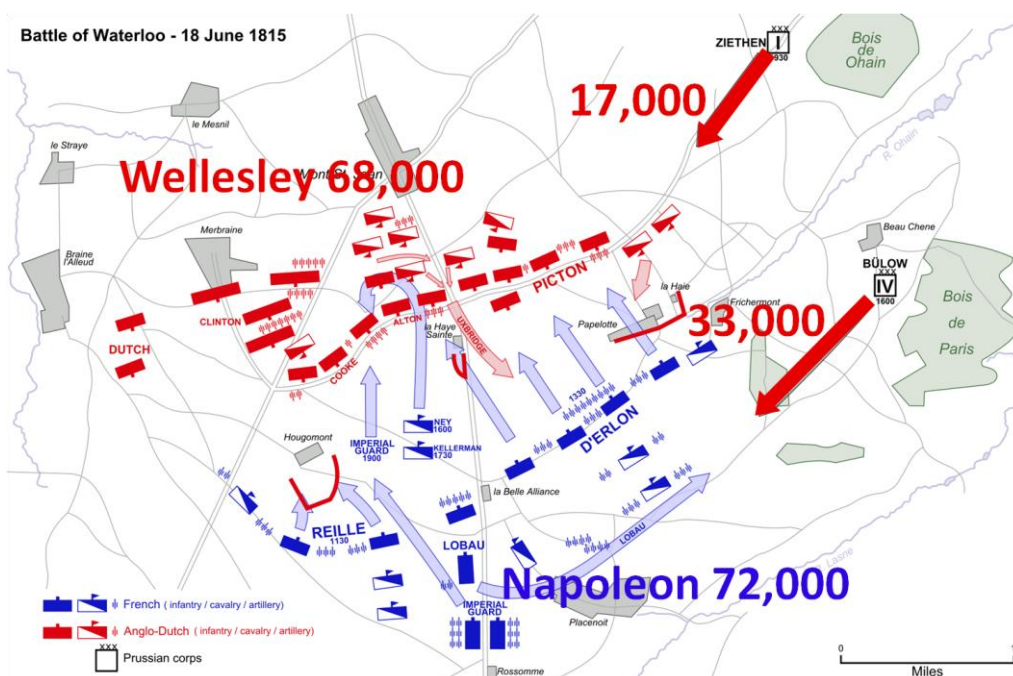


Daniel 11-12

Napoleon Bonaparte was famous for his military exploits and victories. You may know that he met his demise, at least militarily speaking, at the Battle of Waterloo but he was winning the battle at first. Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, was commanding the allies comprised of British, Dutch and German troops. He entered the battle with 68,000 troops compared to Napoleon's 72,000. Even though Wellesley had almost never lost a battle, this one quickly turned against him.

Wellesley was outnumbered because he had expected 50,000 more Prussian troops to join his side. Napoleon attacked at about noon and the Prussians were due by 1 PM but the torrential rains of the day before slowed them down considerably. Wellesley was being beaten and his troops were becoming divided, He was considering a retreat when at the last possible



moment, the first group of Prussians arrived—33,000 soldiers. Three hours later, 17,000 more Prussians arrived and a few hours later, the mighty Napoleon Bonaparte was defeated.

You and I can feel a lot like Wellesley at times. As the evil in this world continues to grow and rage against us, we may like retreating. We may feel like we are losing the war and we may at times, have to pull ourselves out to heal from our wounds because our battle is does not last for a day, but for a lifetime. Our life is a marathon, not a sprint.

This morning we will conclude our study through the book of Daniel and a word that I have not used to describe Daniel yet would be warrior. Daniel worked for and had the respect of powerful kings from two separate empires. He risked his life and saved the lives of others on more than one occasion. His humility is unmatched by other characters in the Bible but he was also a warrior. He didn't love battle and he didn't seek out a battle but he never backed down from an important battle when truth was on the line. In chapter twelve, Daniel received final words from Jesus Christ about the final, decisive battle in human history.

1 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. 6 And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. 8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 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. 11 And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. 13 But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

There are five key words that make up the twelfth chapter of Daniel.

