

Godly Living in A Godless World

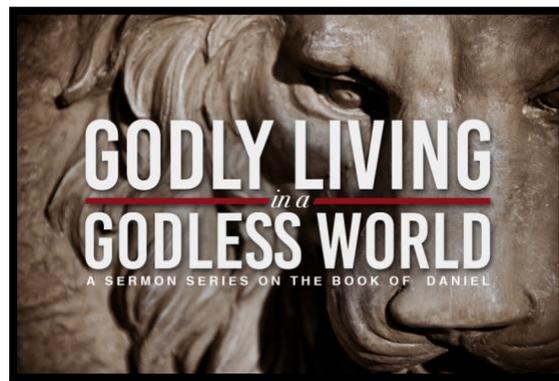
Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 12:2

Written By

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March 12, 2017



Who hasn't looked at the events of your life and turned to God for answers? With as much as my father loved the military, law enforcement, and politics, I've often wondered, "Lord, why didn't you allow him to live a little longer so he could see how you would work in a place like this?" I probably wouldn't have been able to work with him here, and he would have been here . . . full-time, I'm sure. I've thought on more than one occasion, "Lord, why didn't you let Liz's twin sister, Maribeth, live beyond the age of 33 so she should have seen and known her two little girls?" I've also asked, "Lord, why do you, at times, permit difficult things to occur in the lives of really godly people, while providentially permitting very godless people to live large?" I'm sure God's intention has something to do with shaping and honing the soul of the former, but still my logical, thinking mind ponders . . . doesn't yours?

Daniel was a saint with questions, just like you and me, and he wasn't afraid to take his questions to God either, for he knew that God loved him and would, in some instances, give him much needed wisdom and insight. At other times, God would be silent, forcing his saint to lean that much harder on him in faith. Perhaps you can identify. What counts in the long-run? That a servant would be found faithful, no matter what (1 Corinthians 4:2). Are you? Will you be? Go ahead, ask your deepest, complex, most emotional questions of God, knowing that

sometimes He answers and sometimes He doesn't, but at the end of the day He wants you to press on in the faith.

Of all the burning questions Daniel had on the front burner of his spiritual mind throughout his exemplary life of faith, one toward the end of his life really grabbed his attention: "Lord, I know that the **Messianic Express** is coming, and that you will, as promised to the prophets, rule and reign over this old earth (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2, 89; Isaiah 2; 9; Zechariah 12-14), but what will happen to all my people (the Jews) who have died prior to the arrival of your glorious kingdom? You've prophesied they will experience great persecution until your arrival, and many of them have already perished from past persecutions, so what about it? Will they have a place in your kingdom? Will I? And, while I'm asking questions, I must pose one more, Will there actually be justice and judgment for all those who have acted wickedly throughout human history, especially those who have persecuted your chosen people, Israel? Or do they just get a pass at death?"

With verse 2, God will answer this implied question in the most definitive fashion. And, of course, God's answer is all wrapped up in the main motif of the closing of this amazing prophecy.

God's Messianic Kingdom Program Can't Be Derailed, But It Will Be Hailed (Daniel 12:1-13)

By way of review, God told Daniel two things will happen in the middle of the 70th prophetic week (Daniel 9:24-27), or what will occur smack dab in the middle of the seven year tribulation. One, the Anti-christ will be focused on what we've called **The Desolation Of The Passengers**, the Jews (Daniel 12:1a); however, two, their protective angel, Michael, would rise to the occasion to eventually, based on the Messiah's omnipotent assistance (Revelation 19), bring **The Deliverance Of The Passengers**, the redeemed Jews (Daniel 12:1b) at the close of the Great Tribulation. Take note, there is a limit to the wickedness God will put up with. There comes a time when God says, enough! That's when He, in the imagery of the prophet Amos, roars like a mighty lion from Zion (Jerusalem, Zechariah 12-14) to deal definitively with Satan, sin, and sinners (Amos 1:2. Cf. also Isaiah 13:6-9; Ezekiel 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 22, 31; 3:14; Zephaniah 1:14).

With verse 2, God lovingly answers the question which had to be burning on Daniel's mind concerning deceased godly Jews. He also gives him, who had seen so much injustice and cruelty in his day, a peek forward at what will happen to those who lived (and will live) morally and spiritually unhinged, and unchecked lives. When the **Messianic Express** pulls in to the station at the end of the Tribulation, God says glory and judgment will have arrived, finally. I call this profound prophetic verse . . .

The Destination of Souls (Daniel 12:2)

Watch how this jaw-dropping scene at the train station develops:

²Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12).

