

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study *"Hard Sayings of Jesus,"* this sermon talks about the surety of death and resurrection as prophesied by Daniel. Daniel and his companions faced the possibility of death multiple times. Each time God brought them back and used their response as a positive influence in the leadership of the time.

Introduction: They are the sections even the most avid Bible students often skip – the genealogies. These lengthy portions follow a recognizable formula. A man (usually) lives for a certain number of years, produces someone to continue his legacy, and then, after more years, he dies. Repeat.

Life. Accomplishment. Death. Some men believe this is all there is. Jesus promised that the date of a man's death does not need to be the end of his life or the completion of his accomplishment. There is a continuation, an unending second chapter.

If there is a closing to each man's story on earth, there must also be a culmination of the story *for* earth. God created the world; He will destroy it. Daniel spoke of that day. God will restore earth in the end. God's greatest concern though is not for His planet but for her inhabitants.

1. **Each person will experience death.** (Dan. 12:1)

Daniel became intimate with death when he was still maturing. The Babylonians invaded Judah. They killed some and transported thousands more, including Daniel, from their homeland. Daniel had a decision to make and quickly. Would he eat the king's food? Not doing as his captors required could easily have resulted in his death. Thankfully, Daniel's decision worked to his benefit (Dan. 1:19-21). Before his eventual death, he served prominently for decades underneath three world leaders.

During that time, God gave Daniel visions about the future. Unparalleled trouble is coming. A final world leader will gain world dominion. Unlike Daniel's kings, this despot offers no respect to those who practice unsanctioned religious beliefs. He will declare himself to be god and angrily attack the Jews (Dan. 9:27). His offensive and God's judgment will cause the death of billions (Rev. 6:8; 9:15). Soon after, the planet itself will die (Rev. 21:1). Everything dies eventually.

If you cannot prevent a future occurrence, then prepare for it. You bought life insurance, made a video with a final love message, and made sure someone knows how to do the tasks you usually take care of. Good for you. That will help your family when you die. What have you done to help yourself?

2. **Each person will rise from the dead.** (Dan. 12:2)

Babylonian guards threw three Hebrew men into a super-heated furnace. There, they would face the consequences of their actions. They had dared to defy the king's order. (Daniel 3:26-27).

Daniel prophesied about resurrection. Death in some form awaits us all. The body was eventually placed in the ground, but it won't stay there. God will raise up those who die and they will never die again.

3. **Each person will decide their eternal destination.** (Dan. 12:2-3)

Daniel occupied the lion's den for one night. Nebuchadnezzar spent seven years in the woods (Dan. 4:32). Neither died due to their exile. If Daniel had, his spirit would have gone into God's presence where he would await resurrection day. Nebuchadnezzar did not have the same confidence.

Throughout his tenure, Daniel worked to convince Babylon's king to submit to God's authority. Only after living beneath the heavens for an extended time did Nebuchadnezzar receive the stars' message: God is sovereign (Ps. 19:1; Dan. 4:34-35). It took insanity for him to come to his right mind.

Nebuchadnezzar lived among the animals. He looked and acted like them too. He did not share their end. When animals die, they cease to exist. People however, have an eternal soul that will inhabit a resurrected body forever. They will either enjoy the presence of God, or they will live in permanent disgrace.

Conclusion: Though thousands of years have passed since Daniel made his prophecy, the time he spoke of has not come. It will. God promised. Generations may come and go, but one final group will occupy the world when the resurrection happens.

The future aspect of that day makes it easy to ignore right now. Why concern us with the end of the world? We have enough to deal with this day.

Fine. Let's talk about today. You may not be around for the world's final day, but you will experience yours. Acting as if the end will never come is a normal practice for most people. However, the genealogical record confirms it – death happens to all. So does resurrection. Your location is the only factor you can control.

The way to be ready for the distant future is to make sure you are ready for tomorrow. Your last day will likely occur long before the world's. Are you ready?

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