Rise—Wait—Purify—Persevere—Rest

I will get to those in a moment, but first, let me explain why I skipped chapter eleven (see the outline of chapters 11-12 below).¹ Please read this chapter sometime this week to get a feel for it, but to preach through this chapter would be a bit like describing all of Napoleon's and

Wellesley's battles. A because of the many minute details, it would be better suited for an in depth Bible study than a sermon. The details here entail battles within the Medo-Persian and Greek empires. Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes appear again in this chapter. One commentator summarized the chapter in this way. "In the first 35 verses there are at least 135 prophecies which have been literally fulfilled and can be corroborated by a study of the history of the period."² We have seen again and again how the prophecies contained in the book of Daniel have been fulfilled to the letter and chapter eleven contains more specific prophecies than the rest of the book combined. As we have highlighted many times, promises that have already been fulfilled by God speak the absolute certainty of the fulfillment of future promises.

Rise

Our first key word comes from verses 1-2

1 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.

The "time of trouble" is the three and half years of the great tribulation. The end of chapter eleven details the rise and fall of the antichrist, whom we have seen twice before in Daniel. These days are coming and the evil you feel growing around you will continue until the culmination of the great tribulation. This verse tells us that it will be the single worst event in human history.³

But the second half of verse one turns a sharp corner in the story.

But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Here is our word—rise. In the midst of the great fury of the antichrist, the people of God will be miraculously delivered and the unholy trinity of Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet will be utterly defeated.⁴ This is the first and most clear example⁵ in the Old Testament of the promise of resurrection and eternal life.⁶ Notice especially that every person is guaranteed eternal life. Everyone will live forever—you, me, your unsaved neighbor down the street. Everyone is given eternal life—or should I say eternal existence. All will rise in the last day but some rise to everlasting life⁷ with the Lord and others to everlasting contempt.⁸ This is the doctrine of heaven and hell spelled out as clearly as it could be. In fact, most of the book of Revelation is summarized in these two verses. And the difference between everlasting life and everlasting contempt is whether or not your name is found written in the book of life.⁹

Is your name listed there? All names written in this book have been inscribed with the blood of Christ as their ink. Is your name listed there? Do you have confidence in this fact? Your name is not listed there because of anything good you have done. Your name is not listed there because you were baptized. Your name is not listed there because you walked forward during an altar call or prayed a prayer twenty years ago.

Your name is listed there if you consider your righteousness—your good deeds—as filthy rags, as Isaiah the prophet said (Isaiah 64:6). Your name is listed there if you consider your good works as rubbish, as the apostle Paul says (Philippians 3:8). Your name is listed there if you believe that there is "no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"

(Acts 4:12) as Peter said. Your name is listed there if you repent and turn away from your sins and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15) as Jesus said. Your name is listed in the book of life if you simply cling to the cross of Christ¹⁰ as the hymn writer said.

Is your name written there?

Some of you may have been thinking about this but still have a lingering doubt or hesitation in your mind. What have you been waiting for? Why would you not surrender your life to Christ this very moment? Is there a sin or pleasure you just cannot give up? The word of God is telling you that if you hold onto that pleasure now, eventually it will become everlasting contempt for you later. Maybe you think that your sin is too great to be forgiven and cleansed? This is yet another source of pride. Thinking you are “too bad” for Jesus is like thinking you are “too good” for him. This very day your name could be written in the book of life if you will turn from your sin and trust Christ alone for your salvation.

Wait

Our next key word comes from verses 5-7. Daniel sees two angels on either band of the Tigris River and a man hovering over the surface of the water. Any guesses as to the identity of this man? Remember from last week I told you that chapters 10-12 are a single unit. The events all take place at the same time and this man is the same one we saw in chapter ten. This is the pre-incarnate Jesus hovering over the waters with a message for Daniel.

It is one of the angels, however, who asks the first question. *“How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?”* This is the cry of each of our hearts, at times. How long, O Lord, must I endure this trial? How long, O Lord, must I wait on an answer to my prayer? How long, O Lord, till you return and take vengeance on your enemies?

But notice that the angel’s question is very specific. He is not asking how many years are left until Jesus returns. If we were given the answer to that question, then, unlike Harold Camping and others like him, we would know the precise year that Christ would return. But that is not the question that he asked and we know this because of the answer given by Jesus.

And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

Two things are important to know here. First, is the promise itself. The great tribulation will last for a time, times and half a time. By now you should know that this equals three and a half years—one year plus two years plus a half year. This time period is given in Daniel chapters 7, 8, 12 and Revelation chapter twelve. The length of this time of great trouble is as certain as anything in all of Scripture.

Jesus not only stated this promise but he swore to its truthfulness. Look what he did. Jesus raised his right hand, as we do when we swear to tell the truth in a courtroom setting, but Jesus also raised his left hand *and swore by him who lives forever*. Jesus took an oath with two raised hands

by his Father in heaven. Unlike our testimony, the truthfulness of Jesus' words do not need to be verified by an external witness but in order to set his seal of certainty on this promise, he swore an oath by him who lives forever.

