

Israel's Hope

Daniel 12

(preached Pine Grove 5/7/17; Sunday PM)

Introduction

As we get in the car to head anywhere these days, John Andrew asks the favorite question of any 4 year old boy...

Are we there yet?

We can pull out of our driveway and be heading down Pine Grove Road, and he will ask...

How long is the ride, Daddy?

A long time or a short time?

To which I will reply, "Johnny, don't ask that question again. I will tell you when we get close..."

You just need to look out your window and enjoy the ride..

And he will do that, and sometimes he will see things on the side of the road that let him know we are getting close...

Well, Daniel was told some chapters back that Israel as a nation would be given 490 years...

And though Daniel would not live for all 490 of those years, he too had questions about what those 490 years would look like...

And God had given him a lot of answers to help with his curiosity....

First and foremost, God had assured him that Israel would survive their captivity under the Medo-Persian empire...

Though few Jews had taken advantage of Darius' decree to let them return to their homeland much to Daniel's distress, the nation would eventually find their way home...

Yet, the bad news is that things would never again be the same for Israel...

Though they would be in their land for a time, God was going to send some ruthless governments to rule over them led by some evil men...

We saw this last week in Daniel 11 where Ahasuerus, Alexander the Great, Antiochus the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes would all lord over Israel's immediate future...

But worse yet, we also saw last week that a man named the Antichrist would eventually come in the final 7 years of the 490 years to not only rule over Israel but actively persecute them....

So, the good news for Daniel is that Israel would survive all 490 years, but the bad news for Daniel is that those 490 years would not be pleasant...

And to make matters worse, the worst ruler would come last...

At this point in the book of Daniel, the old prophet must have been pretty depressed...

Yes, it was good to know that his people had a future, but it was probably quite disturbing to see how bleak that future was...

This is like hearing that you will live to be 75 but you will battle cancer for the last 40 years of your life...

So, Daniel hears all of this last week in chapter 11, but God does not leave him depressed...

Instead, Daniel is given hope at the end of this message of Israel's future..

And the hope is this...

Israel will not end their 490 years in persecution and shame...

Just when the darkest days come and the Antichrist rises to attack Israel worse than anyone who has come before him, there is hope...

And that hope is the theme of chapter 12...

So, lets begin to get to see Israel's hope...

And the first bit of hope comes in verses 1-4 with....

I. The Conclusion of Israel's Time (1-4)

You wouldn't normally think that the end of something is a source of hope...

Yet it is for Israel...

The end of the 490 years will be joy for Israel in a number of ways...

First of all, God is going to open Israel's eyes to the truth that Jesus is their Messiah, which will bring salvation to their hard hearts..

Second of all, God is going to end their years of suffering under hostile governments and kings...

Third of all, God is going to reward them by keeping his promise to bring Israel into his kingdom and reward them with a 1000 years of living under His rule..

Now, in order to do all of that, God must first ensure that they will survive to the very end and then survive the worst of the worst in the form of Antichrist persecution at the very end...

So, let's see how God will do this beginning in verse 1 of Daniel 12...

“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.

As the end of the 490 years approaches, Israel will be under heavy persecution on all sides...

Not only will the Antichrist be after them, all the nations of the world will be against them as well...

But even if the world is against, all you need is for God to be for you...

And in the end, God will be for Israel...

And he will send Michael, one of his chief angels, who according to verse 1 stands guard over Israel...

And Micheal will stand during Israel's time of distress..

We know from the book of Revelation that Michael will be fighting for God's people in heaven at the start of Revelation...

And it seems clear that he will fight for Israel specifically as the Antichrist sets his sights on them..

Remember that Israel will flee to the wilderness and be protected during the final 3 1/2 years of this final 7 years...

Maybe Michael supplies the wings of the eagle that get Israel to the wilderness and protects them there...

Maybe his wings cover them and surround them as they leave their land and run to the wilderness on foot and in cars...

So God gives the hope of a great defender of Israel in the end...

But he also gives the hope of great deliverance to Israel at the end of verse 2...

Everyone of Israel who is found written in the book will be rescued...

What is this book?

Clearly this is the book of life of the Lamb that was written before the foundation of the world that contains the names of all those God will save...