As you might expect, there is so much rich theology in this short verse there is just no way to cover it effectively in one study. So, for our purposes, we will take two studies to open on the depths of this profound, highly pragmatic verse. To begin, I invite you to consider first what I call . . .

The Reality of the Event (Daniel 12:2a). Behind the angel's prophetic words here is the emphasis that God will, in fact, bring judgment one day. This concept is carefully woven throughout both Testaments.

- ³³ Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD; For He is coming to judge the earth (1 Chronicles 16).
- ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12).
- ³⁶ But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment (Matthew 12).
- ¹ I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: (2 Timothy 4).
- ²² For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light (Mark 4:22).
- ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25).

In a day when devious people are focused on collecting all kinds of dirt on their political enemies by nefarious and high tech means, I think they collectively fail to realize that God has the ultimate intelligence on *all of us*. Because He is omniscient, He not only knows what you said and when you said it, He knows why you said it. He knows what you say in private that you would never say in public. He knows what's playing on the theater of your mind. He knows the motivations behind all of your actions. He knows when your words are true or deceptive. He knows if your faith is real or fake. He sees through all your smoke screens to keep people from seeing the real you. He knows the rationalizations you employ to justify your sinful activity. He also knows your good works done in His name, the quality of your worship, the time you've spent in Bible study, the quality time you've spent in praying for people in your life and what those prayers have accomplished, and so on and so forth. Yes, when it comes to data mining, God's got the corner on it, and on judgment day He will judge all the *facts* most justly (Genesis

18:25). This is what God is telling Daniel in verse 2. Judgment is coming for the righteous and the unrighteous, so hold on.

Before we press on, I must ask a pastoral question: Are you prepared for your day before the judgment bar of God Almighty? You can either stand there condemned by your sinful status (Romans 3:23; 6:23), or you can stand there as a person who is forgiven and wears robes of righteousness God gave you at the moment of your conversion (Romans 8:1; Revelation 7:13; 22:14).

In addition to the reality of this day of divine judgment, we next must give adequate time and attention to . . .

The Timing of the Event (Daniel 12:2a). It's helpful to read the inspired text again:

²Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12).

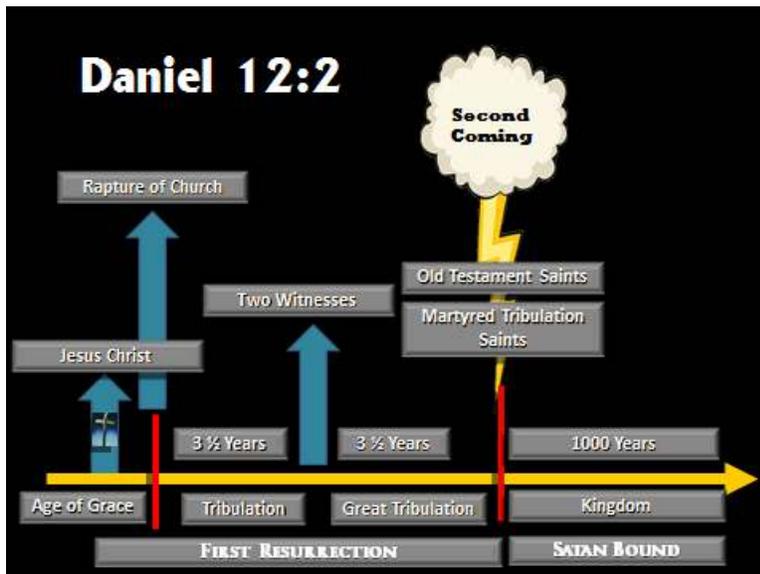
Some saints conclude this denotes a general resurrection of believers and unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation, but I think other biblical texts which came many years after this initial verse teach otherwise. More precisely, I believe there will be a resurrection for believers and one for unbelievers at two separate times. Why do I say this? Because of what we read in Revelation chapter 20:

⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

Revelation 19 through 20 follows the same chronological movement of Daniel 11:40-12:2. Immediately after the judgment of the Anti-christ by the appearance of Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord will resurrect saints from the Tribulation and Old Testament periods so they can enjoy the long-awaited messianic kingdom. They will, then, rule and reign with Jesus over the Davidic Empire for 1,000 years. Note carefully that John says this is the first resurrection, plus he says that the rest of the dead will not be resurrected until the completion of the 1,000 years. With this statement he demonstrates there is a time division in the resurrection Daniel wrote about in chapter 12, verse 2. Those who participate in this first resurrection are, in John's words, blessed. As he states in Revelation 20:6,

⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

I think a chart can assist you in processing this magnificent, marvelous biblical information:



