

## **The Certain Hope of Believers #1**

Daniel 12:2-4

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Biblical hope is not mere optimism, for optimism can be dashed by unexpected events. Biblical hope is not a mere wish that something good might happen in the future. Biblical hope is a certain expectation that what God has promised to come in the future will be realized just as He said, for God it is impossible for God who knows all, is unchangeable, and is ever faithful to fail to keep His promise.

Sadly, the world is seeking to find a certain hope in fallible and changeable people or in uncertain circumstances they want to come to pass, but that is a recipe for despair as one disappointment after another leads to hopelessness. Looking for a certain hope in an uncertain/sinful world only leads to hopelessness.

As Christians, we are given certain hope in Jesus Christ even in the midst of trials, suffering, affliction, and persecution, and especially as we lay on our death bed. We are not left in a state of hopelessness. We have the promise of God that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8) and that these corruptible bodies will be raised incorruptible bodies (1 Corinthians 15:54,58).

Our bodily resurrection gives us hope in this life to persevere in faithfulness to Christ and His truth in all trials/suffering/tribulation, for at the end of this world, we will be conformed to Christ in body/soul.

Our certain hope transcends even the great heights of reformation in the world which is to come to all nations when they will be converted to Christ. That is just the beginning. Our end and certain hope are in the promise of Christ that He will raise us bodily to live in perfect communion with Him and to serve Him in a New Heaven and a New Earth wherein dwells only righteousness/peace/joy/love and freedom from all temptation and sin. That is our end/hope—perfect and everlasting communion with the Lord Jesus in body/soul.

Let's consider that certain hope that is found in Christ alone. Our main points over the next couple weeks are: (1) The Resurrection of the Dead (Daniel 12:2); (2) The New Heaven and the New Earth (Daniel 12:3).

### **I. The Resurrection of the Dead (Revelation 12:2).**

#### **A. Review**

1. We noted last Lord's Day that Daniel 12:1 reveals a time of great intense suffering that will come upon the Jews as an unconverted nation. This time of great trouble will be instigated by the Papal King (Daniel 11:44-45) at the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:13-14). At the time that this great time of death, captivity, and suffering comes upon an unbelieving Israel (Zechariah 12-14) the Papal King will come to his appointed end (Daniel 11:45). Since the Roman Empire did not come to an end at the time that Jerusalem was besieged/destroyed in 70 A.D. (but actually increased in power for the next couple centuries), these prophesied events in Daniel 11:44-45-Daniel 12:1 were not realized in 70 A.D. but are yet to be realized.

2. However, out of this intense suffering of the Jews from this coalition of nations instigated by the Papal King (similar to how the Papal King called the Kings/Princes of Europe to the Crusades), Michael (the Lord Jesus) will arise and will pour out His Spirit upon the Jews who will cry out in repentance and will receive Him as Messiah (Zechariah 12:10). Jesus will miraculously deliver them from their enemies.

B. As we come to Daniel 12:2, there are a few questions to answer concerning this resurrection of the just and the unjust.

1. What is the nature of this resurrection—is it a physical or spiritual resurrection?

a. The Scripture does speak of a spiritual resurrection (regeneration—Ephesians 2:5-6), a figurative resurrection (Ezekiel 37:11-12), and a physical/bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). It is the context that guides us in understanding which kind of resurrection is in view in any given passage.

b. Daniel 12:2 speaks of the dead being raised from "the dust" of the earth—is that

language used elsewhere? Yes, it is, and it refers to a physical/bodily resurrection (Isaiah 26:19). “Sleep” is used for those who are physically dead (Psalm 13:3). It’s the body that sleeps—not the soul (to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, 2 Corinthians 5:8). Unless the context clearly leads us in a different direction, Daniel 12:2 is the bodily resurrection of the dead.

c. This is a resurrection that leads the just to everlasting life and the unjust to shame (reproach and blameworthiness) and everlasting contempt (scorn). This implies this is a resurrection that brings the just and the unjust before God’s righteous judgment.

2. Does this resurrection of the just and the unjust occur at the same time or are there two resurrections separated by a 1,000 years?

a. The reason for this question is that it distinguishes Premils from Postmils. Premils believe the coming of Christ and the bodily resurrection of the just occur before the millennium and the bodily resurrection of the wicked occurs 1,000 years later after the millennium (2-3 resurrections at different times). Whereas Postmils (and Amils) believe there is only one bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, both to come at the same time after the millennium (when King Jesus will reign from heaven and bring all nations to serve/worship Him).

b. Jesus also addresses the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust (John 5:28-29). Our Lord states that the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust will occur in “the hour” when He calls them both forth—not in two different hours separated by a thousand years. Like Daniel 12:2, there appears to be one resurrection of the just and the unjust that occurs simultaneously (Acts 24:15).

