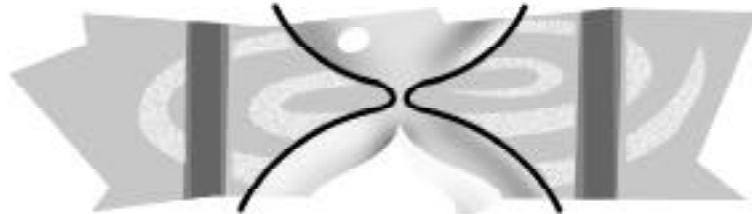


# The Time of the End (or the End of Time)



SABBATH—DECEMBER 18

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Daniel 11:40–12:13.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Those [people] who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky. Those who lead many others [people] to do what is right will be like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3, NlrV).

**THE FINAL (LAST) CHAPTER OF DANIEL** summarizes the closing part of “the time of the end.” At “the time of the end,” there will be a time of terrible suffering. Things will be worse than at any time since nations began” (Daniel 12:1, NlrV). After receiving the last vision, Daniel still had questions. But God held back a full understanding of the visions until “the time of the end.” This is when people who would study Daniel’s prophecies would understand their messages (Daniel 12:4). We believe Seventh-day Adventists are among those people God has called to understand these visions.

In Daniel 12, we stand very close to eternity.<sup>1</sup> Behind us, the great events<sup>2</sup> of salvation history have gone by: the Flood, in which only eight people were saved; the Exodus (escape) from Egypt, which gave birth to the nation of Israel; and the Cross, which brought freedom from sin to all people. But the close of salvation history is still to come. This will be the great exodus of saved people from this sin-filled planet.

**A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** What does “the time of the end” mean? Why do we believe that Michael is Jesus? Why was Daniel sealed until “the time of the end”? What does Daniel teach about the resurrection<sup>3</sup> of dead people?

Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 25.

<sup>1</sup>eternity—life without end; forever.

<sup>2</sup>events—things that happen.

<sup>3</sup>resurrection—returning to life after dying.

## SUNDAY—DECEMBER 19

**“THE TIME OF THE END”  
(Daniel 11:40-45).**

The words “the time of the end” appear only in the book of Daniel (Daniel 8:17; Daniel 11:35, 40; Daniel 12:4, 9). The whole book of Daniel shows “the time of the end” that means the final (last) period in history before the Second Coming. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the year 1798, the end of the 1,260 years, is the beginning of “the time of the end.” Because the final verses of Daniel 11 seem to be unfulfilled prophecy, we need to be careful how we interpret them.

**Which powers could be the “king of the north” and the “king of the south” in “the time of the end”? Daniel 11:40.**

*The king of the north.* At “the time of the end” for the kingdom of Judah, Babylon was the enemy from the north (Jeremiah 1:14, 15). In the book of Revelation, Babylon is spiritual Rome—the papacy.<sup>4</sup> So the king of the north in “the time of the end” is the papacy. This fits with Daniel 11:36-39, where the king who exalts (glorifies) himself is also the papacy.

*The king of the south.* Some view the earlier use of the words “the king of the south” (Daniel 11:5) as the

Ptolemies. The Ptolemies ruled Egypt after the end of the Greek Empire. Because Daniel 11:40 is about “the time of the end,” the words “king of the south” cannot mean the real Egypt. Revelation 11:8 uses Egypt to mean the enemy of true religion. These two powers are involved in a war against Jesus.



Ptolemy.

**Who in “the time of the end” could be symbolized by the nations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon?**

Edom, Moab, and Ammon are no longer countries. This shows that these nations are symbols of something else. In ancient<sup>5</sup> days, these nations were the enemies of God’s

<sup>4</sup>the papacy—the pope; the papacy is the pope’s government of the Catholic Church.

<sup>5</sup>ancient—very old.

people. But God, in His grace, has promised to save many people who were once His enemies. God will use the church to conquer (defeat) spiritual Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Many people will come out of groups who were once enemies of God's truth. These people will join God's people in "the time of the end."

**Daniel 11:40-45 show that the world will be in great trouble until "the time of the end." This trouble should help us understand that God is real, because He is warning us about it now. How should God's warning us about the trouble during "the time of the end" help us face what troubles we have now?**

## MONDAY—DECEMBER 20

### MICHAEL THE PRINCE (Daniel 12:1).

**What two major events does Daniel 12:1 show? Who is Michael, the great Prince, who saves God's faithful people?**

Adventists are about the only Christians who believe Michael is Jesus:

1. The Hebrew word *Michael* means "Who is like God?" The only One who is like God is Jesus (John 1:1).

2. The "prince of the host" or "Prince of princes" (Daniel 8:11, 25) is also "Messiah the Prince" (Daniel 9:25). He is the same as "Michael your prince"

(Daniel 10: 21) or "Michael . . . the great prince" (Daniel 12:1).