From what we know from Scripture, Jesus is, of course, the First fruits of the resurrection (“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep,” 1 Corinthians 15:20). 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells us there will be a resurrection of the saints saved during the period of Grace, or the Age of the Church. After this, we know from Revelation 11:1-12 there will be a resurrection of the two Jewish witnesses during the tribulation. Then, from what John tells us, there is a final

resurrection of saints from other ages, viz., the Old Testament and the Tribulational periods. All of these saints will be raised to thoroughly enjoy and experience the wonders of the prophesied messianic age. If you lost a believing loved one and thought they might miss the kingdom of the Messiah, think again. Jesus, out of love for us and to be true to His word, will not let one saint, from any age miss out on the glory of the kingdom (peace, Isaiah 2:4; 9:4-7; 11:6-9; joy, Isaiah 9:3-4; 12:3-6; 60:15; holiness, Isaiah 1:26-27; 4:3-4; 29:18-23; 31:6-7; glory, Isaiah 24:23; 60:1-9; justice, Isaiah 65:21-23; Jeremiah 31:29-30; removal of the curse, Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25; sickness removed, Isaiah 33:24; Jeremiah 30:17; Ezekiel 34:160, increase in light, Isaiah 60:19-20; Zechariah 2:5; unified language, Zephaniah 3:9, etc.).

At the conclusion of the messianic kingdom, Satan will motivate the nations one more time to rebel against God, God will definitively judge him by casting him into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10), and, then, all the lost of all time will be resurrected to stand before Him to receive their sentence. As John remarks:

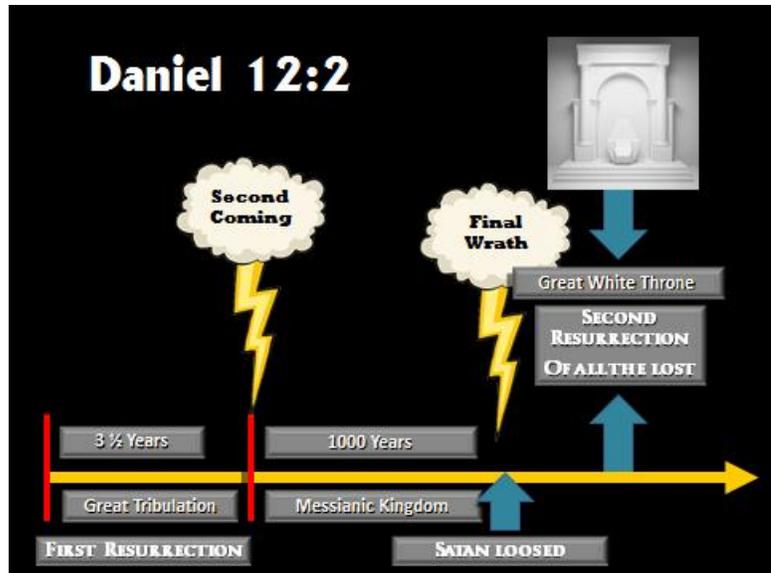
¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not

found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20).

Perhaps another chart will help you process what the Scripture seems to be indicating regarding the concept of resurrection. We will delve into this second resurrection in our next study. For our purposes in this study, let it be enough to simply recognize there will be two resurrections, not one general resurrection. The first resurrection will be for the saved, while the second resurrection will be specifically for the lost, or for non-believers. The question is, Which resurrection will you be part of?

For those who might still have questions about two

resurrections separated by 1,000 years, I think it is important to denote that we already have 2,000 years between Christ's resurrection (33 A.D.) and ours. This clearly shows a time division is, in fact, warranted. Further, prophecy typically contains time divisions which appeared as one unit. Isaiah 61:1-2, which was only partially fulfilled according to Jesus, is a major case in point (Luke 4:1-19). By setting the righteous and the unrighteous apart, as the angel does in Daniel 12, merely sets the stage for two resurrections. Quoting Daniel 12:2, Jesus also demonstrated there will be two resurrections.



²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment (John 5).

Once again, John's words in Revelation 20 clearly demonstrates the two resurrections Daniel and Jesus spoke about are divided by a span of 1,000 years. That is why Daniel says "many" will be resurrected. Christ's emphasis on "all" denotes all from the First Resurrection and, then, "all" from the Second Resurrection. Once more, I'd be remiss in my role as a shepherd if I did not ask

you, Which resurrection will you be in? Those who have come to Christ in faith will part of the First Resurrection (John 3:16-18; 5:24-25). Will that be you?

In addition to the timing of the resurrection event, we need to take a look at . . .