We can see what a great encouragement this promise would be for those living through the great tribulation. Since we know that these three and a half years will begin with the abomination of desolation, when the antichrist sets himself up in the temple and declares himself to be God (that would be hard to miss, don't you think?), this means that those who are alive at this time could literally set their calendars by this promise. They could cross off one day at a time until the end of the three and a half years.

But how does this promise relate to those of us who may not live through the great tribulation? Jesus' point is that evil will have its day but not one day longer than he allows. Just as God allowed Satan to harm Job to a certain point but not one step further, so God allows evil to continue but not one day longer than he says so. And as we said last week, in the meantime even though God allows evil to continue, he is also restraining it at every turn. Who knows how many times each of us have been kept from death and injury by the sovereign hand of God. We know that Clayton and Caleb were both saved through an accident but how many times have you and I been saved from an accident? Things like cancer and death still ravage our bodies but how many times have we been saved from them? How many times have the days of our loved been extended beyond anyone's expectation? If God can set the exact day when evil will be vanquished, then it means that nothing happens outside of his control. When life feels like it is out of control, we need to be reminded that god is in complete control.

Purify

But God did not intend only evil for Daniel's life nor does he intend it for our lives. While we wait for evil to end and thank God for his restraining hand, God also intends that we be busy with the process of being purified.

Verse eight was Daniel's turn to ask a question.

*I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"⁹ He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. **10** 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.*

I love Daniel's honesty here. "I heard, but I did not understand." How many times have we read our Bibles and had the same conclusion? Some things are not understood because we have not dug hard enough and other things may never be understood by us. I think this is why Jesus answered Daniel in the manner that he did. "*Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.* In other words, he said, "Daniel, some things are not meant to be known. Just seal the vision and don't concern yourself with all of the finer details. I will handle that." But Jesus did leave Daniel with the encouragement that *many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined.*

Everything that happens to you is for your purification. Do you believe that? Every good thing, every bad thing and everything in between is given to you for your personal purification and benefit. Nothing is wasted in God's economy, even things which are evil. A thorn in the flesh was given to Paul to keep him from becoming conceited. Paul did not like the thorn in his side. Paul prayed three times that the thorn would be removed but it was given to him—pain and ongoing trial was given to him for his personal purification.

Satan asked permission—and was given permission by Christ—to sift Peter like wheat. And what was Satan's purpose in asking to sift Peter? Satan's only purpose in every moment he exists is to deceive, accuse and destroy. To borrow Joseph's words, Satan meant it for evil but God meant it for good.

We can extrapolate from this and confidently assume that everything that comes our way is given to us for our personal purification and holiness. The easiest question I could ask you this morning is this—what is the most difficult trial or issue you are facing right now? The only way that could be a hard question is if you are facing so many major trials that you cannot possibly choose between them, but even then, I am guessing one stands out above the rest. That thing—that person—this trial, whatever it is—has been given to you for your purity—to be made white and refined, as Jesus said to Daniel.

But it's not just evil things that help purify us but all things. Randy Alcorn had a great blog post about how we miss all of the good in the world because we tend to focus only on the bad. Instead of saying things like, "Where was God on 9/11" or "Where was God at Sandy Hook Elementary?" We should ask:

- Where was God when nine million planes landed safely in the United States?
- Where was God when the world revolved around the sun so accurately that it achieved the Winter solstice perfectly at 5:12 AM December 21 and headed back toward Spring?
- Where was God when the President was not shot at a thousand public appearances?
- Where was God when American farms produced ten million bushels of corn, and 2.8 million bushels of soybeans — enough food to sell \$100 billions worth to other nations?
- Where was God when no terrorist plot brought down a single American building or plane or industry?
- Where was God when the sun maintained its heat and its gravitational pull precisely enough that we were not incinerated or frozen?
- Where was God when three hundred million Americans drank water in homes and restaurants without getting sick?
- Where was God when no new plague swept away a third of our race?
- Where was God when Americans drove three trillion accident free miles?
- Where was God when over three million healthy babies were born in America?¹¹

We know where God was at all these times. He was restraining evil and giving you all of these good things for your purification. But we have to be willing to be trained and matured by these things. Otherwise, they are just more trials poured into our life.

Persevere

Verse twelve reads, *Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days*. Jesus is speaking of persevering through the great tribulation. In a few verses there are two different numbers of days listed. Jesus said that the great tribulation will last for 1290 days but those who wait 1335 days will be blessed. Why are there two different numbers?

