

# SEALED TILL THE TIME OF THE END

Theme: This closing chapter gives us final revelation from God concerning the time of the end and the conclusion of the time of the Gentiles.

This portion of the book of Daniel offers concluding revelations regarding the time of the end. Its focus uniquely concerns Israel, because it describes the concluding events of the Great Tribulation, and the commencement of the reign of the glorious King of Israel over this earth. The first four verses give the conclusion of the last of Daniel's four great prophetic visions--having been introduced in chapter 10:1, and having begun to be described in 11:2. The remaining verses give final prophetic details.

This passage primarily concerns itself with the last three-and-one-half years of the Seventieth Week; and specifically with that time during which the Antichrist will violate his covenant with Israel in the middle of the "week", will bring an end to "sacrifice and offering", and will set up the abomination of desolation "even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate" (Daniel 9:27). It is meant to inform the people of Daniel of the events that lay in store for them in the future; but it is also clearly intended to give them assurance and confidence that the times are in God's hand, and that His purposes will prevail.

The events of this passage parallel those of Revelation 19:11-20:6.

## I. THE END IS DESCRIBED (vv. 1-4).

This section begins with the words "At that time"; which connects them to the prophecy of 11:36-45. The word "at" (the Hebrew preposition *be*) can be translated "in" or "during"--which would then indicate that the events that follow describe what is occurring while the Antichrist is still active--though very close to "his end" (11:45). It is during this time that Michael (the archangel described in 10:13 and 21 as "the prince" who ministers to the people of Israel) shall "stand up" or "shall arise" (*amad*). This may mean that he arises to come to the aid of the people of Israel in a unique way. But the same word can also be translated "to stand still" or "to cease" (as in Joshua 10:28); thus suggesting that Michael ceases his unique work of protection for a time at the command of God, and allows the events of the Great Tribulation to unfold (an event possibly being described in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).

Note that Michael's action is immediately followed by a commencement of the Great Tribulation. The description of this event matches that of our Lord's in Matthew 24:15-22--that is, of a time "such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). It will, however, result in the Jewish people being "delivered, everyone who is found written in the book" (see Psalm 56:8; 69:28; Revelation 20:12, 15).

Following the deliverance of the Jewish people, a great 'resurrection' occurs. Note that "many" (not "all") who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some will awake to "everlasting life" (Revelation 20:4, 6), and some to "shame and everlasting contempt" (probably 1,000 years later; see Revelation 20:5; 12). It is then that those who proved themselves "wise" and who "turn many to righteousness" will be rewarded at the coming of the Lord.

Daniel is exhorted to "shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end". These words in verses 1-3 provide all that God, in His wisdom, chose for His people to have at that time. Much more is revealed in the New Testament--specifically in the book of Revelation. Many will run to and fro in the centuries that would unfold, and knowledge shall increase. Some relate this to Amos 8:12, and to the effort to seek out a word from the Lord in vain; but it may refer to times such as ours in which the ability to travel around the globe quickly and to communicate information instantly has greatly increased.

## II. THE END IS LIMITED (vv. 5-7).

Daniel looked; and on either side of the Tigris River (10:4) stood two others in addition to the being

that was relating these events to him. They stood on opposite sides of the river; which some have interpreted to symbolize the divine power of God standing sovereignly above and outside of the temporal flow of time and of human history. One of these two asks the being who had been relating these events to Daniel--who is presented as being clothed in linen and above the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"--that is, the events described in verses 1-3.

The answer is given by this being who is above the river. He is described as wearing linen--a sign of holiness and purity. He raises not just one hand, as would be typical in the giving of an oath; but two, suggesting great solemnity and certainty. He swears by Him who lives forever and ever (Daniel 4:34) that "it shall be for a time, times, and a half a time" (that is, three-and-one-half years, or prophetically 1,260 days). During this time, the power of the holy people (the Jews) will have been completely shattered (Matthew 24:22), and all these things will have been finished. For the sake of the elect, these days will be shortened. Thus, these words seem to be given to assure the people of God that the time of the Great Tribulation is carefully and sovereignly limited. It is three-and-a-half years in length, and no longer. (Note that the Son of God's ministry on earth was three-and-a-half years in length. The devil's false-christ is allowed the same amount of time to trouble the people of God on earth.)

### **III. THE END IS SEALED (vv. 8-10).**

Daniel wanted to know more. "What shall be the end of these things?" he asked. But he was told to go his way; "for the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. God has revealed what He has wanted known; and reverence demanded a satisfaction with God's choice in the matter. It may be that the words of Christ regarding Daniel's prophecy "(whoever reads, let him understand)" (see Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14) indicate that some of these things that were formerly sealed were then being revealed by the Son of God in His discourse of end-times events.

But though Daniel is not told all that he wants to know about these events, he is told that they will result in the purification of His people (Malachi 3:2-3; Zechariah 13:7-9). The wicked will show themselves wicked (see Revelation 22:11); and none of them would understand what was happening (1 Corinthians 2:14; see also 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). But "the wise shall understand".

### **IV. THE END IS TIMED (vv. 11-12).**

In addition to the "time, times, and half a time" described in 12:7 (1,260 days; see also Daniel 7:25, Revelation 11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5), an additional time of 30 days is added in verse 11. And in addition to that, another 45 days is added in verse 12, with the promise of blessedness to those who wait and come to the one-thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. These days, most likely, represent the events that will occur after Jesus comes.

Though this isn't certain, these additional seventy-five days may describe the necessary time intervening between the Lord's return and the actual commencement of the kingdom reign. Some commentators suggest that it is during this time that the nations are judged (Matthew 25:31-46), and the people of Israel are gathered together by Christ in order to plead His case with them and to purge them of the rebels among them (Ezekiel 20:33-38).

### **V. THE END IS FUTURE (v. 13).**

Daniel is told to go his way "till the end". It is probable that he died not long after hearing these words. He has rested ever since; but will rise again to his inheritance at the end of the days. We who trust Christ today will surely be among those who reign with Christ then. What a remarkable prospect this book closes with! May Jesus come soon!