

Daniel 12 – The Final Instructions from the “Man Dressed in Linen”

Hebrew¹

Dan. 12:1 “At that time, Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will stand motionless, and there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time. At that time, your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.²

Dan. 12:2 “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.³

Dan. 12:3 “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.⁴

Dan. 12:4 “But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book for the sake of the end of time. Many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.”⁵

Dan. 12:5 Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank

¹ Daniel 1:1-2:4 is written in Hebrew, along with 8:1-12:13. The rest of Daniel, 2:5-7:28 is written in Aramaic.

² The “man dressed in linen” of Daniel 10 & 11 is still speaking. He ended chapter 11 with the sudden and quick demise of the Man of Lawlessness in Israel. Now, he comments on the effects that the Man of Lawlessness will have on the Jews (“your [Daniel’s] people”) prior to the Messiah’s destroying him. Because Michael “will stand motionless” and no longer guard the Jews to the extent that he has in the past (whatever this looks like exactly), it will result in a “time of distress” (**תְּנַשֵּׁעַ**) (ή ἡμέρα θάνατος) that cannot be compared for the Jews with any other of their experiences in history (not even the Holocaust? Wow!). Cf. Revelation 7:14;

Cf. Matthew 24:21 – “For then [after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D., 70] there will be a great tribulation [until Jesus’ return], such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.”

Cf. Isaiah 26:19 – “But your dead will live. Their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.”

Cf. Jeremiah 30:7 “Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s distress (**הַיּוֹם לִיעָלָה בָּבֶן־צְדָקָה**) (καὶ χρόνος στενός ἐστιν τῷ Ιακώβ), but he will be saved from it.”

Thus, there will be Jews who will escape the greatness of the tribulation of them and the cruelty of the Man of Lawlessness. Cf. Revelation 12:14, “But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.” Most likely, these are Jews who survive the annihilating efforts of Satan between the time of Jesus’ first appearance and his return, while God remains patient with them.

³ There will be a resurrection of the dead of the “many” Jews that accompanies all these events, with former authentic believers among the Jews (“these”) being granted eternal life. In contrast, non-believing Jews (“the others”) will be condemned to punishment and destruction. According to Revelation 20, authentic believers will be raised from the dead to become immortal and morally perfect beings when Jesus the Messiah returns to establish the Kingdom of Israel, while non-believers will be raised from the dead to be punished and destroyed at the end of the millennial kingdom as a result of the Great White Throne Judgment.

⁴ There will be a kind of honor and glory that matches that of the Bible and that will be given to authentic believers with their understanding of reality. This will include those who have communicated the truth to unbelievers with the (God-caused, obviously) effect of the latter’s embracing the truth.

⁵ The Expositor’s Bible Commentary says, “In the ancient Near East, important documents such as contracts, promissory notes, and deeds of conveyance were written out in duplicate. The original document was kept in a secure repository, safe (‘closed up’) from later tampering, in order to conserve the interests and rights of all parties to the transaction. Though copies might be made from it, the original was to remain secure so that it might be consulted if any future challenge of its terms were made.”

Because the book of Daniel exists, obviously the “man dressed in linen” was not commanding Daniel to make sure that what he wrote never saw the light of day and never was made available to others to read in order to learn about all these important ideas. The “man dressed in linen” wants this information to be made available for the purpose of helping people understand God’s plans and purposes that will culminate in the end of human government that involves anyone else but the Messiah. Combining the evidence in the Hebrew text with the Septuagint, it seems that the meaning of the last sentence is that people will be rescued from crazy thinking by the knowledge of Daniel’s book, because it will be a source of truth that properly educates them in regard to the one true God, Yahweh, and His plans for the end of the age.

of the river and the other on that bank of the river.⁶

Dan. 12:6 And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be until the end of these wonderful events?”⁷

Dan. 12:7 I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time. And like the finishing of the shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.⁸

Dan. 12:8 As for me, I heard but could not understand. So I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?”⁹

The Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2

Future to us

Also called the Son of Destruction

Arises in the Middle East

The Messiah returns and destroys this last, evil ruler
when the land of Israel becomes a part of this war

Future to us

Dan. 12:9 He said, “Go, Daniel, for these words are to be concealed and sealed up until the end time.”¹⁰

⁶ Two other men besides the man in linen of Daniel 10:5ff. This is still the Tigris River as mentioned in Daniel 10:4.

⁷ One of these other two men addresses the man of Daniel 10:5ff., who has been speaking until now. He is asking about the timing of all these events, probably especially those of the Man of Lawlessness and his effects on the Jews that are mentioned last. Two options for what the man means about the question – 1) How much time will there be between the arrival of the Man of Lawlessness and Jesus’ return during which there will be the “time of distress” on the Jews on the land of Israel? 2) How much time will there be between now when Daniel is receiving this information and the Man of Lawless who will bring the future “time of distress” on the Jews on the land of Israel.

Because #2 is the bigger deal and is more in line with the tenor of the whole book of Daniel that refers to at least 2,600 years of history, I think that it is more likely—the time between 536 B.C. and the time of the Man of Lawlessness which is followed immediately by Jesus’ return.

⁸ The man’s answer to the question is enigmatic, “a time, times, and half a time.” Several options for “time” – 1) 1 year (e.g., Exodus 12:2 and the first month of the year), 2) 7 years (e.g., Deuteronomy 15:1 and remission of debts), 3) 49 years (e.g., Leviticus 25:8 and seven sabbaths of seven years), 4) 50 years (e.g., Leviticus 25:10 and the fiftieth year of jubilee). Two options for “times” – 1) 2 x [the number], 2) [the number] x [the number].

