

The Book of Daniel, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 12: The End of the Days: Sealed Until the Time

Daniel 12:5–13

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This final lesson gathers up the great themes of the book and brings them to rest in the hope of resurrection and the call to faithful endurance. The season of trouble for God's people is fixed and limited by God ("a time, times, and half a time"), giving hope to the suffering. The words are "sealed," teaching the humble acceptance that some things belong only to God. Trials refine the faithful while the wicked grow harder, so that suffering becomes a means of purification. And the book closes not with a complete map of the future but with a tender promise of resurrection rest: "you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

A central pastoral note is the freedom of not having to understand everything. God did not explain all to Daniel; He sealed it and told him to go his way and be faithful. This is a vital corrective to the speculative spirit that has so often turned Daniel into a code to be cracked. Teach students the wisdom of Deuteronomy 29:29: the secret things belong to God, and the things revealed belong to us. Our task is faithful obedience to what God has made plain, not anxious mastery of what He has chosen to conceal. There is deep rest in accepting that some things are sealed.

The lesson is profoundly formational. It calls students to endure hard seasons in hope of a God-appointed end, to make peace with not knowing and to trust the God who does, to let their trials refine rather than embitter them, to seek the wisdom that comes from walking with God, and above all to be faithful to the end in the sure hope of resurrection rest. As the study concludes, aim to send students home resting in the God of Daniel, sovereign over history, faithful to His people, the giver of resurrection hope, and to direct their final hope to the rest secured in Christ, who is the goal of all the book has foretold.

Question 1

Student Question:

When asked how long until the end, the man clothed in linen swore by the One who lives forever that it would be "for a time, times, and half a time" (12:7). What does it mean that the season of trouble for God's people is fixed and limited by God Himself? How does the certainty of a God-appointed end give hope to those who are suffering (compare 2 Corinthians 4:17)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the question that opens this closing scene, the question of every suffering saint: "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" (12:6). The answer, given with the

solemnity of an oath sworn by the One who lives forever, is “a time, times, and half a time” (12:7), a limited, God-appointed season. The trouble has a fixed boundary set by God Himself.

Help students grasp the comfort of a God-appointed end. The faithful are not at the mercy of an open-ended, unbounded suffering. God has set the limits of the trouble, and what God has bounded will surely end. This is one of the deepest comforts Scripture offers to those in hard seasons: the suffering is real, but it is measured, and it will not last forever.

Connect this to the New Testament’s perspective on present suffering. “This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17). What feels endless is, in God’s measure, momentary, and it is not meaningless but is working toward an eternal glory. The God-appointed end is not merely a stopping point but a doorway into glory.

Apply this to endurance. Knowing that God has fixed the end transforms how the faithful suffer. They endure not in grim resignation but in hope, confident that the One who set the limit will bring them through to the other side. The oath sworn by the everliving God guarantees it: the trouble will end at the time He has appointed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The season of trouble fixed and limited by God Himself (Daniel 12:7).
- The comfort of a God-appointed end for those who suffer.
- Present affliction as momentary and working toward eternal glory (2 Corinthians 4:17).
- Endurance in hope rather than grim resignation.
- The oath of the everliving God guaranteeing the end of the trouble.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that God fixes and limits the season of trouble?
- How does a God-appointed end give hope to those who suffer?
- How does this transform the way the faithful endure hardship?

Question 2

Student Question:

When you are in a hard season, the hardest part is often not knowing when or how it will end. Where are you tempted to despair because a trial feels endless? How does trusting that God has set a limit, even one you cannot see, help you endure with hope?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question applies the God-appointed limit to the student’s own hard seasons. The hardest part of suffering is often not the pain itself but the not knowing when or how it will end. An open-ended trial breeds despair in a way that even a hard but bounded one does not.

Help students name a current trial that feels endless: a chronic condition, a prolonged hardship, a season of waiting or grief. The temptation in such seasons is to conclude that it will never end, that this is simply how life will always be. That despair is a lie the God-appointed limit answers.

