

DANIEL: Things to Look Forward To Daniel 12ⁱ

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! For those of you that are guests, we want to say a special welcome to you. My name is Chris Wigley, and I serve as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. Whether you are in the room or you are joining us online, we are excited to have you with us today. And on behalf of our church family, and our staff team, we welcome you here today.

We would love the opportunity to connect with you and you can do that in a couple ways. You can text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you do that, a reply text will be sent with a link you can click on. That will direct you to a form that will then provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you.

Or you can stop by the information center in the lobby area as we have a gift there for you. Again, we would love the opportunity to connect with you.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Today we wrap up our study through the Old Testament book of Daniel. I hope that you have enjoyed our study over the past 14 weeks. It's been a ton of fun and I have learned a lot!

With that said, I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me to Daniel chapter 12. I have entitled the message this morning, "Things to Look Forward To."

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Eden and Birthdays

My youngest daughter, Eden is a person that loves to look forward to things. She looks forward to Christmas, forward to date nights, and she really looks forward to her birthday. In fact, it's not a birth-day for Eden, it's a birth month! Any others out there that love to celebrate the whole month of your birthday?! After new year celebrations, Eden starts talking about her birthday. Dad, I'm going to be 13 this year. I'm like, "Your birthday isn't until July! Let's not talk about how old you're getting right now. I can't handle it!" Eden is a ton of fun to be around because she makes everything exciting. She is always looking forward to something.

When it comes to our Christian lives, we have much to look forward to. And in the last chapter of Daniel, there is an encouraging word regarding things we can look forward to.

Over the last few weeks, we have been working our way through Daniel's fourth and final vision. We learned that most of that vision has already occurred while a portion of that vision is still unfulfilled, that we find ourselves in a pause, a prophetic foreshortening. The vision that Daniel receives, and records, is not the message he was hoping for. For the most part, it is a message of coming pain, suffering, and devastation especially for the Jews. The unfulfilled portion of the vision talks of the coming Antichrist that will wreak havoc in the last days.

But in the last verse of Daniel 11, we see a ray of hope. We read about how the Antichrist will come to his end at the hands of King Jesus and the holy army of God. And the verses that follow in Chapter 12 continues the message of hope.

You know, hope is vitally important. Hopelessness is a slippery slope that quickly leads to despair and loss of drive and purpose. But hope is a major component of the Christian faith. Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 13, *"¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three..."* In other words, hope is in the top three components of the Christian life.

You need to have hope. I need to have hope. And the message of God's Word is ultimately a message of hope. And as we like to say around here, "Hope is here," in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Not that it is only here at Trinity, but in the presence of The Lord, who is here with us today.

MESSAGE:

So, let's turn to Daniel 12 as we look at 5 things to look forward to.ⁱⁱ 5 things I pray will give you hope today. First, ...

1) **Rescue.**

As Daniel continues the message of hope in Chapter 12, the first thing he is going to record is the fact that rescue is coming. Even though things will get bad, there is cause for hope. Look at verse 1 with me of Daniel 12.

*"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. **But at that time your people shall be delivered** [rescued], **everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.***

A few things noteworthy here. First, the phrase, “At that time,” refers to what the angel told Daniel was the time of the end. Meaning the end of time, when the Antichrist has ruled the world, has persecuted believers, and has brought defilement to the temple. At that time, Michael will arise.

Who is Michael? He is described as the great prince. In Jude, verse 9, Michael is named as an Archangel that contends with the devil. So, Daniel’s vision reveals that in the last days, the Archangel, Michael, will arise.

Why? Two reasons. First, his job is the defender of Israel. Daniel is told Michael has, “charge of your people.” Jews. The second reason he will arise is because there will be a great time of trouble, *“as never has been since there was a nation [referring to the establishment of Israel].”*

Now, that’s significant. The Jews have suffered much in their history. Taken captive by many nations, Hitler and the Holocaust, Islamic jihadists trying to wipe them off the face of the planet. Yet Daniel says there is a coming time of suffering that will be far worse than anything they have experienced.

Again, this is referencing the Great 7-year Tribulation. The Antichrist will arise and form a treaty with Israel. The temple will be rebuilt. At the mid-way point, Antichrist will turn his back on the treaty and desecrate the temple. That will mark the beginning of the time of trouble.

Jesus, in Matthew 24, said of this time, beginning in verse 15, *15 “So **when you see the abomination of desolation** spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), **16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. [Why?] 21 For **then** [Then meaning the time of the abomination] **there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.***** Wow, Pastor Chris, you started this sermon, and I was tracking with you. Hope is great. Hope is good. This does not sound hopeful!

Well, it is in the darkest night that light shines the brightest. And in Daniel’s vision, the light breaks through in the tiny three letter word, but. Verse 1 of Daniel 12, ***But at that time your people shall be delivered.*** In other words, suffering is limited. Rescue is coming. And while it appears that all of hell will be unleashed on the earth, deliverance is coming, it’s certain.

