

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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The Grand Finale

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:1-2)

In our last study we examined the time sequence from the end of Daniel eleven to the beginning of Daniel twelve. Why do we hold to a time gap here after being so firm that no time gap existed between Daniel's sixty-ninth and seventieth week in the ninth chapter? In that chapter Daniel receives one of the most unique prophecies in the whole Bible. It projected almost five hundred years and promised that the Messiah would come at the end of that time. To break sequential time in such a prophecy destroys its integrity, its true measure of accuracy. In many prophecies Scripture leaps from one significant event to the next significant event, as if the two were sequential when, in fact, they are separated by large periods of time. In that study I cited at length from Barnes' commentary. Here I cite Matthew Poole's commentary on Matthew 24:29.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.... (Matthew 24:29)

Notice that Jesus uses the term "Immediately" when transitioning from the prior verses to His description of major cataclysmic events that he begins to describe in this verse. Here is Poole.

Interpreters are much divided in the sense of these words, whether they should be interpreted,

1. Of Christ's coming to the last judgment, and the signs of that; or,
2. Concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.

Those who interpret it of the destruction of Jerusalem have the context to guide them, as also the reports of historians, of strange prodigies seen in the air and earth, before the taking of it; likewise the word *immediately after*, &c. But I am more inclinable to interpret them of the last judgment, and to think that our Saviour is now passed to satisfy the

disciples about their other question, concerning the end of the world; for although Christ's coming may sometimes signify that remarkable act of his providence in the destruction of his enemies, yet the next verses speaking of his coming with great power and glory, and of his coming with his angels, and with the sound of a trumpet, and gathering his elect from the four winds, the phrases are so like the phrases by which the Scripture expresses Christ's coming to the last judgment, [1Co 15:52](#); [1Th 4:16](#), and Christ speaking to his disciples asking of him as well about that as the destruction of Jerusalem, I should rather interpret this verse with reference to the last judgment, than the destruction of Jerusalem before spoken of, or at least that these signs should be understood common both to the one and the other, as divers of the other signs mentioned in this chapter are. Some think that the darkening of the sun and the moon here, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of heaven, are to be taken metaphorically, as signifying the great change there should be in the ecclesiastical and civil state of the Jews; and it is true that such kind of expressions do often in Scripture so signify, [Isa 13:10](#); [24:23](#); [Eze 32:7](#); [Joe 2:31](#). But without doubt the literal sense is not to be excluded, whether we understand the text of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of his coming to his last judgment; for as historians tell of great prodigies seen before the former, so the apostle confirms us that there will be such things seen before the day of judgment, [2Pe 3:10,12](#).¹

Poole makes a convincing and I believe correct case that the language of Verse twenty nine is similar to other passages where the Second

¹ Poole, Matthew, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, cited from SwordSearcher Bible software, Matthew 24:29.

Coming, literal, bodily resurrection, and final Judgment of all humanity are the intent of the passage, too similar not to be viewed as referring to that Day.

We often tend to think of God's ultimate purpose and work in very personal terms. In my ministerial youth a man told me that, if he thought he'd get to heaven and not specifically recognize his favorite aunt who raised him, he'd just as soon not go there. Given the options available, I suspect he didn't fully believe what he said or at least wasn't thinking of it when he made this statement. Sometimes a married couple who were especially close in this life will voice similar thoughts, but then another married couple who lived together through one emotional storm after the other will likely voice the mirror opposite sentiment, "If I have to live with him/her through eternity, it won't be heaven; it will be more like hell."

A highly relevant and I believe Biblical counter to all of these human-centric emotional attitudes toward heaven is, simply stated, "Who will really care when we actually arrive in heaven?" David's "...I shall be satisfied..." (Psalm 17:15) inspired reaction to the thought far more properly captures the point than the emotional attitudes expressed above. If you are there in God's glorious presence, sin stripped from your person, He and His glory, not earthly relationships, good or bad, will be your exclusive focus.

Although not overtly stated, on several occasions throughout Daniel's various revelations from God we seem to sense an underlying question that haunts Daniel, one that he longs to know. What shall be the end of his beloved people, the Jews, after the conclusion of the four kingdoms that framed each of his major prophecies? And it seems that he never hears the answer to that question, likely because God didn't include it in His revelations to Daniel.