The Description of the Event (Daniel 12:b). God informs Daniel that deceased believers will wake up (sleep is employed here as a euphemism for death) unto life eternal. Before we sink our interpretive spades into what this means, we must first consider, in light of New Testament revelation, where saints are currently prior to the resurrection. Three verses give us the much needed answer.

First, remember what Jesus told the repentant thief who was crucified next to him:

⁴³ And He said to him, Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23).

Christ's promise was clear. At the moment of death, the thief would join Christ in Paradise, or the eternal abode. There is, therefore, no room for the belief in soul sleep. The body "sleeps" as it were in death; however, the spirit goes to be with God *immediately*.

Second, Paul's words echo those of Christ:

²³ But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; ²⁴ yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake (Philippians 1).

You can see the emphasis here. To die is to depart from the body and be immediately with Jesus.

Third, Paul drives the immediacy of our presence with Christ at death home in 2 Corinthians 5:

⁶ Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight-- ⁸ we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5).

I don't think it gets any clearer than this. How comforting, especially to those who have lost a believing mother, father, relative, wife, husband, child or friend.

In addition to this truth, I would like to add a few more insights about the concept of everlasting life.

- The basis of everlasting life. This point speaks of the person of God. God, who exists outside of time and space, is the ultimate foundation for life which goes beyond time as we know it. Concerning the coming Messiah, Isaiah calls Him "the Eternal Father" in Isaiah 9:6. He is, as I have said before, the Necessary Being we are all dependent on. He is the purely actualized One

who always “is.” No wonder Jesus called Himself the “I AM” in John 8:58. The point is well-taken: Because He is eternal, He can, and will, share eternal existence with those finite beings who come to Him in faith. The basis of everlasting life is also wedded to the promise of God. As Paul teaches, ¹ *Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,* ² *in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago* (Titus 1:1-2). God, who cannot lie, has promised to give saints life beyond the grave. It will happen, therefore, based on His inexorable, faithful character to fulfill His spoken word.

- The offer of eternal life. It is, according to John, given to everyone, ¹⁷ *The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost* (Revelation 22). Are you spiritually thirsty for truth? Come to Jesus in faith, like the woman at the well, and He will satisfy your thirst, forever.
- The timing of eternal life. It has a “now” and “not yet” emphasis in Scripture. ²⁴ *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life* (John



5). Underscore that verbal concept “has eternal life.” At the moment of confessional faith in Jesus many wonderful things happen (propitiation, justification, reconciliation, redemption, etc.), however, one should never forget that life has truly replaced death. Jesus speaks about the “not yet” dimension of eternal life in

John 6: ⁴⁰ *For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.* Either way,

life belongs to the saint. It’s a present reality but it will be tangibly actualized at the moment of death. Again, what a comforting concept. Death for the saint is but a passage into God’s eternal presence.



- The object of eternal life. The theological import



here is the difference between belief “that” and belief “in.” James 2:19 instructs us that demons believe that God is one; however, their belief, by now means, saves them. What counts, on the contrary, is belief “in” the facts of the person and work of Jesus. Jesus taught about this repeatedly. His famous words in John 3:16 underscore this truth: *“¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”* What does belief mean? It means I test the facts to verify their truthfulness, and then I trust them to be true for me. Perhaps an illustration will suffice to demonstrate what belief in Jesus is all about. While in Orlando a couple of weeks ago with the staff, we had a night of team building at a place called Fun Spot America. At one point we all took a radical ride on the wooden roller coaster. You can see from the picture why I say “radical.” When I got off this ride I felt like my brain had been re-arranged. Riding this ride was all about faith. Faith that the engineers were good at math. Faith that the construction workers knew how to weld properly. Faith that the wood wasn’t cheap, brittle wood. Faith that the cars would, in fact, stay on the track when we went into our first tight turn. Faith that the brakes would work as we pulled into the station. This ride, my friend, was all about calculated faith in the evidence at hand. Such is the nature of saving, redemptive faith in Jesus. Once you move from belief “that” He was the God-man, to belief “in” him being the God-man for you and your sin you are forgiven and given life eternal. What is keeping you from believing in Him right now? Is this not THE question. And for those of you who already know Him, thank Him for giving you LIFE that will stretch into eternity.

And just how long is eternity? Mount Everest is the tallest mountain of the world, coming in at 29,029 feet. K2 is right behind it at 28,251 feet. If you trained a bird to remove one pebble from Everest every year until the mountain was gone, that would not even be the beginning of eternity. Our life is, indeed, a vapor as James suggests (James 4:14), but for those who have a faith relationship with Jesus that temporal life is, and will be, replaced with life which will know no end in God’s glorious, eye-popping, jaw-dropping presence. Will you be there? Stand and give a testimony right now, “Yes, I’ll be there.”