

The Book of Daniel

Lesson 12: The End of the Days: Sealed Until the Time -- Daniel 12:5-13

We have come to the end of the book, and Daniel, who has spent a lifetime understanding the dreams of others, finds himself in the unfamiliar position of not understanding. He sees two figures standing on the banks of the river, and one asks the question that is surely Daniel's own question, the question of every suffering saint: "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" How long until the trouble is over? How long until God sets things right? And the man clothed in linen raises both hands to heaven and swears by Him who lives forever that it will be "for a time, times, and half a time." A limited time. A time that God has fixed and that will surely end.

But Daniel still does not understand, and so he asks, plainly and humbly, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" And the answer he receives is one of the most important and most freeing things God says in the whole book: "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end." In other words, Daniel, you do not need to understand everything. Some of this is not for you to know. It is sealed. Your task is not to unlock every mystery of the future but to go your way and be faithful. There is deep rest in those words for anyone who has ever been tormented by trying to figure out what God has not chosen to reveal.

And then comes a sober word and a tender one, side by side. The sober word: in the testing that is coming, "many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand." Suffering sifts people. The same trial that purifies the faithful only hardens the wicked. And the tender word, the very last thing God says to Daniel, an old man who will not live to see the things he has glimpsed: "But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

What a way to end. Not with a chart of the future, not with every mystery explained, but with a gentle hand on the shoulder of a faithful old servant: go your way, be faithful to the end, and you shall rest, and you shall rise. You shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days. Daniel would die without seeing the Messiah he foretold, without seeing the kingdom that would never end, without seeing the resurrection he was promised. And it was enough. He could go his way in peace, because the God who had been faithful through Babylon and Persia, through furnace and lions' den, would be faithful to the very end and beyond it. This lesson is about resting in the God we cannot fully understand, being refined rather than hardened by our trials, and going our way in the sure hope of the resurrection rest that awaits all who are faithful to the end.

Group Discussion: When Daniel did not understand, he was told, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end" (12:9). Why is it significant that God did

not explain everything, even to Daniel? How can it actually be freeing to accept that some things are sealed, and that our task is to be faithful rather than to understand it all?

Personal Reflection: God's final word to Daniel was not an explanation but a promise: "go your way... and you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days" (12:13). Daniel would die without seeing what he had glimpsed. Where do you struggle to be at peace without knowing how things will turn out? What would it mean for you to "go your way" in faithful trust, resting in God's promise rather than demanding to understand?

Read Daniel 12:5–13

Study Questions

1. 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)?
2. 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?
3. 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?

4. 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?

5. 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)?

6. 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?

7. 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?

8. 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)?

9. 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?

10. 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.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Deuteronomy 29:29, the secret things belong to the Lord, but the things revealed belong to us; 1 Peter 1:6-7, trials that refine our faith like gold tested by fire; Proverbs 3:5-6, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; Hebrews 4:9-11, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God; Revelation 14:13, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors.