

# *From the Tribulation to Eternity In Heaven*

**W**e are going to take an incredible journey. Our study will cover more than 1,007 years. The reason I say 1,007 years is that 1,000 years covers the millennial kingdom here on earth and the seven years is the tribulation period. When I say “more,” our study goes beyond the millennial kingdom into eternity. We are going to study only three verses, Daniel 12:1-3. However, we will start with the rapture. We are going to visit many Scriptures and will tie them together in a unique way.

The rapture is defined as Jesus will come down towards earth and believers will rise up to meet Him in the air. Then He will take the believers to heaven. That is a short definition of what will happen when the rapture occurs. The

rapture is the next event in God’s prophetic timeline. It occurs at the beginning of the tribulation period. Some Bible teachers believe that the rapture will occur in the middle of the tribulation. That is called a mid-tribulation rapture. Other Bible teachers believe that the rapture occurs three-fourths of

the way into the tribulation—that view is called a pre-wrath rapture. The last view holds that the rapture occurs at the end of the tribulation. That is called the post-tribulation rapture. I believe that the rapture occurs at the beginning of the tribulation. That is called a pretribulation rapture. I am going to present the pretribulation rapture view because that is what I believe the Scriptures teach.

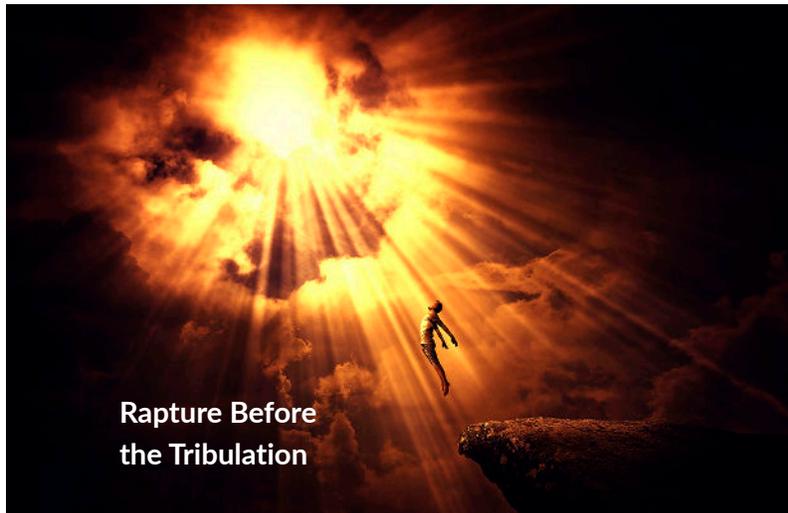
**Pretribulation Rapture.** John 14:1 records part of Jesus’ discussion with the disciples in the upper room. This

occurs on the last night Jesus was with His disciples. Later in the evening, He was betrayed by Judas. He was arrested, went through a trial, and the next day He died on the cross. Jesus had already started to tell the disciples He would not be with them very long. He was departing. He had already told them that He was going to the Father.

In John 13:36, Peter asked the Lord,

“[Lord, where are You going?](#)” [John 13:36a \(NASB\)](#)

That question reveals Jesus had already told them He was leaving.



**Rapture Before  
the Tribulation**

Jesus answered, “[Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.](#)” [John 13:36b \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus made it clear that He was leaving and where He was going, Peter could not go. Where was Jesus going? He was going to heaven to be with the Father.

We know from the Gospels that after He died, He was resurrected. The first chapter of Acts tells us that He then ascended to heaven. The Gospel of John keeps making the point that Jesus came down from heaven, and now He was going back to heaven.

Then when you come to John 14:1, Jesus said,

[Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.](#) [John 14:1 \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus was encouraging them. I like Jesus' statement because it is very obvious that He cares about His disciples. Jesus could have been indifferent to His disciples, but He was not. He was preparing them for His departure in forty-three days. He said, "Do not be discouraged."

Then in verse 2, Jesus offered more encouragement.

**In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:2 (NASB)**

Jesus said, "I am going to leave." Where was He going? Heaven! He said, "In my Father's house"—so the Father's house and heaven are equivalent—"are many dwelling places." The King James says "mansions." That is not a good translation of the Greek *monē*. The word just means there are many places in which you can dwell. That implies heaven has many different places in which we can live.

Verse 3 introduces a new subject.