Offer the hope of the unseen limit. We are rarely shown when or how our trials will end; God did not show Daniel. But we are assured that God has set the limit, even when we cannot see it. We endure not by knowing the end date but by trusting the God who has fixed it. The limit is real even when it is hidden.

Move toward hopeful endurance. Encourage students to bring a specific endless-feeling trial under the truth of God's appointed limit, choosing to endure in hope rather than collapse in despair, and leaning on prayer, Scripture, and fellow believers. The aim is the patient hope of those who trust that no trial of God's people is truly without end.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The despair bred by trials that feel open-ended.
- God's limit on our trials, real even when hidden from us.
- Enduring by trusting the God who fixes the end, not by knowing the date.
- Hopeful endurance supported by prayer, Scripture, and fellowship.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted to despair because a trial feels endless?
- How does trusting God's hidden limit help you endure with hope?
- What support could help you endure this season faithfully?

Question 3

Student Question:

Daniel was told that "the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end," and he was not given full understanding (12:8-9). What does this teach about the limits of what God has chosen to reveal, and about the difference between the secret things that belong to God and the things revealed that belong to us (Deuteronomy 29:29)? Why is humility about what we cannot know a mark of true wisdom?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Turn to the sealing of the words. When Daniel still did not understand and asked the outcome, he was told, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end" (12:9). Even Daniel, the great interpreter, was not given full understanding. Some things were sealed, not for him to know.

Help students embrace the wisdom of Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever." God

has revealed all we need for faith and obedience, but He has not revealed everything, and He has not promised to. There are secret things that belong to Him alone, and humble wisdom accepts the boundary.

Show how this is a needed corrective. Much harm has been done by those who would not accept that anything is sealed, who insisted on cracking every code and mapping every detail of the future. Daniel was told to go his way, not to keep prying. The mark of true wisdom is not to know everything but to trust the God who does, and to be faithful with what He has made plain.

Apply this as freedom. There is deep rest in accepting that some things are sealed. We are relieved of the impossible and self-appointed burden of understanding all of God's ways and the whole of the future. Our task is the manageable, God-given one of faithful obedience to what He has revealed. The sealed things we can leave with Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The limits of what God has chosen to reveal; the words sealed (Daniel 12:9).
- The secret things belonging to God, the revealed things to us (Deuteronomy 29:29).
- Humble acceptance of the boundary as the mark of true wisdom.
- The harm done by refusing to accept that anything is sealed.
- Freedom and rest in trusting God with what He has not revealed.

Discussion Prompts

- Why did God seal some things even from Daniel?
- What is the difference between the secret things and the revealed things?
- Why is humility about what we cannot know a mark of wisdom?

Question 4

Student Question:

We live in a culture that craves certainty and control, and we can become anxious or obsessed trying to figure out what God has not revealed, especially about the future. Where do you need to make peace with not knowing, and to trust the God who does know? What would change if you held the unknown with open hands?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question presses the acceptance of mystery into our anxious craving for certainty. We live in a culture that prizes information, control, and the mastery of the future, and this spirit can invade our faith, making us anxious or obsessive about what God has not revealed, especially regarding the future and the end times.

Help students recognize the unrest this craving produces. The demand to understand everything, to have every uncertainty resolved, to control the future, is a heavy and impossible

burden. It breeds anxiety, and in matters of prophecy it has bred endless speculation and division. The sealed words of Daniel rebuke this craving and offer a better way.

Offer the rest of trust. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5–6). Faith does not require that we understand all of God’s ways; it requires that we trust the One whose ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8–9). To hold the unknown with open hands is not resignation but faith in a trustworthy God.

Move toward a concrete peace. Encourage students to identify one area, perhaps the future, perhaps a circumstance they cannot understand, where they have been anxiously trying to know and control, and to surrender it to the God who knows. The aim is the peace that comes from trusting God with what He has not revealed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The cultural craving for certainty and control invading our faith.
- The heavy burden of demanding to understand everything.
- Trust rather than full understanding as the way of faith (Proverbs 3:5–6).
- God’s ways higher than ours, to be trusted not mastered (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you need to make peace with not knowing?
- What would change if you held the unknown with open hands?
- How is trusting God different from needing to understand everything?

