verse 7, "the power of the whole people is finally broken," for Jesus didn't defend himself and take up his life in power, but laid it down in weakness...to a shameful death on a cross. Jesus was broken and brought to nothing.

What's more, surely (as one commentator writes), "...the greatest abomination of all time was when wicked men laid hands on Jesus Christ, whose body was God's new temple on earth (John 2:19-21). They desecrated that body, the flesh in which God's own glory had come to dwell among us (John 1:14)."² And his death brought an end to the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic law, for they were all pictures pointing to and anticipating this very moment.

Why did he do it this way? For the very purpose of securing our deliverance and leading us into this resurrection to life.

Everyone will be raised, some to everlasting life and others to shame and everlasting contempt. *But how is that determined? Which will be the result of your resurrection?* The angel said to Daniel, (12:13), "you will rest [i.e. die] and be raised to *receive your allotted inheritance*."

² Ian Duguid, *Reformed Expository Commentary: Daniel*

If you were to die today, what would be your allowed inheritance before God? Would you be awarded the radiant glory of everlasting life, or would you be receive shame and everlasting contempt? Is there *anyone* who could receive life and not everlasting contempt?

Is there a person who could stand before Almighty God, glorious in splendor and holiness, and receive from him life and not everlasting contempt? No, for there is no one righteous, no not one. All what we think of as good deeds are as filthy rags before the holiness of God. So God sent Christ to live a perfectly obedient life before him as a true human being, so that there would be at least one who would rise to everlasting life in glorious splendor. Jesus earned this inheritance for himself because, although he endured every weakness we have, he was without sin. That's why, when he died, God raised him from the dead in radiant glory.

And yet, he did not do this just for himself. God sent Christ not merely to live a perfectly obedient life before him, but to suffer, and to endure a sacrificial death penalty in the place of all those who would repent of their sin and trust in his grace alone...He did did this so that he might lead many sons and daughters into this glory.

*How do you rise to receive the allotted inheritance of resurrection life? Become hidden in Christ' resurrection. **1 Corinthians 15:21-23**, As death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. ²² For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.*

There is a righteousness which comes by faith apart from works, and it is the righteousness of Christ credited to you by God's grace for all who repent and believe (Romans 10:9-13).

If you go into the resurrection on your own, you will be brought to everlasting shame and contempt. But if Jesus leads you in resurrection, you will rise to everlasting life. So cling to Jesus by repenting of your sin and trusting in his sacrifice on the cross alone to cleanse you of your sin.

While we cling to Jesus by faith alone apart from our own works, how then shall we live as we await the Day of the Lord and this great resurrection?

(3) How should we wait for this hope to come?

- **A Time, Times, and Half a Time**

What the angels says is actually simple to understand. Just imagine riding in the back seat of the car and asking your mother or father, "How much longer is it?" And they say, "It will be for a time, times, and half a time..." What could they possibly mean by that? It's not for you to know. It's not a mystery for you to solve. If anything it's a promise for you to trust despite not knowing.

It will be for a time. It's length is determined. And then for times...It's length will feel like it's going on and on forever. Yet, there will be half a time and then the end. It will come suddenly, just when you thought it would go on forever.

The angel is saying this is going to be our experience waiting for last day and the resurrection (at Christ' second coming). It's length is determined. It will be long in waiting, yet it will come quickly like "half a time" and it will be over.

Daniel himself later asks the same question and essentially gets the same response (except a little more complex). Daniel is told, "1,290 days...and then at the 1,335th day." Unlike with the prophecy of 70 "weeks" in Daniel chapter 9, there is absolutely no consensus among scholars what this could possibly mean. (It's almost like the angel is saying, "The more you ask me about it, the more I'm going to complicate it for you. It would be better if you just stopped from the very beginning, and took my word for it.

On one hand, perhaps it is beyond our ability to comprehend (like when asks his parents "why?" and it's impossible to answer because they don't have the ability at this point in their life to understand the depths of such answers. On the other hand, perhaps we wouldn't be able to bear the weight of the truth (like a drill instructor who does not tell the recruits how long their hike will last). i.e. Just trust me...you cannot comprehend it, and if you could, you wouldn't be able to handle it. It would overwhelm you.

