

## Daniel 12

### Introduction:

World magazine ran a story about trends that are rapidly reshaping the lives of American Christians. Here are four of the trends...

**Trend one- the rapid decline of Christianity in our country...** “Pew Research has found that millions of Americans “switch away” from Christianity every decade, abandoning the faith of their childhood to identify as agnostic or non-religious...”

**Trend two- the clash of ideologies in our culture...** The majority of millennials have, what is now being called, a “post-truth” worldview. Most millennials believe that truth cannot be known. This “post-truth view is on course to redefine U.S. morals, elections and culture during the next decades.”

**Trend three- the rapid rise of Islam...** “Pew Research shows that Islam is the fastest growing ideology in the world today—by a long shot... This year, the number of babies born into Muslim homes will exceed the entire standing population of Russia... By 2050, there could be 6.7 Muslims in the world for every one American. If the past is any indication, Islam will also continue establishing theocratic governments, which will leverage rising economies, armies, and increasing technology toward Muslim ideologies. Emerging examples of this include the vast militaries and Islamic policies of governments in Turkey (80 million people), Pakistan (193 million people), and Indonesia (261 million people), among others.”

**Trend four- the reshuffling of global economies and military might...** “China is on course to overtake the United States and become the world’s largest economy by about 2030... One Harvard researcher [found](#) that when a No. 2 economy overtakes a No. 1 economy, as China will soon do, it has led to war 75 percent of the time,... during the last 500 years.”

The author goes on to write,

“In what future historians may view as poetic irony, young Americans are increasingly being taught that all belief systems are equal and can coexist without conflict. And yet, they will inherit a world in which the largest, most powerful nations each believe their own ideology to be exclusive and superior. Increasingly in these societies, dissidents are jailed, Christian churches are burned, and American values like freedom of speech and freedom of religion do not exist.”

Summary of the trends...

Christianity is rapidly declining in America.

Islam is exploding in growth across the globe.

The distinctly American values of freedom, liberty, and equality may soon be a thing of the past.

The future looks bleak for Christians.

This brings us to Daniel chapter 12. The future looked bleak for Daniel as well.

Chapters 10-12 contain the last vision in the book of Daniel.

According to chapter 11, at the end of this present evil age, Christians will experience tribulation, persecution, and distress.

Daniel saw this vision of the future and wondered if there was any hope?

Daniel 12 reminds us that we must have hope. Why must we have hope? Because God promises to deliver his people. To help us understand this we will look at two things...

Deliverance described  
Deliverance questioned

### **Describing God's deliverance.**

*(verses 1-4)*

#### **How will God deliver his people? He will send Angels.**

**Daniel 12:1 (ESV) — 1** “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time...

The words, “At that time” connect 12:1 with the end of chapter 11. The end of Chapter 11 (verses 40-45) describes a great period of tribulation at the end of this present evil age. Therefore, the time being described in 12:1 is the end of the present evil age. During this period the anti-Christ will wreak havoc on the people of God. The present evil age started in Genesis 3 and will end when Christ returns.

While there will be tribulation and anti-Christ throughout the church age, tribulation will intensify at the end of the age (Acts 2:16-17, 2 Tim. 3:1). This is what is being described in 12:1-3.

According to verse 1 God will send the archangel Michael to help the saints during periods of intense persecution.

Michael is a high-ranking angel, mentioned four times in the Bible (Daniel 10:13, 21, Jude 9, Revelation 12:7) who battles against Satan and his demons on behalf of the saints.

Some think that Michael is the restrainer mentioned in 2 Thes. 2:6-7. This is very possible (Ferguson, 243).

Here is the goodnews. We are not alone in our struggles against evil. God will send the angel Michael to help us when things get really tough. This is meant to encourage us!

**Hebrews 1:13–14 (ESV) — 13** And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? **14** Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

*How will God deliver his people? He will send Angels!*

#### **How else will God deliver his people? He will resurrect them!**

**Daniel 12:2 (ESV) — 2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

The phrase “those who sleep in the dust” refers to dead people. According to verse 2, some of these dead people will awake to everlasting life and the others to everlasting death.

This is a clear reference to the general resurrection of the dead at the end of the age. When Christ returns, every single person who has ever lived on this planet will be raised from the dead.

Jesus was quoting Daniel 12 when he said...

**John 5:28–29 (ESV) — 28** Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice **29** and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Both parties will awake to eternal realities.

Why will some go to everlasting life?

Because Jesus conquered the power of death on their behalf.

