Fulfilled Prophecies

Daniel 12 Tells Us When The Resurrection Would Occur



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Have you ever wondered when the resurrection was supposed to happen? Many Christians believe it's still waiting to happen thousands of years in the future. But what if God already told us exactly when it would happen?

† Daniel 12 gives us the answer. We don't have to guess, invent a date, or look at today's world to figure it out. God connected the resurrection to something very specific that would happen to ancient Israel.

† Let's make this simple enough for a nine-year-old to understand. Imagine your teacher tells you that recess will begin when the school bell rings. You don't need to guess when recess begins. You just need to know when the bell rings.
† Daniel tells us about the resurrection, asks when these wonderful events will be completed, and then gives us the event that marks their completion. That event was the complete shattering of the power of the holy people.
† The holy people were Israel under the Old Covenant. Their special standing before God came through their covenant relationship with Him. That relationship included the Law of Moses, the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the Temple.
† When that covenant system was completely removed, the events Daniel described reached their fulfillment. From the fulfilled perspective, this happened in AD 70, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.
† We need to understand three simple things. What resurrection was Daniel talking about? What question was asked about its timing? And what did God say would happen when these events were completed?

Daniel 12:1
Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.
† Notice that Daniel was told about your people. These were Daniel's people, Israel, not some nation that would appear thousands of years later (Daniel 10:14).
† God connected their deliverance to a terrible time of distress. Jesus described that same kind of distress when He warned His disciples about Jerusalem's coming judgment (Matthew 24:21).
† This matters because the resurrection in the next verse belongs to the same prophetic setting. We can't separate the resurrection from the time of distress without breaking the

connection Daniel established (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 24:34).

Daniel 12:2
Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.
† Here is the resurrection. Daniel describes people awakening, some to everlasting life and others to disgrace. The language of sleeping and awakening describes the dead being raised (John 5:28-29).
† From the fulfilled perspective, this resurrection involved God's people being released from the condemnation and death associated with the Old Covenant order. Those who belonged to Christ received the promised life, while those who rejected Him faced judgment (1 Corinthians 15:22-26; Romans 8:1-2).
† Think of it like a locked door. The Old Covenant could identify sin, but it couldn't provide the completed redemption that Jesus accomplished. Jesus came to open the way to life through His sacrifice (Hebrews 9:15; 10:19-20).
† Daniel doesn't leave this resurrection floating somewhere in an unknown future. He places it within the events that would reach their completion when the power of the holy people was shattered (Daniel 12:6-7).

Daniel 12:6-7
And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, How long will it be until the end of these wonders?
I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.
† This is the key to understanding the entire chapter. The question was about how long it would be until the wonders Daniel had been shown reached their end. The answer connected their completion to the shattering of the power of the

holy people (Daniel 12:1-2).
† The time, times, and half a time describes three and a half times, commonly understood in this interpretation as three and a half years. The Jewish War that ended with Jerusalem's destruction lasted approximately that length of time (Revelation 12:14; Luke 21:20).
† What was the power of the holy people? It wasn't their military strength. Israel had been conquered by foreign nations many times. Their special identity as God's holy nation came from the covenant God established with them (Exodus 19:5-6).
† Their priesthood, sacrifices, Temple, and covenant Law belonged to that relationship. When Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in AD 70, the Old Covenant religious system lost its earthly center and could no longer function as it had under Moses (Hebrews 8:13; 10:1-10).
† The verse doesn't say that the resurrection would happen thousands of years after the shattering. It says that all these events would be completed when that shattering was finished.
† Here's the simple explanation. Daniel tells us about the resurrection, then tells us when the events of his prophecy would be completed. If the shattering of Israel's covenant power happened in AD 70, then the resurrection Daniel described belongs to that fulfillment, not to an endlessly postponed future.

