

**Old Testament prophecy is compressed**

• Fulfilment – now – the future and more of the future

• It was not given to Daniel to see the detailed picture of the far future – from the first coming of Jesus to the end

• There will be a period of great conflict and persecution for the people of God at the time of the coming of the kingdom of God

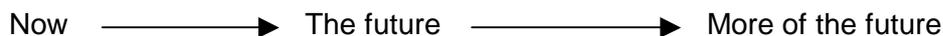
• Many passages of Scripture suggest something similar

It is typical of Old Testament prophecy that it sees the distant future in a highly compressed manner. The prophets saw the distant future with everything tied together in one bundle. To put it another way, there is no separation in the Old Testament between predictions of the first coming and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The view that the Old Testament prophets had could be represented like this:



As the matter gets fulfilled it turns out like this:



From the perspective of the Old Testament prophets the future and more-of-the-future are seen as one unit, one package. We have this phenomenon in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 and here in Daniel chapters 11–12. In each case, when the period of the fourth empire comes into view, the predictions stretch out into the future, but the future and more-of-the-future are all seen as **one** whole. There is no further differentiation of periods of time after predictions of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not given to Daniel to see the ‘times and the seasons’ (as Jesus said to his disciples in Acts 1:7). Daniel lived through the Babylonian period from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar. He has been told something of the Persian period<sup>□1</sup>, something of the Greek period<sup>□2</sup>, quite a lot about Antiochus Epiphanes the persecutor<sup>□3</sup> and a little of the Roman period<sup>□4</sup>. Now he has reached the time of the coming of Jesus. The kingdom of God is set up in the time of the fourth empire and its successors. The angel’s vision has reached the time of the fourth kingdom. So now the prophecy sees ‘the end’ as entirely one unit. Everything from the first coming of Jesus to the final coming and end of the world is to be seen here in Daniel 11–12. As it is revealed to Daniel it is one package. The modern Christian knows that ‘The time is fulfilled’<sup>□5</sup> and that the kingdom of God came in Jesus. But he also finds that the package opens up and that what Daniel saw in one lump of revelation in fact unfolds, and that the totality of what was predicted has not yet run its course.

The angel keeps speaking. <sup>1</sup>‘At that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has never happened since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is found written in the book will be delivered.’ Daniel is told that in the distant future, at the time of the coming of the kingdom of God, there will be a period of great conflict and persecution for the people of God. Many passages of Scripture suggest something similar: the Gog and Magog passages of the Book of Ezekiel 38–39, the warnings concerning a final enemy of God in Daniel, and the descriptions of a forerunner in Daniel 8 and 11:21–39, the warnings concerning events before the fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21), 2 Thessalonians 2, and much that is to be found in the Book of Revelation. Here in Daniel 12:1 a very severe persecution is predicted at some time within the gospel-age. There will be a final conflict between God’s people and the agents of the devil. At such a time the church will get angelic help. ‘Michael’ is an archangel whose task it is to give special protection to the elect. At the time of tribulation in the gospel-age, Michael

- 1 11:2
- 2 11:2-20
- 3 11:21-39
- 4 11:40-45

□5 Mark 1:15

• *The elect will protected though almost destroyed*

and his angels will protect the elect whose names have been in the book of the predestined since before the foundation of the earth. The conflict will be the greatest ever<sup>1</sup>. The elect will almost be destroyed but it will not actually happen.

12:1b

• *The resurrection – two groups*

At some stage after the conflict of Daniel 12:1 will come the resurrection. <sup>2</sup> 'Many from among those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. These shall awake to everlasting life, but others will awake to shame and everlasting contempt.' Two classes of people raised-from-the-dead are mentioned here. Some are raised to life. They are raised 'from among' all who have died. Others form a second group. They are raised after those who have been raised to life. The second group is raised to experience shame and to be everlastingly despised and disregarded by the righteous.

• *The reward of the righteous*

A fuller description is given of the reward of the righteous. <sup>3</sup> 'Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.' The reward of the righteous will include **visible** glory. There will also be **variation** in glory ('One star differs from another star in glory'<sup>1</sup>) according to the impact for good we have had on the lives of others.

1 Cor 15:41

• *Daniel's revelations a help fro those living centuries ahead*

The angelic revelation to Daniel has finished. Now the angel has a last word for Daniel himself. <sup>4</sup> 'But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end.' The revelations Daniel has received have mainly not been about the immediate future. They are the purpose of God; they will unfold over epochs of time. They have mainly focused on empires which (from Daniel's viewpoint) would come in the distant future. At such a time there would be a need for a word from God. <sup>4</sup> 'Many will rush here and there looking to multiply true knowledge.' Daniel's revelation will be a help to them centuries ahead.



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Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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