**If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:3 (NASB)**

Jesus was now referring to the rapture. So the message is that Jesus will come and when He does, He is going to take His disciples with Him to heaven because that is where Jesus has prepared their dwelling places. Now there are two details to notice. First, Jesus used the plural "you" to refer to all believers. In addition, He did refer to the disciples because history tells us that each of the disciples died here on earth. The second detail is this cannot be Christ's second coming because when the second coming occurs, Jesus descends down to earth. He does not return to heaven at that time because He will establish the millennial kingdom and reign as king. This cannot be a reference to the second coming of Christ, or to living in the millennial kingdom. This is about taking believers to heaven. This is the pre-tribulation rapture.

*1 Thessalonians 1:10 & 5:9.* In 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Paul was talking about Christ when he wrote,

**And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NASB)**

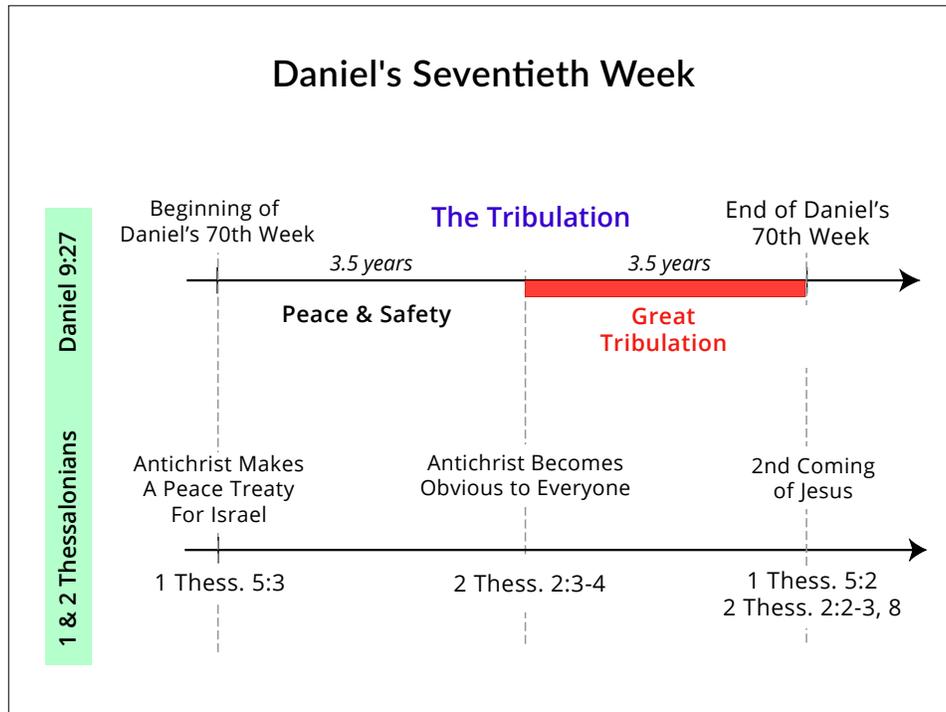
Paul clearly was talking about Jesus Christ. He says, "Christ, who rescues us from the wrath to come." Now, there are two things to think about when we read "wrath to come." First, the wrath is the eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46. That is, the lake of fire. Second, there is also another wrath, the wrath of the tribulation. The tribulation period is a time or period of wrath. Is called the day of the Lord. In Jeremiah 7:30, the tribulation is called Jacob's trouble. There are different terms for the tribulation period. But the message of 1 Thessalonians 1:10 is this tribulation will be a time of horror, and Christ will rescue us from the tribulation.

Next, in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 we find another promise that believers will be rescued from the wrath to come. We are told,

**For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NASB)**

This is another statement that promises that believers will not experience a time of wrath. So 1 Thessalonians gives us a rough timeline as to when the rapture will actually occur. It will occur prior to a time of wrath, prior to the tribulation.

*Daniel 9:24-27.* I would like to go to Daniel 9 briefly and then return to 1 Thessalonians. In Daniel 9:24-26 we read that seventy weeks existed between the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the second coming of Christ. Each week was a seven-year period. When we multiply, we learn that the seventy weeks is 490 biblical years. Then verses 25 and 26 prophesy that there are sixty-nine weeks and then one week. So there are two time periods. First sixty-nine weeks, and then one week will follow. Since each week is seven years, you multiply the number of weeks by seven. So 69 weeks is 483 biblical years to the crucifixion of Christ. Then the last one week, or seven years is discussed in verse 27. Verse 27 says,



And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. Daniel 9:27 (NASB)

Here we are told the tribulation period starts with a covenant. It says, “a firm covenant with the many.” The covenant is a peace treaty that promises seven years of peace. But we are told that in the middle of that week, or after three and one half years, all of a sudden the antichrist stops the grain offering and sacrifice and causes the “abomination of desolation.”