Question 5

Student Question:

The vision says that in the coming testing “many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly” (12:10). What does this reveal about how trials sift and reveal the human heart, refining the faithful while the wicked grow harder? How can suffering become a means of purification rather than destruction (1 Peter 1:6–7)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Turn to the refining work of trials. The vision says that in the coming testing “many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly” (12:10). The same trial has opposite effects: it purifies the faithful and hardens the wicked. Suffering sifts and reveals the human heart.

Help students understand the refining metaphor. Fire purifies gold by burning away impurities; in the same way, trials can burn away what is false and impure in the faithful, deepening their faith and conforming them to God. “The tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than

gold... though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory" (1 Peter 1:6-7). Suffering, rightly received, is a refiner's fire.

Note the sobering contrast. The same fire that refines gold only hardens clay. The wicked, in their trials, do not soften toward God but "act wickedly," growing more bitter, more rebellious, more hardened. The trial does not automatically improve anyone; it reveals and intensifies what is already in the heart, drawing the faithful nearer to God and driving the wicked further away.

Apply this with hope and warning. The hope is that our trials need not destroy us; in God's hands they can purify and strengthen us. The warning is that suffering is not automatically sanctifying; it can also embitter and harden. The difference lies in how we receive it, whether we let it drive us to God or away from Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Trials sifting and revealing the human heart (Daniel 12:10).
- Suffering refining the faithful like gold tested by fire (1 Peter 1:6-7).
- The same trial hardening the wicked and purifying the faithful.
- Suffering revealing and intensifying what is already in the heart.
- The outcome of trial depending on how it is received.

Discussion Prompts

- How do trials sift and reveal the human heart?
- How can suffering become a means of purification rather than destruction?
- Why does the same hardship soften some and harden others?

Question 6

Student Question:

The same hardship can soften one person toward God and harden another. Looking honestly at your own trials, do they tend to drive you toward God or away from Him? What would it look like to let your present difficulties refine and purify you rather than embitter you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question turns the refining of trials inward. The honest question is not whether we suffer, for all do, but which direction our suffering drives us: toward God in deeper trust and purity, or away from Him in bitterness and hardness. Our trials are revealing this even now.

Help students examine their own responses honestly. When hardship comes, do they draw near to God in prayer and dependence, or pull away in anger and resentment? Do they let suffering soften and refine them, or allow it to make them cynical and hard? This is not about pretending to enjoy suffering, but about its direction in the heart.

Offer the means of being refined rather than embittered. The faithful are not refined automatically; they cooperate with God's work by bringing their pain to Him, trusting His goodness even when they cannot understand, leaning on His people, and refusing to nurse bitterness. Refinement is something we yield to, allowing God to do His purifying work.

Move toward a concrete posture. Encourage students to take a current difficulty and deliberately let it drive them toward God rather than away, asking Him to refine rather than embitter them through it. The aim is to become, through our trials, more like Christ rather than less, purified gold rather than hardened clay.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The direction of our suffering: toward God or away from Him.
- Cooperating with God's refining work rather than nursing bitterness.
- Refinement as something we yield to in our trials.
- Becoming more like Christ through suffering rightly received (Romans 5:3-5).

Discussion Prompts

- Do your trials tend to drive you toward God or away from Him?
- What would it look like to be refined rather than embittered by hardship?
- How can you let a current difficulty draw you closer to God?

Question 7

Student Question:

God's word to Daniel insists that "those who are wise shall understand," while "none of the wicked shall understand" (12:10). What does this teach about the kind of understanding that matters most, a spiritual wisdom that comes through a right relationship with God rather than mere intelligence (Psalm 111:10; 1 Corinthians 2:14)? How does walking with God open our eyes to truth that the worldly cannot see?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Turn to the kind of understanding the passage commends: "those who are wise shall understand," while "none of the wicked shall understand" (12:10). The understanding in view is not mere intelligence or cleverness, for the wicked can be brilliant. It is a spiritual wisdom that comes through a right relationship with God.