Since I think that the span of time of the question of v. 6 is 536 B.C. to the Man of Lawlessness and Jesus’ return, #1 & #2 of “time.” do not make sense. But neither does #1 for “times.” For example, if “time” is #4 and = 50 years, then “a time, times, and half a time” = 175 years so that the answer would be 536-175 = 361 B.C.

But if #4 for “time” and #2 for “times” are correct, then the answer is 2,575 years = 536 B.C. + 2,575 years = A.D. 2039. This makes a lot more sense. But is it entirely correct? Good question, and how do we know for sure?

Cf. Daniel 7:25, where the “tenth horn” is allowed to exercise his cruelty on the Jews for 3½ years, using the same phrase. Then, in Revelation 12:14, the only other place where this phrase “for a time, times, and half of time” is used in the Bible, the “woman,” i.e., Jews, is spirited away on eagle’s wings to be fed in the wilderness away from the destroying serpent. In Daniel 7:25, the 3½ years refer to a time of persecution with the addition of God’s faithfulness to ensure the perseverance of the belief of the Jewish believers, while in Revelation 12:14, the 3½ years refer to God’s mercy, patience, and protection of Jews.

Here in Daniel 12:7, the man also states that God will complete His plans that involve all these events which will include the “shattering of the power of the holy people.” I think that this latter clause refers to the final judgment and destruction in the last days of the Jews, God’s chosen people, because of their rebellion against and disobedience of God.

⁹ Perhaps because there has been no explicit mention in the explanation of the vision of Daniel 10:1ff., Daniel feels compelled to ask what is the actual outcome of all that the “man dressed in linen” has said? He could surmise that the outcome will be the messianic kingdom, but perhaps he wants to be sure and to know any other details that the man might be willing to interpret for him.

¹⁰ The first part of the man in linen’s response to Daniel’s question is like that of 12:4, that these are important enough ideas that a secure copy of them must be made.

Dan. 12:10 “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.¹¹

Dan. 12:11 “From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.¹²

Dan. 12:12 “How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!¹³

Dan. 12:13 “But as for you, go your way to the end. Then, you will enter into rest and rise for your allotted portion at the end of the days.”¹⁴

¹¹ The second part of the man in linen’s response to Daniel’s question is that “many” of the Jews (of the world? I think that “of the Jews” makes more sense in this context) will not get better spiritually and morally, especially towards the end. Until the millennial and messianic kingdom of Revelation 20 comes into existence, there will always be two different kinds of Jews in the world—those who act with evil intent towards God, and those who have biblical understanding of the nature of reality and act accordingly. Fortunately, the biblical message states that the Jews with “insight” and who “understand” God and His plans for them will survive His judgment, condemnation, and destruction so as to participate in the “great nation” of Genesis 12 and eternal life of the new earth of Revelation 21.

¹² Three and a half years = $365 \times 3.5 = 1,278$ days, or $360 \times 3.5 = 1,260$ days.

Cf. Revelation 12:6, “Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

12 more days = $1,278 + 12 = 1,290$ days, or $1,260 + 30 = 1,290$ days.

Two options for what this verse means –

1) While there was a mention in 11:31 of the cessation of temple sacrifices in Jerusalem by Antiochus IV in 168 B.C., because of the context of the very end of history when the resurrection of the dead takes place (12:2), the man in linen would now be referring to what the Man of Lawlessness will impose on the Jews, basically the same thing. He will prohibit the Judaism of the Mosaic Covenant for 1,290 days, for 3½ years + either 12 or 30 days.

2) The 3½ years + either 12 or 30 days refer to God’s patience after Jesus’ death which demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the Mosaic Covenant sacrifices (“the regular sacrifice is abolished”) and also is an act on the part of the Jews that is so abominable to God that He is going to desolate Jerusalem and the temple with the Roman army (“the abomination of desolation”) where the “and” in between these phrases means “plus,” i.e., so that they are at the same time. From these events, “there will 1,290 days,” symbolic for the duration of God’s patience, when He will wait for the Jews to repent and claim Jesus as the Messiah. This time of the Great Tribulation and until Jesus returns and restores the Kingdom of Israel is similar to the “3½” years from Jesus’ death to the end of the 70 “weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27.

I am inclined to think that #2 is correct as a way to tie together the message of chapter 9 with this information.

¹³ A month and a half = 45 days. Thus $1,290 + 45 = 1,335$ days. The man states that the person who perseveres in his belief that God will finish His judgment on the Jews with the coming of the Messiah, the destruction of the Man of Lawlessness, and the inauguration of the restored Kingdom of Israel will enjoy seeing this culmination of God’s plans and purposes and, therefore by implication, his own salvation.

Or, if the 1st option in the previous verse is correct, the 45 days (a month and a half) refer to the time when the Man of Lawlessness pursues his final goal of destroying the Jews. But he fails because Jesus returns and destroys him. And afterwards he restores the Kingdom of Israel and brings about eternal salvation for those who persevere in their belief.

¹⁴ The man in linen’s final words to Daniel are to keep living his life until he dies. Literally, he says, “As for you, go die.” Therefore, Daniel is meant to live out the rest of his life in a manner that corresponds to all these true ideas from God, because the end result for him will be that he rises from the dead and acquires the “rest” of eternal life that will be granted to all biblically inward people after the inception of the Messianic Kingdom under Jesus at his return.