



Daniel

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Lesson 14

DANIEL 12

FINAL CRYPTIC NUMBERS – DANIEL 12:11-13	81
CLOSING WORDS	82
TIMELINE OF MILLENNIAL ESCHATOLOGIES	83
THE SYMBOLIC PERIOD OF TIME	84
COUNT-DOWN THEORY OF TIME	84

“The book of Daniel concludes with God’s final promise to Daniel: “As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance””

CLOSING THE SCROLL – DANIEL 12:1-4

Chapter 12 is a continuation of the vision started in Chapter 10. After the resplendent man in linen (the Messiah, 9:25-26, the pre-incarnate Christ, 10:5-6) had described in detail the succession of kings and dynasties of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires (chapter 11), he vaguely outlines the end-times here in chapter 12. He starts with a declaration that there will be a great tribulation, greater than any persecution the people of God had witnessed in the past. Yet their protector, Michael, the archangel (10:13), who is their prince and guardian, will lead the faithful through this horrific time. Those whose names are written in the book of life will be delivered (12:1). Not only that, we see the most clearly articulated description of the resurrection in the Old Testament, the physical resurrection of both the just and the wicked along with their allocation to everlasting life or death respectively (v.2). Up to this point we only had glimpses of the promise of the resurrection of the body (Job 19:25-27, Psalm 49:15, Isaiah 26:19, Ezekiel. 37:12-14, Hebrews 11:17-19). Daniel and his people are encouraged with this admonition that those who remain faithful and lead others to faithfulness will shine like stars forever (v.3). Then suddenly the Lord orders Daniel to shut the book, *roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end*, adding that many will try to search and search for meaning but will not fully understand until the appointed time (v.4).

Dispensationalists would see these prophecies as referring to the Jews, rather than all believers, while Maccabeans see these prophecies not only about the Jews, but limited to the time of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes and the restoration of Jewish autonomy. Conservative scholars see the whole OT & NT Church included (both Messianic Jews and Christians)

ABOUT THE END TIMES – DANIEL 12:5-10

The concluding section of the book of Daniel begins with an expanded scene. Daniel now sees two angels, one on each side of the river (v.5). One angel addresses the Man in shining linen, who is hovering over the river, asking, *“How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”* (v.6). The resplendent Man lifted both arms to heaven and made an oath before the living God, *“It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed”* (v.7 NIV). The ESV translates it with a slight difference, *“...when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished”* (ESV). The interpretation is that the oppressive power “over” God’s people will be broken. Daniel, intrigued, but not understanding, asks, *“My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?”* (v.8). Daniel’s question asks not so much “when,” but what will be the result of this turmoil. The immediate response is that Daniel is told to leave *“for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end”* (v.9).

A similar scenario is described in Revelation (10:1-11) where an angel opens a small scroll, raising his hands and swearing to heaven, announces there will be no more delays, then he hands the scroll to John to eat, that is, to digest it and proclaim the message. The question among scholars is whether this is the fulfillment of Daniel’s vision (the opening of the scroll he had sealed), or yet another continuation of prophecies after the Roman persecution ends, and more persecutions begin. In other words, is it patterned in the same way Antiochus Epiphanes is a precursor to Titus, so Titus is the antitype (foreshadowing) of the antichrist to come? The usual interpretation is that since Revelation speaks of “time, times and a half time” (Revelation 12:14) echoing the words in Daniel, that the “woman” in the text (Revelation 12:1-17) is the church being pursued by Satan, and that this will continue for a long time, referring to the end of the world. Meanwhile the wicked will continue to be wicked, and the righteous will be “refined,” martyred for their faith (Daniel 12:10).

FINAL CRYPTIC NUMBERS – DANIEL 12:11-13

It is at this point the resplendent Man in linen declares two final, but cryptic numbers: *“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. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days” (vv.11-12). The Maccabees reason this way: if the numbers refer to the time between the sacrilege of Antiochus Epiphanes and the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus, then the 1,150 days (from 8:14, where 2300 morning-evenings = 1,150 days) has been purposely changed by the author or another redactor (living before 164 BC), because he found it necessary to correct his original prediction in 8:14 when it turned out to be wrong. He corrects his prediction to 1290 days, but he has to do it again to 1335 days when that date falls short once more. This kind of interpretation has to be rejected because this makes the Bible filled with error-driven prophecies, and secondly, the Qumran (Dead Sea) scrolls demonstrate there were no such corrections.