We discovered earlier that the antichrist will go into the temple and declare that he is God. So, this verse is describing the tribulation period. It starts with peace. In the middle of the tribulation, the antichrist goes into the temple, declares that he is God, stops the sacrifices, and then the horrors of the tribulation follow. So this describes the seven-year period of tribulation, or period.

So, the rapture comes before this. Why? Remember that 1 Thessalonians says that before the tribulation

period, Jesus will rescue believers from the wrath to come. The wrath to come starts in the middle of the tribulation period or during the last three and half years. So this helps us understand when the rapture occurs. It occurs at the beginning right before the tribulation begins.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. Now we return to 1 Thessalonians and chapter 4. In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 the rapture is described in more detail. We are told,

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 1 Thessalonians 4:15 (NASB)

In this verse there are two groups of people. There are those who are alive, because it says: “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive.” The second group of people have “fallen asleep.” It does not mean that they are sleeping. It is a euphemism which means they are dead. These are Christians who have died. Some will be martyrs and others died of natural causes. So some Christians will be alive, and some Christians will have died when Jesus comes.

Verse 16 continues with,

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven . . . 1  
Thessalonians 4:16a (NASB)

He does not come all the way to earth. He comes down from heaven.

. . . with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:16b (NASB)

Now it becomes clear that the people who are asleep are actually dead for it says “the dead in Christ will arise first.” So the dead in Christ will come up out of the grave first. That is one group of people.

The second group of people are mentioned again in verse 17.

Then we who are alive . . . 1 Thessalonians 4:17a  
(NASB)

That is, Christians who are living.

. . . and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:17b (NASB)

*1 Corinthians, 15:51-54.* The Christians who are alive will be caught up together in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. They will always be with the Lord. That is a good description of the rapture. Now, what happens to the people who are alive? Do we just keep our present body? No, we are changed. 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 says,

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 1 Corinthians, 15:51-54 (NASB)

The point is this. Those of us who have mortal bodies will be changed into immortality at the rapture.

Paul calls this a mystery. What is a mystery? A mystery is something that was not previously revealed. In a biblical sense, it is something that was not revealed in the Old Testament. But it is suddenly described and explained in the New Testament. Watch this! The second coming of Christ is revealed in the Old Testament. But the rapture was not revealed in the Old Testament. So, those who are alive at the rapture will be transformed in the twinkling of an eye just as Paul says here in this passage. Believers will meet Jesus in the air. He take believers to heaven where He has prepared places for us in the Father’s house.

**Great Tribulation.** The last half of the tribulation period, or the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation, is mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 24. He calls it “great tribulation.” I have already made the point that Jeremiah 30:7 calls this Jacob’s distress, or we call it Jacob’s trouble. This will be a horrible period of time. It will an incredibly difficult period of time for everyone. Most of the book of Revelation describes this period of time.

Beginning with verse 1 of Revelation 6, we are given an overview of the tribulation period. It does not give us a chronological overview. It gives us the characteristics of the tribulation. The first characteristic of the tribulation is given in Revelation 6:1-2.

Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.” I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. Revelation 6:1-2 (NASB)

Are you wondering, “What does the white horse symbolize? The answer is revealed in verses 3-4 when the second seal was broken.

When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.” And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was

granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him. Revelation 6:3-4 (NASB)

When the second seal is broken, a red horse appears. What does he do? He “takes away peace from the world.” That means peace existed in verses 1 and 2. Verses 1 and 2 are about the first part of the tribulation because it will be a time of peace. Verses 3 and 4 symbolize a time of war. That is the last half of the tribulation period.

Verses 7 and 8 describe death. Verses 9-11 are about Christians who died in the tribulation period. They read,

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also. Revelation 6:9-11 (NASB)

What is described? Christians will die in the tribulation period as martyrs. Chapter 6 describes the tribulation period. Verses 1 and 2 tell us that it starts with peace, and the rest of the chapter, verse 3-17 describe all the horrible tragedies that will happen: war, death, famine, and martyrdom. That is the tribulation.

So when 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9 say that Jesus will save believers from the wrath to come, that means Christians will escape the tribulation. They will escape all of the horrors described in the book of Revelation, from chapter 6 through chapter 19. Those chapters describe what will happen during the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation period.