3. The word *archangel* shows up only two times in the Bible. Once is in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, where Jesus comes with the voice of the archangel. The other time is in Jude 9, where Michael is called an archangel.

**What is suggested by the sentence, "Their names are written in the Book of Life" (NlrV)? (Read also Exodus 32:32; Daniel 7:10; Luke 10:20; Revelation 13:8; Revelation 17:8; Revelation 20:12; Revelation 20:15; Revelation 22:19.)**

There is judgment even for people who serve God. Those names written in the book of life are saved. Those names not written in the book of life are lost. This is the final separation between righteous (holy) people and unrighteous (not holy) people.

**"God desires us to appreciate the great plan of salvation and to understand our high honor as His children. God also wants us to obey Him with a thankful spirit. He desires us to gladly serve Him every day in newness of life. He wishes to see our hearts filled with thankfulness because our names are written in the Lamb's (Jesus') book of life."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ's [Jesus'] Object Lessons*, p. 299. Why do you believe that your name is written in the book of life?**



Trust Jesus.

## TUESDAY—DECEMBER 21

**THE RESURRECTION (Daniel 12:2).**

One of the most powerful verses in the whole Bible is Daniel 12:2. It includes the promise and warning of the resurrection.

**What truth does Daniel 12:2 suggest? The following verses will help you with your answers: Deuteronomy 32:4; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Acts 24:15; Romans 2:5, 6.**

Daniel 12:2 suggests the promise and the warning of God's final judgment. Justice will not be given by weak sinful humans, but by a perfect, all-knowing, merciful<sup>6</sup> God.

<sup>6</sup>merciful—to be full of mercy. Mercy is kindness we do not deserve.

<sup>7</sup>glorification—when we receive a new body and nature at the Second Coming. The new body will never die and our new nature will never be tempted to sin. Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

<sup>8</sup>the state of the dead—the Bible teaches that when we die, we do not go to heaven or hell. We “sleep” in our grave until Jesus returns. Read 1 Kings 2:10; John 11:11-14; Matthew 27:52; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Psalm 146:4; Psalm 115:17.

**What does Daniel 12:2 teach us about death?**

“Death is an enemy. But at the same time death is a defeated enemy. This means we can fight death with faith. We know death's victories will not last. We can be on the side of health, peace, and all else that promises life without feeling discouraged and fearful. We know that death will finally lose.”—Adapted from “Resurrection and Glorification,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), p. 364.



Victory over death comes with Jesus!

**Why is the promise of the resurrection so important to us? How does our understanding of the state of the dead<sup>8</sup> help us see more clearly**

**just how important the resurrection is? Read also what Paul says about how important the resurrection is in 1 Corinthians 15:51-56. Why does 1 Corinthians 15:51-56 make sense only if we understand that dead people are really sleeping?**

### WEDNESDAY—DECEMBER 22

#### THE SEALED BOOK IS OPENED (Daniel 12:4, 9, 10).

**What do Daniel 12:4, 9, 10 say about the book of Daniel?**

For hundreds of years, many of the prophecies of Daniel were hidden. But since the time of the Reformation,<sup>9</sup> more and more students have come to understand the book of Daniel better. It becomes easier to understand these prophecies because Bible students are able to look back over history and see just how these prophecies were fulfilled. This is an advantage only people living at “the time of the end” can have.

**What did Jesus say that helps us understand why Daniel was told to seal the book until the end? John 14:29.**

Through the book of Daniel, the Lord has given us prophecies based on something as large and unchangeable as world

history. We can be as sure of the prophecies as we can be of world history. Let the book of Daniel speak to people who will read and accept it by faith. Daniel will give them positive and wonderful examples of God’s power and promises.