Luke 21:20-22
But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.
Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;
because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.
† Jesus told His disciples exactly what to watch for. Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies. He wasn't describing an event that would be impossible for His original listeners to recognize (Matthew 24:15-16).
† Jesus called these the days of vengeance and connected

them to the fulfillment of what had been written. Daniel's prophecy belongs to those Old Testament writings (Daniel 12:1-7).
† The Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem during the Jewish War, and the city and Temple were destroyed in AD 70. This was the historical setting in which Israel's Old Covenant system came to its visible end (Matthew 23:37-38; Hebrews 8:13).
† Notice that Jesus didn't tell His disciples to look for modern Israel, a future rebuilt Temple, or another worldwide war. He told them to recognize Jerusalem's approaching desolation.

Matthew 24:21, 34
For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will again.
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† Compare Jesus' description of the great tribulation with Daniel's description of the time of distress. Both describe an extraordinary judgment associated with Daniel's people (Daniel 12:1).
† Jesus then gave His disciples the time limit. This generation meant the generation living when He spoke, not a generation thousands of years later (Matthew 23:36; Luke 21:32).
† This connects Daniel's prophecy to the first century. Jesus didn't move Daniel's fulfillment into our future. He identified the generation that would experience the events surrounding Jerusalem's judgment (Luke 21:20-22).
† If Jesus placed the great tribulation within that generation, we shouldn't remove Daniel's resurrection from its stated prophetic setting and place it in a completely different age.

Hebrews 8:13
When He said, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.
† Hebrews explains what was happening to the Old Covenant.

It had already been made obsolete through Christ, but its remaining earthly system was approaching its disappearance (Hebrews 9:8-10).
† Think of an old school building that has been replaced by a new one. The new school is already open, but the old building is still standing. When the old building is finally removed, everyone can see that its time has ended.
† Jesus established the New Covenant through His blood. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70 visibly ended the old sacrificial system (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 10:9-14).
† This is why the shattering of Israel's power matters. It marked the end of the covenant order that had separated Israel from the nations and pointed forward to the completed work of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).

1 Corinthians 15:24-26
then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.
For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.
The last enemy that will be abolished is death.
† Paul connects the resurrection to the defeat of death. He doesn't treat the resurrection as an unrelated event. It belongs to Christ's victory and the completion of His redemptive work (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).
† From the covenantal perspective, the death being defeated was the condemnation brought by sin under the Old Covenant. Jesus overcame that condemnation and brought His people into life (Romans 5:12-21; 8:1-2).
† Daniel identifies when the resurrection would be fulfilled, and Paul explains what Christ accomplished through it. Both point to the victory of Jesus, not to a future destruction of planet Earth (Daniel 12:2, 7; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57).
† The resurrection wasn't a failed promise or something God forgot to accomplish. Jesus finished the work necessary to give

His people everlasting life (John 11:25-26; Hebrews 9:28).

Revelation 20:12-14
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.
And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and they were judged, each one of them according to their deeds.
Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.
† Revelation describes the judgment of the dead and the removal of death and Hades. This corresponds to Daniel's resurrection and judgment, where some awaken to everlasting life and others to disgrace (Daniel 12:2).
† The book of life appears in both prophetic settings. Daniel speaks of those written in the book being rescued, and Revelation describes the book of life opened at judgment (Daniel 12:1; Revelation 20:12).
† From the fulfilled perspective, Revelation describes the completion of the same first-century redemptive transition. Death and Hades lost their covenantal power as Christ brought His people into the completed New Covenant kingdom (Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 1:13).
† We don't need to invent another resurrection thousands of years after Daniel's appointed time. The prophetic writings connect the resurrection, judgment, and defeat of death to the completed work of Christ (Daniel 12:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

Historical References
† Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian who witnessed the Jewish War, described Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 in The Jewish War, Books 5-6. He recorded the siege, famine, slaughter, and burning of the Temple.

† Josephus also described the Roman campaign that began under Vespasian and continued under Titus. His historical account helps us identify the first-century destruction that Jesus had warned His disciples about (Luke 21:20-24).
† Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, recorded the tradition that Christians fled Jerusalem and settled in Pella before the city's destruction. This agrees with Jesus' instruction to flee when Jerusalem's judgment approached (Luke 21:20-21).
† These historians confirm the historical destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. They don't independently prove the theological interpretation of Daniel's resurrection, but they establish that the covenantal judgment associated with AD 70 was a real historical event.