Here is an overview of what will happen in chapters 6-9. A third of the vegetation will be destroyed. A third of

the trees, a third of the animals, a third of the sea life will be destroyed, and a third of the stars will be destroyed. A third of the water will be polluted. Think about that for a minute. What happens if a third of the sea life dies in the ocean, and a third of the fish die in the rivers and the lakes? Can you imagine the stench in the world? Will people want to drink the water?! The mathematics reveals that a half of human life will be destroyed—one out of two people die. I would not want to live in the tribulation period. It will be a horrible time, not to mention all the earthquakes, and the hoard of demons released on the earth. This is the last half of the tribulation period.

**Rescue of Israel at Armageddon.** Our study is from Daniel 12. The chapter division between chapters 11 and 12 should have occurred after Daniel 12:4 because verses 1-4 are still part of the angel’s explanation that started in Daniel 11:2. If you recall, Daniel had made a request. Then an angel was sent to give Daniel the answer, but the angel was delayed by some demonic or evil angels. So, Daniel 11:2 is the start of the angel’s answer.

We discovered the last part of Daniel 11 is about the characteristics of the antichrist. We learned about the battle of Armageddon in verses 40-45. Daniel 11 has been about the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25) which is the period of time Gentiles control Jerusalem. I believe that Daniel was interested in knowing more about the antichrist than what Daniel 7:8; 7:25; and 9:27 reveal. I also believe Daniel wanted to know about the future for the people of Israel. That would explain why Daniel 12:1-3 is about the Jewish people. Consequently, chapter 11 should have ended until Daniel 12:4.