Help students grasp the biblical concept of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10). True understanding begins not with raw intellect but with reverence for God. And the deepest truths of God are spiritually discerned: "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God... and he is not able to understand them

because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). The wise understand because they walk with God.

Draw out why the wicked do not understand. It is not chiefly a failure of intelligence but of the heart. A heart in rebellion against God is blind to spiritual truth, however clever it may be in other things. The wise understand not because they are smarter but because they fear God and walk with Him, and He opens their eyes.

Apply this to the believer. The way to true understanding is not chiefly more information but a closer walk with God. Those who fear Him, obey Him, and commune with Him come to see what the worldly cannot, however learned the worldly may be. Spiritual wisdom is the fruit of relationship with God, available to the humble believer of ordinary intellect and hidden from the proud genius.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Spiritual wisdom through a right relationship with God, not mere intelligence (Daniel 12:10).
- The fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).
- Spiritual truths spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14).
- The wicked's blindness as a failure of the heart, not the intellect.
- True understanding as the fruit of walking with God, open to the humble.

Discussion Prompts

- What kind of understanding does this passage commend?
- Why can the brilliant remain blind to spiritual truth?
- How does walking with God open our eyes to what the worldly cannot see?

Question 8

Student Question:

True wisdom is not mainly about being smart but about knowing and fearing God. Where do you need to seek God's wisdom rather than relying on your own cleverness or the world's? What is one area where you sense God inviting you to trust His understanding above your own (Proverbs 3:5-6)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-focused question applies the nature of true wisdom to daily life. We are tempted to rely on our own cleverness, on the conventional wisdom of the world, or on sheer information, rather than seeking the wisdom that comes from God. Yet the wisdom that matters most is found in fearing and trusting Him.

Help students identify where they lean on their own understanding. In decisions, we calculate and strategize but neglect to seek God. In forming our views, we absorb the assumptions of the

surrounding culture more than the teaching of Scripture. The call is to seek God's wisdom first, in His word and in prayer, rather than leaning on our own.

Point to the promise of Proverbs 3:5–6. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." The path to wise living is not self-reliance but God-reliance, acknowledging Him in all our ways and trusting His understanding above our own.

Move toward a concrete area. Encourage students to identify one decision or area of life where they have been relying on their own cleverness or the world's thinking, and to deliberately seek God's wisdom there through Scripture and prayer. The aim is a life increasingly guided by the wisdom that comes from walking with God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Seeking God's wisdom rather than leaning on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5–6).
- The temptation to rely on cleverness, conventional wisdom, or information.
- Acknowledging God in all our ways for straight paths.
- A life increasingly guided by the wisdom that comes from God.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you rely on your own cleverness rather than God's wisdom?
- What area is God inviting you to trust His understanding above your own?
- How could you seek God's wisdom in a current decision this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

The book closes not with a complete map of the future but with a promise of resurrection rest: "you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days" (12:13). Daniel would die without seeing the Messiah, the everlasting kingdom, or the resurrection he was promised, yet this promise was enough. How does this fitting end to the book gather up its great themes, God's sovereignty over history, the certain hope of resurrection, and the call to faithful endurance, and direct our hope finally to the rest secured in Christ (Hebrews 4:9–11; Revelation 14:13)? And how does Daniel's example teach us to be faithful to the end, content to rest in God's promise even when we cannot see the outcome?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This doctrinal capstone gathers up the whole book and directs its hope to its goal in Christ. The book of Daniel closes not with a complete map of the future but with a tender, personal promise of resurrection rest: "But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in

your allotted place at the end of the days” (12:13). This is the perfect ending, and it gathers the book’s great themes into one.