Now, there are two rescues that the Bible teaches, and each rescue is good news. The first rescue is that of salvation. Daniel says that the deliverance is for those, *“whose name shall be found written in the book.”* That’s the book of Life, Revelation 20:15. How do you get your name in that book? By God’s grace, through faith in the finished work of the cross, we are delivered, rescued, from the wrath of God and the bondage of sin, and our name is forever recorded in the Book of Life. That is the gospel, which is good news.

The second rescue that the Bible teaches is the second coming of Jesus. And when He comes, hell won’t be able to handle Him. Jesus continues in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24. Look at verses 29 through 31. *29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see **the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.** 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Things may get challenging, but we look forward to rescue. No matter what we face, no matter how bad things get, rescue is coming. Praise Jesus! The second thing we can look forward to is...

2) Resurrection.

Look at verse 2 of Daniel 12. *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.*

A couple of things here. The term, “sleep,” is a figure of speech the Bible uses often to refer to death.ⁱⁱⁱ Sleep followed by, “shall awake,” is referring to death and then resurrection.^{iv} And what is important to note is that when the Bible speaks of resurrection, it’s always speaking of the physical body.^v

Now, there are many different beliefs surrounding what happens in the time between someone's death, and their physical, bodily resurrection. One popular belief is that upon death one goes to an intermediate holding place called purgatory. **This is not a biblical view.** Scripture teaches that it is appointed once to die and then judgment. There is no intermediate state.

So, what happens, then, when someone dies? Well, the Apostle Paul said to be absent from the body is to be present with The Lord. So, what Daniel is teaching, and what the New Testament confirms, is when someone passes away, their body is laid in the ground and their soul continues in existence. For the believer, that is in the presence of The Lord in the current Heaven. Then, at some point, in the Rapture, there will be a resurrection where body and soul are rejoined in a perfected body, and they will live eternally in the New Heaven and the New Earth.^{vi}

Some may say, "Well, what about cremation"? If there is a rejoining of body and soul, is cremation against God's wishes? The answer is no, cremation is not wrong. God formed man from dust and to dust we shall return. The same God that formed from dust can do that again at the resurrection in the last days. How all that happens, I do not know. But creator God is also recreator God.

The point is that Daniel teaches, that Jesus confirms, and the New Testament promotes a resurrection of all people. Now, in verse 2 of Daniel 12, we are told that when this resurrection occurs, everyone will end up in one of two places. He says quote, "*some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*" Some to Heaven and some to Hell. Those who have trusted Jesus are resurrected to eternal life with Him in Glory. Those who have not are resurrected to eternal death. Only two destinations, and which destination you go depends on what you have done with the person and work of Jesus Christ.

I tell you this, not because I am narrow minded, or insensitive, or intolerant, but because I love you way too much for you to not know the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by me." So, as we talk about looking forward to resurrection, I guess only those that are in Christ look forward to that.

We look forward to rescue and resurrection. Thirdly, to...

3) Reward.

As believers in Jesus Christ, look forward to a great reward. Verse 3 Daniel 12. ***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.*

The term, "wise," is a reference to those that are saved. The Bible refers to unbelievers as foolish. So, to be wise is to be saved. And the saved will shine like the brightness of the sky above. That is the reward. We get to share in the glory of God as the children of God.

Now, notice the extra reward here. *"...those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."* All who are in Christ shine, but those that lead others to a saving faith shine a little bit brighter. You gain access to the Kingdom of God by faith, but your reward in eternity is determined by your faithfulness here and now.^{vii}

So, we look forward to rescue, resurrection and reward. Fourthly, to...

4) Recognition.

When I say, "recognition," I am not referring to the recognition that comes from receiving a prize. I'm talking about the knowledge to recognize something. Verse 4 of Daniel 12. ***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.*"

Daniel is told to close and seal the book. That is to preserve the book for the future. And Daniel is given the reason why. God was making provision for those who will live at the time of the end.^{viii} Lord knows that's when this book, His wisdom, will be needed the most. In other words, we will be able to recognize what is going on by looking to God's Word. It's why we need to study prophecy and search the Scriptures.

The angel tells Daniel that *many will run to and fro and knowledge will increase.* This is referring to the fact that when the tribulation hits, people will be searching for answers. They will undoubtedly do what many have done in previous times of crises; turn to God's Word for answers. And here in His Word, they will find a play-by-play account of all that is happening. God's Word is truly a gift to us. It's a blessing by which we can interpret the times.

So, we look forward to rescue, resurrection, reward and recognition. Finally, ...

5) Restoration.

Skip down to verse 11. There is a ton in the verses we skipped, but for the sake of time, I want to get to the heart of the restoration we look forward to. Verses 11-13. *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. 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.* Anyone else lost here?! Let me do my best to explain this to you.