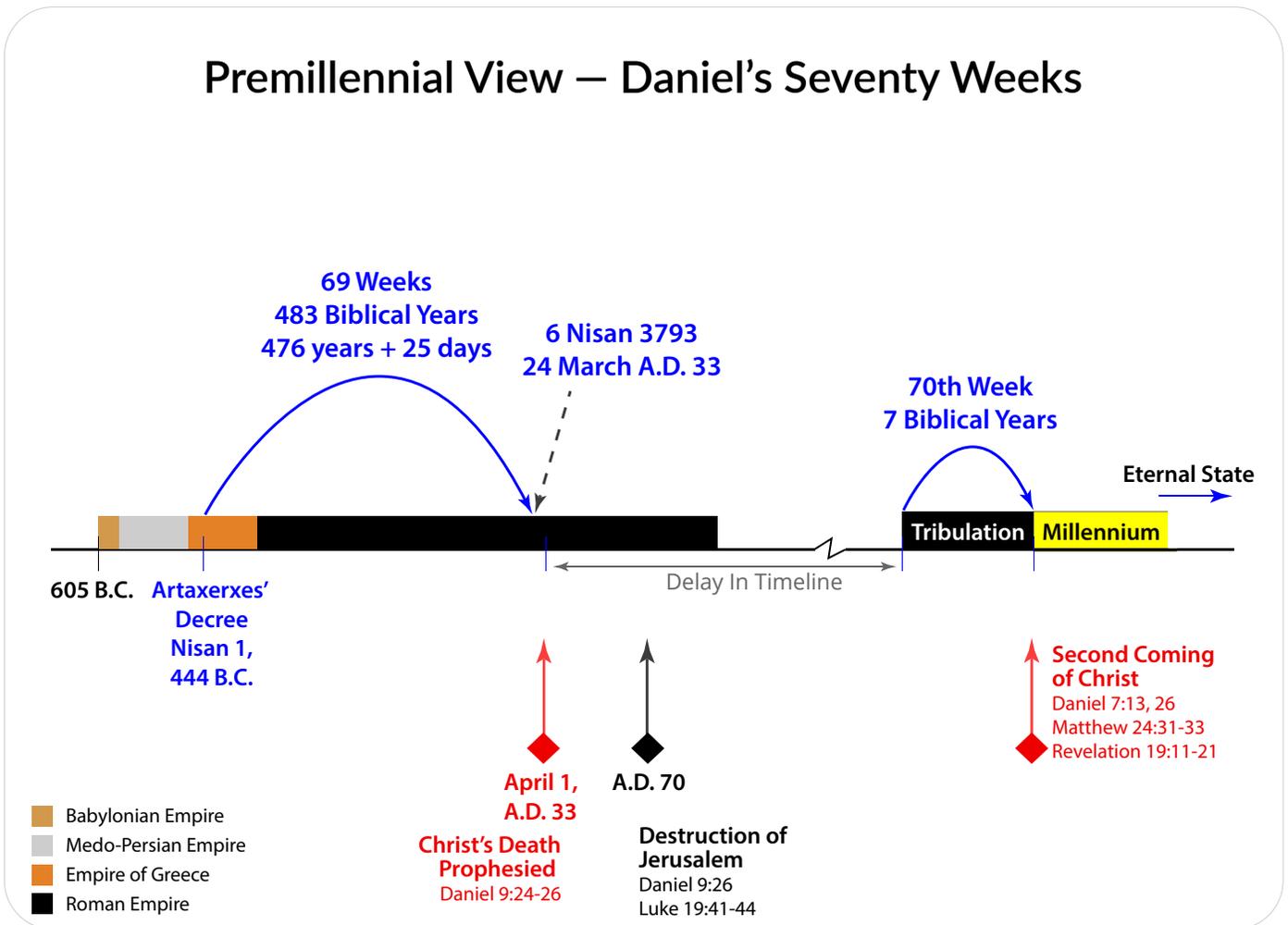
Here is Daniel 12:1,

**Now at that time Michael . . . Daniel 12:1a (NASB)**

“At that time” refers us back to the battle of Armageddon in verses 40-45.

**Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people . . . Daniel 12:1b (NASB)**

# Premillennial View – Daniel’s Seventy Weeks



Michael is an archangel (Jude 9). We have already seen him in Daniel 10. He is very powerful. Next we are told,

... the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress ... Daniel 12:1c (NASB)

Now we are told Michael is the guardian of the nation of Israel. That is his ministry to this day. He protects Israel. Then we are told there will be a time of distress. The Hebrew word for “distress” is the same word that is used for Jacob’s trouble, or Jacob’s distress, in Jeremiah 30:7. The distress is described as ...

... such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time ... Daniel 12:1d (NASB)

What is that talking about? The tribulation period. It refers to the last 3.5 years of the tribulation period which is a time of distress. We discovered that the tribulation period will be incredibly bad. The people in this verse refers to the Jews.

... and at that time your people ... Daniel 12:1e (NASB)

But the next phrase limits “your people” to those Jews who have eternal life. That is, they will be Christians, for it says,

... everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Daniel 12:1f (NASB)

Therefore, verse 1 this is about the last half of the tribulation period since that is when Michael the archangel

defends Israel. He rescues all Christians who are still alive in Jerusalem.

Revelation 12:7 is about the last half of the tribulation. Verse 7 says,

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war. Revelation 12:7 (NASB)

And who is at war in heaven? Michael—who is that? Michael the archangel. We just saw him in Daniel 12:1. Is that not interesting that Michael has angels following him, and the dragon has angels following him. Who is the dragon? Verse 9 gives us the answer.

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan. Revelation 12:9 (NASB)

So, the dragon is Satan or the devil. Back in verse 7 we are told Satan has angels following him?!" We call them demons. We also call them fallen angels or evil angels. So there will be a war between Michael and his angels.

Verse 8 gives the conclusion of the battle.

And they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. Revelation 12:8 (NASB)

These verses tell us that Satan and his angels went up to heaven and tried to take over heaven. After Satan and his angels are defeated, I believe, the middle of the tribulation period occurs. That is, the antichrist sits in the temple and declares that he is God.

Now look at what happens next in verse 13 to the end of the chapter. Verse 13 says,

And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman . . . Revelation 12:13a (NASB)

Who is the woman? Verse 1 says that the woman is Israel. The eleven stars refer to Joseph's eleven brothers. So, verse 13 is telling us that Satan and his angels will try next to take over the earth after being defeated in heaven.

But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. Revelation 12:14 (NASB)

In the book of Daniel, we have already discovered that the time, times, and half a time equals 3.5 years.

In summary, Daniel 12:1 is Michael defending the nation of Israel beginning in the middle of the tribulation, because three-and-a-half years then follow. This helps us put some piece parts together. The rapture will occur before the tribulation period. Then war, famine, death, and martyrdom follows. Zechariah 13:8-9 says that two-thirds of Israel will die during the tribulation. Zechariah, 14:1-3 prophesies that half of Jerusalem will be destroyed. Then Jesus comes and defeats the armies of the world at Armageddon. Who survives? In Daniel 12, we are told,

. . . at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Daniel 12:1b (NASB)

The people of Israel who are still alive at the end of the tribulation will be rescued.