Dispensationalists have a heyday with these numbers using all kinds of machinations to crunch numbers to fit whatever scheme corresponds to their predilections (see attached illustration of various millennial theories). Whether it be the “pre” or “post” tribulation rapture, or even the more popular “dispensational premillennialism,” the underlying effort is to describe a physical reign of Christ with an earth-like kingdom of perfection. They seem to ignore Christ’s words about *“not of this world”* (John 18:36) and Paul’s declaration that our mortal body is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:44), and that we all will be changed in a twinkling of an eye and Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

The more likely interpretation of these cryptic numbers would seem to be in the spiritual realm, that is, symbolic, rather than attempting to convert them into precise days, weeks, or years. After all, the resplendent Man warned Daniel about wasting time trying to figure out what was sealed (v.4). If we understand them symbolically, perhaps the following scenario will resonate better with the totality of Scripture. First, knowing that the completion of the tribulation is 1260 days (Revelation 11:3, 12:6) and it is equivalent to three and a half years or 42 months (using the Jewish calendar of 30 days per month), and 1290 days being 30 days longer (43 months), then a possible interpretation is that each prediction starts at a different date (or significant event) but ends up at the same time.

Let's assume 1260 ("time, times and a half time," v.12:7) starts at Jesus' life and death (the inauguration of the new age), and 1290 starts at 164 BC, the "abomination of desolation" by Antiochus Epiphanes (12:11), then Daniel's time would be further back, or 1335 units of time (v.12). The attached graph will help to illustrate this concept (see Concordia Professor, Dr. Andrew Steinmann's Symbolic theory, as well as an alternate "Count-down" theory popular with dispensationalists).

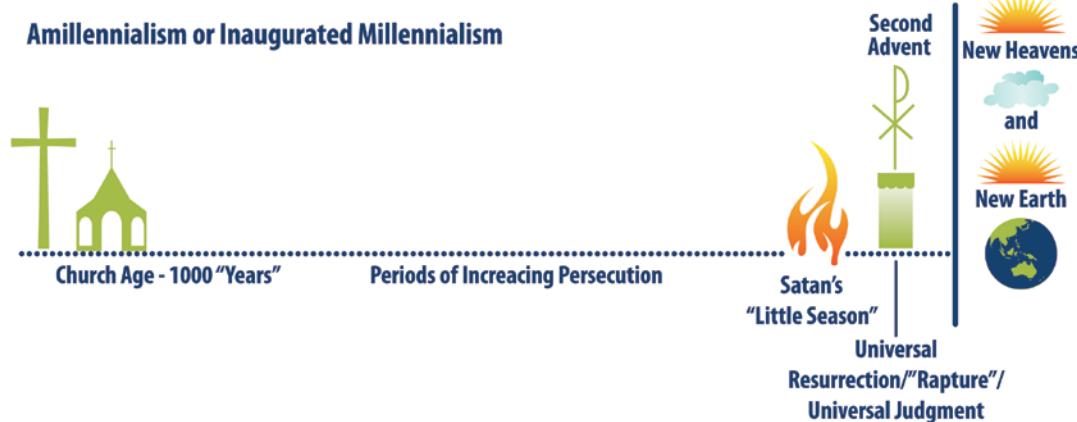
CLOSING WORDS

Whatever the interpretation, we are reminded that these revelations are sealed until the end times. We may not be able to decipher them unequivocally, but we can be assured of God's unfailing promise which has been revealed historically in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. That is, we can see without

question the broad sweep of God's plan of salvation through his chosen O.T. people, and his continual love and protection for his grafted N.T. people (Romans 11:17-24). Meanwhile, like Daniel, we are encouraged to remain faithful (Daniel 10:18-19) and to be bold witnesses (shining stars, 12:3) to his Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