• The Wicked

Unfortunately, many people (both then and now) refuse to accept this answer. This is why Daniel is told to "roll up the scroll and seal it...secure the message, *for many will go about will vain ideas and speculations about these things.*"

According to this passage there are two types of people riding in the back seat: the wise and the wicked. *What are the wicked like?* It starts at the end of v4, *Many will go*

here and there to increase knowledge. and then again in v10, [at the time of the end] the wicked will continue to be wicked, and none of the wicked will understand...

The wicked are not satisfied with simple promises...they demand the details.

When it comes to the end times, they are obsessed about the timing. The wicked are the ones who keep asking the entire car ride, "Are we there yet." They love speculation. They pride themselves in believing they *really* know things as they are (as if they know a secret).

e.g. most extreme (and clear) example are all those who sold everything they own and waited on hilltops to see the Lord returning on a particularly calculated date.

Pastor Ted Hamilton commented, "as they increase in knowledge they decrease in understanding." They become fools, completely missing the point. The moral of their story: Do not waste any time thinking about the timing.

But did you notice they are not called foolish (in contrast to "the wise"). They are called "the wicked." Why is that? Because although it is vain and foolish to try to figure out things that are beyond your comprehension (and none of your business anyway), it is wicked to treat God's own word like this. It is wicked to want God's word to be for us something other than what it is. It is wicked to be dissatisfied with what God has chosen to reveal to us and to seek instead things he has withheld.

People then and people now fulfill what was foretold by the prophet Amos. **Amos 8:11-12:** *"The days are coming," declares the Sovereign Lord, "when I will send a famine through the land – not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord."*

- **The Wise**

In 2017 a WWII veteran died at the age of 99. Until his dying days he was still driving himself around in his pick-up truck and enjoyed a full head of hair. When asked how he was able to live so long, he would sometimes say, "I minded my own business".³

This is what the wise look like in Daniel chapter 12. They mind their own business. They are satisfied with simple promises, and they trust God's discretion to tell them

³ <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/beloved-georgia-wwii-veteran-dies-at-99>

what they need to know, and then they go their way. They are satisfied with what God gives for them to know, [such that they move along to] what God gives for them to do.

The wise understand they either wouldn't understand or couldn't bear to know...They defer their curiosity to God's wisdom, and say, "He must have a good reason for telling us what he tells us and withholding from us what he withholds from us. Oh... look at the time...I must be getting back to that errand now."

What's interesting is that the wise don't know as much as the wicked, but one thing they do know which the wicked just can't get for some reason is **Deuteronomy 29:29**, [that] *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.* The wise know how to tend to the things God has given them and how not to meddle with the things of God.

The timing should be less of our concern than the certainty of the resurrection and the result. Only then can we "go on our way and walk in wisdom". Twice Daniel is told, "Go your way..." It's like in 8:27 when he was overwhelmed by a prophetic vision, he eventually is able to get up and get back to the king's business.

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul will write to a church in the first century. He is writing about the resurrection, the Day of the Lord, the end times, etc. and this is what he says about how they ought to live until in light of these things. **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**, *...make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

[This was mentioned last week at my community group: Martin Luther was asked, "What would you do if you knew the end of the world was tomorrow?" He said, "I would plant an apple tree."]

Conclusion

Yes, waiting is difficult. (For me) it's annoying. If you want to annoy me, tell me I have to wait. If you want to set me off, remind me it is a blessing to wait. But that's what Daniel is told, "Blessed are those who wait for and reach the end..." How is it a blessing? Perhaps because along the way you won't be distracted and stressed about by vain speculations about the end times.

Our ultimate deliverance to resurrection glory will most certainly come, and it will be far more glorious than you or I could imagine. We are told enough to be assured of this such that we can carry on and take care what we have actually been given by God to do today.

What I find ironic is that everything we needed to know was already said in the first three verses. 12:1, *At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise...* implying [while we wait] You are being protected and preserved in ways you don't even know. Your ultimate and eternal deliverance is certain (12:1), and it will bring you into a far greater glory than you were even hoping for (12:3).

Imagine that: the things the angel had already said in the beginning were sufficient in themselves all along to carry us through. If only we would choose the path of wisdom and be content with what God has given us in his Word.

[to sum it all up in one main idea]: Because our ultimate deliverance in Jesus is certain, we can go our way despite knowing when we'll get there.