The Antichrist will, at the mid-point of the Great Tribulation, persecute the Jews and take from them the regular burnt offering. He will also desecrate the Temple, which we've talked about. So, the Tribulation period we know to be 7 years. The first three and a half will be great. The remaining three and a half, what Daniel records as time, times, and half time, will be terrible.

Now, three and a half years in the Jewish calendar equates to 1,260 days. But here we are told 1,290 days. And then we are told blessings come to those that endure the 1,335 days. Why the discrepancy? We essentially have a 30 day initial difference and then an extra 45 day difference totally 75 days.

Let me preface what I am about to say with the truth that I can't be totally sure. I don't think there is anyone out there that can be completely sure they have the correct understanding here. My childhood Pastor, Bro. Lou Brown, used to say that our eschatology (doctrine of the end times) is probably going to get rearranged when it all come to pass. So, with that said, let me share with you what I believe. Take it for what you will. Okay?

What makes sense to me is that there will be 1,260 days (three and a half years) from the abomination of desolation to the return of Christ. In the additional 30 days, totaling 1,290 days, I believe those 30 extra days will be the Final judgment that Jesus laid out for us in Matthew 25.^{ix} Then the additional 45 extra days then to establish the millennial earthly Kingdom.^x That's restoration.

Now, we know from Revelation 21 that ultimately God will fully restore His creation in what will be the New Heaven and the New Earth. Verses 1 through 7 describe the perfection of this place. *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud*

voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." 5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. What sin broke in the Garden of Eden, God will restore in the New Heaven and New Earth.

And in the final verse of Daniel, God assures him of this restoration. *13 But go your way till the end.* [Most likely this is referring to Daniel's death on earth. But look what God promises.] *And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.* This promise meant the world to a man that had been taken into exile, from the promised land, as a teenager never to return to life as he knew it. Now, God was faithful to Daniel during that time, but ultimately God's faithfulness to Daniel is the restoration to his rightful place, his allotted place in Glory. The same promise is given to us believers today.

As believers in Jesus, we have much to look forward to. Rescue, resurrection, reward, recognition and restoration.

CONCLUSION: Invite the Band to come back up.

I can think of no more appropriate message than this one to end with the Lord's Supper. Today is Palm Sunday. We reflect on Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and also anticipate His triumphant return soon.

As we come to a time of response, I want to ask you to examine your heart. If you need to trust Jesus as your Lord, our elders will be here at the front and would love to visit with you about what it means to trust Jesus as Lord. Or perhaps you need the encouragement of prayer. Whatever it is, you come.

But I also want to call us to a time of examination in preparation of partaking in the Lord's Supper, Communion. We hold to an open-closed view of communion. That is all believer are welcome to participate but only believers. Gospel – pray – respond

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: Travis Agnew, “*Daniel [Series Overview]*”, article published on travisagnew.org on August 13, 2020; Stephen R. Miller, *The New American Commentary: Daniel*, B&H Publishing, Nashville, 1994; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: OT Commentary on Daniel*, David C Cook Publishing, 2000; Gene Whithurst, “*The Book of Daniel Commentary*,” document sent to me via Gene; Troy Rackliffe, “*Daniel part 14*,” preached at Glade Community Church in Daniels, WV, November 2020; Mark Driscoll, “*Kingdom Down #12: 5 Things to Look Forward To*,” preached at Trinity Church in Arizona on April 5, 2020; Skip Heitzig, “*I Dare You: Hope!*,” taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque on Sunday, August 4, 2013; Skip Heitzig, “*I Dare You: Respond!*,” taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque on Sunday, August 11, 2013; J.D. Greear, “*Shining in Babylon: It’s All Part of the Plan*,” taught at The Summit Church on Sunday, August 1, 2021; Dr. Robert Jeffress, Pathway to Victory Podcast, episodes: *The Final Chapter parts 1 and 2*, accessed online at <https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/pathway-to-victory/series/daniel-courageous-living-in-a-pagan-world>; John MacArthur, “*The Great Tribulation parts 1 and 2*,” accessed online at <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/27-30/the-great-tribulation-part-1>

ⁱⁱ Idea for the outline was inspired by the title of Mark Driscoll’s sermon, “*Kingdom Down #12: 5 Things to Look Forward To*,” preached at Trinity Church in Arizona on April 5, 2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ Discussion on these terms can be found here: Stephen R. Miller, *The New American Commentary: Daniel*, B&H Publishing, Nashville, 1994, page 316.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Pointed out by Skip Heitzig, “*I Dare You: Hope!*,” taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque on Sunday, August 4, 2013.

^{vi} Mark Driscoll explores all theories in his sermon.

^{vii} My wording here is inspired by Pastor Skip Heitzig’s wording in his sermon mentioned above.

^{viii} Miller, 321.

^{ix} John MacArthur, “*The Great Tribulation part 2*,” sermon preached at Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, Los Angeles, CA on December 7, 1980.

^x Miller, 326.