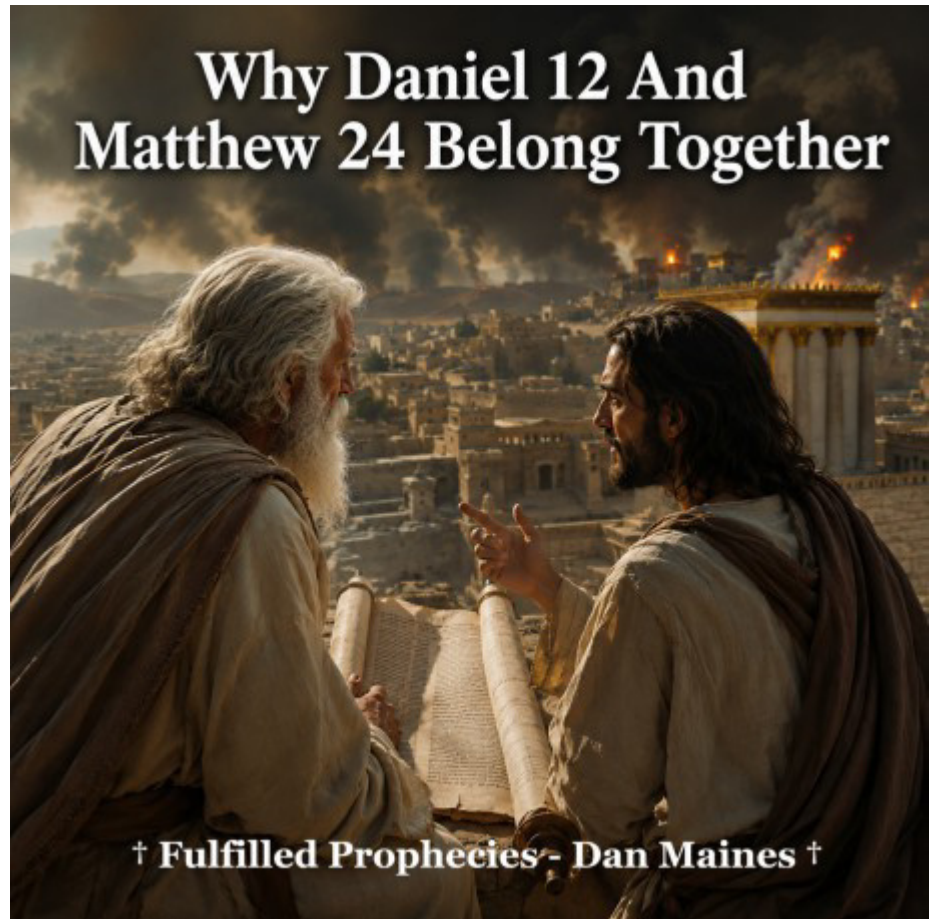


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Why Daniel 12 And Matthew 24 Belong Together



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 aren't two unrelated prophecies separated by thousands of years. Jesus deliberately points His disciples back to Daniel when explaining the judgment that was coming upon Jerusalem and the temple.

† Daniel describes an unprecedented time of trouble, the deliverance of God's people, resurrection, the wise shining, and events belonging to the time of the end. Jesus describes the abomination spoken of by Daniel, unprecedented tribulation, the

gathering of His elect, and the completion of those events within His own generation.

† The question isn't whether Jesus used Daniel. He explicitly told His disciples to understand Daniel. The question is whether Jesus moved Daniel's prophecy thousands of years into their future, or placed its fulfillment within the lifetime of the generation standing before Him.

† When Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 are allowed to interpret each other, the time statements become impossible to ignore. Daniel's time of the end was connected with the end of the covenant age, and Jesus identified the generation that would see it happen.

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.

† Daniel was told about a unique time of trouble involving his people. The prophecy wasn't introduced as a worldwide disaster thousands of years beyond Israel's covenant history. Daniel's people were at the center of the prophecy.

† Notice the combination of judgment and deliverance. Terrible trouble would come, yet God's faithful people would be delivered. Jesus uses this same pattern when He warns His disciples about Jerusalem and provides instructions for escape (Matthew 24:16-20).

† Daniel's language about trouble unlike anything before it becomes especially important when we read Jesus' description of Jerusalem's coming tribulation.

Matthew 24:21

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.

† Jesus didn't merely speak about severe tribulation. His

wording closely reflects Daniel's prophecy of an unparalleled time of trouble.

† Daniel said there would be a time of trouble unlike anything before it. Jesus said there would be great tribulation unlike anything before it. The verbal and conceptual connection is unmistakable (Daniel 12:1).