When the disciples asked Jesus three questions at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse, it seems reasonable to conclude that Jesus answered three questions in the body of that discourse. At least one of the questions had to do specifically with the fall of the magnificent temple that overshadowed them and the city of Jerusalem at that time. And at least one of the questions had to do with a far distant event that the disciples, apparently like many first century Jews, believed would occur immediately following the fall of the temple, the Second Coming. While no major prophetic event remained between the fall of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A. D. and the Second Coming, the fact is obvious to us that God did not intend the Second Coming to occur simultaneously with that event. False predictions of future events are so very easy to refute. Just

wait and watch. The calendar will either confirm the prediction or refute it. In the minds of the disciples the thought that their beautiful temple would fall prompted them to believe that the end of time, our term the Second Coming, would follow immediately thereafter.

The disciples also struggled with other first century errant ideas regarding Messiah's coming. Many Jews in that era believed that Messiah would come in the form of a charismatic military leader who would gather the nation into a powerful army, drive out their enemies, and create an invincible super power in righteousness. Notice the disciples' question to Jesus just prior to His ascension, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) Even after three years with Jesus, they were still confused, expecting the military Messiah to show up after Jesus, the suffering Messiah, had ascended. Do we not likewise often embrace cultural and traditional ideas that have little or no basis in Biblical fact?

A second question that occasionally surfaces regarding this passage has to do with the term "many" instead of "all." Why did Daniel record the word "many" when referring to the resurrection since all humans who ever lived shall arise and, just as Daniel described, face either eternal blessings or eternal punishment? We tend to think of the word "many" as specifically less than the whole. However Scripture does not always draw such a distinction. Many passages could be cited, but one will suffice.

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. (Psalm 29:3)

Tell me; can you name any waters where we cannot say, '...the Lord is upon...' these waters?" Without question, in this passage "many" is equivalent to "all." I suggest that the same can just as logically and easily apply in Daniel 12:2.

The essential doctrine of God's final coming and of His righteous judgment of all humanity has historically formed the foundation for all other essential doctrines and for the hope of countless Christians in the midst of their trials. This final judgment of all humanity, according to Scripture, shall be based either on their own sins, resulting in shame and everlasting contempt, or resulting in their entering eternity bliss based on Jesus' imputed righteousness, the grand Bible doctrine of our eternal justification based on Jesus' work on our behalf.

While Daniel does not go into the details we see in various New Testament passages

regarding the Second Coming and that final Judgment, he clearly states truth compatible with those more detailed passages, good reason that this passage appears in many historical Baptist confessions of faith regarding the Biblical basis for the Biblical doctrine of end times.

No intervening prophecy stands between the time from the ravages the Jews would suffer from Antiochus and the first coming of Jesus till the final trumpet blows and God's eternal judgment immediately and universally appears, introducing us to eternity in a split second, not in seven years, three and a half years, or a thousand years.² Hebrews 12:26-29 suggests to us that God's prophetic voice would go silent from the first advent till the Second Coming, just as it did for over four hundred years between the last Old Testament prophet and John the baptist, the first New Testament prophet.

Daniel finds comfort in the assurance that Michael shall stand on behalf of God's suffering saints throughout the intervening time, and that God's suffering saints shall be delivered, despite their sufferings. I believe this point comes closer to answering Daniel's lingering question than anything we find in God's revelations to the prophet in this writing.

What about the Jews after Messiah comes, and they suffer the judgment that we see unfolding in 70 A. D.? What about them? Beginning with the coming of Jesus and the full expression of the New Testament covenant of worship, the content of your family tree or your DNA is irrelevant. Paul redefines what it means under the New Covenant to be a Jew in terms of spiritual, not ancestral terms.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Romans 2:28-29)

In Ephesians 2:11-22 Paul simply and clearly tells us that the literal wall that separated Jewish worshippers in the first century temple in Jerusalem from Gentile proselytes to Judaism

² There is no secret coming or secret rapture anywhere in Scripture—never. Also Scripture does not describe the Second Coming with such complexity that a rocket scientist would stretch his/her intelligence to make sense of it. The Bible doctrine of the Second Coming is so clear and straightforward that a little child looking across the gap from time to eternity can rejoice and find comfort in it.

has been broken down, thereby eliminating any racial or cultural distinctions within the New Testament worshipping community of the church. Unless advocates of Jewish restoration can provide equally clear and specific Biblical passages that tell us that God reconsidered and decided to rebuild that wall, the idea of Jewish restoration just prior to the Second Coming fails for lack of Biblical support.

The church I serve is blessed with two men whose family tree includes Jewish ancestors. They bless our gatherings by their spiritual warmth and faith, but neither we nor they consider their bloodline as in any way relevant to their spiritual standing in our church. God has redefined what it means to be a Jew in terms of what God does in a person's heart, not what a person's family tree contains. We together, regardless of our ancestors, anticipate the Day of God with joy and encouragement. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20)

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Worship service each Sunday 10:30 A. M.
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