**1 Corinthians 15:20–23 (ESV) — 20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

God's promise of deliverance does not mean that you will have any easy life, or that you will not die, but it does not mean that you will be delivered from the thing that matters most. You will be delivered from the power of death, the power of the devil, and the penalty of sin.

*How will God deliver his people? He will send Angels!  
How else will God deliver his people? He will resurrect them!*

**What will happen after God's delivers his people? He will glorify them.**

**Daniel 12:2–3 (ESV) — 2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. **3** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

God will raise everybody, literally.

Then he will judge all creatures.

At this point, the non-Christians will be sent to hell for all eternity.

The Christians will also be judged.

But here is the good news... Christians have nothing to fear on that great and awful day because Jesus was judged in their place. (Romans 8:1-2)

The purpose of final judgment for Christians is for God to give out rewards to the faithful.

Notice what the text says, it says that the saints will shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Possibly a reference to evangelism.

Saints will be given glorified bodies that shine like the sun (Romans 8).

Plus, the saints will receive rewards for their good works.

**Matthew 5:11–12 (ESV) — 11** “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Revelation 11:18 (ESV) — 18** The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

See also 2 Cor. 5:10

Let me make a very important distinction. We are not saved by our good works. We are saved for good works. Once we are saved, God gives us the motivation and the ability to do good works and then he rewards us for the works that he helped us perform. Amazing!!!

*How will God deliver his people? He will send Angels!*

*How else will God deliver his people? He will resurrect them!*

*What will happen after God's delivers his people? He will glorify them!*

### **Illustration:**

John had a temper. When he flew into a rage he looked like an attacking goose, as a result he received the nickname the goose. As a young man he desperately sought peace for his soul, so he became a priest. His fiery sermons draw massive crowds. He worked, worked, and worked some more for God, but it did not bring peace.

One day he read a book by the English reformer John Wycliffe. Wycliffe taught that humans could get to heaven by grace alone through faith alone. This teaching transformed John Huss's life.

Instantly he started to preach this message. His preaching drew such large crowds that the authorities noticed. They quickly arrested him. Eventually he was summoned to the council of Constance to stand trial for heresy. He naively went under the pretense of safe conduct.

### **One scholar writes,**

“When he arrived, he was jailed in a Dominican monastery, where raw human sewage from the latrines rained down on him. Though he suffered from pneumonia, he was dragged day after day to face the full fury of the church.” (Petterson, 92)

He remained in chains for months. Then he was given to the Franciscans. They tortured him in a last-ditch effort to break his resolve.

He refused to stop believing and preaching that salvation was all of grace.

Eventually they killed him by burning him alive.

Why did he refuse to stop preaching the gospel? Because he believed in the resurrection of the dead and eternal glory.

### **Application:**

The promise of the resurrection and future glory motivates us to keep going.

We can endure suffering, pain, and hardship for following Christ, if we know that resurrection bodies and eternal rewards await us.

What hardships do you face for following Christ?

Being passed up for that promotion.  
Being rejected by family.  
Being ignored by your old friends.

Following Christ is hard... Jesus told us that it would be hard.

Loving our enemies is hard.  
Giving generously is hard.  
Telling people about Jesus is hard.  
Saying know to sin, when it seems so pleasurable, is hard.

We follow a messiah who carried a cross. He expects us to carry the cross as well. This means that we must die daily to our own needs, wants, and desires for the good and happiness of others.

How do we persevere in this task? By remembering the resurrection and future glory.

*I know God will deliver me in the future, at the general resurrection, but what do I do in the meantime? This brings us to the second point.*

*First, describing God's deliverance.*

**Second, questioning God's deliverance.** (4-13)

*Two questions are asked in these verses. Let's look at the first question.*

**How long until God delivers his people?**

**Daniel 12:4 (ESV) — 4** But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

In other words, Daniel write down these words of deliverance in your book (the book of Daniel) and preserve them for future generations of saints.

**Daniel 12:5 (ESV) — 5** Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream.

Daniel sees two mighty angels, which reminds us of a similar scene in chapter 10:4.

**6** And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?”

The “someone,” who spoke, is one of the angels standing by the river. He spoke to the man in linen, which is a reference to the great angel in Daniel 10:5 (probably the angel Gabriel).

The angel's question is simple. He asks, “how long will the woes and the pain in chapter 11 last? In other words, how long will it be until God delivers his people?”

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

The mighty angel raises his hands to make a solemn oath, indicating that he is about to tell the whole truth. Then he answers the question. He proclaims that God will deliver his people after a time, times, and half a time and when his people have been crushed down by their enemy.