† Jesus had already identified the subject of the discourse, the destruction of Jerusalem's temple (Matthew 24:1-3). The great tribulation belongs within that same prophetic setting.

† Luke's parallel makes the covenantal setting even clearer. Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies, those in Judea were to flee, and Jesus called those days days of vengeance in which all things written would be fulfilled (Luke 21:20-22).

Matthew 24:15

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place-let the reader understand

† Jesus removes any reasonable doubt about whether Daniel belongs in the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse. He names Daniel directly and commands His hearers to understand what Daniel had written.

† Jesus wasn't introducing an unrelated prophecy. He was explaining Daniel to disciples who had just asked about the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:2-3).

† The disciples were told, when you see. That language matters. Jesus gave observable signs to people who were actually listening to Him. When they saw the approaching fulfillment, they were to flee (Matthew 24:16).

† Luke identifies the practical sign in unmistakable historical language, Jerusalem surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20). The warning concerned Jerusalem, Judea, and the approaching destruction of that covenant center.

Daniel 12:2

And 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.

† Daniel places resurrection in the same prophetic context as the unparalleled trouble of verse 1. We shouldn't separate the resurrection from the time setting Daniel himself provides.

† This resurrection language describes the great covenantal transition from death to life that reaches its fulfillment in Christ. Jesus used resurrection language for those passing from death into life through hearing His voice (John 5:24-29).

† Daniel's prophecy contains both life and judgment. That fits the New Testament's description of the closing of the old covenant age, when Christ's kingdom was publicly vindicated and the persecuting covenant order came under judgment (Matthew 16:27-28, Matthew 23:34-36).

† Daniel 12 doesn't suddenly jump thousands of years between verses 1 and 2. The trouble, deliverance, resurrection, and final vindication belong to the same prophetic conclusion.

Daniel 12:3

And those who have insight will shine like the glow of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

† Daniel's resurrection prophecy immediately speaks of the righteous shining. Jesus later uses this same imagery when describing the righteous shining in the kingdom (Matthew 13:43).

† The wise weren't defeated by the collapse of the old covenant world. They were vindicated as members of Christ's kingdom.

† This is another reason Daniel 12 can't be reduced to physical bodies coming out of graves. Daniel combines resurrection, righteousness, wisdom, kingdom vindication, and the triumph of God's faithful people.

Daniel 12:4

But as for you, Daniel, keep these words secret and seal up the book until the end of time; many will roam about, and knowledge will increase.

† Daniel was commanded to seal the prophecy because its

appointed fulfillment wasn't immediately at hand.

† This provides an important biblical contrast with Revelation. Daniel was told to seal his prophecy because the time was still distant, while John was told not to seal Revelation because the time was near (Revelation 22:10).

† Daniel says time of the end, not end of time. Those aren't the same statement. The prophecy concerns the conclusion of an appointed covenantal period.

† Jesus' disciples understood that an age could end while the earth continued. Their question concerned the destruction of the temple and the completion of the age connected with it (Matthew 24:1-3).

Daniel 12:7

And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, 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 smashing the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

† Daniel gives us another major interpretive boundary. All these things would be finished when the power of the holy people had been shattered.

† That statement places Daniel's fulfillment within the historical judgment connected with Israel's covenant nation. Jerusalem and its temple system were destroyed in AD 70, bringing the old covenant world to its decisive historical end.

† Jesus uses strikingly similar comprehensive language in the Olivet Discourse. After describing Jerusalem's coming judgment, He tells His disciples when all these things would occur.

† We don't have permission to move Daniel's all these things beyond the time boundary Daniel gives us.

Matthew 24:31

And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from

one end of the sky to the other.

† Daniel's prophecy includes both judgment and deliverance. Jesus does the same. The destruction of the old covenant order wasn't the destruction of God's kingdom, it demonstrated the victory and gathering of Christ's covenant people.

† The prophetic trumpet and gathering language belongs to the biblical imagery of God's people being gathered into His kingdom (Isaiah 27:13).

† Jesus had already declared that the kingdom would be taken from the unbelieving covenant leaders and given to a people producing its fruit (Matthew 21:43). Matthew 24 describes the judgment surrounding that covenantal transfer and vindication.

† The elect weren't waiting for God's kingdom to begin thousands of years later. The gospel was already gathering God's people throughout the nations in the first century (Colossians 1:6, 23).

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

† This is the time statement that controls the entire discussion. Jesus didn't say that generation. He said this generation.

† The same expression is used repeatedly in Matthew for the generation living during Jesus' earthly ministry (Matthew 11:16, Matthew 12:41-42, Matthew 23:36).