We can go back to the illustration of the Battle of Waterloo for a possible explanation. The battle was over on June 18 but the Treaty of Paris was not signed until June 20—two days later. Perhaps these extra 45 days represent some intermediary time between the end of the tribulation and the beginning of something new. Satan will be imprisoned and maybe there is some sort of preparation for the millennial kingdom—the one thousand year reign of Christ on the earth.¹²

We can't know for certain, but the main idea is that we persevere—and again, this is not just for those who will go through the tribulation but this applies to you and me as well. Purity and perseverance obviously go hand in hand. Your perseverance will bring you more purity and holiness and your purity and holiness increases your perseverance.

The Bible is clear that you must persevere. You can't let your faith grow cold and expect to waltz into heaven. You must persevere but the good news is that the true believer will persevere. You can't lose your salvation so you will persevere but if you don't persevere, this may indicate an absence of saving faith. But perseverance does not mean the absence of a struggle. If you are struggling, this is proof that you are in the battle. But if someone has walked away from the Lord, they don't struggle with their sin because they don't care.

Rest

The fifth and final key word comes in the promise given to Daniel in verse 13. *And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days*. Daniel was in his mid 80's and he had lived a hard life but one filled with faith and the power and presence of God in his life. He wasn't going to travel back to Jerusalem which meant that he was going to die in a foreign land away from Judah and the temple that was being rebuilt. He wasn't going home but he was to have a home going. He was soon going to rest from all of his labor.

This same promise is spoken to every believer. *And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days*. Here we have come full circle with our five key words. Believers will rise and enter their eternal rest. But if our rest comes later this means that our work continues today. We must fight the good fight. We must finish the race that is set before us. But we can still “rest” in the Lord as we fight and work. To rest in the Lord is to have a life free of anxiety and free of fear. We can have an anxious free, fear free wholehearted service to the Lord.

Rich Maurer
January 6, 2013

¹ 11.1-35—135 fulfilled prophecies
11.36-30—Description of the antichrist
11.41-45—Armageddon
12.1—Summary of Armageddon and deliverance
12.2—Resurrection of believers and unbelievers

12.3—Millennial kingdom

12.4—Instruction to Daniel

12.5—Two angels on opposite banks of the Tigris

12.6—Jesus hovering over the waters

12.7—Jesus swears by the Father that the great tribulation will only last for 3.5 years

12.9,13—Instruction to Daniel

² Miller, S. R. (1994). *Vol. 18: Daniel*. The New American Commentary (312–313). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³ See Matthew 24:21—*For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.*

⁴ Destruction of the antichrist

Daniel 7:11—*I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.*

2 Thes. 2:8—*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.*

Revelation 19:20—*And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.*

⁵ In Isa 66:24, the only other instance of this word in the Old Testament, it also concerns the eternal state: “And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome [*dērā’ôn*] to all mankind.” Miller, S. R. (1994), p. 317.

⁶ Other clear examples of resurrection in the OT

Isaiah 26:19—*Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.*

Psalms 17:15—*As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.*

⁷ “The phrase *hayyê ‘ôlām* (“everlasting life”) appears here for the first time in the Old Testament.”

Miller, S. R. (1994), p. 317.

⁸ The resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will occur 1000 years apart (Rev. 20:4-6), but verse two seems like to happen simultaneously. Another good example of how OT prophecy is telescoping.

⁹ *This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.* (Rev. 20:14-15)

¹⁰ “Nothing in my hands I bring, **Simply to your cross I cling**, Naked here before your face. Helpless I cry out for grace. Foul, I to the fountain fly. Wash me Savior, or I die.” (*Rock of Ages*, Augustus Toplady)

¹¹ <http://www.epm.org/blog/2012/Dec/31/gods-goodness-2012>

¹² Here is a rough outline, starting with the seven years of tribulation

- Tribulation—7 years (Daniel 9:27)
 - 3.5 years—growth and dominance of the antichrist
 - Abomination of desolation
 - 3.5 years—the Great Tribulation (Daniel 12:7; 11-12)
- Second coming of Christ/Armageddon (Rev 19:11-21; Daniel 11:40-45)
- The beast (the antichrist) and the false prophet thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20)
- Millennium—thousand year reign of Christ (Rev 20)
- Satan is bound in a “bottomless pit” with a “great chain” (Rev 20:1-3)
- Resurrected believers will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev 20:4-6)
- Satan released, final battle; Satan thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10)

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- Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-14)
 - New heavens and new earth (Rev 21)