This book is mentioned in the book of Malachi, the book of Luke, and we recently saw in the book of Revelation...

And the promise to Israel is that many of them will be saved at the end of time as well...

Now, let me make a few comments here that need to be cleared up...

The Bible clearly states that all Israel will be saved...

That is Romans 11:26...

But what is the meaning of that?

So, let's first figure out what this verse doesn't mean?

It doesn't mean that all Israel of all time will be saved.

Salvation in every age is based on belief in Christ...

In the OT, that was a belief that God would send a Messiah to die for sin..

In the NT, that was a belief that God sent his Messiah in Jesus Christ...

All salvation goes through Christ...

Whether you believed in a coming Messiah, you believed in living Messiah, or whether you look back on a Messiah who already came...

There is no other under heaven by which men must be saved than the name of Jesus Christ...

With that said, if a person hasn't trusted in Christ as Messiah...

There is no salvation...

Now, there were people in OT who looked forward to a Savior..

Abraham, Job, David, and many many others who though they didn't have all the truth about Christ, they simply believed in what God gave them and God saved them because of their belief in His promise..

However, not everyone in Israel in the OT believed...

There were many in Israel in the OT would are not in heaven now because of their lack of faith...

There were many Jews in Jesus day that rejected Him...

The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes are all Jews in Jesus' day who will not be saved...

There have been many Jews in the days since Jesus' death and resurrection who have rejected Him..

They will not be saved...

There are Jews today who reject Christ and if they die without putting their trust in him, they wont be saved either...

So, Romans 11 is not a promise that every Jew who has ever lived will be saved...

That doesn't line up with what Scripture teaches...

Romans 11 is also not a promise that every person in the tribulation who calls himself a Jew will be saved...

There will be Jews in the tribulation period who hold on to their unbelief...

So, they wont be saved either...

Romans 11:26 is simply a promise that all of true Israel will find salvation in the end of time..

It will be a large number of Jews..

It will be a great Jewish revival, but this isn't a promise that God is not going to require faith in Christ to be saved just because his people are more special than others..

It is simply a promise that God will begin to open Jewish hearts like never before in the end of time..

Jewish eyes will be opened and their ears unclogged like never before in those days...

And all Israel whose names are found in the book of life will be saved...

The world will end with a great tent revival for the Jewish people and all the ones who God has determined to save will be saved...

That is the second component of hope given to Daniel here..

Daniel, though you have seen the hardness of Jewish hearts in your day...

In their sin and disobedience...

In their refusal to go back to their homeland even though Darius has allowed them to return....

Daniel, in spite of all that stubbornness, there is coming a day where I will rescue Israel...

Not only from the attacks of the Antichrist, but also from their sin...

And we know that day..

That is the day when Israel is surrounded by the nations and the Antichrist at the end of the tribulation...

The day when Israel will have no nation to call upon to help them...

The day when it will be darker than ever for the nation of Israel...

At the moment when it appears that they will be wiped off the map, God will deliver them by sending His Son to destroy their enemies...

And Israel will look upon Christ at His Second Coming, and they see that the one they pierced is the One who has delivered them...

And they will come to faith in Him...

And their rescue will be complete at the end of those 490 years...

Now, when that day comes and Israel is rescued, there will be some other events that will accompany that..

One of those is found in verse 2 and is also a source of great hope for Israel...

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 [a]contempt. 3 [b]Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the [c]expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

We do not have time to look at the resurrections in the Bible and the order of all of them...

But let me give you a short overview of resurrections in the Scriptures...

There were some people in the OT who were resurrected...

Elijah and Elisha raised 3 people from the dead...

And there were some resurrections that Jesus performed in the NT..

But all those people died again...

The first resurrection to eternal life was Christ, and there were some who rose from the graves around Jerusalem when Jesus died...

The next resurrections from the dead will occur at the rapture when the bodies of those in the church age will be raised from the dead and joined with the souls that Jesus brings with him...

And remember, when I speak of resurrections, it is not as if the people who are dead now aren't alive...

Their souls are with the Lord and I personally believe that have a temporary body now as well...

But there is coming a day when their souls will come with Christ and be joined with their new bodies..

Now, it doesn't appear that any OT saints will have their bodies rise from the grave at the rapture of the church..

Though their souls have always been with the Lord and will stay with the Lord before, during, and after the rapture, they will have to wait for their new bodies..

And it seems that Daniel 12:2 teaches that that resurrection of OT saints will have to wait until the end of tribulation...

In other words, true Israel of the OT will be given their new bodies when true Israel of the NT finally comes to faith in Christ at the end of these 490 years...

Now, Daniel also mentions that others will be resurrected to disgrace and contempt...

And though that will not happen here, he mentions it here to remind Israel that not all Israel is true Israel...

In fact, many Jews were Jews in name only as their hearts never trusted in the Lord...

Now, this resurrection will occur at the resurrection of the dead before the great white throne judgment which comes after the 1000 years of Christ's kingdom on earth...

If you are confused, that's good..

I will talk about it more in the book of Revelation...
but long story short is this...

All believers of all time will not all be joined to their eternal bodies at the same time...

There will be stages of the good resurrection....

NT believers bodies will be resurrected at the rapture before the 7 year tribulation...

OT saints bodies will be resurrected at the end of the 7 year tribulation...

Some saints who come to faith in the 7 year period will not get their resurrected bodies until some point in the middle of the 1000 year reign of Christ...

But here's the easy one to remember..

All unbelievers from all time...

From Cain to Judas to the person who dies an unbeliever today, their resurrection of their body will not come until the end of the 1000 year reign of Christ...

Where their bodies will be raised and rejoined with their souls that have been in hell and they will be judged at the Great White Throne before being cast into the lake of fire.

The angel doesn't note that separation of 1000 years between the resurrections of believing Israel and unbelieving Israel..

He simply wants Daniel to know 2 things here...

Believing Israel has the promise and hope of bodily resurrection, while unbelieving Israel has the dread and fear of a bodily resurrection that leads to everlasting death...

So, he tells Daniel that the future for believing Israel is bright even under the shadow of a future that isn't so bright...

And then he adds this as his final words to Daniel...

Verse 4...

4 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.”

In other words Daniel, write what I am telling you down...

And seal the book because there is coming a day when Israel will need this hope...

And those days are the final days of Israel's 490 years as a nation...

You see, Jews alive in the final 7 years will be searching for answers...

They will be turning to their leaders as the world falls apart around them....

Massive earthquakes, natural disasters like never before...

The nations turning against them and then this final evil man known as the Antichrist setting his sights on them to end their existence as a nation...

Everyone will be in a state of confusion, but especially the Jews....

And they will be as this verse says, “going back and forth looking for answers...”

But where will they find their answers to what is happening?

Right here in the book of Daniel written centuries earlier..

They will also find more answers as they are led to the NT as well..

But the point for Daniel is to record all this because it will serve a road map for a future generation of Jews needing knowledge about the end times....

Just like the book of Revelation will serve as roadmap for people who get saved in the tribulation period...

You see, God never leaves his people completely in the dark...

And though Daniel may have questions in his day about what he has heard, the Jews in the tribulation period will value his book more than gold as it gives them hope that they will be protected, saved, and even resurrected...

So, that is the conclusion of Israel’s time as a nation, but all that does is stir up Daniel’s curiosity and ours as well...

So, let's end with...

II. The Curiosity about Israel's Time (5-12)

Verse 5..

5 Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. 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 wonders?"

All this time, Daniel has been near the Tigris River receiving this angelic message...

And as the message ends, he looks up and notices two others sending near the river with him...

And they are talking to one another..

The conversation centers on how long will this final persecution of the Jewish people be?

How long will the attack by Antichrist last?

And the answer comes in verse 7...

7 I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, [d]as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a [e]time, [f]times, and half a [g]time; and as soon as [h]they finish shattering the [i]power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

The answer is clear...

The great persecution of Israel will last 3 1/2 years...

This phrase, “times, time, and half a time” is seen in the book of Revelation as well and signifies 3 1/2 years or 42 months of 1260 days....

And that lines up with what the Scriptures teach in other places...

Though Israel has 7 years left on their time sheet as a nation, the first half of that will be lived in relative peace..

Because the Antichrist will come in the first seal judgment offering peace to them...

And for the first half of the 7 years, they will get it...