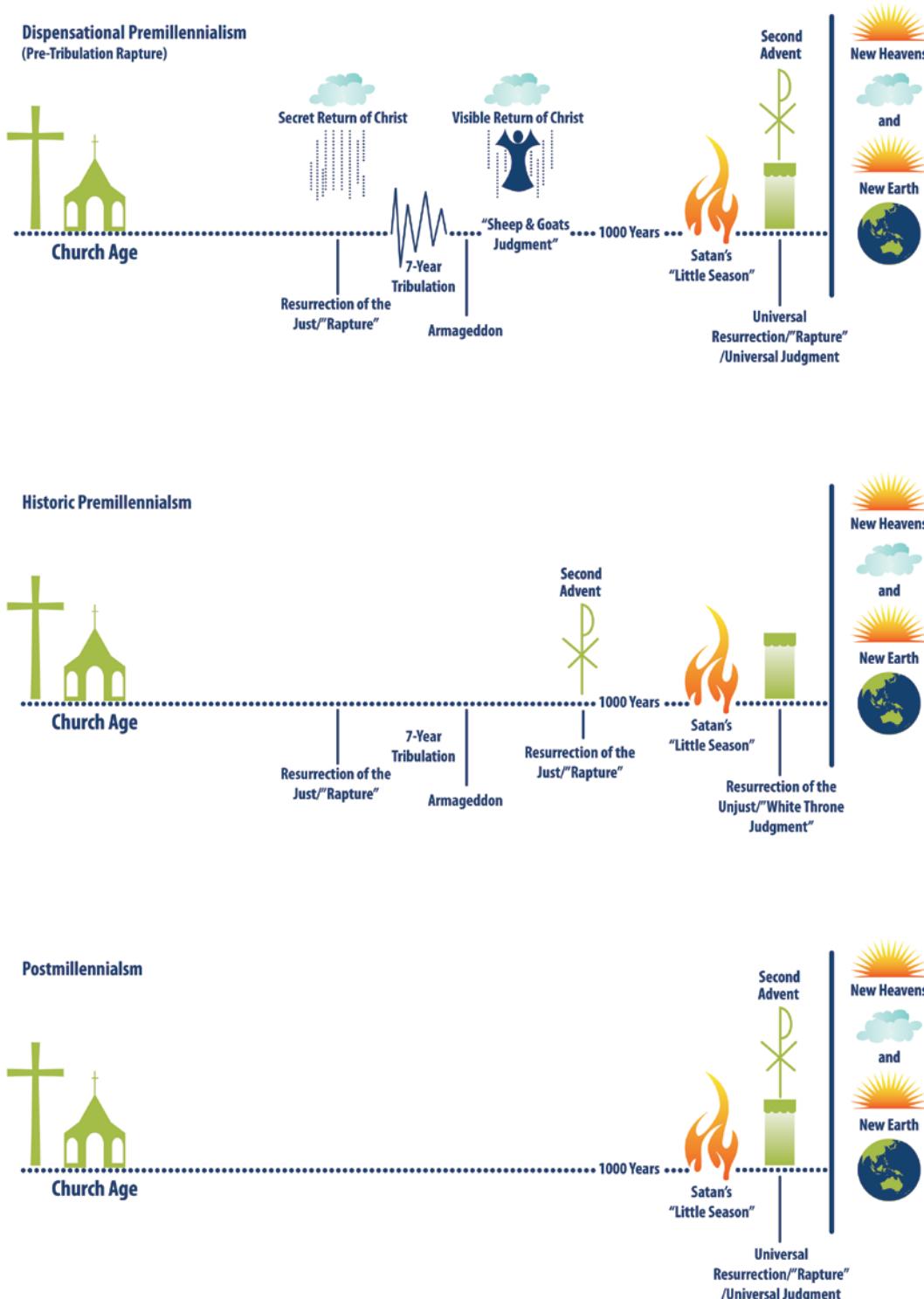
The book of Daniel concludes with God's final promise to Daniel: *"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance"* (12:13 NIV). Certainly, this is the same promise given to us, upon which we can be confident, that is, this eternal salvation is not earned by us, but is a gift of inheritance, sealed and assured in Christ (Matthew 25:34, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, Revelation 2:10).

TIMELINE OF BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY



Millennial illustrations adapted from The End Times: A Study of Eschatology and Millennialism (a report of the commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, September 1989), pp. 27, 45. Used by permission of the LCMS.