What in the world does time, times, and half a time mean? It probably refers to 3.5 years.

Some think this refers to the 3.5 years that Antiochus Epiphanes oppressed Jerusalem.

Others think this refers to the entire church age.

Still others think this refers to a period of great tribulation at the end of the age.

There are other options.

We should not be dogmatic about what this means. Why? Daniel did not even know what it meant.

8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

We don't have to know what time, times, and half time means to apply the principal. Here is the principal.

### **Application:**

Our time of suffering, pain, and tribulation is limited by God's mercy. It will come to an end! When will it end? It will end after time, times, and half a time.

God is in control of the termination date. God may allow you to suffer for a season for your sanctification and his glory.

Some of you have probably wondered...

How long do we have to wait to have children?

How long do we have to wait for my chronic pain to be over?

When will I ever get married?

When will I stop suffering under my current boss?

When will I get reconciled with my long-lost friend?

When will my marriage not be so hard?

When will I get to stop chasing toddlers and changing diapers?

How long oh lord?

God knows your pain, God knows your struggle, and he will end your pain after time, times, and half a time. In other words, he will end your pain when it is most loving for him to end your pain. All that God does, is motivated by love.

He controls every detail of your life and he is working all things for good.

*Maybe you still have questions... this brings us to Daniel's second question.*

*First question, how long until God delivers his people?*

**Second question, what is the result of all these things?** (verses 8-13)

**Daniel 12:8–13 (ESV) — 8** I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?”

Let’s look at the second half of verse 8. Daniel says, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” He is probably asking, “What is going to be the result of all of this suffering in the meantime?”

Let’s listen to how the angel responds.

**9** He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

In other words, Daniel, you don’t need to worry about your future, about suffering, or about tribulation. I will take care of you. In the meantime, go your way, do your thing, walk righteously and humbly before me.

**10** Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

In other words, during the tribulation, the saints will be purified through persecution as the wicked grow all the more wicked.

**11** And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. **12** Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

Several of my commentaries said that no one really knows what 1,290 days and 1,335 days means. But the main point can still be grasped. What is the main point? God is sovereign over the amount of time that his people suffer.

**13** But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Again, Daniel is told to, “go his way.” This is the second time in five verses.

What is the point?

Daniel’s has questions. God does not give Daniel the answers. Instead he tells him to trust him and go his way.

Which way? The way of holiness.

**One scholar writes,**

“The simple interpretation is, “Just go about your business Daniel. I am not giving more details about this now. The matter is closed and sealed until the end actually occurs.”” (Chapell, 212)

**Application:**

God is not going to answer all of our questions in this life.

**Deuteronomy 29:29 (ESV) — 29** “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

We will probably die with unanswered questions.

Why did my child have cancer?  
Why was my marriage so difficult?  
Why did I work 35 years at a dead-end job?  
Why did my marriage end in divorce?  
Why did my child walk away from the faith?  
Why did my dreams not come true?

We should expect for there to be great mysteries in our lives and in the universe. God's ways are much higher than our ways. Furthermore, God does not owe us an explanation for anything that he does.

In the meantime, God tells us to walk humbly before him and trust him to deliver us when the time is right.

Here is the good news. Living on this side of the cross we know that he is worthy of our trust? Why? Because he sent his only son to suffer and die on a cross in our place. If God did this for us, what good thing will he withhold from us? Nothing!!!

### **Conclusion:**

We looked at two things...

Describing God's deliverance  
Questioning God's deliverance

This is a fitting way to end this series and this book.

The main theme of this book is that God reigns. Because God reigns, he is able to deliver

In chapter 1 God delivered Daniel and his friends when they refused to eat the king's food.  
In chapter 2 God delivered Daniel from the king's wrath by giving him an interpretation for the king's dream.

In chapter 3 God delivered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fiery furnace.  
In chapter 4 God delivers Nebuchadnezzar from insanity when he humbles himself.  
In chapter 6 God delivers Daniel from the hungry Lions.  
In chapter 7 God promises to deliver his people through the ancient of Days and the son of man.  
In chapter 8 God promises to deliver his people from persecution.  
In chapter 9 God promises to deliver his covenant people when they cry to him for mercy.  
In chapter 10 God promises to deliver his people from demonic oppression by sending them angels.  
In chapter 11 we learn that God is able to deliver his people because he controls all the details of history.  
In chapter 12 we learn that God will deliver us on the day of final judgment.

God is sovereign.  
God reigns over all things.  
Because he reigns over all things, he can deliver you.

Do you need deliverance this morning? Look to Jesus. Let's pray...