But then when the Antichrist breaks that treaty at the midpoint of tribulation, all the powers of hell break loose on Israel...

And though it will only last 3 1/2 years, it will be the worst 3 1/2 years of Israel's 490 years as a nation...

Unfortunately, Daniel doesn't understand it all...

So the angel reminds him that the message is not entirely for him but there is coming a day when Israel will need to hear it, and in that day, they will understand completely..

Look at verses 8-10....

8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the [j]outcome of these events?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 Many will be purged, [k]purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but [l]those who have insight will understand.

In other words, Daniel just wrote all this down and don't feel a need to understand it all son..

This 3 1/2 year period of terror for Israel will cleanse them and purify them and prepare them for salvation...

You just write it all down and trust the Lord to use your words to comfort true Israel and give them insight when they need it most...

And then we get a fascinating timeline in verses 11-12 that show us how the final days of the end time will play out...

Verse 11...

11 From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the [m]abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!

Let's establish a few facts...

The final 3 1/2 years is also called 42 months or 1260 in other parts of the Bible....

In verse 11, Daniel gives us a little more insight into the timeline of the end...

Ok, let's start with what we know...

Israel will be hid in the wilderness for 1260 days...

What will cause her to flee to the wilderness?

The Antichrist will turn against Israel, stop the nation from offering sacrifices to the Lord, and set up the image of himself in the temple, which is called the abomination of desolation...

At that moment which is the midpoint of tribulation, Israel will be carried to the safety of the wilderness for 1260 days...

Now what will bring them out of the wilderness?

The return of their Messiah, Jesus Christ on day 1260 from the midpoint of the tribulation....

On that day, the Lord will return and destroy the Antichrist and the false prophet and the armies of the world....

And Israel will be delivered once for all...

So, if that is day 1260, why does Daniel give us 1290 days?

It seems best to see that it will take another 30 days to clean up the carnage in Israel...

To remove the dead bodies...

To get into the temple and remove the abomination of desolation ...

To begin to prepare Jerusalem for the arrival of the true King of the world....

And then there will be 45 more days to set up the kingdom on earth...

So, it takes 75 days from the return of Christ to the rule of Christ upon the earth....

Strangely enough, we as Americans can relate...

We elect a president in November, but he isn't inaugurated until January...

In fact, with the past presidential election, it took 73 days for Obama to leave the White House and for Trump to move into it and be sworn in..

I think Daniel is simply giving us the exact day when the kingdom will come...

Now look, that will be helpful for those who survive the tribulation

Jews are notoriously impatient people...

They will expect a return of Christ on Tuesday and a new government in place on Wednesday...

And I guess Christ could do that if he pleased...

Yet, His return and rule will be separated by 75 days and the book of Daniel will ease the impatient hearts alive at the time of the end....

Jesus has come and in 75 days, the kingdom will come with Him...

Then we get this final word to Daniel in verse 13...

13 But as for you, go your way to the [n]end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the [o]age."

In other words Daniel, finish the race well..

Don't let your curiosity of these things get the best of you...

You are going to die before this all comes to pass...

You are going to be with the Lord and rest after death but you will rise again at the end of the tribulation period and get all that I promised to you and Israel since I came to Abram centuries ago...

And that is really a great word to all of us as we finish up the book of Daniel....

Conclusion

Don't let worry and anxiety about the events of the end get the best of you...

Go out and run your race...

If God determines to set the events of the end in motion during our lifetimes, what's the worry?

The rapture will snatch us out of the way so that God can simply deal with Israel for those final 7 years...

We will get our resurrection bodies first, head to heaven, enjoy the marriage Supper of the Lamb for at least 7 years..

And then prepare our hearts to accompany our King on his Second Coming as he heads to earth to rescue Israel and bring in His kingdom...

If the book of Daniel has taught us anything, it is this...

God will keep His people despite their attempts to separate themselves from him...

God will establish his rule despite the devil's attempts to stop him...

God will will keep His Word though the world will refuse to believe it or obey it..

I would say to you church...

We are a most blessed people...

WE have a taste of the kingdom that God is bringing...

We taste the fellowship of the saints...

We see the joy of God's Word coming to pass..

We love the King who is coming to reign...

Let us pray for the day when the Kingdom comes..

Amen.