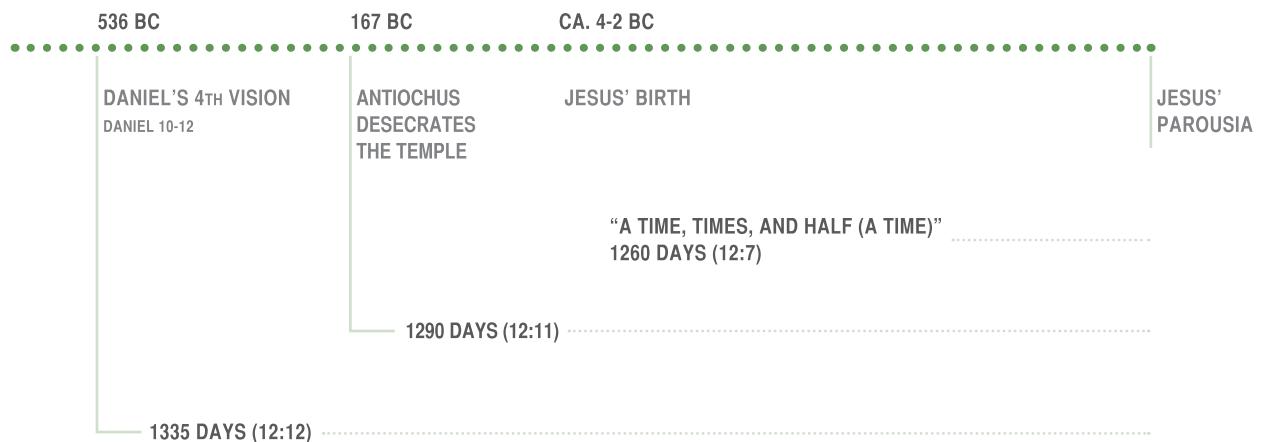
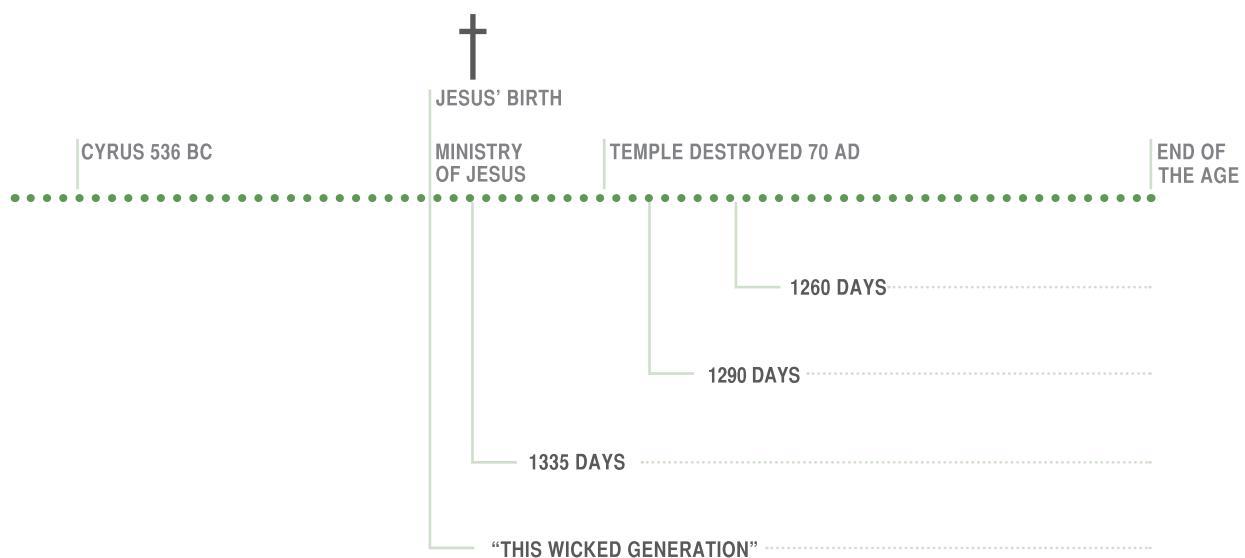
TIMELINE OF MILLENNIAL ESCHATOLOGIES



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THE SYMBOLIC PERIOD OF TIME

Daniel 12:7; 11-12

*Dr. Andrew Steinmann – Adapted***COUNT-DOWN THEORY OF TIME**William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*, Baker Books, 1998. pg.144