**If you had the opportunity to give a non-Christian a Bible study from only one prophecy in Daniel, which prophecy would you choose? Why?**

### THURSDAY—DECEMBER 23

#### “BLESSED ARE THOSE [PEOPLE] WHO WAIT” (Daniel 12:11-13, NlrV).

**At the end of Daniel, we find two time prophecies: (1) the 1,290 days, and (2) the 1,335 days. Some Adventists set them as real days in the near future. But what proof in the Bible shows that these time prophecies have been fulfilled?**

First, we need to recognize that the angel’s long speech in Daniel 11 ends in Daniel 12:4. Daniel 12:5-13 is the closing of the long vision in Daniel 11 and of the whole book. It is not a new vision with a different topic. Instead, it is an explanation of certain parts of the vision in “the book,” which is to be sealed. This is clear from the question in Daniel 12:6, “‘How long will it be before these amazing things come true?’” (NlrV). The words “these amazing things” point to the things

<sup>9</sup>Reformation—when Bible students in the 1500s disagreed with the Roman Catholic Church on how God saves us. Martin Luther was a leader of the Reformation.

Daniel saw in Daniel 11. Daniel 11 is an explanation of Daniel 8.

Second, the words “*time and times and half a time*” (NKJV) in Daniel 7:25 and Daniel 12:7 point to one event. In Daniel 7:25, the saints are given to the little-horn power “‘for a time, times and half a time,’ ” (NIV). In Daniel 12:7, the holy people’s power is destroyed for “‘a time, times and half a time’ ” (NIV). These words point to the attack against God’s people during the 1,260 years.

Third, there is the taking away of the daily in Daniel 8:11, Daniel 11:31, and Daniel 12:11. In Daniel 8:11 and Daniel 11:31, the taking away of the daily points to a past historical event. And the taking away of the daily in Daniel 12:11 is surely talking about the same thing.

Ellen White also made a statement that after 1844, “there can be no more fulfillment of prophetic time” (Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 59*, 1900).

For the reasons given above, the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days are time prophecies that belong to the past.

One interpretation acceptable to Seventh-day Adventists is this: A.D. 508 was the year in which Clovis, king of the Franks, stepped into the important position of the first civil power to join the rising Church of Rome. This laid the basis for that centuries<sup>10</sup>-long union of church and state (government). This is the abomination<sup>11</sup> of desolation (destruction) described in Daniel 12:11. This was also the time when the church established many beliefs and practices that had “covered up” Jesus’ work in heaven as High Priest.

<sup>10</sup>centuries—hundreds of years.

<sup>11</sup>abomination—something that is very disgusting and hateful.

<sup>12</sup>the great awakening—when many people became aware of salvation.

Adding 1,290 years to A.D. 508 leads to 1798. Meanwhile, the 1,335 years starts from the same point (A.D. 508), which then leads to 1843. The year 1843 is “an important year in the history of the great awakening.”<sup>12</sup>—Adapted from *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 4, p. 881; read also Friday’s lesson.

**Read Daniel 12:13. What Bible verses give you as much hope for salvation as Daniel received in this verse?**



**The new earth is a part of what God appointed.**

## FRIDAY—DECEMBER 24

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 112–119.

Some people in the 1800s studied the prophecies in the book of Daniel. They

decided these prophecies meant Jesus would return in 1844. When Jesus did not return, they were very disappointed. Why would God let them make a mistake in interpreting Daniel's prophecies?

"God wanted to test the people who believed Jesus would return in 1844. So He allowed them to interpret the prophecies in a wrong way. . . . When 1844 passed, people who truly loved Jesus were sad. But some people were afraid of Jesus' return. So they believed only to keep bad things from happening to them. These people were glad when He did not return. Their belief had not changed their heart. God allowed the wrong interpretation of prophecy to show who really loved Jesus and who was really just afraid of Him. The people who were afraid turned away from Jesus. They made fun of the people who really loved Him and wanted Him to return.

"But the people who really loved Jesus studied their Bible again to learn more about Daniel's prophecies. God helped them to understand their mistake. They saw that the proof they used to show that the time prophecies ended in 1843 was the same proof they could

use to show that the prophecies really ended in 1844. Light from the Bible shown through their understanding. The believers discovered a delaying time. 'Though it [the vision] tarry [delay], wait for it.' In their love for Jesus' soon coming, they had not seen the delaying of the vision. God planned that they not understand this part of the vision to show who was truly faithful to Jesus." —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 235, 236.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What dangers do we face by setting dates for future end-time events?
2. Daniel ends with the promise of victory for God's people. By thinking about these prophecies, how can your faith and hope grow stronger?

**SUMMARY:** Some parts of the book of Daniel remain a mystery. But we have received enough information to trust in God. Through Jesus, God has promised us that we receive what God has promised to give us "at the end of the days" (Daniel 12:13, NIV).