(1) **Objection:** If the “hour” of spiritual resurrection lasts over a thousand years (John 5:25), why not the “hour” of physical resurrection for the just and the unjust? The spiritual resurrection continues throughout its “hour” of the gospel age. However, the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust is not a continuous ongoing resurrection of the just and the unjust throughout its “hour” but is a singular resurrection of the just and the unjust in the same hour. There is no mention of any gap in time between the resurrection of the just and unjust (a gap has to be read into the passage). We will look at Revelation 20 in the weeks to come.

(2) **Question:** Jesus in John 5:28 uses the word “all” while Gabriel in Daniel 12:2 uses the word “many”. Why the different words? Daniel emphasizes that “many” will be raised from the dead (i.e. not a few), while Jesus emphasizes that “all” will be raised simultaneously (not just some). Romans 5:12 states that death passed upon “all” men through the sin of Adam, and Romans 5:15 states that through the sin of Adam “many” died (all—not some; many—not a few)—no contradiction.

c. The Bible (Old Testament and New Testament) never uses “resurrections” (plural) because there is only one resurrection that raises the just and the unjust simultaneously. Just because a passage of Scripture only mentions the resurrection of believers when dealing with only believers (as we see in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15) does not mean that the resurrection of unbelievers at the same time is excluded—it was only the hope of believers that was in view in these passages.

3. When does this resurrection in Daniel 12:2 occur?

a. It occurs on “the last day” when Jesus comes bodily and visibly at which time all (just and unjust) will also stand before the Judge—Jesus Christ (John 6:40; John 12:48; Matthew 25:31-33,46). When is the last day? It is the day of Christ’s bodily coming when all the dead are raised and all the living and dead are judged by the Lord—both just and unjust (Revelation 20:11-13). There is one coming of Christ, one resurrection of the dead (just and unjust), and one judgment for the just and the unjust (Matthew 25:31-33,46).

b. Carefully note that this bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust is not stated to come “at the time” of the great trouble that will befall the Jews at the Battle of Armageddon (Daniel 12:1-2). That phrase is used twice in Daniel 12:1, but it does not appear in Daniel 12:2.

c. Thus, the context does not require that Daniel 12:2 comes to pass “at the time”

of Israel's great trouble and Israel's salvation in Daniel 12:1. The single bodily resurrection and everlasting judgment of the just and the unjust in Daniel 12:2 moves us to the last hour at Christ's second coming after the millennium and before the righteous inherit the New Heaven and New Earth (Daniel 12:3; Revelation 21-22).

E. Application

1. Our bodily resurrection will be patterned after Christ's glorious bodily resurrection (Philippians 3:20-21). Jesus was the first fruits of the resurrection, and we are the harvest that follows. Let us always remember Jesus is the resurrection and the life and those who believe in Him though they were dead, yet shall they live (John 11:25). We are raised from the dead in order to enjoy Him without sin or pain forever and ever—not to fulfill the lusts of our flesh (with 70 virgins or a to become gods who populate other worlds).

2. Whatever we suffer in this life and in these bodies, there is coming a time when we will have a glorified body like that of the Lord Jesus. A body that is of flesh—a body that is not dependent upon food, but like Jesus can eat food—a body and soul that is free of sin, sickness, aging, and death. That makes the heart of the cancer-ridden, paralyzed, handicapped, chronically ill, worn out saint sing with joy. That may not sound amazing to you who are in the strength of your youth, but it is a blessed hope to us in times of physical suffering and at death. That is a certain hope—not a mere wish.

3. Jesus not only redeems our souls from the curse of sin, but also our bodies as well—our future bodily resurrection is called “the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). Our union with Jesus Christ even extends to the grave—every cell of our body belongs to Christ and will be glorified on that glorious day of resurrection. By His stripes we were healed (1 Peter 2:24). There is healing in Christ's atonement—both spiritual and physical—not necessarily an immediate healing of the body, but our bodily resurrection guarantees a complete healing, and our prayers for physical healing (and all our needs) should look to that ultimate healing. This brings meaning/purpose to life and death.

4. There is the resurrection to everlasting life and to everlasting contempt/punishment. There are no second chances after death. Everlasting life is found alone in Jesus Christ. Let none treat this matter lightly. The doctrine of the resurrection is the blessed hope of all who trust in Christ and evidence that faith in Christ by living for Him, but it is the frightening hopelessness of all who will not trust in Christ and will not live in loving obedience to Him. Let the blessedness/seriousness of the resurrection of the dead lead us all to Jesus Christ.

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