Now, what does that mean that "they are rescued?" First, those Jews who are still alive at the end of the tribulation will become Christians (Romans 11:25-26). Sadly, some people say that nobody can become a Christian in the tribulation period. But we have already seen in Revelation 6 that there are martyrs. For example, Revelation 7:4 introduces us to the 144,000 witnesses. Verse 9 says,

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before

the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes  
... Revelation 7:9a (NASB)

White robes means these individuals are righteous. They are saved. Their sins are forgiven. They are standing before the Lamb.

... and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10 (NASB)

Sound like Christians! They are Christians!

And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:11-14 (NASB)

Notice that they are clothed in white robes because they are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Again, who are they? They are Christians. When did they die? They died in the tribulation. What does that mean? People can become Christians in the tribulation period.

Revelation 11 talks about two witnesses. Revelation 14:6-7 tells of an angel who preaches the gospel throughout the world. Some Gentiles will become Christians. Some Jews will become Christians. So, people will become Christians during the tribulation. That agrees with Daniel 12:1 which says there will be people alive whose names are written in the book of life.

Therefore, at the end of the tribulation period,

Armageddon will occur. The armies of the world will be defeated by Christ. He will separate the goats from the sheep (Matthew 25:31-46). The goats are symbolic of non-Christians. The sheep are symbolic of Christians. Christ will only allow Christians to enter the millennial kingdom, His 1,000-year earthly kingdom here on earth. Everyone else who is not written in the book of life will be sent to hell.

So when Romans 11:25-26 says, "All Israel will be saved," that is correct. All Israel that is still alive at the end of the tribulation, at the battle of Armageddon, will be saved. (Zechariah 12:10-11). They and the saints since Adam are the ones who go into the kingdom. Everybody else goes to hell, and they wait for the final judgment.

**Everlasting Afterlife.** Now Daniel 12:2 describes the destiny of every person who has ever lived.

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 12:2 (NASB)

So what will happen? Revelation 20:4-6 tells us that after the tribulation, only the saints will enter the millennial kingdom.

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4 (NASB)

Also, Old Testament saints will be resurrected, come out of the dust, and enter the millennial kingdom. Christians from the tribulation go into the millennial kingdom. That is what Daniel 12:2 refers to in "these to everlasting life."

Verse 5 describes what happens to the wicked, the unbelievers. The verse says,

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Revelation 20:5 (NASB)

Daniel 12:2 summarizes this verse with, “Others into everlasting contempt.” These are the unbelievers. They will *not* be resurrected at the Goat and Sheep Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). They will be resurrected later and sent to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

Verse 6 summarizes the eternal destiny of the saints and the wicked.

And he says,

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. Revelation 20:6 (NASB)

The next resurrection is described in Revelation 20:11-15. Here are verses 13-15,

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:13-16 (NASB)

So, Daniel 12:2 describes the eternal destiny of the righteous and the wicked. The word disgrace seems to refer to the judgment of the wicked at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-12). Their judgment will include a review of all their evil deeds with everyone listening. How would you like to have all of your sins reviewed with everyone listening (Luke 11:31-32). To have everyone hear a review of all of your evil words, lies, wicked thoughts, hateful words, sexual sins, and displays of pride, for example, would cause disgrace (Matthew 12:36). This review of the deeds of

the wicked will prove that God is justified in sending them to the lake of fire forever.

**Rewards for the Righteous.** Verse 3 is absolutely a thrill. If you were not encouraged by anything else in the study, do not miss verse 3. It says,

Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:3 (NASB)

It is talking about different types of rewards that Christians will receive from God. We know from the New Testament that there are degrees of rewards for Christians. Verse 3 summarizes them. The first part of verse 3 says Christians “are going to shine brightly like the heavens.” That will not be disgraceful. I am not confident how to describe shining. But it is clear that we are going to shine brightly. I do not think this is just a figurative statement. I think this is a statement that says just what it means. We are going to be shining brightly because we will be perfectly righteous. God is light. I think we are going to reflect light. We are called sons of light (John 12:36; 1Thessalonians 5:5). I think we are going to be light.

Then the last part of verse 3 we cannot miss. This is a surprise. It says,

... those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:3b (NASB)

Now, what does this mean when it says “those who lead the many to righteousness”? It is talking about leading other people to Christ, to become Christians. This is talking about evangelism. This is talking about Christians who helped other people become Christians. They shared the gospel so that other people could believe in Jesus Christ. This means there is a special reward for those Christians who were actually involved in evangelism and helping other people come to know Jesus. They are going to be like stars. They are not going to just “shine brightly like the expanse,” they are going to shine like stars. This is a very

special reward for believers who are helping other people to understand the gospel and to come to faith. So, what reward will you receive from God?