† Jesus had just connected His prophecy directly with Daniel. He then said all these things would be accomplished before that generation passed away.

† Daniel said all these things would be finished when the power of the holy people was shattered (Daniel 12:7). Jesus said all these things would be accomplished within this generation. Those statements reinforce each other.

† So we have to ask the unavoidable question. Did Jesus take Daniel's prophecy and move its fulfillment thousands of years beyond Daniel's people, Jerusalem, and the temple, or did Jesus place Daniel's fulfillment within this generation?

† Jesus answered the question Himself. His disciples would see

the signs, Jerusalem would experience the tribulation, the elect would be gathered, and all these things would be accomplished before their generation passed away.

Historical References

† Josephus describes the Jewish-Roman War and Jerusalem's destruction in horrifying detail. He records famine, internal violence, slaughter, fire, and the destruction of the temple, conditions that provide important historical background for Jesus' warning concerning Jerusalem's great tribulation.

Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7.

† Josephus also describes people desperately attempting to escape Jerusalem during the siege and the terrible suffering occurring inside the city. His history shows why Jesus' warning to flee Judea rather than enter Jerusalem was so important.

Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-6.

† Eusebius records the early Christian tradition that believers in Jerusalem were warned to leave the city before the war and went to Pella. This is historically significant when compared with Jesus' command that His followers flee when the predicted crisis arrived. Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5.

† Tacitus confirms the Roman campaign against Jerusalem and describes the enormous population gathered there during the conflict. His Roman account independently confirms the historical setting in which Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed. Tacitus, Histories, Book 5.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't need to fear Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 as predictions of a tribulation still waiting in our future. Jesus gave those warnings to His first-century disciples concerning events they and their generation were approaching.

† We can read prophecy according to its original audience, historical setting, covenant context, and inspired time statements instead of moving fulfilled events thousands of years beyond the boundaries Scripture gives them.

† Daniel's prophecy ends in victory, not failure. God's faithful people are delivered, the wise shine, righteousness triumphs, and Christ's kingdom remains.

† We live after that covenantal transition. We aren't waiting for the old covenant age to end. We belong to the kingdom that can't be shaken (Hebrews 12:22-28).

† Daniel was told about the time of the end. Jesus identified the generation that would experience that end. Jerusalem fell, the temple disappeared, the old covenant system was removed, and Christ's everlasting kingdom remained.

† When Jesus says this generation, we should believe Him. We don't need to stretch His words across thousands of years to preserve a prophetic system. We need to allow His words to determine our prophetic system.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why should Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 be interpreted together?

A: Because Jesus directly identifies Daniel when explaining the coming destruction and tribulation associated with Jerusalem. He specifically refers His disciples to the abomination of desolation spoken through Daniel the prophet (Matthew 24:15).

Q: Is Daniel's time of trouble the same prophetic setting as Jesus' great tribulation?

A: The language strongly connects them. Daniel describes a time of trouble unlike anything before it, and Jesus describes great tribulation unlike anything before it (Daniel 12:1, Matthew 24:21).

Q: Doesn't Daniel 12:2 require Daniel 12 to be about the end of the physical universe?

A: No. Daniel places resurrection within the same prophecy involving his people, their unprecedented trouble, their deliverance, and the shattering of their power (Daniel 12:1-7). The New Testament also uses resurrection language for the

transition from death to life in Christ (John 5:24-29).

Q: What does time of the end mean?

A: Daniel says time of the end, not end of time (Daniel 12:4). The surrounding prophecy concerns Daniel's people and the conclusion reached when their power was shattered (Daniel 12:7).

Q: Did Jesus postpone Daniel's fulfillment for thousands of years?

A: Jesus never says that. Instead, He directly cites Daniel, describes the coming tribulation, gives His disciples instructions about what they would see, and declares that all these things would be accomplished within this generation (Matthew 24:15-34).

Q: What is one of the strongest connections between Daniel 12 and Matthew 24?

A: Daniel says all these things would be finished when the power of the holy people was shattered, and Jesus says all these things would be accomplished before this generation passed away (Daniel 12:7, Matthew 24:34). Both passages establish boundaries for fulfillment.

Q: What should believers expect today?

A: We should live confidently in Christ's established kingdom, knowing that we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem and received a kingdom that can't be shaken (Hebrews 12:22-28). Daniel's time of the end isn't our approaching future, it belonged to the covenantal transition Jesus said His generation would witness.

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

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Source Index

† Daniel 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 7; Matthew 24:15, 21, 31, 34

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5

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