How It Applies To Us Today
† We don't need to live in fear that the resurrection Daniel described is still waiting for a future worldwide catastrophe. Daniel gave a specific setting for its fulfillment, and Jesus connected that setting to His own generation (Daniel 12:1-7; Matthew 24:34).
† We're not waiting for the Old Covenant to disappear. Christ established the New Covenant, and believers now approach God through Him rather than through animal sacrifices, earthly priests, or a physical Temple (Hebrews 10:19-22).
† We're not waiting for Jesus to begin reigning. He has already delivered His people from the domain of darkness and transferred them into His kingdom (Colossians 1:13).
† When believers die today, they don't have to wait in Hades for another resurrection event. They have the promise of being with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23).
† The most important lesson is that we must allow Scripture to explain Scripture. Daniel tells us about the resurrection, the question concerning its completion, and the shattering of Israel's covenant power. Jesus tells us which generation would experience the judgment (Daniel 12:1-7; Luke 21:20-22).
† Even a nine-year-old can understand this. If God tells us an event will be completed when something specific happens, we

shouldn't keep moving that event into the future after the appointed sign has already occurred.

Q & A Appendix

Q: What is the resurrection in Daniel 12:2?
A: It's the awakening of the dead to everlasting life or judgment. From the fulfilled perspective, it belongs to the completion of Christ's redemptive work at the end of the Old Covenant age (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29).

Q: Why is Daniel 12:6 so important?
A: Because it asks how long it would be until the wonders Daniel had been shown were completed. That question leads directly to the timing statement in the next verse (Daniel 12:6-7).

Q: What does Daniel 12:7 tell us?
A: It connects the completion of all these events to the shattering of the power of the holy people. This is the timing connection that must be considered when interpreting the resurrection (Daniel 12:1-7).

Q: Who were the holy people?
A: They were Daniel's people, Israel, who had been set apart through God's covenant with them (Daniel 12:1; Exodus 19:5-6).

Q: What was Israel's covenant power?
A: Their special standing as God's covenant nation was expressed through the Law, priesthood, sacrifices, and Temple. It wasn't simply their political or military strength (Exodus 19:5-6; Hebrews 9:1-10).

Q: When was that covenant system completely shattered?
A: From the fulfilled perspective, its visible and final removal occurred in AD 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. The Old Covenant had already been made

obsolete through Christ (Hebrews 8:13; Luke 21:20-22).

Q: Does Daniel 12:7 actually mention AD 70?
A: No. It identifies the shattering of the holy people's power. We connect that description to AD 70 through Jesus' teaching about Jerusalem and the historical destruction of the Temple (Matthew 24:21, 34; Luke 21:20-22).

Q: Why do we connect Daniel 12 with Matthew 24?
A: Both describe an extraordinary time of distress. Jesus placed the events He described within His own generation, connecting Daniel's prophecy to the first century (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21, 34).

Q: Does this mean everyone who dies today must wait for another resurrection?
A: No. From the fulfilled perspective, the resurrection promised for the end of the Old Covenant age has been accomplished. Believers who die today go to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23).

Q: What's the simplest way to understand Daniel 12?
A: Verse 2 describes the resurrection. Verse 6 asks how long until the wonders are completed. Verse 7 connects their completion to the shattering of the power of the holy people. The fulfilled perspective identifies that covenantal ending with AD 70 (Daniel 12:2, 6-7).

Q: What is the most important lesson?
A: God keeps His promises at their appointed time. We shouldn't separate a promised event from the timing God gave for its fulfillment (Daniel 12:1-7; Luke 21:22).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
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Source Index

† Daniel 12:1, 2, 6-7; Luke 21:20-22; Matthew 24:21, 34; Hebrews 8:13; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Revelation 20:12-14

† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books 5-6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5

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