Help students see how this verse draws the whole book together. God’s sovereignty over history, which has run through every chapter, now reaches its goal at “the end of the days.” The hope of resurrection, declared in 12:2, is personally promised to Daniel: he shall rest, and he shall stand again. And the call to faithful endurance is summed up in “go your way till the end.” Sovereignty, resurrection, and endurance meet in this closing word.

Note the poignancy and the faith of the ending. Daniel would die without seeing the things he had glimpsed: the Messiah he foretold, the everlasting kingdom of the stone cut without hands, the resurrection he was promised. And yet it was enough. He could go his way in peace, resting in God’s promise even though he would not see its fulfillment in his lifetime. This is faith: trusting God’s promise without seeing the outcome (Hebrews 11:13, 11:39–40).

Direct the final hope to the rest secured in Christ. The resurrection rest promised to Daniel is the same rest that remains for all the people of God, secured by the risen Christ. “There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9). “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labors” (Revelation 14:13). The God who was faithful to Daniel through Babylon and Persia, furnace and lions’ den, and who promised him resurrection rest, has secured that rest forever in His Son. Daniel’s quiet, confident ending, go your way, be faithful, and you shall rest and rise, is the hope of every believer who is faithful to the end.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The book gathered up in the promise of resurrection rest (Daniel 12:13).
- God’s sovereignty, the resurrection hope, and faithful endurance meeting in the closing word.
- Daniel’s faith: resting in God’s promise without seeing its fulfillment (Hebrews 11:13, 39–40).
- The resurrection rest that remains for all God’s people (Hebrews 4:9).
- Rest from labors for those who die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13).
- The rest promised to Daniel secured forever in the risen Christ.

Discussion Prompts

- How does this closing promise gather up the great themes of the book?
- How could Daniel be at peace without seeing the things he foretold?
- How does the resurrection rest of Daniel point us to the rest secured in Christ?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole book of Daniel, from a young exile in Babylon to an old prophet promised resurrection rest. Name one specific way the God of Daniel, sovereign over history, faithful to His people, and the giver of resurrection hope, has reshaped how you will live, trust, and endure, and how you want to be different because of this study.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This final capstone question calls students to look back across the entire book and name how the God of Daniel has reshaped them. The aim is not merely to finish a study but to be changed by it, to go their way, like Daniel, more faithful, more hopeful, more surrendered to the sovereign and faithful God.

Help them gather the great themes of the whole book: God's sovereignty over history and the kingdoms of men, the unshakable kingdom established in Christ, the call to faithful and distinct living in a hostile world, the certainty of God's judgment, the hope of resurrection, and the call to endure to the end. Ask which of these the Spirit has pressed most deeply on them through this study.

Refuse vagueness. "Be more faithful" is not a plan. "Because of this study I will live as a citizen of the unshakable kingdom in this way, endure this trial in hope of the resurrection, surrender this to God, or stand firm in this specific area" is concrete and livable. The best answers will be specific and personal.

Close the entire study by lifting their eyes to Christ, the goal of the whole book. Daniel foresaw Him: the stone cut without hands, the Son of Man receiving an everlasting kingdom, the Anointed One cut off for sin, the resurrection of the dead. We have the privilege Daniel longed for: to know the Christ in whom all his visions find their goal. We go our way, faithful to the end, in the sure hope of resurrection rest, trusting the God who was faithful to Daniel and is faithful to us, and who is forming His own Son in us until the day we stand in our allotted place at the end of the days (Daniel 12:13; Philippians 1:6).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The goal of the whole study as transformation into faithful, hopeful disciples (Romans 8:29).
- Christ as the goal of the whole book: stone, Son of Man, Anointed One, resurrection hope.
- The privilege of knowing the Christ whom Daniel foresaw.
- Going our way faithful to the end in the hope of resurrection rest (Daniel 12:13).

Discussion Prompts

- How has the God of Daniel reshaped you through this whole study?
- What is one specific way you will live differently because of it?
- How does knowing the Christ whom Daniel foresaw deepen your hope?